

# THE WITNESS:

AN UNFETTERED MONTHLY JOURNAL

OF

*Biblical Literature, Expository Papers,*

Notes of Addresses, Conference Reports,  
Questions and Answers, Intelligence,  
Poetry, Correspondence, &c.

EDITED BY

JOHN R. CALDWELL.

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# THE WITNESS:

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE.

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## THE CONGREGATION OF JEHOVAH.

I WISH to direct your attention to the use in the Old Testament of the term "the congregation of Jehovah," and then to point out the evident analogy that exists between it and the corresponding New Testament term "the Church of God."

I will ask you to look first at Deut. xxiii. 3, where it is used by Moses in conveying to Israel the commandment of God as to who should be excluded from the congregation. It is unquestionably the most exalted, most dignified title that is or could be given to the people of God. Used as it is in this passage by God Himself, it cannot be otherwise than fitting and appropriate.

Again, we find it used in Numb. xxvii. Here Moses has revealed to him the solemn judgment of God, that because of his sin at Meribah he is not to be permitted to enter the land of promise.

His shepherd heart is deeply concerned, not about himself so much as about the congregation that he so long had served and to which the Name of Jehovah was attached. He prays Jehovah, "the God of the spirits of all flesh, to set a man over them . . . that the congregation of Jehovah be not as sheep which have no shepherd" (verses 16 and 17).

Evidently this exalted title is here introduced by Moses most fittingly. His concern is lest Jehovah's congregation, that congregation to which His great Name was attached, should appear in the eyes of the world to be deserted or uncared for by the God that brought them forth from Egypt and brought them unto Himself. Thus is it used with tenderest regard and deepest reverence.

Again, look at Num. xxxi. 16. Here the zeal of Moses for the honour of Jehovah's

name is again the prominent thought. The Midianitish women had been spared, though they had been the principal instruments of Satan in seducing the children of Israel, and Moses with indignation chides them for their negligence in fulfilling the divine command, saying, "these caused the children of Israel to commit trespass . . . and there was a plague among the congregation of Jehovah."

Surely none can fail to see the deep significance of the use here of this exalted title. The horror of the heart of Moses is not merely that the people had suffered, or that *his* people had suffered, or that the *congregation of Israel* had been plagued—but that the fearful judgment and reproach of a plague had fallen upon Jehovah's congregation—the congregation to which His Name was attached and with which Jehovah's glory was bound up.

We find it next in 1 Chron. xxviii. 8. Here David is solemnly charging his son, Solomon, as to his future kingly responsibilities, and he does so not only in the hearing of God as witness to the charge but "in the sight of all Israel, the congregation of Jehôvâh." There is neither pride nor flippancy in such a use of the term. Indeed, on so solemn an occasion its fitness is evident.

But notice that in this passage we have a perfectly clear definition of what composed "the congregation of Jehovah." It was "all Israel." Nothing more and nothing less. True, there might be leprous or otherwise defiled Israelites outside the congregation for the time being, but such exceptional instances of necessary and divinely-appointed discipline could in no way alter the broad truth that in the divine reckoning "all Israel" was "the congregation of Jehovah."

We shall now look at a few instances of the use of this term which bear a very different

character. Turn to Num. xvi. 1-3. Korah, Dathan and Abiram are here the leaders of an influential faction of the people of God. They "took men," showing that even men who were esteemed as "princes" were but tools in their master hands. Their rebel speech, recorded in verse 3, betrays the pride that surely goes before destruction. Not in earnest prayer or holy zeal for the honour of Jehovah's name, but in pride of heart and high-handed rebellion is the term here used, "Wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of Jehovah?"

"And when Moses heard it, he fell on his face"—the only fitting attitude for one with truly shepherd heart when his leadership is challenged by fleshly pride and self-sufficiency.

Again we find it used in Num. xx. 4, "Why have ye brought up the congregation of Jehovah into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there?" Here, also, too plainly, it is made use of in unbelief and hardness of heart. They charge the troubles that by their unbelief and disobedience they had brought upon themselves against Moses and Aaron. But Moses and Aaron knew their place of refuge and of power: "They went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they fell upon their faces." Most blessed resort in the hour of undeserved blame and censure; and, thrice blessed recompense, "the glory of Jehovah appeared unto them."

But one other passage we must turn to where its use is full of significance, viz., Josh. xxii. 16. Two tribes and a half had received their inheritance on the wilderness side of Jordan. Fearing lest at some future time the fact that Jordan was their boundary line might be used to sever them in some way from their unity with all Israel, they built a great altar, probably more of the nature of a monument, near to Jordan, as a standing witness that they were one with the other nine and a half tribes. News of this having reached the leaders, instantly it was interpreted as of evil import; and "the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered themselves together at Shiloh to go up to war against them." Thus was the matter prejudged, and a conclusion arrived at before inquiry was made. There is that in human nature, and

especially where zeal is more prominent than love, which more readily believes in evil than in good. Happily, before the army marched against the tribes across the Jordan, Phinehas and ten of the princes of Israel were sent unto them to expostulate with them as to the evil they had committed. Their first words betray their true condition: "Thus saith the whole congregation of Jehovah." Had it been "Thus saith the Lord," there would have been some reason for the lofty tone assumed: but was it not, under the circumstances, merely an attempt to attach to a human sentence authority that only pertains to the divine?

Beware of being led into bondage to man through his assumption of authority. However high-sounding or authoritative a human decision may appear, let it never be given the place that belongs only to "Thus saith the Lord."

But was it "the whole congregation of Jehovah" that so spake? They indeed assumed to be *the whole*, but clearly it was not the whole. At most it was but nine and a half twelfths of the whole. But their using such language showed that in their inmost souls it was *they* who were already failing to own the oneness of all Israel. Virtually they had already cut off the two and a half tribes, and the army was ready to implement their hasty and mistaken judgment.

The charity that "hopeth all things," and refuses to believe in evil until it is manifested and fully proved, would have saved them from such a course.

We have thus seen various scriptures where the term "the congregation of Jehovah" is used in the fear of God. We have also seen scriptures where it is the language of unbelief, of pride, and of assumption. But one remarkable fact remains to be noticed, viz., that this expression is never applied in Scripture after the breaking up of the kingdom in the days of Rehoboam. As Abijah rent the mantle of Jeroboam into twelve pieces and divided ten from two, so in the sight of God, the integrity of the kingdom was gone and no longer could any gathering out of the tribes be dignified with the title "the congregation of Jehovah." The same applies to such terms as "the whole assembly of Israel" and "the congregation of Israel" or "of the children

of Israel." All such terms are dropped after the rupture of the ten tribes from the two. We read after that of "the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem" (2 Chron. xx. 5), of "the congregation that came out of Israel" (2 Chron. xxx. 25), of "the congregation of those that had been carried away" (Ezra x. 8), and of "the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity"; but never again is that exalted title used, "the congregation of Jehovah." The term "the congregation of God" occurs in Neh. xiii. 1, but as this is merely a quotation from Deut. xxiii., it serves rather to show the significance of the fact that all such terms as I have indicated are no longer used; clearly because no longer applicable.

I now come to point out the parallelism with the New Testament. Without any doubt the corresponding term in the New is "the Church of God." It is the loftiest, most exalted title that could be given to the saints of this dispensation. It is used in the address to the two Epistles to the Corinthians—these being especially the books in which divine instruction and commands are given as to the construction, ordering, and discipline of the assembly, and therefore for all saints and for all the dispensation. And in each passage elsewhere where it occurs there is an evident reason which justifies its use. This I referred to a former address and need not recapitulate.\*

But in every case it is used of the Church in its entirety, ere division had come in to destroy its original integrity. Not once is the term "the Church of God" used in any of the scriptures which bear specially on the latter days.

I conclude, from a careful and exhaustive examination of its use in every passage where it occurs, that the term "the Church of God" is not applicable to any company of saints in this present time; that to apply it to any local gathering composed of a few of the children of God, however scriptural their order and discipline, is a practical denial of the failure and breaking up of "the Church of God" as God's sole and united witness in the earth;

\* See *Witness*, January, 1892, pp. 2 and 3, and reprint, "The Church of God; its fellowship and government."—The Publishing Office, 180 Buchanan Street.

a denial also of the great fact that all believers constitute "the Church of God which He has purchased with His own blood," and can only be traced to ignorance or to pride, or, what is more likely still, to both.

The assumption to be "the Church of God" in any town or district by a few of God's children who have been seeking unto God and the Word of His grace, is as unwarranted as for the little remnant in the days of Ezra to have assumed the title "the congregation of Jehovah" or "the assembly of the children of Israel." Brethren, "if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself" (Gal. vi. 3). Is it not to be feared that we have been guilty of this? It has been taught that we alone are the gathered out ones, we alone are the Temple of God, we alone are the House of God over which Christ is High Priest, we alone are the Church of the Living God. Do not such pretensions themselves betray the real state of the case? Thinking ourselves to be something, when we are nothing, we have been so far deceiving ourselves.

J. R. C.

(To be followed by an article (D.V.) in February on the various uses of the word "Church" in New Testament).

## CHRISTIAN BAPTISM:

THE PLAIN TEACHING OF THE WORD OF GOD, WITH  
A REVIEW OF CERTAIN TEACHINGS COMMONLY  
STYLED "HOUSEHOLD BAPTISM."

### INTRODUCTION.

THERE are three baptisms in the New Testament, viz. :—

#### I.—BAPTISM OF WATER.

We have three baptisms of water mentioned: (1) John's baptism; (2) The baptism by the Lord's disciples during His life (John iv.); and (3) Christian baptism, instituted by the Lord in the great commission, and introduced by Peter on the day of Pentecost.

John's baptism was the baptism of repentance, to prepare the people (Israel) to receive Christ.

The disciples' baptism was the acknowledgment of discipleship during the Lord's life (John iv.). The Lord made them disciples, then they were baptised.

Christian baptism is based on the death and

resurrection of Christ. What is involved we shall see as we take up the scriptures concerning it.

#### II.—BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

An exceedingly important truth is the presence of the Holy Spirit now on earth. He is the quickener of the dead sinner, the seal of the living saint, and baptises into "one body" all these quickened souls (1 Cor. xii. 13). He came on the day of Pentecost, and will remain until the body has reached its fulness.

#### III.—BAPTISM OF FIRE.

This baptism John speaks of. He said to the Jews, "He shall baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Matt. iii. 11). This baptism refers to the judgments that will fall upon the unbelieving Jews during the age known as "The Tribulation," that immediately follows this present age of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and precedes the millennial age. Fire, in God's Word, always typifies judgment.

We shall now take up the subject of Christian baptism, and its importance is this, that it is a truth of God's Word; and to faith every truth of God has its place and importance. As we are going directly to the Word of God for our thoughts, looking to the Lord for His guidance and the supply of His Spirit, we shall take up the subject under five heads:—

I. The Commission in the Gospels. II. The Teaching of the Epistles. III. The Practice in the Acts. IV. The Mode. V. Review of certain teachings known commonly under the name "Household Baptism."

#### I.—THE COMMISSION.

The ordinance of Christian baptism was instituted by the Lord after His death and resurrection, and is given to us in the commission in Matthew xxviii. 19, 20: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Rev. Ver.). The order is very plain. First, "make disciples;" second, "baptise them;" third, "teach them."

order, and at the same time is explanatory of how disciples are made. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned" (Mark xvi. 15, 16, Rev. Ver.). By believing the preached Gospel the sinner becomes a disciple. He is baptised as the outward acknowledgment of his discipleship, and then is instructed in the truths of Christianity.

This was the order during the Lord's life. We are told in John iv. 1, 2, "When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus *made and baptised* more disciples than John (though Jesus Himself baptised not, but His disciples)." Of course, this was not Christian baptism, as we have seen, but the order is the same. It was a report, and in one part of it the Pharisees had made a mistake. Jesus did not personally baptise, but He most assuredly made disciples, and then they were baptised by others of His disciples as the outward acknowledgment of their discipleship. In John viii. 30, 31, we have the way disciples were made definitely: "As He spake these words many believed on Him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed." They became His disciples by believing, through the spoken Word; they proved their discipleship to be real by their continuance.

We see in Mark the Gospel is preached and believed before baptism is administered, and we need, therefore, to remember what the Gospel brings out, in order to see rightly the place baptism has. In 1 Cor. xv. we have Paul's epitome of the Gospel which he preached; in Romans we have the full development of that Gospel, and in both we find two facts as its basis—first, the utter ruin of man; second, the complete meeting of that ruin in the finished work of Christ, and this manifested by His resurrection. Thus baptism is usually separated from the carnal ordinances of Judaism. At the cross the trial of man ceases; man is proved to be an utter ruin, and judgment passes upon him. The Jew was born by natural birth into a covenant relationship with Jehovah, and circumcision was given as the outward sign of this relationship. But at the

The commission in Mark confirms this

cross this was all set aside, and all were proved alike "dead" (2 Cor. v. 15). So the commission is, "Go into all the world;" and baptism is to be given—not to those who are in natural relationship, but to the one who believes in the Gospel, which, at the same time that it reveals his need, reveals the blessed work that meets that need.

It is in full accord with this that baptism in the commission in Matthew is "unto the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." The name of God, as fully manifested, is put upon the one baptised. And this clearly shows that baptism is the outward acknowledgment of a relationship that is spiritual and real, not outward as in Judaism. We will find in the teaching of baptism, as developed in the Epistles, that the baptism unto "the name of the Father," is expressive of the place the believer has as a child; "of the Son," is an acknowledgment of our place in the Son; and "of the Holy Ghost," of the work of the Spirit in new birth. And so those who are baptised are to be taught. They are recognised as being partakers of the new life. When Nicodemus came to the Lord, owning Him as a teacher, the answer was, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." There is no teaching the old nature. A man must be born again in order to "see." So the fact of "teaching" following the "baptising" shows plainly that the one thus baptised is regarded as being capable of being taught—that is, one "born again."

Before we pass on to the direct teaching on baptism, as developed in the Epistles, I desire to bring out a few general thoughts connected with the commission, and its practical application to us, who, through grace, have been reconciled by His death.

In Matthew xxviii. we have the commission in its general bearing and scope. There is no doubt that the full carrying out of this commission will take place in the millennium, but its principles are true in Christianity. It is not limited to the Church period, for water baptism has absolutely nothing to do with Church position. Baptism of water is the figure and acknowledgment of our individual salvation. But when we believe in Christ we receive the Spirit, not only as the seal of our sonship (Gal. iv. 6), but also as putting us into

the "One Body" (1 Cor. xii.). This is a very important distinction.

By the baptism of water, we are acknowledged as dead and risen with Christ. By the baptism of the Holy Spirit, we, who are thus risen, are united to the living Christ in heaven, and to one another down here.

In the commission, let us note (1): the Lord says, "All authority has been given unto Me in heaven and on earth." What need we have of realising this. He, the risen Christ, has the authority not only in heaven, but *on earth*, and the more implicitly we lean on Him and count upon His authority, the greater the blessing we shall see. This gives the moral power to follow the next injunction—"Go ye, therefore." We are not told to bid the people come to us, but we are to go to them. This is an essential part of all successful Gospel work. "And make disciples of all nations." The Gospel is to go out, not to a privileged few, but to "all nations." A Catholic spirit is what we need. "Baptising them." The responsibility of baptism is here put on the preacher. He must see that the disciples are baptised. But this surely implies subjection on the part of those who have been made disciples. Baptism, therefore, is an act of obedience, both on the part of the evangelist, and those who have been saved through his preaching. The primary responsibility rests on the evangelist, but the responsibility is shifted to the disciple when the truth is laid before him.

But the work of the evangelist does not stop at "baptism." "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." This bespeaks, on the part of the evangelist, a diligent study of the Word, and a bold declaration of obedience to that Word at all costs. Many servants of Christ to-day are leaving out almost altogether "baptism," and the "observing of all things." May their eyes be opened to see the slight thus placed on the blessed Lord, and the real damage to the souls of those who may be saved through their ministry. The Lord keep us faithful to Himself, for only thus shall we realise the full blessedness of the promise—"Lo, I am with you *all the days*, even unto the consummation of the age."

The commission in Mark is explanatory of the commission in Matthew. Doubtless its

completed fulfilment will be in the tribulation. It is morally true in this dispensation, and we learn how disciples are made.

In Luke we have the commission as it was carried out in "the Acts." It is again explanatory of what is declared in the preaching of the Gospel; "and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke xxiv. 47).

In John xx. 23, we have the power by which the Gospel was to be preached, and the result. For in thus preaching in the power of the Holy Spirit, those who deliberately refused the preaching refused it to their eternal peril—their sins were retained; while upon those who, in their heart, received the message of forgiveness, the Lord sets His seal of approval—their sins "are forgiven." And it is this preaching in the power of the Holy Spirit, which is the great lack to-day. And yet it is for us, if we but humble ourselves and seek it earnestly. O for a mighty Word of God in all our souls! J. J. S

### GEORGE BREALEY.\*

THE late Mr. Denham Smith once suggested to Mr. R. C. Chapman that he should write his autobiography. "It is all written, dear brother," was Mr. Chapman's characteristic reply, "and will be published in the morning." Our biographies are all written by an unerring hand, and will be published in the Resurrection morn. Mr. Brealey's biography, written by his son, is well calculated to instruct, encourage, and cheer Christian workers. George Brealey was a capital tract writer, and the "Blackdown Tracts" have been scattered far and near, and God has used them in the conversion of many souls. He was best and most widely known in the south and west of England as a willing-hearted, warm-hearted, and whole-hearted evangelist, whom God had greatly owned in soul winning. He was born of poor but respectable parents at North Tawton, Devonshire, on September 4th, 1823. The family had many hardships, and, strange to say, though his parents were decided Christians, he was apprenticed, at the age of fifteen, to an infidel uncle who, in addition to being a country shoemaker, kept a public-house.

Here he learned to drink, swear, and fight, but becoming seriously ill, he was obliged to return home.

At three o'clock on Whitsunday, 1841, his mother found him in a public-house playing cards with two other young men. A short time previously they had taunted him with being a "Methodist." He set to, and thrashed both of them, and then took them to the public-house to prove that he was no "Methodist." His poor mother finding him in such a place at such a time, fell on her knees and pleaded with God for her erring boy. He was completely overpowered by his mother's prayers and entreaties, and, turning to his companions, said, "Good-bye, mates, I shall never enter this place again, as I have done." "What," they replied, "*you* going to turn 'Methody.' He's afraid of his mother." This taunt annoyed him, but he was enabled to control his feelings, and quietly replied, "I am not afraid of my mother. You know I love her too well; but I am afraid of God and of my sins. Will either of you go to hell for me?" "No," they replied, "we don't want to go for ourselves much less for you." "Then," said he, "don't laugh at me for turning round and trying to escape." He left with his mother, and soon after obtained peace with God. At the age of twenty-one he married and commenced business on his own account in the city of Exeter. For several years he made but little, if any, progress in the divine life. His biographer remarks that "he sank to the level of an ordinary Christian," a most extraordinary, but alas! a too correct description of the spiritual condition of numbers in these days. Many who were once bright, happy, hearty workers for Christ have "settled down," and are absorbed in their own concerns and interests. Satan has rocked them asleep in his downy cradle by his subtle lullabies; and under the guise of "prudent management of worldly affairs," or "dutiful attention to family interests," the Lord's work is neglected.

During this period he was regular in his attendance on the "first day of the week" at the Lord's table, went to other meetings and occasionally engaged in Christian work. The Lord aroused him from his spiritual slumber partly through a conversation he had with a devoted Christian in a railway carriage, and

\* "Always Abounding"—Recollections of the Life and Labours of the late George Brealey. Publishing Office. Price 2/6.

partly through the suicide of "Old Evans," a godless man known to Brealey, who lived near him, but to whom he had never spoken on eternal matters. As he cut down the lifeless body, "the terrible thought of his accountability to God and his responsibility to his fellow-men pressed so crushingly upon him, that there and then he resolved to give himself afresh to God and His service with a determination never relinquished or relaxed."

From that day forward there was a mighty change in his life, which manifested itself to all, for he became what D. L. Moody calls an "O and O" ("out and out") Christian. He recognised that he was no longer his own in any sense, and was willing to be anything or do anything for Christ. Referring to this "second conversion," or restoration to God, he wrote as follows: "His love had killed my earthly desires, and I was ready to be His slave because he had made me His free man." Night and day he prayed that he might be used of the Lord in His honourable and blessed service. The trammels of shame and worldly policy having been broken, he launched out into the deep, and let down his net for a draught of souls. And God greatly blessed him. He allowed himself only five hours for sleep; and in this way, whilst attending to his earthly calling, he succeeded in devoting several hours daily to visiting from house to house, and speaking personally to the people about their spiritual condition.

Through valuable help afforded him by various Christians, he was enabled to distribute tens of thousands of Gospel tracts at fairs and races. Tract distribution on such occasions was not then so common, and he experienced much opposition. Undaunted, he persevered in carrying the Gospel into the headquarters of the enemy. With banner, and striking texts inscribed on it, he moved from place to place, warning the unsaved to flee from wrath to come, and pointing them to Christ the sinner's refuge. "Instant in season, out of season," he preached in the streets and lanes of Exeter. He also visited the low public-houses, speaking tenderly yet faithfully to the poor slaves of drink, and distributing Gospel papers and booklets. Eventually he became exercised about devoting his entire time to Gospel work. After much prayer he decided to go to

Demerara to preach to the negroes. Berths were taken in a sailing vessel. But the Lord had work for him nearer home. A "Macedonian" cry came from the Blackdown Hills in East Devon. The "Hills" have an area of 400 square miles, and here and there are farms, hamlets, and villages scattered far apart. The moral and spiritual condition of the people at that time was wretched in the extreme. At first he had a salary which was given by various Christian friends. But as God began to work he became troubled about his position. Numbers professed to accept of Christ as their Saviour. As the young believers searched the Scriptures, they saw that in apostolic times, when men and women believed on Christ, they were baptised, and gathered together on the first day of the week (not the first Sunday of the month or quarter) to break bread. They desired to obey the Lord and act out what they had learned. Some who contributed toward the evangelist's support became alarmed, and threatened to withdraw their help if he baptised the converts. What was he to do? "If I teach them absolute submission to the authority of the Scripture, must I *hinder* them in their desire to obey the Word of the Lord? Am I not responsible to help them to obedience?" Such were the questions that George Brealey had to face, and he decided to obey God rather than man, and carry out His instructions: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded." Thus he gave up his salary and trusted the Lord alone to supply all his needs, and he never regretted taking this step.

The cottage in which the meetings were held became too small. It was subsequently enlarged, and in the course of two years 140 were baptised and received into fellowship. The work increased, and other parts of the "Blackdowns" were visited with similar results. Schools and Gospel halls were built, and men and women, as well as boys and girls, have not only been taught to read and write, but many have been saved and led on in the ways of Christ, some of whom are labouring for the Lord in China, India, Africa, and America, while others are witnessing for Christ in various parts of Britain. When Brealey began work in the Blackdown Hills, he asked God for a "body of iron and a soul of fire,"

and for nearly twenty-five years he had his desire granted. In summer he preached in the open air and in tents, and in winter in halls, school-houses, cottages, and meeting-places of all kinds. He had literally a passion for souls. In later years he evangelised through the large towns of England wherever a door was opened of the Lord. Oftentimes he was heard saying, "My parish is the world. Anywhere for Jesus I would go, and anywhere I would preach, provided I would be allowed to take the Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth."

He loved to dwell on the freeness and fullness of God's provision for sinners. Once he was rebuked by a hyper-Calvinist, who said, "You are much too free with the Gospel. You preach the Gospel to every one, and you forget that God will only save His own that are given to Christ, and you should leave the work for God to do, for you *may offer salvation to those whom God will not save.*" "Well," said Brealey, "if you will come with me and give me a *sign* by which I may know who *are* His own that He purposes to save, I will preach salvation only to them." "Of course I could not do that," said he. "Then until you or anyone else can, I will abide by the Master's orders to go out into the highways and hedges, and as *many as I find* bid to the marriage, and continue to preach the Gospel to every creature."

Early in March, 1888, he was taken home to be with the Lord. In his last address he spoke as follows of the blood of Christ: "We shall never get out of the sight of the Cross, and can never do without the blood; and, may I say, never was the cross of Christ or the blood of the Lamb more precious to my soul than now—make much of the cross, make much of the blood." "He being dead yet speaketh," and the work on the Blackdown Hills is still carried on by Mr. Walter Brealey, the evangelist's biographer. Many striking cases of conversion are recorded, which will, we trust, be used of the Lord in leading weary and heavy-laden souls to know Him who plucked such trophies of grace as brands from the eternal burning.

A. M.

THE Holy Ghost is the Witness of all that we have, and the Producer of all we should be.

LANDMARKS OF THE FUTURE.—I.

## GOD'S OWN CHURCH.

FIRST PAPER.

OUR subject to-day is the Church of God. Let us take as a key-text, 1 Cor. x. 32, "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God." You notice the three-fold division God Himself has made, classifying the people of the world as Jews, Gentiles, and the Church of God. We may be Jews, we may be Gentiles, we may be of the Church of God. If we belong to the Church of God, we can't be in God's sight Jews or Gentiles, for it is written that every such distinction is, as it were, set aside; "For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 27, 28). See also Col. iii. 10, 11. Thus the Church of God is composed of people who have been called of God out of both Jews and Gentiles, and have by the Holy Spirit been baptised into Christ, and have put on Christ.

Now let us take all the scriptures that bring out clearly the terms that God uses concerning His Church, that we may see it is always applied to a company of such people as I have just stated. Acts xx. 28, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed *the Church of God*, which He hath purchased with His own blood." Here we get the designation of that company as the Church of God. Again in Matt. xvi. 18, the Lord speaks of it as *His Church*. We have another blessed designation in Heb. xii. 23, "The Church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven." Isn't it good to belong to such a company as this, to be enrolled in God's own Church-book as belonging unto the Church of the living God, that He has given to Christ, His Son? One more scripture, Heb. iii. 5, 6, and this will conclude this portion as to the designation of the Church of God: "Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a Son over His own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the



end." Thus God has given us in His Word, indited by the Holy Spirit, the terms that He uses with regard to the company He has chosen out of this world to be both His portion and the portion of His beloved Son.

Now, to join this Church, to belong to it, is a matter of great importance, but, as we shall see distinctly, it is out of the power of any human being to join it of his own accord, any more than a stone could put itself into the building in which we are.\* Every stone was placed in it by the builder, and every member of the Church must be placed in it by the power of God. And thus we shall find the house God has builded is called both a building and a body, and the members of the constituent parts of a building and of the body are illustrative of the creative power and wisdom of the re-Creator. God ever desired a people, and when the fulness of time came God called His people forth. As we all know, the people of Israel could not and did not respond to the heart of God; speaking shortly, they were an utter failure, and God replaced an earthly people by a heavenly people, who not only were not a failure, but a very delight to the heart of God.

Before turning to the scriptures where the Church is called a *building*, first let me show you that both the Head of the body, the Church, and the One to whom God has given the body and the building, is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. I want to exalt *Him* as Head of the Church, the centre of all authority; I want *Him* put before our hearts, to-day, as Lord of each heart, and as the sole referee as to all questions in reference to the Church. Shall I take counsel of any human creature apart from my Lord? If *He* lived not, then I might refer to the best human counsel I could; but if God sets His own beloved Son to be the Head of the Church, let us give due allegiance to Him, let *Him* have our heart's loyalty, and let us remember that the blessed Spirit is given that in all simplicity we may understand what He loveth. We shall never be without divine wisdom, if the Spirit of God leads us to take counsel with the Head of the Church. You see the

various divisions of Christendom which Satan makes to be virtually a shame in the world, each boasting of itself that it has better parts than another; but, nevertheless, there existeth the true Church and the true Head of the Church, and one people responsive to the Head of the Church, known of Him, beloved of Him, and honoured by Him. So let us not despair and think, because of the varying and conflicting elements of Christendom, that God has failed in having a people. God has *not* failed; He knows where there are bands of faithful ones to fight, in every generation; they may be called by different names, but they are one company of the living God.

Now let us see the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ. Eph. i. 15, 23, "And gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him filleth all in all." Chap. iv. 15, 16, "The Head, even Christ." Chap. v. 23, "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church: and He is the Saviour of the body." How righteously indignant a wife would be if urged to take counsel from any but her husband about the management of the household! And how proper and beautiful for the Church of Christ to acknowledge none but the One whom God has made to be the Head of the Church. (See also Col. i. 18; ii. 18, 19.) Sever the head from the body, and the body is useless. Sever Christ from the Church, and the Church is useless. Sever the individual from communion with Christ and he is fruitless, but attached to Christ he is fruitful. As the head is to the body, so is Christ to the Church. As the head is to the members, guiding, directing, controlling, so is He unto His own. My friends, there is nothing more precious than taking counsel with the Head for all matters pertaining unto both spiritual and temporal things.

Now, let us look at those scriptures which speak of the Church as being a *body*, a *building*. 1 Peter ii. 4, 5: "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house," &c. Here, under the guise of a building, the apostle speaks concerning the redeemed as "living stones" joined together. Who joined them? The Master Builder. "There are diversities

\* A different aspect of the truth is taught in Acts ix. 26, viz., an assaying to join himself unto the disciples, or to the assembly locally.—Ed.

of operations, but it is the same God who worketh all in all." Who set the stones of the building in which we are? The builder. Did one bring itself here? "No," you say, "of course not." Did one of us join ourselves to the Church of God? "No," you say, "I couldn't." It was out of our power. If He had not chosen to take us and be at the pains of quarrying us, and having selected us, to place us in His house, who of us could have taken ourselves out of the quarry of nature, and put ourselves into the house of God? *God* must choose and place us. But here is the secret, "To whom coming," &c. God takes those who come, and builds them up to be a living temple, resplendent with the glory of Christ. The temple of Solomon was nothing compared with the company of the redeemed. The tabernacle's glory was poor in comparison with the excelling glory of the Church of God. Fill this building with redeemed souls whom God has been at the pains of saving; and, I say, is there not here a glory greater than the glistening glory of the temple of Solomon? What is that compared with the men and women God has been at the pains of saving and renewing in His image? That is the temple I love to be in. Not one atom do I care for the fictitious glory of earthly things; give me a company of those whom God by grace has saved, and by His Spirit indwells, *there* is my glory and my redeemed soul's delight, because of partaking of what God Himself loveth. 1 Cor. iii. 16. Heb. iii. 5, 6. A. O. M.

#### THE PROSPECT OF GLORY.

WHICH is happiest, to be like water in a still place, never moved, or to be poured from vessel to vessel, finding it all Christ, and Christ, and Christ? The Lord does not let the prospect of glory into the soul when any are settled on their lees, but when they are poured from vessel to vessel. He chooses the time of trial as a time to give the sweetest taste of His love. When in a time of difficulty, faith may break down, but Christ will not. He sees when the storm comes, and makes that the time to come to us, walking on the waters, and at His word the storm subsides in a moment.

G. V. W.

It is one thing to be an advocate of Christianity, and another to be a disciple of Christ.

#### HEBREWS AND JAMES.

THE Epistle to the Hebrews and those of James and Peter, which are grouped together in our Bibles, are all written to the Jews.

That to the Hebrews is written to Jews (or Hebrews) who had come out from the nation on account of their faith in Christ Jesus, and the object of the epistle is to teach them their *heavenly calling*; and this is done, contrasting it with the *earthly calling* of Israel as a nation.

The first ten chapters are occupied in leading these converted Jews within the veil from which they were excluded as belonging to the nation which was under law.

The last three chapters are occupied with showing that those who have been led inside the veil are called to go outside the camp.

In the last chapter (v. 20) we read that the great Shepherd of the sheep has ascended on high, and as the sheep have to go outside the camp, James as an under-shepherd (so to speak) meets them at the door when they come out, and teaches them how to go through the world being "as wise as serpents and as harmless as doves."

He warns them of the discrepancies they will meet with in the world, and even amongst professing Christians, and tells them they will have to form judgments for themselves as to these things; distinguishing the *sources from which* the things come, by the *fruits which they bear*.

He begins by telling them that if they lack wisdom for such discernment, they may ask of God, and it shall be given them without upbraiding. But it must be the wisdom which "*cometh down from above*," as contrasted with that which is *from beneath*, which is *earthly, sensual, and devilish*. That from above being *pure, peaceable, &c.*, without *partiality* and without *hypocrisy, &c.*

As the Epistle to the Hebrews is addressed to Jews *who had come out from the nation*, James on the other hand is addressed to a believing remnant, *not yet separated from the nation*: and so James, who was still at Jerusalem with the eleven other apostles (see Acts xiii.) calls them "Brethren," referring to his *national* relationship to them, and exhorts them to *receive the engrafted word which is able to save their souls*.

These scattered twelve tribes are addressed, therefore, not as we would address "Brethren in Christ," but as his brethren after the flesh as belonging to the nation.

It is manifest that we could not exhort a real brother in Christ to receive the engrafted word that his soul might be saved. The word "engrafted" is one of extreme interest, as when presenting the New Testament to the Jews the apostle could assure them that it was not an effort on his part to take away from them the Old Testament Scriptures, and to substitute the New Testament for them, but that this Word which taught them salvation was a graft on their own Scriptures.

The apostle exhorts them (chap. i. 13 to 17) to distinguish—*First*, between the lusts *from within*, by which they were tempted, and every good and perfect gift which cometh down from above.

*Secondly*.—Between doers of the Word and not hearers only (v. 22).

*Thirdly*.—Between what *seems* to be religion (but which discloses its real character by an unbridled tongue) and pure religion, which seeks to comfort those whom sin had wounded in their tenderest relationships.

*Fourthly*.—Between the poor, as heirs of the kingdom (ch. ii. 5), and the rich man who exalts himself.

*Fifthly*.—Between a dead and a living faith; giving examples in ch. ii. 14 to end.

*Sixthly*.—Between the actions of the old nature and the new, by the tongue, the readiest index as to which is in action, and they are to discern the source from which the language used comes, as one would that of a fountain from which either sweet or bitter water flowed.

In ch. iv. he speaks of wars and fightings among them which do not mean the wrestlings of Christians with wicked spirits in heavenly places (Eph. vi. 12), but lust against lust, and their prayers become ineffectual because the requests made are from impure or selfish motives; and in the end of the chapter he warns them from acting in independence of God, and forgetfulness of the coming of the Lord.

In chapter v. he draws a contrast between those who live in pleasure, and those who suffer for Christ here and who wait for His coming, reminding them that one event ends the course of each.

Peter, another shepherd to whom the Lord had committed the feeding and shepherding of the sheep (John xxi.) leads the heirs of glory into their inheritance, telling them that they *are* what Israel failed to be (Exodus xix. 6), viz., "a royal priesthood."

He tells them that there was a "needs be" for all their trials and that they must expect to suffer "for conscience' sake" (ch. ii. 19), "for righteousness' sake" (ch. iii. 14), and "for Christ's sake" (ch. iii. 14): and then he, being soon about to depart to be with Christ, commits these "scattered pilgrims and strangers" to the care of the elders who are to succeed him as shepherds of the flock, warning them not to be "lords over God's heritage," but "ensamples to the flock," assuring them that when the chief Shepherd (the great Shepherd of Heb. xiii. 20) shall appear they would receive the crown of glory which fadeth not away. F. C. B.

## "THE GREAT COMMISSION."

Jottings from Addresses at Glasgow Half-Yearly Meetings in Waterloo Rooms. About 1800 Christians from the city and district came together.

**Mr. Henry Payne, of Barcelona.**—The hearts of the children of God are being stirred up in these last days in connection with the commission the Lord gave to His disciples before His ascension to the right hand of the throne on high: *first*, through the Scriptures searching our hearts to see how far we are carrying out that commission; *secondly*, God by His providence is opening up all lands for the preaching of the Gospel. These words in this commission give us the proper business of all the disciples of our Lord in this world. If we do not understand our business, of course, our time is lost. The great enemy of God and His people will seek to destroy the effect of these words by directing our attention to something else, or by giving to them a false interpretation or application. In this way Satan paralyzes all efforts to carry out our Lord's will in this matter. The first thing is not the commission,

BUT POWER IN OUR HEARTS.

Therefore, before the Lord gives His commission He tells His disciples that all power in heaven and on earth is given unto Him. Then He says "Go ye therefore and teach all nations."

The marginal reading is the correct one—"Make disciples of all nations." We don't make disciples by baptising them. That follows in its proper order. Mark xvi. 15, 16, gives the means by which disciples are made, viz.: by the preaching of the Gospel and its reception of faith. The next thing was to teach those who had become disciples of Jesus to observe whatsoever things He had commanded them. If we were to speak of commandments, the chief one would be to love one another as He has loved us. The sad thing with us is that we know so much and observe so little. Our minds are occupied more with the things of God than with God Himself. Let us find out what *we* ought to observe that we have not observed. Then let us seek to know how we can help other disciples unto a knowledge of what the Lord has taught us.

## HOW LONG

is this work to last? It is hard work, very hard work; and when we begin we are like Isaiah, who having heard the voice of the Lord crying "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Me?" said "Here am I; send me," so we start off at once, it is so precious a thing to serve the Lord. But when we begin to understand the greatness of the work and how difficult it is, we are ready as Isaiah to ask the question, "How long?" The Lord said, "Lo, I am with you always (or all the days), even to the end of the age." Not only on the Lord's day; on all the days of the week, and all the days of the year, are we to go on serving the Lord. Not in order that we may make disciples, but that we ann they may observe His commandments. God would have our minds occupied with the need of the vast world, and to remember that until we have reached the ends of the earth, and not even then are we to stop, because I am still to ask the question "Is there one in this world that is not a disciple?" I must not be satisfied when I have preached the Gospel to him; I must seek to win his heart, I must pray for him until he has been brought to know the Lord. How great a work is embraced in these words, "Make disciples of all nations!" I would not have them changed for the world, they are divinely appointed. The Lord would so lay hold of us by these words that we might get a grasp of them and thus be prepared to get a grasp of the people.

**Mr. John R. Caldwell.**—John xvii. 2 : "As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him." Because all power is given unto the Lord Jesus, therefore all that the Father has given unto Him shall come unto Him, and "him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out" (John vi. 37). Therefore, there is no possibility of divine testimony failing of its results.

In Acts xviii. 9-11, we find the Lord's servant in great danger; evidently fear was coming into his heart. Perhaps he was saying, like Isaiah, "How long, Lord?" Perhaps he was thinking that his work there was done. The Lord came to him in a vision and said, "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace; for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee; for I have much people in this city." Thus the Lord assures him that he may count upon His

## PROTECTION FROM ALL THE POWER OF MEN

and Satan, for all power in heaven and on earth was in His hands.

Then 2 Cor. xii. shows us not only that the work cannot fail of its results; not only that there is all protection for the Lord's servants whatever their danger, but in addition to that there is an infinitude of supply for all his need. The Lord says to Paul in 2 Cor. xii., in connection with the trial that He permitted to come upon him, "My grace is sufficient for thee." We were hearing, in a recent missionary meeting held in Glasgow, of the present great need of the Lord's servants and the Lord's work in different parts of the world. One remark in the prayer of a brother who followed was impressed on my mind. It was this: he said, "Lord, it is only the channel that is changed, the source is the same." The inexhaustible source remains the same; for "all fulness" is in Him into whose hands God has committed "all power in heaven and on earth." In whatever department of the Lord's work we may be called to serve Him, whether it be publicly preaching the Gospel, teaching in the Sunday-school, distributing tracts, visiting the sick, or going forth to the ends of the earth with the Gospel, if the Lord has called us and given us that work to do, then we can claim from His

## INFINITE RESOURCES

a supply for every need. In His providence

God has connected the power to speak with the power to hear. In Isaiah l. 4, the Lord Jesus says, "The Lord God has given unto Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: He wakeneth Mine ear morning by morning, He wakeneth Mine ear to hear as the learned." The Lord Jesus could say, "As I hear I speak." None of us can go as the Lord's servant to preach the Gospel or to speak to the children of God until we have heard first. It is in the hearing of the voice of God that we get the power to speak. May the Lord open our lips by opening our ears, that our ears may hear His voice and our lips show forth His praise.

**Mr. Wm. Lear** read Isaiah liii. 11: "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." How great our privilege, as the messengers of our God, to be the channels of the living bread and the living water to the perishing. There is nothing to be compared to such

#### HONOURABLE AND BLESSED SERVICE.

What can be compared to the enjoyment of the love of God, and being the channels of that love to others? How blessed, when in the enjoyment of the love of God, to testify to the precious atoning blood of the Lord Jesus! Whatever the work our God has given us to do, as we are in His hands and subject to Him, we are helping to the fulfilment of that scripture, "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied."

**Mr. Thos. Cochrane.**—How did Christ get His powers? All the power of a righteous God was against the sinner. The love of God could not flow out to you and me. But Jesus met the sword of judgment; He took the sinner's place and met the sinner's penalty. He died and rose again, and God has put all power into His hands, and now that power is exercised on behalf of the sinner. Therefore, go and tell the glad tidings to every creature. Make disciples; make willing learners. Those whose love to their Saviour will make them sit at His feet and learn of Him. How can a redeemed sinner sit at the feet of Jesus if he does not grow in the knowledge of God his Saviour? If his heart is filled with the love of Christ he will sit down at His feet and will say, "What

will Thou have me to do?" If we would lead God's people to sit at the feet of Jesus, His love must be poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit; and then, out of full hearts we will tell others of that love. The days may be very dark, and in the midst of darkness we are apt to

#### LOSE HEART AND GET DISCOURAGED;

but let us look off to Calvary's cross, where we see a blessed example of trust in God in the deepest darkness. At the end of every dispensation there is always a bright gleam of faith seen in the midst of the darkness. May we see a Father's loving hand in all our trials. Don't think it strange; it is a proof of His love. If He did not love us He would not ask us to suffer for Him.

**Mr. Geo. Adam** read Luke ii. 19 and John xvii. 18, and said:—I read the first scripture to bring before us the example of our Lord, who was sent by the Father and came as His Servant. He said, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" And in praying for His disciples, whom He was about to leave behind Him, He says, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them that should believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one," &c. Not only one in blessing but one in responsibility according to our measure. We have been all taken out of this world by the grace of our Lord Jesus, and sent back into it to testify for Him. When He was the Father's Servant here, He attended to His Father's business. If we are faithful servants we will also attend to the business He has given us to do for Him here. Paul did not, as some suppose, make tents, and preach the Gospel during his leisure time. His

#### MAIN BUSINESS

was to preach the Gospel. The Lord says, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things (food and raiment) shall be added to you." As Mr. Spurgeon remarked in one of his sermons, "The things of this life will be thrown into the bargain if we always put God's things first." The Lord having shown His pierced hands and side on that ground, He said, "Peace be unto you." Then He said, "As My Father hath sent Me, even so I send you" (John xx.). From the moment we saw the Lord on the cross for us, we have been sent on His service.

(Concluded in next Number.)

## "THE HIND OF THE MORNING."

(Psalm xxii.—Marginal title).

Oh, "Hind of the morning," by terrors surrounded !  
 What mean those great crimson drops staining Thy brow?  
 Not yet by the dogs hath Thy body been wounded,  
 Then why like a bleeding one, bendest thou now ?

Oh, "Hind of the morning !" alone in Thine anguish,  
 Around Thee the curtains of midnight are drawn ;  
 Thy spirit, 'mid sorrows unmeasured, doth languish,  
 Awaiting the fatal approach of the dawn.

Oh, "Hind of the morning !" betrayed and forsaken,  
 "Encompassed by strong bulls of Bashan" enraged ;  
 A captive at will in their snare Thou art taken,  
 Against Thee, lo, Satan and men are engaged !

Oh, "Hind of the morning !" to dogs Thou art handed—  
 Loud soundeth their yell on Thy sensitive ear ;  
 The "bulls" and the "dogs" \* to destroy Thee are banded,  
 Nor lover, nor friend, or companion stand near.

Oh, "Hind of the morning !" the horror grows deeper,  
 While noontide assumeth the blackness of night ;  
 Jehovah, Thy God, Thy defender and keeper,  
 Now hideth *His* face like the sun from Thy sight !

Oh, "Hind of the morning !" why *thus* art Thou stricken?  
 Thou fairest by far of the children of men ;  
 Why round thee do woes without parallel thicken,  
 Whilst thunders re-echo the mighty amen ?

Oh, "Hind of the morning !" for *sinners* Thou'rt bearing  
 The wrath of a righteous and sin-hating God ;  
 Our guilt like a garment of death Thou art wearing,  
 And groaning beneath its unutt'able load !

Oh, "Hind of the morning !" entombed amid sweetness,  
 When finished the work which thy love undertook,  
 Say, wilt thou arise in accepted completeness,  
 Great source of salvation to all who will look ?

The "Hind of the morning"—tell out the glad story—  
 Hath burst every fetter of death and the grave ;  
 He rose ere the dawn gilded earth with its glory—  
 Came forth in His majesty, "Mighty to save !"

Oh, "Hind of the morning !" we see Thee ascending,  
 Resuming the glory for us left behind ;  
 Bright seraphs and cherubim on Thee attending  
 Thy chariot the clouds, and Thy charger the wind.

Oh, "Hind of the morning !" we wait Thy appearing,  
 And long for the dawn which Thy presence shall bring ;  
 Fair morning of gladness our drooping hearts cheering,  
 When Thou in the midst of Thy people wilt sing.

Come, "Hind of the morning !" bid sadness and sorrow  
 Depart ; be Thou fleet o'er the mountains of light :  
 A sunrise of splendour will be the glad morrow,  
 When Thou in Thy beauty shalt burst on our sight.

\* Jew and Gentile.

A. W. P. S.

## Correspondence.

### THE UNRECOGNISED ASSEMBLY.

To the Editor of *The Witness*.

DEAR BROTHER,—Some correspondence I have had on this question has induced me to send you the following thoughts, lest in our desire to guard saints against one snare we should seem to give license for going into

another. It is not possible in a short reply to take up such a question in all its bearings. In the first place, we need to be sound on the foundation truth that the Lord Jesus as "Son of Man" alone has the right either to *recognise* or to *disown* any company of saints as an "assembly of God." He has given to His assemblies the authority to deal with the *individual* transgressor, but He has reserved to Himself the power to deal with an assembly *collectively*. All we can do is to carefully mark the operation of His hand, and also mark if there is that spirit of *subjection* which ought to characterise all those who profess to be gathered under the authority of the Lord Jesus.

There are three conditions of assemblies which it is well to distinguish from each other. 1st. There are those who are in a *transition* state, who are honestly carrying out all the truth they know, and whose minds are open to receive more. Surely any servant of the Lord is at liberty to help such. 2nd. There are those assemblies against which no evil doctrine or immoral practice can be charged, amongst whom the whole truth of God is allowed, and also liberty of ministry, but who, in the judgment of some brethren, are not up to the *proper standard* in matters of reception and discipline. Well, instead of such being cast off and avoided, I believe the scriptural course would be to go and render them *special help*. I am sure the Apostle Paul would have done so. 3rd. But there are other meetings of quite a different character from these ; companies of professing Christians here and there over the land, who have been gathered through the energy of the flesh. Some brother or brethren who could not get their own wills carried out where they were have *gone out* and set up meetings of their own ; and whilst such meetings may be a good imitation of the divine reality of an assembly, and may thus mislead the unwary, yet believers gathered by the Spirit of God through the truth, and those gathered by the energy of man's will, are in a fundamentally different position. The only help which could be given to such would be to "meekly instruct" them, with a view to their deliverance from a position that cannot be glorifying to God. G. A.

### SUBJECTS AND RULERS.

ONE correspondent takes exception to the statement in our last paper, "It is no vain boast which Satan made when he offered the Lord all the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them, saying 'That is delivered unto me and to whomsoever I will I give it,' for he actually does give it to the man of his choice" (Rev. xiii. 4-11), and quotes as opposed to this teaching Dan. iv. 17, v. 21 ; Job xli. 11 ; Ps. xxiv. 1.

Undoubtedly God overrules in all things, and whilst allowing to Satan certain powers in the world puts a limit to those powers which he cannot overstep. It was by permission that Satan afflicted Job (Job i. 12 ; ii. 16), but he had not power to touch his life. By permission he tempted and so far overcame Peter (Luke xxii. 31). By permission he afflicted Paul (2 Cor. xii. 7) and hindered him (1 Thess. ii. 18). But in this present age Satan is allowed to go further than in any previous age in carrying out his will as "prince" and "god" of this world. Hence the extraordinary prophecy of Rev. xiii. 2 that the dragon (Satan) gave to the beast "his power and his throne and great authority." That

this power was only allowed him for a fixed period and was overruled by God is evident from Rev. xx. 1-3. Rev. xvii. 17 proves that God did not for a moment surrender His overruling control even of Satan and his subjects.

This correspondent also speaks of Dan. ii. 44 and Ps. ii. 6, 7 as being fulfilled. But such a view must result from failing to distinguish between the Kingdom in its present aspect of mystery and the Kingdom manifested in glory when the Lord appears. Christ was King on the Cross and is King on the throne, but He has not yet taken possession of the Kingdom—see Rev. xii. 17, 18, and Rev. xix. 11-21.

We must reserve our remarks on the criticism of our esteemed correspondent, G. F. T., till our next.

J. R. C.

## Questions and Answers.

We desire to express our thanks to all who have sent answers. Replies to appear in the next number require to be sent in not later than 15th of present month, and so on; the 15th of the month being always the latest to which we can defer making up for press.

We again urge the importance of replies being *short*; it is essential, in this particular line of things, to be *concise*.

We shall greatly value remembrance in prayer that special wisdom and grace may be given for this service.

When more than one question is replied to, let the answer to each question be upon a separate piece of paper. THE EDITOR.

### Replies are invited to the following:—

Explain the earthen vessel and running water of Lev. xiv. 5—"And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water."

What are we to understand by 1 Cor. iii. 17—"If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are?" Does it refer to the destruction of the flesh?

Is there any difference between elders under the law and elders under grace, or Old Dispensation elders and New Dispensation elders?

Please explain the meaning of the word, "prophesy," in 1 Cor. xiv., especially verse 39; also in Acts ii., verses 17, 18.

How should we (believers) regard Christmas?

"The voice of a majority."—Does 2 Cor. ii. 17, rendered by Rotherham the "majority," not favour ruling by majorities; and are we not socially and morally ruled by the voice of the majority in municipal and parliamentary affairs, affecting all our church, home, business, and general interests?

How are we to discern the sin of covetousness? (1 Cor. v. 11).

If a believer kept his place of business open until Lord's-day morning, could he be charged with covetousness according to 1 Cor. v. 11?

What are we to understand by the "glory of the celestial" and the "glory of the terrestrial" in 1 Cor. xv. 40?

What will be the *object* of the war in heaven? (Rev. xii. 7). Will Satan oppose his being ejected? Is it not on his being cast out into the earth that he will raise up *the* antichrist. What heaven is it he will be ejected from?

Will some of our brethren please explain, through *The Witness*, 1 Samuel xxviii. 7-20?

## THE PERSISTENT LIAR.

**QUESTION 430.**—A colonial brother would value help as to how to act towards one in an assembly who has been "proven" to be a "persistent" liar; some saying there is no scripture for dealing with an acknowledged liar.

**Ans. A.**—The practice of lying is causing untold sorrow of heart to many, and no form of it is so prevalent as that of *exaggeration*. Hence, in giving reports of conferences, and the numbers attending them, let us see that we don't overstate them; and in communicating special Gospel efforts, let us *leave the counting to the Lord* (Ps. lxxxvii. 6).

Grievous as is the sin of lying, the strictest discipline that *the Book* imposes is that of *sharp rebuke*. "The Cretians are always liars" (Tit. i. 12), and evidently had not fully abandoned the habit, as there still existed among them "many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers" (v. 10); "this witness is true, therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith" (v. 13).

There is no command in the scripture to an assembly to *put away a liar* (1 Cor. v. 11), but there is an urgent exhortation to *every individual believer to put away lying*, and speak every man truth to his neighbour (Eph. iv. 25), and the ground of this appeal is "that we are members one of the other." Let us see that we "lie not one to another" (Col. iii. 9), remembering that "lying lips are abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly are His delight." T. B.

**Ans. B.**—The question about one "who has been proven to be a persistent liar," is a strange and serious one. If words have any meaning, what characterises the one referred to is "lying"; he is a "liar," and "all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Rev. xxi. 8). Habitual lying, "*persistent*" lying, is wickedness, and the habitual or "*persistent*" liar is a "wicked person." In 1 Cor. v. 8 we read, "Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." We are not to "keep the feast with the leaven of wickedness," but are to "put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (v. 13).

In the case of one who has been "*proven to be a persistent liar*," it is not altogether unreasonable to "stand in doubt of him," and wonder if he got into fellowship through lying. But the case is so strange and serious, that before "*putting away*" the person it would be advisable, if it is possible, to ascertain and make it certain that there is not some mental defect or infirmity. L. D. G.

**Ans. C.**—A Continental brother answers a Colonial brother thus: "Liar" is not among the sad list in 1 Cor. v., neither is "thief" nor "murderer"; yet the last named is included in a very similar one in Gal. v., and "liars" are joined, in Rev. xxi. 8, with most of the cases referred to in both passages. Is there not a Divine principle underlying the words, "and such like," of Gal. v. 21? and would not lying be one of the "such things" there mentioned? Lying is sometimes founded on "malice and wickedness" (1 Cor. v. 8). Acts v. probably refers to weak believers, and shows

how they were judged, that their spirits might be "saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." G. J. C.

**Editor's Note.**—That there is no definite command to "put away" for lying is true, and one reason for this may be that lying almost invariably is resorted to for the covering of some other deeper sin; such as, for example, the covetousness of Ananias and Sapphira. Sarah lied in Gen. xviii. 15, but it was through fear, like Peter's lie in denying that he knew the Lord. Such lies, though evil indeed, are differently dealt with in Scripture from those such as Ananias and Sapphira were guilty of.

The fact referred to by Paul (Titus i. 12), viz., that a certain Cretian writer had denounced the Cretians as "always liars," &c., does not necessarily imply that the Cretian Christians were liars, but that such being their besetting sin by nature, there would continue to be in their flesh a tendency upon small provocation to relapse into this sin. Wherefore the need of "sharp rebuke." But one proved to be a "persistent liar" could only be regarded as one who persisted in any other form of wickedness upon which the judgment of God is pronounced. We would, however, warn against, and strongly reprobate, the habit of characterising as "lies" conflicting statements that are merely differences of judgment, or the result of looking at circumstances from different points of view. We have known such cases to which the term "persistent lying" would be applied by some, whilst in the judgment of others it may have been only a determined adherence to their own opinion—a bad enough condition possibly, but not to be confounded with persistent lying.

**CHRIST AS "KING" OR "ELDER BROTHER."**

**QUESTION 431.**—Is it Scriptural for the redeemed of the Lord of this dispensation to speak of the Son of God as being "our King" or "Elder Brother"?

**Ans. A.**—The Lord Jesus Christ is not yet manifested as the King, though "decreed" so to be (Ps. ii.) in the day to come. He is not ashamed to call us "brethren," but it is surely scarcely reverent to speak of Him as "our Elder Brother"; neither, because we are part of the Church (the Bride), should we individually speak of Him as "our Bridegroom." The use of terms beyond Scripture leads to undue familiarity, and is reprehensible. A. O. M.

**Ans. B.**—There is not in the New Testament any warrant for saying that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is "our King" or "Elder Brother." The positive terms and titles in the New Testament are, "Son of Man," "Son of God," "Saviour," "Mediator," "Intercessor," "High Priest," "Advocate," "Lamb of God," "Word," "Word of God." The figurative terms and titles are very various, but do not include those in the question. "King of Israel," "King of the Jews" should have been mentioned before.—"Messias who is called Christ," "Shepherd," "Alpha and Omega," "Amen," "Lord of Glory," "Son of David," &c. The prophetic terms are also various—"Branch," "Servant," "Emmanuel," "Prophet," "Son of Righteousness," "Shiloh," "Redeemer," &c. There is not anything in the New Testament to warrant the use of terms that betray undue familiarity, and are very near being irreverent. L. D. G.

**Editor's Note.**—The habit of calling the Lord Jesus

"our King" arises from confounding two things which differ and are carefully distinguished in Scripture, viz., the Church and the Kingdom. He is "Head of the body the Church" and Lord of the individual—but is never said to be King of His own redeemed ones in this dispensation. We own Him as the rejected King of Israel and as the future "King of kings"—but our relation to Him as members of His body or as the bride espoused renders the title of King inappropriate for us.

The fact that it rhymes with the word "sing" and "bring" accounts for its frequent use in hymns.

That He should in such marvellous grace not be ashamed to call us brethren is no warrant for our calling Him "Brother," or "Elder Brother." "Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am."

#### THE TWO OPPRESSIVE KINGS.

**QUESTION 432.**—Please explain who the two kings mentioned in Isaiah vii. 16 refer to.

**Ans. A.**—Verse 16 should rather be read: "The land by whose two kings thou art (now) distressed shall be forsaken"—i.e., of its inhabitants. That is the land of Israel (as distinct from Judah) and Syria. Both of these kings mentioned in verses 1-9 perished (see 2 Kings xv. 29, 30, and xvi. 9), and their countries were laid desolate. A. O. M.

**Ans. B.**—The "two kings" are Rezin, the king of Syria, and Pekah, the son of Remaliah, king of Israel. The verse (16) is part of a paragraph which commences at verse 10—"Moreover the Lord spake again unto Ahaz"—and ends with verse 17. The difficulty in the paragraph is caused by local and contemporary matters being complicated with an event that was not fulfilled until seven centuries after the sign was predicted. There are more than three renderings of verse 16, but only three need be quoted, and the Revised rendering will assist the understanding and help anyone out of the difficulty:

The A.V. reads, "For, &c., the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings," implying that Ahaz abhorred the land, and that "both her kings" would forsake the land. The R.V. reads, "The land whose two kings thou abhorrest shall be forsaken." That is very different, and scarcely needs a comment. Another reading by a critical reviewer of Isaiah is similar to the R.V., "The land shall be forsaken whose two kings make thee afraid."

The "two kings," then, are "Rezin, the king of Syria, and Pekah, the son of Remaliah, king of Israel" (Isa. vii. 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 16). It must be observed that while Ahaz is the one in the land who is locally or personally concerned, it is "the house of David" that the matter concerns (verse 2), and the predicted "sign" is given to "the house of David" (verse 13). L. D. G.

**Ans. C.**—They are doubtless Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel, joint-oppressors of Judah (verses 1, 2). Bishop Lowth's rendering of verse 16 gives the sense better, "For before this child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land shall become desolate by whose two kings thou art distressed." Pekah was assassinated within three years of the accession of Ahaz, having first in the Lord's hands severely chastised Judah with its wicked monarch. Rezin fell before Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, hired by Ahaz to assist him. W. P.



## A FEW THOUGHTS ON REVIVAL.

PSALM LXXXV. 6.

**M**AY we look to God to give us back days of the power of His right hand, such as our fathers told us of as having been enjoyed in their days? We need not be doubtful as to the answer. The bold assurance, the joyful expectancy of faith, is, "*Wilt Thou NOT revive us again, that Thy people may rejoice in Thee?*" (Ps. lxxxv. 6). It is not, mark you, "Will He?" but with a clarion blast, loud and clear, it rings out: "Will He *not!*" How can faith look at Him in any other light? It has been schooled differently. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, *how shall He not* with Him also freely give us all things?" Such the bread upon which faith has found its delight to feed. One look at the Cross—and the question we asked has found its satisfactory reply. We thus know the tide having gone out will come gloriously back again.

The beginning of a divine movement is like the youth-time of life. There is a charming freshness and buoyancy, an energy and enthusiasm with it that makes it ride on the crest of the wave. "When Israel came out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language; the sea saw it, and fled: Jordan was driven back," "The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs." While the "very rock," was turned into "standing water," and the "flint" into "a fountain of water." The secret was "Judah was *His sanctuary*, and Israel *His dominion*" (Ps. cxiv.). Thus it was with us when newly born into the family of God. Thus it also is when God interposes on the behalf of His testimony on the earth and recovers ancient verities from disuse, restoring forgotten truths, illuminating dark pages of His Word, wiping the dust of neglect off the golden vessels of the sanctuary. Thus it was when it pleased God to work a generation ago, when He gave His saints a wider survey of the unsearchable riches that are treasured up in the covenant of grace.

But a reaction sets in. A new generation grows up. The men of might and power who through tears oft, and on bended knees, read the holy truths that guided their footsteps out of unscriptural associations, leave the field of battle one by one. Other lips may give forth

the same truths, but there is apt to be a lack of the holy unction that once clothed them, and the heavenly dew that once rested on them. How easily decay may set in, while a cold formality, a mere lifeless, joyless, heartless orthodoxy supplants the living, burning energy of the Spirit.

Thus history has been wont to repeat itself. The anointed eyes of the Apostle Paul saw the mystery of lawlessness working like souring leaven in the churches even in his day, as the earliest epistle on record bears testimony. Not that the truth was immediately discarded; that would have been too bold a step. But the power of it over the conscience is felt less and less, until "the good conscience" is lost. The next step is not far off then. The moorings having been cut, the "shipwreck" of the faith is only a mere matter of time. How imperceptibly we slip away from fellowship with Him to whose blessed Person truth would ever lead us as adoring worshippers!

The lukewarm way in which truth is held in our day on every hand would present a sorrowful outlook for the future, unless our confidence in God to come in once again to revive His Church remains unshaken. Our holy Lord, "the faithful and true Witness," no matter how unfaithful His servants have been with His backslidden people, is sick of our lukewarmness. "I will spue thee out of My mouth" are words that show to us His loathing and disgust. The whole-heartedness and true-heartedness of His saints has ever been "a brook by the way" which has ministered a draught of refreshment to Him during the long day of His rejection on earth. But like a thirsty traveller disappointed with the insipid waters of an inviting stream, He spues the lukewarm mouthful out again.

It is "in the midst of the years" that revival is so much needed (Hab. iii.). The halo and poetry of youth has given place to the dull prosaic conditions of middle age. The sails hang lifeless on the rigging; there is scarcely a motion in the air, or a ripple on the watery expanse. The gallant vessel that started with favourable winds is becalmed. Oh for a breeze from the shores of eternity, for a breath from the everlasting hills! "Revive Thy work (preserve it alive, *marg.*) in the midst of the years."

"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." Natural law does not govern the spiritual world—at least not in this particular. For in natural things "even youths" may "faint and be weary" and "young men" may "utterly fall." But though conscious of decrepitude, trembling hearts and hands, dim sight and enfeebled knees, "waiting upon Him" proves a sure "*elixir of life*." The never-wearyed One, the Creator of the ends of the earth, whose mighty arm has securely upheld the worlds that compose the universe, He who fainteth not neither is weary to keep them whirling through boundless space in their appointed orbits without the possibility of a collision, *He* gives us the fellowship of His own strength, when by confession and prayer we come in touch with Him. "Pouring out our *hearts*"—laying bare our *thoughts, motives, purposes, our hidden selves*,—room is made for Him to come in. Thus retiring into the innermost circle of His temple, we obtain eagles' wings for soaring sun-wards, God-wards, far above the din and strife of earth into the region of the unseen yet eternal; girded loins for running the race for the glorious prize; and strengthened ankle-bones to walk on, and up, without fainting at either the length or ruggedness of the road. "They shall rise . . . they shall run . . . they shall walk." Ah! this is indeed revival.

Much depends on the individual in a day of approaching apostasy and judgment. One man could have stood in the gap in Ezekiel's dark day, and God in patient grace sought for him (Ezek. xxii. 30). One intercessor could have, at that point, delayed, if not entirely averted, the judgment that was threatening at the gate. What a solemn lesson this ought to read to us. "*Though I walk in the midst of trouble THOU WILT REVIVE ME*" is a bold assurance restoring grace delights to put into the lips of faith. In the midst of trouble, thundering long and loud—trouble in the social sphere, the political world, the business, the family, the Church; sea and waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear of the things that are coming on the earth,—nevertheless, "Thou wilt revive me." Where shall we put the emphasis on these four words? *He* will do it. *He* will do it. *He* will *revive*. *He* will revive *me*. Even then and even there,

the joy of revival, "the health and cure" of revival, may shine out in one solitary man—alluring others, beyond a doubt, away from their "ashes" of past experiences, their "flesh-pots" of Egyptian delights, and their "idols" of unhallowed love.

Let us then cry to God for it, individually and collectively. "O house of Jacob, *come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord*" (Is. ii. 5). He says, "I will heal their backsliding"; not only blotting out the sin, but healing the wound it has made. "Take with you words," for the answer is ready and waits to be claimed. Doubtless much of *our* building He needs to pull down first, and much of our planting to uproot. Let Him strip us bare if need be. Yea, let Him put the axe at the very tap-root of every luxuriant tree of selfishness, pride, vain-glory, and worldliness.

Above all may he show us Himself. We could not struggle up to Him as sinners, neither can we as failing saints. By a look Peter was won to Jesus at the first (John i. 41, 42), by a look he was restored. When Peter saw that face, spat upon and marred, buffeted by the rough hands of the coarse soldiers, yet looking on him just as kindly and tenderly as ever, he saw how much more cruel was his treatment of the Master than the mocking jeers of the Jewish mob, or the crown of thorns platted by Gentile hands—"and Peter went out and wept bitterly."

'Tis the look that melted Peter,  
'Tis the face that Stephen saw,  
'Tis the heart that wept with Mary,  
Can alone from idols draw.

Draw and win and fill completely,  
Till the cup o'erflow the brim.  
What have I to do with idols,  
Who have companied with Him?"

M. I. R.

#### HEAVEN COMPARED WITH EARTH.

"IF earth, which is provided for mortality, and is possessed by the Maker's enemies, have so much pleasure in it that worldlings think it worth the account of their heaven, such a sun to enlighten it, such a heaven to wall it about, such sweet fruits and flowers to adorn it, such a variety of creatures for the commodious use of it, *what must Heaven be*, that is provided for God Himself and His friends?"

## "THE SNARE OF THE DEVIL."

2 Timothy ii. 26.

THE devil has many snares for the feet of the saints of God. One of these is specified in 1 Tim. iii. 7. There is no difficulty in understanding what this snare refers to, because it is defined by the Spirit of God. The snare that is spoken of in 2 Tim. ii. 26, is not so easily understood; and the passage in which it occurs having been the subject of much controversy, it is needful to approach this question in a prayerful spirit, and with a single eye. That is, to have no object before the mind, but to find out what is the mind of the Spirit of God.

In the first three chapters of 2 Tim., there are *two* men mentioned in each chapter. These men are evidently representative of three different classes of professors. Those mentioned in chap. iii. 8, namely, "Jannes and Jambres," would seem to represent men who "resist the truth" by imitating the power of God as they did (Ex. vii. 11, 12, 22; chap. viii. 7). Such "evil workmen" are to be found all over the land.

The two mentioned in chap. i. 15, are men of a different character, and represent a totally different class. They were converted men who had "turned away" from following, or rather from being identified with Paul in the testimony he was bearing to the Lordship of Christ by being a prisoner for His sake. The apostle Paul in several passages enjoins believers to be followers—literally *imitators* of him (see 1 Cor. iv. 16; chap. xi. 1; Phil. iii. 17; 1 Thess. i. 6). When he wrote his second letter to Timothy he was a prisoner at Rome. And in it he exhorts Timothy not to be "ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner" (verse 8). And in verse 7 he tells him that "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

The word "fear" in this verse might be rendered timidity, or cowardice. The two men, namely, Phygellus and Hermogenes, mentioned in verse 15, were a sample of those who through fear, or timidity, or through lack of moral courage, had become "ashamed of the testimony of our Lord and of Paul His prisoner." The testimony Paul bears to the faithfulness of Onesiphorus (verse 16), clearly agrees with this thought. Amongst the children of God in the

present day there are very many who are not walking in obedience to much of the truth, because of the reproach which it would bring upon them. Many doubtless are walking in disobedience through ignorance, but there are also not a few who are ready to confess to much truth which they have not fortitude to carry out. Chap. ii. 12 proves that such will be great losers in the coming age. But to identify this class with those who are spoken of in verse 26, is, in my judgment, to misunderstand, and to misapply scripture. There does not appear to have been anything wrong with either the moral behaviour or the doctrine of Phygellus and Hermogenes, but they had become ashamed of "Paul's chain," and so "turned away" from him.

When we come to chap. ii. 16, we find an entirely different line of thought. In this passage the Spirit is not speaking of those who have "turned away," but of those who have been "put away." The two mentioned in this chapter are of a totally different character from those in chap. i. In writing of such men, the Holy Spirit, through the apostle, says: "Hold-ing faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck. Of whom is Hymenæus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme" (1 Tim. i. 19, 20). There are some who contend that although these men were delivered unto Satan by apostolic authority, the church of Ephesus failed to "put them away from amongst themselves," as the Church of God in Corinth was commanded to do with the man there who had also been delivered unto Satan (1 Cor. v. 4, 5, 13). Whether the Church failed in this or not does not affect the matter on hand. If they did not put such men away, they clearly ought to have done so. And the fact that there was no trace of evil doctrine in the church of Ephesus some thirty years after, is very strong presumptive evidence that the contention referred to is untenable (see Rev. ii. 1, 2, 3, 6). One thing is clear, that whether put away by the Church or not, his being delivered unto Satan by apostolic authority did not put a stop to the blasphemy of Hymenæus. The reference to Alexander in chap. iv. 14, 15, proves that he was not restored either. Whether Philetus had been delivered unto Satan along with these two men, or

whether he became associated with them after, is not made clear; but this is plain, he was a noted helper of Hymenæus in spreading his blasphemous heresy.

The Sadducean heresy regarding the resurrection, in some form or other, would appear to have been widespread in these days (see Matt. xxii. 23; Acts xvii. 18-32; xxvi. 8). And even in the church in Corinth there were some who were saying "there is no resurrection of the dead" (1 Cor. xv. 12). It might be well to notice here that the Holy Spirit puts the doctrines of the "resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment," on the same level (Heb. vi. 2). Both are fundamental doctrines, and must be dealt with accordingly.

Having now gathered up some truths relative to the subject we are dealing with, let us look a little more closely at it.

Hymenæus and Philetus represent those whose place is "outside" of a scriptural assembly, but who, instead of profiting by the divine discipline to which they were subjected, persist not only in holding, but also in teaching evil doctrine, and by so doing they overthrow the faith of some; but this faith being overthrown did not necessarily affect their eternal safety. "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." That is, if any one "who is called a brother" be guilty of iniquity which the Lord commands to be put outside of His assemblies, then we are not to regard them as "dear brethren," but as "wicked persons," until they give evidence of repentance and restoration. Only this we must bear in mind, that those who *lead* souls captive, into error of any kind, and those who are thus *led* captive, do not stand on the same level; that is, they are not both equally guilty, and therefore ought not to be treated in the same way.

Now, mark well, it is the same line of divine thought from chap. ii. 16 on to the end. The Spirit of God is speaking of those who have been "delivered unto Satan," and of those who have been ensnared through the heretical teaching of such men. And notice, this is quite a different class from those who though sound on fundamental doctrines, have "*turned away*" because of the "afflictions of the Gospel."

I am not here seeking to make light of the sin of "sectarianism," nor of the guilt of "turning away" from following the Lord fully because of reproach or worldly loss. I am simply distinguishing between things that differ; and I am convinced that those spoken of in verse 26 as being in the "snare of the devil," are those mentioned in verse 18 as having had their faith overthrown concerning the resurrection. And "the truth" spoken of in verse 25 is not the doctrine of the Church, either in its "body" or "house" aspect; it is the truth of the resurrection regarding which they had erred. And, moreover, the repentance required is not only concerning the evil doctrine they had imbibed, but repentance of the sin of "opposing themselves" to the *corrective discipline of the Lord, by identifying themselves with those who were under His righteous judgment*. When the Lord is dealing with any of His people on account of sin, it is a deeply solemn thing for any to take sides with the sinning ones; and while such are eternally safe if they belong to Christ, yet God may be so displeased as to "let them alone" and may never grant them repentance in this life. But to apply this to all and sundry who have never learned, or never obeyed the truth of gathering unto the name of the Lord, is to confound things that differ, and is a perversion of the truth taught in this passage.

Time and space fail us to speak of the "great house" (verse 20), but one cannot help observing how some who make much of verses 20 and 21, never notice verse 22, which brings the obedient servant into fellowship with every child of God who is "calling on the Lord out of a pure heart." Also, mark the injunction given to the "servant of the Lord" (verses 24, 25). How he is enjoined to "teach" with gentleness, to "instruct" or *correct* with meekness those that "oppose themselves." How well the example of Paul agrees with the instructions he gives to Timothy. The church of God in Corinth had moral evil in their midst unjudged (1 Cor. v. 1, 2). Also, there were those amongst them who said "there is no resurrection of the dead" (chap. xv. 12); but instead of setting them aside as an assembly of God, how tenderly, and with what energy he endeavoured to put them right. He sent Timothy, his most trusted fellow-helper, to Corinth (chap. iv. 17).

He "greatly desired" Apollos to go there (chap. xvi. 12). He himself wrote a long letter "out of anguish" of heart and with "many tears" (2 Cor. ii. 4). How little there is of this yearning over fellow-saints, and over assemblies, when they break down in their testimony by failing to judge sin; or in some matter of discipline, or case of reception. The grace of God and the "gentleness of Christ," as seen in Paul, the "pattern man," may well put us all to shame.

Whilst seeking grace to walk with unspotted garments in the midst of increasing pollutions, let us beware of going beyond the Word of the Lord in our zeal to judge sin. There is no surer way of opening the door to the adversary, than to wrest Scripture, or go beyond it, in our fleshly haste to judge our fellow-saints who may not know all the Lord has taught us. It was adding to the Word of the Lord that was the first step towards man's fall. Our mother Eve was not content to use the unadulterated Word of God when she was assailed by the tempter; she dared to add some words of her own, saying, "neither shall ye touch it lest ye die" (Gen. iii. 3), and her power was gone. However honest our desire is to judge sin and to separate from it, let us see to this, that we keep strictly to the injunctions, and to the examples given us in the Holy Scriptures, and never in our zeal wrest, or go beyond them. G. A.

### SERVING THE LORD IN SECRET.

Matt. vi. 1-8.

IT is enough for him who walks with God to know that God rewardeth those who diligently *seek Him*. To such the praise of men is of no account. It was everything to the Pharisee and hypocrite to be seen of men. They took no higher ground than this in all their religious performances, which have their miserable reward. The Lord's tempters were obliged to say that He cared for no man, nor regarded the person of men. Of Himself He could say, "I receive not honour from men." Such an One, therefore, could well say, "How can ye believe which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour which cometh from God only?" "Tell no man," was the constant word of Jesus to those whom He healed and blessed. He spoke not of Himself, nor did He desire

others to do so either. But His fame could not be hid. When the people would make Him king, He withdrew to the mountain apart, that He might, in the secret of His Father's presence, enjoy all the honour He sought. When the Father glorified Him on the holy mount, still His word was, "tell no man." In a word, "He made himself of no reputation." This was the Father's business, and not His.

His brethren did not understand such secrecy, when they thus addressed Him, "Depart hence, and go into Judea, that Thy disciples also may see the works that Thou doest. For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If Thou do these things, shew Thyself to the world."

Jesus did go up, but not with His vain-counselling brethren, nor yet openly, but "as it were in secret;" and only then when His *time of service came*. How important it is before any service is entered upon, that the soul should first find the refreshing of the Father's presence, then would service be with power and unction. How important to come out of one's sacred hiding-place before we have to do with others. Moses came down full of glory, though "*he wist it not*," but others felt the power.

The earliest ministry of Christ was to expose the vainglory and trumpet-sounding publicity of the Pharisee. So strictly private would the Lord have our *alms* to be, that He warns us against letting the left hand know what the right hand doeth. *Prayer* is to be in the *secret* of the closet; *fasting* is to be with anointed head and washed face, so as not to appear to men to fast.

All this is hard work for the vanity of our hearts, that, butterfly-like, would ever float upon the sunbeam of human admiration.

He who walks with God has the constant sunshine of His presence; to him gifts shall flow in their needed measure. No work that is done to God shall be in vain. True love seeks not its own praise, but the weal of its Object. It condescends not to make its gift a tribute to self. "Ye have done it unto Me" is its motive, and with such sacrifices God is well pleased. The widow's mite and Nathaniel's prayer are those precious fruits of the Spirit which are as incense before the

Father ; whilst all these noisy and ostentatious exhibitions of self are as though we had offered strange incense in His courts.

Much of the weakness attending on the saints in these days may be traced to the spirit of the Pharisee, through lack of private self-examination and faithful dealing with one's self in secret beneath the eye of God. Much more might be said, but I desire briefly to suggest these few thoughts to the attention of brethren, and conclude with this beautiful and appropriate scripture, which opens out what God delights in (Is. lviii. 7, 8, 10) : "Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him ; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? *Then shall thy light break forth as the morning*, and thine health shall spring forth speedily : and thy righteousness shall go before thee ; and the glory of the Lord shall be thine reeward. . . . Then shall thy light rise in *obscurity*, and thy darkness be as the noon-day."

#### LANDMARKS OF THE FUTURE.—II.

### GOD'S OWN CHURCH.

#### SECOND PAPER.

"THE... Building *groweth*" (Eph. ii. 19-21). Mark the increase, contrary to nature ; one temple, yet ever increasing. What for? "An habitation of God through the Spirit." As God filled the earthly tabernacle and temple with glory, so doth God fill His Church with glory, and maintains the presence of that glory right through, until the time shall come when in the city there shall be no need of a temple or of light, when God and the Lamb shall be both a light and temple eternally to His people. Notice, the habitation of God is the company of the redeemed, quickened and indwelt by the Spirit—none other could possibly form a habitation for God. We shall see the object of it shortly ; we have but glanced at it now. 1 Cor. xii. 12, &c., "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body ; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body," &c. Unto the figure of the body, each member performing its office, God likeneth His people. There is no distinction.

"By one Spirit are we all baptised into one body," This is not baptism with water, but with the Spirit ; a matter that taketh place the moment we believe in Christ. Then we are incorporated into one body, we lose our natural estate, and become new creatures in Christ Jesus. Oh ! what a privilege to belong to this, and whosoever believeth on Him shall be re-created a new creature to abide for ever the delight of God. Remember, there are four places in Ephesians where the illustration of the body is used. We cannot stay to turn to them ; but we have got hold of this, that as the head is to the body, so is Christ to the Church, and as the members are responsive to the head, so every living member is, by the very fact of being a member, responsive to the guidance of the Head that God has given. Now notice the loveliness of this. My hand does what I bid it. If it were to fly away at a right angle instead of so doing, it would show it was utterly diseased ; either that my brain was diseased, or that I had a nervous affection that hindered it from doing my will. Thus it would not only throw upon the other members increased duties, but would itself become numb and enervated and would gradually wither. So it is with any member of the body of Christ who is irresponsive to the Head, he becomes useless and numb for the time being. Response to the Head showeth the work of God, and the carrying out of what the living members are placed there for. Every member is subservient unto the Head, and thus does the will of the Head ; and where there is the corporate desire to do the will of the Head, there corporate unity is manifested. And in the living Church all respond to Him and are agents to do His bidding.

Now I come to the *object* for which God has this building on earth, not for a grand earthly building or fane. I once said to a lady, "Have you seen the beautiful cathedral they are building in a small village near?" She was astonished. "Yes," I said, "it is built of most precious stones." She thought I had gone out of my mind, so I led her back to see that the building of God is not composed of earthly material. She was accustomed to speak of a material building as the Church of God, and forgot that it was but a shadow of the great reality God was building. Now notice the

calling we get for the Church in Eph. iv. 1-6 : "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness," &c. Now mark who are looking on. Chap. iii. 10, 11: "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." "These people," said Haman to the king, "are a people with laws diverse from our laws." And this Church, this wonderful corporation, owns fealty to one Head, and the world thinks them not worthy to live. They are a strange, peculiar people; and this sect is everywhere spoken against and will be to the end. They are a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to demons—a spectacle of difference of spirit from the people that dwell upon the earth; their code of laws, citizenship, and tendencies utterly different from those who are earth-born. Earth-born folk love the earth, heaven-born folk love heaven; earth-born folk speak of earth, heaven-born folk have their conversation in a double sense in heaven. They are here for Christ; they present the spectacle of a heaven-born people kept down on earth to show forth God's salvation. God might take us immediately we are born again, from earth to Himself; but He wants us here to be a testimony for Him, and He allows trial, persecution, affliction. He allows His people to pass through torrents of temptation; but sustains them, goes with them into the furnace of fire or the den of lions, and that makes them so quiet that people say: "What people are these?" The people of God are left here to illustrate the grace of salvation, and are purposely allowed to pass through trial; not only the common sufferings of humanity, but extraordinary persecutions to which God's people ever will be liable on earth. For the Word has told them, "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." But they glory in it because it is the appointed path that the Master has marked out for them to go, and promises them, "To you that are troubled, rest shall be your portion."

Now one more thought (I have, so to speak, only sketched out the subject, to lead to the study of, and thinking out of, the sketch

given), and the thought is this—What do we get by being the Lord's portion? Not earthly glory certainly, but heavenly comfort. We delight in being children of God. Belonging to the Church of God is ample compensation for all the way we have to go through down here. Is there one here to-day who would give up being a child of God for anything on earth? Your heart says, "No; I should think not. I would not give up the satisfaction given to me for all the world and Satan have got to give." Internal comfort is your portion now through the indwelling Spirit; external glory, as well as internal and complete glory, will be yours in the day to come, when you reach what your heart longs for, in the presence of your Redeemer. There will be no rest till you get to God; you are like a stranger in a foreign land, or a child away from home. Have you ever seen a bit boy sent away from home? How his heart cries to get back. Have you ever seen a Christian home-sick? I have; longing to be away with God, his Saviour, the source and centre of his joy. But God thus leaves us for a little while, and gives us His blessed Spirit to comfort us by the way, to assure us, as Eliezer did Rebekah—"When so many more days are gone we shall reach the tents"; and though the desert was new to her, Eliezer was by her side, and the pledges of Isaac's love adorned her and comforted her heart as she journeyed to him of whose love she had heard, but whose person she had never seen; and as each day was struck off she would say, "Yet a few days more and I shall look upon him, the story of whose love has brought me right across the desert."

May that be our portion. May we see that the calling of God to be among His people, the calling to be among the members of the Body of Christ, is a most comfortable thing, and the highest glory mortal ever knew. And may any here who do not belong to it enter through the portal, Christ, to His joy and to their eternal blessing. A. O. M.

If we receive truth *notionally*, we shall receive error also; there is no guard. The Divine guard against error is the Spirit of Truth, reading the truth in the written Word, to the lowly, prayerful soul.

## THE CARE OF THE ASSEMBLIES.

"That which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the assemblies." (2 Cor. xi. 28).

**T**HE care of the assemblies is a very serious matter, and at the present time it seems a proper course to inquire what is taught upon the subject, and who, if any, are appointed or indicated for such a serious and responsible work.

In the days of the apostles when a new dispensation was being introduced and set up, when, as yet, there was not any "holy writ" to inform, instruct, and guide the new converts, and the assemblies of new converts, as to the order of "the house of God," and how they were to "behave themselves in the house of God," the apostles, Paul and Peter, had to adopt means suited to that end and purpose. They ordained elders in every city, sent a trustworthy man here or there to set in order things that were wanting, and then wrote to those men, and to the various assemblies in Asia Minor, Greece, and Rome, the important letters which we know as "the Epistles." In the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles we may learn who, what kind of men, were deemed suitable, selected, and appointed to the work of elders, deacons, shepherds, overseers; for by these terms were indicated the men who had to take care of "the assemblies" of "the house of God," and of "the flock." It will therefore be useful and instructive, and it is also necessary at the present time, to examine the distinctive characteristics and qualifications of those who are referred to as elders, deacons, shepherds, overseers.

**Elder.**—This is *presbuteros* (see *presbus*, which is used much like to *presbuteros*), and means older, an old man, a man advanced in years, an old person. See in Luke xv. 25, "his elder son" (*presbuteros*), and John viii. 9, "and beginning at the eldest" (*presbuteron*). "Let the elders (*presbuteroi*), who rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in word and teaching" (1 Tim. v. 17). In the foregoing passages *age* is a prominent and distinct feature.

When the apostles would appoint elders in every assembly or city, they would look around for and select men of years, probity, and that experience of men and things which is only obtained by those who have lived many years.

I am here referring to the first selections (Acts xiv. 23). After this, two younger and special men, who were specially instructed by the apostle, were deputed, the one to Macedonia, to "charge some that they teach no other doctrine" (1 Tim. i. 3; 2 Tim. i. 6; 1 Tim. iv. 14) and the other to Crete, that he should "set in order things that were wanting, and appoint elders (*presbuteroi*), in every city" (Titus i. 5).

In the following passages the word "elder" (*presbuteros*), occurs, but to give them all in full would take up too much space. Acts xi. 30, xiv. 23, xv. 4, 6, 23, xvi. 4, xx. 17-28, xxii. 5, xxiv. 1; James v. 14; 1 Tim. v. 1, 17, 19; Titus i. 5; 1 Peter v. 1.

**Deacons.**—*Diakonos*, from *diakoneo* — to minister, to serve, a servant, a waiting man. "Deacons in like manner must be grave, not double tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them serve as deacons, if they be blameless" (1 Tim. iii. 8-13). We have to notice here the clause, "and let these also *first be proved*;" then let them serve as deacons" (A.V. and R.V.)

**Shepherd or Pastor.**—*Poimenas* (Eph. iv. 11; 1 Peter ii. 25; Heb. xiii. 20)—a herdsman, whether of sheep or oxen; a shepherd, one who feeds or tends a flock. The same Greek word is rendered both shepherd and pastor.

**Overseer or Bishop.**—*Episkopos*, one who watches over, an overseer, a guardian. It is said to be equivalent to *presbuteros* (Acts xx. 28; Phil. i. 1; 1 Tim. iii. 2; Titus i. 7, with 5. It appears to be from *episkope*, a watching over, visitation. See Luke xiv. 44, *episkopes*, "visitation."

"This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of an overseer, he desireth a *good work*," &c. "Not a neophyte, or one young in age, or young in the faith, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil," &c.

The *work* of an overseer is a "good work," the man for the work is described in 1 Tim. iii. 1-7, Titus i. 7, 8, 9, and it seems to be summed up in these words, "sober, just, holy, temperate." "Temperate" does not mean "teetotaler," but one who is "master of himself."



From all the preceding we learn that elders and overseers must be elderly men, men of probity and of good reputation, who hold fast the faithful word and the mystery of the faith, and are able by sound doctrine to exhort and convince gainsayers; men who watch for the souls of the people of God, *as those who must give account*; men who will tend the flock of God, but will not lord it over God's heritage.

Eldership is not an office, it is a charge, and usually a local one. An elder is not necessarily a preacher or teacher; but it may be that he is, and "labours in word and teaching," and in that case he is to be "held in double honour." The elders and overseers are the "caretakers" of the house of God, the watchmen and guardians of the house and the household.

Shepherds are those who tend the flock and keep them from straying, or fetch them back if they do stray. Deacons are men who do useful, necessary, but quiet unobtrusive work, and we cannot do without them and their wives. But it reads as though a special care were to be taken in reference to them. "Let these also *be first proved*; then let them serve as deacons." But the proving is not, I think, to be confined to deacons, for we read, "let these *also be first proved*." There is no need for "also" if the deacons only are referred to. The "also" may apply equally to overseers.

Such, then, were the kind of men who, in apostolic days, were appointed to take "the care of the assemblies." They were not official nor officious men. The detailed characteristics of the men as found in 1 Tim. iii., Titus i., 1 Peter v. 1-4, are so strict and searching, that while reading them one feels more disposed to retire into a corner than to push one's self forward in a meeting, or to take a seat upon a platform. I have seen and known something similar to the apostolic order in my day, but it was many years since. The men were not elected, appointed, nor self-appointed, but quietly and gradually, in course of time, developed into elder, shepherd, overseer or deacon, and almost without knowing it; and they were recognised by the work and tacitly owned in the sphere of their

work and responsibility. Does such an order prevail in our assemblies now? Has such an order prevailed during the past ten or fifteen or more years? No! But, instead, we hear and read every week throughout the year of

The oversight,  
Oversight brethren,  
Brethren in oversight,  
Brethren who take the oversight,  
Overseeing brethren,  
Oversight meeting,  
District oversight meeting,  
United oversight,

and letters are sent from "brethren in oversight" at one place to "oversight brethren" in another place. These stereotyped terms and phrases, and the condition of things represented by them, have superseded the apostle's words and order in the house of God; and an order has been substituted for it that one is obliged to say is not of God, for it has caused, and still causes, strife and debate, confusion, and tends to cause further division in an already much divided body. Surely God is not the author of all these. (See 1 Cor. xiv. 33). Practically, and in some places actually, "oversight brethren" are self-appointed, and some assume an official place, airs, and manners. Age, experience, reverence, and godly fear, the characteristics detailed by the apostle to enable us to recognise who are elders, shepherds, overseers, and deacons, are not the *sine qua non*, the indispensable condition for membership in oversight meetings. It may be the condition in a few exceptional places notwithstanding the adoption of the new order called "oversight," but it is exceptional I fear. Neophytes, young men, are very much in the front nowadays; they push themselves forward, and have qualities that find favour and acceptance in worldly affairs. "Assurance," "push," "go," "energy," and some such are "in the oversights," but, as is natural enough, they are impatient of the restraints which the teachings, injunctions, and admonitions of the apostles impose upon us all, especially upon those who addict themselves to any form of ministry or service, and who labour in word and teaching. The directions of the apostle concerning those who are to take care of the assemblies of God's people are either disregarded or ignored, or

NOTE.—I wrote the above remarks upon the authority of the A.V., R.V. and Alford, but I have found on referring to Tischendorf that the S. and A. omit "also."

never thought of. The new order called "oversight" supersedes all that. This constantly used word, "oversight," occurs *only* in the Authorised Version of the New Testament.

But where are the elders, overseers, deacons and shepherds, who would find their places, do their work, and meet their responsibilities, if they were not supplanted by a modern and human arrangement? Surely there are such men still! Some probably have been drawn into "the oversight," have lost their individuality, and are merely "oversight brethren." Others probably have been forced back, and out of sight, by a current that is too strong for men who are required to be quiet, grave, sober, just, holy, and able to restrain themselves. Yet it is these men, and only such as these, who are competent to take "the care of the assemblies," and "watch for the souls" of those who compose the assemblies. But how "watch for their souls"? "As those that *must give account.*"

If the right men, in their proper place, and doing a proper work, "*must give account,*" what of those who supplant them, and invent and enforce an order of their own?

"Every man's work shall be made manifest, it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work *of what sort it is.* If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (2 Cor. iii. 10-15). "Yet so as by fire." Like a man drawn through the fire he is saved, his works burned. He is saved, for the truth of the gospel is truth for ever; but the man referred to has only, so far as can be seen, a naked salvation! On the other hand a faithful elder or shepherd, though he must give account, will receive "a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

There is a difference between a zealous care for a conventional order of things and an anxious, godly, reverent care for the people of God in the assemblies of His people. This note is written in behalf of the latter, and to show that God in His wisdom has provided those who can take "the care of the assemblies," though human and conventional expediency have done so much to frustrate the divine purpose.

L. D. G.

## THE TWO PASSOVERS.

"When I see the blood I will pass over."  
"Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us."

IN iron bondage is God's chosen race,  
Bowed down beneath the oppressor's heavy hand,  
Weary with toil unceasing, and regrets  
For that far home, their own beloved land.  
But now, at last, the fetters must be burst,  
And God Himself comes down to strike the blow.  
The word goes forth against the tyrant race,  
And death's destroying angel lays them low.  
But solemnly, within the closed doors  
Upon whose lintels blood is sprinkled o'er,  
The Paschal feast for the first time is kept,  
To be perpetuated evermore.  
When, on the still night air there breaks a cry,  
An awful, deep, exceeding bitter cry.  
There is no house in which one is not dead,  
For the destroying angel hath passed by.

\* \* \* \* \*

Once more the evening shadows close around,  
Once more the sacred Paschal lamb is slain,  
And in the chosen city of their God  
His people all are gathered.

And the streets  
Are now deserted, for the hour has come  
When each to his own chamber must repair  
To eat the Passover, for God had said,  
"One lamb must die for each man's family."  
And so the streets are quiet, but the lights  
Gleam out alike from palaces and halls,  
And from the meaner dwellings of the poor,  
And with closed doors the Passover is kept,  
As it was kept hundreds of years before.  
While all unknown, *He* walks the streets below  
Who is Himself the Paschal Lamb of God—  
And now, alone in the deserted town,  
He winds His way to dark Gethsemane,  
This Man of Sorrows, weary, spent and worn.  
The fitful light falls on His gentle brow  
Revealing lines of care and toil and pain.  
The deepening shadows from the ancient trees  
Fall silently across His lonely path.  
The solemn hills around Jerusalem  
Are wrapped about in darkest, deepest gloom.  
Behold Him, in the garden's solitude,  
A King, uncrowned with aught save sorrow's crown.  
The King of kings, the Lord of lords, alone,  
Drinking in agony the bitter cup—  
The cup of death, which leads us into life.  
The hour has come,—the Son of God must die,  
And on the shameful cross He yields His life  
To save His people.—

Blessed Paschal Lamb,  
Whose precious blood avails for every sin,  
Oh, by Thy sacred passion, by Thy cross,  
Yea, by Thy bleeding wounds, Thy pierced side,  
Thy life of sorrow and Thy death of shame,  
Draw Thy redeemed people to Thyself,  
Thou Son of God, Thou Lamb for sinners slain.

J. P.

## CHRISTIAN BAPTISM:

THE PLAIN TEACHING OF THE WORD OF GOD, WITH  
A REVIEW OF CERTAIN TEACHINGS COMMONLY  
STYLED "HOUSEHOLD BAPTISM."

## II.—THE TEACHING IN THE EPISTLES.

WE now turn to the teaching of the Epistles on the subject. Of the five writers of the Epistles, only Paul and Peter touch upon it; and Paul does not give it as part of his special revelation. It is rather "Know ye not"; that is, he appeals to the saints on the basis of truths they have already been taught. In Romans vi. 1-5 we have the first mention: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection."

It is well to note that up to Romans v. 12 the apostle is dealing with "sins," and our justification from them. But in v. 12 he goes on to the question of "sin" the root. It will make this plainer perhaps to some, if we go back to the type of Israel in Egypt. We know that Israel under the shelter of the blood—during the night of the judgment upon the first-born in the land—is a type of a sinner sheltered by the blood of Christ. But Israel being separated from their old taskmasters, and obtaining deliverance through the Red Sea, is a picture of the saved soul learning the lesson of the Two Natures, and how we get deliverance from the power of indwelling sin and the law, by our death with Christ. "Christ died for me" was the blessed truth that brought peace to my soul, when I saw myself a lost sinner, and my sins calling for judgment. "I died with Christ" was the truth that set me free, when a poor, helpless saint, I found the true character of the old nature in me, and my utter weakness to keep it under. This is the lesson of the Red Sea.

It is in connection with this latter lesson,

which every child of God has to learn, the apostle turns them back to their baptism. In the latter part of the fifth chapter, he brings out the two heads, and shows how grace superabounded; and now the question is raised "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" "You cannot do that," says the apostle. "Your baptism teaches you better. Were you not buried with Christ in baptism unto His death? Did you not thus show you were dead to sins? He died to sin, and if you accepted burial with Him, you must have accepted death with Him, and thus you are dead to sin. And you were buried to come out as living men, to walk in newness of life." "For if we have been planted in the likeness of His death" (that is, buried with Him), "we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection" (that is, we shall live morally as resurrection men).\* And it is well to stop right here, and ask ourselves the question, have we learnt our baptism lesson? Are we really living as those who are "dead to sin," and "alive to God through our Lord Jesus Christ"? Many people will press the truth of believer's baptism, that show by their conversation how little they have learnt in God's presence the real power of it. My brethren, these things ought not to be.

The truth here is very plain. The moment a sinner has appropriated the death of Christ to himself, he is "dead with Christ." Baptism is administered to him as the outward acknowledgment of this fact. He is not buried unto his own death, as a sinner dead in sins. For the sinner dead in sins, who remains so, when he meets God, the eternal burial place will be "the Lake of Fire." But we believers receive baptism as the figure of burial with Christ unto death, and as buried with Christ, it is the acknowledgment of our death with Christ, and therefore, as such, dead to sin.

But burial is not all that is included in baptism. It implies, nay, it includes, resurrection; for Christ could not be holden of death, and, therefore, one thus buried with

\* We are buried with Him by baptism, that surely implies death with Him. We are "baptised unto His death"; that is, in recognition of His death. But we are buried—not to His death, but "unto death"; that is, an acknowledgment of our death with Him. The way our household baptists try to reason out of this plain scripture is a remarkable instance of the really blinding effect of following human theories. The very truth it is taken up to develop, that is, in connection with "sin," is enough to show it is only believers, and true believers, that could be in question here.

Christ must necessarily be risen with Christ. The mode of baptism is so plainly told out here, I shall only say that immersion could be the only mode of baptism as representing burial. But this very mode also figures resurrection, for the one who is buried under the dark waters is brought up out of the waters. Colossians ii. 12 confirms this. The Revised Version reads, "Having been buried with Him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with Him, through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead." Here we have "buried with Him," and "raised with Him" in baptism, but the baptism is only a figure. So the apostle adds, "through faith in the working of God."

But this teaching shows us that baptism is the acknowledgment of a change of place. *For the believing sinner accepts in baptism his place of association with Christ in death and resurrection, and so is brought in figure on to resurrection ground.* He has put on Christ. And this is the truth of Galatians iii. 25-27: "But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor. For ye are all the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptised unto Christ did put on Christ" (Rev. Ver.). Baptism is here looked at as the outward putting on of Christ. It is linked with the inward faith that makes us sons. No one has any right to "put on Christ" except he has first received Him by faith, and thus become a son. To make a profession without the inward reality is hypocrisy. And here there is a striking contrast between the carnal ordinance of circumcision and the Christian ordinance of baptism. Circumcision was for one "born in the house," or "bought with money" (Gen. xvii. 13). It was those who were by natural birth, or right, who were by circumcision acknowledged as in covenant relationship with God. But it was a fleshly relationship. The cross comes in; God is manifested, and man shown to be utterly bad. And now baptism is given; not to those born by natural birth, but to "sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus." The fleshly relationship is but a type of the spiritual; therefore to give baptism to children by natural birth is to go back in principle to Judaism, and to degrade baptism into a carnal ordinance, placing it indeed on a level with circumcision, which has

been done away with. Thank God, faith has come, the shadows of the law are gone—and now we have the privilege of leading our children to Christ. But more of this will come in after.

We have in Peter just a simple statement of what baptism gives us. He uses the flood of Noah and baptism as figures of salvation. I quote from the Revised Version. "Few, that is, eight souls were saved through water: which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter iii. 20, 21). The marginal reading of "after a true likeness" is "in the antitype," and the Greek word is translated "figure" in Hebrews ix. 24. *The thought is plain. Baptism saves in figure, not the outward washing of the water, but by giving the inquiry of a good conscience toward God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Seeing our place of burial with Christ, and because He is raised from the dead we are raised with Him, we can now come into God's presence. Our conscience is clear. This confirms the teaching of the apostle Paul, and shows clearly that baptism is only for those who have accepted the death of Christ for themselves. The plain teaching of the Epistles thus limits baptism to believers. For any others its teaching would be a mere sham. But to believers, what a precious mine of truth is here brought to light! How it brings before us the fact of the death of Christ for us and our association with Him. We can sing—*

The dark, dark waters, Lord,  
 Pressed heavy on Thy soul;  
 The billows of God's judgment flood,  
 O'er Thee, o'er Thee did roll.  
 The heaven its storm poured down,  
 On Thy devoted head;  
 The deep its fountains fierce broke up,  
 O'erwhelming Thee in dread.  
 Alone in that dark hour,  
 No help below, above;  
 Smitten of God and mocked by men,  
 O Lord, how great Thy love!

And as we enter somewhat into the reality of His death, will not our death with Him become a reality? And then to keep in mind we have "put on Christ," we are to "walk in newness of life." To show the resurrection Christ in our

ways here. To know Him in His resurrection power and glory, and thus to walk like Him. If we want to be like Him here, we must live much with Him. "When we see Him as He is, we shall be like Him." J. J. S.

### VARIOUS USES OF THE WORD CHURCH.

THE word church (Ecclesia) is variously used in the New Testament. In its widest sense it is equivalent to "the body of Christ." In 1 Cor. xii., from verse 12 to 27, the apostle is speaking in the language of a figure. Every word is based on the idea that the head and members of the natural body constitute a divinely-appointed representation of Christ and His own whom the Father had given Him. But at verse 28 the figure is dropped, and the apostle goes on to say, "And God hath set some in *the Church*." Clearly showing that, as here used, "the Church" is the exact equivalent of "the body." So also in Eph. i. 22, "Head over all things to *the Church*, which is His body, the fulness (or completeness) of Him that filleth all in all." And the corresponding truth in Col. i. 18, "He is the Head of the body, the Church."

Where the figurative term, "body," is used, it specially denotes the Church's relationship to Christ. Hence, with reverence we say, the term "body of God" could not be used; whilst "Church of God" is, in its own place, appropriate. Again, "there is one body"—hence the figurative term "body" cannot be used in the plural. But the term "churches of God," used in 1 Cor. xi. 16 and 1 Thess. ii. 14 is appropriate, for the word "church" is applicable to a part as well as to the whole of those who are Christ's.

And not only is it applicable to those who are Christ's in a city, but even to the few who may be accustomed to assemble together in a house (see Rom. xvi. 5, Col. iv. 15). Even two or three gathered together unto the name of the Lord Jesus may claim all the privilege that attaches to the presence of the Lord Himself (see Matt. xviii. 20), and are responsible, whilst claiming such privilege, to respect the authority of the Lord in the ordering of so small an assembly as loyally as if it were a gathering of hundreds.

And we would here remark that the New

Testament knows no form of gathering or association other than "the Church." Very numerous in these days are the associations societies, brotherhoods, &c., religious and professedly "Christian" in their character and aims. But none of them can give from the Word of God a warrant for its constitution or even for its existence. The Church, as instituted by God, was in its construction, its order, its ministry, its testimony, designed to answer all the purposes of God in this dispensation. Endowed with the permanent presence of the Holy Spirit, and united to its glorified Head in heaven, its sufficiency was guaranteed so long as it remained in subjection to the Lord, and the Spirit was not grieved or quenched.

It was thus "the Church of the living God: the pillar and ground of the truth." The word "pillar" here is not necessarily a pillar for the support of an edifice, but rather a monumental pillar, such as those erected in honour of earth's heroes, on which are inscribed their mighty deeds or victories. The "ground" is rather the pedestal which exalts it. Christ is the truth in its embodiment. The Church was designed of God to be, and for a time in reality was, God's one monument in the earth, a standing memorial and witness for Christ, having His mind and character inscribed upon it by the Spirit, and at the same time that pedestal upon which the truth was lifted up before the eyes of men for their acceptance.

Nothing else under the sun exhibited "the truth" but "the Church of the living God."

It is written concerning Israel of old, "This people have I formed for Myself; they shall show forth My praise." But Israel utterly failed to answer to the mind and will of God. As a nation they apostatised from Jehovah. As a restored remnant of the nation, they degenerated quickly into heartless indifference to Jehovah's love as well as to His claims. (See Malachi). As a national testimony to the excellence of Jehovah's character and will, Israel first and last proved to be an utter failure. And the depth of the failure was only more fully manifested by the presence of the Messiah. Nevertheless, the time will assuredly come when Israel, as a nation, shall show forth Jehovah's praise according to His eternal purpose, which can by no means be frustrated.

Meantime, there has been a sense in which

Israel has been to Jehovah's praise. To them were committed the oracles of God, written and spoken, and by them were these living oracles jealously and effectively preserved. Even when captives under Gentile dominion, the secret of the Lord was with the captives; and the Gentile monarch had to be debtor to the captive Israelite for wisdom higher than his own.

And even yet, the Jewish nation is the one standing miracle in the earth which cannot be refuted or gainsaid witnessing to the absolute truth of the prophetic Scriptures.

But upon the coming of Messiah, and His rejection, a new order of things began, a new dispensation was inaugurated. The Church, the body of Christ—elect, precious—gathered out of Jew and Gentile, became God's witness in the earth to show forth the praises of Him who called it out of darkness into His marvelous light.

It was to be "the pillar and ground of the truth." It was to be "the House of God." It was to be a holy nation bringing forth the fruits of the kingdom of God. And had it continued in the goodness of God, a glorious testimony it had been. For a little while it answered marvellously to the thoughts of God. Its unity in love and fellowship was perfect (Acts iv. 32), and its separation from the world was complete (Acts v. 13).

And these results were not brought about by intelligence as to the new order of things, for they could but have learned a little of the mind of God, and much was not at that time revealed. It was the power of the presence of the living God which was the attraction in the midst, and the wall of fire that warded off the world.

But quickly the elements of corruption and discord came in. The wily adversary soon entered upon his work of enmity and deceit. And before the completion of the Scriptures, to the prophetic eye there arose a vision of utter failure and ruin so far as corporate witness for God in the earth was concerned.

As a people occupying the position of testimony in the earth akin to that which before was accorded to Israel, it is written, "Thou also shalt be cut off." As "the House of God," judgment must begin at it; and for centuries of the history of this dispensation the world was as destitute of anything that

God could own corporately as "the pillar and ground of the truth," or as "the House of God," as it was in the days of Israel's captivity destitute of a national witness to which God could attach His glory.

Later, at the Reformation, some of the vital truths of the Gospel, long buried, were unearthed and brought to light. But still God's House was a ruin, and God's monument shattered and defaced. Later still, other long-hidden truths have been dug out of the rubbish of the traditions of ages, and here and there the children of God have been graciously led into separation from the world, to own the common bond that unites them, and to seek in simplicity unto the ways which be in Christ. With such the only authority is that of the Lord, the only appeal to the Scriptures as the Divine statute book. Blessed indeed have such gatherings proved, though also scenes of trial. For whilst Satan may care little to oppose and scatter associations that are brought together and constructed upon humanly-devised principles—such, as a rule, develop and prosper, and soon attain the support of worldly religion and wealth—all his hellish energies are bent to corrupt or to scatter that which in simplicity follows the Divine pattern.

That very many "churches of the saints" have thus been formed in many lands during the past half-century is a great and blessed fact.

But wherever the attempt has been made to mould these into a confederacy—into a corporate thing, to be called the temple, the house, the church of God, the pillar and ground of the truth, quickly has such assumption been manifested to be of the flesh and not of God.

But in writing thus we are open to the charge of "independency." Verily, no. Those who own that they are members of one body—"members one of another"—cannot be independent. Those who are indwelt by one Spirit, who walk in His gracious ways, can never be independent. Love can never be independent. Those who compose one assembly will never, if acting in love, despise, or set at nought, the godly doings of another.

Thus God may be glorified even now in the companies of His children who are seeking to please Him, so long as they hold the Head, walk in the truth, and love one another. J. R. C.

**"I HAVE SET THE LORD ALWAYS BEFORE ME."**

CHRIST alone, in the days of His flesh, could say this, but there is a measure of it in all the children of God. Those brought into the closest communion with Him, are most probably they who are most conscious of failure, for they measure themselves in the full shining of His light. Here they learn the true extent of human attainment, yet without one despairing thought, for they learn it in the blessed consciousness that their title to glory is in the *perfect* work of Him by whose side they feel the shortcoming of their holiest things. To set the Lord always before us, is to be "doers of His will, not our *own*."

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## Questions and Answers.

We desire to express our thanks to all who have sent answers.

Replies to appear in the next number require to be sent in not later than 15th of present month, and so on; the 15th of the month being always the latest to which we can defer making up for press.

We again urge the importance of replies being *short*; it is essential, in this particular line of things, to be *concise*.

We shall greatly value remembrance in prayer that special wisdom and grace may be given for this service.

When more than one question is replied to, let the answer to each question be upon a separate piece of paper. THE EDITOR.

### Replies are invited to the following:—

Explain the earthen vessel and running water of Lev. xiv. 5—"And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water."

Is there any difference between elders under the law and elders under grace, or Old Dispensation elders and New Dispensation elders?

Please explain the meaning of the word, "prophesy," in 1 Cor. xiv., especially verse 39; also in Acts ii., verses 17, 18.

"The voice of a majority."—Does 2 Cor. ii. 17, rendered by Rotherham the "majority," not favour ruling by majorities; and are we not socially and morally ruled by the voice of the majority in municipal and parliamentary affairs, affecting all our church, home, business, and general interests?

What are we to understand by the "glory of the celestial" and the "glory of the terrestrial" in 1 Cor. xv. 40?

What will be the *object* of the war in heaven? (Rev. xii. 7). Will Satan oppose his being ejected? Is it not on his being cast out into the earth that he will raise up the antichrist. What heaven is it he will be ejected from?

Will some of our brethren please explain, through *The Witness*, 1 Samuel xxviii. 7-20?

## BUSINESS ON LORD'S DAY.

QUESTION 433.—If a believer keep his place of business open until Lord's-day morning, could he be charged with covetousness according to 1 Cor. v. 11?

### COVETOUSNESS.

QUESTION 433A.—How are we to discern the sin of covetousness?

Ans. A.—There are two questions about "covetousness," and they, probably, refer to the same matter. It is not wise to be looking for evil, and it is not right to judge another whose circumstances, probably, are different from one's own. Where "covetousness" exists it betrays itself, and there is not any need to ask how it may be discerned. The word in 1 Cor. v. 10, 11 is "pleonektees"—covetous, avaricious, from "pleonekteo," (1) to make again or prey of, defraud, circumvent; (2) to get the better, as of an enemy. A covetous man's motto amounts to this, "Get money, honestly if you can, but get money." It is the goal of his life, and it makes him "a covetous man who is an idolater."

There is something in the form of the second question that gives one the impression that its locality is some part of the immense metropolis of five millions of people called London, where the population is dense, and either poor, or the means of living very limited indeed, and numbers of the people can only make their purchases late, some of them very late on Saturday night, thus obliging, or compelling, or making it necessary for the shopkeepers to keep open their shops until midnight on Saturday; and some there are who, to meet requirements in the neighbourhood, open their shops on Sunday morning. Perhaps some one who "is called a brother," whose lot is cast in such a neighbourhood, and who has to struggle like hundreds of other men for a living, is obliged to keep his shop open until midnight on Saturday, but he is not *therefore* a "covetous man who is an idolater"; and "everything that surrounds the case must be looked at, charitably and righteously, not pharisaically, before asking "could he be charged with covetousness according to 1 Cor. v. 4."

The writer of this has to pass through such a neighbourhood on Sunday and week nights to get to the nearest meeting, and very trying it is. But he feels sure that he would be wrong if he judged the people in a sectarian or a pharisaic spirit; and if he knew that one who "is called a brother" had a shop in that neighbourhood, and was as much compelled as other men to keep his shop open until midnight on Saturday, he would pity him, but he could not regard him as a "covetous man who is an idolater." In this London, dairymen have to supply four or five millions with milk on Sunday morning, and if some dairymen are Christians they are not "covetous," because they supply the daily milk on Sunday morning. L. D. G.

Editor's Note.—Covetousness is one of the sins mentioned in 1 Cor. v., for which a person is to be put away from among the saints. It differs from such sins as theft, drunkenness, or murder, which only require a knowledge of the facts to determine their true character. It is rather akin to railing or heresy, to diagnose which,

rightly, involves not only a knowledge of all the facts, but also a measure of spiritual discernment. It is on account of this distinction that differences of judgment so often arise, as to the true character of actions which are supposed to bear the stamp of railing, heresy, covetousness. Looked at in the light of Scripture generally, we fear covetousness, as a sin of the heart, is far more common than any of us suppose. When one approached the Lord, saying, "Speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me," the Lord's answer was, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesses." He then added the parable of the rich man, whose ground brought forth plentifully. We thus see that the desire to possess that which belongs to another, or in other words, discontent with that which God has given, is covetousness; and, on the other hand, settling down to rest in the abundance that God has given, may be no less an indication of a covetous heart. Nevertheless, before covetousness can be judged in the assembly, it must be manifested in overt acts of unrighteousness of such a nature as to carry conviction to every honest mind, that the one charged is indeed a covetous person.

#### DEFILEMENT.

**QUESTION 434.**—**What are we to understand by 1 Cor. iii. 17—"If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are"? Does it refer to the destruction of the flesh?**

**Ans. A.**—This is a statement declaring the retributive action of God. "If any man corrupt, mar, or defile" (as it is variously rendered) "the temple of God, him shall God corrupt, mar, or defile." As the entire Church groweth unto a holy temple for an habitation for God to dwell in (Eph. ii. 21, Rev. xxi.), so the local church, and also the individual saints, are now the temple of God, each a model after the pattern of the entire Church. This involves responsibility, as it is written, "Holiness becometh Thine house, O Lord, for ever" (Ps. xciii. 5). Hence the interrogation, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" Gold, silver, and precious stones are emblems of the divine virtues which are to adorn the "spiritual house." Such materials did David prepare for the building of the earthly temple (1 Chron. xxix). Wood, hay, and stubble stand here in contrast, and are emblematic of works of human vanity; corruptible, combustible, and bulky. Such works corrupt the temple of God; therefore, "Let every man take heed how he buildeth," lest he mar or destroy the work of God; and let him know that his work shall be tried by fire, and that he shall suffer loss in the exact proportion and character that he has caused loss.

The decree of King Darius concerning the building of the house of God at Jerusalem by the returned captive remnant, stipulated that "Whosoever shall alter this word" (which was the commandment of God), "let timber be pulled down from his house, and, being set up, let him be hanged thereon" (Ezra vi. 11). For Esau's violence against his brother Jacob, the judgment is,

"As thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head" (Ob. 15). Again, "If we deny Him, He will deny us" in that day; in the measure in which we have dishonoured Him, He will dishonour us then. "He that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong: and there is no respect of persons" (Col. iii. 25).

The fire will reveal every man's work. "For we must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ" (2 Cor. v. 10). The damage we have done saints and assemblies of God will be as manifest as the help we have rendered—the loss will be as conspicuous as the gain, the shame as deep as the joy. I fear we have much to learn as to the character of the judgment seat of Christ, and that we have been occupied with the thought of reward to the exclusion almost of the loss we shall sustain. I confess there are statements regarding the "bad deeds done in the body," the "bringing to light the hidden things of darkness," and "making manifest the counsels of the heart," "being ashamed before Him at His coming," &c., which to my mind appear strangely solemn. Doubtless they are intended to make us "serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. xii. 28). Our esteemed brother, the late Mr. H. Groves, used to say, "Our last tears will be at the judgment seat of Christ, but He will wipe them all away."

However, it is encouraging to know that the Righteous Judge we are going to meet is our gracious Master, and has died for our sins; and, therefore, we know that our defects and failures, however much glory and reward they may cause us to lose, cannot affect our complete justification, or stain "the righteousness of God" in which we now stand "perfected for ever."

T. R.

**Ans. B.**—In 1 Corinthians iii. 17, the Greek word for "defile" and "destroy" is the same. The word used for destruction of the flesh (1 Cor. v.) is a different word altogether. The word used in 1 Cor. iii. 17 (Phtheiro) is used as follows:—1 Cor. xv. 33, "Evil communications corrupt good manners"; 2 Cor. vii. 3, "Have corrupted no man"; 2 Cor. xi. 3, "Your minds should be corrupted"; Rev. xix. 2, "Corrupt the earth." From the same root we have "corruption," "corruptible," and with the negative prefix we get "incorruption." The builder who built "wood, hay, and stubble" on the foundation and so "corrupted" the temple, would come under the judgment of God: not eternal, but governmental. He would lose his place of service here and his reward hereafter. There is no question of the soul's salvation, but simply the reward of service.

J. J. S.

**Editor's Note.**—We would only add to the foregoing replies, that when Paul said "I have laid the foundation" he referred to his preaching of the great fundamental doctrines of Christ and His Cross. The "building thereupon," therefore, implies subsequent teaching, by which the saints were edified. It becomes, therefore, a specially solemn warning to teachers that they mingle not human principles, human wisdom, human traditions, or anything that is of man, with the pure gold, silver, and precious stones of Divine Eternal Truth.



## CHRIST IS ALL.

“THE testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Rev. xix. 10). “Search the Scriptures . . . they are they which testify of Me” (John v. 39). Thus the Word of God in its entirety directs to a Person, reveals a Person, bears testimony to a Person.

To the Son of God Himself life was the knowledge of a personal God. Though sent by the Father into the world, He never left the Father, for even here He was the “Son in the bosom of the Father” (John i. 18). When referring to His departure out of the world, He speaks of it as “going to the Father” (John xiv. 12 ; xvi. 28) ; it is a Person He goes to, not a place or a state. His obedience is obedience to His Father (John x. 18 ; xiv. 31), and is the fruit of love to the Father (John xiv. 31). He was never alone (till on the cross forsaken), because the Father was with Him (John viii. 29). It is not merely *the* sun that shines, but His Father’s sun ; nor does He say “it rains,” but “He sendeth His rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matt. v. 45). His own are ever seen by Him as “those whom the Father has given Him,” and of them He will lose nothing, but raise it up again at the last day, because such is the Father’s will (John vi. 39). The temple was not merely the house of God, but “My Father’s house” (John ii. 16). Thus the life of Christ was lived *by* God the Father (John vi. 57) and *to* God the Father, and His death was offering Himself without spot to God (Heb. ix. 14). His ascension was not merely to heaven or to the throne, but “I ascend unto My Father.” Every thought and word and step and act of His was a witness to the truth of that wondrous saying, “I and My Father are one.”

And after this manner is the whole divine method of salvation. It is at the first the coming of the sinner to a Person. “Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out” (John vi. 37). “To whom coming as unto a living stone” (1 Peter ii. 4). “Ye are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls” (1 Peter ii. 25). “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. xi. 28). Any experience that falls short of a personal dealing with a personal Saviour falls short of a divine

salvation. “This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent” (John xvii. 3).

There is such a thing as a change of outward life, or a change of religion, or a change of views as to Christian doctrines, or a period of impressions and convictions, ending in a happy experience and a profession of being saved, and yet no experience of having come to a Person and having cast one’s heavy-laden soul on the One who alone can give the weary rest.

What to Him are such changes as these if they fall short of the heart’s confidence and love? They yield Him no refreshment, no recompense, no satisfaction. The faith of the needy, the hot tear of the penitent as if trickles over His feet, the kiss of the one who has been forgiven much—these are the pleasant fruits that rejoice His heart.

But it is also *believing* in a Person. Paul does not say “I know that I have believed,” or “I know *what* I have believed,” blessed as it is to know that by grace we *have* believed and to know also intelligently *what* we have believed. Paul’s testimony is to a Person—“I know **WHOM** I have believed” (2 Tim. i. 12). In that ever-precious third chapter of John over and over again it is “whosoever believeth in Him.” It is not merely believing about Him, as we believe about Cæsar or Napoleon, or about Luther or Wesley ; it is not believing a record about one who lived and died and so passed away as a present quickening power ; it is believing **IN** or **ON** Him. It is faith in and trust upon a living Person, who is able to save, and willing to save, and whose faithfulness is pledged, and whose love is stronger than death and cannot fail.

True, it is believing “the record that God hath given concerning His Son” that saves ; but belief of that record leads to trust in the person of the Lord Jesus, or it is nothing. Let it never be forgotten that in the Scriptures of truth, the Word of God, and there alone is Christ revealed. From beginning to end they testify of Him—“to Him give all the prophets witness”—so that the faith which embraces in the heart the Word of God, at the same time embraces the Christ of God. It is impossible to reject the written Word and to receive the living Word. The Word is the instrumentality.

used by the Spirit of God to bring Christ before the soul.

The life that Paul lived was by the faith of the Son of God, who loved him, and gave Himself for him (Gal. ii. 20). His aim and ambition was to "know Him" (Phil. iii. 10); not merely to know about Him, as one may by reading the Gospels and studying the types and searching the prophecies—all most needful and blessed exercise; but through such knowledge and through daily obedience and trust, through temptation and trial, through sufferings and tears, through prayers and answers to prayer, to grow in personal acquaintance with the Lord Jesus Himself.

"Lord Jesus, make Thyself to me  
A living, bright reality;  
More present to faith's vision keen  
Than any earthly object seen;  
More dear, more intimately nigh,  
Than e'en the sweetest earthly tie."

Christian obedience and service loses all vitality so soon as it fails of the element of personality. If it be not the willing obedience of love; if it be the mere discharge of a duty, the mere going through of a routine, what is that to the heart of Christ? It is "work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. i. 3) that is dear to Him. It is that to which the love of Christ constrains (2 Cor. v. 14), that for which the power of Christ enables (2 Cor. xii. 9; Phil. iv. 13), that which is consciously done by Christ and for Christ, which is of value to Him.

And herein is the danger attending all regular service engaged in for Christ month after month, year after year. It is good indeed to be regularly engaged in the work of the Lord, but the danger is that it may lose its fatness, its sweetness and its joy, by being gone on with habitually but without the consciousness either of the present help or the approving smile of the Lord. "Lovest thou Me?" was the prelude to "Feed My sheep." "I am with thee; . . . I have much people in this city," was the encouragement to Paul. "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age," is the permanent sufficiency of the servant of the Lord. It is not merely a promise of providential care or angelic ministry, but of the personal presence of the living, loving, Almighty Saviour.

And as to ministry in the assembly, it is that which comes from the Head and that only which edifies. It is in hearing the voice of a living, present, personal Christ that blessing is received. Ministry is a message direct to the present need of the saints, from the One who lives and loves and cares for them. Alas, how often are those who have surrendered the popular educated human ministry subjected to what is meant to be and what professes to be divine ministry, but which in reality is only the flesh in another form and not one whit more the voice of the Beloved.

We are wont to gather together on the first day of the week: it is the Lord's-day (Rev. i. 10). The table is the Lord's table (1 Cor. x. 21); the supper is the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. xi. 20); the feast is in remembrance of Him, and till He comes (1 Cor. xi. 24-26); all is personal.

Every blessing with which we are endowed is in Him, and in fellowship with Him. He is our life, our light, our peace, our all. (Col. iii. 4, 11, &c.)

We are blessed with all spiritual blessings in Him (Eph. i. 3). Nothing apart from Him.

It is in Him we have redemption through His blood (Col. i. 14); in Him we have the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace (Eph. i. 7). Even the promises of God are yea and amen to us only in Him (2 Cor. i. 20). He it is who is made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption (1 Cor. i. 30); and it is in Him that we have obtained the inheritance. (Eph. i. 11.)

Death, to the believer, is a departure "to be with Christ" (Phil. i. 23); absent from the body is to be "present with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 8). Vain curiosity as to place and condition receives little or no gratification; it is enough for every one who has tasted that the Lord is gracious, to be *with Him*.

If He prays to the Father for the utmost pitch of blessedness that His own loved ones are capable of, it is "that they may be with Me where I am" (John xvii. 24).

If He gives them a promise to cheer in all tribulation, to comfort in every sorrow, to stimulate to every service, to sustain in every conflict, it is "I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may

be also" (John xiv. 3). Our hope is, not, heaven, it is not a place, it is not a mansion, it is not a kingdom, though all this and infinitely more is included in it; our hope is a Person, Christ is our Hope (1 Tim. i. 1).

If is this intense personality that gives character to God's salvation, and marks it off from every species of "*religion*." Religion may lay down rules for life, may propound doctrines and theories, more or less good and beautiful, but no religion that ever was evolved from the mind of man presented a person for the heart's acceptance—a personal Saviour, a personal Hope. One of the greatest scientists of the present day was asked as an especial honour (he being what is called a layman) to preach in Westminster Abbey on the one day in the year known in the Metropolis as "Missionary Sunday." He chose for his subject the three great missionary religions of the world, viz., Buddhism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity. He made comparisons of the three as to their morality, their vitality, &c., &c., and if Christianity was the best of the three, that was about all that could be said for it!

Alas for the wisdom of the world! The world by wisdom knows not God, and knows not the Christ of God. To faith, it is not Christianity, but Christ, that is precious; He is its Alpha and Omega, its centre and circumference, its author and finisher, its root and its fruit, its foundation and its top stone. To the Christian, "Christ is all." J. R. C.

### LAVISHING LOVE.

"That the love wherewith Thou hast loved me may be in them."

IT is one practical proof of our poverty and of our riches that Christ has given to us His own love to spend on one another. How lavish we should be of its divine refreshing, seeing we draw from a source that cannot be exhausted, and we can never share its wealth with others without being ourselves the more enriched: for it is the quality of grace alone that it multiplies by being divided, even as the five loaves and two fishes passed from the Master's hand filled twelve baskets after five thousand were first supplied. A. E. W.

### FAITH HEROES.

HEBREWS XI. has been called God's portrait gallery—the roll call of the heroes of faith. This commentary of the Holy Spirit on Old Testament history will well repay meditation. It is profitable to note what is commended as well as what is passed by. There is not one note of condemnation. The silence of love covers all that is not of faith. The Spirit of God in the New Testament never calls attention to the faults of those of the Old. God will not speak evil of His children behind their back. The chapter closes with a summary of the great army of the faithful, looked at, shall we say, in two battalions—first, those who conquer; then, those who suffer. There is a faith that is glorious in victory; there is a faith sublime in suffering. There are some, "who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: *and others* were tortured, not accepting deliverance; . . . they were stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented" (Heb. xi. 32-40). It is characteristic that while the life story of the former, those great heroes of faith who overcame, are for the most part preserved to us in Holy Scripture, the history and circumstances of the latter are wrapped about in silence. If unknown on earth, they are well known in heaven. There their achievements are chronicled, their histories preserved with loving care and blessed approbation. For to God, the faith that suffers in the evil day is as true as the faith that overcomes. The tears of Jeremiah are as precious as the faith of Elijah on Mount Carmel, for true faith is born of true knowledge of the Most High. It is only those who know His Name that put their trust in Him (Ps. ix. 10). Hence it follows that the testimony of the man of faith will be in harmony with the counsel of Jehovah, in keeping with His then governmental dealings. For "the secret of the Lord

is with them that fear Him." Matthew divides the time from Abraham to Christ into three periods, of fourteen generations each, thus:—

- 1st. Abraham to David, Nation rises to highest point.
- 2nd. David to Captivity, Gradual fall.
- 3rd. Captivity to Christ, { Continued fall till lowest point is reached.

Those referred to in Hebrews xi. as overcomers lived in the first two sections of the history, whilst the unknown and silent sufferers were in the last. Yet it is concerning the last group of faith heroes that the Holy Spirit adds, "Of whom the world was not worthy." Their testimony was in harmony with the times in which they lived. May we not say as a general principle that God does not deal in blessing with those who deliberately reject His message? In the parable those who excused themselves were left, the invitation was sent to a wider circle. Does not history support the suggestion that God's dealings in blessing flow in like a tide quietly, resistlessly, overcoming all obstacles until the high-water mark is reached? Then it retires, never to return in like manner: retires, because the message has not been received in the love of it. This is true of God's dealings with nations, peoples, companies of saints, and indeed in principle with individuals. Should the call be responded to and the blessing received, it is well; but, alas, man fails under all conditions, whether in Eden or under millennial glory, or the various stages between. We suggest that the point at which the blessing leaves the believer is when he turns away his ear from God. Remember, man is so complex a being that he is capable at one and the same time of gladly receiving truth *on some points*, whilst rejecting it on others. Therefore, the truth being only partially rejected, the blessing, the joy of communion with God and all that this means, is only partially withdrawn. Does not this account for the noticeable fact, true of individuals and companies, that as they gladly receive the truth they grow and grow? Then a moment of crisis comes, they arrive at a point where two roads meet. A call is given for a higher obedience than they have yet yielded. It is a struggle upon the issue of which depends much; it will shape their whole after life. Shall it be the higher or the lower road? What if they shrink from the cross bearing?

For a while all is darkness, then they start again; but it is along the lower road. They enjoy communion it is true, are used in service, but the higher possibilities of the upper path they can never know. And as to the particular matter which (like the tree in the garden) was the test of their obedience, their conscience never troubles them. To that special call they are dead. Many illustrations will occur to us of this unhappy condition. It may be a habit, lawful perhaps in itself, but indulged in till it has acquired undue power; or it may be certain neglected commandments such as baptism or gathering to the Lord's Name.

The testimony of the man of faith will be in harmony with God's dealings. He may be called to testify with a militant faith like Elijah, or withdraw from the multitude like the Master, to expound the mysteries of the Kingdom to the few (Matt. xiii.).

Some prophets may inspire to glorious victories like Elisha, others sorrowfully tell of sure defeat like Jeremiah. The tide at its height is at its weakest as regards power, then you can hardly say whether it is at ebb or flow; so as regards testimony. National revival that was possible in Elijah's time (for at his death the tide, shall we say, began to ebb) became impossible later on in the history. Nevertheless, in darkest hours there is found the brightest testimony for God both individually and collectively. The remnant who still fear the Lord and think upon His Name, is an object of delight to the Lord, like a lily among thorns. Yea, as from darkest caverns come the sparkling diamonds and from deepest depths the milk-white pearl, so do times of declension, marked, it may be by general departure from the Lord and lack of power, yield opportunity for faith most precious, love most loyal, and hope most true. The victories of Gideon or Jonathan brought back to the royal standard Israelites who were hidden away, and rallied round the true king those who in fear had made truce with the enemy. But it takes the darkest hours of David's life to manifest Ittai the Gittite. David has no royal bounty to bestow; he is beating a hasty and sad retreat; an outcast from his loved Jerusalem; driven out by his son; his life in danger. Bereft of all, why should Ittai go with him? Ah, all that grief

and loss do but the more bring out the true love of that loyal heart. "Surely in what place my lord, the king (David is still that to him) is, whether in life or in death, there also will thy servant be." Next to the Lord Himself, who mourned more over division than Paul? All who are in fellowship with the heart of Christ will mourn also. Yet the Holy Spirit writes through Paul, "There must be also heresies (and therefore divisions) among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you" (1 Cor. xi. 18, 19). The nightingale only trills its sweet notes in hours of darkness. Only when the sun has gone down are the stars, the jewellery of heaven, discovered. The winter flowers are the more beautiful because all around is barren. So when the lamp of God's truth burns low the love of many wanes cold, evil comes in like a flood; then, just then, the faith that endures, as seeing Him that is invisible like Moses in Egypt, is most precious to God. When the strong tide comes in it is easy to be borne onward, it is easy to go with the flowing tide, but when it ebbs then shall be borne away all that is not of faith and therefore not divinely sustained. In the hour of trial may it be ours to hold fast. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life" (James i. 12, and Rev. ii. 10). The testing shall reach us in many a way. We may see the ebbing tide carry away many whom we judged strong. It may be those who were once our teachers and helpers shall drift away. O to stand fast and hold fast. Human stepping stones will be placed for us; human activity manifested in the lighting of many fires which only guide, as Isaiah tells, to a place of sorrow. Little clubs, where only those who all agree are found, may hold out their arms of invitation as an escape from assembly troubles. Nevertheless may it be ours to turn not to the right hand or the left. Let us trust and wait. Only a little while; not for ever the strain; not always the toil. The cross a crown affords. Tribulation may last ten days, but afterwards the "better things"; the glorious resurrection; the crown of life; the eternal sabbath; the everlasting song; the Master's smile; yea, Himself for ever.

"Oh! how shall recompense His smile,

The sufferings of this little while."

W. H. S.

## THE CONGREGATION OF JEHOVAH.

SOME of our critics, friendly and adverse, have remarked upon Micah ii. 5 as one instance of the term "Congregation of Jehovah" being applied to Israel after the national disruption.

Our not referring to this was an omission, as the passage had been fully considered ere we wrote the paper in our January number. The context will plainly show to an unbiassed mind that there is no application there of the term "Congregation of Jehovah" to the condition of Israel at that time. The prophet foretells that a doleful parable will be taken up to the effect that Jehovah had changed the portion of His people, "to the rebellious He hath divided our fields." Instead of a restoration of the land, as in the days of Joshua when the land was measured by the line and described in a book and Joshua cast lots for it in the congregation of Jehovah at Shiloh before the Lord, their portions would be left desolate, given over to the rebellious, and no Joshua would arise as of old to restore to them their inheritance. "Therefore thou shalt have none that cast the line by lot in the congregation of the Lord" (R. V., Micah ii. 5).

The reference is manifestly to Joshua xviii., just as the reference in Neh. xiii. 1 is to Deut. xxiii., and not to the congregation as then existing. That the remnant then assembled at Jerusalem were responsible to act upon the law as given in Deut. is not disputed, nay, we contend most strongly for it; but a feeble few obeying the Word of the Lord were not thereby entitled to assume that they were "the Congregation of Jehovah."

Lam. i. 10 is also a definite reference to Deut. xxiii. How terrible that those who in Deuteronomy were excluded from the Lord's assembly should now actually enter into Jerusalem's sanctuary.

One critic declares that the teaching of this article, being based upon a "huge blunder," necessarily falls to pieces.

The said "blunder" is that we did not deem it necessary to differentiate between two Hebrew words, each of which is translated almost indiscriminately "congregation" and "assembly," and not having done so it is

assumed that we were grossly and culpably ignorant of the fact.

We make it a rule to avoid references to the original unless absolutely necessary. The practice of self-taught young men coming before the public each with a revised version of his own, we strongly reprobate; albeit we respect all such diligent study and value every help.

But in this matter of the two words *Geh-dah* and *Kah-hal* we had made it subject of careful examination, and seeing that neither the "*Geh-dah* of Jehovah" nor the "*Kah-hal* of Jehovah" was to be found as applying to the post-disruption condition of Israel, we deemed it quite unnecessary to allude to the original.

It is asserted that "assembly" is the English equivalent of *Kah-hal*, and "congregation" of *Geh-dah*. This may be so, but both Hebrew words are rendered by both English words, and in the Septuagint *Kah-hal* is frequently rendered by *Sunagogee*, and not at all uniformly by *Ecclesia*, as some indicate.

*E. G.*—See Sept. Lev. iv. 13, 14, xvi. 17; Num. x. 7, xx. 10; Deut. v. 22, &c.

To discuss in the *Witness* such critical points as these is not our object, especially when they have no bearing upon that which we sought to establish.

J. R. C.

### NO TIME.

*No time to be alone with God.* In these days of hurry and bustle, we find ourselves face to face with a terrible danger, and it is this—*No time to be alone with God.* The world, in these last days, is running fast; we live in what is called "The age of progress"; and "You know we must keep pace with the times." So the world says. But this spirit of the world has not confined itself to the world. It is, alas! to be found among the saints of God. And what is the result? The result is—*No time to be alone with God*: and this is immediately followed by *No inclination* to be alone with God. And what next? Surely the question does not need an answer. *Can* there be any condition more deplorable than the condition of a child of God who has no inclination to be alone with his Father."

AUGUSTINE said, Good works (as they are called) in sinners are nothing but splendid sins.

## THE BLESSED HOPE OF THE CHURCH.

OUR subject last time was "The Church of God," its composition, object, &c., and how it was left down here in the midst of trial and persecution.

Now, if the people of God had nought in prospect but tribulation, it would cause dolefulness, whereas you generally find that God's people who are feeding on the Bread of Life, are the most joyous people in existence; as the apostle says, "Joyful in tribulation." What is it that so inspires and so brightens? It is the Holy Spirit that inspires and generates such peace and joy in believing that the whole being is content with the present will of God. But, beyond, there is a prospect; and with that we deal to-day. The hope of the Church is *the return of the Lord Jesus*, and God endorses this as the lawful prospect of His waiting people.

For a key-note, let us turn to Titus ii. 12-14. "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Now, it is concerning this blessed hope, which by the Spirit of God has been so termed, that we wish to speak, so that none may fail to say, "It is the lawful, appropriate, and God-born hope of His people." It is called "that blessed hope," because; of the blessing it yields to the one that possesses it, and the blessing which it will eventually bring unto all the people of God. Here it is expounded and defined, "The glorious appearing of the great God our Saviour" (as it is really). Now, what joy, taken in its primary sense, it is to the redeemed to have the prospect of seeing their Redeemer! What a joyful prospect for the saved to see the One who died to save them! In many a household, when the master is absent, the wife waits up while the rest of the household are asleep; her heart is waiting for him, whatever hour he may come; it is her hope, and she has joy in the anticipation. So the true Bride expectant, hopeful in thought, is waiting for the consummation, the "blessed hope." Now mark from Col. iii. 3, 4 what the attitude and standing shall be of those who are His when He comes. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with

Him in glory." Again the hope is set out that when Christ cometh they shall be manifested at the same time in glory,—no long interval if they should have died; no interval at all if His advent should take place during their lifetime. Directly Christ appears, those who are dead are raised as to the body—the spirit meanwhile having been with Him—and the living are changed, and in one company they shall be caught up to be with the Lord. There will be a reunion in that day of the sinner and the Saviour, the Redeemer and the redeemed, manifestly.

When the Lord Jesus was going away He knew their hearts were sore, and said, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself." Now the interpretation that suggests itself to some minds, and has been taught by many, is that this refers to the time of our dying; but I want to show from John xxi. that it was never so thought of by the disciples themselves, but that it was clearly understood by them to mean the day of the Lord's return. "Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou Me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" Mark their interpretation. Directly the Lord Jesus says, "If I will that he tarry till I come," they began to whisper, "John will not die, but he will be here when the Lord comes," howbeit the Lord did not so say. But my point is this: the mind of the disciples, and not wrongly so, laid hold of the fact that the promise of John xiv. meant that the Lord would go away to get a home ready, and then come back and take His people there, so they rightly said: "Surely John is to be alive when the Lord returns"; and though right as to the fact, they were wrong as to its application to John.

Now turn to Heb. ix. 28, where you have this hope set before all God's people, that we might not interpret it as belonging to the disciples alone. "Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation"; not to offer Himself again, but unto the full, complete, everlasting salvation of His people. Are there any here who

are not longing for this advent? If I were to take census I could not decide; the Lord knoweth. The condition is exceedingly precious and exceedingly profitable: to be looking for, longing for, wrapped up in the hope of the return of the Lord Jesus. Rom. viii. 22, 23: "We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting." What for? For the consummation in the redemption of the body; for as far as that is concerned, we are saved only by hope. If I say "I am going to London to-morrow," I can't ensure my getting there, and no human promise can; it would be a probability, not a certainty. But when I speak of the promise of the Lord, "Where I am, there ye may be also," I speak of no probability or uncertainty, but of an absolute assurance from the lips of the living Saviour Himself. Now a principle is here stated. The common lot of men is death and judgment; but as surely as that is the common lot of men, so surely as Christ has appeared to make atonement for sin, He shall appear the second time to claim His Bride, to take possession of His property; and in order that we may be sure that we shall not be left behind, it is written, "The Spirit Himself beareth witness," and is the earnest (pledge) of our absolute redemption, until He takes possession of His property. I want you to remember that the comfort of the Holy Spirit is God's assurance to the individual believer, "You belong to Me; and if you belong to Me, I can't leave you down here." And no one who has received the Spirit can lose Him, though the assurance of the Spirit may become dim and faint and seem to pass aside; not one to whom the Lord has given His Spirit shall ever be forsaken again. God sets His royal stamp upon His possession and says, "It is Mine." Has God ever lost anything yet? "Those whom Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost." So He assures my heart that, when the Lord Jesus comes, He will not forget a single believer who has put his trust in Him in this day of grace.

*(To be concluded in our next.)*

As poverty increases in the Church, may liberality increase too, and a poor Church become what a poor Christ and poor apostles were to the world in days gone by: "Poor, yet making many rich."

## C. H. SPURGEON.

CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON is a name that is well known and highly respected by Christian people wherever the English language is spoken. When the telegraphic message was flashed across the wires, little more than a year since, that the "prince of preachers" had departed to be with the Lord whom he had long loved and served, there was universal regret. In the language of another, it may be said, "We must go back a hundred years to find a parallel to the bereavement which now has so sorely stricken the church of God."

Several biographies of this valiant soldier of the Cross have already appeared, but by some Mr. Douglas's\* is considered the best. He has certainly had exceptional opportunities of obtaining his information first-hand, having been on most intimate terms with Mr. Spurgeon for many years, and conversing and conferring with him again and again on innumerable matters and questions. C. H. Spurgeon was born on 19th June, 1834, at Kelvedon, Essex, and was the son of an Independent minister. He was converted at the age of fifteen, in a Primitive Methodist Chapel in Colchester, through a discourse delivered by an illiterate but earnest local preacher, whose name is unknown. Shortly after his conversion, we find him as an usher in a school at Newmarket. Whilst at Newmarket, through study of the Word, he became convinced that infant baptism was unscriptural; that believers, and believers only, were the proper subjects; and, with his parents' consent, he was publicly baptized in the river Lark, and joined the "Baptist" denomination. From Newmarket he went to Cambridge, as an usher in a school. Here he began speaking at cottage meetings. His first address to adults was on the words "Unto you that believe He is precious." The place of meeting was a thatched cottage, and his audience was principally composed of farm labourers and their wives. He spoke with wonderful ease, freshness, and power, and before the last hymn was sung an old woman in the audience cried out, "Bless you, dear heart; how old are

you?" He waived the interruption, but at the close he was again asked his age, and he replied, "I am under sixty." "Yes, and under sixteen," was the rejoinder. "Never mind my age," was his reply, "mind my theme." The "boy preacher" was soon in great demand, and at the age of seventeen he is minister of the Waterbeach Baptist Chapel. Here God richly blessed his labours. His fame by this time had reached London, and when only twenty we find him pastor of the New Park Street Baptist Chapel, Southwark. The congregation had dwindled greatly, but in a short time the chapel became too small, and Exeter Hall and Surrey Music Hall were successively used, and even such capacious buildings were insufficient to contain the crowds that flocked to hear him. Eventually the Metropolitan Tabernacle was built, with seating capacity for close on six thousand people. For more than thirty years he ministered to crowded congregations in this magnificent building, the result being that multitudes of Christians were helped and thousands of souls were hopefully converted to God. Addressing a church prayer meeting in the Tabernacle on 26th May, 1890, he said—"How many thousands have been converted here! There has not been a single day but I have heard of two, three, or four having been here converted, and that not for one, two, or three years, but for the last ten years!" When he began his ministry in the Metropolis, the papers criticised him most severely. A leading London journal objected to his preaching on the ground that it "appealed to the coarsest of tastes and degraded the pulpit to a lower level than the broadest buffoonery of the stage." In spite of hostile criticisms and misrepresentations, he continued preaching the old Gospel in a simple, earnest, interesting, and attractive way, and the "common people heard him gladly," and were blessed. Christ and Him crucified was the central theme of his ministry. When asked to write in an autograph album, he usually inscribed the following lines:—

"E'er since by faith I saw the stream  
Thy flowing wounds supply;  
Redeeming love has been my theme,  
And shall be till I die."

At a meeting in the Tabernacle he said, "Here, then, I stand at the foot of the Cross, and tell

\* "The Prince of Preachers": a Sketch, a Portraiture, and a Tribute. By James Douglas, M.A. Morgan & Scott, or *Witness* Office. 2s. 6d., post free.



out the old, old story, stale though it may sound to itching ears, and worn threadbare as critics may deem it. It is of Christ I love to speak—of Christ who loved and lived and died; the Substitute for sinners; the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." Who can tell the numbers that found rest and peace through his preaching? And how many have been saved through his printed sermons that have poured from the press in booklet form by tens of thousands, appearing in British, American, and Australian newspapers, translated into numerous languages, and found in many parts of the globe? We remember seeing the report of an address, delivered over twenty-five years ago at Edinburgh, before the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, in which he declared that ten thousand persons, personally known to him, had been brought to Christ through his instrumentality. And how many were won through him during the last twenty-five years?

Some of the characteristics of his influence are specified by Mr. Douglas in his interesting biography. His *spirituality* is put first. He was thoroughly consecrated to the Lord, and delighted in seeking to please Him. "His ministry was the overflow of his heart's homage to the Lord Himself. He served much, because he loved much." This spirituality was manifested in his simple and childlike faith in God. He had his times of depression when, Elijah-like, he was found under the juniper tree. But these seasons did not last long, and he loved to dwell upon and expatiate on God's great and unchanging love to His people.

There were other things that doubtless contributed materially to his success as a preacher of the Gospel. "He had a voice of amazing compass and sweetness of modulation. His speech was music. He was a born speaker." He was a man of *intense sympathy*, and constantly sought to encourage, cheer, and help others. Being a many-sided man, he could adapt himself to all sorts and classes of people. He had extraordinary *readiness of speech*, and was never at a loss for a word that was needed for the occasion. It will surprise some to know that he never wrote out a single sermon for delivery. As is well known to all who have heard him preach or have read his

writings, he had *great originality and fertility of illustration*.

Besides all this, he was a *man of indomitable energy and perseverance*. He toiled and laboured, sword in one hand and trowel in the other. He bought up opportunities, and like the "busy bee" he gathered honey "from every opening flower." He was an omnivorous reader, and a hard student. He was *most generous* and benevolent, and was a friend indeed to hundreds of orphans, students, preachers, and Christian workers of all kinds. "So long as there is milk in the can," he used to say, "it matters not who gets it, if only it goes where it is really wanted." On the occasion of his "silver wedding" and his fiftieth birth-day, he was presented with sums amounting in all to £11,000, but he refused to use the money for his own needs. "Not one farthing for me. You may give it me, but I won't use it," he said.

He had no sympathy with the "down-grade" tendencies of the times, and wrote some striking and severe articles on those who were seeking to explain away the atonement, the inspiration of the Scriptures, and the eternity of future punishment. It has been pithily said that "preachers are of two sorts—those who bring their thoughts to Scripture, and those who evolve their thoughts from it." C. H. Spurgeon belonged to the second class. "Let others defend Scripture," he said, "and prove it to be true; they can do their work better than I could; mine is just the mere work of proclaiming. I am the messenger; I tell the Lord's message; if you do not like the message, quarrel with the Bible, not with me."

Shortly before his death, Mr. Spurgeon severed his connection with the "Baptist Union." He saw that he could not remain in fellowship with those who were sapping and mining the foundations of the faith. He continued a "Baptist," however. When exercised about baptism he made the Scriptures his only standard. "If we could find baptism in the Word of God, we should adopt it," are his words. "But we have looked well through the Bible and cannot find it, and do not believe it is there, nor do we believe any one can *unless they put it there first*." Quite true! It is, however, a very great pity that Mr. Spurgeon

did not, at his baptism, or afterwards, "look well through his Bible" and ascertain if there was a single passage in it justifying believers in forming themselves into, or identifying themselves with, a "sect"—or if some prefer it, a "denomination"—on the ground of the acceptance of the truth of believers' baptism calling itself "Baptist"! There is as much scripture for the formation of a new sect on the ground of the belief of the other ordinance instituted by Christ—the Lord's Supper—the members calling themselves "Lord's Supperists!"

If it was wrong for Christians in apostolic times to gather around men and say, "I am of Paul," "I of Apollos," surely it cannot be less reprehensible in these days for Christians to connect themselves with "sects," and say, "I of the Wesleyans," "I of the Lutherans," "I of the Presbyterians," or "I of the Baptists."

No preacher known to us has spoken so frequently or so strongly against those whom the world nicknames "Plymouth Brethren." Doubtless the Metropolitan Tabernacle minister had again and again felt grieved and disappointed at losing some of his most energetic and able helpers. This ought not to have irritated him and caused him to do what so many small people do when they find themselves worsted in controversy—nickname their opponents. Then his position was an anomalous one among the "Baptists," not being a believer in clerisy, and practising "open communion." Speaking of preachers calling themselves "Reverend," he writes as follows:—"It is at any rate a suspicious circumstance, that among mankind no class of persons should so commonly describe themselves by a pretentious title as the professed ministers of the lowly Jesus. Peter and Paul were 'right reverend' men, but they would have been the last to have called themselves so. A lad fresh from the college who has just been placed in the pulpit is called the 'Reverend Smith,' whilst his eminently godly father who has for fifty years walked with God has no claim for such reverence. We wonder where men first sought out this invention, and from whose original mind did this original sin emanate. We suspect he lived in the 'Roman Row' of 'Vanity Fair,' though the 'Reverend' John Bunyan does not mention him. One

thing is pretty certain, he did not flourish in the days of the 'Reverend Paul' or 'Reverend Peter' or 'Reverend Apollos' or 'Reverend Cephas.'" Mr. Spurgeon was on this point consistent, and refused to be addressed as the "Reverend C. H. S."

One has said that a "wrong condition, which is inward, is ever more defiling to the soul and more injurious to spiritual life than a wrong position which is outward." We can praise God for the *unsectarian condition of soul* of so many who are still held in the bonds of a *sectarian position*, whilst we mourn over the *sectarian condition of soul* of some who *boast of an unsectarian position*." We can truly praise God for the *unsectarian condition of soul* of dear C. H. Spurgeon, whilst deploring that he was, as a "Baptist," in a *sectarian position*. It is quite possible for those who profess to be in an unsectarian position to slip back into sectarianism. This can take place in more ways than one. But one way which besets us especially in these times is, while making the Word the basis of fellowship, requiring an "understanding of, and submission to, truths which God has not made essential to fellowship." Let us beware of the spirit that finds expression in the words, "Stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou."

Let us frankly own that we have miserably failed in acting out the mind and will of the Lord; but in doing so let us not forget that failure in carrying out New Testament principles can never alter or affect the principles. Let us also remember that our basis of church fellowship must not be limited by any attainment in knowledge or faith; and may we constantly seek to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, not insisting on uniformity of judgment on "minor" points, but "whereto we have already attained let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."

A. M.

WE tremble to see Israel so soon connecting Mount Sinai and the Golden Calf; but how much worse is it to connect Mount Calvary and the world.

THE beam that blinds a man to his own faults is a microscope to the mote of his neighbour.

THE flesh profiteth nothing, either morally, intellectually, or religiously.

## CHRISTIAN BAPTISM:

THE PLAIN TEACHING OF THE WORD OF GOD, WITH  
A REVIEW OF CERTAIN TEACHINGS COMMONLY  
STYLED "HOUSEHOLD BAPTISM."

III.—THE PRACTICE OF THE APOSTLES IN  
REGARD TO BAPTISM.

AS to the practice, we have it revealed in  
"The Acts."

Peter introduces the ordinance on the day of Pentecost. To the Jews who were pricked in their hearts, he says, "Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts ii. 38). To Peter was given the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven—that is, the authority to open the door—and in Acts ii. he opens the door to the Jews by the preaching of the Word, and in Acts x. to the Gentiles. In his sermon to the Jews, he says, "Repent, and be baptised unto the remission of sins"; and in his discourse to the Gentiles he says, "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts x. 43). So if we permit Peter to explain himself, we see that baptism is with him an outward profession of faith in Christ. Their repentance was clearly linked with the faith that the Jesus whom they had crucified was Lord and Christ. It was as believers in Him, and owning His authority, they were baptised, and the Holy Spirit was given as a seal of their faith. "They that gladly received His word were baptised" is the simple declaration that follows.

In Acts viii. 12 we find this practice still carried out. "When they believed Philip preaching . . . they were baptised, both men and women."\* But one comes on the scene who believed, and was baptised, but his belief was not of the heart. Although he had made a profession, he manifested his unreality, and is told by Peter, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter." But it was on the profession of his faith he had been baptised, as with the others.

In the 38th verse of this chapter we have the baptism of the eunuch. The eunuch

was manifestly a believer. The 37th verse is admitted by all to be an interpolation, and really adds nothing to the testimony of scripture. It is generally believed to have been added in the second century, and is only important in this, that it confirms the testimony of Neander, the great German church historian, that believers' baptism was the faith and practice of the church in the first three centuries. To those who say that they would be believers in believers' baptism if this verse were in the original, I answer: If they can reject the plain, positive teaching of the Epistles, the explicit declaration of the Commissions, and the practice so clearly laid down in the Acts, neither would they be persuaded if a hundred more plain scriptures faced them. A following of any unscriptural theory always leads to moral blindness and inability to understand the simplest declarations of God's Word.

We next come to Paul's baptism in Acts ix. 17-19. He was baptised as one who had met the Lord, and had received his sight. In Acts xxii. 16, Ananias said to him, "Arise, and be baptised, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." This has been used by some to teach baptismal salvation. Others, to evade the difficulty, have made forgiveness of sins, as connected with baptism, to be only governmental. But we do not need to accept either the baptismal salvation, which is utterly false, or the other theory, which really evacuates the teaching of baptism as given in the Epistles. Peter has definitely stated in his Epistle that baptism is a figure; and surely when Paul related this conversation in Acts xxii., after his own clear utterances of the gospel and explicit statements as to baptism, he must have taken it up in the figurative sense.

In the case of the Gentiles in Acts x., we find that whereas the Jews received the Holy Spirit after baptism, and often by the laying on of hands of the Apostles, the Gentiles received the Holy Spirit before baptism, and this seems to be the rule as connected with the Gentiles. We do not have a single instance of a Gentile believer having to wait for the Holy Spirit until after baptism. It will be noticed in all the cases of baptism with Peter, it was on the ground of professed faith. There are no children nor households mentioned.

\* Not children, or unconscious infants. In the miracle of loaves it was "men, women, and children." Philip knew nothing of infant baptism.



## OUR FAILURE AND OUR NEED.

Brief Report of Conference at Lurgan.

THE Annual Conference of Believers was held at Lurgan on the 4th, 5th, and 6th of January. As is the custom at these Conferences, the first two days were given up to prayer and waiting on God, and intended especially for those who are engaged in the ministry of the Word and those who care for the flock.

These two days were

### MEMORABLE SEASONS.

There was much real humbling before God, and confession, in view of the present sad state of things in the Church of God; with real thanksgiving to God for His mercies vouchsafed in opening doors in the North of Ireland, as at Ballymena, Belfast, and other places. There was also much prayer and humbling for the assemblies which were passing through trial, with earnest supplication to the Lord to preserve His gathered saints in Ireland and elsewhere in the simplicity which has hitherto characterised them.

Two thoughts were very prominent all through these days.

### OUR FAILURE.

FIRST.—Our failure in seeking to build up the saints gathered to the Lord's name, to the almost total neglect of the other members of the body of Christ. It was pressed home upon our hearts and consciences that, while we are to walk the narrow path of obedience to the Word of God, we are to lay in our hearts the foundation of the whole Church of God, and thus reap the blessing of Haggai ii. 18, 19. Connected with this was pressed home the need of fervent love and the compassions of God in our dealings and intercourse with the children of God in the denominations and the unsaved, while speaking in real faithfulness and not withholding the whole truth of God, but ministering in "wisdom, love, and faith," as tersely expressed by one beloved brother.

### THE NEED OF BEING "FILLED."

The SECOND thought was the need of being individually and continuously "filled with the

Holy Spirit." It was shown that if we sought the Lord's face diligently, and opened our hearts to Him for the removal of all obstacles, the hindrances would be removed; and as the water flowed unhindered from the laver in the temple through the mouths of the oxen, so the Spirit's power would be manifested in "the rivers of living water" flowing uninterruptedly from the deep places of the believer's soul. It was shown also that "being filled with the Spirit" was manifested in the one thus filled being occupied with Christ; that in Luke i. and ii. those "filled" were righteous in their lives, and their speech was Christ and His glories; and that the servant in Gen. xxiv. (the type of the Holy Spirit) ever spoke of

"MY MASTER."

Thus by the Spirit's power we realised an opened heavens, and the living person of the Son of God, on the throne of God, with His hands ever uplifted in blessing on His people.

At the closing prayer meeting (which was another instance of the best wine reserved to the last) our beloved brother William M'Lean gave some touching experiences connected with his ministry during the last twenty years in the North of Ireland, and also gave an account of how the Lord prepared his way to go to New Zealand. It

"HELPED OUR FAITH"

much to see how simple waiting on God, without any recourse to man at all, brought the answer from a faithful God. We are sure our dear brother will have the united prayers of God's people that his visit to New Zealand shall be for great blessing to many souls.

The public meeting in the afternoon was one of real power. "The filling of the Spirit" was the theme, and was taken up in its different aspects by nine brethren, and leaving us after all, so vast is the subject, at the threshold. May its *reality* be ours!

One great cause of thanksgiving was the being brought safely through the crisis of typhus fever of Dr. Darling. His cheery presence was much missed, but all will rejoice that he is now in a fair way to restoration of health, and thus he will be spared to the Lord's people, to whom he has been such a help in times past.

J. J. S.

## Correspondence.

To the Editor of *The Witness*.

### SPITALFIELDS JEWISH MISSION CHAPEL.

AT the invitation of our brother in Christ, Mr. I. I. Aschkenasi, a number of friends from the various London meetings gathered in the above Chapel, in Brick Lane, on Thursday evening, the 9th February, 1893, for praise and prayer in commemoration of the opening of the building, and the extension of the work amongst the Jews.

Most of the brethren and sisters assembled at six o'clock for tea, and a very happy season of greeting and fellowship was enjoyed until seven o'clock, when our brother Mr. J. W. Jordan gave out a hymn, after which Mr. Aschkenasi stated the purpose of the meeting, and he also referred to the work, recounting the various meetings that were held in the building during the week—the distribution of soup and bread to the starving Jews, and the preaching of the Gospel to them; the precious service that Mrs. Aschkenasi was carrying on amongst the Jewesses in the Mother's Meeting, and visiting from house to house; the earnest labour of many Christian workers on Saturday afternoons amongst the Jewish children, some of whom they could not find room for, as they had not sufficient workers, and for this he invited help. He also was able to speak of many sons of Israel there present with them that evening, who had through the work been brought to a knowledge of Jesus, the Nazarene, as their true Messiah.

Two or three brethren led in prayer and thanksgiving, and then our brother J. W. Jordan spoke, referring to the time when he first met Mr. Aschkenasi at a Leominster Conference, soon after he came to England; and from the commencement of the work in Brick Lane he had audited the accounts, and could, therefore, heartily commend this service for God, as our brother sought to maintain it in simple dependence upon God and not by advertisements for funds. Looking at the Scriptures, we found that whilst God was not in this dispensation saving the Jews as a nation, yet He was converting individuals, and that the Bride of Christ was being formed of Jew and Gentile alike. And further, it was noticeable that when a Jew was converted to God he oftentimes became a most ardent and acceptable evangelist in winning souls, because of his knowledge of the Word and his zeal in the work. And then, beholding the growth of the labour there, through the blessing of God upon it, he exhorted our brother Aschkenasi to take courage and go forward.

Brethren again led in thanksgiving and prayer, and then General Halliday read the 25th Psalm, commenting specially upon the last verse, "Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles."

And after applying it to a future day, also used it in application to their present need as individuals of a Redeemer.

After prayer, our brother in Christ Mr. Max Reich spoke, and referring to 1 Cor. xiv. 21, he said that it was written, "With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people." And doubtless this had reference to the Gentiles carrying the Gospel to the Jews; and whilst he had great love for his brethren according to the flesh, yet he felt that he had been called to minister to the uncircumcision, as our brother Aschkenasi had been called to minister to the circumcision.

Our brother Mr. Grant having given out a hymn and spoken a few words of help and encouragement, after further thanksgiving and prayer the happy evening was brought to a close.

All communications respecting this work amongst the Lord's ancient people—which is highly commended by all who know it—should be addressed to Mr. I. I. Aschkenasi, 52 Alconbury Road, Clapton, N.

## Questions and Answers.

Replies to appear in the next number require to be sent in not later than 15th of present month, and so on; the 15th of the month being always the latest to which we can defer making up for press.

### Replies are invited to the following:—

Is it desirable at the present time that the Lord's people should all speak the same thing, and be of the same mind and in the same judgment in reference to the meanings of the Scriptures? If so, please explain how it could be brought about.

Considering that New Testament fastings were occasional and not continuous exercises of self-denial (Acts xiv. 23, 1 Cor. vii. 5, 2 Cor. xi. 27), would it be unscriptural and inexpedient in these days to exhort believers to engage in a period (say a week) of self-denial, the proceeds to be given to the poor saints, or the Lord's servants?

Should the laying on of hands, as practised in the early church, be continued now?

Please explain through the *Witness* what the scapegoat sets forth in Scripture?

What is the special significance of our Lord's words: "Remember Lot's wife" (Luke xvii. 32)?

Explain the earthen vessel and running water of Lev. xiv. 5—"And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water."

Is there any difference between elders under the law and elders under grace, or Old Dispensation elders and New Dispensation elders?

What will be the *object* of the war in heaven? (Rev. xii. 7). Will Satan oppose his being ejected? Is it not on his being cast out into the earth that he will raise up the antichrist. What heaven is it he will be ejected from?

## WHAT IS PROPHECY?

**QUESTION 435.**—Please explain the meaning of the word “prophecy,” in 1 Cor. xiv., especially verse 39; also in Acts ii., verses 17, 18.

**Ans. A.**—1. To prophesy is to predict.

2. To make a declaration under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, whether predictive or not.

Of this latter (2) is the “to prophesy” of 1 Cor. xiv. What it is—or will be—that is referred to in Acts ii., Joel ii., no one can tell, because the events mentioned in Joel ii. are yet future.

Joel’s prophecy (ch. ii.), is connected with the “day of the Lord” (ch. ii. 1-11). The Pentecostal manifestation of the presence of the Holy Spirit was connected with the inauguration of the dispensation of the grace of GOD (see John xvi. 7-11; Luke xxiv. 49; Acts i. 4-8, ii. 1-4). Joel’s prophecy is referred to by Peter to show that such an outpouring of the Spirit was in the purpose of God; but he does not say that Joel’s prophecy is fulfilled. On the contrary, Joel’s prophecy is still future, and ch. ii. refers to “the day of the Lord” (verses 1-11), and Jehovah’s intervention on behalf of His people Israel, and their restoration. And then—“And it shall come to pass *afterward* that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,” &c. (v. 28); and in v. 29—“*In those days* will I pour out My Spirit”; and then follow details of “the day of the Lord.”

In Ezek. xxxix.—after the overthrow of Gog, prince of Meshech and Tubal, and his hosts—at v. 22, to end of chapter, we read of the restoration of the “whole house of Israel,” concluding with—“Neither will I hide My face any more from them: for I have poured out My Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD.”

Now, 1 Cor. xiv., also xii.—In order to prevent misunderstanding these two chapters, something that is rarely, if ever, mentioned has to be distinctly remembered and kept before one’s mind, viz.: *At that time* the “order of the house of God” was only being introduced. There was not, in those days, any New Testament for believers to read and meditate upon, but they were dependent upon an order of men called prophets, who received direct divine communications (xiv. 29, 30, 31), that would instruct, edify, and exhort and comfort them (v. 3). To be a prophet in those days was of more importance and value than the miraculous, or acquired ability to speak in foreign languages (v. 5); hence, in verse 39, “Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy.” But apostles and prophets have passed away. They fulfilled their course (see 1 Cor. xii. 28, xiii. 8; Eph. ii. 20). The first and the second order of gifts given for laying the foundation, and for the edification of believers when assembled together, have passed away; the third in order remains, “thirdly teachers” (xii. 28).

But notice v. 29, which means that *all* are not apostles, nor prophets, *nor teachers*. L. D. G.

**Editor’s Note.**—In 1 Cor. xiv. 3, while it is asserted that one who prophesies speaks unto men “to edification, to exhortation, and to comfort,” it by no means follows that all who speak to edification and comfort are prophesying. A teacher ought at all times so to speak, and yet teachers are carefully distinguished from prophets in Scripture (see Rom. xii. 6-8; 1 Cor. xii. 28; Eph. iv. 11).

The gift of the evangelist is also distinct, and so also is that of exhortation.

In 1 Cor. xiii. 8, the transitory character of this gift is referred to in contrast to the abiding character of love. This verse cannot mean that anything which God has foretold would fail to be fulfilled, but rather that the gift of prophecy would cease, and this, we believe, did take place so soon as the written revelation of God concerning the dispensation of the Church was by the pen of the apostles completed. Consequently, in 2 Tim. ii. 2, the apostle instructs that the truth, as taught by him to Timothy, should be committed to faithful men, who should be able to teach others also. Thus he anticipates the cessation of fresh prophetic revelations from God, and casts the Church in time to come upon the truth already revealed through the apostles.

Again, in 2 Peter ii. 1, there is a remarkable confirmation of this, the more conclusive because quite incidental, “There WERE false prophets,” that is to say, when there were true prophets, Satan raised up false ones—his counterfeit of the true. Even so “there SHALL BE”—not “false prophets,” but—“FALSE TEACHERS among you.” Why this change of the word from “prophets” to “teachers”? Is it not for the very reason we have been endeavouring to show, that in the future of which Peter is speaking there would be teachers for Satan to counterfeit, but not prophets?

Again it has been taught and received by most of those who have spiritual discernment and intelligence, that all the Second Epistles have a character which specially bears upon the latter times of the Church.

Is it, then, without design that there is not a single allusion in any of the Second Epistles to either New Testament prophets or to the New Testament gift of prophecy? Neither is there in the Epistle of Jude, which also bears upon the latter times.

More might be added, but surely this is enough to convince any who are willing to hear the Scriptures, that it is an utter perversion to apply Scriptures concerning the gift of prophecy to modern preaching or teaching.

The prophet was one who spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost. He was an instrument, for the time being, taken up and spoken through by God apart from his own understanding, and

even, in certain instances, contrary to his own will. God could choose whom He pleased, and use them as, and where, He pleased; yet, even this mysterious gift could be abused *in its exercise*, and hence the limitations imposed upon those so gifted in 1 Cor. xiv. "Let the prophets speak *two or three.*"

A dozen might be ready to utter what was in them by the Spirit; but the *Spirit's impulse* is subject to the *Lord's command*.

#### SHOULD MAJORITIES RULE?

QUESTION 436.—"The voice of a majority."—

Does 2 Cor. ii. 17, rendered by Rotherham the "majority," not favour ruling by majorities; and are we not socially and morally ruled by the voice of the majority in municipal and parliamentary affairs, affecting all our church, home, business, and general interests?

Ans. A.—What Rotherham's rendering of this passage may be, really signifies little. The R. V. is strictly literal, "*the many.*" It well describes the state of the vast many, or the majority, if you like, in the world around us, but has nothing whatever to do with ruling, whether in one way or another, does not touch the question. I. G. H.

Ans. B.—Divine righteousness, and not the will of a majority, or minority, is that which gives power to any action of the saints on earth. The divine judgment upon the conduct of the one referred to, may be found in 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10; and in chap. v. the saints are taught that their judgment of such conduct must be the same. In chap. vi., no fornicator shall inherit the kingdom of God; and in chap. v., no fornicator is to have a place among the saints on earth. The "*many,*" therefore, who inflict the punishment are the saints gathered in the name, and with the power, of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to His own Word. "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven." The many were in this case in favour of keeping this man in their midst until they were told that the place for such persons was outside.

After a time it became evident that this one was not a sow turned again to her wallowing in the mire, but a true sheep of Christ's flock that had fallen into the mire, and thereby been defiled. The many are then exhorted in the same name, and by the same power, to forgive and comfort him. But in both cases the many simply carry out the divine command given through the apostle Paul.

Editor's Note.—We do not accept Rotherham's rendering "the majority" as the best. As stated in answer A, "the many" is strictly literal. See the same word in Acts xiii. 31, xxviii. 23; 2 Cor. iv. 15, ix. 2; Heb. vii. 23, and other such passages where "majority" would be inadmissible.

But all that can be deduced from the passage

is, that the apostolic injunction to "punish" the offender by having no company with him and excluding him wholly from the fellowship of the assembly, was not obeyed by all.

It is evident that there was a strong party in the Corinthian church that was against Paul, questioning his authority as an apostle, and imputing to him evil motives. It is most probable that such did not conform to the divine sentence. But what has that to do with "ruling by majorities"? If some did not obey, does that invalidate the action of those who do?

And it is to be noticed that the assembly is not instructed to "put away" those who did not indorse the judgment of the Lord. Nevertheless, the apostle calls for further self-judgment, and holds out the prospect of His coming Himself to deal with the unfaithful (see xii. 20, 21, and xiii. 1, 2).

#### HEAVEN AND EARTH UNITED.

QUESTION 437.—What are we to understand by the "glory of the celestial" and the "glory of the terrestrial" in 1 Cor. xv. 40?

Ans. A.—The argument is designed to show that God is, *in the new creation, in Christ*, creating a people fit to live in heavenly places. Verse 50 shows the utter unfitness of the *natural* body to be there. Verses 51-57 show the way God designs to render us who believe personally fit to live there. Verses 39-41 are only illustrations of the differences which exist in the natural creation, and which show out the possible way of God in giving a form and life after even death. So verse 49 assures us we *shall* have a new being capable of enjoying the new abode and incapable of sinning; and of this the Holy Spirit is the present pledge (2 Cor. i. 22, v. 5). A. O. M.

Editor's Note.—It is an essential part of God's great plan, that there shall be a witness to the power of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, both in heaven and earth. The Lord Jesus has two great titles, "Son of Man" and "Son of God." As Son of Man He inherits the earth, and this is His title in connection with His coming again to take possession of His kingdom in the earth.

As Son of God, His place is the Father's house, therefore, heavenly, not earthly. As the First-born among many brethren, He has gone to His heavenly glory, and is pledged as the Captain of their salvation to bring them there too.

Thus in the new creation as in the old, there will be the heavens and the earth; a heavenly people, fitted to dwell in the heavens, and an earthly people, fitted for their inheritance upon the earth. Heaven and earth thus united in Him who is the antitype of the ladder Jacob saw, will bear a two-fold testimony to the glory of redemption.

Reply to correspondence on "The Christian and Politics" is crushed out this month, but will appear (*D.V.*) in our next.—Ed.



## THE TRIUNE GOD.

**T**HOUGH the above phrase is not found in scripture, the truth expressed by it shines out so clearly upon every page of the inspired volume that no one who has eyes to see can fail to perceive it. It is not indeed enunciated there in any abstract manner, as it often is, and correctly enough, in creeds and confessions of faith; but it is a fundamental truth of divine revelation, and everywhere glows with the warmth of life and love. In these days, when the dignity of the Christ of God and the very existence of the Holy Spirit are on every hand either denied or ignored, we cannot too often, or too simply, seek to impress upon Christians, and especially upon the young, the importance of holding fast the great doctrines of the true and proper Godhead of the Son and of the Spirit, and the distinct personality of both the Son and the Spirit in the glorious Godhead. It is a truth that goes to the very root of the mighty work of redemption, and the inspiration of the sacred Scriptures.

We should, moreover, not be content to hold this great doctrine simply *as a doctrine*, to be proved by texts of scripture when challenged, but see to it that it is a reality to our *hearts*—a reality that moulds all our thoughts, our prayers, and our worship. In this way, and in this alone, will it become so essentially a part of our very selves that no spiritual pirates shall be able to rob us of it, let their arguments be ever so specious. If love be not a reality to the heart of the loved one, it is nothing; and we surely cannot know the *love* of the Father (2 Cor. xiii. 14), and of the Son (Gal. ii. 20), and of the Spirit (Rom. xv. 30), without knowing the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Spirit* who love us. It is with the object of helping young disciples to a more intelligent grasp of these cardinal verities of the faith, once for all delivered to the saints, that this brief paper is written; but we do well to remember that as the sun in the heavens is seen only by its own light, so God can be known only as He reveals Himself, and this not simply *objectively* as by His Son (John i. 18), and in the Scriptures which testify of Him (John v. 39), but *subjectively* by the teaching of His Holy Spirit who unfolds

the written Word. Hence it is to the one who is diligent enough to seek and search for wisdom, and humble enough to lift up the voice and cry for understanding as one who cannot obtain it by searching alone, that the promise is given, "Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God" (Prov. ii. 3-6).

God revealed Himself to Israel as the one true God, in contrast with the many false gods of the nations, and of this *one God* they were to be witnesses. But in His very first utterance to Israel from Sinai, "I am Jehovah thy God," and in the great statement which every Jewish boy was required to learn, "Hear, O Israel: Jehovah, our God, is one Jehovah," and frequently elsewhere the word used for God is plural, and seems to intimate the truth so explicitly revealed in later days. And as, with the light of revelation, we look back to the period before God had begun to manifest Himself in any act of creation, we must think of the Godhead in essential being and uncreated glory—the Father, Son, and Spirit in a wondrous unspeakable *fellowship*—eternally blessed and self-sufficing. This fellowship, ever subsisting, and in which all divine counsels and purposes were formed, has been, and must be, expressed in all the actions of God; and the holy exercise of tracing out the expression of it will tend to our profit and the establishment of our souls, at least if we are enabled to consider it with the lowly mind ever to be found in those who really "inquire in His temple." The following headings may help any who would more fully pursue this interesting subject:—

1. *Creation*.—In addition to the word, "Let us make man" (Gen. i. 26), we have express mention of Father, Son, and Spirit in the work of creation. It is spoken of as the work of *God* in Acts xvii. 24; Rom. i. 19, 20; and Heb. xi. 2. It is affirmed concerning the *Son* that "all things were created by Him and for Him" (Col. i. 16; John i. 3). It is also declared that "the *Spirit of God* moved [or brooded—producing life] upon the face of the waters," and "by His Spirit He hath garnished the heavens" (Job xxvi. 13).

2. *God's dealings with Israel*.—*God* sent Moses to deliver Israel, but He did so "by the hand of the angel" who could declare His

own name to be "Jehovah," and of whom it is said "The Angel of His presence saved them" (Ex. iii., vi.; Acts vii.; Isa. lxiii.). But if Moses wrought mighty works in Jehovah's name it was because He "put His Holy Spirit within him" (Isa. lxiii. 11; Num. xi. 17), even as they who wrought the Tabernacle were filled "with the Spirit of God," that "good Spirit" being also given to the people to "instruct them" (Ex. xxxv. 31; Neh. ix. 20).

3. *The ministry of the Prophets.*—Whenever God revealed Himself to men it was by the Son, who could always speak and act as God, because He is, and ever was, "God blessed for ever" (Rom. ix. 8). It was He who appeared to Isaiah in the temple (Isa. vi.; John xii. 41), and asked the remarkable questions, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" But when God spake through men (Heb. i. 1) the instruments He chose spake from Himself as they were borne along by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. i. 21), and therefore their words are cited as the words of the Holy Spirit (Heb. iii. 7, x. 15). But seeing it was as "the Spirit of Christ" that He spake, the words which He inspired are also quoted as the words of Christ (Rom. xv. 3; Heb. x. 5-9).

4. *The Incarnation of the Word.*—When the "fulness of time" had come for the fulfilment of God's eternal purpose of grace, and the angel Gabriel was sent from His presence to announce to the chosen virgin the birth of the long-promised seed of the woman, the answer to her inquiry, "How shall this be?" was, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee" (Luke i. 35). Thus while "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman," and the Son of God took upon Himself the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, the body prepared for Him was the fruit of the creative power and wondrous skill of the Holy Spirit (Gal. iv. 4; Phil. ii. 6, 7).

5. *The public ministry of Christ.*—It was as anointed with the Holy Spirit (Luke iv. 18) that the Lord went forth on His holy ministry, having His ear opened morning by morning to the voice of Jehovah, and so speaking what He received from the Father (Isa. l. 4; John xii. 50). Of His works it is said that God wrought them by Him, that He wrought them by the Holy Spirit, and that in working them

He "manifested forth His glory" (John xiv. 10; Acts xi. 22; Matt. xii. 28; John ii. 11).

6. *The death of Christ.*—This is explicitly traced to the Father, who "spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all," for "it pleased Jehovah to bruise Him," and it was He who gave the command, "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd" (Zech. xiii. 7). Yet He laid down His own life, offering Himself without spot to God, and it was "through the Eternal Spirit" that He did so (John x. 18, xix. 30; Heb. ix. 14).

7. *The ministry of the Apostles.*—We see at Pentecost the gracious fulfilment of the promise of John xvi. 13-15; and in the calling and service of the apostle Paul we have a beautiful expression of the perfect fellowship of the Godhead. Saul was definitely called by the risen Christ, and was under the immediate care and guidance of the Lord (Acts xxiii. 11, xxvi. 13-18; 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9), yet he says that God called him by His grace to reveal His Son in him that he might preach Him among the Gentiles (Gal. i. 15, 16), and at the same time he was subject to the direction of the Holy Spirit by whom he was sent forth on this very mission to those who were outside Israel.

8. *The bestowal of life and sonship.*—It is "God who quickeneth all things" and "even so the Son quickeneth whom He will," while every quickened soul "is born of the Spirit" (1 Tim. vi. 13; John v. 23, iii. 5-8); and the eternal life which is the fruit of that "renewing of the Holy Spirit" is the gift of God to His people and the gift of the Good Shepherd to His sheep (Rom. vi. 23; John x. 28). In like manner the relationship which is the result of new birth links us with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is the Father who begets children to Himself; the "power" or capability to take their place as such is bestowed by the Son; while the Spirit alone enables us to cry, "Abba, Father" (John i. 12, 13; Gal. iv. 6; Rom. viii. 15). And the resurrection which will put us into the full possession of sonship with all its glories, and bring us into the enjoyment of eternal life in all its perfectness, is the joint act of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit (1 Cor. vi. 14; John vi. 40-54; Rom. viii. 11).

Much might be added, but these few suggestions will show how large and fruitful is the subject.

W. H. B.

## CHRISTIAN BAPTISM:

THE PLAIN TEACHING OF THE WORD OF GOD, WITH  
A REVIEW OF CERTAIN TEACHINGS COMMONLY  
STYLED "HOUSEHOLD BAPTISM."

III.—THE PRACTICE OF THE APOSTLES IN  
REGARD TO BAPTISM (SECOND PAPER).

AS to the Philippian jailer, much pains have been taken to show that when he rejoiced, and believed with all his house, the verb is in the singular. And so, when we say "Our neighbour took a drive, with all his family," because the verb is in the singular it follows that perhaps his family didn't go at all! The fact is, the two cases of household baptism here are clearly according to the teaching and practice of Peter, which Paul received; and the language used shows plainly it was baptism on individual responsibility. "And was baptised, he and all his," not as our household-baptist friends would say, "He was baptised, and then had his family baptised." He *was* baptised, they *were* baptised, and they all believed and rejoiced together. And a blessed and refreshing sight it must have been to the dear servant of Christ!

The next instance of baptism in the Acts, in no unmistakable terms, confirms all we have gone over. "Many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptised" (Acts xviii. 8). How simple. They heard. They believed. They were baptised. And this is all the more instructive, as it was in this very place, and among these people, that Paul refused to do the baptism personally, for fear of making "Paulites." (1 Cor. i.). He follows the spirit and principles of the Great Commission; and although he did not perform the ordinance, he saw that it was done. It is, therefore, a complete refutation of the charge, that Paul was careless as to the baptism of those who believed through his preaching.

In Acts xix., the last instance of baptism mentioned in the Acts, we have an instructive lesson as to the difference between John's baptism and Christian baptism. A number of disciples were found having had only the baptism of John and not yet having the Spirit. Paul informs them that John's baptism was to prepare the people to believe on Jesus, when He came. They, when they heard this, were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus—that

is, having accepted Him, they acknowledged Him. And the best thing that can be said of infant or household baptism, which takes in infants and unbelievers, is that many of those who do so baptise them, do it in the spirit of John's baptism. But this scripture teaches that it is a great fallacy to suppose that baptism before belief is in any sense of the word to be considered "Christian." It was a careful consideration of this scripture that led me, after two years' patient inquiry and exercise of soul before God, to suffer myself to be baptised in scriptural order—that is, after faith. Sincerity is a good thing, but there is a sincerity of superstition as well as a sincerity of faith, and for a parent to baptise his children because of belief in a human theory, is after all only superstition, not faith. Faith is based on the bare and living Word of God. For many years I taught and practised household or infant baptism; but when in the providence of God there came a breaking up in the fellowship of the Christians I was with, I was turned more from man to the Living God. And as I searched the Word of God, seeking wisdom from Him only, it became manifest to me that my cherished views on baptism were only theories of man's invention. It was painful and humbling to have to own that I had been listening to the voice of man, but I have been recompensed in the increased light and fellowship with the Lord I have enjoyed. My own failure to discern God's mind should surely teach me forbearance with my dear brethren who hold what I have been compelled to reject, and at the same time an earnest desire that they may be led to a careful re-examination of their views in the light of God's presence. It has been the simple study of God's Word alone that has compelled me, in order to maintain a good conscience, to reject the teachings of household or infant baptism.

One of the most painful things to me about these teachings is, that many of the Christians who hold them hold them because coming from a great teacher. It is man's voice, and therefore the majority cannot explain why they hold them. Over and over again it has been said to me, "Mr. — and Mr. — hold it; and do you think they can be mistaken?" This is always the effect of a human system of teaching. It makes those who receive it

dependent, not on the Spirit of God and the Word, but on those who expound the teaching, and so man takes the place that belongs to the Spirit. I regret to have to say these things, but I know they are true, and it is in order to lead to real exercise of soul on the part of all that I give expression to them. There never was a day that we need more freedom from man than to-day. We can surely give honour to whom honour is due, but it must be GOD'S VOICE that we hear.

### LESSONS FROM ISRAEL'S REMNANT DAYS.

IN the opening of the book of Ezra we are told it was, "that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia," so that he made a proclamation giving liberty to all the Jews throughout all his dominion to return to Jerusalem and to build the house of the Lord. In the same chapter we read: "Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, with all them whose spirit God had raised, to go up to build the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem."

Thus we see that this restoration, like all other revivals and restorations, had its source in God Himself. He first touched the heart of king Cyrus, and then He touched the hearts of His people and made many of them willing to leave all their associations in Babylon, and return to Jerusalem. The LORD had said, concerning the house which Solomon had built, "Mine eyes and Mine heart shall be there perpetually" (1 Kings ix. 3). And the hearts of the returning remnant were where the Lord had recorded His name. What a contrast there was between this feeble remnant going up from Babylon and the whole congregation in their march through the wilderness from Egypt to Canaan. They had now no cloud to lead them by day, nor pillar of fire by night; these they had sinned away. They had still the same faithful God to guide and guard them, but they had grieved away His *manifested presence*, and that was never restored to them.

From what is recorded of the remnant in

the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, they would appear to have taken the place of confession and weakness. When the nation was in its primeval glory, not only every tribe but every man was "to pitch by his own standard" (Num. ii. 2). And when the camp "set forward," it was "every man in his place by their standards" (verse 17). There does not appear on the part of the remnant to have been any attempt to *reconstruct* the "camp of Israel." They were too conscious of their own sin and failure to attempt the work of reconstruction. They took the place of weakness and therein lay their power and their safety. While the LORD extended mercy to them and brought back a remnant to the land of promise, it was not His purpose to restore Israel to their place among the nations. They only enjoyed their liberty by permission of a Gentile king. There was no restoration of the nation, as such, to its primitive power and glory. Israel had sinned grievously and persistently, and whilst the LORD in grace had pardoned their sin, yet, in His righteous government He never restored to them the power and privileges they had lost by sin. There is in all this a solemn lesson for those who in the present age have been seeking to return to the simplicity of church order, as it is to be found in the New Testament. Like Israel, the Church has sinned, and sinned against greater privileges and clearer light than ever Israel had; and has lost her place and power by sin. And has there not been on the part of all of us a sad failing to own our common sin before the Lord? And are not all attempts to reconstruct the Church as it appeared in early days a practical denial of the complete ruin the devil has made through man's unfaithfulness?

But to return to the remnant of Israel. Whilst the LORD never restored to them much that they had lost by sin, He appears to have taken a special delight in that feeble remnant; for He not only numbers them all, every family by name, but He *recounts* them, the genealogy in Neh. vii. being, with very little variation, a repetition of the one given in Ezra ii. Just as if the heart of Jehovah had delighted to go over them again, family by family. And whilst there is no record now kept on earth, are we not from this warranted

to conclude that He is now keeping a record of those who have returned, and are returning, out of spiritual Babylon to gather around the precious name and person of the Lord Jesus Christ? It cannot be that our God will attach less importance to faithfulness to his truth and to the ordinances of his house in the present age than He did in that day.

There are several things which characterised the remnant of Israel on their return from Babylon to Jerusalem which are worthy of notice. First, their return was purely *voluntary*. There was no pressure put upon them beyond the grace of God touching the hearts of the individuals who returned. It was all they "whose spirit God had raised" (Ezra i. 5). Again, it was those who were "minded of their own *free will*" who were to go up (chap. vii. 13). Has not this divine principle been sadly overlooked, or rather violated, by the way in which many dear saints have been pressed to take a "position" for which they had neither light nor faith? and failing this, hard feelings have been cherished towards them, and hard words have been spoken about them, simply because they refused to go beyond their *own* light.

Another trait in the character of this remnant was the godly fear and reverence with which they read and listened to the "book of the law of Moses." Nehemiah viii. would be a profitable study, going over it verse by verse. How when "Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people," "all the people stood up." "And when he blessed the LORD, the great God, all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground" (verses 5, 6). Notice, also, how they "read in the book of the law distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused the people to understand the reading" (verse 8). Also mark the effect it had upon them, "All the people wept when they heard the words of the law" (verse 9). Then, after they were broken down into contrition by the truth, they were filled with joy, "because they had understood the words that were declared unto them" (verse 12). How little of this spirit there is now-a-days among us who almost boast of "going by the book," and only the book.

Also how careful these godly souls were to

observe all they found "written in the law." They kept the "feast of booths" which had not been kept "since the days of Joshua the son of Nun." Whatever they found written in the book they went and joyfully obeyed. Let us also mark the thoroughness of their confession. "The seed of Israel separated themselves from *all strangers*,"—not from one another—"and they *stood* and confessed their sins," and not only their own sins, but the "*iniquities of their fathers*." And all this was done in self-judgment. For "they stood in their place, and read in the book of the law of the LORD their God one fourth part of the day; and another fourth part they confessed, and worshipped the Lord their God" (Neh. ix. 2, 3). Has there not been a tendency among us to make much of what would please and puff up, and to pass over truth that tends to humble and lay us low before God?

Very much might be said on this subject, but I wish only to point out some things that may help us to find out how far we have drifted away from a condition of heart which is pleasing to God (see Isaiah lxvi. 2).

Another thing is worthy of notice. The remnant had no priest with "Urim and Thummim" (Ezra ii. 63, Neh. vii. 65). This privilege or power of getting the mind of the LORD directly from Himself had been lost by the sin of the nation, and was never restored. The remnant not only did not possess this power, but they never *pretended* to have it. They took the place of confession and owned the righteousness of God in dealing with them as He had done (Ezra ix. 13, Daniel ix. 3-19). Would it not be well and becoming for us in these days of such humiliating failure to seek grace to imitate the example of these godly men?

In conclusion, let us observe again that this remnant of godly Jews on their journey from Babylon to Jerusalem never attempted such a thing as the reconstruction of the camp of Israel. Nor after their return did they profess to possess privileges which their fathers had sinned away. They took the low place and accepted their punishment. There was no pretention to exercise a power or an authority which they did not possess. But this lowliness of heart never made them less careful to carry out all they "found written in the Book."

May God give us grace to imitate these godly traits in their character. And whilst endeavouring to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3), let us beware of doing so in a spirit which would be a practical denial of "our own sin and the iniquities of our fathers." Whilst seeking to cultivate fellowship with all the children of God as far as we can without surrendering the truth, and specially seeking to walk in manifested communion with all those who are walking in the truth and keeping the ordinances as they were delivered unto us, let us never attempt with our puny hands to repair the present ruin of the Church as to its manifestation. Let us rather seek to walk with unspotted garments in the midst of it, stretching out a helping hand to all and every fellow-saint within our reach, and with expectant hearts waiting for the coming of the "Bright and Morning Star."

G. A.

### EGYPT.

LAND of departed grandeur, ruined fane,  
Of broken column and deserted plain!  
Colossal pillars reared to Carnac's praise,  
Attest the glory of thy ancient days!  
Those pyramidal structures first conceived  
In giant minds, by skilful art achieved  
With mathematic measurement precise:  
Mysterious marvels, towering to the skies—  
God-like productions of the olden time,  
Proudly defiant of both age and clime.  
Gigantic sculptures scattered o'er  
The waste, appear like shades from days of yore,  
Each a majestic sentinel of stone,  
By Desolation set upon her throne;  
O'er heap and tomb to hold viceregal sway,  
Their selves absolved meanwhile from like decay.  
Where are thy many gods Egyptia, now,  
To whom adoring thou didst daily bow?  
Had *they* no power their worshippers to save,  
Or stem destruction's overwhelming wave?  
No; what to Nature's eye seemed fair and bright  
Were but the watches of a pagan night;  
Only faint glimmers now and then hadst thou,  
Of the true light which yet shall grace thy brow.  
Thou wast a shelter in thy days of youth  
To those entrusted with the Word of truth.  
Jehovah's people found in thee a home,  
When forced by famine from their land to roam.  
Yet was the light to Goshen much confined,  
Dense the deep darkness of thy heathen mind.  
Joseph and Moses, brilliant stars and true,  
Both shone athwart thy sky, then sank from view,

Leaving thee grovelling still in midnight gloom,  
Without one ray of hope to cheer the tomb.

What though thine arts corruption could defy,  
And from thy dead embalmed, bid her to fly?  
Though rolling centuries could not erase  
The form or features laid in costly case,  
All gem bestudded, each one ouch'd in gold  
(In latter days by plundering Arabs sold)?  
Of what avail that time should cheated be  
Since Life eternal was unknown to thee?

It was thy soil the blessed Son of God  
With trembling foot of infancy first trod.  
High honour—though unconsciously received—  
Was thine, for who within thy bounds believed  
That the young fugitive so closely pressed  
In childhood's slumber to His mother's breast,  
Was the Almighty God who formed the earth,  
Who gave sun, moon, and stars their wondrous birth?  
Yet so it was, and thus His will was done,  
Who said "From Egypt have I called My Son."

Great promises are thine; land of the Nile,  
Hope gilds thy future! Yet a little while  
And *He* as Son of Man shall come again!  
Then from thy neck shall drop the alien chain:  
He all thy former prestige shall restore,  
And bless thy borders infinitely more  
Than at the first: for on thee light divine  
In pure effulgence radiantly shall shine!  
No more shall idol shrines upon thee rise,  
Thy people unto God shall sacrifice;  
To Israel only second shalt thou be,  
A happy nation, honoured, rich, and free.  
Of thine, when comes that bright and blessed day,  
"They are My people" shall Jehovah say.

God speed the noble band who, even now,  
Seek from thy rubbish jewels for *His* brow,  
Who came lost sinners to redeem and save,  
And His own blood the costly ransom gave.  
Who by His Spirit now is gathering in,  
From *every nation* of this world of sin,  
His Church—a people for His Name and praise,  
To reign with Him through everlasting days.  
Amongst that heavenly band, oh may there be  
A goodly multitude, Egypt, from thee.

Well might the *Coming One* be thy desire!  
Did but "That Hope" thy silent harp inspire,  
Then would the wilderness with music ring,  
One Name would vibrate on each trembling string  
The Name of "JESUS"; and thy earnest plea—  
The language of thy awakened heart would be,  
"Come quickly, King of righteousness and peace,  
Whose mighty hand alone will bring release,  
Who oil and wine in bleeding wounds will pour,  
And hush the trump of war for evermore."  
All those who love Him say "Amen, Amen,  
Come, take to Thee Thy power, O Lord, and reign."

A. W. P. S.

LANDMARKS OF THE FUTURE—IV.

## THE BLESSED HOPE OF THE CHURCH.

**N**OW we have dealt with that portion as giving clear and unmistakable promise, that there will be a return of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that at His return His people will be with Him. Now let us look at certain Scriptures as to the actual *manner* of His return, the mode in which it will take place. 1 Thess. iv. 15-17: "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (see also chap. v. 9, 10, and 1 Cor. xv. 51-54). Often the question rose in the hearts of the early Christians, as to *how* it would be, and God reveals how. "Behold, I show you a mystery," which is here unfolded. Here is the mode: the Lord Himself shall come to claim His beloved ones, mortality shall give place to immortality, and corruption to incorruption, and in one grand, glorious body they shall rise, not needing a whirlwind or chariot of fire, like Elijah, but in the calm majesty of divine power the Lord comes to take them to be with Himself for ever. Now, mark how the Lord afresh taught His disciples through an angel the same truth. Acts i. 9-11: "And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And, while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." No doubt they watched Him with aching hearts to lose His presence. Instantly He sends the message, "This same Jesus, ... shall so come in like manner"; and it shall be when that trumpet sounds we shall lift up our heads and see, coming to meet us, the One we have longed for. "What man is this that walketh in the field to

meet us?" said Rebekah. "It is my master," said the guide; and she veiled herself, for she had never seen him before. And when the guide shall tell us that the Master has come, shall we not in like spirit bow in conscious unworthiness of such grace, but with a heart that longs for and desires the sight and presence of Him whom "having not seen, we love"? Now turn to Rev. xxii. and see His parting words. Verse 7, "Behold, I come quickly" (also, verses 10, 12, 20). When He says, "Surely I come quickly," let our hearts respond, as in this passage, "Do come quickly, Lord Jesus." She would be an ill wife, who, when her husband had been absent for years, and she was told he was close by, should say, "I don't want him to come yet." And it is an ill-conditioned church which does not answer ever to the response put into its lips by the Spirit, "Even so, do come, Lord Jesus." And it is quoted as so foretold in Heb. x. 36, 37, "Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry," as if to say, "Don't give up heart; trouble is appointed to you; but a little while and the coming One will appear, and will not tarry a moment beyond God's time." Now, notice, these are promises and explanations as to His sure advent, and as to the method of the advent.

Now, I want you to see that the early Church lived in expectancy of this, and to prove it turn to 2 Thess. i. 7-10; ii. 1-4. This passage refers to certain evident tribulation that they were passing through, and in which their thought was that it was an evidence of the speedy return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, the apostle writes in order to show them that tribulations were a sort of frequent factor in the experience of the Church, and they must not put their hands upon a certain phase of tribulation, and say, "This is the tribulation prior to the return of the Lord"; but he says, "I want to speak to you about the hope we have, the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, that you may not be troubled and think the great day of tribulation is at hand." I want you to see that the Lord's advent is not to be determined by any outward signs, that there is no premonitory, anticipatory sign of necessity that is to precede His appearing. He simply tells us, "*Watch.*" He never tells us *when*, but He never tells us anywhere that we should

look for signs preceding His advent. I want to speak with all deference to the views of others, for I know how Satan seeks to turn the minds of believers away from the main fact, to certain side issues that many believe must be prior to it. I want you to see that these things have nothing to do with the absorbing *hope* of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. He sets before us ever the possibility of His speedy return, but He never tells us *when*; but He also never tells us to go to sleep, for that a certain period of a hundred or a thousand years must elapse before the Lord Jesus returns. It is a spiritually healthy hope. While I could not dogmatise as to the time and signs, I would say it is the most spiritually healthy condition for the Church to be in, ever to be longing for, and expectant of, the coming of her blessed Lord. Now, the minds of many of the Lord's people have been turned aside from the proper hope of the Lord's return, and made to say, "I can't understand prophecy; and if Christians differ so, it is no good for me to try and study it." My friends, do you not see why Satan endeavours to raise differences as to details and tokens of the blessed hope of the Lord's return? If he robs them of the blessed hope and sets them at variance because of times and seasons, he robs them of power for testimony. So I want to impress this on the hearts of all God's people, to "*watch and pray*," and be like men that wait for their Lord. I live in daily hope of the Lord's return, and so do others. I look upon His return as possible to-day. Some think phases of persecution must come first. I don't quarrel with them and say I won't have anything to do with them. They love the Lord's return as much as I do, aye! and perhaps far more. When I want to know whether Christians long for the Lord's return, I watch to see—Are they *held by it*? Are they seeking to rescue the perishing? Are they occupied till the Lord come in the things He loveth? A busy Church is a waiting Church; an idle Church, talk as well as it may on prophecy, is not a waiting Church. What matter what views are held? Think you the Lord loveth words glibly spoken of His return, and at the same time conformity to the world? What possible power in the world is it to hold the fruth of the Lord's appearing, and not to care for the heart's desire of the Lord for the

world or the Church? So may God give us to see that the early Church longed for it, and that it is kept before us as a possibly speedy and blessed hope, and that we are never told the time of His advent, or that it is safe to take our minds off it.

Now, I want you to see that according to 1 John iii. 1-3: "Every man that hath this hope in Him *purifieth himself*, even as He is pure"; to remember that *this* is the effect on the waiting believer. He knows that when the Lord Jesus comes, He will change this "body of humiliation, and fashion it like unto the body of His glory"; and this is the most personally purifying hope possible, to be as one who looks for and longs for the Lord's advent. Again, it is written in 1 Cor. xv. 58: "*Therefore*, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." The certainty of what is there written assures the Church of the coming back again of the Lord, and of the reward of our work. So that I know it is useful and profitable to be now occupied for my Lord, putting out my talents to advantage; for in the day of His coming when He deals with me as a Master with His servant, I shall have a reward. "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light." It is nearing day by day; not that it requires time to make that salvation surer, but it requires time to make it consummated unto us. We want the consummation, we are waiting for it, and this hope makes us a different kind of beings from those who do not care for the Lord's return. So you see the effect of this is not to lead to theories and speculations which are bare and barren, but that it brings downright power and blessing to everyone held thereby.

And lastly, if I had time, I should so like to point out certain prophecies, especially in the Old Testament, that give us distant views of the great day of God, without filling in the detail that is supplied in the New Testament. As you look, for instance, at the neighbouring hills, you think there are only two or three; but as you go toward them, you find range beyond range rising, and a hill, that you thought just



over the city, has several ranges between it and the city. And so in the Old Testament, views of prophecy are given, the details are filled up in the New, and as the salvation comes nearer, the details of the intervening space become clearer, the map is filled in, so that what is not unfolded in detail in the Old Testament, is unfolded in the New. What is not given to Zechariah, so to speak, is given to Paul and John, who unfold that glory, and especially the revelation of the Lord's absolute advent, and of His reception of His own to Himself to be with Him for ever.

Now, my friends, as certainly as we are living beings to-day, so certainly will the Lord return, and I know I speak to many who *want* His return; I know I am also speaking to some who are shivering for fear He should return before they are ready. Come to Him for salvation, and once saved you will never fear or wish for delay in the coming of that One again. Let nothing hinder our faithful watching in the interim, for "At such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh." "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching."

I have failed to finish what I intended, and have only taken the prior part, but you must fill in the rest in your studies. A. O. M.

#### CONFERENCE REPORTS.

### JOTTINGS FROM HAMILTON, CANADA.

The Seventeenth Annual Conference of Christians gathered to the Name of the Lord at Hamilton, took place this year January 12-15.

**A** PRELIMINARY Prayer Meeting was held on Wednesday evening, January 11th. At this meeting, Jer. xvii. 5-7 and Isaiah ii. 22 were read by brother A. Ironside, and the truths emphasised gave to the meetings that followed much of their distinctive character of ministry. Many of the labouring brethren from various parts of Canada and the United States were present, and our God graciously vouchsafed to speak to us, and our hearts were really opened to attend to the things spoken.

On *Thursday morning*.—After much prayer, brother J. Martin read from the book of Ruth, and remarked on the "begetting," the "decision," and the "fruit" of faith, as seen in Ruth, the Moabitess. Boaz, the mighty man

of wealth, the kinsman, is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom "dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Chap. i.—Ruth's faith is begotten in the midst of poverty; verses 15-17—Her confession of faith; verse 18—Her decision; verse 22—Result: they come to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest. Chap. ii.—Faith begotten brings forth fruit in service. Ruth wants to be a labourer; verse 5—The eye of Boaz recognises service; verse 8—He gives her words of encouragement; verse 10—Their result: humiliation; verse 23—Her constancy. Chap. iii.—The patience and perseverance of faith; verse 14, first clause—Her place till the morning. Chap. iv.—The blessed reward of faith.

Brother John Smith read Jer. xiv., and spoke some plain words on the spiritual dearth that was prevalent everywhere. "Is there not a dearth?" Look across the Atlantic—see the unhappy divisions there—Look at the condition of the Church on this side the water—see the worldliness, carnality, and lack of godliness that is so manifest! Alas, we cannot close our eyes to it—"there is a dearth." In Deut. xxix., Jehovah promised plenty as the result of obedience, but the book of Ruth begins with a famine, the result of God's judgment on them, for "every man did that which was right in his own eyes; there was no king in Israel." In Amos iv. 6 we find God's object in giving "cleanness of teeth"—that is, a famine of bread—was that Israel might return unto Him. But to return. Jer. xiv. 3—So in some of our little meetings, the Lord's little ones come with their vessels empty, and go away as they came. Verse 7—The cause of the dearth is departure from God. He will bear with ignorance, but not with crookedness or secret sin. Verse 8—Why should the Lord be to us as a passer by, a wayfaring man? If we keep His words He will *abide* with us. But verse 9 tells us He is still in the midst, and His people are called by His name. What grace! In verse 20 we find acknowledgment of sin; and in verse 22 a determination to wait upon God.

On *Thursday afternoon*.—Brother Quee read 2 Tim. ii., and spoke of the calling, training, walk, fitting, and conflict of the soldier of Jesus Christ, illustrating his remarks by many incidents of military life.

Brother R. Dickson read Ezra viii. 21, and spoke of the right way that God had prepared for ourselves, our children, and our substance. He then looked at 2 Chron vi. 28 (dearth), and verse 29 (the remedy), and concluded a searching word by expressing the desire that 2 Chron. vii. 1 might be the blessed outcome of all these meetings.

Brother D. Munro read 1 Cor. x. 11.—Israel's experiences were written as types for our admonition. In Exod. xvii. 8 to the end, we have one of these experiences. In Exodus we have three aspects of the Cross: chap. xii.—The passover; chap. xiv.—The passage of the Red Sea; chap. xvii.—The smitten rock. In the book of Exodus we have the redemption of Israel, and it corresponds with the epistle to the Romans, which specially brings out the redemption of God's people now. In chap. xvii. we have the smitten rock, the cross, and the flowing water, types of the holy Spirit. Verse 8—"Then came Amalek," and the conflict begins. Moses on the mountain top, with uplifted hands gives Israel the victory, and Joshua, in the valley, led them on. Thus it is now. There is One on the mountain top—in the glory—who, with uplifted hands, is interceding for the people of God, in their conflict down here; and there is also One mighty to lead them on to victory. That victory is sure, for we shall be "more than conquerors through Him that loved us."—*Notes by W. B.*

## RETURN OF THE UNCLEAN SPIRIT.

Matt. xii. 43-45.

**T**HIS startling revelation respecting the "unclean spirit" going out of a man, walking through dry places seeking rest, but finding none, then ultimately returning and finding his house swept and garnished, bringing with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, gives us a vivid insight into the awful reality of the existence of invisible wicked spirits, and into the fact that they can and do enter into men, and take possession of their bodies.

As to the origin of these bodiless beings, scripture does not inform us. Whether they ever had bodies, or whether they were the inhabitants of the pre-Adamic earth we are not told. We are told that Satan is the "prince of the authorities of the air, the spirit that now

worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph. ii. 2). These "authorities," it would appear, are fallen angels which are set in authority over principalities and powers, now in darkness, as the "rulers of the darkness of this age," by the agency of "wicked spirits in the heavenlies" (Eph. vi. 12).

From this statement of our Lord, we learn that *individuals* are the subjects of this dreadful experience, and "so also," He says, "shall it be to this generation," *i.e.*, the *apostate nation of Israel*. And as we learn elsewhere, it shall be to *apostate Christendom*.

*First*, then, as to *individuals*. 2 Peter ii. 20 shows us that persons may escape the "pollutions of the world," *i.e.*, its outward and visible uncleanness, "through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour"—mere intellectual knowledge, of course—whilst they are still the servants of corruption, and in the end the "unclean spirit" returns in sevenfold power, when the reformed but unchanged nature returns like the "sow that was washed to its wallowing in the mire." Cases in point, alas! are not far to seek.

*Second*, as to the *nation of Israel*. The unclean spirit of idolatry and divination, with its invariable accompaniments of vice and sensuality, possessed the nation from the period of Solomon's degeneracy till they were carried away captive to Babylon, when it left them. Their history after that period being marked by a rigid observance of the letter of the law, and was "garnished" by an outward moral rectitude, which grew into the extreme Pharisical formalism, which the Lord so faithfully exposed and rebuked.

The Lord here foretells the return of the "unclean spirit" at the "end," when Israel, led by the "idol shepherd," the Antichrist, who shall spread his idols upon their battlements, shall again become "soothsayers like the Philistines," "their land shall be full of silver and gold" and "treasures," "full of horses and chariots," and also, "full of idols," and they shall worship the work of their own hands (Is. ii. 6-8).

But the Lord shall come "and the idols He shall utterly abolish" (v. 18). "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness. And it shall

come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land; and also I will cause the prophets and the *unclean spirit* to pass out of the land" (Zech. xiii. 1, 2).

*Third*, as to Christendom. No one can deny that Christianity has exerted a moral influence on the nations. The unclean spirit of the worship of the gods of lust, love, war, &c., has been displaced. True, but all this "sweeping" and "garnishing" of Christendom is merely external and superficial, and therefore temporary. Are there not indications of a return to the demon worship, darkness, and dissoluteness, which characterised Paganism. The old Pagan world had two marks upon it, viz.: *dissoluteness* and *darkness*.

#### I.—DISSOLUTENESS.

They were devoted to pleasure and dissipation; wild and wanton, lewd and luxurious, their lusts were their gods, and unrestrained gratification of the senses was their glory and virtue. Rom. i. furnishes their history and judgment. And is not this advocated now? True, not as rude barbarians would do it, but with an intellectual and philosophic air of refinement and religiousness, which talks plausibly about physical and natural laws, and the socialism of humanity. Casting off the restraints of God's law, denying its divine claims, men are become "vain in their reasonings," "worshipping and serving the creature rather than the Creator"; nay, the doctrine is gradually spreading that man himself is a part of God, that God is a diffused Being, not having a personal existence or exercising a single will. When men come to regard their own desires as supreme, the predicted marks of the last days will be complete, some of which are "lovers of their own selves," "incontinent," "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God." Thus, the last state of Christendom will be worse than the first.

#### II.—DARKNESS.

This was the second mark of old Paganism. They asked but could not answer the questions that lay at the root of all possible virtue. "Whence am I?" "Whether am I going?" "Have I a Creator?" "How can I be justified before Him?" Darkness on these questions is worse than dissoluteness. If there

is a little light there is hope; but extinguish the light, and all hope is gone, moral confusion and corruption will follow. Men are now familiar with the light that has come into the world; and as the air that surrounds us and presses us, of which we do not think, so the "true light" is forgotten and despised; for "men love darkness and not the light, because their deeds are evil." The light of reason, the wisdom from beneath, being deemed superior.

If the light of nature were withdrawn or deprived of one element of its composition, death and darkness would result; so if the truth of God and salvation by Christ are deprived of their divine element, or withdrawn, dense heathenism will be the result. Let the present leaders of thought continue to teach their doctrines, the present movement of opinion advance, the opinion that Revelation is only a name for an ancient religion, that it is partly guess, partly ignorance, partly imposture, an opinion which is fast getting into the heart and fibre of the masses, and which is rendering them gospel proof; let this be taught in Sunday-schools and colleges, and in less than two generations the darkness will be complete, as though it had come as suddenly as an eclipse. The leaven is slowly but surely doing its work, and soon the customs, laws, and institutions will have altered their character, and "churches and creeds" be as rubbish of the past. The unclean spirit will return in sevenfold force, and Christendom will be given up to a reprobate mind and to a stronger and more fatal delusion than blinded the Pagans; and the parallel between Rom. i. and 2 Tim. iii. will be complete.

Rev. ix. 20 and xviii. portray the last phase of Christendom, "Come out of her My people." "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean; and I will receive you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore, dearly beloved, these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. vi. 17, vii. 1). "Surely I come quickly" (Rev. xxii. 20). T. R.

If our eye look much *upward*, and much *inward*, wisdom will be given, with a heart of compassion, to look outward.

## SHOULD QUESTIONS BE ANSWERED AT CHRISTIAN CONFERENCES?

IT has become a common practice in Conferences and other meetings to devote some portion of the time to the answering of written questions. It is evident to most that in some cases good and useful results have been the outcome, particularly so in relation to questions purely and directly scriptural.

Those into whose hands the questions come, and especially brethren who are expected to answer same, have again and again expressed the grave danger in connection therewith; for very often these questions are put in to the detriment of a brother or brethren, instead of an honest, face to face dealing.

How often has the judgment of a leading brother been accepted and acted upon, whereas, if the full merits of the case had been known and explained, his judgment might have been possibly the exact opposite, or modified to a very great extent.

Would it not be for the good of all that fewer questions were handed in at such times, and let questioners, and those who seek to answer, be they few or many, remember the principles laid down in the Word, and expressed in the following scriptures:—

“Doth our law judge any man before it hear him and know what he doeth?”—Jno. vii. 51.

“Is it lawful for you to scourge a man . . . and uncondemned?”—Acts xxii. 25.

“I gave commandment to his accusers also to say before thee what they had against him.”—Acts xxiii. 30.

“Laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove.”—Acts xxv. 7.

“It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him.”—Acts xxv. 16.

“He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him.”—Prov. xviii. 17.

Surely the “law of Christ” is not below that of the Roman law.

Many years ago a young brother wrote a question which materially affected an elder in the same assembly, and the evil resulting from it is apparent to this day.

Scripture teaches:—

“Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father.”

The elder was rebuked, but not entreated; and that under cover of a question.

We do well to see to it that in our dealings with each other these things are not forgotten.

In days past the apostle spoke of “questions that engendered strifes,” and immediately follows the exhortation:—

“The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all, apt to teach, patient.”—2 Tim. ii. 23, 24.

In these days, when division is rampant, the exhortation comes with double force.

## SUBJECTS AND RULERS.

IN reply to your challenge on page 166, addressed to the supporters of the view that a Christian may be a “ruler,” to show why in the New Testament God has given no instructions to Christian rulers, may I remind you that no instructions are required for this as distinct from any other position of responsibility? The ruler is to “eschew evil, to do good, to seek peace, and to ensue it.” He is to “judge righteous judgment.”

These being instructions for all believers under all circumstances, they do not touch the question at issue as to whether a Christian ought to be a politician.

He is to be a terror to evil-doers, and to praise them that do well.

This quotation is here expressed as if it were an exhortation to Christian rulers, but reference to Rom. xiii. will show that it has no place among the exhortations of the chapter, but is a statement as to what rulers are to be, always speaking of such in the third person and never to them.

Like elders in the Church and bishops in their families, he is to *rule well*.

Elders, as to rule in the Church, are specially addressed and instructed; therefore no question arises as to whether a Christian should be an elder, overseer, or pastor.

It is idle to say that the expression “rule well” is indefinite and requires enlargement. Everyone knows what ruling well means. And no doubt if the New Dispensation had involved any change in this respect the beautiful language of 2 Sam. xxiii. 4 would have been further enlarged. “He that ruleth over men righteously, that ruleth in the fear of God, he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, a morning without clouds,” &c. Blessed office! Christ-like service truly!

2 Sam. xxiii. 4 refers to a dispensation in which no such distinction obtained as this dispensation necessitates, viz., between *world government* and

*church government.* The world-kingdom then was Jehovah's congregation; and in the day prophetically spoken of in this passage the same conditions will again be found—the king of the nation will be the ruler of the congregation. The Queen is nominally the head of the Church of England now, but we know that such a relationship is utterly unscriptural, the principles of world government and of church government being incompatible.

Happy they who, whether in the factory, the ship, the farm, the family, the Church, or the State, are by grace enabled so to walk and so to rule!

“The factory, the ship, the farm”—all these come under the head of masters and servants, and are therefore directly and specially contemplated in Scripture as possible for Christians. So “the family” and also “the Church.”

But if you still object that rule in the State was so important a sphere as to require some special instructions, I reply that the Holy Spirit in no part of the practical or ethical Scriptures gives directions for possible future needs of the saints.

This may be so, but we do not admit that in those days none were converted to God in positions of responsibility under the world's government, as soldiers, magistrates, &c. We believe there were such, and whilst no command is given to *withdraw immediately* from such positions, there are principles essential to the Christian order of things that would necessarily sooner or later detach them from the same; and again we assert that there are no instructions or exhortations to such which could be construed into a sanction of the occupation of such positions by a Christian.

He dealt with the day then present, and the customs and requirements of the time, merely giving *principles* for our guidance under circumstances not then present.

Surely there are principles, precepts, and examples in the Old Testament sufficient to guide *parents and children* at all times. Yet parents and children are addressed specially in the New Testament, and in addressing them the Old Testament is actually referred to in confirmation. It is not enough to account for the absence of such address to rulers to say that principles of rule are found in the Old Testament.

For the sect of the Nazarene there was then no need of such instructions, as there were no cases of Christian rulers requiring them, nor for centuries after. But the principles are given, and are amply sufficient.

Is it not a little dangerous to suggest that the absence of instructions absolves saints from duty?

The absence of specific instruction cannot absolve from DUTY, but the question in dispute is *whether it is a Christian duty* to take part in the world's politics and government!

Will you, when dealing further with this subject, refer to like absence in regard of the observance of the Lord's-day; the institution of marriage, both as to monogamy and the use of a rite; the age for baptism of believing children; the use of forms of praise and prayer; &c., &c.?  
G. F. T.

We do not think the propounding of further difficult questions has any bearing upon the one under consideration; nevertheless, we may say as to those named, that either there is New Testament instruction as for monogamy, or they are matters of Christian liberty and discretion. The use of forms of prayer we except, but need not discuss.  
J. R. C.

## Correspondence.

To the Editor of *The Witness*.

### WORK AMONG GERMANS.

With increasing interest, and I trust profit, I have been reading *The Witness*, and am thankful to find suitable instruction from the Word as to believers, assemblies, worship, and ministry. We seek to carry out the simplicity of Biblical teaching in our ministry among believers here, and are much encouraged to notice growth in grace and in the knowledge of God. For some weeks I have had a daily course of Bible study with believers from Moabit and Charlottenburg, and this resulted in a deeper love of the Word of God, sincere devotion to the Lord and His service, and in more energetic efforts to reach the unsaved around us. Plain Gospel preaching is little known here, but the Lord graciously blesses the testimony to the conversion of sinners.

We have very satisfactory attendances at our Gospel services even on week nights, and the large Gospel Hall is filled on Sunday evenings. The masses around us live in utter indifference to the claims of God, and so-called “Protestants” deny, and even ridicule, the very idea of a divine revelation in Jesus Christ. The Word of God is set aside; and the teachings of men, void of the Spirit of God, are sought after. Notwithstanding all this, the Lord is at work, and we have the great joy to know that He has caused His work to prosper, and a good number are now believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, seeking to obey Him in all things.

In four gatherings in and around Berlin there are now over 200 in fellowship.

I desire to commend the Lord's work here to the prayerful help and sympathy of the readers of *The Witness*, that we may be upheld in testifying

to the Lord. We are often very sorely tried as to means needful for the work of the Lord; yet each sweet Ebenezer we have in review confirmse His good pleasure to help us quite through.

28 KRUMME STRASSE,  
CHARLOTTENBURG, NEAR BERLIN.  
JULIUS ROHRBACH.

NOTE.—A few interesting particulars of the life and departure to be with the Lord of our esteemed brother, Joseph Stancombe, will appear in next *Witness*.

## Questions and Answers.

### Replies are invited to the following:—

Considering that New Testament fastings were occasional and not continuous exercises of self-denial (Acts xiv. 23, 1 Cor. vii. 5, 2 Cor. xi. 27), would it be unscriptural and inexpedient in these days to exhort believers to engage in a period (say a week) of self-denial, the proceeds to be given to the poor saints, or the Lord's servants?

Should the laying on of hands, as practised in the early church, be continued now?

Please explain through the *Witness* what the scape-goat sets forth in Scripture?

What is the special significance of our Lord's words: "Remember Lot's wife" (Luke xvii. 32)?

Is there any difference between elders under the law and elders under grace, or Old Dispensation elders and New Dispensation elders?

### ONENESS OF MIND.

QUESTION 438.—Is it desirable at the present time that the Lord's people should all speak the same thing, and be of the same mind and in the same judgment in reference to the meanings of the Scriptures? If so, please explain how it could be brought about.

Ans. A.—The desirability of oneness of mind and judgment among the Lord's people in all things is very plainly taught in the Scriptures. Let one passage suffice for proof, "I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment."

There are two things brought before us in the Scriptures, as means to the attainment of this most desirable end. To the one who speaks to God's people, the word is—"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." Now if all those who speak to God's people really spoke as the oracles of God, and if God's people believed and obeyed their word, the oneness of mind, and judgment, among the Lord's people would be an accomplished fact.

But in all past ages there have been those of whom it could be truly said—"I have not sent them, yet they ran. I have not spoken unto them, yet they prophesied." So in our day there are

many who do not speak as the oracles of God, and the word to the hearer is—"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God."

The whole matter resolves itself into a question of individual responsibility. The speaker is to speak as the oracles of God. The hearer is to "prove all things, and hold fast that which is good."

Ans. B.—It is desirable at all times "that the Lord's people should all speak the same thing, and be of the same mind and in the same judgment." The apostle Paul desired it in his day, and wrote to those who composed "the assembly of God at Corinth"—"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no schisms, or divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. i. 10).

Thus so early, when twenty-five years only had elapsed since the crucifixion, and when "the assembly of God at Corinth" was only four years old, differences of judgment had commenced, parties had been formed, and the apostle had to "beseech them to speak the same thing, and be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." Since that time, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-four years have passed, and in that time the profession of the Christian faith has gone through many and varied stages of development and change, and become what it is to-day, in A.D. 1893; and we have but to look around, whether in the length and breadth of Christendom or in the narrow circles of the various parties "who meet as we do," in order to ascertain that to expect there will be, or can be, oneness of mind and judgment, is to expect what is impossible without a miracle.

But the question apparently, I say apparently, does not take so wide a range, and yet it does take the same range, notwithstanding what may be thought a limitation. "Is it desirable at the present time that the Lord's people." This term goes beyond all in the various parties who "meet as we do," and includes *all* who in every place call "upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord." "Is it desirable that the Lord's people should all speak the same thing, and be of the same mind and in the same judgment in reference to the meanings of the Scriptures?" Yes, it is very desirable. But, again, look around at the number, variety, and the doctrinal and ecclesiastical condition and pretensions of the great national churches: the Eastern, or Greek; the Western, or Romish; the English, and the many other churches and sects,\* including

\* The reference to the great professing churches, Eastern and Western, and the many denominations and sects, it is not intended to imply that they, as such, are "the Lord's people," but it is probable that many of the "Lord's people" are within those spheres of Christian profession, even in parts that are so bad as to merit the description, "where Satan's throne is."

all the varied sections of those who "meet as we do," and then ask yourself this question: Can it ever be that all these will speak the same thing, and be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment in reference to the meanings of the Scriptures? There is but one answer. It is impossible. It cannot be brought about by any means short of a miracle. All the churches, all the sects, including ourselves, have grown old in differences of judgment and interpretation of the meaning of Scripture; and it is more prevalent and more determined at the present time than ever. There is no remedy. The prophetic outlook in 1 Tim. iv. 1-4, 2 Tim. iv. 3, 4, 2 Peter ii. 1, and in 2. Jude, forbids us to expect what is so lacking, yet so desirable. Teachers may do much, if they will, in their limited spheres of work, if they rightly divide and rightly use the Word of truth, and "hold fast the form of sound words," but they cannot effect what is impossible. L. D. G.

**Ans. C.**—God could not set before His people any standard of obedience short of His perfect will. "Be ye holy for I am holy." "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." "That ye love one another as I have loved you." We ought "to walk even as He walked." That we "all speak the same thing and that there be no schisms among us, but that we be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment," is the Lord's injunction (1 Cor. i. 10). The aim is high, and the difficulties have always been great. Even when the Church was in her pristine purity and power, when inspired apostles and prophets and divinely ordained elders taught and guided the saints, there are indications in the epistles of dissension, present more or less, in all the assemblies. At Corinth this was the case to a melancholy degree. Even in the spiritual assemblies at Thessalonica and Philippi, there was not lacking this defect. To the former the apostle says, "We hear there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies" (2 Thess. iii. 11). And in his epistle to the latter he exhorts two sisters to be of the same mind in the Lord (Phil. iv. 2). At Ephesus, where Timothy was, he says "some have turned aside to vain jangling" (1 Tim. i. 6).

Amongst the assemblies on the island of Crete there were many "unruly and vain talkers and deceivers," whose "mouths had to be shut" (Titus i. 10). The assemblies of Galatia were troubled with Judaising teachers (Gal. v. 12). And Paul had to rebuke Peter. Even Paul had a sharp contention with Barnabas (Acts xv. 39).

Discords amongst saints always call for humiliation, forbearance, and prayer. There are cases where rebuke is needful, when vital and fundamental truth is at stake, and "vain talkers"

must be suppressed; but where there is humility and the fear of the Lord, there will be "the spirit of love, and of power, and of a sound mind."

The principal factor in arriving at the much-desired oneness of mind is *patience*; this is one of the essential elements of the Christian character. "Tribulation worketh patience," and our church difficulties, which often arise from the fact of the various degrees of love, faith, patience, and knowledge possessed by each, are doubtless designed by God to produce patience in us. James writes:—"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing that the trying of your faith worketh patience"; and adds, that if patience has her "perfect work," we shall be "perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (chap. i. 2). Doubtless he had much to exercise his patience amongst the Jewish converts in Jerusalem.

The apostle's prayer (Rom. xv. 5)—"Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another, after the example of Christ Jesus: that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"—directs our minds to the example of patience and love in our Lord Jesus Christ. How "He suffered long and was kind; how He bore all things, believed all things, hoped all things, and endured all things" of His disciples (1 Cor. xiii.).

Our God is a patient God, and would teach us to be "like-minded" with Himself. This like-mindedness is not agreement in opinions, but a mutual agreement to bear and forbear although our opinions differ, in consequence of our difference in knowledge and understanding. This would gradually lead to "one mind" (inward), and "one mouth" (outward). Man would begin with the outside, and produce a uniformity as a gardener would clip shrubs down to the size and shape required. God begins inside, and produces a unanimity by uniting hearts in love. "Wherefore (notwithstanding differences) receive ye one another, as Christ received you to the glory of God" (Rom. xv. 7). T. R.

**Editor's Note.**—The desirableness of that which God has commanded cannot be questioned. But how it is to be brought about is the practical question. That God is able to reproduce the unity of mind and heart witnessed in Pentecostal days is true; but that He will do so is not predicted in the Scriptures so far as we have seen. Nevertheless, it remains for us and for every believer to "endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit." Included in this unity must be oneness of mind as to the meaning of the Scriptures. As the Scriptures are that "form (or mould) of doctrine" given to shape the whole inner and outer life of the believer, oneness of mind as to their meaning is essential to oneness of judgment as to the practical carrying

out of the will of God. The "receiving" of Rom. xiv. 1, and xv. 7, is not conditioned upon oneness of mind and mouth, but in order thereto. First, then, in order to oneness of mind there must be oneness of heart. Those only can "keep rank" who are "not of a double heart" (1 Chron. xii. 33). Love is the prime essential element in which alone unity of mind and judgment can develop. Another essential is deep and reverent subjection to the Word of God. The Spirit will only guide the meek. It is the one who trembles at the Word that will best understand it. This involves, moreover, subjection to the Spirit of God as teacher, by which condition conceit of knowledge and the natural ability of the carnal mind are excluded. Alas, how far *conceit* has to do with diverse interpretations of the Word of God it would be hard to say. The child-like spirit is quickest to discern the divine teaching. It is a solemn iniquity to hazard the putting forth of novel, grotesque, onesided, misleading interpretations of Scripture, to further particular ends, backing up the same with references to the original Hebrew and Greek, in order that the ignorant may blindly accept them.

We add only the divine recipe, "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another" (Col. iii. 12). So assuredly shall oneness of mind be promoted.

#### CLEANSING THE LEPER.

**QUESTION 439.**—**Explain the earthen vessel and running water of Lev. xiv. 5—“And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water.”**

**Ans. A.**—Observe that this verse is in connection with the *cleansing* of the leper. From this we judge that the living water (R. V. margin) and the blood of the slain bird stand in the same relation as the blood and the water which flowed from the pierced side of the dead Christ (John xix. 34). And "this is He which came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ" (1 John v. 6), all of which speaks of cleansing as well as of atonement (Eph. v. 26; Acts xx. 28).

In reference to the "earthen vessel," we find that the priest commands the bird to be killed *upon* (Young) an earthen vessel, which remained unbroken, and preserved the blood separate from the living water; and now that the blood has been shed, the priest is in a position to act, and dipping the living bird, &c., in the blood of the slain bird, in the earthen vessel, he sprinkles the leper seven times, and pronounces him clean, sending out the blood-dipped bird into the open field—a type of power and resurrection out of death in the earthen vessel.

Verses 51 and 52 confirm all this, for we read that the living bird, with the other things men-

tioned, are dipped in the blood of the slain bird, *and in the living water*, and . . . he shall cleanse the house with the blood, and with the living water, &c.

**Ans. B.**—In all the types it is very difficult to separate a verse from its context, for, like mosaic work, one piece removed spoils the beauty of the whole. In the cleansing of the leper, we must always bear in mind it is not the redemption of a sinner, but the cleansing from defilement and restoration into fellowship of one who was already redeemed, but whose presence inside would have defiled the camp (1 Cor. v).

Redemption was wrought for us on the Cross by our Redeemer, Kinsman (Goel). "We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." Having wrought out redemption, He entered into heaven with His own blood (Heb. ix. 12). There He lives, our great High Priest, to *make propitiation* (atonement, the same word) for us (Heb. ii. 17). Not as we sometimes sing, "The atoning work is done." The redemption work is done, the mercy-seat, atoning work of Christ, goes on, and will, until every redeemed one is safely home. "Being able to save to the utmost all that come to God through Him" (Heb. vii. 25). Every type and shadow in this chapter show His perfect fitness to do this priestly service (Heb. ii. 10). He who came from God (John xiii. 3), whose glory He shared before the world was, (John xvii. 5), thought it not rapine to be equal with God, took upon Himself our nature, a servant's form, was made in the likeness of man, became in grace an *earthen vessel* (we have this treasure in earthen vessels, 2 Cor. iv. 7). The vessel was full of *living* (not running) water, so Christ as man could say, "Thy Word have I hid in My heart." "By the word of Thy lips have I kept Me from the paths of the destroyer." He who, in the days of His flesh (His earthly vesselship), was tempted, yet without sin, how well able is He to succour and make propitiation for the tempted one (Heb. ii. 17; 1 John i. 7)? He who kept Himself by the Word, how well does He know how to apply that Word in all its living, cleansing power to the heart and conscience of the defiled one? Then the end, when through the washing of water by the Word He shall present to Himself His Church, a glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. I judge the earthen vessel to be a type of Christ's humanity, the living water the Word of God. "This is He who came by water and blood, Jesus the Christ, not by water only, but by water and blood." So in this type the blood of the dead bird mingled with the living water speaks to us of our Lord's death, and with blood-stained wings the live bird, soaring on high, of His resurrection. J. C.

**ERRATA.**—On page 41 of last month's *Witness* for the words, "If we could find baptism in the Word of God," read, "If we could find *infant* baptism."



## “THE USE AND ABUSE OF THE SCRIPTURE.”

ON this subject I would endeavour to speak somewhat suggestively, so as to lead to further inquiry. Turn with me to a verse in 2nd Epistle to Timothy iii. 14: “But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;” 15, “And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus;” 16, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God (or all Scripture is God-breathed), and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;” 17, “That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” I stop at this passage, for it gives us very shortly a thought as to the greatness of the Scripture. It is all that we need in order that as “men of God” we may be perfect—that is, “mature,” or “full grown.” We begin with the Scripture “as new-born babes,” desiring “the sincere milk of the Word that we may grow thereby”; and we find in the Scripture all, from the milk for babes, to the strong meat for those of full age. We have that which, according to God’s wisdom, contains in it sufficiency for all periods, for all circumstances, and for all conditions.

God has given us this precious treasure. It is “given by inspiration of God”; it is “God-breathed” every word of it. I do not now refer to differences of translation, for you know that translation from Hebrew and Greek to English is the work of man, and everything that man does is liable to mistake. We have every reason to thank God for what we have, although it is not perfect. But “*the Word*,” as it was spoken and written by those men of God, is perfect. “Every word of God is pure, as silver tried in a furnace of earth seven times purified”; so that you and I may stake our existence on any word of it as it came from the living God.

In the Revised Version some alterations are not good. I quote one, “Every Scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable,” giving the idea that *some* of the Holy Scripture is not inspired. To my mind it is a deep perversion of the passage. Every Jew knew what

was meant by “THE SCRIPTURES.” “The Scriptures” included all the Old Testament from Genesis to Malachi. The Lord Jesus honoured “the Scriptures.” “What saith the Scripture” was to Him a final appeal. The Lord set His seal on the Old Testament Scriptures as they were in His hand, and as they are in ours.

Now, there are two ways in which the Scriptures are manifested to be of God. I only speak of two (there may be many others), as I am trying to confirm and strengthen the faith of young believers, who do not know much as yet, and who may be exposed to cavillings from without and difficulties from within.

The Scriptures are prophetic. No other book under heaven is prophetic. The Scriptures are proved to be the Word of God by hundreds of prophecies fulfilled to the very letter. I am speaking about prophecies fulfilled, not unfulfilled. There is a sort of charm for some about *unfulfilled prophecy*, which does not attach to fulfilled prophecy. But take the Old Testament Scriptures and compare them with the New, and see how prophecy is fulfilled, and you will find that the Scriptures are indeed divine, “God-breathed.”

Now, another way in which you will see clearly proved the inspiration of the Word of God is this. Suppose you were made a present of a costly casket fitted with a most intricate lock, in order that no thief might be able to pick it; suppose you tried every key in your possession to open the lock, and the keys of your friends, and it baffled all your efforts. At last the one who presented you with it says, “Here is the key.” You put the key in easily and it opens it without force, and you say, “Whoever made the lock made the key.” We have in the types and shadows of the Old Testament the lock, and in the New Testament we have the key to all, which is CHRIST. In the Old Testament there are types and shadows innumerable. Picture after picture divinely drawn; not like those drawn by man, but like those photographed by the sun. They may be nothing to the carnal mind, but they are precious to the opened eyes of faith anointed by the Spirit of God. We know the meaning of that word of the blessed Master, “Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they

which testify of Me" (John v. 39). These types and shadows are pictures of the living Christ, bringing before us His character, His work, His sufferings, His sacrifice, His personal glories, His official glories, and the very words that fell from His lips on the cross, written hundreds of years before. We find Him in the lamb of the passover, in the smitten rock, in the sacrifices and offerings, in the altar and the laver, in the manna and the serpent. Time would fail me to enumerate them; but it is Christ in them all.

And is it not evident that the mind which inspired the New Testament is the same that inspired the Old? Man never wrote this book, but the Spirit of God breathes throughout it all.

I do not refer to external evidences. External evidences serve to condemn the world, but they do not enlighten us, though we value them in their own place. Every modern discovery in Eastern lands, every monument and inscription that is brought to light, goes in the most extraordinary way to testify that the Scriptures are true. Infidelity is being silenced and its cavillings rebuked. We are indeed interested to see it. We like to read about it, but you and I do not need such evidences to support our faith; for we have beheld the glory of the Sacred Page. Like an Israelite of old who needed not to study genealogies to know that Jesus was the Messiah, but said, "*We beheld His glory*"; so you and I do not need external evidences of the Scripture. We have beheld its own internal glory. Let us ever come to the Scriptures with worshipping hearts, not merely as to a book, but as to the channel of communication from God to our own souls; that is the right use of the Scriptures. "He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned" (Isaiah l. 4).

In my office we have what is called a telephone. If I want to hear a voice fourteen miles off, I do not go to examine the instrument. It is a wonderful instrument, but I do not go to open it out to see how it is constructed. I go and put it to my ear to hear a voice. Is that the way you go to the Scriptures? Or do you go to them as you would go to Shakespeare or any other book? Let it not be a question of coming to a book

for knowledge to puff up, but let it be a coming to a living person to hear Him speak to you. I warn you against mere abstract dealing with the Scripture as a book. Modern professors of theology may criticise it and say, "This or that part is not of God!" O the Satanic irreverence of it! Come as little children to the feet of the Master, that Christ may speak to your heart through the Word. And if you fail thus to hear Him, He will bring you, as He has brought me, into circumstances, and into a condition where I felt my need of Him, and truly desired to hear what God had to say to me. Thank God for that which makes the Bible real. Perhaps we have had many a Bible-reading about the coming of the Lord, but that fourth of 1st Thessalonians had never been His voice to us till death has entered the dwelling, and then, oh what comfort shone forth from these precious words into the sorrowing heart! Then it is God speaking to my soul—God commanding me, God comforting me, God strengthening me. Many years ago, one who was chiefly used in bringing me to Christ said, "Get a Bible, and get a pocket big enough to hold it; and never be without your Bible." It was good advice! In Proverbs vi. 20-23, we read: "My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother;" 21, "Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck;" 22, "When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee;" 23, "For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life." The law that the father had laid hold of and cherished, the law that the mother had loved and taught to the child, keep it, and, mark the result, a constant companionship. The communion of the Holy Spirit is the Holy Spirit taking the words of that Book, and bringing them into my soul according to my present need. Bringing them in comfort, in light, and in strength. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly," that is God's instruction. And if the Word is dwelling in me richly, then I will find that I have that which brings me into communion with the love of God, and with the Lord Jesus Himself; the Word being the medium of communication.

(To be continued.)

J. R. C.

## HEAVENLY WAYS IN EARTHLY SURROUNDINGS.

A FEW THOUGHTS ON PSALM XVI.

THE title of this Psalm has been variously understood. The margin puts it "A golden Psalm of David," others take "michtam" to mean "a golden secret," or "a secret treasure." Doubtless a combination of all these different renderings will give us the whole meaning.

It is a "golden psalm" because its truths are like the "pure gold" of heaven, which is "like unto clear glass" (Rev. xxi. 18), unmixed and transparent, reflecting glory on God, unlike the *yellow* gold of earth, which might become dim, and, when found, is mixed with dross and dirt.

It is "a golden secret," for the secret of "the life which is life indeed," the life of heaven and happiness in a world of sin and sorrow, is divulged here. The question, "Is life worth living?" is answered therein.

It is "a secret treasure," because but a little digging will reveal a hidden wealth of truth which will greatly enrich the one who by faith makes it his own, and enters into the practical enjoyment thereof. The lovers of heavenly wisdom inherit substance and their treasuries are filled with durable riches (Prov. vii. 17-21).

The eleven steps of this psalm, beginning with the cry of dependence and ending with the joy of the throne, have been trodden before. The blessed Son of God, when in humanity's lowly guise on earth, has climbed this heavenly ladder. This we know from Acts ii. 25-28, xiii. 35; Heb. ii. 13. He has perfectly exemplified the life of faith. He never swerved one hair's-breadth therefrom, no matter what the provocation. The will of God was His meat and His drink, and, however testing to faith, ever sweet to His taste. It is ours to press on in the same narrow path, and to know not the mere "imitation," but the daily reproduction of the life of Christ through the Spirit, by whom He can constitute our very hearts His dwelling-place (2 Cor. iv. 10, 11; Eph. iii. 16, 17).

The first verse gives us THE SECRET OF THE LIFE OF TRUST. The cry of *that* life is: "I hide in Him." "Preserve me, O God: for in Thee do I put my trust." Where Adam

peculiarly made shipwreck Christ peculiarly triumphed. Adam fell in a garden, Christ conquered in a wilderness, after forty days abstinence, so that the intelligences of heaven, withstanding with the flaming sword the defeated first man, could minister to the victorious second man, the Lord from heaven (Mark i. 13). His resort was God. Let us also make Him our hiding-place, as the timid dove seeks the cleft of the rock as a shelter from the cruel birds of prey. Thus hidden, we are temptation proof. We are encased in "the armour of light."

Verse 2.—THE SURRENDERED LIFE. "O my soul, thou hast said unto Jehovah, Thou art my Adonay," my master, my owner, possessor, absolute proprietor. The confession of the verse is: "I belong to Him." As regards our blessed Lord every fibre of His being was yielded up to God, every vein in His body throbbled with submission and devotedness to Him. O may we also fall as vassals before Him, putting His feet upon our necks, anticipating His coming "crowning day" by giving Him "the dominion" even now (Rev. i. 5, 6). In a deeper sense let us cry with the dying emperor: "*O Galilean, Thou hast conquered!*"

Verses 3 and 4.—THE SEPARATED LIFE, which declares plainly: "I side with Him." Our Lord was the true Nazarene. He could join neither Pharisees, Sadducees, or Herodians. He walked apart from man's religious parties, who idolatrously worshipped religion, and bowed at the shrine of human tradition, because it gave them a respectable standing among men, but turned their back on the living and true God, making His Word of none effect. We too are exhorted to go forth unto Him without the camp and bear the stigma attached to His still outcast name. His cross delivers us "out of this present evil age, according to the will of God and our Father" (Gal. i. 4., R. V.), and brings us into a new kind of world altogether, where "Christ is ALL, and in all" (Col. iii. 11).

Verses 5 and 6.—THE CHRISTIAN'S SECRET OF A HAPPY LIFE," all in two short sentences. The speaker in this verse practically says: "I am satisfied with Him." Levi's portion was the God of Israel; thus we too are to find our possession in Himself. He fills the cup. Homeless on earth, He gives us to drink of joys that take not hence their rise. The heart

has found its centre, the soul her home. The lines have indeed fallen in pleasant places.

Verse 7.—**THE INSTRUCTED LIFE.** The ear is here opened to discipline. The Lord gives His wise counsel in times of perplexity. In the stillness of "the night seasons," in the hour of bereavement, the dark and cloudy day of blighted hopes and disappointed plans, weighty lessons are imparted and golden secrets are divulged, while errors learned in earthly schools are untaught by that Teacher, who being meek and lowly in heart, says: "Learn of Me." This verse gives us the soul's response: "I listen to Him."

Verse 8.—**THE SECRET OF A STEADFAST LIFE.** The Lord is ALWAYS before the face of the psalmist. He is at his right hand ready to succour and defend. He fills the soul's entire vision. No wonder he can add: "I SHALL NOT BE MOVED." He practically says: "I am engaged with Him." The eye is fastened upon Him. He goes on in peace, for who can do him harm?

"The sea of my life all around me may roar;  
When I look unto Jesus I hear it no more."

Verses 9-11.—The fitting close to what goes before. **THE LIFE BEYOND THE VEIL.** The lessons have been learned, the changing scenes of the wilderness have served to bring out the manifold grace of God. Life's chapter draws near to its "finis." Its story is about told, and now the Father's peaceful home bursts into view. The "cup" of the lone pilgrim is exchanged for the banquet, the manna of the wilderness for the flowing milk and honey of the goodly promised land.

"The streams on earth I've tasted,  
More deep I'll drink above."

"I am going to Him." Sweet was the foretaste, sweeter yet the fulness. The Nazarite may drink wine now, and it will not be the worldling's guilty joy in independence of God, the elder brother's kid to make merry with his friends. The wine of the Father's kingdom cheereth God as well as man.

And our Jordan has no "stormy banks" as some have dreamed. We triumph in death in the victory of the living Christ of God. What aileth thee, O Jordan, that thou art driven back (Ps. cxiv. 5)? Where is thy victory, boasting grave? And where thy dreaded sting, cruel death?

It will take us all our time to learn the first six golden secrets thoroughly. The desert becomes our school. How much like sieves are our minds. How impatient under repeated lessons. But we shall have an eternal "holiday" by-and-bye, an unending "vacation" with Christ in glory, when "school-term" is over. Full and lasting will be our enjoyment, when "satisfied" and filled to our vessel's fullest capacity, we awake to shine in His likeness and enter into the life beyond the veil. Then the heavenly life, now feebly manifested in earthly surroundings and struggling against limitations and difficulties, will expand and develop in its own happy and holy native clime.

M. I. R.

## THE MODE OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

**W**E find baptism signifies "burial," and the mode is so clearly shown in this signification, that, to one who simply bows to the Word of God, there can be no doubt that immersion into the water is the true mode. The children of Israel were completely buried in the sea and the cloud, when they were "baptised unto Moses." Sprinkling, in no sense of the word, can be said to represent "burial."

But there are many who believe that immersion is the true mode of baptism, who accredit sprinkling as being baptism mainly because of their belief in infant, or household, baptism. They claim that even if the ordinance is administered in a wrong way, it has been done in the name of the triune God, and must therefore stand; the responsibility of the mistake resting on those who baptised them. But these same Christians would strenuously insist that a similar change in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper would invalidate its claim to be called the Lord's Supper. For example: sprinkling is putting a few drops of water *on* the person, instead of putting the person *into* the water. What would they say if in the Lord's Supper, the elements were merely used externally? If, instead of drinking the wine, it was sprinkled on them, how horrified they would be, and rightly so. They would say, "How plainly the Lord says 'drink.'" But just as plainly the Word says "buried with Him in baptism," and it is only the perversion of the

ordinance, that the Church of Rome introduced, and, alas! its common practice by those who have followed the Church of Rome in this respect, that makes it endurable, or admissible to the Lord's people. And the use of the name to an ordinance the Word of God knows nothing of, really adds to its condemnation. If we keep simply to Scripture, it is plain that the only valid baptism is the burial of a true believer into the water, either "unto the name of the Lord Jesus" (the manifestation and revelation of the triune God), as in the Acts, or "unto the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," as in the commission in Matthew.

To show the result of leaving the simplicity of the Word of God as to this, I would mention that one writer gravely asserts that those who have come to the Lord's table before baptism do not need to be baptised at all, as the Lord's Supper is a more adequate profession of faith than baptism! Surely this is making the Word of God of none effect, through human tradition.

If we follow the simple, plain teaching of Scripture, we cannot consider sprinkling to be valid Christian baptism, any more than we could believe that the Lord's Supper had been observed if the elements had not been actually partaken of. And we have Acts xix., where Paul baptised over again disciples who had not yet received Christ, having only been baptised with John's baptism, as a plain proof that baptism before faith is not "Christian" baptism.

We appeal to every child of God who reads this paper to lay aside all prejudice and pride, and simply keep the ordinances as they have been delivered. I am persuaded that many dear children of God are kept from the observance of this ordinance through fear of man. May the Lord give real courage to be simple, and to hear His voice, and obey it. "*Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it.*"

J. J. S.

THE sad and sorrowful heart has a special claim upon Jesus. Take it into His presence, He will bind up the broken-hearted. He knows how to succour those who are tried. He did not first appear to the *strong*, so to speak, not to Him who had begged His body, but to the poor broken-hearted Mary.

## "RECEIVE NOT THE GRACE OF GOD IN VAIN."

Notes of Address at Glasgow Conference by R. M'URDO.

"We then, as workers together with Him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain" (2 Cor. vi. 1).

THIS seems to be the burden of what goes before in the preceding chapters of this epistle. The condition of the saints at Corinth lay heavily upon the heart of the Apostle Paul, for, in spite of the great ransom at which they had been redeemed, and the much labour expended upon them, they were going back into unequal yokes, and joining together that which God had put far asunder.

And thus God was robbed of the joy that He should have had in them as His sons and daughters; and they, too, were losing the manifestation of His presence with them.

The first five chapters display the wisdom of the Holy Spirit through the apostle in the method used to lift those saints to a higher plane, where they might walk with God and He with them to His glory and their joy. In chapter i. Paul reminds them of their part in Christ and His sufferings, and also of the blessed results that had followed their giving of their substance; for not only had the need of the saints been met, but the thanksgiving of many had risen up to God and gladdened His heart. But He says, "To spare you I came not as yet to Corinth. Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy." Oh, that we could drink in of this noble spirit, and follow the beautiful example of that love that "seeketh not her own." And there is plenty of scope for service in this direction all around that we may be helpers of each other's joy. If any one could have claimed dominion over their faith, it was the apostle; but no, he would rather get down and seek to lift them up.

Chapter ii. shows how thoroughly he sought their good. And when he had to write words that at first were to cause pain, those very words passed through his own heart with all their sharpness—cutting, tearing in his own bosom, until "out of much affliction and anguish of heart he wrote."

Little wonder that what he did write produced such results and wrought so effectually

in the saints at Corinth, when every word was steeped in this awful mixture, and dropped with all the tenderness and sympathy of that great heart that first felt their power to wound.

Oh, that we could learn to try the sharp, cutting word always upon our own heart before it goes forth to do its work in others; for in the measure we feel in our own heart the power of the word we speak, in that measure will it be felt by those who hear.

Chapter iii. shows something of the wisdom with which he was endowed, who had by the grace of God been chosen to be an able minister of Jesus Christ. Ignorant ones might question his place and power as an apostle, but the evidence he brings forward is conclusive. And yet he turned their eyes completely away from himself, for, great and learned though he was, he never allowed the shadow of his person, or the glow of his eloquence, to obscure the glory or add to the message of Him who had chosen him to be His ambassador.

"Need we, as some, epistles of commendation to you! Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men." Just as if he had said, "Do you at Corinth seek a proof of my sufficiency? Behold yourselves! The seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord."

There is ever a tendency to depart from this line of proof, and to accept a great name for a great argument, or to receive a doctrine because of him who preaches it, instead of judging it by the fruit it brings forth. True it is, if we follow this course we are led to the master rather than the servant, to the source rather than the channel. But this is just how Paul would have it. "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think anything of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God."

This chapter closes with a beautiful contrast between the glory of the old covenant and the new. Moses is spoken of as the one who could look steadfastly to the end of that which is abolished. He saw through and beyond all the shadows, in the midst of which he stood, right on to Christ and His glory. And that which caused his face to shine so that he had to put a veil upon it, was but a ray from that glory to which the shadows pointed. Verse 18 gives the contrast, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the

Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

May we take advantage of this mighty transforming mirror, and gaze often and long upon Him to whose perfect image we are predestinated to be conformed. So that even here and now we may take on much of His likeness, and this earthen vessel be lighted up with that glory before which, in a time yet to come, every shadow shall flee, and the sun itself fade like the morning star before approaching day.

We would naturally expect the first word of chapter iv. to be "Therefore." The diamond that has been in the sunlight must shine: without any effort the light is given off. So we, too, as we turn away from beholding the glory of the Lord, will unconsciously shed abroad in the darkness rays of light that come from Christ through us. "Therefore, seeing we have this ministry (we might say this glorious ministry), as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Against this no weapon that is formed shall prosper. Stephen's shining face may be broken with stones, the earthen vessel shattered; but still the light shines, for the excellency of the power is of God, and not of us. This chapter closes with another contrast between the "affliction," which is but for a moment, and the "glory," which is eternal. The "affliction" is light, but the "glory" is heavy. But it is only while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, that we shall be able thus to speak. When we take a telescope into our hands, we see as it lengthens it widens, and each succeeding lens is enlarged. We put the narrow end to our eye, then distant objects seem near and large; but reverse the telescope — look through the wide end — then objects near at hand look far away and very small. So it is Satan's business to get this spiritual telescope reversed, and to get the saints of God to look not at the things which are unseen, but at the things which are seen. Then the glory seems light and far away, and the affliction heavy and very long.

May it be ours to lift our eyes beyond the passing, fading things of time to that which is eternal. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Thus the apostle leads those Corinthian saints right on to the glorious home which they were called one day to enter, and brings before their minds, in glowing terms, the exceeding riches of God's grace. What was it all for? That he might apply it as a mighty magnet to their hearts, to separate them from the unbelievers, the unrighteousness, the darkness, the idols, with which they were mingling.

When we look at the first verse of chapter vi. in the light of what goes before in the former chapters, with what an irresistible power the words come: "Receive not the grace of God in vain." And what heavenly wisdom is displayed by the able minister of the new covenant in leading those saints up to the top of this spiritual mount, causing them to behold, from this lofty height, the glories of their heavenly inheritance. And there, when their vision is filled with this scene and their hearts opened by the warmth of this heavenly atmosphere, he falls down, as it were, at their feet, and appeals right to their hearts with these words, "We then, as workers together, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain."

May we individually follow him there, and allow the mighty power of the grace of God to captivate our hearts, and to work effectually in us. Then, as we turn our face towards men there will be through us the manifestation of the presence of God. And we will be able to say, with power, to our brethren who are still in bondage and in the company of the unclean, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean." We ourselves must be a living epistle of what we preach—our own face lit up with the glory of the Lord—and then shall it not be in measure to-day, as will be seen in its fulness, when "it shall come to pass that ten men shall take hold, out of all languages of the nations, of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, we will go with you, for we have heard—that Jerusalem is the right place to worship, and that there

only is there a perfect form of government?" Ah, no! it is not the place, though right; nor the government, though perfect. But, we will go with you, for we have heard that "**God is with you.**" Such, then, is the example left us by the great apostle. He made the fact of what they were by grace the demand for what they ought to be in their life. He did not say, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate," and ye shall become "the Temple of God," or ye shall become the "Church of God." But he made the fact that they were that already by the grace of God, the reason why they should not be where they were. God could not act a Father's part to them according to the desire of His heart; and they could not be to Him sons and daughters so long as they were in these unequal yokes.

And there are many saints to-day in the same position. How can we help them? By applying to their hearts the compelling power of the grace of God. And before we say, "Up, what doest thou here?" let us first set meat before them that they may eat and be strengthened for the journey. And if they are fighting barefooted, or without a shield, waging an unequal warfare against a mighty foe, let us set before them the open door of God's armoury and say, "Brother, put on the whole armour of God," and not stand idly by and behold with our eyes the unequal contest until they fight their way through the enemies' ranks to where we are. Thus only shall we be following in the footsteps of our Lord and Master, who came down to where we were, putting His arms of love around us, leading us to repentance by the goodness of God. Oh, that our hearts were enlarged to embrace the riches and fulness of the grace of God, so that standing ourselves in communion with Him, we will be able to beckon to higher heights those who may as yet have received the grace of God to a large extent in vain.

IF we take delight in the things God *has* judged, we shall also in those He is *going to* judge. Rather let us walk in the light of His judgments, drawn by the cords of His love!

A MAN may give up the *world*, and yet not give up *himself*. He will then surround himself with what is *of* himself, *his own world*.

LANDMARKS OF THE FUTURE.—V.

## THE RESTORATION OF THE JEWS.

**Y**OU remember our first lecture was in regard to the Church of God—what it was, how God was forming it, to what He destined it, and its present condition and business. And we saw in the second that the hope of the Church of God, of the company of the redeemed gathered out from Jews and Gentiles, was the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to fulfil what God had determined, and take His people to be with Himself.

Now we come to a subject that, if rightly understood, will give the key to very much of the prophetic Scripture, and which, if ignored, will hinder us either enjoying or rightly understanding the major part of the prophecies of the Old Testament. The habit that has obtained in many minds of spiritualising Scripture has spoiled the minds of many as to the proper reading and understanding of these precious things which God has written about His people of old. In our reading of the Scriptures let us take the primary meaning of what God said; and understand that when He speaks of Jerusalem He means the literal Jerusalem; when He speaks of Israel, He means the people of Israel; when He speaks of Ephraim, He means the ten tribes; and when He speaks of Judah, it is literally of Judah and Benjamin, who as one people were then dwelling in the land. To call Jerusalem “the Church” and Israel “the people of God,” and so interpret the Old Testament Scriptures, is to confuse utterly what God intended to be clear, and to rob both Jew and Gentile of their proper position and portion. Inter-wrought within the promises to the Jews is much out of which Christians may draw comfort, but it primarily is the proper portion of the Jews, whether now or in the future.

Now, I want to turn to Romans xi. to show the promise absolutely of the restoration of this ancient people. Verses 25-36, “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness

from Jacob: for this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins,” &c.

Verse 29—“The gifts and calling of God are without repentance,” viz., change of mind on His part.

Verse 31—“Your mercy,” mercys shown to you.

Verse 36—“For of Him,” the source, “and through Him,” the agent, “and to Him,” is the return of all glory; and we may well add our “Amen” to this, for no one can read Romans ix. to xi. without seeing distinctly that the apostle was told of God to write, and by the Holy Spirit taught to write God’s future purposes out in detail, and he tells us distinctly, “God hath *not* cast away His people,” though “blindness in part” hath been brought about by the rejection of the Lord Jesus. No one can read them impartially without coming to the conclusion that this verse tells us of that time to be, when by means of the Deliverer coming to Sion and turning away ungodliness from Jacob, that nation which now rejects Christ as the Messiah shall own Jesus as the Christ, and shall be blessed in fulness. And I cannot but think that God intended by the nation of the Jews to give a lesson to the whole world. There is no *nation* on earth at present, either as a national exhibition of the purposes of God or as a witness for God. England as a nation has not more influence upon the people of China spiritually than any other nation; it is because God has called so many out of England in grace that the influence of individual Christians bears upon the circles in which they move abroad. But no Christian *nation* does the work; it is done by God-inspired, God-filled men and women, who testify of the grace of God to both Jew and Gentile, and are the means of calling out of every nation under the sun a people for God wherever they go. Remember, the present influence upon the nations is not that of any particular nation, but of the Church of God, which has a mighty persuading influence, affecting, by God’s grace, circles and spheres in every land under heaven, and collecting a people who shall be ready for the coming of the Lord. But again there will come a time when, according to the Scriptures to which I shall refer, the Jewish nation shall all be called righteous, and God will fulfil His covenant with Abraham: “In thy seed shall



all the families of the earth be blessed." We shall see that it needed (though *they* see it not) the death of the Messiah in order to bring them back to God, and the infinite grace of God to remove their sin by a suffering Messiah before they were fit to be under the rule of the glorified Messiah. And God will by that nation affect the world. At present it is not so.

Now, let us see from the prophets God's fore-warnings that if they did reject Christ, they should be scattered (Lev. xxvi. 21-45). There you see distinctly the condition of reprobation and of exile from God and their land, and yet the absolute promise to restore, because God would fulfil His word to their fathers. Deut. xxxii. 8, 9—"When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel: for the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance." God sets the bounds of the people referentially to Israel, as if Israel were the centre of God's dealings, and the other nations settled according to Israel—"For the Lord's portion is His people."

Now, if you turn to Jer. xxx. and xxxi. you find the cause of their dismissal from the land, and yet the promise of restoration. (Chap. xxx. 9, "David," subsequent to his reign, always means his offspring, the Messiah; verse 17, "Zion" means "the place of barrenness.") Who, looking upon the Jews to-day, would dream that such things were to be? Persecuted, wandering to and fro—and yet the Lord says, "I will bring again the captivity of My people Israel and Judah, . . . and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it." Whose heart does not bleed for their present condition? They said, "His blood be on us and on our children," and nationally theirs has been a terrible history ever since, a people distinct among nations and never extinct, a people no nation could crush and annihilate, though they have tried ever since the Romans took Jerusalem; yet like as when Pharaoh sought to destroy them and utterly failed, because of God's protecting care, so has it been and shall be. God takes care of them, and they can't be extinguished, for they are God's factor whereby to display to all the riches of His grace. God

has chosen a nation on earth, and the Jews are that nation. Jeremiah xxxi. 26, "My sleep was sweet unto me." Do you know what that means? "I awaked and said, 'What a sweet vision I had when asleep: God told me that the day will come when my people will be restored.'" These two chapters contain an epitome of the present state and future prosperity of this beloved nation, which God loves exceedingly still.

Now, we have got hold of the main thought—there is a people in the world who reject Christ as the Messiah, but who hold the Old Testament Scriptures, and who, generally speaking, are very scrupulous in observing the ordinances of these Scriptures, and the question, why are they still a distinct people, though living among the nations, is a problem which the wisest politicians cannot solve; but a problem which God's people understand, for no one knows political history like the people of God who read in God's Book. The politician does not understand what is as clear as noon-tide to the Christian, for God foretells, "I will take up that nation and plant it in the land." Isaiah ii. 1-3, shows the time when that is to be. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Not from London or Paris or Rome or Berlin: they will have passed aside and been utterly forgotten; but from Jerusalem, now trodden under foot (which then will be the centre of the whole earth), from it the law is to go, when God restores the dignity of His people in the day of the Messiah. Jeremiah xxxiii. 3-8, "And I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries whither I have driven them," &c. Jeremiah wrote just before the captivity of the people by Assyria, but it was not the restoration in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah that fulfilled this precious and full promise; *that* was but a partial restoration of forty or fifty thousand; the ten tribes and the majority of Judah and

Benjamin never returned. So the prophecies given us here were concerning a future day altogether; and another strong proof of this is, that after *that* restoration the people never fulfilled these moral conditions, but became worse and worse till it culminated in the rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ. *Their* soul was never "as a watered garden"; they were a morally degraded people, of whom the Lord speaks in terms of utmost grief, saying, "Ye serpents," &c., and that of the most religious part of the nation." So *that* restoration did not fulfil the prophecies of Jeremiah.

A. O. M.

### ETERNITY'S CENTRE.

ETERNITY! Before thine endless years  
Our finite thoughts to insignificance sink—  
Sink but to rise and take another view  
Backward and forward—all unceasingly  
Still they run on; like Noah's dove they find  
No place of rest. Eternity doth stretch  
And cover (like the flood of the ancient earth)  
The distant past and future evermore.  
Yet stay, I see one peak, one point stand out—  
Behold the CENTRE of Eternity! [rest ;  
The CROSS of CHRIST! My soul, HERE thou may'st  
For HERE thy GOD found rest. In ages past  
He cast a forward look, and on *this spot*  
Centred the HOPE of all Eternity.  
Stupendous wonder! here the Son of God,  
Maker of all things, clothed in flesh, is seen  
Hung by the creatures His own hands had made,  
To expire in agony upon the tree!  
A crown is on His brow, placed there in scorn;  
And hands that should have heaven's royal sceptres swayed,  
With cruel nails are pierced. And pierced His feet—  
The feet whose right alone it is to walk  
At liberty, throughout all time and space.  
Why was He there? The answer is, "FOR THEE!  
*For thee, and every child of Adam's race!*"  
"My LORD, my GOD!" these are the only words  
My lips can utter as I gaze on Thee!  
Centre of God's own heart, centre of bliss,  
Centre of REST ETERNAL, here I rest—  
THE resting place of all Eternity!  
Here let me learn the depths of all Thy love,  
Gauged by Thy depths of woe and agony.  
Here show me, in the light Thy *cross* affords,  
The blackness of each sin that nailed Thee there!  
Here, in the early morning, let me turn,  
May noontide hours be spent in this same spot,  
Let eventide still find me gazing HERE,  
And on till midnight vigils let me stay.  
O CROSS of CALVARY! here deepest woe  
And highest bliss for ever mingled are—  
Fixed CENTRE OF ETERNITY—GOD'S heart  
Rests here in Christ, and here in Him I rest.

M. M. D.

### THE LATE MR. JOSEPH STANCOMB.

MANY will have heard with sorrow of the removal of a dear servant of Christ; Mr. Joseph Stancomb, of Yeovil, who fell asleep on the 8th of March, aged 75 years. Brought to God in early days, and taking a decided stand as a Christian, the gift bestowed upon him was richly developed for the help and profit of those amongst whom he had the opportunity of ministering the Word of God. In the solemn division of 1848 Mr. Stancomb, under the firm impression that some were not as prompt as they should have been in inquiring into certain doctrines alleged to be dishonouring to Christ, took his stand with the late Mr. J. N. Darby and others, and maintained that position for about twenty years.

Having been left a widower, with six children, he married, in 1854, Miss Martha Murly of East Coker, who, after her conversion, had been much used of God for the beginning of a gracious work in that village. There he went to reside, and became the chief helper in the work that had been going on for nearly twenty years, the meeting having already been favoured with the visits of various servants of the Lord, for whose reception the house of the late Mr. Murly was always open. He was much used of God to the blessing of many in the neighbourhood, and also moved about a good deal in a wider sphere, his ministry being much appreciated.

Mr. Stancomb was a man of singular integrity of conscience before God, and it was this that caused him to be unable to go on in the position he had taken. About twenty-five years ago he was arrested, in common with some other men of discernment, by certain teachings of Mr. J. N. Darby, which they judged to be contrary to truth, and desired should be brought to the test of Scripture. Others refused even to allow a question concerning these teachings, and Mr. Stancomb very naturally asked himself, How can I stand in separation from those who are charged with sheltering unsound doctrine, through non-investigation, and yet go on with those who are allowing a similar doctrine, and refusing to consider it when it is brought before them?

Careful inquiry convinced him that those

from whom he had separated had, if not as quickly as he thought needful, really investigated, judged, and cleared themselves of complicity with the evil doctrine in question, and that their aim was to be subject to the Word of God and the authority of Christ in all things. He therefore felt that there was no godly reason for remaining in separation from them, though he did feel very deeply that there was ground for much humiliation before God on both sides, and in this some who had occupied a different position were of one mind with him. Meetings were held, therefore, for united confession and prayer, by means of which barriers were still further broken down, and God gave much blessing.

Through the visits of dear brethren to the small conferences held at Yeovil, old links of fellowship were revived and new ones formed, and a time of deep humbling before God in one of them is remembered by some to this day. Just about this time our departed brother, Mr. W. Yapp, visited Mr. Stancomb, and sought his fellowship in the conferences proposed to be held at Leominster, the object of these conferences being that servants of Christ might be helped by spending a few days together in prayer and meditation on the Scriptures. In these he became a willing helper, with the understanding that the first day should be specially given to humiliation and prolonged waiting upon God in prayer; and since he has been unable to attend them, one of his first questions after a conference has been as to the measure of help God had given in the time thus appropriated. He was pre-eminently a man of meditation and prayer, and hence his prayers in public were so rich with the very language of Scripture, and so calculated to draw hearts out towards God. In larger meetings, such as those long held at Merriam Hall and Willow Park, Dublin, his ministry was much appreciated, though it was in the smaller conferences that he shone most brightly.

About twenty years ago the house in which Mr. and Mrs. Stancomb and family resided at East Coker was burnt down, which led to their removing into Yeovil; but through all these years he has regarded East Coker as his special place of meeting and local sphere of service—a service in which he has ever had the

hearty co-operation of his wife and daughters, the latter being accustomed to spend the whole of the Lord's-day there, taking charge of the Sunday-school and helping in other ways. Whilst health admitted he regularly, at certain intervals, ministered the Word in Yeovil with much acceptance, and monthly visits to other places were much valued, as was also his fellowship in many annual meetings and the quarterly meetings at Exeter.

While the great theme of Mr. Stancomb's ministry was the heavenly calling and hope of the Church of God, he had a very firm grasp of the truth of God's electing love and what are generally known as the doctrines of grace, combined with much simplicity in preaching the Gospel. Any true evangelist always found in him a ready helper, and so free was he from anything like jealousy or self-esteem that he ever made much of the ministry of others, and was even too ready to keep in the background, while giving place to men of much less ability than himself.

With all movements that grew out of a desire for more practical holiness, he had deep sympathy, though his knowledge of Scripture made him very conscious of the defects of some teachings connected with them. He increasingly feared that there was a lack of such teaching amongst ourselves as is calculated to lead to devotedness of heart to Christ, and that a tendency to glory in riches not actually possessed by living faith, was leading to a poverty of experience as to Christ dwelling in the heart. He saw the danger of the form without the power; the shell without the kernel; a glorying in position with little regard as to condition. Those who knew Mr. Stancomb best knew how he himself thirsted for deeper experience of this reality, and how truly his one aim was to walk before God, and to be well-pleasing to Him. His public service flowed out of this; hence its value. In personal matters he was always ready to sympathise and help, and he never heard of any sorrow or cause of reproach amongst Christians without feeling it deeply. Anything that brought dishonour upon the name of Christ was a heavy burden to him. His spirit was very free from anything like sectarian narrowness, and he ever sought to embrace in his love and prayers the whole Church of God.

The divisions amongst the people of God were constantly mentioned in his prayers, and certain tendencies amongst some who seem to be departing from the simplicity of Christ he felt very deeply. There can be little question that his own experience of former days made him dread a line of things which inexperienced brethren are ready to turn to. He felt that the siftings which God in His gracious discipline has given some, should have sufficed to keep others from following such pernicious ways, in which Christ cannot be known as both centre and circumference.

It is no small joy to look back upon years of close and growing fellowship given by God in His grace, and it is a still greater joy to look on to the day for which all who are "with Christ" are waiting—the day of resurrection glory—the time of *perfect* fellowship, when the sorrows connected with human and Divine affections, as well as service, will be all past, and without any conflict or hindrance "His servants shall serve Him; and they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads." W. H. B.

YEovil, 18th March, 1893.

### FERVENT IN SPIRIT.

**N**OT only warm, but fervent, that is, "boiling" in spirit. This is a most necessary qualification for a servant of the Lord, be he evangelist, preacher, or Sunday-school teacher. It is not so much a natural endowment, as the index of a spiritual condition. It is begotten and sustained by communion with God. The fire that causes his spirit to "boil," is altar fire, not mere fleshly energy. He is often found at the Cross of Christ. He muses much on His deep unchanging love. He dwells in spirit at Gethsemane and Golgotha. Eternity is printed on his eyeballs. He values souls according to the value that God has put upon them. He gazes into an open heaven and an ever-filling hell, and "his spirit is moved" as he sees the crowd rush on to the ever-burning flame. He lays himself on the altar of God, and when his Master sends him an errand with a message of mercy to some needy soul, he "boils" with earnest yearning for that sinner's salvation.

Workers of the "fervent" spirit are the lack

of the times. Full plenty of the "neither cold nor hot" Laodiceans there are among us, but oh, how few of those who can say, "Whom I serve with *my spirit* in the Gospel."

Fellow-workers! let us seek after this fervour of spirit. It is indispensable to a soul-winner. Others who deal in theoretic religion, who spend their days in "hair-splitting" and debate on minor matters, may do without it, but he who goes forth in the name of the Lord, to speak to souls the message that carries life or death to them, must be in sympathy with his work. He must be an "enthusiast" as the world would say. Few have ever been successful in anything until they threw themselves heart and soul into it. In God's work we need to be "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord."

### GLEANINGS FROM MINISTRY

AT GLASGOW HALF-YEARLY MEETINGS.

**H**OW precious to look to the glory—what a joy to the soul! And oh, the joy of being for ever with the Lord! Let us live for Him now.

The promises of God are exceeding great and precious (2 Peter i. 4), because they sustained the Lord Jesus when down here. All the promises of God are yea and amen in Him, because they don't depend upon you and me, but on the Lord Jesus.

Job's friends wanted to make him out a hypocrite, and said his troubles were retribution for his sins. Job said God was acting arbitrarily, and had set him up for a mark to shoot at. Both were wrong. There was a deep current of self-righteousness in Job, and God wanted to show him what was in his heart in order to bless him. God wanted to show His grace through him. He tested and tried him, and brought all the dross to the surface, and all this in order to his blessing.

All things given to us for life and godliness are found between the boards of the Bible, but they can only be effectual through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord (2 Peter i. 2). Mere knowledge puffeth up. We may be well up in doctrine and acquainted with the original, but it will only puff up except as we know God. Paul desired to know Him (Phil. iii.). Let us look back and ask, Have

we grown in the knowledge of our hearts and in the knowledge of God? If any one can say so it will be from the refining pot that he has gained a knowledge of his own heart, and through suffering that he has grown in the knowledge of God.

Every Christian is a servant of the Lord. We were once the servants of sin, but we have been ransomed from death and hell, and we are now the bond-slaves of the Lord Jesus. There is an obligation laid upon every saved sinner to serve the Lord. We ought to start with, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" and then, having found out what the Lord would have us to do, let us do it for and to Him, whatever it is.

Everything now-a-days is called "the work of the Lord"; but nothing comes under that name except what the Lord commands. The servant should get his directions direct from his Lord. His work will always be triumphant. The work of the Lord is not what saints like, but what the Lord commands.

The conversion of souls is the beginning. Until the stones are quarried out we cannot build. There never can be a healthy Church without spiritual ministry. Wherever the Lord has set us here below there our sphere of service will be.

There are different departments of the Lord's work. There is quarrying, building, shepherding, and restoring backsliders. We are called into co-partnership in the business of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are open doors all over the world for the spread of the Gospel. There are millions upon millions who have never heard the Gospel of Christ, and God is putting it into the hearts of many of His children to give up all for Christ and seek the salvation of the perishing. We ought to have fellowship with such. Fellowship comes in in connection with the Gospel in the epistle to the Philippians. We have fellowship in prayer. The responsibility lies upon us to acquaint ourselves about the Lord's work and His servants. We have it in our power to yield unto God an odour of a sweet smell—a sacrifice well-pleasing to the Lord. We can do it with two mites given to His servants under the constraint of His love.

Anything that tells of the loving-kindness and care of Him who stands before the throne for us is edifying.

We ought to have large hearts (the bigger they are the bigger they'll get); to let in every blood-bought soul, keeping, at the same time, strictly to the Word of God. We want enlarged hearts to take in all the Lord's children and servants.

The Lord Jesus is the beginner and perfecter of faith. Our attention is called away from "the cloud of witness" in Heb. xi. to Him who trod the path of faith perfectly. In Him we see the perfection of every grace and the living embodiment of that which should be found in us. He is the One who was tested to the very utmost; who fathomed the depth of trial. God has committed into His hand the carrying out of all His counsels. If God can entrust Him with this vast responsibility, surely we should trust Him with our little concerns. Each redeemed, ransomed sinner shall yet shine in the light of God; each shall reflect the perfect image of Christ.

That which is of God never takes root in this earth; it is an exotic down here.

Only the man that has peace with God and who has been reconciled to God through the death of His Son can walk with God. "How can two walk together except they be agreed?"

If we would walk with God we must walk in heart-separation from all that is not of God. Enoch walked with God in a day of apostasy and departure from God. He turned his back upon the glory of earth and steadily and quietly walked with God. He kept step with God and went all the length that He went. The one who habitually walks with God is brought into paths that he would not naturally choose. Thus he becomes acquainted with the ways of God and finds His paths to be blessed.

Another result of walking with God is *divine* guidance. When we walk alone, and according to the sight of our eyes, we get into trouble. We have to learn to distrust our own wisdom and prove the sufficiency of divine wisdom. In the midst of the conflict we need divine support, for by nature we are feeble. Enoch, like all of us, may have tried to walk alone, and would find in his bitter experience that he

stumbled and fell, and had to renounce confidence in his own strength and lean alone on God for support. If we would be guided aright in the path of faith we need to read the Word daily.

God's message to John the Baptist separated him from the dead formality that surrounded him; it led him into the wilderness apart from it all, and there he witnessed for God. The three Hebrew children had the courage to refuse the mandate of the King of Babylon, because it was contrary to the will of their God. These three men were the objects of God's deep interest and care, for they were obedient.

We are in danger constantly of slipping back into the world's ways and customs, therefore we need to ask God to "hold up our goings in His paths, that our footsteps slip not." That which precedes this slipping back is neglect of daily prayer and reading the Scriptures. Other books and other things absorb our attention, and the Word of God is laid aside and seldom taken up. Let our prayer continually be, "Order my steps in Thy Word." If we are not ordering our steps by the Word of God the world will get into our hearts and rob us of peace and joy, and unfit us for the service of the Lord. If we want to grow in grace and in likeness to Christ we must devote a portion of time daily to reading and meditating upon the Word of God. Let us seek by the grace of God to increase and abound in love and in thanksgiving, also in the grace of giving to the Lord's work and servants.

### THE ENTERPRISE OF PREACHING.

"Now when He had finished speaking, He said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught."—Luke v. 4.

"To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means gain some."—I Cor. ix. 22.

**T**HESSE verses embody a principle well worth taking notice of in preaching the Gospel or in teaching saints. "Launch out into the deep" of this world, bleak, vast, and stormy. What millions of souls are there, in ignorance and depravity, and how many Christians unenlightened as to much that we have learned. The need for "launching out" is very great. We are responsible, we who

have been enlightened, first—with the Gospel; second—with many great and precious truths. Can you, O child of God, stand and gaze at that mighty rolling deep and have no desire to put forth an effort? May God grant that you may be inspired by divine love to launch out into the deep and "let down your nets for a draught." The object is to save souls and to bless saints. Fruit will be the result if we "launch out into the deep." The moral is—we cannot expect to save souls or bless saints if we keep to one place, one sphere of service.

"I am made all things to all men." We should take all righteous means to reach all. We should be willing, nay, should be exercised to go everywhere with "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." Are we not behind in this matter? Spurgeon said "a fool cannot win souls." Can we, if we are not wise as serpents? We may be tempted to preach always in one place. But in a large town there are many benighted ones in obscure lanes, who will not come to us. *Let us go to them.* Let us imitate the Master and we shall be blessed.

G. B. L.

### Questions and Answers.

We desire to express our thanks to all who have sent answers.

Replies to appear in the next number require to be sent in not later than 15th of present month, and so on; the 15th of the month being always the latest to which we can defer making up for press.

We again urge the importance of replies being *short*; it is essential, in this particular line of things, to be *concise*.

We shall greatly value remembrance in prayer that special wisdom and grace may be given for this service.

When more than one question is replied to, let the answer to each question be upon a separate piece of paper.

THE EDITOR.

#### Replies are invited to the following:—

Should the laying on of hands, as practised in the early church, be continued now?

What is the special significance of our Lord's words: "Remember Lot's wife" (Luke xvii. 32)?

Is there any difference between elders under the law and elders under grace, or Old Dispensation elders and New Dispensation elders?

What is the teaching of Samuel offering a burnt-offering at Mizpah, and building an altar unto the Lord at Ramah (1 Sam. vii. 9-17), in seeming neglect of the teaching of Leviticus xvii. 4, Deuteronomy xii. 13, 14, and ignoring of the Priesthood?

If a master should ask a servant to do something which the servant did not consider straightforward, should he obey or refuse to do it; and, in the event of the master insisting upon obedience, should he leave?

Would the servant's responsibility towards the Lord not cease after he had indicated to his master what he considered was right?

Kindly explain the several meanings of the word translated "rest," and what rests they signify in Hebrews iv.

Please explain the meaning of the following verse: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins" (1 John, i. 9). Can we think from this that a child of God would be lost if he were to fall into some open sin and die suddenly without time for confession?

#### THE SCAPEGOAT.

QUESTION 440.—Please explain what the scapegoat sets forth in Scripture.

**Ans. A.**—Doubtless there are two ways of looking at this type. The first, and it lies on the surface, that it signifies that aspect of the sacrificial work of Christ which rids the sinner of his burden rather than that which meets the righteous claims of outraged justice.

That the two goats, on the day of atonement, represent but one work is clearly brought out in Leviticus xvi., where they are spoken of as being but one sin-offering in the eye of God (verse 5). One offering with a two-fold application—Godward and man-ward.

Thus it may be safely asserted (though the very expressions are not found in Leviticus xvi.) that the first goat, whose blood the high-priest put on the propitiatory in the holiest, where God was enthroned, represents PROPITIATION; while the second goat, upon which the representative of the congregation laid his hands confessing the people's "iniquities," "transgressions," and "sins," which the goat carried away into oblivion, represents SUBSTITUTION.

But there is another point connected with it, and one often overlooked, *i.e.*, Israel's still future apprehension of the true meaning of the death of the Messiah; in other words, Israel's conversion at the return of their still hidden Christ.

The order of events on the day of atonement was this:

1. A young bullock for a sin-offering and a ram for a burnt-offering were set apart for Aaron and his priestly house.
2. The two goats for a sin-offering and the ram for a burnt-offering for the congregation of Israel.
3. Aaron's bullock slain.
4. The incense taken into the holiest and the blood of Aaron's bullock alone put on the mercy-seat.
5. Jehovah's goat slain.
6. Its blood alone taken into the holiest.
7. The blood of Aaron's bullock, *with* the blood of the slain goat, put on the horns of the altar before Jehovah, and seven times sprinkled upon it.
8. The dismissal of the live-goat.

Thus we learn in this chapter the careful distinction between two companies, the priestly house and the congregation of Israel, though both are identified in the hallowing of the altar before Jehovah.

The priestly house *anticipated* the congregation in the sprinkling of the atoning blood, while the live-goat was not for the priestly house as such, but for the congregation of Israel.

Aaron and his house foreshadow Christ and His assembly, and the house of God *now* anticipates Israel in the enjoyment of the reconciling death of Christ. But when the now hidden One comes to sight again and His feet stand on that day on Olivet's brow, the fountain will be opened at last for guilty Jerusalem too. They will be in bitterness for Him, looking to Him whom *they*, in their fathers, have pierced, while the sublime utterances of the 53rd of Isaiah, which many a contrite sinner from among the Gentiles has already put into his lips, will get their complete fulfilment in the lips of repentant Israel. A covenant-keeping God will remove the iniquity of that land in one day (Zech. iii. 9). "I the Lord will hasten it in His time." M. I. R.

**Ans. B.**—It should be specially noted that the two goats were "a sin-offering" (Lev. xvi. 6), and together they set forth atonement and its results. The careful observation of this would have preserved from many conjectures as to the meaning of Azazel (R.V.), some of them even profane. The Revised Version, margin *dismissal* (verse 8), gives a meaning which accords with the general teaching of the chapter. As Bähr well expresses it: "The true expiation was effected by the blood of the first goat, which was set apart for Jehovah.

After the expiation had been accomplished by the sprinkling of the blood, the sin was still farther to be carried away into the desert. What the first goat, which died as a sin-offering, was no longer in a condition to set forth, was supplied by the second, which was as it were one with the first, inasmuch as it carried the sin which had been covered, entirely away, and that into the desert or desolate place, where it was quite forgotten; so that the idea of expiation, or the extermination of sin, was rendered thereby absolutely perfect" (Mic. vii. 19).

It was when Aaron had *made an end* of reconciling the holy place, &c. (v. 20), that the action with the scapegoat commenced, Israel having only to look on and afflict (or humble) their souls before God. So, in Hebrews x., we have first the perfection of the work of Christ set forth, and then is adduced the witness of the Holy Spirit to its perfectness in the words, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." The repentance and faith of a sinner adds nothing to the work of Christ, but it brings him into the enjoyment of the results of that work.

With reference to Israel as a nation, that is as to their experience, the type has been fulfilled as far as verse 20; and when they take their part according to Leviticus xxiii. 27 and Zechariah xii. 10-14, they will know Christ as the Remover of their sin and guilt on the ground of the atonement once for all effected. W. H. B.

#### OCCASIONAL SELF-DENIAL.

**QUESTION 441.**—Considering that New Testament fastings were occasional and not continuous exercises of self-denial (Acts xiv. 23, 1 Cor. vii. 5, 2 Cor. xi. 27), would it be unscriptural and inexpedient in these days to exhort believers to engage in a period (say a week) of self-denial, the proceeds to be given to the poor saints, or the Lord's servants?

**Ans. A.**—Whilst God in His goodness has given us richly all things to enjoy (1 Tim. vi. 17), still we find from various passages that New Testament fasting was an occasional self-denial of the *necessaries* of life, therefore—

I. It is quite scriptural and proper occasionally to deny ourselves such *necessaries* of life, e.g., bread, milk, water, &c. (that which *strengthens* man. Ps. civ. 15).

II. How much more so, things which, whilst not necessaries, may be called the *luxuries* of life, e.g., oil, butter, sugar, flesh, fish, &c. (that which makes man's *face shine*. Ps. civ. 15).

III. How much more so, things which may be called the *enjoyments* of life, e.g., wine, beer, tea, &c., company, tobacco, recreative enjoyments (that which *cheers* man. Judges ix. 13; Ps. civ. 15).

But inasmuch as self-denial of the first series is connected with special occasions and circumstances in individual life, which may not occur simultaneously, we therefore judge it would not be expedient (unless in very special cases) to exhort to a period of united fasting.

But as to occasional united self-denial in the second and third series, we consider it would be both scriptural and expedient to exhort believers to engage in such for an arranged period, seeing that Paul, to *benefit others*, was willing to deny himself, not occasionally, but always in some of the things named (Rom. xiv. 21; 1 Cor. viii. 13).

As to the most suitable "mutually agreed period," we think that special occasions of helping the poor saints or the Lord's servants might guide in this, especially if we feel *strained in these services*. Why should there be any more difficulty in this matter than in a specially agreed "week of prayer"?

This mutual and occasional self-denial must not be confounded with "*individual abstinence*" from the third series, unto and before the Lord, for a period long or short, in the spirit of a true Nazarite (Num. vi. 1-8).

**Editor's Note.**—That fasting was practised and allowed in New Testament times cannot be questioned. In Acts xiii. 2, the prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch "fasted" as well as "prayed." This was the manner of their engagement in the serious work of setting apart to special service those whom the Spirit signified as the proper persons to be sent.

There was no lightness or haste, but solemn, serious, self-denying waiting upon God for guidance, power, and blessing.

Now-a-days, when such fellowship in service is at all considered, it is rather identified with the social enjoyments of "the tea-meeting" than with fasting or self-denial of any kind.

The same is practised in connection with prayer by Paul and Barnabas in Acts xiv. 23, not only on a single occasion but repeatedly.

Again, in 1 Cor. vii. 5 fasting is associated with prayer, as also by the Lord in Mark ix. 29.

But it is always voluntary and always in connection with spiritual matters of special importance.

How far the indulgence of lawful desires may cramp and hinder our spiritual power, we are probably little aware of. Excess in eating, drinking, sleeping, or anything else, will unfit for spiritual exercise, and temporary abstinence has been no doubt proved in all ages to be helpful in "keeping under the body"—and so affording increased freedom to the spirit.

But as we have said, it is always voluntary, and there are those doubtless to whom, from bodily weakness or infirmity, absolute fasting would prove a hindrance rather than a help.

There is no indication that we know of in New Testament Scripture of the Lord's people generally agreeing to impose upon themselves or others a stated period of fasting. Such are the methods of Romanism and of ascetic fleshly religion of all kinds, whether Buddhist, Mohammedan, or (so called) Christian.

But we must carefully distinguish between individual voluntary fasting and self-denial in the matter of luxuries and needless expenditure with a view to increased liberality toward the Lord's servants and poor ones.

The denial of self is the very first step in discipleship, and, alas, it is too often about the last to be learned.

Herein we do well to humble ourselves and own our unlikeness to the Master.

But it is one thing to exhort to self-denial and to practice self-denial, hiding from others as far as possible the fact that we are doing so (Matt. vi. 17, 18), and another thing to proclaim to all the world that "we are going to have a week of self-denial"! If we have learned anything of the mind of Christ we are sure that such are not His ways.



## REFLECTIONS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

### CHAPTER I. 1-6.

THE Epistle to the Romans is divided into three parts, viz. :—

1st. Chapter i. to end of chapter viii.—establishing the general principles of the Gospel of God.

2nd. Chapter ix. to end of chapter xi.—treating of the dispensational dealings of God with Israel and the nations.

3rd. Chapter xii. to end of Epistle—setting forth the practical effects which these truths should produce in the souls and ways of the Lord's people.

Taken as a whole, the general design of this Epistle is to establish the fundamentals of Christianity, and therefore the Holy Spirit has introduced it in a most befitting way, by first giving expression to that which constitutes the very basis of these fundamentals themselves, as, indeed, of all Divine revelation—namely, the glorious authority of our ever blessed Lord Jesus Christ, who is, in His own Person, the essential substance of all truth. To Him, then, as the needle to the pole, all Scripture points as the Alpha and Omega of every promise. Each thought in the infinite mind of our blessed God centred and substantiated itself in His Son.

The Gospel, which originated in the purpose of His love in ages past, and was subsequently declared in the judgment of the serpent at the fall of Adam, was concerning His Son. The head that devised that fall should ultimately be bruised under the heel of the woman's seed coming forth as the Deliverer of His people through the tasting of death for them—the Son of God to destroy the works of the devil.

Subsequently God communicated this purpose of His concerning His Son by promise to Abraham and to David, which two were the depositaries of promises concerning Israel and the land, and Israel and the kingdom, respectively. Of these the prophets have testified in the Scriptures, ever setting forth Messiah as the *substance* of the promises and the *security* of their fulfilment. The same is true of the peculiar counsels of God concerning His heavenly elect outside the sphere of mere earthly blessing; for whatever be the

character of promised blessing, whether earthly or heavenly, throughout all, as a golden thread, we have Christ in His essential fulness personally, whilst in some particular phase of His glory officially, as the embodiment of all blessing.

The first promise was “to Abraham and to his seed.” Isaac, as the heir of promise, passing through death and resurrection in a figure, foreshadowed “Him that was to come.” All promise centred here. Two great divine principles were necessary to the laying hold of the promise and to the realisation of its fulfilment, viz.—*faith* and *resurrection*. We see both of these in the case of Abraham. Faith triumphed over the knife and the altar in counting upon the God of resurrection (see Heb. xi.). By faith Abraham, knowing that the true Son of promise should enter into the world through Isaac's lineage, could rise above the then present trying circumstances, persuaded that not only would God fulfil His promise, but that He would do so in the way He specified. Of course this entailed resurrection. Faith having laid hold on God and honoured Him, God communicates thereto the mighty security of every word He had spoken. Death could not hinder His purpose, and so Abraham “rejoiced to see” Christ's day. “He saith not, ‘and to seeds,’ as of many, but as of one, ‘and to thy seed,’ which is Christ.”

The promise declared in God's unconditional covenant with Abraham has a double fulfilment—first, with reference to Israel and their land, as the natural seed; and next as to all who in every subsequent age would embrace God by living faith, the spiritual seed (see Gen. xv. and Rom. iv. with Gal. iii.). As to the first of these, although both the nation and their land are in desolation because of disobedience, yet the person of Christ Jesus is their memorial before the face of their covenant-keeping God. His cross has ratified all the covenant of promise for them, and His resurrection is the earnest of complete fulfilment. And this though they now reject Him! What a testimony to His faithful love! And whilst as a sequel to their sorrowful history they must enter into a horror of great darkness in the future days of Jacob's trouble, yet they shall see what Abraham saw, even the

oath and the covenant secured by the blood for them.

Next, we have promise made to David as to his seed and his throne. There should not be wanting a man to sit on that throne. A king shall reign in righteousness, unto whom all nations shall be subject, universally owning Him "King of kings"; all the earth, filled with His knowledge as the waters cover the sea, shall taste the sweetness of millennial felicity under the hand of her Almighty Restorer, whose coming shall bring in the "sure mercies of David."

When He first came into the world He carried in His own person all the rights to David's throne according to the flesh, but was rejected. Though He came to His own to fulfil for them the promises made to their fathers, they "received Him not." Rejected by the world and by Israel, He withdrew from them, leaving them under this judgment, and the nation "Lo-ammi." But if, as the rejected King, He withdrew from them dispensationally, it was to reveal Himself to believing souls everywhere, "to as many as received Him," as the Light of Life which the darkness round comprehended not. Therefore His rejection and humiliation have, through His super-abounding grace, been made the occasion of such an unfolding to our hearts of His glory and His love as we never should have had otherwise. Here His personal glory is seen as the basis of it all. "Declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from among the dead." This is the grand answer which God has given to the world's rejection of His Son. The Spirit of holiness—He who could rightly estimate the Person and work of Jesus our Lord in the light of God's throne, has given expression to His thought of that rejected One in resurrection. The cross was the world's estimate of Him, but *resurrection* has ratified every claim of Christ's which men denied, for it is the declaration of how faithfully He maintained the claims of God's throne even unto death, and how fully as sin-bearer in death! This is all because of what He was in His own perfection, and here-upon rest all the divine counsels which revolve around Him as their centre. Everything is secured in His person and work, the glory of

the former having given efficacy to the latter. Thus the "sure mercies of David" are found in our risen Saviour (see Acts ii. 24-31).

In coming as the Son of David to Israel it was in view of this, and although His claim to Judah's sceptre is now disowned, yet His resurrection is the corroboration and security of that claim, for thereby God has given assurance to all men that His Son shall judge the world in righteousness upon the throne of Judah.

In the meantime, whilst rejected by the world, He sits at the right hand of God until His enemies become His footstool. When He reigns as the Antitype of *victorious* David it will be until all these foes are subdued under Him. But now, as *rejected* David hidden in Adullam's cave, associating with Himself the "debtors" and the discontented—those who are weary of the usurper's heavy hand—He is hidden from the world, and has become the Captain of Salvation to all these (1 Sam. xxii. 1, 2).

It is the same Jesus, to whom the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven testifies (John xvi.), in whom God brought forth meat out of the eater and sweetness out of the strong. All the glory and fulness of God's purposes are seen in this blessed Person, in whom, as David's son, Israel's promises are made good, and whose infinite resources have reached out unto the uttermost parts of the earth, bringing present and eternal blessing to all who believe in Him the risen Son of God with power! The Spirit, having thus set forth the authority of Christ, now claims obedience of faith among all nations in subjection to His name. The grace and apostleship, the source and channel of ministry towards these nations, proceed from the ascended One in His authority as Lord and Christ, giving a royal and heavenly character to His call. He sits at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. The apostolate was His embassy to the world, hence the Gospel comes as a direct command from the Throne.

E. L.

Obedience to God's revealed truth puts us into the only way of being blessings to others. It is not when we are in sympathy and fellowship with the many that we are really helpful to them, but when we are in sympathy and fellowship *with* God.

## SATAN.

THERE are two passages in the Book of the Revelation which bring together four different titles descriptive of the one person, viz.:—Rev. xii. 9 and xx. 2, “the Great Dragon,” “the Old Serpent,” “the Devil,” and “Satan.”

The first title seems to refer to him as he existed prior to the historic record of his ways in relation to this earth. From this passage it appears that he drew after him in his rebellion against God (as expressed by the figurative language, “his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven”) a very large proportion of the angels, so that his revolt was a large and formidable insurrection. Probably it is those angels who joined in his rebellion who are called “his angels.”

The title “the Old Serpent” naturally takes us back to the third chapter of Genesis and the inspired record of his temptation so successfully brought to bear upon Eve, and through her on Adam and the whole human race. How or why he should have assumed the form of the serpent it were vain to speculate upon. Evidently the serpent did not then crawl upon its belly as it now does, nor could it have been to Eve the repulsive, hateful creature that through the divine judgment it has become to us. Thus is demonstrated the personal identity of the serpent of Genesis and the dragon of Revelation.

Satan is his personal name in Hebrew, and Devil (from the Greek *Diabolos*) is his personal name in Greek. They have a similar signification, viz.:—adversary or accuser, *i.e.*, a legal adversary who accuses in order to condemn.

“Abaddon” and “Apollyon” (Rev. ix. 11) are other two of his titles, also Hebrew and Greek, signifying “destroyer.”

The word devil (*diabolos*) is never used in Scripture in the plural except in three instances, where it is applied to men and women in its literal signification and rendered “false accusers” and “slanderers” (1 Tim. iii. 11, 2 Tim. iv. 3, and Titus ii. 3). In every other passage where it is used it is a proper name, and as such should be written with a capital D. There is only one Devil.

In the many other passages in our translation,

both old and revised, where it occurs in the plural, it is quite a different word in the original, viz.:—“daimon” or “daimonion”, and should be rendered “demons”.

All cases of possession were “*demoniac*”; the only one possessed by the Devil was Judas, of whom it is written that “after the sop Satan entered into him” (John xiii. 27).

Who or what these demons are it is not for us to say. They are spirits. They are wicked spirits. Their prince whom they obey and to whose control they are subject is Beelzebub. That this is only another of Satan’s titles is evident from the Lord’s words in Matt. xii. 26, and Mark iii. 23-26, Luke xi. 18. That the demons are Satan’s emissaries by whom he incites men to evil is abundantly evident in Scripture. So numerous are these evil spirits that a legion (5000) could be deputed to take possession of one man.

Probably it is from the fact that Satan’s forces are so numerous that the idea has been formed that Satan is ubiquitous or that he is not a person but an influence. But no one can read the Scriptures, old or new, with an unprejudiced mind without being convinced that Satan is a great personality, and always so viewed and spoken of by the Spirit of God and by the Lord Jesus.

There is not much to be found in Scripture as to his origin. We are informed that certain of the angels “kept not their first estate” (Jude iii.); originally it is to be presumed that they were of the same group as the “elect angels” (1 Tim. v. 21), and so we find two classes of angels referred to, viz.:—“the elect angels” and those who “sinned” (2 Peter ii. 4).

It is not conceivable that God could ever have created an evil being. We are not informed how sin originated; but this much is certain, it must have developed in a being originally created pure.

Of Satan it is said by the Lord:—“He abode not in the truth;” indicating that at one time he had been in the truth. In 1 Tim. iii. 6, we have incidentally the sin which brought Satan under the judgment of God, viz.:—pride. And this is confirmed by various other Scriptures.

It is one of the ways of the Spirit of God, whilst speaking of an historical person, to regard him at the same time as a type, and so

to use language applicable to the person typified but inapplicable to the merely human type. As an example of this we have the language used in speaking to David concerning Solomon:—"He shall build an house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever." See also the language of Psalm lxxxix. 20-36.

It is after this manner that two great personages are spoken of by the prophets. Isaiah in chap. xiv., in speaking of the king of Babylon, uses language which must have reference to some greater one connected with earth and heaven. "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!" Then the sin of this person: "Thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God . . . . I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High." Equally hyperbolic is the language used of the king of Tyrus by Ezekiel. "Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God . . . . Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day thou wast created, *till iniquity was found in thee*. . . . *Thine heart was lifted up* because of thy beauty; thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness" (Ezek. xxviii. 12-17).

We cannot but conclude that this language applies to some superhuman personage, and believe that it refers ultimately to none else than Satan himself. In all probability the fall of Lucifer is the thought in the mind of the Lord when He said, referring to an event far back in the ages before the creation of man: "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." Concerning this passage Alfred writes: "'I beheld' refers to the original fall of Satan when he lost his place as an angel of light, not keeping his first estate; it belongs to the period before the foundation of the world when he abode in the bosom of the Father. As 'lightning' implies not the suddenness only of the fall, but the brightness of the fallen angel also." And the sin of these great ones corresponds with the allusion in 1 Tim. iii., already noticed. It is evidently pride. Further confirmed by

the character and sin of Antichrist, the impersonation of Satan—"Who exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (2 Thess. ii. 4).

The words of our Lord may be adduced as presenting a difficulty. "He was a murderer from the beginning . . . he is a liar, and the father of it" (John viii. 44). But the term "from the beginning," evidently applies not to the beginning of his existence, but to "the beginning" of his relations with the human race. From the first mention of him in the Word of God he is presented uniformly as a liar and a murderer, albeit his craftiness induces him to assume at times the garb of "an angel of light."

From all we have now considered, we gather that Satan was originally one of the greatest, wisest, most beautiful, and most glorious of created beings. In rank one of the "principalities" of heaven (Jude 6, see margin).

He fell through being lifted up with pride, and drew with him in his rebellion a vast number of the heavenly host. These are subject to him. He is their prince. The hosts of evil spirits called demons, whether they be the fallen angels or not, are at his bidding. His enmity is directed against God and against Christ; and, therefore, against all who are Christ's. His six thousand years of experience of man has qualified him to compass more powerfully than ever his malignant designs. The believer is the special object of his study and attack. To tempt him to sin, to incite him to rebellion against God is his dark purpose, and the believer's only safety is to "abide in Christ."

"O Lamb of God, still keep me  
Near to Thy wounded side;  
'Tis only there in safety  
And peace I can abide."

J. R. C.

God is love! (1 John iv. 8-16). There is therefore a love which is *infinite* in its measure! There is a love which is *everlasting* in its duration; *omnipotent* in its power; *unchangeable* in its character; *all-pervading* in its presence; and which passeth knowledge. "Keep yourselves in the love of God" (Jude 21).

## JOTTINGS FROM A CONFERENCE

IN HAMILTON, CANADA.

**T**HOS. D. W. MUIR drew our attention to Prov. xxviii., verse 13, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Covered-up sin leads to leanness of soul, and possibly tells the reason of the lack of prosperity in many a child of God. And the condition of *individuals* is largely the condition of the assemblies they represent. None are without a measure of responsibility—"No man liveth unto himself, and no man dieth unto himself." This should give solemnity to our thoughts and lead to carefulness and watchfulness in our lives.

Reference has been made by a brother to a "derelict" ship—a waterlogged wanderer at sea—an unseen danger, on which a noble vessel might be wrecked. The question might well be raised in our consciences: "Am I one of those over whom young saints and others influenced by me might make shipwreck?"

Oh, the needs-be to keep short accounts with God. Note the words: "Whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy." Not confesseth and goeth on in sin—but confesseth and forsaketh. God would have the unclean thing put away. To do otherwise shows that real self-judgment has been lacking; and there is no true confession apart from sin and self being judged. Then, when it is judged and put away, we have His own word: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John i. 9).

The next meeting, after much prayer, was opened by GEORGE O. BENNER, who read Ps. li., and observed that it was a perfect dealing with God that was needed. "Wash me thoroughly." As we have in Hosea xiv. 1, 2, "Take away all iniquity . . . so shall we render the calves of our lips."

Verse 4—"Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned." Had David not sinned against man? He had; but his sin against the Throne of God was greater. Our secret affections must be held in subjection to Christ as Head, and whatsoever is not done in subjection to Him, is of the flesh, and is against the Throne of God.

Verse 8 speaks of "*broken bones*." In

Ps. xxxii. he speaks of his bones "growing old" in backsliding. Here they are broken in conviction. What an awful thing it is to get away from God! Many would like the joy of verses 12-14, but they do not like the terms of verse 3. But they must be complied with. There is no restoration of the joy of God's salvation apart from the acknowledgment and confession of sin. Then follows power for service.

Verse 17—No broken bones here, but a broken and contrite spirit; and it is here God dwells.

ROBERT TELFER followed with a very searching and practical word on Luke xii., laying stress on the two things against which the Lord warns His disciples—"hypocrisy" and "covetousness."

Hypocrisy is simply a pretension to what we know we are not, and have not. Like Rehoboam when God allowed the enemy to rob him of the golden shields his father had made, he substituted *brass* ones instead. They might deceive for a while by their glitter, but they would not stand the test (1 Kings xiv. 27). Oh, how many of us are unwilling to let it be known that we have been spoiled by our enemy the Devil; so we substitute something for the reality, that we may not be discovered. It is hypocrisy, and will be exposed.

In Acts v. we find a couple guilty of both hypocrisy and covetousness, and *death* followed. Let us ever remember that "God desireth truth in the inward parts" (Ps. li. 6), and so be delivered from these and other things that grieve Him.

JOHN HALIBURTON read Psalm xxxii. This is a Psalm "giving instruction." May we be instructed by it. You have here *trouble*, *confession*, and *rest*.

Like the valley of Achor which is mentioned three times—(1) Joshua vii. 26, "A valley of trouble"—sin confessed and judged; (2) in Hosea ii. 15 it is "A door of hope"; and (3) in Isaiah lxv. 10, "A place for herds to lie down in." Thus we have progress. Note the same threefold cord in Psalm i. 1-3. The blessed man who meditates on God's law day and night, is the one who is separate from the world on the one hand, and fruitful to God on the other.

JOHN BLAIR followed with Gen. xxv. 1-4. God's command to Jacob was "Go up," but

first he had to "put away" things that would hinder fellowship with God. The principle is still true (see 1 Peter ii. 1). May His Word remove all things displeasing to Him.

I have noticed the stones of the brook that were under the running water were worn smooth and round, while those on the banks are rough and sharp-cornered. Sometimes a flood comes, and they get a good wash; but when it subsides, they are as rough and angular as ever. Beloved, what we need is not merely a good wash, but we need that the Word of God, like the running water, should go over us, that we may be polished and smooth. We remind you it was smooth stones David used in his service against the giant of Gath. Some of us get a good wash at conference times, but afterwards there seems to be little perceptible change in us. Oh, to be kept under the water of His Word!

JOHN MARTIN read Col. i. 1-11. We have here three stages of knowledge—

Verse 6—*To know the grace of God in truth.*

Verse 9—*Filled with the knowledge of His will.*

Verse 10—*Increasing in the knowledge of God.*

We thus have progress in the ways of God.

W. WILSON drew our attention to the question in Jer. viii. 22: "Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? why then is the health of the daughter of my people not recovered?"

Jeremiah xxvi. 1-6: "If they will not hearken"—then the curse. This is very solemn. "The curse causeless shall not come." They were God's people, and He must punish sin, but He graciously sends His messenger to them. If they heard him, God would turn away the evil; if not, He would send the curse. The reason, therefore, of the incurable condition of God's people is found in the chapters that follow. They followed false counsellors, and rejected the Word of the Lord, and the curse came.

Oh, for ears to hear Him, be it in rebuke, correction, or instruction. I trust we may ever have an open ear to His Word; it is the only place of true blessing. From Luke x. 16 we learn that to despise the Lord's messenger is to despise Him. May we be delivered from it!

W. B.

## HIS SHARE AND MINE.

His was the crown of piercing thorn,  
And His the path thro' desert waste;  
His was the hatred and the scorn,  
And His the sting of death to taste.  
Can I, a follower of my Lord,  
Dare seek for aught but His reward?

His friends forsook Him far and fled,  
His own acquaintance hid their face;  
Those He loved best were worse than dead;  
To lay His head He had no place.  
As in His path He leads me on,  
I too must lay my pleasures down.

That cruel spear pierced His dear side,  
Upon the cross for me He hung;  
While darkness spread its mantle wide,  
And seraph's harps were left unstrung.  
Lord Jesus thro' that death of Thine,  
I share Thy endless life divine!

His is the kingdom and the power,  
O'er worlds triumphant shall He reign;  
His sufferings past for evermore,  
He will not bear the cross again.  
My share with Him henceforth will be  
The portion of His victory.

W. M'C.

## HIS CORRECTION.

"Thou wilt make all his bed in sickness"  
(Ps. xl. 3).

SICKNESS is frequently the cup that the Lord, in His love, mixes for His people in order to make them, in a greater measure, "partakers of His holiness." The "end of the Lord" will surely be shown to be "very pitiful and of tender mercy." Beloved, be not weary of His correction, nor say that the "needs be" for the affliction is passed or its lesson learned. Hezekiah thought so when summing up the instruction of his sickness. "In all these things is the life of my spirit." "The living, he shall praise Thee." "I shall go softly all my days." But "at that time" the messengers came from the king of Babylon, and "Hezekiah was glad of them, and showed them the house of his precious things!" Say, rather, it is good to be "smitten of God, and afflicted," that we may learn His statutes.

## HOUSEHOLD BAPTISM THEORIES.

IN the face of all the scriptures we have looked at, it seems strange that any question could come in on this subject. But we find tradition has had its say in this as in other truths of Christianity, and many Christians believe in a doctrine which they admit has not one direct line of Scripture for its support. We shall see that its main support is forced interpretations of Scripture and unscriptural theories concerning the kingdom of God and the house of God.

The different theories of infant baptism may be classified as follows:—

I. The covenant relationship, which has developed into the headship theory.

II. Baptism into the house.

III. *Baptism into the kingdom, and connected with this the governmental forgiveness and temporal salvation theory.*

IV. The baptismal regeneration theory, which I do not need to take up, as it is rejected by all those for whom I write; and so, while we believe that our brethren are wrong, we do not believe their teaching is a fundamental heresy, but rather that which would lead to forbearance and patience, even while we speak the truth in love. The natural impatience and fleshly energy with which believers' baptism is sometimes pressed makes one feel that the real truth of it has not been learned in God's presence. Never are we to forget "lowliness and meekness, longsuffering and forbearing one another in love." We must speak plainly as to the doctrine and its results, but love should be in active exercise towards those who do not see eye to eye with us. Let us look at each of these views, and

#### I.—THE COVENANT RELATIONSHIP OR HEADSHIP THEORY.

This view is that as the children of Israel were by natural birth in covenant relationship with God, so now the children of Christian parents are in the covenant, and as baptism has taken the place of circumcision we are now to baptise our children.

We answer: Israel as a nation were under trial, but at the Cross the trial of man ceases, and man is proven to be utterly bad. Now Christianity has come in as that which is spir-

itual, not natural, and the natural is a type of the spiritual; so the children of Israel circumcising their children by natural birth corresponds with baptising those who are children of God by spiritual birth (see Gal. iii. 26, 27, where these are thus linked together). Moreover, if you make baptism an acknowledgment of a fleshly relationship, you turn it into a carnal ordinance, and we are told the carnal ordinances were nailed to the Cross. But further, the Lord's Supper has taken the place of the Passover. The Passover was for all the children by natural birth, so if you baptise your children by natural birth, you ought to be consistent and give them the Lord's Supper! If we bear in mind that the natural is a type of the spiritual, it makes all clear. For instance, the children of Israel saved from temporal death by the blood of the lamb is a type of the children of God saved from eternal judgment by the blood of "the Lamb of God"; the children of Israel "baptised unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea," is a type of the children of God as dead and buried with Christ, as in Romans vi.; but to make one to be the same as the other is to degrade the ordinances of Christianity into mere carnal ordinances.

But those who teach the headship theory say, "Does not God bring a family into blessing through the head? For instance, Noah's family; were they not saved through Noah's faith? And are not the children of believing parents holy? Does not the Lord say, 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven'?"

We answer: When the parents of a family are converted the children are brought into a place of privilege, because they are brought into a place where they will hear the Word of God, and where they will be kept in a measure from the defilements of the world. Through Noah's righteousness the invitation was given to his family. The Lord said, "Come thou and all thy house into the ark." But we are carefully told that each one accepted for himself and herself. "And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark" (Gen. vii. 7).\* The

\* No infants in the ark. Each one *went* in on their individual responsibility.

invitation was given to the family through Noah's faith, but they individually accepted it. So in Acts xvi. the word to the jailer was, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." He was to believe and be saved, and his house was to believe and be saved, and so, as we have noticed, he did not *have* his family baptised as household baptists do, but "he was baptised, and all his," implying that it was done on their own individual responsibility.

I would notice here the mistake many have fallen into of making the flood a type of baptism. That is a shadow of a shadow! Peter tells us the flood and baptism are both figures† of salvation, not one the figure of the other. Some have gone so far as to make the baby Moses, put in the ark on the banks of the river Nile, as a figure of putting our children into the place of blessing by baptism! They are not logical enough to see that their illustration goes too far, and teaches baptismal salvation; for the ark is used as a type of Christ, and if the children are put into Christ by baptism, it surely means baptismal salvation. Moreover, the Word of God does not say the mother put Moses in the ark by faith. She hid him by faith, and it was when faith failed she resorted to the ark, and so lost her child. God overruled it, but she suffered. We mention this as a sample of the crude and anti-scriptural teachings that pass as "advanced truth!" It manifests what absurdities sincere Christians can be drawn into by seeking to support a human theory from the Word of God.

In 1 Cor. vii. 14 the (Gentile) husband and children of a believing wife are holy, in contrast to what they would be in Judaism. This scripture has nothing to do with baptism. If, indeed, baptism of children of believing parents were right, this would have been the place for the exhortation, which, as we know, is never given, nor even once hinted of.

The Lord's words, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, . . . for of such is the kingdom of heaven," are often used to support their baptism. But the language used precludes this. It is not "Suffer the children to be brought," but to "*come* unto Me," and

"come unto Me" is used in other scriptures as synonymous with "believe on Me." (See Matt. xi. 28; John vii. 37.) So here the word the Lord uses proves that He meant that the children were to be led to believe on Him, as it is children, not infants, that are to come. "Of such is the kingdom of heaven" is clearly connected with His words in the previous chapter, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xviii. 3). If adults had to become as little children to enter the kingdom, why let the little ones tarry? "The kingdom of heaven" is made up of little children, not literally surely, but morally. If it meant here that little children by natural birth make up the kingdom, it would be a flat contradiction to the scripture just quoted, that converted people are the true constituents of the kingdom. It is exceedingly important for the Lord's people to weigh this scripture and act upon it—not by administering to the children an ordinance that can be of no profit to them, and is not even once hinted at here, or in any other part of God's Word, but in teaching them early what God's Word says about them as sinners, and thus leading them to real faith in the Lord. And we are taught here that we can count on God for their conversion in early life. May the privilege and responsibility of this be more realised by the Lord's people.

Connected with this question of headship, let us remember that the children of believing parents are in a special place of privilege, because they are where the Word of God is especially valued and told out to them; but they need new birth just as others, and are all "by nature children of wrath." They are to be brought up in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord," and if parents are faithful to their trust their children will be saved in their tender years. Then when they have accepted Christ let them be baptised intelligently, and the lesson taught therein will be for their blessing and comfort.

We now look at "baptism into the house" or "the kingdom," with its attendant theories of governmental forgiveness and salvation. In this it is taught that it was part of God's purpose to have the external or outward place of salvation into which people are brought by

† This is positive, as the word "antitype" is the same Greek word translated "figure" in Heb. ix. 24.



the rite of baptism. But inside this is a smaller circle, composed of all those who are really saved and indwelt of the Spirit; this inner circle being "the body," into which we enter by baptism of the Spirit, and the outer circle, which includes the inner one, being "the house." One school objects to this external and larger circle being called "the house," claiming that it is "the kingdom," and that "the house" is but one aspect of "the body." So the difference is really one of terms. It is claimed by some that baptism was to the Jews a salvation from the temporal judgments coming on the Jewish nation, and they were thus brought into a place in which they could be taught. So the commission in Matt. xxviii. is made to read, "Make disciples, by baptising and teaching"; that is, first baptise those who will receive it and teach them afterward, and so make disciples. So, of course, it is right to baptise children, to introduce them into this place where they can be taught, and where it is claimed the Holy Spirit works! They claim therefore that there is no work in the soul needed in order to Christian baptism, as it is merely external.

I quote from one of their writings as to this:—"Baptism, then, is not the witness of blessing *already* received, nor the confession of a state of soul, but it directs *to* blessing; it puts one into Christ's company outwardly, in whom all blessing is found, and it admits one into the professing Christian body on earth, where privileges are enjoyed." (*Christian Baptism*, by Walter Scott, page 12.)

I have no doubt that many of my readers who have only looked at baptism as it is taught in Scripture will ask in wonder where did they get all these teachings from. We can answer—*not* from the Word of God. We shall see that the teaching arises from a mistake on their part, in which they make the profession of Christianity, which has become corrupted by the admission of false professors, to be part of God's plan! And so baptism, which is really an outward profession of an inward faith, is made to be a profession merely, needing no reality in the soul, even if it is to the name of the living and true God!

J. J. S.

The Bible, truth, or work, without Jesus, is the essence of backsliding.

## THE RESTORATION OF THE JEWS.

## SECOND PAPER.

HERE let me say, that the prophets from Isaiah onward, more or less all of them, with one or two exceptions, speak distinctly of the moral degradation of Israel and of their restoration from it. And remember, some are called "minor" not because they are of less importance, but because they are *short*; there is no such thing as minor or major importance in the Word of God. Joel is as important as Isaiah, and Malachi as Ezekiel. Oh, grasp the meaning of the prophetic utterances of these prophets that you may see the gracious purposes of God. Read Isaiah xxvi. and xxvii. about the restoration of Israel. I have not time to dwell on these chapters; suffice it is to say that chapter xxvi. 19, "Thy dead men shall live, my dead body it shall arise," is a distinct prophecy as to the restoration of that nation, equally with the vision of the valley of dry bones in Ezekiel, and we have no business to take and apply it otherwise, though we may draw lessons from it. Now, let me paraphrase that verse, "Thy dead men, O Israel, shall live; my dead body—the people of Israel—it shall arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust, for thy dew—the dew that God giveth thee—is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast forth the dead ones." This is not in regard to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus at all, but in regard to God's purpose to bring out the dead and apparently forgotten people from the grave, and make them "a watered garden." Thank God for this! Oh, it will be a glorious time when the Lord reigneth in Mount Zion, and the people shall be under the government of the King of kings, and be at His disposal to be witnesses to the ends of the earth.

Now as to the restoration, the division into two groups called Judah and Israel is very marked in the prophetic Scriptures. Where Judah is, is fairly known; where Israel is, is not known. Some go to the extreme of saying that the people of England are the lost ten tribes, but there is no possible proof hereof whatever. It is a delusion of the mind, and robs those who take it up of spiritual energy

to serve God in seeking the salvation of both Jew and Gentile. If the people of England were the ten tribes, and to be resuscitated of God, we would see their moral condition different from what it is now. Don't take up such nonsense; it will rob you of the power of witnessing for God. Anything that Satan can get us to lay hold of to take us from the beaten track and hinder us in the Lord's work, he will; and these fancies (to call them by their true name) hinder the soul from being occupied with the salvation of others, which should be the primary object of every Christian. Now, Judah and Israel are distinct, and their restoration is spoken of separately (Zechariah xii. to xiv.). "The Lord also shall save the tents of Judah first," &c. (Ezek. xxxvii. 15-28).

I have been drawing a sketch of this people and their ultimate blessing, leaving till next week the terrible sifting which they must pass through. Of their absolute restoration we are assured. Read Joel iii., Isa. xlix., Ez. xx. and xxxiv., Jer. xxxi., and you will see, without the least doubt, that God must restore this people, and restore them in a condition which shall be a praise to His name for ever; for though they may come back at first politically and in unbelief, yet God will eventually bring them into a condition which shall be a praise to His name throughout the whole earth.

And lastly, I want you to see what shall be their *mission* when restored. It is, to be missionaries to the whole earth. "Is this really to be the end of the Jewish nation?" you ask. Yes, they are to be God's missionaries to the whole earth, and then shall the knowledge of the Lord cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, but not till then, when God returns and builds up the tabernacle of David which has fallen down. (See Isa. lxvi., lx., Zech. viii., xiv.) In all these scriptures you find unfoldings of what shall be. Let us read Zech. viii. 20-23, and see how, because they are fitted and used of God as a people, they can fulfil the purpose of the heart of God to evangelise the world—"Thus saith the Lord of Hosts; It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts; I will go also. Yea, many people

and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you." People don't do so to us. Christians are utterly despised in the world—they are only witnesses. But in that day there will be such heart-longing over the earth that "Ten men shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you." Oh, may God hasten that blessed time, that time when He shall be known. The true Christian longeth that the Lord shall be known, and weepeth for sorrow that He is not known but then, like the morning light irradiating and illumining the whole world, restored Israel shall illustrate what He is, and the whole world shall bow in worship to its Creator. May God hasten that time! A. O. M.

## "THE USE AND ABUSE OF THE SCRIPTURE."

[SECOND PAPER.]

THERE are one or two figures used concerning the Scriptures that I would like to mention. There is the sword: Eph. vi. 17, "The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." Another figure that I would put alongside of that is the seed: 1 Pet. i. 23, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." Mark iv. 14, "The sower soweth the Word." Now, I use these two figures, the sword and the seed, to show that the Word is the instrument God uses in dealing with the unsaved. The Word of God is the Spirit's sword—not my sword, but the Spirit's sword.

I may use the Word of God without any reference to the Spirit of God, and it may produce no effect whatever; but when it is the Spirit's sword it comes with conviction to the heart and conscience. But it is not only the "sword," it is also the "seed."

Men may be cut to the heart like those who gazed upon Stephen, yet gnashed upon him

with their teeth. They were cut to the heart like the ground that is ploughed, and so prepared for the seed ; but if the seed be not received, there is no life. As the seed is cast into the ground, so the Word is sown in the heart ; kept in the heart, it generates there, and springing up it brings forth fruit unto life eternal.

Again, the Word is said to be "light." Look at a passage or two as to this : Psalm cxix. 105, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." I constantly hear that verse misquoted, and nothing that will fix it on your memory like understanding it. It is a light that shines down upon the path in the midst of the darkness of this world. But it is something else. It is also a lamp that you carry with you and which you can hold down to your feet, giving you light for each successive step. I have carried one many a time, and if you were walking in a place that was full of snares and pitfalls you would then know the meaning of "a lamp to my feet." The prophetic Scriptures are like a light down the age telling us its character and its end. But there is more than that—the Scriptures also descend as a lamp to the feet, giving instruction for the steps of every-day life. God gives particular precepts to guide, as it were, at every step. Reverence for the Word of God will accept it in both capacities. We should seek to know the course of this world and the path for God's children in it. But we should seek also for guidance as to the details of life in the family, the business, and the church, in order that our lives may be ordered thereby. We are not delivered from bondage to do what we please, but we are made free in order that we may do the will of God. As the melted metal is poured into the mould to take the shape of the mould, so you and I are to be moulded by the Word of God. See Rom. vi. 17, "Ye have obeyed from the heart that mould of doctrine whereunto ye were delivered." And this form or mould is just the likeness of Christ.

Another figure for the Word is *food*. Turn to Job xxiii. 12, "I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food." Deut. viii. 3, "And He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know ; that He might make thee know

that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." Jer. xv. 16, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them." The book of the law had been lost, and Hilkiah, Jeremiah's father, found the book amongst the rubbish in the Temple. The long-lost Word of God was to Jeremiah the joy and rejoicing of his heart. Dear young believers, I beseech you, take these words to heart and feed upon the Scriptures. As you take the book into your hand to feed your hungry soul, know that you are in the presence of the God who breathed it, and at the feet of the Lord who loved you. Thus will you be edified and comforted. The Scriptures thus brought home to the heart in the power of God are as necessary for your soul as breakfast and dinner are for the sustenance of the body.

#### ABUSE OF THE SCRIPTURE.

Heb. iv. 2, "For unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them : but the Word preached did not profit them." Why? Because there was anything wrong with the Word, or with the way in which it was preached? No. But because it was not "mixed with faith." If the Word is to be profitable to us it must be received by faith. What is the value of a promise if I do not believe it? A one-pound bank note is worth 20/. You would not take 19/11 for it, because it is worth its full value. But if you were living in South America just now, and you had one of the Argentine bank notes, you would find it was only worth 10/ in the pound or less. The value of the note depends upon the credit of the bank. You would get rid of all your notes as quick as you could if there was a whisper of the bank being insolvent. This Word is God's bank note, and faith gives it full value to my soul. I have got the promise in the Word of God, and know it is for me. But what good is it to me unless I receive it by faith?

Another passage I want you to look at : 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16, "And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation ; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you ; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things ; in which are some things hard to be understood,

which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest (twist or torture), as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction." Ungodly men torture the Scriptures, and it is a common enough thing now-a-days for one to take his text from the Word of God and so torture that text that it speaks falsely, and is made to convey a meaning that God never intended. I do not know anything more sad than what is launched out now from the press and the pulpit to ensnare the children of God, and this while professedly ministering the Word of God. Christians can wrest the Scriptures as well as the unconverted. For instance, one may take up a pet theory about holiness, and may go to the Scriptures to get passages to support this idea. Instead of coming to the Scripture to stand on its side, I may go to the Scripture to get it on my side. God grant unto us that we may come as little children to take the Scriptures in their entirety and in simplicity. If there is something "hard to be understood," as Peter says, seek grace to say, "I do not know," and wait on the living God; and if there is something you see that your brethren do not see, wait on the living God till He shows it to them. There is many a thing in this Book which years ago were to me "hard to be understood," but which are now quite clear to me. But there are very many things concerning which I am still waiting for light from God. When the Lord comes He will explain it all, and I will find out then how blind I was.

Yet one other point about the abuse of Scripture: 2 Cor. ii. 17, "For we are not as many, which corrupt (or adulterate) the Word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ." The Word of God in one sense is incorruptible, no man can corrupt it. But man may mix something with it, and thereby neutralise its power. Turn to the Gospel by Matthew xv. 6, "Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition." This is one way of neutralising the power of the truth, putting tradition alongside of it. Oh, how many are in bondage to tradition! The authority of tradition is so great in some minds as to outweigh the very Word of God itself. Put alongside of the Word of God it makes the Scripture "of none effect." The Word of

God must be paramount; everything must be brought to the test of the Scriptures.

One other thought about abusing the Scriptures. God will have His Word treated reverently. There are three scriptures to which I would refer you on the subject of *curiosity*. Col. ii. 18, "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind." When the ark was taken from Israel by the Philistines and returned upon their "new cart," it came into the hands of the men of a certain place called Bethshemish. These men presumed to open the ark and to look into it. For this they were smitten by the judgment of God, so that 70,000 perished. Again, the Levites were not to be present when the holy vessels were being covered up. The priests alone were to look upon them and prepare them for being carried by the Levites. Again, at Sinai, a fence was commanded to be put around the mountain, and the people were warned not to break through to gaze. Such are God's thoughts about curiosity. Let us beware of this spirit of wanting to know everything. It is not that we want to know in order to be more like Christ, or to have more communion with God, but a pressing of questions and inquiries leading to speculations and theories, often intruding into things not revealed or reaching after things too high for us. I rejoice when I see the young convert growing in the knowledge of God, but I have seen some of those who grew most quickly getting puffed up and ending in a terrible fall. It is knowledge conforming to Christ that will do us good, all the rest is lost. In the wilderness they gathered the manna; but some who had not the confidence to trust God for manna on the morrow stored it up, and it bred worms and stank. May God keep us from the mere thirst for knowledge apart from receiving it from and using it for the living God. J. R. C.

If we are to bring to God we must first receive of Him; if we are to work for Him, we must first rest in Him.

SELF-JUDGMENT.—If we exercised more self-judgment on ourselves it would cause us to be less severe in judging others.

### "THE GREAT COMMISSION."

**W**E must carry out the commission as the Lord has given it to us. The Son of God is still the rejected One. The world knows Him no more to-day than when they nailed Him to the cross. Let us remember that the offence of the cross has not ceased yet.

All power (authority) is given unto the Lord Jesus Christ. Many a time, when I have gone to a place with the Gospel, this word has come to me in power. Seeing that all authority is vested in the Son of God, let us own that authority, and lay hold of the mighty power of Him who exercises it. We know that the power that worketh in us is the power of the Holy Spirit. If we are filled with the Holy spirit, what a difference it makes as compared with trusting in our own power.

Then the next thing is "Go." It is not stay where you are. If you would reach the people with the Gospel, you must go to them with the Gospel. Many servants of the Lord are not successful in their Gospel ministry, because they don't go to the right place to fish for souls.

The next word is "make disciples." I accept this word **IN ITS FULL FORCE.**

It is linked with the authority of a rejected Christ; and it is by the power of the Holy Spirit that disciples are made. Paul could say "I have begotten you through the Gospel." Alas, we often get children in our own likeness.

Then the next thing is, baptising them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. How could you put the name of the triune living God on a dead sinner? Those to be baptised should be truly born of God.

Then they were enjoined to teach them to observe all things which He commanded. Some don't believe in observing the Lord's Supper every Lord's-day, but this is in accordance with the command of the Lord and the example of His apostles.

The Lord give us a heart as large as His own. "He loved the Church and gave Himself for it." He loved the whole church. And now He is sanctifying and cleansing it, that He may present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. In spite of the failures of man, God's counsels will be carried out.

Then He says, "Lo, I am with you all the days." Those who carry out this commission of our Lord may claim the fulfilment of this promise. In these days of sorrow, darkness, strife, and division, how blessed to have this promise to fall back upon. The trouble is not so much outside as inside the church now, May God help us to claim this promise. May we have the Lord with us; and if He be indeed with us, what more do we need? J. J. S.

### JOY, COMMUNION, THANKSGIVING, PEACE.

"Rejoice in the Lord alway; again will I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians iv. 4-7).

**T**HE tenor of the believer's life Godward should be an ever-flowing expression of thanksgiving, an effluence of spirit-joy. It lends wings to the soul, enabling it to soar above the turmoil and harassment of daily life; but its enjoyment and sustainment depend upon the measure of soul-communion with the Father. When "in spirit," as John the beloved was in Patmos Isle, an environment of difficulty, of adversity, of so-called misfortune, doth but become the occasion for increased communion with God, "by prayer, supplication, and thanksgiving."

The incidents of the pilgrim pathway, whether of a joyous or of a grievous nature, are disciplinary, the outcome of tenderest love, directed by infinite wisdom. They serve to develop and mature Christian character, thereby fitting and preparing the coheirs of glory for their respective spheres of dominion and rule in the revealed kingdom of the Lord Jesus. The trainage of the wilderness has for its object the transformation of the believer's moral character into the verisimilitude of Christ's character; it constitutes the process of "growing up into Him in all things (Ep. iv. 15), "the putting off" the earthly, the "putting on" the heavenly (Col. iii. 8, 9, 10, 12). In other words it is the processively increasing domination of spirit-life over flesh-life, the spiritual over the carnal. And in proportion to this spiritual or heavenly sublimation will be the

measure of the believer's service and testimony on earth to the glory of Him "whom, not having seen, he loves"; and corresponding thereto will be the grade of the sphere of dominion which shall be allotted to him—the guerdon of his trustfulness—when "the proof of his faith shall be found unto praise and honour and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

In the realisation of this Scriptural condition of absolute trustfulness in the infinite wisdom, love, and power of the Heavenly Father, the believer should enjoy unruffled calm amid all the vicissitudes of his time-life, "the peace of God, passing all understanding, keeping, or guarding, his heart and his mind—that is, his affection and his intellect—through Christ Jesus." Such the fruition when the believer practically and daily lives a "life of faith," "walks by faith, not by sight," commits his way unto the Lord, and trusts the providential faithfulness of his Heavenly Father. Then in his inner consciousness will he feel assured that "all things work together for good"; that every incident of his life is of Divine permission, and is an expression of the Father's tender love, inscrutable though it be, co-operating one and the selfsame thing, the evolvment of the Heavenly Father's "thoughts of peace and purposes of love."

Such the highest type of the believer's walk on earth, because such the example left for his imitation by the Lord Jesus.

The Saviour's life was a voluntary coalescence in and with the will of the Father, which led Him inexorably into those infinite depths of obedience and self-emptying which culminated in His death upon the cross. The harmony of His life found expression in His utterances—"I delight to do Thy will, O My God;" "Not My will, but Thine be done." "The things which He suffered" were the gauge of His obedient trustfulness. The instinct of His existence on earth was ever manifested in His self-abnegation. His words, "My meat, or food, is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work," spoken to the Galilean disciples, as wearied and worn, He rested at Jacob's well, reveal the spirit-symphony subsisting unbroken between the Father and Himself, "The Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief" throughout his isolated Nazariteship from Bethlehem to Golgotha. And, similarly,

when His disciples shall have attained to that same mind, then will they be willing in self-renunciation to follow Him, to take up His cross, to tread in the imprint of His feet, in the Scriptural apprehension of their true Nazariteship—separation unto God; then will it be their joy to do and to suffer the will of the Heavenly Father, to accept the cup of suffering or of discipline from His hand, be it bitter, be it sweet, and drink it, trusting His love.

From this it is evident that the highest phase of the life of faith is "joy in God": and hence the exhortation, "Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again will I say, Rejoice."

The outflow of trustfulness Godward is communion. Trusting souls, expatiating in all that the Scriptures teach of "the wisdom, love, and power" of the Heavenly Father, must of necessity be drawn into communion with Himself; and then, as they realise and enjoy the unfoldings of the riches of His grace and of His glory, will they make known to Him all their felt needs, their sorrows, and their joys, "by prayer, supplication, and thanksgiving." As surely as they do this will "the peace of God, passing all understanding—that is, intellectual comprehension—guard their hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Thus shall all "the faithful in Christ Jesus," living in the power of the Holy Spirit, experience joy, communion, thanksgiving, and peace in "the house of their pilgrimage," as they go on their way, "rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God." W. R. V.

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#### "WHEN HE HAD GIVEN THANKS."

"THE LORD JESUS the same night in which HE was betrayed took bread: and WHEN HE HAD GIVEN THANKS, HE BRAKE IT, and said, Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. *After the same manner also He took the cup, when HE had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me.*"

"For a good man some would even dare to die," and a friend might be willing to die for a friend, or a mother for her child; but where, in all the long history of this world's sorrows, can we point to *one* who, on the eve of a death such as *His* for us, *could give thanks?* Yet this, Christ did.

Betrayed by one of His disciples, and about to be denied by another; then to be forsaken of all, and hurried from place to place, all through the night, till sunrise should see Him condemned to death, and "led as a lamb to the slaughter"; "He took bread: *and when He had given thanks, He brake it.* . . . .  
*After the same manner also, He took the cup, when He had supped."*

"When He had supped": for the paschal lamb typified Himself; and in eating, He had in spirit gone through all the anguish. He takes His stand beyond the Cross—the work is done—His body given, His blood shed—"this is My body which *is* broken for you." His gracious love, self-abnegating, triumphant, and divine; lifts the dreadful load, soars far beyond what yet awaited and lay full before Him in all its details; and dwelling in its "tender mercies" on the blessing of its all-unworthy objects,—from a breaking heart "GAVE THANKS" (Ps. lxxix. 20; Luke xxii. 19).

J. L. K.

## Correspondence.

### CLEANSING THE LEPER.

To the Editor of *The Witness*.

DEAR SIR,—As a constant reader of the *Witness*, from which I have derived much spiritual help and blessing from time to time, will you allow me to point out two slight mistakes in the answer given by your correspondent (J. C.) to the above question?

*First*—J. C. states that Christ entered into heaven "with" His own blood, whereas Scripture says "by," or through, His own blood.

Christ poured out His blood on the cross to make an atonement for sin; therefore, it is in virtue of the blood shedding on Calvary He has entered, once for all, into heaven itself, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

*Second*—J. C. says: Christ took upon Himself our nature, but Scripture tells us it was "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Romans viii. 3; Phil. ii. 7, 8). "A body hast thou prepared, or fitted, Me" (Heb. x. 5).

Our nature is sinful, His was not, for "He knew no sin."

Every reader of *The Witness* knows full well that J. C. has only used the above expressions, like many more of God's people, unwittingly, but with no intention of misstating Scripture. F. D.

NOTE TO CORRESPONDENCE.—Answer B in our April number to Question on "Cleansing the Leper," has elicited a good deal of criticism. We

insert one of the letters received. The correction on Heb. ix. 12, "by His own blood," instead of "with," we fully endorse.

As to the words "took upon Himself our nature": surely none could for a moment suppose that this implied our *sinful, corrupt, fallen* nature. The words are only intended to express what is found in Heb. ii. 14: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, *He also Himself likewise took part of the same.*"

The distinction drawn between "atonement" and "redemption" has also been commented upon. We are not prepared to say that either word can be scripturally marked off and defined as in the answer referred to. Redemption regarded as *purchase* was effected and completed at the cross (see 1 Peter i. 18; Heb. ix. 15), but in its further aspect as *deliverance*, it goes on into the present and the future (see Rom. viii. 23; Eph. i. 14, iv. 30, &c.). "Atonement" or "propitiation" has usually been limited to the shedding of the blood of the offering, and in this sense it is correct to say: "The atoning work is done." But there may be also a sense in which the work of the high priest within the veil, based upon the "finished" work of Calvary, may be called "atoning," as indicated in Lev. xvi. 17.—ED.

## Questions and Answers.

We desire to express our thanks to all who have sent answers.

Replies to appear in the next number require to be sent in not later than 15th of present month, and so on; the 15th of the month being always the latest to which we can defer making up for press.

We again urge the importance of replies being *short*; it is essential, in this particular line of things, to be *concise*.

We shall greatly value remembrance in prayer that special wisdom and grace may be given for this service.

When more than one question is replied to, let the answer to each question be upon a separate piece of paper. THE EDITOR.

### Replies are invited to the following:—

What is the special significance of our Lord's words: "Remember Lot's wife" (Luke xvii. 32)?

Is there any difference between elders under the law and elders under grace, or Old Dispensation elders and New Dispensation elders?

What is the teaching of Samuel offering a burnt-offering at Mizpah, and building an altar unto the Lord at Ramah (1 Sam. vii. 9-17), in seeming neglect of the teaching of Leviticus xvii. 4, Deuteronomy xii. 13, 14, and ignoring of the Priesthood?

Kindly explain the several meanings of the word translated "rest," and what rests they signify in Hebrews iv.

### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS.

QUESTION 442.—Please explain the meaning of the following verse: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins" (1 John i. 9). Can we think from this that a child of God would be lost if he were to fall into some

**open sin and die suddenly without time for confession?**

There is a wide distinction to be drawn between judicial remission (answering to justification) and parental forgiveness.

One who has not obtained the remission of sins, or in other words who is not a justified person, is "condemned already" and "under the curse." But a sinning child is not exposed to the condemnation of the guilty. For him there is the rod of the Father, the chastening hand of the Lord ("as many as I love I rebuke and chasten"); never the sword of justice, never the wrath of God.

The Father has forgiveness in His heart for the sinning child the moment he owns his sin. Till then the happy intercourse of the Spirit of sonship is suspended. There is a distance and a reserve such as an earthly parent must exercise in discipline toward a child who refuses to own his fault. But the question of relationship is never raised. The child is sealed by the Spirit till the day of redemption, notwithstanding that the Spirit is so often grieved by his disobedient ways (Eph. iv. 30).

#### THE LAYING ON OF HANDS.

**QUESTION 443.**—Should the laying on of hands, as practised in the early church, be continued now?

The laying on of hands was connected (1) with healing, see Mark vi. 5, Luke iv. 40, and Acts ix. 17, xxviii. 8; (2) with blessing, Matt. xix. 15, Mark x. 16; (3) with bestowment of the Spirit, Acts viii. 17, xix. 6; (4) with the conferring of gifts, 2 Tim. i. 6, 1 Tim. iv. 14; (5) with appointment to special service, Acts vi. 6, xiii. 3.

We are not aware that any profess to practise the laying on of hands now as it was practised under the first four heads by the Lord and His apostles. This would involve the assumption of power not possessed, and if practised at all would, in such a case, be the acting of a solemn lie—a religious fraud.

The question, therefore, must be limited to the last, viz. :—as connected with appointment to special service.

The custom was putting the hands upon the head and when done by many at once, as in Acts xiii. 3, it was only the right hand that was used, and therefore, it became known as "the right hand of fellowship" (Gal. ii. 9).

The laying on of hands invariably signified *identification*. In the case of the sin-offering (see Lev. viii. 14, compare Lev. xvi. 21) it was identifying it with the sins of the one who laid his hand upon its head.

In the case of healing it was identifying the sick one with the health-giving, life-giving, power possessed by the healer.

In the bestowment of the Spirit it was identifying

the recipient of the gift with the bestower in common possession of the one Spirit.

So also with bestowment of gift. And in going forth on special service it was significant of identification with those sent forth; committing those who so commanded them to remember them, care for them, pray for them, communicate with them, and in every respect act toward them as being wholly identified with them in a joint ministry.

Assuredly, such a manner of going forth on special service is Scriptural and most fitting—it is sad that this part of the divine pattern has been so much lost sight of. But let it be born in mind that the mere form of "laying on of hands" is in itself nothing. If it be resolved through custom into the warm grasping of the two right hands, we see no reason why such custom should be departed from—it is not a perversion of a typical ordinance, or an infringement of any divine instruction.

It is important to note that, under the new covenant, grace adopts and sanctifies the ordinary customs of nations—for example, the washing of the feet, and the kiss of salutation—without imposing the identical customs as ordinances to be observed among nationalities where other forms and customs express the same ideas.

The license that perverts baptism from immersion to sprinkling is quite a different thing—it is the obliterating of the type, and, therefore, robs the ordinance of its significance.

#### MASTER AND SERVANT.

**QUESTION 444.**—If a master should ask a servant to do something which the servant did not consider straightforward, should he obey or refuse to do it; and, in the event of the master insisting upon obedience, should he leave? Would the servant's responsibility towards the Lord not cease after he had indicated to his master what he considered was right?

Before refusing to obey, the servant would require to be perfectly certain that the thing he was asked to do was wrong. To do a wrong thing at the bidding of an earthly master, would be to obey *man* rather than *God*. But refusal, when necessary, should be done in the spirit of meekness. Showing clearly that the refusal to obey results from subjection to the will of God, and not from self-will, or pride.

If subjection to the Lord involves the loss of the situation, the Lord is able to make up for it.

No amount of testimony to the master as to the wrongness of the thing commanded, could justify a believer in doing the thing he believed to be wrong.

For example—to use an unjust balance, or a light weight, knowing it to be such, could never be justified by merely informing the employer that such was the case.



## THE BRIGHT SIDE OF A DARK PICTURE.

Rev. ii. and iii.

**B**Y some strange fatuity or perversity the attention of teachers and preachers has almost invariably been not only directed to but concentrated upon those details of Rev. ii. and iii. which treat of evil and wrong, while the other details that relate to what is good and commendable have received but scant notice; and a line of teaching that was introduced more than forty years since is being perpetuated to-day by teachers, not all of whom are even middle-aged men, but who have adopted the teachings of a particular school. The general aspect of the chapters Rev. ii. and iii. is as dark as any of the paintings by Rembrandt; but it is not all dark in those chapters, and the long-continued practice of treating exclusively of the dark parts of the picture has deprived, and still deprives, the people of God of what is for their "edification, exhortation, and comfort."

The address to each ecclesia (assembly), not "church," is to the assembly as a whole; but all through the seven addresses we distinctly—no, we should distinctly—observe that the Lord, the Righteous Judge, discriminates, and in the worst cases recognises those who are worthy of commendation, encouragement, and comfort. How much better, and how different the probable result, if our teachers had done so.

In the first address are seven or eight things in favour of the assembly, and one thing against them.

In the second address are five or six things in favour of the assembly, and nothing against them, unless we conclude that "the synagogue of Satan" was amongst them.

In the third address are three things in favour of the assembly, and that, too, in a place so bad that it is described as "where Satan's throne is," and there are "a few things against" them, two of which are mentioned.

In the fourth address are six things in favour of the assembly, and "a few things against" them, one of which—a false and pernicious teacher—is mentioned.

In the fifth address it is stated that the assembly had a name that it was living, though

practically it was dead, but even there could be found "a few names" that "are worthy."

In the sixth address are six, or perhaps seven, things in favour of the assembly, and nothing against them.

In the seventh address there is not anything in their favour, but it is probable that a man, or perhaps some men, may be even there who will hear the voice that speaks.

Again, at Ephesus, those who had failed, fallen short, &c., were exhorted to repent and overcome; at Smyrna they were comforted by the assurance that the Lord knew all about them and their surroundings; they were exhorted to be faithful, and a promise was set before them; at Pergamos is to be noticed the discriminating judgment which is so lacking in us. There are "a few things" against the assembly because they have amongst them those who "hold" bad doctrine and are addicted to false teaching, and the exhortation to "repent" is addressed to the assembly; but the punitive threat is "against *them*," the holders of bad doctrine and the teachers of false doctrine. A promise is set before those who overcome in these matters.

At Thyatira is the teaching that has been so perverted and abused amongst us since 1849.

No discrimination has been exercised, but a sweeping condemnation of all was made in what was for so long held to be a parallel case. But look at the facts that are recorded. There are six things recorded that are to the credit of the assembly at Thyatira—works, charity, service, faith, patience, and later works that were more commendable than the first recorded works; and yet there were a "few things against them" because they allowed a false teacher to be amongst them. But the whole force of the reproof and threatening is against the false teacher, and those who receive and adopt the false teaching. "And I gave *her* space to repent, and *she* repented not"; then a threat, "Unless *they*," the receivers of the false teaching, "repent of their deeds," &c., &c. And now observe what follows—"But unto *you—the rest* in Thyatira, *as many as have not this doctrine*, and who have not known the depths of Satan—I will put upon you none other burden"; and, as in previous cases, promises are set before those who overcome. How carefully, how distinctly, and

how positively, does the Lord discriminate between the parties who compose the assembly at Thyatira! What a serious pity it is that we do not the same. The Lord judges the evil at its source—the authors of it—and calls upon *them* and their *following* to repent. The Lord talks about “overcoming.” Many amongst us for nearly half a century have insisted upon “separation”; and is it not, at least, a little remarkable that there is not any exhortation to the *assembly* at Thyatira to *repent*? It will be noticed that I am, as I am bound to do, pointing out what is written to the several assemblies which then were in existence. I am not touching, nor do I intend to touch, the prophetic view which some hold and teach upon Rev. ii. and iii., for it leads us away from the primary teaching of the chapters, and not unfrequently leads teachers to invent theories of their own or to adopt the theories of others. Thyatira is a dark enough picture, but there is a bright side to it, and it is well and proper to look at it.

At Sardis the whole assembly were wrong. They had a name that they lived, but practically they were dead. Their works were imperfect before God. The whole assembly are admonished and told to *repent*. And yet even there was a bright rift in the cloudy scene!

“Thou hast a few names *even in Sardis* which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk *with Me* in white: for they are worthy.” What a mercy to know that there is an Eye that can see a “few names *even in Sardis*.” At Philadelphia it is nearly all commendation of *them*, but we must be very careful how we apply it to ourselves and our conventional associations. The details of the statements to the assembly at Philadelphia are not for our private interpretation, nor for the glory of our assemblies. “Hast kept My word” is not the same, as some think and say, as “breaking bread on the first day of the week.” “My word” has a very wide range indeed, and a little lower down the Lord speaks of the “word of My patience,” and the two terms are connected as the parts are to a whole. The simple, faithful ones at Philadelphia were exhorted to hold fast what they had: “Let no man take thy crown.” So they already had a crown! And now I

have reached the last, the miserable assembly, Laodicea—lukewarm, neither cold nor hot, to be spued out—boasting of being rich and not being in need, and yet as a matter of fact “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” We do not very often hear that applied to ourselves. But even in such a condition of things there may be a man, or a few men, who have an ear to hear what the Spirit saith to the assemblies. “If any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in *to him*, and will sup *with him*, and *he* with *Me*.”

Again, as in previous cases, promises are set before those who overcome.

And now I have done briefly what I set out to do: to show you what so few, if indeed any, for many years past, have showed you—the bright side of a dark picture.

L. D. G.

### SATAN.

THE popular idea that the Devil is in Hell has no foundation in the Scriptures.

Possibly it is based on the statement in 2 Peter ii. 4, that “God spared not the angels which sinned, but cast them down to hell (*tartarus*), and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.”

This is again alluded to in Jude 6; but whoever these angels are they cannot include Satan, for there is abundant evidence in Scripture that from the beginning of the world till now he is neither in “*tartarus*” nor chained, but at liberty to carry on his evil designs, with hosts of evil spirits at his command, who range the “heavenly places” which surround this earth, and occupy and control the very air in which we move and breathe.

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, “the heavenlies” (or heavenly places) are seen to be the sphere of the Church’s blessing in and with Christ (see chap. i. 3). There Christ is set at the right hand of God (chap. i. 20). There the saints are “seated” in Christ Jesus, and whilst the Church continues upon earth it is an object of intense interest and divine instruction to the “principalities and powers” in the same “heavenly places” (chap. iii. 10).

But when we turn to chapter vi. we find that in those heavenlies to which we are called, and in which we are blessed, there

are also powers arrayed against us—for “we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual wickedness (or wicked spirits) in heavenly places.”

In chapter ii. Satan is referred to as “the prince of the power (or authority) of the air” and “the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.”

That these “angels,” “principalities,” “powers” of evil are hostile to Christ and to His Church is clear from Rom. viii. 38, 1 Cor. xv. 24, Col. ii. 15. Conversion is being turned “from the authority of Satan to God” (Acts xxvi. 18), and deliverance from the “power of darkness,” and being “translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son” (Col. i. 13).

From all these scriptures it appears that the sphere of Satan’s power is very extensive—including the “heavenly places” as well as this earth; that his authority over this world gives him control of the unsaved—“the whole world lieth in the wicked one”—and control over the air and over disease; and that even in death, Christ only and those who are His are delivered from his custody.

In this connection the first chapter of Job is very remarkable. Satan is introduced as presenting himself before the Lord amongst the sons of God. He is at once addressed by the Lord—“Whence comest thou?” His answer reveals the extent of the permission he has to range this earth. He had come, presumably, into the heavenlies, “from going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.”\*

The next question, “Hast thou considered my servant Job?” and the reply of Satan shows that those who fear the Lord are the special subjects of his envy and malice. He insinuates to God that there is no reality in Job’s piety—that he serves God only because it is the best policy, and that if God deprives him of the blessings so abundantly bestowed on him, he would curse God to His face.

But Satan could not touch Job without divine permission. The hedge of divine protection was about the servant of God. The same thought is found in the Lord’s words to

Peter—“Satan hath desired (or demanded) to have you that he may sift you as wheat.” Only by divine permission could Satan cause the blast of his temptation to bear upon the disciples.

But for purposes of wise and loving discipline, large permissions are at times granted to Satan, as we see illustrated in the case of Job—“Behold all that he hath is in thy power, only upon himself put not forth thine hand.” It is comforting to note here not only the permission, but also the limitation. Thus armed with the divine permit, Satan goes forth from the presence of the Lord determined to use it to the very uttermost. And now, observe the instrumentalities he avails himself of. He had no need to obtain permission to make use of Sabeans or Chaldeans; they were already under his authority. Little did they know whose bidding they were at, whose will they were fulfilling, when they mustered their bands for an expedition of plunder and bloodshed against the peaceful and prosperous family of Job. It was Satan that “filled their heart,” though they knew it not. They were “the children of disobedience,” and the spirit that energised them was the Devil.

It is the same still. The men and women of the world are to-day as ignorant as were the Sabeans and Chaldeans of old; but the fact is the same now as then—that the energising power of the world’s great undertakings is satanic. The love of gain was the natural desire that Satan made use of in these ancient plunderers, and the “love of money” is still “a root of all evil”—continually used by Satan for the furthering of his purposes of destruction.

But other powers were also at his disposal. The thunder cloud, the lightning, and the “great wind from the wilderness,” were at his call, and fulfilled their mission of destruction at his will. Thus we see him to be both “the god of this world” and “the prince of the power of the air.” The storm on the lake which threatened the destruction, had it been possible, of Christ and His disciples, was no less satanic than the enmity of Herod and the perfidy of Judas.

Who could have guessed had it not been revealed that these sufferings which tested the faith and patience of Job were the workings out of a mighty controversy between God and Satan, the subject of absorbing interest to the

\* The original word here used for “going” signifies going about as a spy; to search, to inquire, to observe diligently.

sons of God, the heavenly hosts! It seems as though all heaven must have held its breath in rapt silence as at last there fell from the lips of Job the sentence which was to declare the victory for God or for Satan, when slowly the crushed and bewildered patriarch uttered the words, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away." What next? is it victory for Satan? Does Job curse God to His face? All heaven waits for the next word—"Blessed be the name of the Lord."

Oh, what glory to God, what defeat to the proud and shameless adversary, was achieved by the patient, godly submission of this suffering saint.

And may we not gather that similar interests still invest the temptations, trials, and sorrows of the saints of God? Is God not still glorified in the patient uncomplaining sufferings of many a child of His whom the world knows not and with whom few even of the children of God are acquainted.

Ye who are called to meet the tempter's wiles, take courage and endure, for when the trial is over ye shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to those that love Him (James i. 12).

Ye who have taken joyfully the spoiling of your goods, and endured a great fight of affliction, faint not in the weary struggle—cast not away your confidence, for it hath great recompense of reward (Heb. x. 32-35).

Satan was defeated, but his impudence knows no bounds: he returns to the charge: again he insinuates that if only Job's bone and his flesh be touched he will curse God to His face. And again the permission is given with the definite limitation attached, "Behold he is in thine hand, but save his life."

Another power is now availed of, even that of disease. From the sole of the foot to the crown of the head he is smitten with sore boils. Who can tell by what means this disease was produced, or how the infection was brought? Man in his wisdom would have traced it out, and would have gloried in his discovery of the source of the infection, but would have remained altogether blind to the fact that by whatever means produced it was Satan's doing and a trial of faith and patience permitted and appointed by divine love and wisdom.

Such was the "thorn in the flesh" to Paul. That it caused him intense suffering is evident. It was "the messenger of Satan to buffet him." But it was more; though the doing of Satan and doubtless the expression of his malice, yet it was the Lord's appointment for his blessing. It was preventive discipline. The Lord detected a danger to Paul unseen by any other eye, unsuspected even by himself, though unsparing was his self-examination and self-judgment. The very revelations he received might be the means of his becoming unduly exalted. The lurking seed of spiritual pride was there ready to develop in suited conditions. But anticipative love detected it, and the appointed prevention was provided by means of Satan's malignity.

Paul, therefore, glories in his infirmity. No murmur escapes his lips: he accepts the discipline as the unerring appointment of love, and gives glory to God.

But Job's trial was not yet complete. His wife was spared to him. Whatever she may afterwards have become, at this stage she was too evidently Satan's tool. "Curse God and die" was the serpent's voice, though uttered by human lips.

Again all heaven waits in breathless silence the response. And once more it is victory for God. "What! shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil?"

Thus is Satan defeated. Thus it is manifested to all intelligent beings, and for all time, that what God by His grace has wrought in the soul is *indestructible*. And herein it differs from all mere formal outside or human religion. All such, when tested, gives way. But that which is of God is like silver and gold, the fiery trial instead of destroying it only purges it and displays its beauty. J. R. C.

WHAT is it which satisfies a father or mother and makes them account a child really dutiful? Not the child's barely doing as he is bidden, but his doing it with a cheerful and affectionate mind. Whoever will consider this for a moment will easily understand how charity, that is a hearty desire to please God, comes to be so praised in the Gospel, and why the very best of works are no better than dead and useless in the sight of Him who knows the heart, if that desire be entirely wanting.

## ENCOURAGEMENT.

"But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God."

1 SAM. xxx. 6.

**T**RIALS and perplexities of no ordinary kind pressed at this moment on the anointed successor of Saul. He was an exile from his country, driven hither and thither in search of that safety which the jealousy of the king denied; and now, in addition to all the sources of disquiet which had distressed him so long, that city which had been given by Achish for an abode for himself and his companions had been treacherously burnt with fire, and all the inhabitants thereof, with their substance, carried away captive. We need not marvel much that at such a discovery "David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep." But all this was not sufficient; yet deeper woe and fear were to be meted out to him, who, by his more exalted position, was exposed to the fiercest blasts of adversity. Let us read the next verse. "And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters: *but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.*"

Well was it for him that he had such a refuge to fly to in this day of sore calamity. When earthly help and consolation failed, when those devoted followers who had shared his wanderings and dangers, in so many a perilous hour, rose up in the bitterness of their wounded affections, and "spake of stoning" their leader, whither should he turn for aid if not to the Lord his God? But while we rejoice that the chosen monarch had it thus in his power to draw help and courage from a source of infinite supply, would it not be wise for us to search out and learn the lesson which this narrative is assuredly fitted to impart? "All things were written for our learning," we are told in the Scriptures; shall we not, then, endeavour to extract from the passage before us some of its treasure of instruction?

Are we not all of us, wherever we may be placed, and whatever may be our individual circumstances, subject to many a trial—some arising from outward events, some from inward causes; some, perhaps, brought upon us by

the failings of others, while some owe their sole origin to the perverse inclinations of our own rebellious hearts? The life of the Christian, whatsoever may be the aspect it assumes in the eyes of his surrounding companions, is always, and of necessity must always continue to be, an incessant warfare; and as such it will ever be fraught with occasions of trial, of fear, perchance of danger. Then who would not welcome with thankfulness aught that could bestow calmness and faith to pursue the path unflinchingly, whatever may betide? And how can we gain this aid otherwise than by following the example set us by the psalmist king?

The sorrows of this probationary scene are very varied, they differ in their nature as do the individuals who undergo them; but whatever they may be, it is no easy, no pleasant task to endure their provings. Sometimes they are permitted to arise so thickly, and to press so heavily, that the sufferer is well-nigh ready to exclaim, "Thy waves and Thy billows have gone over me." Then is the time for the exercise of faith; then is the season for the poor tried one to place his sole dependence on his heavenly Friend; to feel and know that amidst all these assaults, the hand of almighty power is underneath. Then may the believer encourage himself in the Lord his God! Hope may be inclined to droop and fold her wings, to refuse to buffet any longer with the storm; still let the oppressed spirit draw comfort from the remembrance that "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."

There is something inexpressibly cheering in the remembrance that the eye of omniscient love is watching over us, wherever we may be; that "even the very hairs of our head are all numbered." Forgetfulness of this is very productive of discouragement. If we could but realise livingly that the Almighty is ceaselessly regarding us for good, that the blessed Saviour, whose sacrifice purchased our redemption, is still our never-slumbering Advocate with the Father, how hopefully, how confidently should we pass along our daily walk! how calmly should we say, "The Lord is on my side: I will not fear!" how constantly and entirely should we encourage ourselves in the Lord our God!

## THE WORK OF VISITATION.

THE word "visitation" occurs in the following Scriptures: "Thou knewest not the time of thy visitation" (Luke xix. 44); "Glorify God in the day of visitation" (1 Peter ii. 12). We have practically the same word in 1 Peter v. 2: "Taking the oversight thereof"; "Looking diligently lest any fail of the grace of God" (Heb. xii. 15). "Looking diligently" is the same word in the Greek (*Episkopeo*) which literally means "overseeing," as a shepherd oversees his flock. It includes not merely looking at them at a distance, but getting close to them and carefully examining them to see if any were diseased, maimed, or otherwise in a bad condition.

The Lord said unto the shepherds in Israel: "The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, . . . neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them" (Ezek. xxxiv. 4). We gather from this passage that the shepherd's work has mainly to do with those who, in some way or another, have come under the power of the enemy. If well and healthy, they would need less of the shepherd's care.

In Zech. xi. 16, 17 we get some further light on shepherd work in the way of contrast: "Visit those that be cut off," "Seek the young ones," "Heal that which is broken," and "Feed that that standeth still." It is said concerning the idol shepherd that "his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye utterly darkened." He shall lose power and discernment—indispensable requisites in shepherd work.

Shepherd work necessitates an intimate acquaintance with the need of each individual person, hence the need of visitation. "Looking diligently," that is, looking in such a way as could only be done by a personal visit. Whenever this word, or words corresponding to it are used in the New Testament, the signification is visitation in grace, that is, with a loving, gracious object. God said to His own people, "Thou knewest not the time of thy visitation," as if God had purposes of revival when He came near and visited them, prepared to bestow blessing if they only recognised it.

Rom. xii. 8, "He that ruleth, with diligence."

This is evidently shepherd rule, and connects with Heb. xii., "looking diligently." It involves close watchfulness of persons, and observation of their condition and circumstances, which cannot be arrived at in any other way than by personal visitation.

Observe in this chapter how the various gifts are distinguished. Each one is to wait on his ministry. One person cannot do everything. If the flock is to be properly cared for, the shepherd will have to attend to his work, the teacher and the exhorter to their work. All the gifts cannot be properly mastered by one person. This is wherein a humanly-constructed system fails.

An overseer must be "apt to teach." That does not necessarily signify that he is a teacher, but one who can bring the Word to bear upon practical things and circumstances, so that in visitation he may be helpful in a way that the teacher cannot be. It is a most practical and precious service, one that involves continual self-denial, and one which the Lord will specially own and bless and reward.

Spirituality of mind is indispensable in the work of visitation. "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. vi. 1). This is the mind of Christ: that lowly, gentle, gracious mind that deals in faithfulness and grace with the erring one. This is an important work in connection with visitation. Visitation has not only to do with those who are overtaken in a fault. It may be that the quick discernment of the spiritual eye detects some trace of failure in grace—a failing of the grace of God. Therefore, such an one needs the ministry of the grace of God. Those that would be used in this blessed ministry must have their own souls saturated with the grace of God.

The one who visits must be at leisure from himself, so that he may be able to consider calmly, patiently, and carefully those that he is visiting. That is where the shepherd-heart comes in, and also the heart of a parent; it considers only the well-being of the child; it is most unselfish, thinking only of the blessing of the child: that is the spirit of the true pastor. He considers only how those under his care can be blessed, helped, and led on in the Lord.

Paul spoke of coming to the saints at Rome "in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ." Those who addict themselves to visitation, should see that they are in fellowship with God, having His thoughts and His love filling their souls, that in visiting they seek the blessing of the one they visit; not so much seeking to get blessing as to be the means of blessing. If this be the spirit in which they go about their work, then they will not only be the means of blessing to others, but they will be abundantly blessed in their own souls.

Wisdom is needed first, that in the visitation it may be to edification. A visit is utterly spoiled sometimes because it is too long. I have known of some who were perhaps the most gracious, careful, and experienced pastors that God ever raised up, and when they visited they remained only a short time. They got at the condition of things and ministered the word to suit it. Their visit would not be a weariness, it would not be an intrusion—always welcome, and they could come back the sooner. That was the character of the visitation of the late J. G. Bellet. He was a pastor indeed. I could mention the name of others—R. C. C., and men of that stamp—men of grace, power, and wisdom, whose visits are appreciated and welcomed because gone about in a becoming and considerate way.

Those who visit should take into account the temporal concerns of the Lord's people, Stephen, one of the seven who were chosen to look after the temporal concerns of the early Church, was a man full of faith and the Holy Ghost, and spake the Word of God with power and wisdom. The Apostle Paul was entrusted with conveying a contribution, made by the Gentile churches, to the poor saints at Jerusalem. Whilst both these servants of Christ were greatly endowed with spiritual gifts, they were ready and willing to minister to the temporal necessities of the saints. It is often God's way of opening up the hearts of His people to receive, with love and grace, counsel and instruction in spiritual things. They are thus made to feel that there is a real living Christ who cares for them, through the members of His body. People sometimes say: "It is hard to visit where there is poverty and distress, and have nothing to help them." It requires much wisdom in such circumstances. Nothing

would go further to nullify the benefit of a visit of one with a shepherd's heart than the idea that, when he came, he was always going to give something at the same time. In these matters, there is special need of divine wisdom—to be led at every step by the Spirit; and that every visit might be looked upon as an occasion of blessing—the "speech always with grace, seasoned with salt."

While seeking to enter into their needs, everything in the shape of inquisitiveness or gossip should be avoided. This work must be gone about with discretion and wisdom, not interfering with matters that we have nothing to do with, but seeking in a loving, gracious, and wise way to seek their good, with a single desire that God may be glorified. Going about it in this spirit, it will not fail of blessing to those visited.

J. R. C.

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REFLECTIONS ON ROMANS.—II.

THE POSITION AND PURPORT OF  
"ROMANS."

THE prefatory matter of verses 1-6, which passed before us, concludes with the salutation of verse 7. The substance of the epistle commences at verse 8; but ere we review the contents of chapter i., I would make a few remarks as to the epistle generally. First, you will notice the position which it occupies in the order of the New Testament books, coming in between the Acts of the Apostles and the ecclesiastical epistles; and I am of opinion that this arrangement is not without divine import. It appears to me that in the Gospels and the Acts we have the *ground* in which the *foundations* set forth in Romans are laid, ere we arrive at the *superstructure* of the subsequent epistles, bearing in mind our opening observation as to the design of this epistle under consideration, namely, that it is the establishment of the fundamentals of Christianity. As we proceed these fundamentals will come prominently before us—the truth as to sin, judgment, righteousness, the law, justification on the ground of atonement, &c.

It is remarkable that this specific line of truth is addressed to the saints at Rome, the city from which subsequently emanated the unholy system of ecclesiastical power which took root in that soil through endeavouring to

neutralise these very fundamentals themselves by the introduction of an admixture of Pagan and Judaistic principles into the elements of Christianity, casting forth from this centre her pernicious offshoots throughout the face of the earth: a system which droops under the influence of the light of truth, thriving only in the darkness of falsehood and ignorance. A sad record to be borne concerning the influences proceeding from that place from which, at the first, so blessed a testimony had gone forth as that Paul could thank God that their faith was spoken of throughout the whole world!

Doubtless the prophetic Spirit in the apostle anticipated this rise and development of spiritual corruption there; and this, I venture to suggest, accounts largely for the intensity of his desire to visit them. How he assures them of the yearning of his soul after them, appealing for witness of it to God, whom he served in the Gospel of His Son, praying unceasingly for them, and desiring to come to them in the fulness of the blessing of his special ministry as the apostle to the Gentiles, that they might be established to their mutual comfort! For this express object he wrote to them, evidently in lieu of a visit, having been "let hitherto" in his intention to come to them. We all would do well, and young saints more especially, to hang over the pages of such an epistle in prayerful meditation.

As to the period of the introduction of the Gospel into Rome, or who brought it there, nothing is certainly known; but it would appear that God planted an assembly there through some instrumentality other than the apostolate. It is evident that none of the apostles ever visited Rome until Paul was conveyed there in bonds. Europe received the Gospel about 52 A.D., through the combined labours of Paul, Silas and Timothy in Macedonia, then a Roman colony, where it seems that Luke joined them (Acts xvi. 9, &c.). There is room for the supposition that Rome may have been reached by the subsequent spread of the truth from this quarter, but we cannot speculate upon it. The absence of any mention of Rome having been visited upon the occasion of this the first evangelistic mission to Europe, as well as Paul's desire in this epistle to visit them, is conclusive that no

apostolic foot had ever entered that city up to the time this letter was written. And this conviction is strengthened by the consideration that the apostolate of the *twelve* was primarily and characteristically Jewish, being connected with the kingdom rather than the Church, and the dispensation of the latter having been committed to Paul, it is reasonable to infer that he, as a "chosen vessel" to bear Christ's Name before the *Gentiles*, would, therefore, be the *first*, if not the *only* apostle selected to evangelise Rome. Matt. xvi. 18, 19 is advanced by the papal school in support of their dogma alleging Peter's supremacy in the Church in connection with Rome, whereas the Lord never committed an *ecclesiastical* dispensation to Peter, but rather the "keys of the kingdom of heaven," reserving to Himself the inauguration of the Church—"I will build"—and eventually choosing His servant Paul as His "wise master-builder" (1 Cor. iii. 10). In Acts ii., Peter, in fulfilment of his specific commission, opens the kingdom of heaven to men, whilst the Church was there as a nucleus awaiting its distinctive dispensational development through the ministry of Paul. Truly, if there existed ground for the claim of any apostle to be recognised in the said "supremacy," Paul should stand there; but he, on the contrary, declared himself "less than the least of all saints" when speaking of the special ministry committed to him.

Paul addresses these Romans from his own proper standpoint as the "Apostle to the Gentiles," in which capacity he had purposed coming to them that he might also have fruit among them as among other Gentiles. Realising the responsibility of so great a ministry intrusted to him, he holds himself a debtor both to Greeks and Barbarians, wise and unwise, and this consciousness renders him ready to preach the Gospel at Rome also. As he writes in another place, "For necessity is laid upon me; for woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel. For if I do this of mine own will, I have a reward: but if not of mine own will, I have a stewardship intrusted to me" (1 Cor. ix. 16, 17, R.V.).

Before proceeding with our chapter it will not be unprofitable to pause for a few practical reflections upon what has been under our consideration. A threefold impulse of soul,



the operation of the Holy Spirit in the Apostle, is clearly indicated in the sublime introduction and the spiritual tenderness with which our epistle opens and proceeds. First, a deep sense of the majestic glory of the Master whom he served, and the power belonging unto Him; next, a tender care for those who belonged to Christ because they were dear to God; then a solemn realisation of his obligation toward God respecting the unsaved. In the energy of the first impulse he gave forth the thrilling words which open the epistle, appealing both to the affections and the understanding with such power and persuasion. He knew the glory and grace of that Saviour whose he was and whom he served, and also the power of His resurrection. This imparted a tone of holy authority to his words and service, compared with which the excellency of mere natural qualification was as nothing. Christ was the life of his ministry. Christ *inspired* it; Christ *constituted* it; and, in consequence, Christ was *ministered to souls through it*: hence its suitability to all classes of need, and its resulant success! The secret of this was the place Christ had in his affections. Christ was everything to Paul; therefore all that Paul had to minister was *Christ*.

In the power of the second impulse his heart went out to the saints because it was filled with Christ. Those who were "beloved of God" absorbed his interest, for he was in sympathy with Him about them. Hence the longing desire to be with them for their edification and comfort, and for the fellowship of a "mutual faith" which had Christ for its one object. Their state and needs were no matter of cold indifference to Paul, nor did the fact of their being the fruit of another's labour render him a whit less solicitous about their welfare than if they had been his own children in the faith. The saints at Rome, though "unknown by face" to him, shared in the apostolic care implanted in him by the Chief Shepherd for all the flock in every place. This grace is much to be coveted by us who stand forth as servants of Christ to-day!

Yet the occupation of his affections with Christ and the saints did not cause him to think little of a perishing world. The third impulse had its place in him also. He owned his solemn obligation to proclaim the Gospel

to the thousands dying around him, as their debtor, to tell them the truth. Neither an impetuous enthusiasm nor an indifferent fatalism ever appeared in the ministry of this "chosen vessel." The entire claim of Christ over him, felt and responded to, imparted a steady balance and an even tone, and so regulating his judgment as to render him wise unto the moment's need, characterised him as truly the Lord's *servant*. A faithful servant is not a mere mechanical executor of his master's dictates, but is one who stands *in* his master's thoughts and works *out* from them. It is beautiful and touching to see how truly this distinguishing grace pervades the inspired utterances which open our epistle, telling where the writer's heart was as he penned them.

May it be ours to experience like grace! It is solemn and blessed to stand *in* Christ; It is equally so to stand *for* Him. And if we stand for Him His sympathies will be ours, and this will impart character to our testimony and labours. The soul's condition is everything. Setting the *affection* on the Lord Jesus will regulate both the trend of our thoughts and nature of our service.

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#### SELECT THOUGHTS.

ALTHOUGH Scripture does not say that the devil or any other created being can read our hearts, I suppose that he is keen to watch every glance, tone, and movement, and to take advantage of the feeling or temper which it may betoken.

PRAYER, which seems to yourself cold and formal, offered and persevered in as a duty, may win you a greater blessing than that which seems to flow more freely, and which gives most comfort at the time. What a comfort there is in considering who said, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

LET it be ever so little a matter which annoys us, if we get over it because we are determined to be contented and cheerful, knowing such to be the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning us, this is the work of the gracious Comforter, this is that good thing which the Scripture calls Joy, and mentions, along with Love and Peace, among the fruits of the Spirit.

## HOUSEHOLD BAPTISM THEORIES.

[SECOND PAPER.]

LET us look at the teaching of the Word of God connected with "the kingdom," "the house," and "the body."

The kingdom of God covers all dispensations. In all ages, God has reigned; and the Lord, in John iii., gives the moral truth concerning the kingdom: "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." New birth into the kingdom, in all ages, is the plain teaching of the Lord. Before the cross, God was dealing with man as under trial, and therefore a nation was taken up, but in the midst of this nation only those born again were *really* in "the kingdom of God." From the cross to the eternal state, there are three dispensations of "the kingdom of God": the present period of grace, the tribulation, and the millennium. If we turn to Matthew's gospel we find the phrase "kingdom of heaven" used; and the same parables that apply to "the kingdom of God" in Luke, are given in Matthew as of the "kingdom of heaven." So these last three dispensations of the kingdom of God are called in Matthew "the kingdom of heaven." So that new birth is needed for "the kingdom of heaven." We are not left even to the general statement concerning the kingdom of God as to this. In Matthew xviii. 3 the Lord says, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." The negation is very strong here. So it is new birth into the kingdom of heaven; and none are *really* in excepting those born again.

The endeavour to make these scriptures only true of one phase of the kingdom is futile. The context forbids it. It is the moral truth of the kingdom. And so, baptism cannot bring into the kingdom. It is only the outward acknowledgment of a place that the believer is already in. Just as circumcision was the acknowledgment of covenant relationship with the children of Israelitish parents.

But in the seven parables of Matt. xiii. we find the first four give us the outward growth and consequent corruption of the kingdom. First, we have the seed sowing, and the nucleus of the kingdom in those who received the Word in a good and honest heart. Next we find the parable of the tares, A man

sowed good seed in his field. The good seed, we are told, are the children of the kingdom, the wheat that is gathered eventually into the garner. This good seed clearly is "the kingdom" in God's purpose and as He sees it. Note in this parable the seed are the people, and the Lord only sowed good seed, that is, "born-again" souls. But now, as men see it, there are tares, that is, unconverted professors. Who sowed them? The devil. And so we must never forget the two standpoints from which the kingdom is seen. From God's standpoint, as He sees it in His counsels, the kingdom is composed of born-again ones only. But from man's standpoint, and as we see it, there is a mixture. But this mixture is the work of the devil. It is in vain to try and make three classes in this outward view of the kingdom. The Lord says there are only two, and the one class is fit to be gathered in the garner, the other to be burned. It is repeated in the parable of the ten virgins. The five wise virgins correspond to the wheat, and the five foolish to the tares. And it is impossible for any honest and impartial Christian to deny that the doctrine of infant baptism has done more to introduce unconverted professors into the outward sphere of Christianity than all other false teachings combined. We admit there are two circles in Christendom—the inner circle of reality, the outer one of mere profession. The Lord calls one the wheat, and the other the tares. And so a believer is said to bring his children into this circle, **AMONG THE TARES**, and it is bringing them into a PLACE OF BLESSING! Moreover, it is utterly untrue that the Holy Spirit is limited in His operations to any such human circle. Wherever the Word of God is preached the Spirit is there to make it powerful.

We know this present dispensation of the "the kingdom of heaven" is the "gathering out of the nations a people for His Name"; that is the formation of the Church of God. There are different titles used of this ingathering of people. It is called "the Body of Christ," "the House of God," "the Church of the Living God," "the Temple." This Body of Christ is composed of all true believers from the day of Pentecost until the Lord comes, and it is by the one Spirit we are all baptised into the one Body (1 Cor. xii. 13). The kingdom

of heaven covers the last three dispensations of the kingdom of God, so it is quite distinct from the Church in its thought, as it is by new birth we enter the kingdom. But all who are born again in this dispensation are baptised by the Spirit into the one Body, so the kingdom in its reality is composed of the same people as the Church; that is, the Church dispensation is simply a dispensation of the kingdom of heaven. There is therefore the outward profession of the Church as well as the kingdom. The "false brethren" of the Church, the "vessels to dishonour" of the House, the "wood, hay, and stubble" built on the Temple are identical with "the tares" of the kingdom. God's thought, God's plan is for reality, and He is carrying out His counsels. Satan has used man to corrupt externally; but out of this external ruin there shall yet ascend to the heavens "a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing."

Their interpretation of the great commission in Matt. xxviii. is so unlike the principles of Christianity that it is felt necessary to give new translations from the Greek! One who is quoted approvingly by Mr. Scott, writes:—"Some have confidently quoted *them* in Greek, to prove by its masculine termination that it is in concord with disciples, not neuter, as agreeing with nations; saying, that if *them* applied to nations, it would have been *auta*, whereas it is *autos*. This looks plausible, and may pass with those who do not know Greek, or such as might not bear in mind that the pronoun in question, in respect of *gender* and *number*, often follows the rule of rational concord, or the construction required by the sense" ("Christian Baptism," page 20). Very cleverly put; but the writer admits that the grammatical construction requires that the *them* should be connected with "disciples." But, he says, "rational concord" and "construction required by the sense." Let us look at this "rational concord." It is admitted by all that baptism is burial; so, as they will not have it the burial of those who have "died with Christ," it must be the burial of those "dead in sins." For those who are "dead with Christ" have a living germ that comes out of the water in resurrection; but with them it is "burying nations" (not "disciples")

and then teaching them. Teaching, note, not dead people merely, but buried people; and so with them this spiritual and national graveyard is turned into a school, where buried sinners are taught "to observe all things!" It is refreshing to turn from such "rational concord," which denies the very first principle of Christianity, viz., that a man must be born again in order to be taught (John iii. 5), to Professor Brown's exposition of this scripture in the commentary of "Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown," especially as Professor Brown is generally believed to have some knowledge of Greek, and is also a Presbyterian, and thus a pedobaptist.

But it is said the keys of the kingdom given to Peter were "Baptism" and "the Word." But where does it say there were just two keys? Then baptism is made a door. How can it be a door and a key? The keys were given to Peter, and to Peter alone. "I give unto *thee*," the Lord says to Peter; and so according to this we have no right to "baptise" and preach "the Word" now. The real truth is, that Peter had the authority given to him to open the door, that being what the keys represent in Scripture; and when the door was once opened it did not need to be opened again, so we don't need any man with the keys to-day. On the day of Pentecost he preached the Word, and "they that gladly received the Word were baptised." And if we bring the two statements Peter makes as to forgiveness of sins, it does away with the thought of any governmental forgiveness connected with baptism. To the Jews he says, "Repent and be baptised unto the forgiveness of sins." To the Gentiles, "Whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." Nothing can be clearer from this than that baptism was with Peter an outward acknowledgment of faith in Christ. The Gentiles receiving the Holy Spirit was an incontrovertible proof that they had faith and were accepted of God; so Peter says—"Who was I that I could withstand God?"

There is a statement made as to the household of Stephanas in 1 Cor. i. that they were baptised, but not in the assembly, although in the last chapter the household of Stephanas are said to have been "the first-fruits of Achaia." The contention is, that it is *oikos*

in the first chapter and *oikia* in the last; and that *oikos* means family, and *oikia* servants; and so the family were baptised, but the servants were converted, and no mention made of their baptism at all. The extreme improbability of this staggers many. But the distinction claimed between the words is not at all maintained in the New Testament. For instance, in Acts vii. 10, Joseph is said to be governor over "all the house of Pharaoh." Here the word *oikos* is used, and clearly refers to the servants only. In 1 Tim. iii. 12 the deacons are to be the husbands "of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well." Here also the word for house is *oikos*, and is definitely linked on to servants. So the whole thing goes, as *oikos* and *oikia* are used interchangeably, and the *oikos* and *oikia* of Stephanas in 1 Cor. i. and xvi. are identical. It was an exceedingly fine distinction to build such a superstructure as household baptism on, but even this does not stand.

As to the households of Scripture, we find it was a common thing in those days for a whole house to be saved. Take, for instance, Crispus, in Acts xviii., who believed on the Lord with all his house; the jailer, in Acts xvi., who believed with all his house.

In Ephesians iv. there are seven unities mentioned; and this scripture has been pressed into the service of the household baptism teaching. "One body, one Spirit, and one hope of one calling" is designated as the inner circle. "One Lord, one faith, and one baptism," as the circle of profession; and "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all," is considered to take in the world at large. That we have

the Trinity here is very plain, but the context makes it plain that it is our place as Christians in relationship to the Trinity. Connected with the Spirit there is "one body" and "one hope"; connected with the Lord there is "one faith" and "one baptism," and this as real as the other. The very fact of the "one baptism," as the acknowledgment of the "one faith" in the "one Lord," proves plainly that it is real faith that is meant here. The fact is, household baptism is a distinct thing in principle from the baptism of Acts ii. and Romans vi., and as there is only "one baptism" it has no place in Scripture, however much it may have in theology or people's minds. "One God and Father of all, who is over all, and above all, and in all" (Rev. Ver.), is our relationship to God as Father. To apply this to the world at large, is simply to accept the Unitarian teaching of one "universal Father." Scripture never calls God the Father of any but those who are born again. The nearest approach to anything like the "universal Fatherhood" teaching is Paul's sermon to the Athenians, in Acts xvii., where he quotes the words of one of their poets, "For we also are His offspring," but he carefully keeps from the use of the word "Father." It is "God" all through his discourse.

"The promise is to you and to your children," in Acts ii., is taken as a basis for baptising children; but, as in all other cases, the context manifests the fallacy of it. The promise of the Holy Spirit was to the Jew first and to his children; but the condition was, "Repent and be baptised, *every one of you.*" It was a promise to them and for them first, but on individual faith.

### A SOLEMN CONTRAST.

BABYLON.	
A Habitation of Demons, - - -	Rev. xviii. 3.
A Table of Demons, - - -	1 Cor. x. 21.
A Cup of Demons, - - -	1 Cor. x. 21.
Doctrines of Demons, - - -	1 Tim. iv. 1.
Sacrifices to Demons, - - -	1 Cor. x. 20.

All planned and carried out in the energy of that wisdom which is "earthly, sensual, *devilish.*"—James iii. 15.

I would not that ye should have fellowship with demons.—1 Cor. x. 20.

THE CHURCH.	
A Habitation of God, - - -	Eph. ii. 22.
The Table of the Lord, - - -	1 Cor. x. 21.
The Cup of the Lord, - - -	1 Cor. x. 21.
The Doctrine according to Godliness, - - -	1 Tim. vi. 3.
Spiritual Sacrifices, - - -	1 Peter ii. 5.

All planned and carried out by that wisdom which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.—James iii. 17.

Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.—1 John i. 3.

## THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

THE most superficial reader can hardly fail to notice the frequent use by the Apostle of the divine title "God," used as it is some thirty-nine times in the five chapters which comprise the epistle. The use of a special divine title to give character to the whole is not peculiar to this portion of Scripture. Thus "Jesus" is embalmed in Philippians; "Christ" is characteristic of Ephesians; "Lord" prominent in Corinthians. The suitability of such choice is apparent; the special name harmonises with the particular teaching. It may be the appropriateness of the title "God," so prominent in this epistle is not so obvious; in order the better to appreciate it we must remember the circumstances under which this letter was penned, we therefore go back a little. Let us refresh our memories as to Paul's first visit to Europe; the circumstances were remarkable. That visit, destined to bring about such mighty results for God, was undertaken in no light spirit. It was the result of much heart exercise and dealing with God, undertaken in the assurance the Lord had called him, not at the dictates of his own desires, but rather against his own inclination, in obedience to the divine call. Read Acts xvi. 6-12. This exercise of soul, though painful in process, led to the deep-rooted conviction that he was treading the pathway marked out for him, and was therefore most necessary. As we trace the sequel of persecution and opposition we can admire the wisdom that granted His servant such a preparation of spirit. Only the assurance that he was indeed where God would have him could have sustained his spirit in the fiery trials through which he was called to pass. Had he doubted this he must have lost heart and courage; as it was he could sing in the prison, and be calm and unruffled when the mighty earthquake threw open those prison doors. He acts like one who knows the mighty God is for him and with him. This exercise of soul teaches Paul the better to lay hold of God, and so fits him for the persecution. That same persecution was to have a like result in the lives of the young converts. The bitter opposition was not for nothing, but

to build up the character of the Christians and impart to them a vigour and hardihood which should stand them in good stead by-and-by. "A green winter means a fat churchyard" is a proverb. The biting east wind and bitter cold of winter shall kill many an enemy to the plant life. The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church. When opposition is keenest God's work is deepest. Hence the terrible persecution that drove Paul from place to place during his first European missionary tour, to which he assuredly gathered the Lord had called him, was indeed one of the "all things" that work together for good. To recapitulate the story shortly:—Driven away from Philippi he reaches Thessalonica, where he preaches with even greater blessing, to be driven out with more relentless opposition. From thence he gets to Berea; again he has to fly for his life. He makes for the sea coast, for the moment leaving Timothy and Silas behind him, who soon, however, join him at Athens, which for a little while affords him a place of safety. He cannot rest; his heart goes out in much affection to the dear ones at Thessalonica, whom he hears to be cruelly ill-used by their own countrymen, for by this time the persecuting spirit has passed on from Jew to Gentile. So tender are his feelings that he prefers to remain at Athens alone rather than that they should be neglected, and so he sends Timothy and Silas back to comfort and sustain these dear saints. Presently he moves on to Corinth, where he is again joined by Timothy and Silas, who bring him refreshing tidings of these loved ones; tidings which fill the great Apostle's heart with thankfulness, and cause him, led and inspired by the Holy Spirit, to write this beautiful epistle. Under such circumstances how blessed to stay one's heart and the hearts of fellow-sufferers on God. He who knows God will care little for the wrath of man. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. viii. 31). "When I cry unto Thee, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God is for me" (Ps. lvi. 9).

Mr. Gladstone, in his remarkable book, "The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture," says that the late John Bright once told him that he would be content to stake on the Book of Psalms the great question of whether there is

or is not a divine revelation. Mr. Gladstone goes on to show that the immeasurable superiority of the Psalms to all the writings of the ancients lies in this: they lift up the souls of men to know, enjoy, and hold communion with God. An idea which he says no other religion affords even an approach to. Hence the Psalms are suitable for the spiritual of all times and dispensations. In all ages devout men, of whatsoever degree, high or low, intellectual or illiterate, have found consolation and comfort by the reading of its pages. The reason is they bring the soul into God's presence. There can be nothing higher than this, even to know God. For this our Lord did suffer, the just for the unjust, *to bring us to God*. That which is simplest is often deepest. The food for the young converts at Thessalonica is still food for the most advanced to-day. Oh, to be so occupied with the grace of God in His wonderful dealings with us that we, in spirit, rise up to this, which should indeed be the experience of all. "Not only so, but we also joy in God" (Rom. v. 11). Passing from the gifts to the Giver. Joy not only in salvation possessed, but joy in God Himself. The Thessalonians had turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God. How blessed for them, in the dark hour of tribulation, to remember God was for them. Did unbelief tempt Paul in prison to doubt? Then he would remember God was for him, and so could laugh at prison walls, and sing to God, who sent His answer in a great earthquake. So at a later time, when in the storm at sea, he boldly confessed, "I believe God" (Acts xxvii. 25). And, because of all this, did not the Spirit guide Paul to bring God before these troubled ones, that they thus might be brought to enjoy the quiet of His own presence? In keeping with this, when Paul so sadly foretold and warned the Ephesian elders of the coming dangers, did he not add, "Now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace" (Acts xx. 32). God and His Word sufficient then and enough now. The darkness may increase, evil abound more and more, dangers on every hand may threaten, but God is enough.

"Say not, my soul, from whence  
Can God relieve my care?  
Remember that Omnipotence  
Has servants everywhere."

God's help is always sure,  
His methods seldom guessed ;  
Delay will make our pleasure sure,  
Surprise will give it zest.  
His wisdom is sublime,  
His heart profoundly kind ;  
God never is before His time,  
And never is behind."

THOS. LYND, 1855.

W. H. S.

## Questions and Answers.

We desire to express our thanks to all who have sent answers.

Replies to appear in the next number require to be sent in not later than 15th of present month, and so on ; the 15th of the month being always the latest to which we can defer making up for press.

We again urge the importance of replies being *short* ; it is essential, in this particular line of things, to be *concise*.

We shall greatly value remembrance in prayer that special wisdom and grace may be given for this service.

When more than one question is replied to, let the answer to each question be upon a separate piece of paper. THE EDITOR.

*Several correspondents have lately made reference (not unkindly) to the fact that their questions have not appeared in "Witness."*

*To all such we take this opportunity of explaining that we have received hundreds of questions which have never appeared, and that it is impossible from want of space, if for no other reason, to insert all the questions received.*

*We select a few for each month, such as we deem most likely to be for general edification. More than this we do not see our way to undertake.*

### Replies are invited to the following :—

Is there any difference between elders under the law and elders under grace, or Old Dispensation elders and New Dispensation elders?

Kindly explain the several meanings of the word translated "rest," and what rests they signify in Hebrews iv.

Please explain Isaiah xxiv. 21.

What is the meaning of the expression "seven times," four times repeated in Leviticus xxvi. ? Is it possible by this chapter to decide in what year the times of the Gentiles will end?

When we remember 1800 years have elapsed since the words "I come quickly" were uttered, how are we to understand them?

Which event will be first in order of fulfilment—the expulsion of Satan from heaven, or the rapture of the saints (1 Thess. iv. 16)?

Do the Scriptures authorise or allow me to state the Lord's table has several aspects, and call it the Father's table, giving Luke xv. as my authority ; or the King's table, based upon 2 Samuel ix., 1 Kings x., and Song of Solomon i. 12 ; and again the Priestly table, based upon Genesis xiv. 18 ; or, should I content myself with speaking of it only as the Lord's table?

Please explain the following : "The law was our schoolmaster unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal. iii. 24).

## SAMUEL'S ALTARS.

**QUESTION 445.**—What is the teaching of Samuel offering a burnt-offering at Mizpeh, and building an altar unto the Lord at Ramah (1 Sam. vii. 9-17), in seeming neglect of the teaching of Leviticus xvii. 4, Deuteronomy xii. 13, 14, and ignoring of the Priesthood?

**Ans. A.**—Among the subjects of inquiry in page 78 of *The Witness* is one relative to the conduct of Samuel in offering sacrifice in other places than that appointed by God. That one so holy, so devoted, so well acquainted with the Divine purposes regarding Israel, should have so acted must have arisen from a latent cause needing explanation. Unlike Aaron he was not, by popular tumult, to be instrumental in worshipping idols, forsaking the law of his God. His was a solitary path amid the general wickedness. The circumstances were, then, most peculiar.

At that period the holy arrangement ordered by God, and carried into effect by His servant Moses, had been entirely broken up. The ark of God captured by the Philistines and recovered by that superhuman process was lying at Bethshemesh, an object of such terror, so that to escape the destruction they applied to Kirjath-jearim to take it away, which they did, placing it in the house of Aminadab. And there it remained till David, seated on the throne of Israel at the age of 30, went to remove it; but, alarmed at the death of Uzzah, carried it to Obedom, a man of Gath. Subsequently with very eminent zeal and great celebration, he took it to his own royal city, where it remained till Solomon, in his twentieth year, conveyed it into the temple he had erected.

In consequence of the slaughter that befell Israel when they sent for the ark as a talisman against the Philistines, the deaths and diseases occasioned by its presence among that nation, and the further death of so many at Bethshemesh, the house of Israel had looked upon the ark as a pestilence. Veneration had been changed into hatred, thence into contempt and utter disregard; until David restored due reverence, though not unmixed with alarm at the death of Uzzah.

But while the ark was thus apart, dissociated, where was the tabernacle? Where the altar of burnt-offering? The tent which God had made for His own residence among men, most elaborately constructed, was disregarded. Up to the time of Sam. iv. 4 the tabernacle and ark were at Shiloh. Afterwards the tabernacle and altar were found at Gibeon (1 Chr. xxi. 29), and there Solomon offered sacrifice. It is not said where the altar had been previously. Consequently the whole economy of worship was disjoined. Ark in one place, tent in another, altar in a third. Where could Israel worship? Nowhere. The whole was in abeyance, deranged. Ps. lxxiv. 3 shows the abandonment by the sparrows building nests on the altars.

Yet though Israel was given to idolatry, God left them not without a communication with Himself. There was Samuel, a Levite, who was favoured with Divine messages as God's servant: likewise the holy ephod with sacred breastplate, which on the slaughter of the priests one fugitive brought to David, and was more than once consulted by him. After twenty years that the ark had been at Kirjath-jearim, Israel sought towards their God (1 Sam. vii. 2). But this was merely a short part of the time the worship had been neglected. For from the day when the ark had been taken by the Philistines until the twentieth of Solomon, there occurred the forty years of Saul's reign, forty of David's, the twenty of Solomon, making 100 years, besides the remainder of Samuel's life, perhaps not less than twenty more. Though the scourges upon the people and the long-suffering of God towards them in the days of the judges produced no amendment, yet the favour shown to the nation through David and his dependence on the Most High appear to have in them that most remarkable alteration evinced in the latter part of David's reign and by the offerings they made to their God in 1 Chr. xxix.

Another point is to be noticed. On the destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar, the ark was not among the plunder carried away. It had previously been despoiled (2 Chr. v. 10) of the pot of manna and of Aaron's rod; the two tables of the covenant alone remained therein. These were too valuable to be left any longer in the care of man. The God of Israel took them into His own keeping (Rev. xi. 19).

Though Israel failed in that wherewith it was charged, and though we Gentile sinners, born of God to a higher elevation, have sinned yet more deeply in regard to that wherewith we have been charged (John xvii. 21), yet our God remains faithful to all His promises. He will heal and restore!

R. N.

**Editor's Note.**—We here give extract from articles by the late Mr. M'Leod Wylie—which appeared, years ago, in *The Witness*—reviewing the teaching of Professor Robertson Smith—in which the subject of this question is dealt with most exhaustively:—

**SHILOH CHOSEN AND FORSAKEN.**—The case stands thus: in Deut. xii. God promised that when Israel was at rest and dwelt securely, He would appoint a place for His name, and in that place alone sacrifices were to be offered. Accordingly, when Joshua had subdued the land, He chose Shiloh (which means a place of rest), and that, for a space of three hundred years was known and honoured as the place of Jehovah's habitation. Afterwards, for the sins of the people, He "refused the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which He placed among men" (Psalm lxxviii. 60), and He never

returned there. But subsequently, on Mount Moriah adjoining Mount Zion and the city of David, in the place of the sheathed sword and the accepted sacrifice (2 Sam. xxiv. 18, and 1 Chron. xxi. 26-28), He found His rest an habitation for the Mighty God of Israel (Psalm cxxiii.), and there His people gathered to His name, and there His glory appeared to them, long prior to either Jeremiah or Isaiah. This was about 130 years after Shiloh was forsaken. There is no difficulty in the matter. The interval was one of trial and disorder, and it was not till Solomon was established on the throne that the time for Deut. xii. 10 to be again fulfilled arrived. A review of the record of these events in the Word will make it all quite clear.

First, in Joshua xviii., we read that "The whole congregation of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation. And the land was subdued before them." Here we find God faithful to His promise, and the people living in the manifest enjoyment of His favour and blessing. At Shiloh the solemn lot was cast for the inheritance of the tribes (xix. 51); and there the commandment of Moses respecting the cities of the Levites was carried out (xxi. 2).

Then in Judges xviii. 31 we have the expression in reference to Dan's stolen image, that it continued "all the time the house of God was in Shiloh," an expression which is in exact harmony with the rest of the Word. "He refused the tabernacle of Joseph and chose not the tribe of Ephraim; but chose the tribe of Judah, the Mount Zion which He loved, and He built His sanctuary like high places, like the earth which He hath established for ever" (Psalm lxxviii. 67-69). At Shiloh it might have remained had the priests and people been faithful, but it is written: "Go ye now unto My place which was in Shiloh, where I set My name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of My people Israel" (Jer. vii. 12). "If ye will not hearken to Me to walk in My law . . . then will I make this house like Shiloh" (Jer. xxvi. 6).

In Judges xix. 18 we find the Levite going to the house of the Lord, and in xxi. we read of a yearly feast in Shiloh. In Ruth (while the law is shown to have been strictly observed) there is no mention or hint of any local altar. In 1 Sam. i. Elkanah is spoken of as going up yearly from his city in Mount Ephraim to worship and sacrifice at Shiloh. The special sin of Eli's sons who ministered there is stated to have been that they caused men to abhor the offering of the Lord; but it is not said (as we might expect from Professor Smith's view) that they then sacrificed elsewhere. For a time it appears that the Lord in some measure forsook the place, but when according to His ways, of which we see so much in the Word, He raised up a prophet on the failure of the priest-

hood, we read (1 Sam. iii. 21)—"The Lord appeared again in Shiloh, for the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the Lord."

In chap. iv. the ark is brought up from Shiloh to the camp and is taken. By the glory then departing (ver. 21, 22), I apprehend that more is meant than the loss of the ark itself. There was no more hope of seeing the Shekinah shining there as the token of God's presence in the sanctuary. In chap. vii. the ark is restored by the Philistines, and finds a dwelling-place in the house of Abinadab after being twenty years in Kirjath-jearim. In chap. xiv. Saul bids Ahiah "bring hither the ark (for the ark of God was at that time with the children of Israel)." This was in Gibeah of Benjamin, apparently the same place as Abinadab's abode, which is also called the hill, or Gibeah. The ark is not in any way again mentioned in connection with Shiloh. Probably Shiloh had before this time been destroyed, for the priests are found at Nob.

But what of Samuel, of whose sacrificing in other places Professor Smith speaks as a proof that the law of Deut. xii. was then unknown? Strange if he did not know of a law which had manifestly been in full operation so long! We find no exceptions to the custom of sacrificing at Shiloh all the time the ark and tabernacle were there, save such as prove the rule. These are the sacrifices of Gideon and Manoah, in the presence of the Angel of the Lord, on a rock, and Gideon's altar and sacrifice by express divine command. The other altar, called "Jehovah Shalom," is not mentioned as a place of sacrifice, but was like the altar of the Reubenites for a memorial and witness (Jud. vi.).

Professor Smith implies that if Samuel had known of the law of Deut. xii., he would have sacrificed at Nob. But God had not chosen and appointed that place, and the ark was not there. Doubtless in sacrificing at Ramah, Gilgal, and elsewhere, he stood as a prophet in God's counsel. At Mizpeh (1 Sam. vii. 6), he poured forth water before the Lord, and afterwards offered a sucking lamb, whether on a rock or an altar we know not. All this time the kingdom was in terrible disorder, and sometimes, as we see in chap. xiii., was altogether in the hands of the Philistines. It was no time of rest for the people, or for the gathering of the tribes, according to the law, to the one promised sanctuary. Soon after, the priestly line of Eli was nearly destroyed, and the survivor was a fugitive with the *rightful* but rejected king in Adullam. There was nothing incongruous with Deut. xii. in Samuel's other altars at such a juncture. To speak of them as necessarily superstitious or heathenish because apart from the one appointed place, *when there was no such place*, betrays a singular misapprehension of the circumstances of the case.



## ONE OF THE HARD SAYINGS.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY MR. JAMES WRIGHT.

"Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you" (John vi. 53).

THESE words are part of those sayings of Jesus, concerning which many of His disciples said, "This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" The words presented a two-fold difficulty to their minds—a physical difficulty and a moral difficulty.

The *physical* difficulty is expressed by the utterance of the Jews in verse 52, "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?" This physical impossibility is similar to the difficulty Nicodemus felt when the Lord spoke of the necessity of being born again. "How can a man be born when he is old?" Now, for all who are willing to be taught of God, the solution of this difficulty is very simple, and is given us in verse 63, where the Lord says, "The words I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life," implying that the subject of His words were *spiritual* realities; not things of which the senses could take cognisance, but spiritual realities. "They are *spirit*," and therefore about spiritual things. So the birth again of which the Lord spoke to Nicodemus was a *spiritual* birth, and eating the flesh was spiritual feeding. The first, the new birth (the birth again), denoting the commencement of a new spiritual existence, and the second word of Jesus, which was spiritual also, about eating His flesh, referring to the way in which that new spiritual existence is nourished and sustained; but, in both cases, whether speaking of the beginning or the sustentation of life, the words were "spirit." He did not speak of a second natural birth, but of the commencement of the new spiritual life, as real as the first birth; quite as real, but of a totally different order. And so, when He speaks of eating His flesh, He speaks not of the process by which the physical frame is built up, but of the *spiritual* process by which that new life which He has created in the believing sinner is nourished and developed.

This, though very elementary truth, is exceedingly important to dwell on in these days, because on the misuse and the misapplication of it is erected a whole system of error. Wrong

views of the new birth and wrong views of the sustentation of spiritual life are both built upon the materialistic interpretation of these words of Christ, which are "spirit." So that when a professed teacher of the truth of God tells me that he is endowed with power, as he sprinkles water upon the head of an unconscious infant, and pronounces certain words over it to make it "a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven"—in other words, to begin the new life in him—he misses the force of the words of Jesus, which are "*spirit*." And when that same teacher proceeds to say that by partaking of the bread and wine called "sacramental elements," the spiritual life, which was commenced in the way he supposed, is nourished and sustained, and that therefore it is of deep importance for the maintenance of spiritual life to partake of that sacrament, he is missing, I say again, the very essence of that word of Jesus. Spiritual life is not sustained by anything taken into the lips. The whole thing is a deeply important illustration of the widespread error that the father of lies can bring about through the misinterpretation or misapplication of the very Word of God, and therefore it should lead us to cry very earnestly to the God of Light, that we may see light in His light.

Now the second difficulty which these hearers of our Lord had was a *moral* difficulty, and a far greater difficulty even than the other to them. It seemed as if the words of the Lord Jesus directly contradicted the command of Jehovah given to Moses (Lev. xvii. and Deut. xii.), in which so repeatedly occurs the expression, "No soul of you shall eat blood." The prohibition of eating blood was one of the most strict commands of the Old Testament economy, hence to the Jews and to every professed disciple this was an enormous stumbling-block.

But before going further into that, let me dwell on one fact, that this hard saying about the new birth did not effectually stumble Nicodemus, so as to drive him away from Christ's feet; nor did this hard saying stumble the eleven, as represented by Peter's confession, so as to drive them away from His feet. Why not? Why was not Nicodemus driven away like the contentious Jews? Why were not the eleven driven away? The secret is just this, the

Spirit of God had taught them so much of the *person* of Christ that they could not leave Him. When observing how many were leaving Him on account of these difficult sayings, the Lord turns and says, "Will ye also go away?" With the utmost frankness Peter replies, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." "Thou art the loadstone, the magnet to draw our hearts to Thyself, the blessed Son of God." As much as to say, "We cannot understand your sayings, but we know you are the sent One of God, and we must cling to you till you make it all plain to our minds." Now, you see, they were of the mind of the Queen of Sheba; *she* had hard questions, but she came to Solomon and "communed with him of all that was in her heart"; and then we are told so beautifully, "And Solomon told her all her questions; there was not anything hid from the king which he told her not." But look at the condition, the posture of soul, the temper in which that woman came to Solomon; she came to him as the repository of God's wisdom and truth, and she took a most expensive and troublesome journey, and thus bears testimony to that unbelieving generation: "The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them, for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold a greater than Solomon is here." In other words, if the Jews had in frankness and simplicity communed with Him, the true Solomon, about their hard questions, as did the disciples and Nicodemus, all would have been made plain to them. But what do we read about them? They "strove among themselves." Now look at the contrast: the Jews striving among themselves, the obedient disciples, Queen of Sheba like, communing with Jesus, and in the end therefore having all their difficulties removed. Now these two contrasted ways of dealing with the truth of Christ have not disappeared yet, they are present with us to-day. There are those who make the difficulties of Scripture just an excuse to have nothing to do with the whole thing. Now what lies at the back of that? The *desire* to have done with it. Beloved friends, the soil of infidelity is not *intellectual*, but *moral*. "The fool hath said in his heart,

No God." ("There is," is in italics.) That is, he does not wish for God. The base of all infidel structures in man's soul is the *desire* to have done with God, for they desire not the knowledge of His ways. Paul diagnoses the real moral disease when he says, "They did not like to retain God in their knowledge"; and when man does not like to retain God in his thoughts he can give a hundred-and-one reasons in Scripture for professing to disbelieve the whole thing. Therefore to this day we have the representatives of those who "strove among themselves." Look, they are not in union; there are all sorts of schools of infidel opinion. Infidels are not in union among themselves, but in endless strife; but it is the strife of common opposition to the truth of God. And that striving, instead of bringing them to the feet of Jesus, with the confession that it is the character of the creature to seek wisdom from the Creator—the character of the sinner to seek the Saviour—it makes them fly off at a tangent, and practically to depart from God; whereas communing with Jesus about the hard questions sooner or later leads to their solution by Jesus, or to the intense joy of being able to bear the yoke—the yoke of patient waiting for a fuller revelation. That word in Matt. xi., "Take My yoke upon you," is in connection with the entire subjection of His holy soul to the sovereign will of God, in hiding the truths of redemption from the wise and prudent, and revealing them unto babes. "Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight." That was the yoke for the obedient servant, for the Son whose business it was to honour the Father. "Take My yoke upon you." And, therefore, amongst all the burdens and heavy-ladings that oppress men, none oppress men more than those of a restless intellect. Now, the Lord so pities His poor disciples and His very creatures that He longs to give them rest. Are there any souls here weary of intellectual striving? Hasten to Jesus; put your neck into the other half of the yoke, and you shall find rest, not in subjection to the iron despotism of man over the heart and conscience—this is the kind of rest Rome gives; it is a *kind* of rest—but a perfect counterfeit of that which comes from subjection to God; that is true, the other is counterfeit.

(Concluding portion in next number.)

## HOUSEHOLD BAPTISM THEORIES.

[CONCLUDING PAPER.]

THE governmental forgiveness, as connected with baptism, is based on the parable of "the unmerciful servant" in Matt. xvii. 23-35. The reference here is plainly to the Jewish nation, whose sins of disobedience and rebellion had been overlooked, and even their great sin of rejecting and crucifying the Messiah, and they had been the first to hear the gospel of mercy; but they refused the same mercy to the Gentiles, and thus have brought the judgment of God upon themselves. But where is there any connection in Scripture between this and baptism? The link is missing. And this is the whole trouble with all the infant or household-baptist teaching—THE LINK IS MISSING; THERE IS NO WORD OF GOD FOR IT. The epistles tell us how to train up our children, showing also that if one parent is saved the children are to be considered "clean" or "holy" (that is not children of immorality, as they would have been with the Jew); but not one word about baptising them. We are to "suffer them to come to the Lord," but are not exhorted to bring them in baptism. No command, no exhortation, not even an indirect inference! And what is the answer to all this from those who, we believe, desire to go by the Word of God? The absurd statement that "there is no Scripture for women being at the Lord's table!" Paul addresses his letter to the Church of God at Corinth, "To them who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints." In chap. xi. 1-16 he puts the man and woman in their respective places, and then says, "When ye (the Church of God) come together," especially as connected with the Lord's Supper. And this does not include women! Such foolish statements manifest the weakness of the cause that has to be supported by them.

But we are met again with the statement that the tares in the parable of "the wheat and the tares" are "the children of the wicked one," and so they must refer to a special class who have no hope of salvation. According to this view, in the outward aspect of the kingdom there are three classes—the wheat, the tares, and the middling class. The Lord only speaks of the two classes, and with Him the wheat

represented saved souls; those who are fit to be gathered into the garner. But if we turn to 1 John iii. 10 we find the two classes still, and also how each is manifested. "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." It is only born-again ones who can "do righteousness" and love their brethren, and John says all others are manifested to be "children of the devil." Unconverted professors surely come under this category. As Adam listened to the word of the devil, and so received a fallen nature, which we all inherit, so now when we listen to the Word of God, and receive it in our hearts, we become the children of God. The tares are therefore simply unconverted people in the profession of Christianity.

We have done. We have sought in all to write for the Lord's glory and the edification of His people, with no desire to wound or grieve, but yet to speak plainly what we believe is the Lord's mind. The darkness is gathering around us. Satan is attacking the Bible now directly. Its inspiration and its accuracy are impeached. But his strongest point of attack is still the tacking on to the Word of God that which does not belong to it. Romanism, the great masterpiece of Satan, is a manifestation of his work in this line, and we doubt not its infant baptism teaching is one of its greatest bulwarks. Let the children of God therefore be wary, and judge everything by the living and abiding Word of God. We know that "Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." May we "be diligent, that we may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless."

J. J. S.

## DISCONTENT.

WHEN discontent is searched out to the bottom, it is in fact no better than unbelief. It is the root then of all evil, for it is setting yourself against the will of God, just as being resigned and contented is having the same will as He has.

For a man to profit as he ought, even from the best of truths, they must not be merely taken up from his teacher, but must be rooted and grounded in his own understanding and practice.

## ENTERTAINING A PROPHET.

2 Kings iv. 8-37.

**T**HERE are certain sympathies of the renewed mind which we quickly recognise in each other. The Shunammite was of the distant tribe of Issachar, and not acquainted with Elisha. There were, nevertheless links of union and understanding between them. "I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually." She understood not only that this was an holy man of God; but she understood his tastes and habits. She received him, a prophet, in the name of a prophet. She does not propose a great thing to her husband, for that would not have suited the "man of God." This was real hospitality—entertaining a prophet according to the taste of a prophet's mind. He was a pilgrim in the earth. How blessed it is, in a cold forbidding world like this, to see two together of one mind and understanding according to Christ. This is the communion of saints. Just so the Lord, in the house of Mary and Martha and Lazarus. It is not the feast that forms the atmosphere of the room, but the love. It was the mind and heart of the woman that entertained Elisha; and, oh, how little we get of it in this world!

We are, then, like this woman, to provide according to the tastes and desires of the renewed mind. Elisha found himself at home (ver. 11); and it is blessed when the saints find themselves at home in each other's company. We are not careful enough to be imitators of such blessed samples given by the Spirit of God. The question is, have the sympathies of love spread the feast? Thus it was with the family at Bethany. "The house was filled with the odour of the ointment."

The woman stands before him (ver. 12). Though she was the mistress, she takes the place of the inferior. Yes, we want to cultivate the little touches of the Spirit given to us in such a scene as this, where so much of heaven shines forth.

The prophet acknowledges all her hospitality (ver. 13), and desires to recompense her; but as he had not used his interest at court for himself, to be a great one in the earth, so, in like manner, the woman would not be a great one: she says, "I dwell among my own people."

What union is here! Are you, and am I willing thus to occupy ourselves till Jesus come, in that lowly place where we are set, not desirous to advance one step higher in this world's rank; content that the king's ear, and the captain's ear, should know not our names?

She behaves not herself unseemly (ver. 14). Familiarity may lead to liberty; but here was close intimacy of two hearts that understood each other. It was not an intimacy that allowed nature to take the advantage; nor was it a liberty that would degenerate into anything common or coarse. It is blessed to see Elisha like his Master, of whom he was the shadow, having nothing, depending on the woman for a lodging. Thus was it with Jesus; yet if leprosy, or blindness, or deafness, came before Him, he had power to meet it; so also Elisha. He travels in the greatness of the strength of the Spirit, but he does nothing for himself. He can feed the armies of kings; he can restore the dead; he can heal the leper; he can make the oil to flow;—all this time he reminds us of Jesus, who has women to minister to Him of their substance.

He now speaks to this daughter of Abraham as God did to Abraham, "Thou shalt have a son" (ver. 14-21). Here we get into sympathy with the faith of this woman, who was a child of Abraham. When death enters her house, she is prepared. There is no surprise, no amazement; but the calmness of one who knew there was a power and grace that could meet her every necessity, the calmness and the certainty that mark the way of this dear believing child of Abraham (ver. 21). Here is no disturbance. She does not deal with the necessity as though there was no power or remedy above it. Beloved, when our faith brings us into the presence of God, this same calmness is ours.

Shall I look at the work of Satan, and take the sentence of death into me, and shall I not look at the work and doing of the Lord Jesus for me? The woman's conduct was calm; so was that of Abraham in offering up Isaac; he also gets the young man and the ass, and tells them to abide, and he and the lad will go and worship. There was no doubt in his mind as to the certainty of death, but he was calmly talking of life. It is this same spirit which we observe so sweetly in the woman who knew

there was relief in the prophet for her. We should cultivate this calmness and composure of soul. We should know that *life in Christ* is as certain to one who believes, as death through sin is certain. We know that the power of God was enough, and nothing but that power would do.

What a blessed thing, she can say (ver. 26), "It is well." The moment we apply to the power and grace in Jesus, that moment we can talk of life in the midst of death. It is not well if we look to the circumstances, but *it is well* if we look to the power of God. She presses through ordinances, through new moons and sabbaths, through Gehazi; they will not do, she must come to the feet of the prophet of God (ver. 27, so again in ver. 30). Oh, beloved, I do invite every one to linger here a little moment. What a temptation, "take my staff"; but nothing will satisfy the woman short of the presence of the prophet himself. It is this that the Spirit of God desires in us. It is Jesus; Jesus *Himself*, and nothing else will satisfy the conscience of a renewed soul. It is a precious moment when we are brought to know that

"None but Jesus,  
Can do helpless sinners good."

The soul rightly convicted by the Spirit of God can never rest in any ordinance. Though the prophet's own lips propose that the staff should be taken, the woman refuses it, just as before she had refused to listen to her husband when he talks of the new moon and sabbaths. This is what Jesus wants. He came that He should Himself be used, and not another. It is HIMSELF. He has not entrusted His power to any delegate, or vicar, or representative. He wants the conscience to say, "*None but Thou, none but Thou canst do me any good.*"

Verse 30. "And he arose, and followed her." Jesus only waits, in the history of our conscience, for a moment like this. Ask what you will. Jesus is at the disposal of our necessity; let us tell Him we cannot do without Him, and the Son of God is at our bidding.

Verse 31. I like to see the prophet's staff no better than a piece of wood. This ordinance is rebuked, it is laughed at. If we stop short of Jesus there is no life. "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life."

Verses 33, 34 present a blessed picture, the soul of Elisha breathing life into a dead child.

Verse 37. Mark the calmness and the certainty of the woman. She fell at his feet, and bowed, before she took up her child. She has no more doubt that the child is living than she had before that it was dead. She does not examine it, or question it. She is not amazed with any amazement; her faith is more like Abraham's than Sarah's. Amazement does not belong to faith. We shall have for ever the wonder of adoration, but not the wonder of amazement. She was a happy mother, it is true, but happier as a child of faith who could carry her necessities up to God, and in calmness and certainty have those necessities met.

### GOD'S BOUNTIES.

CHRISTIANS as we are, have we not often sadly forgotten who gave us our corn and other provisions for the body? We have ploughed, sown, harrowed, reaped, thrashed; we have taken our portion in the fruits of the earth day after day and season after season; God has most graciously fed us, and those who are dear to us, all our lives long unto this day: and the very abundance of the mercy has made us unthankful. Almighty God has been very bountiful to us, as a country; for many, many years, there has been nothing like a famine in this land. And we have grown so accustomed to the blessing of plenty, that we have taken it as a matter of course. We have reckoned upon a certain return of crops which we put into the ground, and each one of us, speaking generally, has reckoned upon such and such meals in the day, almost as if it were a thing to which we had a right, and as if it would be dealing hardly with us, should God refuse it. And all the while both the general harvest of the country, and each person's own share in each meal that he has partaken of, have been wholly and undoubtedly free gifts of our good and forgiving God, free gifts bestowed on people who were continually forgetting Him. We have gone on lying down at ease in our beds, saying, "To-morrow shall be as this day, and yet more abundant," and have neither thanked Him earnestly for the bread of the day gone by, nor entreated Him earnestly for the bread of the following day.

LANDMARKS OF THE FUTURE.—VIII.

## THE GREAT TRIBULATION.

WE saw in our last that the Jews would be restored, and Jerusalem become the centre of the earth; but we did not touch on the steps leading to their return to the land, what must take place in order to their being purified as a people, for they must receive at the hands of the Lord "double for all their sins" in one sense. We have to-day to look at the question of the political way in which the Jews are to be humbled before they are taken up to be openly acknowledged by the Lord they once rejected.

Now, from various scriptures we get the details of this, and though we cannot look at a tithe of those concerning what is called "The Great Tribulation," yet I shall give sufficient for such as will be at the pains to read the Scriptures to form a key to interpret the rest, to which I cannot allude, shewing most fully that prior to their restoration there must of necessity be a tribulation such as has never been known before, and suffering greater than any nation has ever gone through. Joel iii. 1, 2, 9-15—"For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat," &c. This I read as a preface, in order to show God's dealings with the nations that shall surround the people in the day of deliverance and at the close of the tribulation, that they must of necessity be brought through.

Now, if you turn to Dan. ix. 20-27, you get the prophetic scope of Israel's history, the period commonly spoken of among commentators as "the seventy weeks of Daniel"—"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and three-score and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous

times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off," &c. Mark the prophetic landmark: "from the going forth of the commandment to rebuild the city," at the end of the sixty-nine weeks, there should be a landmark which should never be obliterated, Messiah should be cut off. So from the going forth of the command until the cutting off of the Messiah sixty-nine weeks were to be fulfilled, and from the cutting-off of the Messiah till the anointing of "the Most Holy" another week had to transpire. Now, the computation of these sixty-nine weeks is easy to determine. It is clear from historical fact that from the command to rebuild Jerusalem to the cutting off of the Messiah four hundred and eighty-three years transpired, for in prophetic language the simple week of seven days stands for seven years. Seventy multiplied by seven makes four hundred and ninety years; so after four hundred and eighty-three have elapsed out of the four hundred and ninety years, seven years, or the remaining week of prophecy, has yet to run its course.

Now, I stay not to show that which students of prophecy cannot but fail to see, that while Israel as a nation is in abeyance, time is not computed in regard to them, but that the chronological order of events in relation to Israel is computed only as they are standing in God's favour as a nation, and that when God takes up again that people as a nation there will be a recomputation of time according to promise, and a fulfilment of revealed events yet unfulfilled, till there is "a bringing in of everlasting righteousness and the anointing of Messiah as King"; and I take it for granted that the majority here have already grasped these facts, for they are points on which there is very little division of opinion.

So we have to deal to-day with the restoration of Israel as a nation; we have to deal with what transpires in that last week, subsequent to the cutting off of the Lord Jesus Christ, and subsequent to their desolation as a nation and restoration to God's favour and the land of His promise. I am aware—and I speak with all diffidence and, I trust, with humility of heart—I am aware of the division of mind that subsists between readers of Scripture on this point, and my purpose is not to dogmatise,

but to submit, in order that by the comparison of Scripture the mind may be formed as to the general tenor of Scripture. We may differ in details, but in the general scope of the purpose of God I cannot but see that we are coming together, and that the hope of the Lord's return and of the blessing that shall come to the earth through His return is increasingly the hope of the Church of God; and if there are points which we have not yet come to one mind upon, it only teaches us to wait on God continually, and to respect the conscience of those who differ loyally from us in the interpretation of the Word, while they respect ours.

Now, with reference to what will transpire during that last week, turn to Matt. xxiv., Luke xxi., and Mark xiii., all tending to unfold the same great truths, and all the utterance of the *Prophet of God*. Let us hearken to the words of this Prophet. Mark the three questions in Matt. xxiv.—“When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?” (or age, or dispensation). The Lord Jesus answers these three questions in this chapter, and He answers them not as we would, but as God's Prophet, unfolding to them just so much as God intended them to know distinctly, in order to inculcate upon them that it was not for them to know the times and seasons which the Father has put in His own power, but for them, being made aware of what God is going to do, to occupy themselves in the world for Him, and to “watch and pray, lest they enter into temptation.” Now, intertwined in this chapter (and in Mark xiii. and Luke xxi.) are prophetic details as to the *first* tribulation that the Jews shall pass through immediately before the destruction of Jerusalem under Vespasian and Titus, and subsequently there is unfolded unto us what shall transpire after their restoration again as a nation, before the advent in glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, before they shall “look upon Him whom they have pierced” and mourn on His account, when He steps in for their deliverance from those nations we read of in Joel iii. So there is in this chapter an intertwining of this tribulation which came upon the nation then before they were scattered.

Verses 5-28.—There the first portion of this ceases; the whole of that has received its

fulfilment, but immediately after that comes a fresh revelation. The fulfilment of the scripture from verse 5 to verse 28 virtually took place when the city was besieged and razed to the ground, from which time they have never returned, and the city has never been properly rebuilt in its old place and the temple service resuscitated. But mark what we get in verses 29-31 (and similar passages in Luke and Mark; Luke is more general than Matthew or Mark). But I want you to notice that these answers, while containing in them general truth, are spoken primarily to the Jews of that generation, and applied to, and *wholly* applied to, in a primary sense, the Jewish nation. There is a difficulty in the minds of interpreters how to discriminate between those scriptures spoken generally and those spoken particularly to the Jews; and if we do not discriminate between what the Church is and what is her destiny, and what the Jewish nation is and what is its destiny, there will arise great confusion. But all these scriptures have a primary application to the Jewish nation and not to the Church of God, which is a distinct body, called out from both Jew and Gentile to be the bride of the Lamb. I submit this because there should be clear intelligence of the matter, for if we as a Church are looking for the advent of the Lord Jesus, we are not to be looking for signs, but for the Lord. Signs and troubles may come, but *our* hope is our Lord's return; while the scriptures that refer to the Jews bring before us with absolute certainty that they must necessarily be brought back to their own land and terribly tried before the appearing of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven for their deliverance. I do no more than ask you to read these three chapters because we have so many more to refer to.

Turn to Zechariah. In chapters xii., xiii., xiv., we get the Lord's dealings with that nation—their mourning, in chap. xii.; their tribulation and trouble, in chap. xiii.; and, in chap. xiv., the Lord appearing for their deliverance and the holiness that shall pervade the land after the judgment upon the nations that persecuted them. Now, I want you to see, with regard to this time of trouble which they must necessarily pass through, it says in chap. xiii. 8—“Two parts shall be cut off and die; but the *third* shall be left therein.” From

chap. x. to the end of the book you get God's purposes of grace to that rebellious nation as ultimately to be carried out in perfection; but mark, the tribulation is so terrible in its effect upon them that it was like refining them as silver and gold is refined, until every particle of alloy or mixture should be purged away. Now, it is noteworthy that in refining silver or gold it is put into such heat that the heat destroys every foreign gas or deleterious foreign matter in the silver and gold; so the Lord says—"I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried," and bring them out free from any mixture of alloy. This Ezekiel refers to under the figure of hair drawn out and divided into three parts, some smitten and some burned in the fire. Under this figure God teaches us that He must deal with His people to purify them. A. O. M.

### THE CHRISTIAN'S SOWING AND REAPING.

"He that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. vi. 8).

**T**HIS is a very solemn word to Christians. It is connected with the word which immediately precedes it, "God is not mocked." He regards our objects, our interests, our very tastes. What are they? Is it our object to know so much of Christ only as we think needful for our salvation, and then to sink down into decent worldliness, so that the very men of the world can perceive that we are as eager in the pursuit of this world as they themselves are? Let us not be deceived, for "God is not mocked"; and the wisdom of God has laid down the rule that where our treasure is there will our hearts be also. "The flesh" in a Christian, although it be his privilege to recognise its judgment in the cross, will be found putting forth its claims and craving to be satisfied. It is specially spoken to the Christian, "He that soweth to *his* flesh." It is easy to see that those who are in the flesh can only sow to the flesh. But there is in the Christian another principle, "the Spirit." The contrast is not without meaning—"his flesh," *the* Spirit. There is a way of avoiding the keen edge of the Word of God—the sword of the Spirit—by turning

it against the unconverted, instead of allowing us to probe our own consciences. Therefore says the apostle to us, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked." If the Christian sows to *his* flesh, he shall reap what he sows, even corruption. Nor does it require any very lengthened experience to prove to the Christian how every result of sowing to the flesh has issued in disappointment, if not in deadness, to the soul, or positive corruption. But there is a peculiar form of "the flesh" to which the Christian is liable to sow, and that is to religious flesh, in some shape or other. There is the same tendency in us as in the Galatians to turn aside from the true doctrine of the cross to ordinances, or to seek to please the imagination or puff up the intellect; and where this kind of sowing takes place what a harvest of corruption do Christians reap. And, oh! what a mercy, however smart the discipline, if all their works are now burnt up and they, stripped of everything, are shut up to the cross of Christ to be saved by that and nothing else. There is another contrast here in the respective harvests to be reaped—"corruption," "everlasting life." There is an everlastingness in all that is sown to the Spirit. When the Lord speaks of fruit resulting from abiding in Him it is fruit which should remain. Where the Gospel is received it is everlasting in its effects. There will be no forgetfulness when in heaven as to how we came there; that way will be had in everlasting remembrance in the never-tiring new song, "Thou art worthy; for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood." Nothing done in reference to Christ, His cause, His people will be forgotten, be it small or great; for our harvest will be as our sowing is, whether to *our* flesh or to the Spirit.

J. L. H.

IN your Christian devotions, you will, I am sure, present this great and sore trouble (disinclination to prayer) very earnestly before your Saviour, and you need not fear to come near to Him for pardon and help. Did He not come on purpose to break such bonds?

THE care of the soul is a practical matter, just as much as the care of the body; the only difference being in the comparative importance of the two; and that is indeed unspeakable.



## THE BEARING OF THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES

ON THE PRESENT POSITION OF THE JEWS.

**A**BOUT a year ago circumstances caused me to look at Ezekiel xxxvii. with reference to its primary and immediate teaching, namely, the restoration of Israel. It then appeared to me that there were some definite features illustrating the present condition of the Jews in a remarkable way, which I have not seen noticed anywhere, though this may easily be without my knowing it. The circumstances which have happened since the time to which I refer, when I gave a short address on this subject, have rather strengthened the impression on my mind and added to the general interest of the question. Possibly, then, it may be well to commend the features to which I refer to the judgment of others.

Probably no one would doubt the fact that Ezek. xxxvii. has a very direct bearing on the present state of the Jews. In Ezek. xxxvi. is mentioned the recovery of Palestine to fertility, after its barren and desolate state, and the restoration of the Jews to their cities. Ezek. xxxviii. and xxxix. deals with Gog. Most of us identify Russia with that monstrous northern power which had as yet no existence when Ezekiel wrote. Between these subjects—that is, the restoration of Israel in the land and the advance of Gog against it—comes the valley of dry bones, apparently to show forth the perfectly hopeless condition in which the Jews are placed when God begins to work with them, and then the action by which He is pleased to work.

I would suggest that this being the position and object of the chapter, it is allowable and right to see how far in detail the features illustrate and correspond to what is occurring, though very probably one would have shrunk from insisting on them bearing the meaning now attributed to them had one lived in the days of Ezekiel; and it is now only my wish to suggest a definite meaning to any feature according as it may seem to commend itself.

*First.* Suppose physical life to represent spiritual life—flesh, sinews, &c., to represent all the means through which life showed itself and moved. Just as a living body is acted on

through its nerves and sinews, so Israel may be supposed to have been acted on through all the outward channels of ministry and worship that God had ordained.

On this principle, Israel, in Isa. i., is very sick, faint, and corrupt, but not dead. How could it be dead, with Hezekiah and Isaiah acting in the living power of God, and God's visible presence probably still in the most holy place? On the other hand, our Lord uses figures implying both death and corruption to the state of things He found then existing (Matt. xxiii. 27, 28).

To go on then. Stress is laid on the form that death will have assumed in Ezek. xxxvii. The bones are not in a sepulchre, but are scattered; they are "very many" and "very dry."

The successive stages through which a poor human body passes in returning to dust is wonderfully seen in the catacombs at Rome. The skeleton gradually dries and withers up, till at last is seen only ridges of dust tracing faintly where the skeleton lay.

This is not Ezekiel's figure. The bones, as bones, are carried away and scattered through the valley (or "plain," see margin), implying movement and violence.

It is suggested that a "bone" tells its own tale; it is part of a human body. Dust would not do so. It may be questioned if a little dust were taken from the catacombs whether Professor Huxley himself could say that it had formed part of a human body. God's sentence has been completed, "To dust shalt thou return."

Now, this just fits the case. The Jews lost their spiritual life and real knowledge of God. The diseased body at last died, then the flesh went, and the bones were scattered. That is the temple, the sacrifices, the priesthood; every outward manifestation which God had once owned went, and the Jews were scattered, but scattered in the form of bones. We know them when we see them. We can say, This is a Jew. He is not what he was in David's time; but in the flesh he is a Jew, although a dead bone.

*Next.* Ezekiel lays repeated stress (verses 2 and 4) on the fact that the bones were "dry." A fresh bone has the savour of flesh through it. We know we use the bones of animals

habitually to make soup, but a really dry bone is nothing but the gravestone of life. Does not this exactly correspond to the present state of things? Not only have Jews no sacrifice and no temple service, but most of them care little or nothing for such questions.

To give an illustration. Happening to see a Jew on a matter of business before starting on a journey to the Holy Land, I took the opportunity to inform him of my intended visit, hoping to interest him in spiritual things. Not a sign of interest did he show, till suddenly he said, "Shall you be in Cairo?" I rashly assented, and at once became the object of his persistent importunity that I would try and procure "three giraffes" for him, for which he was prepared to give several hundred pounds; in fact, he eventually became quite angry with me. Observe, the more I spoke of Jerusalem, the more I stirred up his keenness for things of Egypt. Literally and spiritually the mention of what God had provided for the Jew only called out this Jew's wish to provide for himself in what Egypt represents—that is, the world. Probably in this sense, whether it is thought pushing the meaning too far or not, most readers will own that the bones they meet are "very dry." A man might well walk through Petticoat Lane, or the Jewish quarters in any great town, with the promises of God in his mind and ask himself the question, "Can these bones live?"

Now, I think, comes in the helpful light thrown by the passage on the manner in which God works. There are two distinct movements by which the resurrection of the dead in this passage is brought about. First, Ezekiel prophesies to the dry bones, and a "shaking," or in the new translation, an "*earthquake*," takes place, "and the bones came together, bone to his bone," then "sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them." Does not this mean that an earthquake, an earthly convulsion, brings together these dry, unbelieving Jews, who in their *bone* condition get back into the land and when there set up the outward expression of service to God, but without life?

Ezekiel does not address himself to the bones next time, clothed though they be, but he is directed to prophesy to the wind

(margin, "breath"; new version margin, "spirit"), that breath and life may enter the slain that they may live. Then "the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army." Surely this implies that while political movements may restore the Jews to their land, and even cause a temple worship and service to be set up, the bringing of the nation to God is to owe its origin to a distinct manifestation of power from above—no *earthquake*. It is not my object to trace the question further and connect it with the many other scriptures bearing on it. It may be given to us not to wait to see much more of the prophecy fulfilled than is now before our eyes. E. O. B.

### "WE SHALL SEE HIM."

1 John iii. 2.

#### "WE SHALL SEE HIM."

BRIGHT, blessed hope, transcending highest thought—  
But who are *we* to whom such grace is brought?  
By nature enemies, and far from God,  
Rebellious sinners on destruction's road,  
Aliens and outcasts of the Gentile race,  
Beggars who on the dunghill had our place,  
Helpless to cleanse ourselves from one dark stain,  
Or find our way to Eden back again.  
Black as the tents of Kedar in God's sight;  
Both inwardly and outwardly the blight  
Of sin had seized us, not in part but whole,  
Alike corrupting spirit, body, soul.  
With wound and bruise, and putrifying sore,  
We were from head to foot quite covered o'er.  
Like Syrians, on the brink of death were we,  
Unable from our wretchedness to flee.  
Fools, too, we were, had sold ourselves for nought  
To Satan, who had all our ruin wrought;  
His slaves became, oft toiling night and day,  
And groaning 'neath his heavy iron sway.  
Wild asses' colts, each one by nature's birth,  
Without one trait or trace of heavenly worth.  
Weighed in God's balances and wanting found,  
Captives of death, in sin's strong fetters bound—  
Blind, deaf, and dumb, head-sick, heart-faint, and lame,  
Insensible withal to our deep shame.  
How dark the picture, thick with shadows strewn!  
Yet is it under and not over drawn.  
The Saviour looked but saw no pitying eye,  
No arm outstretched to save from earth or sky.  
Then came He down from heaven's pure zone of light  
Into the dark recesses of our night.  
Deep down He sank into the miry clay,  
That He might raise us up to life and day.  
He loved us, washed us in His precious blood,  
Healed all our wounds, and brought us nigh to God;  
Thus loved and saved, washed and from guilt set free,  
This crowning hope is ours *Himself to see*.

“WE SHALL SEE HIM.”

But who is *this* whose loveliness to see  
Will be the joy of joys eternally?  
The full effulgence of the Father's light,  
The very image of His person bright,  
The One who only spake and it was done,  
When first the planets journeyed round the sun.  
Who strewed the milky way with stars like sand,  
Adorned Orion with each circling band ;  
Made for the sun a temple of high state ;  
Who like a king, with nuptial joys elate,  
Rejoicing in the greatness of his might,  
To run his race from rosy morn till night.  
What splendour twinkles from the midnight sky !  
And yet but one small portion meets our eye ;  
For there are systems beyond systems still,  
Myriads of worlds created by His will,  
Sustained and governed by His mighty hand,  
And all fulfilling His divine command ;  
Whose eye can, with the eagle's, bear the blaze,  
Brave the fierce brightness of meridian rays.  
If such great glory in His works we see,  
What must the *person* of their Maker be ?  
Angelic servants waiting His command,  
With veiled faces in His presence stand ;  
Their flight is as the vivid lightning flash,  
Their voice terrific as loud thunder crash.  
They execute His will in every place  
Throughout the wide expanse of boundless space ;  
Their unstained garments, of the purest white,  
Appear as if composed of woven light.  
Celestial and unfallen beings they,  
Inhabitants of an eternal day.  
Yet not to *all* of those bright ones is given  
A constant place in the high court of heaven ;  
But such whose charge on earth are heirs of grace,  
At *all times* may have access to His face.  
Their mission to defend, then bear on high  
The ransomed soul when breathed the latest sigh.  
Since angels Him with deepest reverence see,  
How great the honour of His majesty !

“WE SHALL SEE HIM.”

We *shall see* Him, hope steadfast, sure, and clear,  
Promise of love to loving hearts most dear ;  
No fancy vague, or poet's airy dream,  
It sparkles from afar with golden beam.  
We *all* shall see Him who His Word believe ;  
Each a fond look of welcome shall receive  
From Him ; and gazing on that wondrous sight,  
We shall ourselves reflect His image bright.  
Then will He be admired in us ; but we  
Only the King's own loveliness shall see.  
We *shall* behold the Lamb, who once was slain,  
Whose precious blood has cleansed our every stain.  
That brow once circled by a crown of thorn,  
Those hands and feet by iron rudely torn ;  
That spear-pierced side will evermore declare  
Him as the One who all our sins did bear.  
Oh, does hope long deferred make sick the heart ?  
Do blinding tears and sorrow's bitter smart  
Oft dim this vision, and the weary years  
Seem freighted to the full with toils and fears ?  
Be patient, brother, sister, He'll not rest

Until He clasp thee to His tender breast.  
The day of His unveiling is at hand,  
Then we shall see His face and with Him stand ;  
While waiting for that advent, may we be  
Conformed to Him whom we so soon shall see.

A. W. P. S.

REFLECTIONS ON ROMANS.—III.

## PREACHING AT ROME.

TO be ready to preach the gospel at Rome meant determination to endure for Christ's sake against the world-power of the day. The wisdom of philosophy and the ignorance of paganism were to be found there, and, as is evident from the reasoning of the epistle, Judaism was likewise represented. All the contemporary elements of that worldliness—political, philosophical, pagan, and pharisaic—were arrayed against the gospel of Christ, and yet Paul was ready to go there and preach it. He was not ashamed of that gospel, because it was “the power of God unto salvation to every one” that would believe it. It had been offered first to the Jews upon the ground of God's promise to Abraham, but it was rejected by that nation, whereupon it was proclaimed to the Gentiles (Acts xiii. 46, xvii., xxviii. 28). The gospel comes to both Jew and Gentile upon the basis of their common *need*, declaring both under sin by its free offer of salvation, divesting man of everything in which he would boast in God's sight ; and this is what the world hates. The religious community, represented by the Jew, and the scientific community, represented by the Greek, alike reject this counsel of God ; the former stumbling at it, whilst the latter regard it as foolishness. But God is pleased by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe, and these, whether Jews or Greeks, find it to be Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God ; for the gospel is God coming out in the person of His Son, the living Word, to reveal Himself in the plenitude of His grace to needy souls, that by this revelation they may be drawn into eternal relationship with Himself, by union with His Son in resurrection. Surely this is glad tidings, that God has come down in grace to lift the sinner up by divine power, through faith, the subjective link between the soul and Himself.

Well may the believer now join with Paul in that grand declaration—"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." Is the beggar ashamed to be lifted from the dunghill and placed with princes? Is this a reproach to him? Assuredly not. We boast in the gospel of *Christ*, the anointed, in His ascension, glory, and power!

The reason why Paul could thus glory in this gospel was because it was the power of God unto salvation to the believer; and the further reason why it is the power of God unto salvation to the believer comes out in verse 17, "for *therein* is revealed the righteousness of God from faith to faith." God has given a revelation of Himself to men, and ever maintains the integrity of that revelation in all His dispensational dealings with them. This is evidently the meaning of the righteousness of God here, as suggested by another, whose opinion commends itself to me as having the sanction, and therefore standing the test, of the plain statement of Holy Scripture. The truth of this definition of the righteousness of God comes convincingly to the front in the gospel. We have already defined the gospel to be God coming out in the person of His Son to reveal the plenitude of His grace to needy souls, and in so doing He confirmed the integrity of His entire revelation. In Christ we see God standing faithful to all that He has shewn us of Himself, and abiding by every word which He has spoken.

Take one example of this. Jehovah had revealed Himself in the inflexibility of holiness upon the flaming mount, giving the law, which set forth the claims of rigid righteousness. God maintains this character throughout the dispensation of law, recompensing a *just* retribution upon every transgression and disobedience. But in this, whilst He was "merciful and gracious," as regards His *disposition toward the sinner*, He "would by no means clear the guilty," for to have done so would have meant the compromise of His essential holiness. Now Christ comes upon the scene, magnifying the law and making it honourable, whilst unfolding the gracious fulness of that Holy God to needy souls; rendering it now possible, through His death and resurrection, for the Merciful and Gracious to have mercy upon the guilty, through the

substitutionary bearing of our guilt Himself, and being made a curse for us. In fact, the outflow of the fulness is the outcome of the law having been satisfied as to our guilt by the blood of the substitute. Christ risen is the settlement in perpetuity of the whole question of sin which was entered into upon the cross. God has been manifested in the flesh for the accomplishment of this mighty work, and, all having been done, He is seen, justified in the Spirit, believed on in the world, and received up into heaven. Consequently God can abide by His entire revelation of Himself when He justifies the ungodly, hence the "righteousness of God" as declared in the gospel of Christ. It is there revealed from faith to faith; that is, I take it, faith in the apostolic message receiving the direct communication of the truth from God, and faith in the believing hearer apprehending the same to the glory of God.

Now we see that God will ever abide by His Name, which expresses all that *He is*. This the gospel teaches, and for this reason was the gospel sent; for in faithfulness to the revelation of His Name, His wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness of men who assent to the truth but practice unrighteousness also, for in so doing they misrepresent the nature of what they profess to believe in. The integrity of divine revelation is thus impeached, and this is what the wrath is to come down upon. The true knowledge of God, as He has revealed Himself, is so distasteful to fallen nature, that strenuous efforts are made either to obliterate that knowledge entirely, or to neutralise it, by bringing it down into association with unrighteousness. But this cannot be done unwittingly, because the conviction as to God troubles the conscience, for His knowledge is manifested there in secret. Men who would silence the voice of revelation, and stifle the convictions of conscience, have still to encounter the testimony of created things, which declare the power and Godhead of the Creator. The gospel calls men to forsake these futile endeavours to exclude the light, and to come and take rest in God as He is revealed in it.

This Scripture is solemnly important, being pregnant with instruction and warning for us in these apostate days, as we trace therein the

rise and development of the darkness of heathenism with all its fearful history. The condition of the nations, described here so vividly, commenced with corrupting the knowledge of God, and this corrupting process went on unto the extinction of that knowledge, as far as a revelation of God was concerned, save only the testimony of creation and of conscience. These latter cannot be silenced, hence the heathen are without excuse. Here we have God's governmental dealings with the world that once had His knowledge, but cast it off. When they knew Him they glorified Him not as God, but received His providential goodness as a matter of course, without thankfulness. Reason exalted itself against revelation, and God was cast off. In their wisdom they became fools, and the ultimate development was the transfer of the honour, due only to the living God, to demons (1 Cor. x. 20), under symbolic images of men and lower animals. So they changed the truth of God into a lie, worshipping the creature rather than the Creator, who is God over all, blessed for ever. Then we have the awful statement, "wherefore God gave them up." His patience lingered over men until they cast Him off for the worship of the creature, and for this cause He gave them up.

Three times these solemn words are repeated here, "God gave them up." Because they would not retain Him in their knowledge they became judicially blinded, hence the gross darkness which covers the nations.

Then follows an awful record of moral depravity, showing the depths into which they sank, and this is a faithful mirror held up to the human heart, which is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked (Jer. xvii. 9). It is the representative character of all the fallen sons and daughters of Adam. Under the providential arrangements of God the outward manifestation of all those gross evils, which if they remained unfettered would speedily *destroy*, are kept in check governmentally; but yet the poison is in the nature. The naked depravity of the heathen is the covered depravity of the professing Christian. It began with disobedience, and developed upon ignorance of God, by which we were alienated from the life of God. The only remedy whereby the man can be brought back

to God is to be found in the knowledge of Himself according to His revelation.

The apostasy of the early nations from what they knew of the true God, commencing with a corruption of that knowledge, and culminating in a final casting away of it, is forcibly illustrative of the character and progress of these last days, in which the sound doctrine of orthodox Christianity is being relinquished by many of the professing community. In a subsequent chapter (the Lord willing) we shall have occasion to consider the "fulness of the Gentiles," and their final apostasy from the goodness of God. The days of this apostasy have come upon us. Its characteristics are becoming increasingly manifest. The unbridled lawlessness which marked the advance of heathenism is also the ruling principle of this anti-Christian age, with its philosophy and infidelity. Compare verses 28-31 with 2 Tim. iii. 1-5. Both ages are marked by the casting off of God and His revelation, with a resultant spread of unrighteousness. It is as true now as then that the people do not want to retain God in their knowledge, the days having come when they will not endure sound doctrine. It will soon be true of the professing churches as of the early nations, that God shall have judicially given them up unto the full power of their own evil dispositions. The strong delusion of the last days is quickly to follow on the progress of apostasy (2 Thess. ii.), and they, like the heathen, shall turn unto the worship of demons, the worship of the creature rather than the Creator, setting up the image of the beast to represent the object of their universal choice. So surely as God is *given up* Satan is *set up*.

In this chapter we have now seen a perfect delineation of what man is in a *lawless* state. In the next we shall see him *under law*, and find that his nature is not a whit better there. Thus we shall have learned God's verdict upon the question of humanity in its fallen condition. Conviction of sin, the knowledge of our common *ruin*, is a most important feature of the soul's experience. A Christian who has only superficially learned that lesson cannot largely appreciate the power of grace, hence the walk is unstable. Some learn it at once upon conversion, others by painful experience afterwards; but whenever learned the lesson is good and seasonable.

## THE BOW IN THE CLOUD.

Gen. viii. 15-22, ix. 1-17.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY P. HYND.

THE lessons to be learned from the deluge are various and important; but there is one that lies upon the surface, and easily learned, viz., that the deliverance of Noah and his family through the flood is an illustration of a soul passing through death into life. There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. To the believer, judgment is past. Just as God called Noah and his household into the ark and they obeyed, even so after the ark had passed through the flood, He called Noah forth from the ark to a renovated earth. When Noah stepped out of the ark he showed his gratitude to God by building an altar and offering burnt offerings thereon. God smelled a savour of rest in these sacrifices. They foreshadowed Christ, the One who has been wholly offered to God on behalf of His people. And now God rests in Christ, and we, too, rest in Him.

Then God establishes His covenant with Noah, and his seed after him. It was summed up in this: "I shall set My bow in the cloud . . . and shall remember My covenant between Me and you and every living creature. . . . And the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between Me and every living creature." Thus God pledged His word and gave the token that judgment will never, in this manner, come upon the earth, however threatening circumstances and appearances might be. While we are a saved, redeemed, blessed, and cared-for people, and grace is assured us for every step of the way, we are not exempt from trial; our path through this world is to be characterised by trials, sorrows, and difficulties. But we are also assured of the presence of the Lord with us in them all.

The cloud betokens the presence of God with His people. That is brought out in Israel's experience in the wilderness. In other places it is emblematical and typical of difficulties, sorrows, and trials. Though we are saved and in the enjoyment of God's favour, notwithstanding clouds gather around us; and

if we get occupied with the clouds instead of a loving, gracious God, in His fatherly dealings with us, we will become discouraged, and fret and complain against God.

Ezek. i. 28: "As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of God." That confirms what I have said. God is glorified in our salvation, but we seem little to apprehend that He is as much glorified in our keeping and deliverance in the midst of the trials and difficulties of the way as He is in our salvation from hell. Sorrow and trial is common to all men. We are "born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards." Sorrow comes from the most unexpected quarters and in the most unexpected ways. The cloud is what we least expect. Trials may be known only to God and the one who is passing through them. They may come upon us in the domestic circle or in church relationship, but they must and will come.

"When *I bring the cloud.*" We often bring troubles upon ourselves. Israel again and again brought the hand of the Lord upon them because of their murmurings and rebellion.

Clouds are not a blemish in nature, neither are adverse circumstances and events a blemish in the workings of God's grace. I have seen a morning cloudy and portentous, but by-and-by the sun broke through and dispelled the clouds; and those very clouds, so dark and threatening in their appearance, were filled with beauty, reflecting brightness and glory of the sun. There are two words in common use among men—viz., Optimism and Pessimism. The optimist is a man who sees the rosy side of everything—clouds never appear on his horizon. The pessimist is a man who sees the dark side of everything. The Christian ought to be neither the one nor the other. Clouds must come; they serve a gracious purpose in the economy of God's grace. If there is a cloud, there is also the bow in the cloud. The cloud, with all its forebodings of trial and sorrow, is intended, in God's wisdom and love, to lead us nearer to Himself, and to make us more Christ-like. You may have observed a smooth, even green lawn, so beautiful to look upon. What brought it to that state of perfection? The more it was rolled and pressed,

the more beautiful did it become. All the pressure of trials, all God's discipline, is intended to beautify our Christian character, to develop His grace in us. When we reach the glory we shall know all the mystery of sorrow. Meanwhile the discipline should yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness if we are exercised thereby. In all our afflictions our God manifests Himself to us as the God of comfort and consolation. If the waters must be passed through, then He is with us as we pass through them. The bow is always in the cloud. We are not to think it strange when the fiery trial comes upon us. It may come with heart-breaking force, it may come from unexpected quarters, but it is not strange or unexpected to Him. He says, "When I bring the cloud." In Ex. xviii. we get an object lesson: "Moses told his father-in-law (Jethro) all that the Lord had done unto Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, and all the travail that had come upon them by the way, and how the Lord delivered them" (v. 8). There is the cloud and the bow. There was a people redeemed from Egyptian bondage by blood and power, and the whole sum of their experience is told by Moses to Jethro—(1) deliverance from Egypt, (2) all the travail that had come upon them by the way, and (3) God's delivering grace. The presence of Jesus with His disciples in the ship did not prevent the storm coming upon them. Although we have the Lord with us, in the consciousness of His presence the storm will come. Don't let us faint; let us strengthen each other's hands in God, because, if the cloud comes, the bow is in the cloud. And if travail comes upon us by the way, it is that we might learn and experience the sustaining and delivering grace of our God. He was glorified in our salvation at the beginning of our Christian experience, and He is also glorified in saving His people all the way through. Meantime, He sits before them as an incentive to earnest, patient endurance. His coming again. Then we shall be perfectly glorified, and fully conformed to His glorious image. What a meaning is in these words: "How the Lord delivered them." At the very moment and in the very circumstances when it may be that darkness lies heaviest upon us, we have the promise that the dawn is at hand

—the morning star is about to appear. God's deliverances are most timely. It was when the feet of the priests touched the waters of Jordan that the waters parted and opened up a way for all Israel to pass over on dry ground. Just when the three Hebrew children are cast into the fiery furnace, the Son of God is seen along with them in the furnace. That is what we shall prove in all our trials if our faith lays hold upon a living, faithful God.

"Moses told of the travail by the way." It was only by the way. Clouds would be out of place in heaven. John the apostle, when in Patmos, as in vision he got a view of heaven, saw a rainbow surround the throne of God; but we do not read of any cloud being there. There will be no clouds in heaven. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. xxi. 4). But while we journey here, we will have to prove the travail of the way, and His timely gracious deliverances in every time of need.

It is a good exercise to refrain from speaking, when it would tend to blame others, or get credit to oneself, unless it be a matter of duty; and this alone will furnish a good deal of matter for watching and self-examination.

### Questions and Answers.

We desire to express our thanks to all who have sent answers.

Replies to appear in the next number require to be sent in not later than 15th of present month, and so on; the 15th of the month being always the latest to which we can defer making up for press.

We again urge the importance of replies being short; it is essential, in this particular line of things, to be concise.

We shall greatly value remembrance in prayer that special wisdom and grace may be given for this service.

When more than one question is replied to, let the answer to each question be upon a separate piece of paper. THE EDITOR.

Having to complete the "Witness" earlier than usual this month, owing to the Glasgow Fair Holidays, some articles expected are deferred to September No., among which is a further article by the Editor on "Satan."

Several correspondents have lately made reference (not unkindly) to the fact that their questions have not appeared in "Witness."

To all such we take this opportunity of explaining that we have received hundreds of questions which have never appeared, and that it is impossible from want of space, if for no other reason, to insert all the questions received.

We select a few for each month, such as we deem most likely to be for general edification. More than this we do not see our way to undertake.

### Replies are invited to the following :—

Is there any difference between elders under the law and elders under grace, or Old Dispensation elders and New Dispensation elders?

Kindly explain the several meanings of the word translated "rest," and what rests they signify in Hebrews iv.

Please explain Isaiah xxiv. 21.

What is the meaning of the expression "seven times," four times repeated in Leviticus xxvi.? Is it possible by this chapter to decide in what year the times of the Gentiles will end?

When we remember 1800 years have elapsed since the words "I come quickly" were uttered, how are we to understand them?

Which event will be first in order of fulfilment—the expulsion of Satan from heaven, or the rapture of the saints (1 Thess. iv. 16)?

Do the Scriptures authorise or allow me to state the Lord's table has several aspects, and call it the Father's table, giving Luke xv. as my authority; or the King's table, based upon 2 Samuel ix., 1 Kings x., and Song of Solomon i. 12; and again the Priestly table, based upon Genesis xiv. 18; or, should I content myself with speaking of it only as the Lord's table?

### LOT'S WIFE.

**QUESTION 446.**—What is the special significance of our Lord's words: "Remember Lot's wife" (Luke xvii. 32)?

**Ans. A.**—Primarily, these words refer to the awful days of the Antichrist, just before the coming of the Son of man to judgment. At that terrible time of Jacob's trouble, a certain number of Israel will be saved (like Lot), by fleeing from the scene where the stroke of judgment is about to fall so heavily. When they shall see the abomination of desolation standing where it ought not; then the injunction is: Flee—flee immediately, there is not a moment to lose. Flee as Israel fled, when the Lord said, "Get you up from about the tabernacles of Korah, Dothan, and Abiram. . . . And all Israel fled." Flee as Lot fled. Do not linger on any consideration of stuff, or garments, or house. The peril of delay is immense. "Remember Lot's wife."

Secondly.—These words give a most solemn warning to sinners who may have been awakened to a consciousness of ruin and danger; but who, nevertheless, linger, and have not fled for refuge to Jesus—have not entered, in by the door; and so are exposed to judgment and wrath, which may overtake them suddenly as they overtook Lot's wife.

There is also a weighty warning in these words to saints, who have in measure been awakened to the evils of some association with which they may be connected; the sin of some habit in which they indulge, the wrongness of some course they may be pursuing, or the wilfulness of neglecting

something which the Lord enjoins, but who still delay to take a stand for God and His Word which they know they ought to take. "Remember Lot's wife," whose heart was tied to something in Sodom, and thus she lost her opportunity to escape, and never escaped.

### THE LAW.

**QUESTION 447.**—Please explain the following: "The law was our schoolmaster unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal. iii. 24).

**Ans. A.**—"The Scripture hath concluded all under sin." Israel was there, and the law locked the door and kept them together under sin. That "the promises by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." Not to Israel alone, but "to them that believe." But before faith came we were kept under the law shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster unto Christ, *i.e.*, the law was a schoolmaster, dealing with Israel till Christ came, corresponding to ver. 19. "It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made." The question of bringing men to Christ now does not appear here. Condemnation and death are the effects of the law. God may let people feel thus the law's awful power, then bring them out of it by Christ. But surely none will say a killing power is in itself the means of bringing people to Christ. "The law was our schoolmaster." It acted as did the servant who had charge of children under age. It dealt severely with its subjects till Christ came. The Galatians were Gentiles, and consequently were never under the law, but He points out to them the manner in which God had dealt with Israel as under it.

The Jew had the law for a schoolmaster, but when he received Christ he was freed from the law, and became a subject of Christ. A. B. G.

**Ans. B.**—So the law hath been our tutor unto Christ, so that we might be justified on the principle of faith.

The law acted the part of a severe disciplinarian to the Jews till Christ came.

It discovered to them their utter inability to answer to its requirements, and brought out their true state plainly before them.

Christ having come, God opened their eyes to see that righteousness could be obtained through faith in Him alone, and not by works of law.

The moment therefore a Jew believed in Christ, he passed from under the dominion of the law to be thenceforth under the authority of Christ. The interpolation of the words "To bring us," tends to obscure the meaning of the verse.

The effect of the law was to minister death and condemnation (2 Cor. iii. 7-9), and not the means of bringing people to Christ. J. D.



## CONFORMED TO CHRIST'S IMAGE:

## Or Lessons from Photography.

**I**N these days we are all more or less familiar with the process of "taking a likeness."

For that reason we would endeavour to use it as an illustration of spiritual truths; ascending from the familiar and seen to the inscrutable and unseen. Much of the inimitable freshness, beauty, and profound simplicity of our Lord's teaching may come from the fact that He so constantly adopted this method of instruction.

The steps in photography are, briefly, these:—A plate is first of all prepared and placed in the instrument; the object having been duly put into position, the lens is uncapped in full view of it. Instantaneously the flash of light produces the image on the sensitised plate, on which when first taken out nothing may be seen, yet on that plate is a latent image, perfect in all its parts. There is then poured upon it the "developing solution," and now appears a very blurred and indistinct image; but one after another the details become more clear until the perfect, easily recognised likeness stands before us. There is just one more step. The "fixing solution" is next poured upon it, and now the image is *permanent*; but for this last step it would quickly fade before the action of light.

God's ultimate purpose in our salvation is declared in these words:—"Whom He foreknew, them He also foreordained to bear the likeness of the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren" (Rom. viii. 29, Alford). What a view this opens up to us of the scheme of Redemption! It is not, as so many seem to think, merely a plan to save believers in Christ from hell, though that would have been infinite kindness, but our God, in sovereign grace, has designed that all His children shall one day bear the image of the risen and glorified Lord Jesus. And this likeness will be moral as well as visible; within and without we are to be like Him. We are thus to be conformed to Christ in all that we can be conformed to Him, in sharing with Him in all that it is possible for creatures to share; and this great work is commenced and carried on down here.

As we have seen, the first step in producing a likeness is the preparation of the plate; and the first step in stamping the image of Christ upon us is the preparation of the soul, by the Holy Spirit, to receive that image. All Christians, more or less, distinctly recognise the necessity for this work of God in the soul prior to conversion. We speak of it as "conviction of sin," and the necessity of it is everywhere assumed in the Scriptures. Man is spiritually blind, and this blindness produces self-ignorance as well as ignorance of God. The gospel, when declared in the power of the Holy Spirit, opens men's eyes, and turns them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. There was a time when every reader of this paper was spiritually blind—blind to his condition before God, blind to the heinousness of sin, blind to the holiness and love of God, blind to the beauty of Christ and the desirability of God's salvation. Such was once our state, and but for God's sovereign grace it would have remained so till we had awakened in an undone eternity. Left to himself man would perish of hunger, albeit the Bread of Life is close to his hand.

Now it is obvious that till the sinner knows something of his need he will never come to the Saviour. So we hear Christ declaring that He had come not to call the righteous (men who from want of true self-knowledge imagined themselves such), but sinners to repentance. It is this work of God within which cuts from beneath our feet every creature-prop, drives us out from every refuge of lies, and makes us desire, above everything else, to be saved in God's time and way. There is *no merit* in conviction of sin; indeed, this is not so much a condition imposed by God, as it is a necessity from the nature of man. We do not say that only those who feel their need *may* come, but that such only *will* come.

How important that all who are engaged in the blessed work of soul-winning should seek to do real work. We must dig deep, and lay well the foundation facts of man's utter ruin and inability to deliver himself from that condition. This point is very clearly brought out in the parable of the sower. There are four kinds of soil, but only from one is there perfect fruit produced. In each instance the seed was the same; the difference lay wholly in the

soil, one having been prepared to receive the seed, whilst the others had not. Thus from our Lord Himself we have a striking illustration of the point we are emphasising, viz., *the necessity of a work of God in the soul prior to conversion.* But I must pursue this no further, simply adding a few scriptures bearing thereon, which please ponder. Luke viii. 4-15, xv., xix. 10; John xvi. 8-11; Acts ii. 37, xvi. 14; Rom. iii. 19, &c.

(2) We come to *the second step*—the stamping of the likeness on the prepared plate. In the spiritual world the *new birth* answers to this. It has become a well-worn expression that “conviction is not conversion.” But though so trite, it is none the less important to remember. Essential as it is for a soul to realise its need, that in itself is not enough. Should it end there, that man can never bear the image of God’s Son. For this, a further work of the Spirit is necessary, that great work in which He re-creates the soul after the image of God. We may judge of the importance and far-reaching effects of this act, by the terms used to describe it. See John iii. 3, v. 25; Eph. ii. 1-10; Col. i. 13. The Holy Spirit as the agent, using the Word of God as the instrument, produces this vast change. From first to last it is the work of God. In the heart of the unregenerate, chaos and darkness reign, as of old, in the physical world. But now, as then, Jehovah speaks the word—“Light be!” and light, beauty, and order prevail, and the image of God’s Son is impressed on the soul. Sin had well-nigh obliterated that image, but in that new creation act we again partake of God’s image—that image which consists in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, so that every true believer in Christ has within him a spiritual principle, which is nothing less than the latent image of the Redeemer.

(3) After the likeness is taken, the next step is its *development*, and this stage of the process, compared with the others, is a lengthy one. In the spiritual realm we have answering to this *the Christian life*, with its warfare, its temptations, and its chastenings, all tending to the one result—growth in grace and increasing likeness to Christ. When first “born again,” we are, of course, “babes in Christ.” At that time we have all the latent powers and

faculties of “men in Christ,” but these require developing; and He, who in grace begins the good work in the soul, carries it on, moment by moment, till Christ is fully formed in us.

Justification before God is instantaneous and complete the moment the soul rests on the Christ who died and rose again; but sanctification is progressive, and will not be fully attained as long as we are in the body. All God’s dealings with His children are to the end that they may practically obtain that holiness without which no man can see the Lord. He educates and disciplines us that we may become partakers of His holiness. Trials, disappointments, losses, bereavements, are all bright angels in disguise to lead us upward and homeward. And we may settle it in our hearts that our God is doing the best we will allow Him to do, for and with each one of us.

Afflictions have been the refining-pot for the faithful of all ages. There is a beautiful allusion to this in Malachi iii. 3. “*And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.*” I am given to understand that to this day the purifier of silver *sits* over the crucible; he then heaps on the fire and stirs the metal *till* it acts as a mirror and *reflects His own image.* And thus sits, and for a like purpose, our own Lord Jesus Christ! There are many allusions in the Scriptures to the furnace and the fining-pot; if we read them in the light of this passage, it will surely help us to bear with patience the furnace, when our time comes to be put therein—as come it surely will. For of every predestined one God might say: “*I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction!*”

There is a well-known law, the effect of which the most of us must have noticed. A young man very much admires and respects an older man, and is much in his company. Unconsciously to himself, the young man gradually takes on the tone of voice, manners, and, ultimately, traits of character of the one he loves and dwells with. I am persuaded that this same law holds good in our relationship to the Saviour of men. Christ is *God’s ideal man*; and the moment our eyes are truly opened to see Christ He becomes our soul’s Hero, *our ideal man.* There is nothing in Him we could wish absent, and no quality or perfection we could wish He had.

And so, as day by day we search the Scriptures in order to find Christ and learn of Him, as we study His life in every relationship, and ponder His words and ways, *we become like Him*. Have we not met some Christians who reminded us of Christ? There are some men I have known, of whom I have said to myself—"I think I know more of the Lord Jesus from knowing them." Thus ought it to be with every believer. Important aids to the development of the Christ-image are, feeding on Him in the Scriptures, meditation, and prayer. There is one important passage bearing on this, which I must not fail to quote, viz., 2 Cor. iii. 18—"But we all with unveiled face, beholding in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transfigured into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit" (Alford).

At the end of a heathen temple a large mirror was fixed up. The worshipper, as he stood before it, first saw his own likeness. But, continuing, to gaze, his own likeness gradually gave place to the image of the god he came to worship. To explain that this was simply a trick of the priest is unnecessary.

Yet a like result, spiritually, follows as we gaze on Christ in the mirror of His word. The change I spoke of above mostly takes place through unconscious imitation. But in the spiritual change there is a mighty agent at work continually conforming us to Christ's likeness. As we look on Christ, and seek to imitate Him, the Spirit of God reproduces in us the mind and character of the Lord Jesus, The Revised Version suggests another point: we receive His glory that we in our turn may reflect it to others. A reflector behind a lamp does not produce light, but it aids immensely in diffusing it through a room. Such is every Christian's work. But we only shine as we are shone upon. Yet as we keep the reflector bright we aid in Christ's manifestation to the world; or, to use the language of another apostle, we "show forth *the excellencies* of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Peter ii. 9).

I would like to impress upon myself, as well as others, the great importance of *meditation* on the Scripture in order to growth in the divine life. Prayer and study are important, but cannot take the place of meditation.

But in this mad, rushing age meditation seems to be almost among "the lost arts." In a sense it is an art, for it has to be acquired and constantly practised. Yet, of all exercises of the soul, it is, perhaps, the one most frequently inculcated in the Scriptures, and the one from which most enjoyment and profit are derived. So let us daily seek to practise this holy habit, and the word will be fulfilled: "WE . . . BEHOLDING . . . ARE CHANGED INTO THE SAME IMAGE."

(4) But there is a final stage, *the fixing process*. After the likeness is perfectly developed it goes through a process which makes it permanent. Without this it would quickly fade before the action of light, and for God's redeemed ones there is an analogous process. There is nothing in our present appearance to indicate "what we shall be." In our true, heavenly character the world "knows us not"; even as it did not recognise in the lowly Nazarene the Eternal Son of God. We are now princes in disguise; but the day of manifestation is coming on apace. Oh, knowledge most precious! *We know that when He shall be manifested we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is*. Oh, the glorious and blessed prospect of for ever possessing the character and bearing the outward appearance of the man Christ Jesus! Yes, *for ever bearing it*. By no possibility shall it ever be lost. Whether for good or ill, when this life is done with, the character is fixed for eternity. "He that is unrighteous, let him do unrighteousness still . . . and he that is righteous, let him do righteousness still; and he that is holy, let him be made holy still" (Rev. xxii. 11).

And this very body of our sin and shame and humiliation shall be changed into the likeness of Christ's glorified body (Phil. iii. 21). Let us rejoice and worship as we think on the five links in that golden chain of sovereign grace. They bind together the eternities; yet now in time, they meet in the person of every poor, hell-deserving sinner who casts himself on Christ for salvation. The *foreknown* ones are *predestinated* (eternity past), the predestinated are *called* and *justified* (the present), and these in turn shall be *glorified* (the eternity to come). It is all looked upon as one great and glorious scheme. So much so that even

though in the world, and subject to its sorrows and trials, the being glorified is looked upon as a work already perfected, as much as the other links. Thus certainly shall it be fulfilled; yea, already we *are* glorified in the person of our Redeemer. Well is it for us that our eternal glory is connected with the unalterable purposes of Jehovah, and does not merely depend on the creature's will.

God has predestinated us to be like Christ, and like Him we certainly shall be. Now we sigh and mourn and look forward; but soon, very soon, we shall see and be like Himself.

Several believers were once together, and the question came up as to what gave to each most joy in contemplating the future. Said one, "With me it is the great thought that *I shall see Christ!*" Ah, surely that is well calculated to give one joy. Poor Balaam was forced to exclaim—"I shall see Him, but not now; I shall behold Him, but not nigh." While in faith Job says of his Redeemer—"Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." A second added, "My chief joy is in knowing that I shall be *with Christ.*" Why this is something more; not only to see Him, but also to be with Him. The people of Windsor get an occasional glance at the Queen; but we are not only to see our Lord now and again, as it were on state occasions, but we are to be with Him constantly! A third said, "My great joy is in remembering that I am to be *like Him!*" Oh, this is still better! Not only to be with Him, but to be like Him! Nothing within or without to grieve Him, or that He or we would have different. Another of the group added the finishing touch—"And all this is to be ours *for ever.*" Let wordlings go in for their riches, pleasures, and honours, for have they not "their portion in this life"? But, in exultant faith, each believer may exclaim—"As for me, *I shall behold Thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness.*"

CHINA.

J. N. C.

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SHE did but touch with finger meek

The border of His sacred vest,

Nor did He turn, nor glance, nor speak,

Yet found she health and rest.

## SATAN.

SATAN'S power to use the children of disobedience in furtherance of his ends, and to summon to his aid the tempest, the lightning, and the pestilence by no means exhausts the forces at his disposal.

It would appear from Scripture that his most subtle influences are exerted in the way of suggestion to the mind.

Such was the manner of his first assault upon Eve. It was a covert insinuation that the love of God was not perfect, and His Word was not absolute truth.

We are definitely informed that it was Satan who moved David to number Israel (1 Chron. xxi. 1). How, or by what means, the suggestion was communicated we are not told, but we are left in no doubt as to its origin.

It was one of the spirits which "stood before the Lord" who proposed to entice Ahab to his destruction by becoming "a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets" (2 Chron. xviii. 21). An emissary of Satan, at all events, if not Satan himself.

Such are the "doctrines of demons" referred to in 1 Tim. iv. 1. Satan, by means of "lying spirits," suggests to the minds of carnal men wrestings, misapplications, perversions of Scripture. These become formulated into doctrines, and being always "earthly and sensual," as well as "devilish," they appeal to the world and the flesh and secure popularity.

It was "the Devil" who put into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray the Lord Jesus (John xiii. 2), and that previously to, and apart from, his personally entering into him. So that suggestions of evil to the mind are communicated apart from the more dreadful conditions of demoniac possession.

It was Satan who filled the heart of Ananias with the lie that was visited by death under the judgment of God (Acts v. 3).

The desire to stand well with the multitude of the disciples, and to maintain a reputation for whole-hearted devotedness whilst harbouring the love of money in his heart, was the condition that drew from Satan the suggestion to cover it with a lie.

From the Lord's own warning to Peter, it is clear that the sifting he was put through, and which elicited the thrice-repeated denial of his

Master, was Satan's device, and the denial Satan's suggestion. Even in the apparently kindly remonstrance by which he sought to deter the Lord Jesus from facing the cross, it was the voice of the tempter that the Saviour detected (Matt. xvi. 23).

But we cannot overlook in this connection the greatest of Satan's efforts by suggestion to overcome, viz., the temptation of the Lord in the wilderness.

In what form the adversary appeared, and by what means he communicated his suggestions, we are not informed, and upon such matters we have no liberty to speculate.

It may be hard in our case to distinguish between the evils that naturally spring up in our own deceitful hearts, and those that are as fiery darts injected into our minds by Satan. But with the Lord Jesus the suggestions must have come entirely from without. "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me." There was no evil desire or propensity within to which Satan could appeal, or which could yield a response. It is not so with us. How often the Christian is startled, alarmed, horrified at the fearful response that he finds within to some Satanic suggestion—even though the evil presented be at once rejected and overcome. But in the Lord Jesus there could be no affinity with evil.

Hence the suggestions made by Satan must be of a kind suited to such a holy being.

The first was an appeal to a natural but perfectly pure desire, viz., hunger.

The path of obedience which the Saviour came to tread involved not only that He should abstain from things unlawful, but that all He did should be in perfect and implicit dependence upon and subjection to His Father.

To act according to His own will, or after His own desire independently of His Father, would have been to fail in what He came to do.

To have used His own miraculous power at Satan's instigation to satisfy the cravings of hunger would have been a departure from the path of dependence upon God.

The second was a suggestion to test the faithfulness of God by an act of presumption. Without command, without any definite end in view glorifying to God, without any necessity for it, to cast Himself headlong from a

pinnacle of the Temple, to prove whether God would or would not be true to a promise that had no real bearing upon such conditions, would have been to "tempt the Lord." And at this point it is noticeable how Satan misuses the Scriptures. He has various methods of perversion. One is misinterpretation: making out that words and sentences mean something which they were never intended to teach. Instances of this are too numerous to mention but by way of example, that the soul only means the life, and is extinct when the body is slain, or that eternal punishment is either not eternal or not a conscious state of existence, &c., &c.

Another method is misapplication of Scriptures—as in the case before us. Applying to believers passages descriptive of unbelievers, or to unbelievers passages which are the peculiar property of the saints, applying the principles of the old earthly dispensation to the new and the heavenly, and reproducing the consecrated building, the priest, the altar, and the sacrifice, and so on.

To question the plenary inspiration of Scripture; to suggest that there are errors and contradictions, and so to undermine the faith, these and many others are Satan's methods.

The third temptation of our Lord was the most manifestly satanic of all. The offer of all the kingdoms of the world if He would fall down and worship him. God, His Father, had said "Ask of Me and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession." But ere He could attain to this, well He knew that the cross must intervene, and that there was no path to the coming glories for Him but through sufferings and death. And here lay the subtlety of Satan's suggestion. It was a proposal to obtain the inheritance without the cross.

Thus Satan brings forward his proposals ever feigning to offer better terms than God. And thus it is he so often succeeds with the simple and the unwatchful and the self-reliant. With one who is "abiding in Christ" he has no power. "That wicked one toucheth him not." Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world. The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe.

Satan's suggestions are generally on the line either of gratifying a lawful desire in a way or to such an extent that it becomes sin, or on the line of inciting to do that which is unlawful, and so getting the soul into darkness, and even despair, through a defiled conscience.

The Lord often exhorted to two things which may not be separated, viz., "Watch and pray." Watching implies that the enemy is near, prayer implies that God is near. The one tells us our danger, the other our resource.

J. R. C.

### WORLD-WIDE GOSPEL TESTIMONY a Fulfilment of Scripture.

**F**OLLOWING up the subject of the Great Commission discussed in the June number of the *Witness*, I feel sure that there is one aspect of the work of world-wide witnessing that is often forgotten, namely, that it is in the line of the fulfilment of Scripture. It has been aptly expressed in these words: "God has promised (in Old Testament Scripture) not only that He will display His grace in His Son, but *also* that He will publish that fact to the whole world." And so we have these words from our risen Lord Himself: "*Thus* it is written, and *thus* it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, and ye are witnesses of these things." It is remarkable throughout the Gospel narratives how the obedient Son of God cleaves to the written words of His Father, never once appealing to His own divine knowledge of His Father's will. Human wisdom suggests that the number of the nations already preached to ought to suffice for the present dispensation, and brings in the question of increasing the responsibility of the heathen, &c.; but the example and words of our Lord leave no room for such reasonings.

Paul, who followed so closely in the footsteps of his Master, departed not from this rule. Acting as a man under authority, he says to the Jews in Antioch in Pisidia, "It was *necessary* that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you . . . lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying,

I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." Paul's realised oneness with Christ brought him under obligations to fulfil all that was predicted of *Him* in the Scriptures, so the language of his lips and life was, "I am a debtor both to the Greeks and barbarians, both to the wise and unwise." The same thought, I think, is found in Col. i., verses 24, 25: "Who now rejoice in sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church: whereof I am made a minister . . . fully to preach the Word of God" (margin reading). In Romans xv. we have also these parallel passages, verse 16, &c. "That I should be the servant (minister) of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles. . . . Yea, so have I strived to preach the Gospel (to both Jew and Gentile), not where Christ was named, . . . but *as* it is written, To whom He was not spoken of, they shall see; and they that have not heard shall understand."

We, then, who claim to be Christ's, ought we not daily to consider Christ's claims upon us in the same way as Christ considered the Father's claims upon Him? Surely when He hath accomplished so great a work, our communion with Him must be feeble indeed if we have no heart to proclaim it. It would seem as if Paul recognised that a certain measure of blood-guiltiness rested upon him if he failed to warn the wicked, and "command *all men everywhere* to repent;" for in his parting words to those at Ephesus he says, "I am pure of the blood of all, having fully declared unto you the whole counsel of God." We may well say, on the one hand, that it is our privilege to preach the Gospel, but let us remember that in doing so we have nothing to glory of, for necessity is laid upon us; yea, woe be unto us if we preach not the Gospel!

FRED. S. ARNOT.

. . . . The time to think of God's eye being upon you is when your own eyes are tempted to look the wrong way, or your ears to listen to what you know will prove near occasions of sin. . . . The only safety in temptations, properly called carnal, is in *flight*; when that can be had, it is vain trusting to resistance.

## REFLECTIONS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

### CHAPTER II.

**W**HILST some people are ever forward in censuring others for evil practice, yet, as a rule, they are unwilling to admit that they themselves also carry in their own hearts the same root of all the evil fruits which offend both sight and hearing. The general acknowledgment "we are all sinners," is often thoughtlessly made by those who would object to apply it to themselves in the first person singular. God requires individuality in this matter, but the human heart shirks it. Man would generalise himself amongst others as to guilt, but individualise himself above others as to goodness, as exemplified in the Jew resting within his legal enclosure from which he viewed with cold disdain the Gentile "dog" outside.

Yet the Gentile outside and the Jew inside both practised "the same things." Israel, who occupied the elevated position of being Jehovah's people, to whom His law was committed, becoming inflated with pride, began to think more of their position than of the Lord who placed them in it, and were victimised by the same blinded heart which actuated the lawless propensities of the Gentiles; and whilst holding on to their distinctive position they practised therein the same evils which their law condemned, even the pollutions of the nations out of which Jehovah had called them at the first.

But a high religious position, be it ever so orthodox, cannot make up for a low moral condition. Could these Jews imagine that their sins would escape the judgment of God, which is declared against evildoers, because they held a formulary of laws and rites appointed by Him, and could boast of the possession of that which the Gentiles had not? If God in His goodness had taken them by the hand from the days of their forefathers, to lead them into the enjoyment of covenant blessing, were they not despising that goodness by sinning presumptuously in the face of it all whilst professing much zeal for the letter of His word, not knowing that His goodness leads to repentance? Thus the hard and impenitent heart prepares itself for the day of wrath in which the righteous judgment of God is to be revealed.

Should our reader be one of those who trusts in himself that he is righteous and despises others, boasting in the possession of spiritual enlightenment to which many are strangers, let him weigh well the salutary instruction in this solemn passage. They are not few who glory in the name of the "Reformation," but in whose hearts the key-note of that Reformation never has been sounded. Luther's theology is professedly endorsed, whilst Luther's Christ has no place in the heart; and yet the elevating influence of the gospel can be expatiated upon and contrasted with papal darkness and demoralisation. Thus is the goodness of God despised—that goodness which should lead to repentance, the hard and impenitent heart all the while storing up wrath against the coming day. The possession of privilege and opportunity neglected shall bring souls under a weight of judgment proportionate thereto in that day. Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum, places where most of the Saviour's mighty works were done, are threatened with heavy judgment in consideration of their treatment of divine privilege, and thus they stand forth as solemn examples to professors to-day. To trifle with the goodness of God in the present means to tremble under the judgment of God in the future.

Let me emphasise both the *goodness* and the *judgment* while I state irrevocably that God will never compromise the latter to exercise the former, bearing in mind that the prominent feature of truth in this section of our epistle is *the righteousness of God*. My reader will bear with my lingering at this point to raise a note of warning much needed in our day and generation. Universalism is making a clean sweep of God's revelation of Himself in the Word, by seeking to press the "goodness" of God to the denial of His *judgment*. Once admit the advances of that school with their "good words and fair speeches," and the integrity of the whole revelation is at stake, for their doctrines strike at the righteousness of God at once. His love is brought out as an argument against the truth of coming judgment and eternal punishment, and this is then bolstered up, in anticipation of defeat, by the coolest denial of Scriptures which cannot be explained away.

Here it is unquestionably established that a

man's future destiny shall be as his present course (verses 1-16). Speaking generally, the human family is divided into two sections, viz., those who seek for glory, honour, and immortality, whose hearts are exercised in real earnest about eternal matters, and whose lives have, consequently, a character in agreement with this disposition of their minds, manifested in patient continuance in well-doing; and their future state shall be accordingly. And then there are those who follow the pleasures of sin with hearts coldly indifferent to the solemnities of eternity; their lives are characterised by sin, and their future portion shall be accordingly. Let me make a remark here which our subsequent study of the remainder of the epistle will confirm, that this passage does not set forth the meritorious effects of good works in the obtaining of salvation—there is no such doctrine to be found in Holy Scripture: the point in the argument is as to the *character* of the one who is bound heavenward, and that of the one who is journeying to perdition. Here are distinctive indications by which we may know each of them. This is one of those passages, such as John v. 29, and Luke xvi. 9, which seem to show the relation between the present and future of individuals in a general way without entering into the question of grace or faith. The apprehension of this relation eliminates all the hypothetical ground upon which seducers have based their arguments against the coming judgment retributive and individual. The restless waters of popular opinion, agitated by the contrary winds of heretical doctrine, are now militant against the invincible authority of Holy Scripture. In *that day* the controversy shall end in victory for the truth, when God shall judge the secrets of all hearts.

As the responsibilities of men differ, so shall the measure of judgment executed be proportional thereto. Sinners without law shall perish without law, and sinners under law shall be judged by law. Gentile and Jew both stand *inexcusable* before God. Their common nature could be neither tamed by a generous providence nor restrained by a rigorous law; it despised the one and disobeyed the other.

The Jew, having volunteered himself under

law shall be judged according to that standard, and this is equally true as to a Gentile also who puts himself under law. Such is the position of the pressing thousands of Christendom to-day who have taken upon themselves the "confirmation vows," and unite together in the common cry—"incline our hearts to keep this law," after the repetition of the Decalogue. Now, considering that the masses of these have never been born again, and are still in the bond of iniquity, and under the condemnation of a rejected Gospel, how awful is their outlook for eternity! A threefold cord of guilt binds them: guilt on the ground of a fallen nature; guilt by reason of a broken law; and guilt because of a rejected Gospel. How appalling is the doom awaiting Christendom then! How it should touch our hearts with pity, and stimulate our untiring endeavours and prayers on behalf of precious souls!

Reader, if you are a formalist, weigh all your ritual in the balance of unerring truth, and investigate all your tenets in the light of the same, and see where you stand. Remember that it is only *if any one could* keep the law he would be justified thereby; but, as subsequent pages shall show us, *all* have failed to do this because of inability through indwelling sin; therefore, since it is not the hearer of the law, but the doer of it that could be justified before God, all stand condemned—yourself included. It is grace, and not law, that God offers you now; and in rejecting this grace you come under the threefold judgment mentioned above. The retribution for rejection of the free grace which characterises the present dispensation who can contemplate without feelings of solemnity! For if, under the legal dispensation, every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall the neglecters of God's great salvation escape? (Heb. ii. 2-3).

E. L.

[“The Heathen,” &c., in next Number.]

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A CORRECTION.—The clause “faith in the apostolic message” in last paper on Romans should have read “faith in the apostolic messenger,” the thought intended to be conveyed being that the faith of the apostle received the truth by inspiration; then we receive the message by faith therefrom—“from faith to faith.”—E. L.



## ON THE GOVERNMENT OF THE TONGUE.

IN James, chap. iii., we get the tongue specially dealt with as an instrument that can be used either for much good or much evil; and in the three figures used three small things are referred to—a bridle, a rudder, and a small fire.

The bridle is composed of two parts, the bit and the reins; the rudder has a helm attached to it; and the little fire has to be attended to that it may not get in contact with inflammable materials so as to destroy them. Now these three things are very useful in their place; but we see that each of them needs a *controlling power to make them answer their purpose for good*. The horse with the bridle needs a person to guide it in the direction desired; the ship needs an experienced person at the helm to guide it; and the fire needs to be looked after that it does not do harm. The tongue is a very important member of the body, although it is small; just as the bit and helm, or rudder, are important in their places. Now we might inquire, How is the tongue to be guided and controlled for the glory of God? The answer is that this can only be in proportion to our being under the guidance and controlling power of the Holy Spirit, who dwells within us as believers; and just as the horse with the bit, and the ship with the rudder, need a guiding hand, so is it with us with regard to our tongues. But the question is how this guiding and controlling power is to be carried out. Well, just as there are reins in connection with the bit, and a helm, or wheel, in connection with the rudder, so our spirits are the *connecting link* between the Holy Spirit and our bodily members. But we are to remember that because of sin the Devil has also *access* to our bodily members, to use them for his purposes, through our spirits; so that as long as one is unsaved that one is under the power of Satan. But when we are saved, born from above by the Spirit of God, our position is completely altered; for though we have still in us the flesh as an unchangeable evil principle, we have the new nature, in which the Holy Spirit works, leading us to know and do the will of God as we are subject to Him. So we find in this chapter James speaks of the

wisdom which is from above, and also a wisdom that is earthly, sensual, and devilish. The heavenly wisdom is pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy; but the other is earthly, sensual, and devilish, and its manifestations are bitter envying and strife—*envy in the heart and strife through the tongue*. So while there is just one outlet for good or evil speech—the mouth or tongue—we see that there are two fountains, so to speak, in the believer—the one sinful and bitter, the other holy and sweet. But as we have the Holy Spirit in us we ought to yield ourselves up to God, that only the waters from the sweet fountain flow through the one outlet (John vii. 37-39). In the flesh dwelleth no good thing, so the bitter fountain cannot yield the sweet water, for it is wholly of Satan, and it is of him that it manifests itself in the sins of the tongue, or through other members of the body (Rom. vi. 19, 20). We are dead to sin judicially by the body of Christ, and we ought to be dead to it practically by the power of the Spirit (1 Peter ii. 24, 25).

We learn here we are not to offend in word, and that if any one offend not in word the same is a perfect man, and able also to *bridle the whole body* (chap. iii. 2). So we must have our new nature in subjection to the Holy Spirit to become holy or perfect men in the sense of James iii. 2; and thus, instead of being stumbling-blocks to others we shall be made a blessing to them, by becoming more and more like Jesus, who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth, and He has left us an example that we should walk in His steps (1 Peter ii. 21-24). In conclusion, I would say that the epistle of James is deeply practical, and it would be well for us as believers to read it carefully and prayerfully in these difficult days of outward profession, and also where there is with some a great profession of faithfulness to God and His truth as to church position and fellowship, &c. The believer's standing and church position and dispensational truth are very important in their place, but we find the Spirit of God in the epistles gives great place in His exhortations to the spirit and walk of the saints. In James we see that high profession without a corresponding walk is very *strongly condemned*; and

we always find the doctrines of the Word combined with exhortations to love, peace, humility, forbearance, meekness, or, in short, a Christ-like spirit (Titus ii. 7-14). "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God" (James i. 19, 20). W. G. S.

## ONE OF THE HARD SAYINGS.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY MR. JAMES WRIGHT.

"Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you" (John vi. 53).

I SPOKE of the moral difficulty as the great difficulty that faced the disciples. Moses commanded us not to touch blood. In order that we may feel the force of this, let us refer again to passages where Moses is commanded of God to tell them, "You are not to touch blood on any account whatever." "Yet," they might say, "this Teacher commands us to drink His blood!" Yet to the humble souls willing to be taught then, as to the humble souls willing to be taught now, the answer is very plain, "The words I speak unto you," the words of God, "they are spirit and they are life." Now, again and again, we read just now "The life of the flesh is in the blood"; but here the Lord Jesus tells us, "The words I speak unto you, . . . they are life." Now in that lies the solution of this great problem. The Lord Jesus meant that if they believed His word, testifying to the power of His blood to remove sin, that if they believed that word of His setting forth the virtue of His blood shed to remit sin, they would in that act of believing have all the value of that blood attached to them; in other words, their sins would be forgiven them, they would have life in His death, be justified before God. How? By the belief of that word testifying the power of that blood to remit sin. We have an exact parallel in chap. xv., "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." But one who has been reading Heb. ix. might say, "Is it not the blood that cleanses?" Do we not read, "How much more shalt the blood of Christ . . . purge your consciences." What does the Lord mean by saying, "Now are ye clean through the word"? Just this,

dear friends, the word testifies of the blood, and it is when I believe the record of God concerning this great truth all the value of that blood-shedding attaches to me. The moment I believe what Jesus says, that that blood "cleanseth from all sin," the moment I in simple faith rest on that, the whole value of that blood-shedding attaches to me, a poor sinner believing in Him. His blood answers for my sin, God accepts His death instead of mine, and the whole value of it attaches to me. The blood is the actual agent, the procuring cause of the blessing; yet it is by faith in the word that the Spirit of God applies the blood to me.

Now, just as it is true of cleansing, so it is true of life-giving; the actual procuring cause of the life of the believer is union to Christ. God in His counsel has ordained that His people shall be united to the Covenant Head, and through union to that Covenant Head shall be partakers of the new life; the life of the Head permeating the members. How am I brought into contact with Him? By faith. But what does faith rest on? "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." So the Word is necessary to bring me into contact with Him, and when I receive that Word which testifies about the power of the blood I receive life then in Him. Why? Because He laid down His life. I do not receive life, when I believe, by *infusion*—I say this because of a prevalent error—because Christ's life is infused into me. I receive it on this ground:—I am a lost sinner, my life is forfeited to God on account of sin, but the atoning Surety came down and died on the cross in my stead; and because He has died in my stead, and God has accepted that death in my stead, I have everlasting life. The cause of my life is Christ at the right hand of God. By His death He identified Himself with me: He came into the dust of death where I was, united Himself to me, and now I am quickened and raised up with Him.

This explains why in these chapters of the Old Testament God sets such value on blood, and guards it with such fences. Turn again to Lev. xvii. The point there is—that all beasts that were slain while Israel was in the wilderness, whether for sacrifice or food, had, if the Israelite was obedient, to be brought

to the door of the tabernacle first. Flesh food was not common during the wilderness journey; manna was their ordinary food, yet from time to time the Lord gave them flesh food (*e.g.*, the quails), and satisfied their desire even in the way of chastisement; but the very fact of their complaint of their food shows what a rare thing it was to have animal food. Nothing is said about the tribes generally having herds. When Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh wished to stay on the other side of Jordan, the reason given was, "The country . . . is a land for cattle, and Thy servants have cattle." And it seems to have been almost a monopoly of these tribes; therefore indulgence in flesh food was almost unknown, but not prohibited. The Israelite was to bring the animal to the door of the tabernacle, and *see* it slain, and its blood poured out. What was the meaning? God intended that man to see His sentence upon him—"There *my* life is poured out, forfeited to God"—in the act of preparation for an ordinary meal. The sprinkled blood on the altar was fitted to teach him a glorious second lesson; the first, that his life was forfeited to God, and then that not only was his life forfeited, but another life accepted in his behalf. He learned a two-fold lesson—that he deserved death, and saw another resigned life accepted in his stead, and went home, speaking in New Testament language, "to eat his meat with gladness and singleness of heart." For there is a very remarkable word in this chapter: "And offer them for peace-offerings unto the Lord"; and you know in these the larger part of the offering was handed back to the worshipper. So, when he wanted flesh meat, he had to bring the animal to the door of the tabernacle, see it slain, and its blood sprinkled, and the fat burned as a sweet savour to the Lord, and then he received the rest as a peace-offering, and went home to feed upon it.

Now this is a very beautiful typical picture, and, spiritually, very practical truth to the believer. You know these things are written for our instruction. I think it teaches us this: We are exhorted in New Testament language, "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do *all* to the glory of God." Now what a beautiful thing it would be, when we sit down to our flesh food, just to remember,

"When had man a right to eat that food?" Not till after the flood, not till after God's wrath and judgment swept over the world and cleansed it from all impurity, was man allowed to eat flesh. Now I should remember this every time I eat flesh food, that judgment was poured out, and new mercy introduced; and, if I do that with intelligence, what a spiritual thing it makes my meals! There need be no formality about it; but as we acknowledge the mercy of God in giving us the food (as I hope we all do), if these things pass in our hearts, God takes notice, and what a delightful thing it is to Him to see each of His children reminded by the meat of His own grace.

Now look on in this chapter and you see a very striking illustration of the value God attaches to blood. It was forfeited to God, and not to be touched as food. It was to be offered to God, and they were to see that it was not offered to idols; . . . so it was to be poured out or covered with dust. Now look at the case supposed in verse 13, because it is an extreme case. Picture to yourselves Israel's huntsman wearied in the chase, perhaps half the day gone before he sees his prey, and then, with the huntsman's instinct, he follows it over hill and dale, and at last seizes it. Now, famished with hunger, his tendency is to rush on it and eat it; but God's command comes in—he must pause before the majesty of God—and, before he touches that flesh, must pour every drop of blood out of the animal; and, as he sees that blood pouring out, he is face to face with God, and remembers his sinnership. And then he must cover it with dust, so that it may be hidden from the eye of man or ravenous beast. It is extraordinarily beautiful to see how God goes into the social life of His people, and takes up constantly the different recurring points of that life, and stamps it as divine; puts His own stamp on it, repeating in the ears of His people, even in that dispensation, if they had ears to hear it, "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Beloved friends, that will be the joy of heaven, nothing will be done there but that brings our God before our hearts.

Now turn to Deut. xii., just to see that the rigidity of Lev. xvii. was modified when Israel

came into Canaan, and locally were placed at great distances from the centre of worship, and therefore, God in tenderness, and pity, and compassion, did not make that long journey a necessity. In the wilderness, the journey to the tabernacle from any part of the camp was easy; but in Canaan some would have had very long journeys if they had had to come up to the tabernacle every time they wanted to eat flesh. So verse 21, "Thou shalt eat in thy gates whatsoever thy soul lusteth after"; but still there is the reiterated command, "Only be sure that thou eat not the blood." Why? Because "the blood is the life," and that life was forfeited to God, and God ever had in His mind, when He guarded any other blood, *the blood* that should make atonement for sin, and hence His jealousy in connection with all that concerned blood.

Now, are there any here who are practically despising this blood? In the Scriptures of truth put before you you have seen God's thoughts about blood. Remember, in all God commanded in the Old Testament about blood, He had the precious blood before His mind, and the issues attached to the blood-shedding of the Son of God; and it is because all this was always before the mind of God He gave this reiterated injunction. Now let this sink into your heart, there is nothing to be compared with this blood, it is the blood of God. "Feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood." Beloved friends and fellow-sinners, I beseech you see the value God attaches to that blood. When He commanded blood to be sprinkled on a house, not one in that house perished, because they were under the shelter of the blood. If you want to be saved flee under the shelter of the blood. Have you to drink that blood? Have you to shed blood? No. What have you to do? To receive the words of Jesus, which are "spirit" and "life"; to believe the words of Jesus; to believe the words of the apostles of our Lord and Saviour to the Church that He purchased with His own blood. And let me remind you what they said about it, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold; . . . but with the precious blood of Christ." Let me remind you of what Paul said, "In whom we have

redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." Let me remind you that no soul dare approach God except through that blood. For we have "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." Remember, beloved friends, the mind of the apostle, to glory in nothing but the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, where that blood was poured out which gave such efficacy to it. Remember, if you ever get to heaven, your hearts and lips must be attuned so sing this song, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, . . . Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." Are your hearts and lips attuned to sing that song now? It must be rehearsed here if you are ever to sing it up there. Now I entreat and beseech you, any who have not peace with God, to remember this is the sole ground of peace. If you, to-night, rest on the Word of God about this blood, you go out of this a sinner justified, a child of God, a temple of the Holy Ghost; for into the heart of every one who trusts in Christ He sends His Spirit, because He is a child of God. Remember, all hinges on whether you are at one with God as to His estimate of the blood of Christ. If you are not, God bring you to it, for His Name's sake.

## CONSCIENCE.

THERE are *three* ways in which conscience is spoken of in Scripture:—I. The Natural Conscience; II. The Purged Conscience; III. The Seared Conscience.

### I. THE NATURAL CONSCIENCE.

This every man has just as certainly as he has a *soul*. Not all in the same measure: a poor idiot, for instance, is very different from a man of sound mind. And it has, of course, its different degrees of guilt, according to the amount of *light* given. Even the *heathen* "accuse or else excuse one another" (Rom. ii. 15) on the ground of natural conscience; but, so long as the natural conscience is a *guilty* one, it must be a source of unhappiness to its possessor.

### II. THE PURGED CONSCIENCE.

This is effected by the precious blood of Christ (see Heb. ix. 14). "How much more

shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself *without spot* to God, *purge your conscience* from dead works to *serve* the living God?"

This is the blessed and proper condition of every believer in Christ; for without a "purged conscience" it is impossible to render acceptable *worship* to God. A man may cry for *mercy*, as the publican did, but that is not *worship*. Directly, however, his conscience is purged from sin, through faith in the *blood* of Jesus, he becomes a *worshipper*.

### III. THE SEARED CONSCIENCE.

This is awful! it is similar to that most solemn truth which we have so often spoken of lately, viz.—*judicial hardening*. It is the result of *truth* and *grace* being trifled with or despised.

Judas's conscience, at the last, became a *seared* conscience. He could deliberately *sell* his Master, and then afterwards, when his Master said in his presence, "One of you shall betray Me," he could hypocritically ask *Him*, "Lord, is it I?" *Remorse*, for having betrayed "innocent blood" led that wretched man eventually, as we all know, to *hang himself!*

It is very fearful to see from 1 Tim. iv. that the "*seared* conscience" is spoken of in connection with the *corruption* of Christianity. There is (1) departure from "*the faith*"; this, alas! is very wide. Then there is (2) the forbidding to *marry*—Romish celibacy, for instance. Then (3) abstinence from *meats*—Romish likewise, but still wider, for *vegetarianism* and *teetotalism* AS A RELIGIOUS SYSTEM with respect to *drinks*, come under this word. It is all mere *fleshy holiness*, which is but another name for abominable self-righteousness. The Spirit of God designates the whole of this as men "*speaking lies in hypocrisy*, having their conscience *seared* (as) with a hot iron," i.e., all its proper sensibility gone; it becoming, under the influence of *error*, a dead, warped, hard, withered thing!

"Herein do I *exercise* myself," said the apostle Paul, "to have *always* a conscience *void of offence* towards God and towards men." This is the same as the "*good* conscience" he speaks of in 1 Tim. i. 5-19, and the "*pure* conscience" of 2 Tim. i. 3. The precious blood of Christ is that alone which can cleanse

the conscience as before the Holy God, and the blessed Spirit is the one through whose power alone a believer may bring forth fruit to the glory of God and the welfare of precious souls. B.

### THE WORK OF VISITATION.

HAVING read with deep interest and much profit the article on this work in July *Witness*, it is my desire to write a little as to the work in relation to service in the gospel. My personal experience in the matter is far short of many servants of Christ. But it may be that my imperfect attempt to deal with it will stir up some one to contribute further from a store of greater knowledge and more lengthened experience. Such would be eagerly read by many who earnestly pray and diligently search for the wisdom of the soul winner.

It is an essential in Christ's service that we should act upon principles which are not formulated by men, but clearly taught in the Word of God. To be assured that what we do will stand the test of this divine plummet gives dignity and holy boldness to the lowliest servant, while doing the humblest and most obscure work.

House-to-house visitation is very specially a trying work, and can only be maintained in communion with God, and by being assured that it is a part of the apostles' doctrine and practice. "Preach the gospel to every creature," is the standing order of the Captain of our Salvation. "I am pure from the blood of *all men*"; the experience of a "*pattern*" servant and soldier of Jesus Christ. The rugged and difficult path to this height of experience in service was "I have taught you publicly, and *from house to house*, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Again, of the apostles we read, "Daily in the temple, and in *every house*, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (Acts v. 42). These holy men of old are seen as *streams* in the desert, bringing refreshment, joy, and gladness to weary and downcast travellers. Not only a well in a public part, which they truly were, but from house to house they passed with "the gift of God." Oh, to be so filled

with the love of God and the compassion of Christ that we should ever be found "daily," according as we have opportunity, seeking to tell of Jesus wherever we are.

Again, the work has difficulties which seem almost insurmountable, but, at the worst, in Britain at least, it is not to be compared with the days of the apostles (see Acts v. 17, 18, &c.); but their trust was in God, and "they rejoiced" not that they were counted worthy to preach, but that they were "counted worthy to suffer shame for His name." It is our responsibility, in face of every difficulty, to carry the message to them. If they slam the door and close their ear to the message, we are clear from guilt, and have done our duty to God and our fellow-men. Yet, even then they are not out of reach; we can reach them by way of the throne of grace, and many times have we in the past had our way opened to most hardened sinners, in a remarkable way, through pleading for them there.

The work is a powerful auxiliary to the gospel meeting, and a great help to the gospel preacher. There you meet the individual and get to know common excuses and difficulties which can ever be met by the most simple texts of Scripture. In this way you find out the need and difficulties, and when the time for public preaching comes this proves a great help in clearing the mists of difficulty, doubt, and despair.

Recently the writer laboured in the gospel with some Christians in a country village, with evident blessing among the unsaved. This could be traced to the continued house-to-house visitation of a brother of low degree, whose godly life and readiness to every good work had gained him a welcome to nearly every house in the village, where he read the word to and prayed for an interested household.

This is an almost unnoticed service and neglected work, yet one which ever bears precious fruit. There is much to bear and encounter as you move from house to house, but though your service is looked upon as contemptible, being rewarded here only by the frown of man, the conscious smile of the Master is our support now, and the certainty of His "Well done" that which carries us forward perseveringly "till He come."

A. B. G.

## Questions and Answers.

We desire to express our thanks to all who have sent answers.

Replies to appear in the next number require to be sent in not later than 15th of present month, and so on; the 15th of the month being always the latest to which we can defer making up for press.

We again urge the importance of replies being short; it is essential, in this particular line of things, to be concise.

When more than one question is replied to, let the answer to each question be upon a separate piece of paper. THE EDITOR.

### Replies are invited to the following:—

**HIS MIGHTY WORKING.**—Kindly give the force and meaning of the expression "His working which worketh IN ME mightily" (Col. i. 29). Was this mighty working felt, and should we experience the same as believers now?

**INSPIRATION OF ECCLESIASTES.**—Is the teaching of Ecclesiastes divine? and if so, does it apply now, or could the book be regarded as an inspired record of human wisdom?

**"PERMISSION" v. INSPIRATION.**—I Corinthians vii. 6, 10, 12, 25, 40 verses. Are we to conclude that part of this chapter was written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and part was not, but are simply the words of Paul as a man? If so, why is it recorded in the word of God?

**REST.**—Kindly explain the several meanings of the word translated "rest," and what rests they signify in Hebrews iv.

**SEVEN TIMES.**—What is the meaning of the expression "seven times," four times repeated in Leviticus xxvii.? Is it possible by this chapter to decide in what year the times of the Gentiles will end?

### THE LORD'S TABLE.

**QUESTION 448.**—Do the Scriptures authorise or allow me to state the Lord's table has several aspects, and call it the Father's table, giving Luke xv. as my authority; or the King's table, based upon 2 Samuel ix., 1 Kings x., and Song of Solomon i. 12; and again the Priestly table, based upon Genesis xiv. 18; or, should I content myself with speaking of it only as the Lord's table?

**Ans. A.**—It certainly is not correct nor allowable to call the "Lord's table" by a variety of names. The doing so quietly but surely ignores His Lordship, and it is the Lordship of Christ that the apostle presents and insists upon in 1 Cor. x. He warns them against idolatry. They are to flee from it (verses 11-14). He tells them that the things which Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and that "the assembly of God at Corinth" cannot participate with the sacrifices of the Gentiles and demon worship while participating in the communion of the body and blood of Christ. They cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the demon's table; and if they do they will provoke the Lord to jealousy (verses 15-22).

Luke xv. is a parable without the faintest reference to the Lord's table, and incidents that are recorded in the Old Testament must not be foisted into the New Testament, and especially

not into those parts of it which treat of "Do this in remembrance of Me," and of the "Lord's table."

Yes, you "should content yourself with speaking of it only as the Lord's table." L. D. G.

**Ans. B.**—In my judgment it is unwise to speak of the Lord's table either as that of the Father, the King, or the Priest, though, doubtless, it has relations to all three. The Spirit of God has given it one title—"the table of the Lord"—and it is not ours to amplify or rather to alter it. The Lordship of Christ, His glory and authority at His table, is the point in question in 1 Cor. x., and that will not be strengthened but weakened by the changes indicated in the question.

At the same time we must be careful about denying to others or to ourselves full liberty in the use of all Scriptural illustrations tending to enlarge our thoughts upon this great subject, provided we do not exalt an illustration into a doctrine.

The following beautiful lines, from the Spanish, by the late Archbishop of Dublin, will indicate my meaning:—

Honey from the lion's mouth,  
Emblem mystical, divine;  
How the sweet and strong combine!  
Cloven rock for Israel's drouth;  
Treasure house of golden grain;  
By our Joseph laid in store,  
In his brethren's famine sore,  
Freely to dispense again;  
Dew on Gideon's snowy fleece;  
Well from bitter changed to sweet;  
Shewbread laid in order meet,  
Bread whose cost doth not increase  
Though no rain in April fall;  
Horeb's manna freely given,  
Showered in white dew from heaven;  
Marvellous, angelical!  
Weightiest bunch of Canaan's vine;  
Cake to strengthen and sustain  
Through long days of desert pain;  
Salem's monarch's bread and wine. G. F. T.

**Editor's Note.**—The expression "table of the Lord" occurs in Malachi i. 7-12. It is not the same as the altar, whereon "the food of God" (see Lev. iii. 2 and Num. xxviii. 12) was presented, but was furnished from the altar and expressed the truth of Communion. God having His portion, the priest his portion, and the offerer his portion, all of the one offering.

The "table of the Lord" still expresses the same truth. It is because of the great peace sacrifice having been offered and accepted that a table is furnished for us, and our partaking at that table tells of our communion with the God to whom the offering was presented.

In like manner, partaking at a table furnished from the altar of an idol would imply communion with the demon to whom the offering had been presented.

There could be no reconciling of the two, no

possibility of true fellowship at the Lord's table, if there was partaking at an idolatrous table.

Analogies and illustrations there may be, and to note these may be instructive and edifying, but we have no Scripture warrant for calling "the Lord's table" "the Father's table," or any other name.

#### ELDERS.

**QUESTION 449.**—Is there any difference between elders under the law and elders under grace, or Old Dispensation elders and New Dispensation elders?

**Ans. A.**—The purpose of a presbytery in the Old was much the same as in the New Dispensation. It was for rule. Also, the men were to be of mature age in both cases, with proved governmental gift, or, at least, capacity.

But there were fundamental differences. For example, the elders of Israel were to be selected for certain qualifications (Num. xi. 16), in which regeneration was not included. An elder in the church must be first of all a member of it; that is a regenerate soul, proved by many very definite and explicit signs in his walk and conduct. Again, the elders in Israel were representatives of the people in the sacrifice of the sin-offering (Lev. iv. 15), to which no duty of New Testament elders corresponds.

Also, in Numbers xi. we find that the presbytery of Israel were specially and collectively endued with the Holy Ghost for the business of their office.

A feature of likeness ought, however, to be mentioned—viz., that while the original institution was very definite in occasion, method, and purpose, in neither Old nor New Testament is any instruction given as to the continuance of the office, or the method of subsequent selection and ordination.

The presbytery is perhaps the Church institution in which her departure from God is most strongly marked. "Man that is in honour and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish." He can endure any or all of his present conditions better than authority. There pride flourishes to his downfall, as of old before the world was.

Men love the high place and seek and cling to it, though they may possess none of the qualifications for its occupation worthily. So it comes to pass that, in the Church as in Israel, the worst damage the cause of God has to suffer comes from the self-made, or man-made, officials of His congregation. G. F. T.

**Editor's Note.**—Elders, overseers (or bishops), and pastors denote the same persons in the New Testament. Elders they must be as a matter of fact, not youths or novices. For such a ministry there is necessary the fitness of gift, the fitness of spiritual condition, and the fitness of experience. This latter, which is prominent in 1 Tim. iii. involves maturity of years. The mention of

"elders" in 1 Peter v. 1, in direct contrast with the "younger" in ver. 5, proves that in the apostle's mind those whom he exhorted to feed the flock were to be of mature years.

We do not suppose that elders were constituted such by ordination; they were thus pointed out by the Spirit of God as men fitted to take the oversight.

In Numb. xi. 16 they were elders before they were selected by Moses, and endued with the Spirit for the office assigned to them.

It is a grievous abuse to recognise the young, the inexperienced, or the carnal as being shepherds. Still more so to assume the power to ordain such, a power that never was committed to the saints but strictly reserved for apostolic hands, or a specially appointed apostolic delegate, as Titus.

#### I COME QUICKLY.

**QUESTION 450.**—When we remember 1800 years have elapsed since the words "I come quickly" were uttered, how are we to understand them?

**Ans.**—The explanation of these words, so simple and at first sight unmistakable, though in the lapse of eighteen centuries become so mysterious, can only be found in 2 Peter iii. 8—"One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." We have not yet, in the sense of this latter statement, reached the end of two days since our Lord's departure. "Quickly" is to be interpreted by God's chronology, not by ours. The early Church was possibly not aware of this. Paul, interpreting the promise of his Lord's return literally, said, "*We* which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord." He looked to be caught up himself. He also said, "Now we see through a glass darkly." "Now I know in part."

There is, however, an instruction in the word "quickly," which though secondary is not to be neglected. What is to be expected "quickly," we must be prepared for. In this sense the words of the promise are equivalent to those of our Lord himself. Mark xiii. 35, 36—"Ye know not when the Master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning; lest, coming suddenly, He find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." In the light of this passage the word "quickly" covers a late morning hour as well as an early evening one, and to be watchers all the night through is our part and duty. G. F. T.

#### THE NEXT EVENT.

**QUESTION 451.**—Which event will be first in order of fulfilment—the expulsion of Satan from heaven, or the rapture of the saints (1 Thess. iv. 16)?

**Ans.**—I presume this is not a question of curiosity but a desire to know the truth. Perhaps the most helpful way will be to look at the passage

where we are told of Satan's expulsion from heaven (Rev. xii.). It is quite clear from this vision that the man-child will be "caught up" before Satan is "cast out into the earth." So if we could determine who the man-child is, we would have a correct answer to our question.

I know some esteemed expositors believe the man-child to be a portion of the Jewish remnant during the "great tribulation." But to this view there are *insuperable* difficulties. *First*, It is nowhere said or implied in Scripture that any portion of that remnant will be "caught up unto God, and to His throne;" *second*, It is nowhere said that any portion of that remnant will ever "rule the nations with a rod of iron;" whilst both these things are true of Christ and of the overcomers in His Church (see Psalm. ii. 7-9, Rev. ii. 26, 27, Luke xxiv. 51, 1 Thess. iv. 17).

To this view there are also two difficulties. *First*, If the Church is seen in heaven in the fourth and fifth chapters, how could she be "caught up" again in the twelfth? To this I reply, that prophetic truth is not revealed in the consecutive order in which the events will occur; but these future events are often looked at by the prophets or "seers" as we would look at a group of stars, without taking any note of their distance from where we stand. Also, the twelfth of Revelation is a distinct vision within itself, and is not necessarily affected by anything that has gone before.

The *second* difficulty is, How could the man-child include both Christ and the Church, seeing so long a period has intervened between the ascension of Christ and the rapture of the Church? To this I would answer, that in many of the prophetic Scriptures the period of the Church's testimony on earth is passed over as if no such period existed. Take, for instance, Isaiah lxi. 2, or 1 Peter i. 11. The whole of the present age comes in between the "acceptable year of the Lord" and "the day of vengeance of our God." As also between the "sufferings of Christ" and the "glory that should follow." So, whilst a whole dispensation comes between the ascension of the Head and the rapture of the body, it is not recognised as in the passages cited. See also 1 Cor. xii. 12 and Eph. ii. 15, where Christ and the Church are spoken of as *one*. The "Christ," and the "new man." So from this vision in Rev. xii., looked at by itself, I conclude that the Church will be in heaven with the Lord before Satan is cast out.

I have kept closely to this one passage because I know many have a difficulty with it. We need to be very clear that nothing come between the heart and the coming of the Lord for His Bride. The heart of the believer ought to have no "tomorrow" but the morning of the resurrection, the appearing of the bright and morning star.

G. A.



## THE COMING OF JESUS CHRIST AS SON OF MAN.

OUR blessed Lord has the two distinct titles of the Son of God and the Son of Man. As the Son of God He sustains the dignity and power of being Lord of life and Lord of resurrection, for "as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself"; and the "dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." As Son of Man He is judge of quick and dead, for the "Father hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man" (John v. 25, 26, 27).

Of that blessed hour of His coming into the air as Son of God, to raise in glory the saints who have died, and to transform us into His likeness, and to translate us, together with them, into His presence to be for ever with Him, we do not at present speak.

Between the time of His coming to the air as Son of God, and the time of His coming to the earth as Son of Man to execute judgment, to take vengeance and to rule, the Antichrist will be raised, and the "dragon will give him his power, and his seat, and great authority," as we see in Rev. xiii. and other scriptures.

In order to get possession of the colossal fortunes of wealthy Israelites, the Antichrist will sell or divide the land for gain, and in compensation for their wealth he shall confirm a covenant with them for one week, or one seven years, constituting Israel an independent state in the land of Canaan, as told out in the ninth and eleventh chapters of Daniel. The seventieth week, spoken of by the prophet Daniel, will begin to run the very day that this covenant is signed or confirmed.

The Antichrist having established himself as absolute despot among the nations, his image is set up, unto which his false prophet has power to give life (or breath) and speech; and all classes, small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, are compelled to receive his mark upon their right hand or upon their foreheads. Through these and other means opposition to his will seems to be crushed throughout his vast empire; and now he turns against Israel. From the first his heart had been against the covenant, and now at the time of which we

write he proceeds to break it, but meets with a vigorous and formidable resistance. Thereupon he proclaims war, saying, "Beat your plough-shares into swords and your pruning-hooks into spears," as we are told by Joel the prophet. This is in order that he may arm every available man. The prophet Isaiah sends us the telegrams of the advance of this huge host in chapter x.: "He is come to Aiath, he is passed to Migron; at Michmash he hath laid up his carriages," &c. Thus he advances. Micah gives us a glimpse behind the scenes when he says, "Many nations are gathered against Zion, which say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion. But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they His counsel: for He shall gather them as the sheaves into the threshing-floor." This army will be of immense proportions: "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of Jehoshaphat," filling the land, with the headquarters at Armageddon. This brings on the great tribulation, of which Scripture frequently speaks, such as never was on the earth before and never will be again.

As the great tribulation rises to its extreme height, our blessed Lord has two ways of preserving the elect remnant of His people. As it was in the days of Noah, and as it was in the days of Lot. In the days of Lot the elect few were preserved by fleeing, so in these days when the man of sin shall have placed his image or "abomination" in the holy place, he himself also will sit in the temple of God (yet to be built in the literal city of Jerusalem), showing himself that he is God. Then the Lord says, "Let them which be in Judea flee unto the mountains," and not linger for stuff or house or garments or anything else. What mountains are these? Where are they? Our God tells us by Daniel that the Antichrist, as the one who exalts and magnifies himself, will not be able to grasp or include in his dominions Edom and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. Where are those countries? Any one who may have a map will see at a glance that they lie round the south and south-east borders of Judea, quite near. The God of Jacob keeps those three little states out of the grasp of the man of sin, in order that they may be a valley of Achor for a door of hope in those dreadful days. Among the mountains

in any of these countries they will be just as safe as Lot was in Zoar. And they will be conveniently near to return when the tempests of wrath and judgment are over.

But there are those also who shall be preserved as it was in the days of Noah—that is, divinely protected in the very midst of the terrible tribulation and slaughter. The Lord says that “because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold,” and some “he shall corrupt by flatteries”; “and some of them of understanding shall fall—great ones—to try them and to purge and to make white,” but the blessed Lord Jesus tells them that he that shall endure unto the end the same shall be saved. Those days shall be shortened—a number of them shall be cut off—for the elect’s sake; and were they not shortened no flesh should be saved, that is, not a man in mortal flesh should come through the tribulation.

The Son of Man shall come with power and great glory. Before Him go the ministers of His power. He shall send His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all which offend and do iniquity. These are the eagles which are gathered together where the body is (see Luke xvii. 37). The angels, like the eagles, are clear of sight and swift of wing, and in an instant will seize upon and bear away one from the bed where two are reposing; one woman from the mill where two are grinding. This is the gathering out of the tares, to be bound in bundles to be burned. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun.

When the Son of Man comes, preceded by myriads of His angels, accompanied by myriads of His saints, and followed by the armies in heaven, “He shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth shall shake.” The prophet Joel saw and heard this in the visions of God. It was like earthquake and thunder combined. Habakkuk, in the visions of God, says, “He stood, and measured the earth: He beheld, and drove asunder the nations.” “Thou didst march through the land in indignation, Thou didst thresh the heathen in anger.” In Rev. xix. we learn that “the beast (the Antichrist) was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and that worshipped his image.

These both were cast alive into the lake burning with brimstone.”

“The hour of His judgment has come,” and “the day of vengeance is in His heart, and the year of His redeemed is come”; therefore, “He will tread down the people in His anger, and make them drunk in His fury.” And now, is His discriminating wisdom, “His fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” “Then the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”

“In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not; and to Zion, Let not thy hands be faint. The Lord God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love; He will joy over thee with singing” (Zeph. iii. 16, 17). “And the name of the city from that day shall be, The Lord is there” (Ezek. xlvi. 35).  
J. S.

## SERVICE IN THE CHURCH.

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS AT A MEETING OF OVERSEEING BRETHREN, BY JOHN R. CALDWELL.

Scriptures read—Rom. xii., I Peter iv. 7-11.

**I**N these two passages two things are closely connected with service, viz., lowliness and love. “Don’t let anyone think of himself more highly than he ought to think.” “Have fervent love among yourselves.” These two exhortations, coming in connection with these passages on service, correspond exactly with what has often been pointed out in the First Epistle to the Corinthians. Chapter xii. gives us the enumeration of the gifts; chapter xiv., the administration of the gifts; but, coming between these is chapter xiii., which treats on love. One principal element in love—“It vaunteth not itself.” Love will not contravene the exhortation—“Let not any man think of himself more highly than he ought to think.” Lowliness and love were the two great characteristics of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Eph. iv. 1-3, we are exhorted to walk towards one another in lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one

another in love. These two elements are essential in connection with all service in the Church.

I would submit that there are three things necessary for service, viz., gift, experience, and spiritual condition. God has mapped out service in the Church in great variety. He has not entrusted all the functions to one person. As each member in the body has its own function to fulfil, so in the Church each one has his own peculiar gift; another cannot do his work, and he cannot do that of another. "As every man has received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Peter iv. 10, 11). Each one should learn from God what gift he has received, and the work that God would have him be diligent about. It is a great mistake if we try to do everything; very often much energy is lost by one seeking to do work that he is not qualified for, instead of leaving it to those fitted, or exhorting others to do it. Let each one of us seek to know what particular line of service God has gifted us for.

In connection with service to the Lord there is something more than gift needed: that is, experience. That we specially find in connection with the work of an overseer or shepherd. One desiring to do such work must not be a novice: that is, one not long converted. Such are in danger of being lifted up with pride. He may have been very abundantly gifted for service, but patience is required to gain the experience necessary—the experience of his own heart, the experience of men and things, that can only be gained by time. God never calls persons inexperienced into the front of the battle, or to minister for Him. The time that is used in gaining experience is not lost time. Moses was forty years old when he forsook the court of Pharaoh, yet he was forty years in the desert learning from God. David was trained for the Lord's service tending his father's sheep in the wilderness, and also gained experience when pursued by Saul, and learning in bitterness his liability to fail in the path of faith. He passed through all this experience before he was called to the throne. Then there is the case Joshua. He began as a young servant of Moses. He passed through all the trials of

the wilderness in fellowship with God, gaining experience before he was called to lead the host of the Lord into Canaan. In these, and many other cases throughout Scripture, we see the necessity of experience. That experience may be got in various ways. What experience Peter got through his terrible fall in his denial of Christ. The Lord said, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." He was gaining experience of himself and the Lord that was to be brought into service later on. This is brought out in his epistles. Remember that experience is not gained in a day. No one can too soon begin to tell what God has done for their souls; they cannot too soon become witnesses for God of what they know of Him and His grace. Yet I believe it is a great mistake for young, inexperienced persons to be engaged as leaders or overseers in an assembly. Timothy was comparatively a young man—but not what we call a young man, possibly about forty years of age—while Paul was very much older.

Moreover, there may be gift and experience whilst spiritual condition may be lacking. In Gal. vi. 1 the spiritual are exhorted to restore any overtaken in a fault. The saints at Corinth were in such a low condition that the apostle could not speak unto them as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, because there were envying, strife, and division amongst them. If they had been spiritual these things would not have been amongst them. There is no possibility of a carnal man restoring a lapsed soul; it is the spiritual that God uses in such a service. I have heard of persons who have been used by God in the Gospel whilst by no means in a spiritual condition. God may take up one in certain circumstances and use him in this way, as Samson took up the jawbone of an ass and slew a thousand men therewith, and afterwards flung it away. God can use what instrument He pleases, but His usual way is to take up the spiritual and use such in His service. He uses the learner at the feet of Jesus; and the one who is characterised by lowliness, meekness, and love, God will use in blessing to His people. The spirit of the Master was fully exemplified in the apostle Paul, who said to those naughty Corinthians, "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love you the less I be loved"

(2 Cor. xii. 15). And in Acts xx. 17-29, in addressing the Ephesian elders, he could say, "Ye know, from the first day I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears and temptations." We see the deep lowliness of mind in which the apostle served the Lord in serving His people. Let us who have been serving the Lord amongst His people compare our past ministry with these scriptures, and see if these have been the spiritual characteristics of our ministry; see whether we have been each one ministering according to the grace given, and see whether we have sought of God the spiritual fitness and experience for the work. Have we been serving the Lord first, and serving the Lord in serving His people, and doing that in the lowliness and in the love that can only be got from the Fountainhead—Christ Himself?

If we gave heed to these plain, simple things; if we realised the responsibility we are under in undertaking service in the Church, there would be more fruitfulness in our ministry amongst the children of God. I would say these things in the spirit of self-judgment.

By way of encouragement let us ponder what the Lord has promised to do for the faithful servant. Luke xii. 42-44. Where, there is one faithfully and wisely exercised about feeding the lambs and the sheep of the flock of the Good Shepherd, He has promised a special reward to such. Real divine shepherding is toilsome, hard work that requires patience and self-denial in doing it. The Lord Jesus appreciates those that in wisdom follow in His footsteps. He will put such in positions of trust in His coming kingdom. 1 Peter v. 1, 2—"The elders which are among you I exhort . . . feed the flock of God." 1 Thess. ii. 7-11—"We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children." "We exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children." There is a great difference between using "flattering words" and loving words. We may use loving words, as the apostle always did, without ever using flattering words. It is the mother nurse that the apostle refers to here; not the hired nurse. "We were willing . . . to have imparted unto you our own souls

because ye were dear unto us." If we are to be in any way helpful to God's children we must let them feel that they are dear unto us. We cannot help them otherwise. Parents will not help their children if they are not made to feel that they are dear to them. If we let them know in our faithful and wise dealings with them that we love them, what a power our discipline will have with them! The apostle was both a father and mother to these Thessalonian saints. As a father he charged and counselled them; and as a mother he carried them in his bosom and nursed and cared for them in all tenderness and love. Let us learn thus to serve amongst the Lord's people.

### RESURRECTION POWER.

THIS power is nothing less than the very same power which wrought in Christ when God raised His body from the grave. It is therefore *almighty resurrection power*. The apostle prays that the saints may be enabled to understand this, for the apprehension of it gives most blessed confidence. See Eph. i. 18-21, iii. 20; Col. ii. 12; where the same word (*energy*) is used in all places.

The world and Satan had done *their worst* with the Son of God. They had killed Him. We know the *grace* that led Him to the cross; but it is nevertheless true, they *killed* Him. What does God now do? He puts forth His almighty power, and raises the dead body from the grave. And not only so, for Lazarus had been an object of resurrection-power before; but He raises Him to His own right hand in glory, "*far above all principality and power.*" Who is the victor now? The very principalities and powers which we have to wrestle against in the heavenly places (chap. vi. 12) have had a victor pass right through, and go *above them* in the power of God; and *that* is the power that works (or *energises*) in *us* who believe in His risen Son. Can Satan withstand *this* power? No! It has been *proved* that he cannot, for Christ is at God's right hand in heaven, "*far above*" him and all his hosts. "Fight the good fight," and be *sure* of conquest, beloved. "Greater is He that is in us" (God the Holy Ghost) "than *he* that is in the world" (Satan).

## "OPEN BRETHREN."

IT has become the fashion in some quarters to declaim against "Open Brethren" as though they were the very embodiment of all that is evil, and there are those who evidently think they do God service if they can only lead some to eschew the company and the fellowship of those whom they thus describe. As simple-minded believers, whose aim it is to be well-pleasing to God, are often deceived by an assumption of zeal for God, and are thus unwittingly led astray from the path of true simplicity, it may be good to look at the question, What is meant by "Open Brethren"?

Those who are so called never gave themselves such a description. Indeed, they never even called themselves "Brethren"; for, knowing that that holy title belongs to *all* the children of God, they would not use it in a sectarian sense. But the fact that they owned and treated one another as brethren led to their being *called* "Brethren." Then, when some sought to introduce a system of church principles and discipline which others deemed contrary to Scripture, and separated from those who could not accept it, the two parties began to be distinguished from each other. Those who entered upon a new path came, in course of time, to be called *exclusives*, while those who sought to maintain their original position, were known by contrast as *open*. Humbling, indeed, are these distinctions, but more humbling are the divisions that first led to them and are still maintained. But those known as "Open Brethren" have never taken any new ground. This, indeed, is part of the grave charge brought against them. It has been recently said, "Some are in a chronic state of lawlessness, which it would be difficult to exaggerate. The greater number are going on upon what they call the principles of 'The early Brethren.'"

The first part of this we will notice presently, but as to the latter part we may well ask, "What culpability is there in following the principles of 'The early Brethren'?" The writer of the above speaks as if ignorant of the fact that the one aim of "The Early Brethren" was to learn and carry out the will of God. They were delivered from various

ecclesiastical systems, though chiefly from the national establishment, by the power of the truth. They learned the heavenly calling of the Church of God, and that all His people are made priests to Himself, and, in many cases at no small cost, sought to follow out what they learned. Thus they were *open* from the beginning; desiring to have their minds open to learn all the truth of God, and their hearts open to receive all the people of God. This is the *openness* enjoined in Scripture, *this* they practised, and this alone we desire to cultivate. Open in these senses we are, or at least aim at being. We have no rule that prevents our following out whatever is shown to us to be the teaching of God's Word; we have no barrier to the reception of any who desire to do the same. This, then, is the course pursued by what the writer above quoted calls "the greater number" of the assemblies to which he refers, and what other course would he have them pursue?

But he speaks of *some* assemblies as in "a chronic state of lawlessness." Now, when we read of *lawlessness* in Scripture we know what is meant; but when a charge of lawlessness is brought by men we at once ask for *the law*—the standard by which they judge them whom they accuse. Without such a standard it is impossible to test the charge; and we can only say that, if it be a question of bowing to human authority, we desire to be as lawless as Paul was (Gal. ii. 5). It is often said that men holding the false doctrine of the non-eternity of the punishment of the lost find a place in our assemblies. To this charge I have several times said, "State distinctly *who* has thus been received, and *where* and *when*," and have always found that such a definite requirement could not be met. Other accusations have been made in the same way, and the accuser silenced for the time, only, alas! in some cases, to repeat the charge to someone else when opportunity offered. The man who makes such a charge and is not prepared to prove it is beyond question a lawless man; he stands self-convicted as a breaker of the law of God by Moses—"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour"—and certainly shows little regard for the law of Christ. I could name some who have been refused fellowship of any kind for years because of

their holding evil doctrine, and some who have suffered in temporal things for their faithfulness to the Lord in these matters.

That there is much weakness and even disorder in some assemblies we must admit, but we do so with more sorrow than surprise considering the lack of shepherds on the one hand, and, on the other, the restless spirit of some who seem to be most at home in the sad work of sowing discord amongst brethren and fostering the spirit of division amongst the Lord's people. Such things are not likely to be corrected by controversy, or by anything else except the patient work of pastors who have the mind of Christ. And while we wait on God for these, let us all seek to be truly open for the reception of all God's truth and of all God's people (excepting such as by reason of error in doctrine, or evil conduct, are by the Word of the Lord to be excluded), even at the risk of being stigmatised as "Open Brethren."

W. H. B.

### "THE DIVINE ENTERPRISE OF MISSIONS." \*

DR. PIERSON is an interesting and instructive writer. "The Divine Enterprise of Missions" is a thrilling and stirring book, and is eminently calculated to cause Christians to consider their relation to the Lord's commission, given eighteen centuries ago, to "preach the Gospel to every creature." The volume is divided into seven chapters, and embraces, (1) The Divine Thought of Missions, (2) The Divine Plan of Missions, (3) The Divine Work of Missions, (4) The Divine Spirit of Missions, (5) The Divine Force of Missions, (6) The Divine Fruit of Missions, (7) The Divine Challenge of Missions.

#### THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE.

The population of the earth is estimated at 1,500,000,000. Three times every century the whole population of the globe passes out of time into eternity; most of whom never heard the Gospel of God's grace. Dr. Pierson strenuously maintains that the great business of Christians is to attend to their Master's "marching orders," and see that "every

creature" is brought under the sound of the Gospel.

"Every saved soul is called to be a herald and a witness; and we are to aim at nothing less than this: to make every nation, and every creature in every nation, acquainted with the Gospel tidings. This is the first and ever-present duty of the Church; it is the heart of the whole missionary plan. God will give us souls for our hire and crown; but we are not to wait for results; we are to regard our duty as never done while any region beyond is without the Gospel. Let all men have a hearing of the Gospel at least, then, when evangelisation is world-wide, we may bend our energies to deepening the impression which a first-hearing of the Gospel has made. The first need of the world is to hear the Gospel, and the first duty of the Church is to go everywhere and tell every human being of Christ, the world's Saviour. Instead of creating a few centres of intense light, God would have us scatter the lamps until all darkness is at least relieved, if not removed."

Again, "Death and hell are mounted on their awful steeds, and are hotly pursuing the whole host of mankind; if those whom we warn will not hear and heed, perhaps others will; and, in any case, we owe to all the same privilege and opportunity of hearing and heeding. With all possible haste should the Church push her heralds on to the limits of the globe. Without an hour's delay for any cause, on any pretext, save only to receive power from above, should we who believe urge on this holy crusade for God until every living soul has heard of Christ."

#### THE CHURCH ASLEEP.

"Something is wrong. Our Lord, more than eighteen and a half centuries ago, urged an immediate and world-wide proclamation of the Gospel to every creature; and yet, in this closing decade of the nineteenth century, at least one half of the population of this globe remain as entirely strangers even to the fact that Jesus died for them as though they were inhabitants of another planet. We have been going about this work leisurely. We have gone to nations here and there, and set up the Cross as a rallying-point; sought to convert the nations and subdue whole empires for Christ. We have waited to complete this

\* "The Divine Enterprise of Missions," by Arthur T. Pierson, D.D., can be had at *Witness Office*. Price 4s. 6d.

work while the regions beyond have remained in the unbroken shadow of death. All this seems, in some respects, directly opposed to our Lord's orders."

#### THE CONVERSION OF NATIONS.

Dr. Pierson does not expect, as many do, that the nations "will be converted in this dispensation through the preaching of the Gospel." He makes some very pertinent remarks on the subject. "The conversion of a nation seems a goal of hope toward which the passionate ardour of faith reaches; it is, in fact, an illusive vision, a dream of a misguided fancy, that draws the Church away from her simple work of witnessing, to follow a deceptive and even a dangerous expectation. Both God's Word and God's working, even in this, the missionary age, teach us that during the present dispensation our watchword is *evangelisation*. We are not to look for a world's conversion; we are to *evangelise* the world; and if the result proves to be not the world's conversion, but the outgathering of the Church, the *ecclesia*, the called-out assembly, the Bride of Christ, is it not exactly the Scriptural goal of this age? This is the only hope warranted by the Scripture or the history of missions, and therefore it is the only hope not possible to be disappointed."

#### "NUMBERING THE PEOPLE" A FOE TO MISSIONS.

Dr. Pierson exposes the evil of being overly anxious about the *results* of our service, and says some searching and solemn things on counting converts. "The great snare of our day is the mad passion for numbers. The Diana of the modern Ephesians is the statistical table, and many are the makers and vendors of these shrines of our great goddess. To report so many converts more a year, or boast so many accessions at one communion, is the devil's bait to catch the superficial winner of souls. . . . The insane clamour for 'numbering the people' is one of the main foes to missions. As in David's case, it leads to spiritual famine, pestilence, or defeat, and sometimes to all three. Converts are to be weighed, not counted. One Cilician Saul is worth ten thousand like the Samaritan Simon. Not how many, but how much, is the question. . . . If by the ingathering of a

large number of converts God is pleased to set His seal on mission work as being of a godly sort, yet this is not the infallible criterion either of fidelity or success; many a devoted servant of God has met with what, to human eyes, is not only rejection but failure. When Judson had laboured for ten long weary years in Burmah, and had seen but eighteen converts, he was asked, 'What of the prospect?' His characteristic reply was: 'Bright as the promises of God.'

#### IF NO PERSONAL EFFORT, WHAT THEN?

We have been saved in order that we may witness for Christ. Dr. Pierson has some valuable and timely words on this. "We here unhesitatingly affirm that the conception of Christian life which leaves out personal labour for lost souls is as radically wanting as that conception of salvation which leaves out faith; for believing is not more prominently connected with salvation than is witnessing connected with service to God. . . . We must go beyond the conception of service to God as a mere help to growth—it is a condition of life. Salt without saltiness is no longer *salt*. A light without a ray is no longer a *light*. It is of the nature of the Christian life to witness, and when there is no witness is it too much to say that logically there is no life?"

#### CLERICALISM A FOE TO MISSIONS.

Dr. Pierson speaks plainly and somewhat strongly on the pernicious effects of clericalism. He speaks of the terms "clergy" and "laity" as the "invention of the devil in the dark ages." "The introduction of this distinction into the Church of Christ (he adds) was not only an invention of the devil, but a master-stroke of Satan-craft. The Church of God has come to recognise a dividing line, not found in the New Testament, between the *clergy* and the *laity* so called. A small minority of church members are set apart for the preaching of the Gospel and the care of souls. The very terms 'preacher,' 'pastor,' 'curate,' have come to embody the conception that these men are specially ordained to preach the Gospel, shepherd believers, and care for souls. What, then, is the duty of the 'laity' but to take care of the 'clergy': hear the gospel which they preach, keep in the fold, or follow in the flock with

the flock where the pastor leads; and to see to it that while the 'curate' is caring for souls, he shall be paid for his professional work?"

#### THE CRYING QUESTION.

"Nothing, to-day, is to the Church its shame and its crime, as is this, that since Christ gave this last command nineteen centuries have struck on the clock of ages, and more than sixty generations have lived, sinned, suffered, and died."

Dr. Pierson earnestly maintains that obedience to the Lord's command should be immediate, implicit, and absolute: "For the present generation of the saved to reach the present generation of the unsaved, is the one question of the hour that leaves all others far in the distance." In the closing chapters of the book there is much valuable information given of the opposition to and entrance of the Gospel into various heathen lands, and of the mighty changes wrought on the people through its reception. Let us not forget that awful fact that there are millions upon millions of people perishing in their sins who never heard of God's great love. Let us remember that "faith cometh by hearing," and that it is God's desire that the Gospel should be preached to them through His servants.

"A cry of pain again and again  
Is heard through the deserts  
And wide sounding main;  
A cry from the lands that in darkness are lying;  
A cry from the hearts that in sorrow are sighing."

Get Dr. Pierson's book if you can. Read it carefully and prayerfully (and pass it on to others), and your conceptions of your relation and responsibility to the perishing millions will be increased and deepened. A. M.

"BEHOLD He cometh!" Blessed assurance! But a little day of toil, and then we shall come with Him, and rise to join His assembled saints, dressed all anew with our house from heaven, that spiritual clothing meet for the new creature in Christ Jesus. O what glorious liberty we are heirs to as children of God, one day to love the eternal Father, Son, and Spirit with unalloyed affections, when our whole nature shall be again on the side of God, and not a place left for the enemy to put his foot to harass the heir of glory.—A. N. GROVES.

#### SATAN—HIS TACTICS.

THE tactics of the adversary are remarkably illustrated and exposed in the Lord's parables concerning the Kingdom of Heaven. The first in Matt. xiii. is that of the sower; and here Satan and his emissaries are likened to the birds who follow the track of the sower and pick away the seed. It thus appears that Satan has not only the power to inject evil thoughts into the mind, but also the power of abstracting good.

By what means he accomplishes this we are not informed, but, judging from observation and experience, it can hardly be questioned that this mischievous work is accomplished by so filling the mind with vanity, with "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," that the things which are true and good are crowded out.

How often, after the most solemn appeals, are the hearers found immediately turned away from the subject of discourse to earthly and temporal things, or else engaged at once in discussing some peculiarity of the speaker, some form of expression used, anything, in short, but the one thing that is of paramount importance.

Satanic influence being at work, the transition from the solemn to the profane, from the serious to the frivolous, is made easy.

Thus Satan ever seeks to neutralise the preaching of the Word. But he does not always succeed in this way. In many cases the Word finds entrance, and a desire is created to follow in the path of obedience. Immediately there arises tribulation, or persecution, "because of the Word." Not having succeeded in catching the Word away, he sets himself to oppose every practical outcome of it. The enmity that suddenly is developed in friends and relatives, and which finds expression in unkind and cruel hindrance of each step that is attempted in obedience to the Word, is not natural to them, it is instigated and energised by Satan. The Word of God is the appointed means of grace, and therefore Satan hates it and ever opposes it with his utmost subtlety and malignity.

But even "tribulation and persecution" do not always succeed. The stand that was made for the truth is maintained and Satan



foiled, as "the roaring lion" sets himself in other and more subtle ways to oppose the Word of God.

When Israel came out of Egypt they were attacked in the rear by Amalek, and sorely harassed. Later on, Balaam was hired by the King of Moab to curse them. But Amalek was defeated, and Balaam's intended curse was turned into a blessing.

Soon after we read of Israel being entangled in ungodly alliances with the daughters of Moab. Ensnared by their friendly enticements, they soon bow down to their idols. Israel is joined to Baal-peor, and thus bring upon themselves the terrible judgment of a jealous God.

But not until some time later is the secret disclosed that the self-same adversary who failed to curse them was the instigator of the friendly advances that issued in such disaster (Num. xxxi. 16).

And so is it still, the adversary changes his tactics according to the character and conditions he has to deal with.

Thus when tribulation and persecution fail, how often is the one who was proof against these entangled by "the cares of this world," or "the deceitfulness of riches!" Poverty has its cares and prosperity has its pleasures, and both alike are thorns and briars to choke the Word and render it unfruitful. The action of Satan is more hidden here, but none the less real.

Then follows the parable of the tares, in which again the working of Satan is plainly shown.

It was not thorns, or briars, or thistles that were sown. These would have been quickly and easily distinguished. But the peculiarity of tares is the likeness they bear to the wheat. In fact, so long as they were both in the blade they were indistinguishable; it was not till the fruit appeared that the mixture was detected. The tares represent fruitless profession; nominal Christianity without Christ; the form of godliness, the power denied; a name to live, but dead.

And is it not the case that wherever throughout the whole world the gospel is preached, it is consented to and professed by multitudes who are not born again? And so blind are many of the servants of Christ that

they glory in the numbers who profess as though they were all the saved of the Lord, forgetting that Satan has mixed his converts with those of the Lord—has sown his tares along with the wheat.

And, indeed, whatever tends to false profession is the enemy's work. It is the forged note that most effectually discredits the Bank of England's genuine note. It is the false Christianity of the day that is the Devil's masterpiece to discredit the true.

There are those who seek to minimise the perversion of the Lord's ordinance of baptism, regarding it simply as a matter of opinion, and so far from being an essential that it is not worth contending about. But it cannot be so regarded if it is seen that no device ever forged by Satan has been so effectual as this in furthering the enemy's object of multiplying merely nominal Christians.

Devised in Romanism, and retained by the Protestant churches with certain modifications, what could more effectually answer Satan's ends than the making of Christians, and declaring them regenerate persons upon their being subjected as unconscious infants to an outward ordinance.

Rev. xii. has already been referred to as giving four different titles which belong to the one great adversary. But this important chapter (together with chap. xiii.) also represents Satan in four different characters. He is first the deceiver; then the accuser; then the persecutor; and finally, the blasphemer.

In the first two characters he is overcome by the saints through "the word of their testimony" and "the blood of the Lamb."

It is only by the Word, read, meditated upon, "inwardly digested," that he can be overcome as "the deceiver." "By the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer" (Psalm xvii. 4).

The Holy Scriptures are sufficient for all the need of the saints. They are given "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy iii. 16-17).

As "the accuser" he can only be overcome "by the blood of the Lamb." The fact that the Lord Jesus appears before God on our behalf as our High Priest and Advocate does

not hinder Satan from appearing as our accuser. Doubtless he marks well the sins and failures of the children of God into which he himself has beguiled them in order that he may bring them up as railing accusations against them before God.

How he does this we are not told, but we are not left in doubt as to the fact. And surely it is no uncommon experience to have accusations brought up within the heart so keenly and persistently, especially in seasons of physical prostration, as to admit of no explanation but the one, viz., that they were suggestions of the adversary, fiery darts cast into the soul to disturb its peace and foster doubt and unbelief. For all such temptations there is but the one resource: simple, confident trust in the abiding efficacy of the precious sin-cleansing blood.

As "the persecutor" the victory was through "not loving their lives unto death." The fires of persecution, the sword, the stake, the torture room, have witnessed ten thousand times to Satan's defeat and the victories of self-denying faith. "Who is he that shall harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts" (1 Peter iii. 13-15).

Finally the defeated adversary, in impotent rage, "opens his mouth in blasphemy against God" (Rev. xiii. 6).

Meantime God keeps silence, but the day of retribution is surely coming. J. R. C.

## REFLECTIONS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

### CHAPTER II.

THE question has been often raised as to the heathen in their ignorance of either law or grace, but it presents no real difficulty. All reasonable beings have an inherent sensibility of right and wrong; which indicates the work of law inscribed in their hearts, and this possession of conscience renders them *a law unto themselves*. Adding to this the combined testimony of Creation and Providence mentioned in chapter i., we see how they are not without responsibility, although they are "without law" or without a written revelation;

so that we can only reasonably bow to the inspired verdict—"therefore they are without excuse" (verse 20). Hence the *righteousness of God* in judging those who are "without law." This "righteousness" shall regulate the number and intensity of the stripes inflicted respectively upon those who knew the Lord's will, and those who knew it not, whilst *all* receive stripes.

There are mysteries connected with the sovereignty of our God which our poor finite understandings cannot comprehend; but instead of these weakening our confidence in the accuracy, authenticity, and consistency of His revelation of Himself and His purposes, they rather impart a deep sense of the superiority of that light which no man can approach unto, above the puny speculative thoughts of our hearts. Could we fully grasp all the mysteries of God we should doubtless esteem Him such an one as ourselves, thus missing one blessed element of worship in our souls, namely, *reverence*. As to all such mysteries, they are the *secret things* which "belong unto the Lord" into which we may not intrude, and with which we have nothing to do. "The things revealed" belong to us, and contain His entire counsel for us (see Deut. xxix. 29), not being given us for speculation, but for obedience; and we may rest assured that the righteousness and consistency which mark these latter which we *can* understand are in nowise wanting in the former which we *cannot* understand, for His holy purposes are "ordered in all things and sure."

Now, God has "revealed" His wrath from heaven against all ungodliness. This is a fundamental doctrine in His revelation of Himself, and woe to those who tamper with it! Their wilful denial of eternal punishment establishes against themselves a conclusive proof of its existence, for they, adding to or taking from the word of inspiration, forfeit a portion in the "Tree of Life," securing unto themselves participation in the "plagues which are written" in the Book. This will be the end of their "higher criticism," and of their "broader hope."

But to return to our chapter. The Jew, resting in the law, and boasting in covenant relationship to Jehovah; possessing a knowledge of His will wherewith to guide the blind

enlighten the darkened, instruct the foolish, and teach babes; with all this stood before God upon the same footing as the Gentile naturally. This is demonstrated and pressed home upon the Jewish conscience by the fact of Israel's breach of the law both dishonouring God and causing the Gentile to blaspheme. The exterior profession of legal observances only covered a desperately wicked heart. Obedience is the divine requirement, which is the true circumcision—that of the heart; and with nothing else will God be satisfied, whilst men are quite pleased with their formalism and dead ritual. The true Jew, the real law-keeper, was the man whom God could approve. But such was nowhere to be found amongst Adam's posterity, save only in the ever-blessed Son of God, whose holy life and pilgrimage through this sinful world stood forth in vivid and rebuking contrast to all around Him. On Him alone could heaven open to express God's delight and complacency in those thrilling words—"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased." On Him alone could the Spirit of holiness, coming from thence in dove-like similitude, find rest amid the troubled sea which could not rest, but cast up upon its waves the mire and dirt from the depths beneath! On such a Man, in such a world, God could smile. But excepting Him, humanity, represented in both Jew and Gentile, has ever proved itself to be but a corrupt and a corrupting stream, thus corroborating the testimony of holy Scripture; the one cannot open the mouth in judgment against the other, for both are "without excuse."

The real benefit of circumcision, which was the seal of the Abrahamic covenant, lay only in the obedience of the circumcised. An uncircumcised stranger turning to righteousness would stand in advance of his Jewish brother who transgressed the law although circumcised; because his turning to God in brokenness of spirit evinced that circumcision of heart which God sought for. This does not touch the question as to their natural standing; nature is one thing, but the disposition of the soul after God is another.

For example, Cornelius, the centurion, sought the Lord up to his light, and God took account of his prayers and alms—not as a means of procuring for him the blessing of salvation

which he sought, but as an indication of the sincere bent of his mind. He was a real seeker after God, and God sent him the true knowledge of salvation through the preaching of Peter, "words whereby" he was to be "saved." Cornelius exemplified verses 7 and 10 of our present chapter; for his "patient continuance in well-doing" declared that he sought for "glory, honour, and immortality"; his "working good" indicated the direction of his desires. We repeat that these things did not save him, for they could not. Notwithstanding his devout manner of life he had to take the place of a needy sinner, and so accept Christ whom Peter preached unto him. But having sought the Lord, He took care that the search should not be in vain (Acts x.).

Blessed be God, He ever reveals Himself to real seekers, despite all the darkness and fruitless activities that oftentimes accompany the searching. To troubled, anxious souls in every age and clime this precious word is ever true—"Thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek Thee" (Psalms ix. 10). This Cornelius proved experimentally, and how many millions more God knoweth! Here, indeed, was one of the "uncircumcision by nature" judging those who, by "the letter and circumcision," had transgressed the law, and not only this, but had also augmented their guilt by the rejection of Christ whom Cornelius received.

Who can estimate the value which our Lord has placed upon the affections of the soul? The true circumcision of heart, the *brokenness of spirit*, which is to Him a goodly sacrifice, is before all exterior excellency. Not that Christians should underrate true accuracy of walk, and thus become as salt that lost its savour; for "this is the love of God that we keep His commandments." But when the tendency has been unwittingly to make more of *position* than *condition*, it is important to see how carefully Scripture puts the latter as the root of the former, and therefore the former as the fruit of the latter. We must needs maintain the outward and the inward together. To assume the outward, apart from the inward, is Pharisaism; to profess the inward without having the outward is Antinomianism; but to possess both in sincerity before God is godliness.

LANDMARKS OF THE FUTURE.—VIII.

## THE GREAT TRIBULATION.

**N**OW I come to a point which leads me to give the general scope of certain chapters of Revelation, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass." In this revelation which He has given appear the dealings of God with the Jews as a nation and the ultimate blessing that they shall have. In chap. vii., where you get the sealing of the twelve thousand out of each tribe, you get, in figure, God sealing or electing His own for preservation during the time of the great tribulation. I understand it as meaning that God seals a certain number who shall pass through a fiery ordeal such as none shall have passed through since the beginning of the world; but He will bring them through to stand before Him eventually. Now, Revelation unfolds to us what the Lord Jesus is going to do in the day when He comes. God does not want it to be a sealed book to us, though Satan, whose final downfall is clearly foretold in it, would keep us from reading it, saying, "You cannot understand it." We may not understand all, but we may understand part. It is a *Revelation* of the Lord Jesus and what He gave to His servants, to show to them things which must shortly come to pass. And so when we get to Rev. v., and the question is as to who should open the book—the book of God's Revelation as to His purposes for the world—*He* is the only one fit to do it; and when He opens it, all heaven rises to say, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof."

What happens when He opens the book? Chap. vi. tells us that as seal after seal is opened there comes upon this world tribulation such as the world never knew, such as the people dwelling on the earth never experienced, each seal as it is opened giving yet more fearful trouble to arise upon the earth; and as the seals and the vials and the trumpets are brought to the front, you get God's visitations on the earth in various ways. On *whom* do they fall? Now, I submit this—I do not dogmatise, but I submit it—that in chapters iv. and v. we get a company already safe, already praising, entering into what God

is about to do, looking on as the Lamb opens the seals; and I submit that these are the redeemed ones, who say, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation"; that this company is the company which we have looked at before, caught up to be with Christ—caught up to be with Him, *when* I do not say, *where* I do not say, but caught up to be safe with Him while these judgments are on the earth; I submit that these are the company of the redeemed in heaven, who enter with delight into what the Lord is about to do; and as He opens the seals the effect comes down upon the unbelieving Gentiles and the remnant of unbelieving Jews.

Now, after the taking up of this heavenly company to be with the Lord, when the Lord shall begin to deal again with the Jews as a nation, comes in this week of Dan. ix. 27, when there shall be a great Power that shall confirm the covenant for a week and break it, and begin to persecute them with awful tribulation; and this tribulation is spoken of from Rev. vi. to xvi., including both the tribulation on the Jews as a nation and the tribulation that shall come down on the unregenerate and Christ-rejecting nations of the Gentiles. From 2 Thess. ii. we get this great truth, that there will be those left who do not believe the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be literally in those days deluded to believe a lie; those who now deliberately reject the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ will be given over to a strong delusion, and will listen to Satan rather than the Lord. What an awful time that will be, if the Spirit is removed from directly operating on the hearts of men, when the Church is taken hence, when Satan, urged on in the consciousness that his time is short, puts forth all his power to deceive! Now, both Jews and Gentiles will come in for tribulation such as never was; but chap. vii. gives another company sealed by the Lamb to be intact during this time of tribulation. Now, what is said of this company? "These are they which came out of *the* tribulation, the great one." Out from the tribulation will come a group of both Jews and Gentiles, out from the Gentiles an elect remnant, and from the chosen remnant of the Jewish nation will come those that shall fill the land and replace

the people of the land, and shall dwell in Jerusalem again under the beneficent sway of the once-rejected Messiah. What more takes place then, it is not my province to enter into to-day; I only submit that this company here sealed is literally of the tribes of Israel, and represent the company that pass through the tribulation and endure to the end, and are delivered by the Lord Himself. Now, what are these? They are to be the nation unto whom all nations will flow, according to Zech. viii., and upon their city the law of purity and holiness shall be written. No fear, God will not forsake His people whom He foreknew; He will no more forsake His people—"If those ordinances (the sun and moon) depart from before Me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me for ever."

Now, I want you to notice that subsequent to those scriptures—which I read in Matt. xxiv., and alluded to in Mark and Luke—immediately connected with and subsequent to them is the advent in glory of the Lord Jesus Christ; so that these scriptures cannot have been fulfilled, because if they had, His advent would also have been fulfilled. Indissolubly linked with the tribulation and its end is the advent in glory, with all the saints, of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Son of Man shall be revealed,

we shall appear with Him, He will appear with all His saints; and though there are varied interpretations as to His coming with the saints, I cannot but read it in clear understanding that when the Son of Man returns in glory with His own, it is, as Rev. xix. tells us, *after* the marriage supper of the Lamb, *after* He has gotten His own, and that "the armies which were in heaven and followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean," are evidently the saints spoken of before, who are clothed in white linen (verse 8). "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth," and when He comes out in the majesty of wrath to deliver His chosen earthly people from their oppressors, His bodyguard shall be the Church of the living God. And what shall *we* do? Rev. xix. unfolds to us what we shall do. We shall share: the arranging with our Lord of all the Lord's purposes; we shall go forth with Him to destroy the confederate armies that surround

the camp of the saints and the holy city. For we read of the enemy that "He will take the third part" (Zech. xiv.), and think entirely to crush the Jewish people and Jerusalem. Then the Lord Himself shall destroy them with the brightness of His coming; the wrath of the Lamb shall come down upon the kings of the earth and their armies; then the false prophet and the beast shall be taken, and cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone; and then comes Rev. xx., the opening up of millennial glory, and Satan bound; then shall be the great Sabbath, sin put away, the Lord reigning, all things put in order, and the earth purged.

I have only given a little sketch of what is on my mind, after trying to learn the Scriptures for some years. To me the hope of the Lord's return is prominent. I do not say there will not be tribulation and trouble, but I do put these things before you and ask the question as to whether "the great tribulation" does not refer to the Jews as a nation and *not* to the Church of God? I only submit that whether we pass through tribulation or not, let us never forget the *hope* that we are to look for, viz., our Lord's return, keeping this as the attitude of our souls and of primary importance. A. O. M.

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### ROOTS OF BITTERNESS.

THERE are two things spoken of in the Scriptures as *springing*: one is the water that Christ gives (John iv. 14), the other is a root of bitterness (Heb. xii. 15). The one comes through knowing the *gift of God*, the other through failing of the *grace of God*. Before our conversion we were in the "gall of bitterness" (Acts viii. 23), from which "gall" we were effectually delivered by Christ having "gall given Him for His meat" (Ps. lxxix. 21), as we often sing, "What curse was mine He bore, the wormwood and the *gall*." But, though delivered from the *gall of bitterness*, there may be a root of bitterness in the heart. But of one thing we may be sure, that while the living springing water, and the bitter springing root, may be in the *same* believer, *yet the living water never nourishes the bitter root*. The believer who has in him the bitter springing root cannot say to Jehovah, "All my *springs* are in Thee" (Ps. lxxxvii. 7),

for God will never give His substance to nourish bitterness. Brethren, let us lay aside *all* bitterness (Eph. iv. 31), or God will lay us aside. "Doth a fountain send forth at the same hole sweet water and bitter?" (James iii. 11, margin). It cannot; and how is it that we can *bless God* in the morning meeting, and then CURSE OUR BRETHREN as soon as the meeting is over? May we be the springing wells of living water, diffusing refreshment all around, rather than springing roots of bitterness, spreading trouble and defilement among God's precious people.

T. B.

## THE VALLEY OF DEATH'S SHADOW.

I.

THE way is dark!

I cannot see one step beyond the present;  
Valley of death's shadow—so weird! so desolate!  
Naught to lead on or indicate the way,  
But the ray of brightening hope,  
That gleams upon Faith's steadfast eye,  
Reaching the unseen afar, beyond the enshrouding gloom.  
Pole star of the soul! Unerring guide!  
Beacon of safety and of rest!  
Goal of beatitude and home!

As step by step I track the devious path,  
With eye intent upon the destined heritage,  
Wearied and lone, my pilgrim way I tread,  
Forgetful of the past, prescient of the future;—  
My stronghold's Faith, my strength's Omnipotence,  
My guide God's Word, my light its prophecy,  
My cheer its promises, so precious, so exceeding great!  
In peace rest here my soul upon "the Yea and the Amen"  
Of Him who cannot lie;  
From everlasting to everlasting, eternally the same,  
"The Alpha and the Omega"—"I am that I am,"  
Who was, who is, and who is yet to come,  
The Almighty God, Jehovah, Elohim!  
Friend of the friendless! Father of the fatherless!  
Thou God of love!

To Thee my soul would cling, in Thee would it abide.  
Nestled 'neath the shadow of Thy wing,  
Hidden in the hollow of Thine hand, secure I am.  
Were earth my heritage 'twould bring me woe.  
All weak and faint, all helpless and alone,  
Life's springs all dry, or yielding bitterness,  
Cisterns all broken, water not will hold;  
Mortality my destiny, the grave my goal.  
What here that does not mock, that does not disappoint!  
Sin, in all its protean shapes and forms,  
Befouled hath the whilom paradise of God!  
Made bitterness and strife life's heritage for man;  
Vanity and vexation close up his troubled day,  
In dread uncertainty; and then—  
Death's sting, how sharp! Grave's victory, how sure!  
But what beyond? What, but abyssal gloom?  
Illimitable, impenetrable, so dark, so drear!  
From which the soul, if veiled in unbelief, in sense, in sin,  
Instinctive shrinks.

W. R. V.

## Correspondence.

### THE LAW OUR SCHOOLMASTER.

To the Editor of *The Witness*.

Dear Brother,—In reference to the Question 447, on Gal. iii. 24, the replies given will not do; because, even as a matter of grammar, *eis Christon* could not be the same as *heos Christon*, or like it at all. The one means *up to Christ*, or in reference to Christ, as the design of law; the other means *until* Christ, as an adverb of *time*, and would simply mean that the law was given at one time, and Christ and the Gospel came at another time, without any necessary relation one to the other. Such would be the force of *until* in this connection. The object of God in law was to make sin "*exceeding sinful*," that thus the sinner, seeing his condition, might seek deliverance and cry for it (Rom. vii.). And again, the law was added for *the sake of* transgressions, *i.e.*, to make sin *transgression—parabason charun* (Gal. iii. 19). And was not this the design of God in giving law? Yet it was turned by man (the Pharisee) into another aspect entirely because of the deceitfulness of the heart, and consequently perverted from the divine object and design. And so, as I understand it, the old version and the revised version were right in rendering according to our idiom—"to bring us unto Christ." It became a pedagogue for that purpose, and I doubt not that our good brethren, when they examine it apart from theory, will come to the same conclusion. Does not the term law (*nomos*) apply to the whole revelation of God prior to our Lord? But here it applies only to Sinai and Moses in Gal. iii. Yours very sincerely,

T. R.

THE word translated "schoolmaster" appears to point to the disciplinary rather than the educative side of child training. So the law may truly be described as God's disciplinary method by which the soul is prepared to appreciate the benefits of the redemption that is in Christ. In Romans and Galatians occur many comprehensive and striking statements as to the purpose and the effect of the law. Thus, Rom. iii. 20—"By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." No sinful man ever was or could be justified as a law-keeper, for the law supplies merely the knowledge and not the cure of sin. This is its proper duty as a "schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ." Again, Heb. vii. 19—"The law maketh nothing perfect." Neither nationally nor as individual souls could we be always under a schoolmaster—that were perpetual childhood. Again, the passage in question—"Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made" (Gal. iii. 19). Speaking also in general

terms, the apostle says (Rom. v. 20), "The law entered, that the offence might abound." The argument of Gal. iii. is that the promise of justification by faith presented the original and only ground of reconciliation, and the law was not itself a ground of the gift of eternal life, but a concomitant of the great plan of redemption—a means whereby "every mouth might be stopped" and all concluded under sin (Gal. iii. 22), that thereby "the promise might be given to them that believe." The mission of John the Baptist, as coming in between the dispensation of the law and the preaching of Christ crucified, is most instructive in reference to the work of the law. His office was to approve the effect of the tutelage of the law in those who received the law, and his ministry divided between those to whom the law brought home the knowledge of sin from those who remained blind to its searching power. They who justified God were baptised with the baptism of repentance *unto* Christ (not *into* Him), confessing their sins in token of true repentance; but the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, refusing His baptism. If we inquire as to who they were to whom the schoolmastership of the law is made effectual, they were the godly repentant ones; who were not only of Israel, but also "the Israel of God"; them who, by faith and patience, inherit the promises, of whom we are the followers; them who, in the midst of hypocritical national apostasy, "walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless," "looking for redemption in Jerusalem." To them the law was a schoolmaster unto Christ, preparing them by its precepts and observances, all testifying of imperfection, for the coming of that which is perfect. W. P.

#### "I COME QUICKLY."

IN reference to Question 450, in September number, "When we remember 1800 years have elapsed since the words 'I come quickly' were uttered, how are we to understand them?" We must just understand them as they stand, "for the Lord is *not slack* concerning His promise as *some men count slackness*" (2 Peter iii. 9). This dispensation is compared to a *year* (Luke iv. 19), to a *day* (Heb. iii. 7, 2 Cor. vi. 2), to an *hour* (John v. 25), and my little time of testimony and affliction in it to a *moment* (2 Cor. iv. 17). I often say that from my conversion to my translation and transformation it is only "*two moments*." "Our light affliction which is but for a *moment*" (2 Cor. iv. 17). "We shall all be changed, in a *moment*" (1 Cor. xv. 52). The Scriptures say "that *one day* is with the Lord as a *thousand years*," and *vice versa*; so, if we follow this divine method of calculation, the Lord Jesus has not been absent *two days yet* (2 Pet. iii. 8, Ps. xc. 4). *I must beware of binding the Lord to conform to my idea of speed.* When

He says, "I come quickly," I bow my head in adoring worship, and say, "The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills" (Song of Solomon ii. 8). T. B.

SEVERAL correspondents take exception to two expressions, in answer by J. C., in Question 439.

"Entered into heaven *with* His own blood"—should be "*by* His own blood"—*i.e.*, in virtue of the blood shed upon Calvary. The fact that the High Priest carried the blood, on the day of atonement, into the Holiest, simply typifies that it was by virtue of atonement made at the altar that he entered.

"Took upon Himself our nature" is also objected to. Of course the writer did not suppose anyone could understand him to mean our fallen, corrupt nature, but as expressed in Heb. ii—"The children being partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same"—certainly not "the same" in the sense of being corrupt, but "the same" apart from every taint of sin or corruption.

## Questions and Answers.

### Replies are invited to the following:—

INSPIRATION OF ECCLESIASTES.—Is the teaching of Ecclesiastes divine? and if so, does it apply now, or could the book be regarded as an inspired record of human wisdom?

REST.—Kindly explain the several meanings of the word translated "rest," and what rests they signify in Hebrews iv.

SEVEN TIMES.—What is the meaning of the expression "seven times," four times repeated in Leviticus xxvi. ? Is it possible by this chapter to decide in what year the times of the Gentiles will end?

### HIS MIGHTY WORKING.

QUESTION 452.—Kindly give the force and meaning of the expression "His working which worketh in me mightily" (Col. i. 29). Was this mighty working felt, and should we experience the same as believers now?

Ans. A.—"Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (*perfect here means full grown*): "with a view to which I also labour, striving according to His working which worketh in me mightily."

The apostle felt for the saints, whether known or unknown (see chap. ii. 1), and his conflict for them was exceedingly keen because of their dangers and difficulties.

He did not, however, overlook the fact that the combat he was engaged in was in accordance with the powerful operation of Christ, a power entirely beyond himself. He recognised the necessity of Christ working in it all. The same

inward-working is spoken of in the Epistle to the Galatians, when the apostle writes, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth *again* until Christ be formed in you."

He was going through deep, painful throes about them on account of their having lapsed from Christ. Once they had been happy, but now they were clouded.

Also in Colossians iv. 12 we read of Epaphras labouring fervently or wrestling for the saints in prayers, that they might stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

Christ alone could thus enervise His servants to combat for the blessing and growth of His loved ones.

The same power is still available for all who seek the welfare of "the chosen flock." J. D.

**Ans. B.**—The force and meaning of the expression is that Paul took no personal credit for what he laboured so earnestly for. In 1 Cor. xv. 10 he declares that he is what he is, and that he does what he does by the grace of God, which was with him. In consequence of this grace of God he gloried in the cross, and was not ashamed of the gospel; but on the contrary knew himself to be a debtor to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise, to proclaim the gospel, which he did with indomitable courage and with unflinching zeal, from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum.

"Was this mighty working felt?" It was felt intensely. It was the exercise of this mighty working of God which produced the patient, plodding perseverance, and daring, self-sacrificing exploit recorded in Acts xx. 19-24. It was the exercise of this mighty working of God which delivered him from the people and from the Gentiles, and sent him a most effective instrument to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God (see Acts xxvi. 17, 18). It was this mighty working consciously experienced which made him the channel whereby a stream of life, light, and joy flowed, and Satanic ire was aroused wherever he went.

"Should we experience the same as believers now?" It is not said of every believer that "he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel," which was said of Paul (Acts ix. 15). Neither is the working of special miracles within the province of believers now, although, at that inaugural period, miracle was entrusted to Paul and other apostles as the credentials of the heaven-sent message and of the messengers. But of believers we read, "It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil ii. 13). Epaphras laboured earnestly in

prayer for Colossian believers "that they might stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." And Paul prays for the Ephesians "that they may know what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power" (Eph. i. 18, 19). All of us might experience more of this mighty working of God in us now were we more obedient children, more holy Christians, and more devoted servants. J. S.

#### "PERMISSION" *versus* INSPIRATION.

**QUESTION 453.**—1 Corinthians vii. 6, 10, 12, 25, 40 verses. Are we to conclude that part of this chapter was written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and part was not, but are simply the words of Paul as a man? If so, why is it recorded in the Word of God?

**Ans. A.**—1 Cor. vii. verses 6, 12, 25, 40, are the apostle's *advice*, not his *commandment*. He would advise or give them the option of taking such and such a course, seeing he would not force their faith and that there was no distinct command of the Lord on the subject. But in verse 10 he quotes a distinct *command* of the Lord (Matt. xix. 6-9) as authoritative and binding. By saying (verse 40), "I think also that I have the Spirit of God," he refers to the allegations made as to his not being a real apostle, and claims that as they laid claim to having the Spirit he also surely might. A. O. M.

**Editor's Note.**—When we hold that the apostolic writings, together with every other part of the Scriptures of Truth, are given by inspiration of God, it does not necessarily follow that God limited Himself to one particular method of communicating His mind to or through the writers. See Heb. i. 1.

In some cases the Spirit of God used the writers of the Scriptures as instruments merely; they spake "moved by the Holy Spirit," and afterwards they searched into the meaning of the things they had spoken or written (1 Pet. i. 11, 2 Pet. i. 21).

In certain cases the Holy Spirit brought to the remembrance of the writers the words which had come from the lips of the Lord Jesus. John xiv. 26, Acts xx. 35.

In other cases the Lord Himself gave the commands directly and personally, as 1 Cor. xi. 23, 1 Cor. iv. 15, Gal. i. 12.

Again, as in these scriptures referred to in 1 Cor. vii., the apostle gives counsel as one who, by the teaching of the Spirit, has gathered what the mind of the Lord is, conveying the same, in these particular matters and circumstances, not as explicit commands, but as sound advice. The teachings given (and preserved for us) in any or all of these different methods, are alike divinely inspired and worthy of our deepest reverence.



## THE COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

NOTES OF ADDRESS AT GLASGOW HALF-YEARLY MEETINGS FOR CHRISTIANS, BY J. R. CALDWELL.

1 John iii. 1-3.

THIS passage shows us that the truth of the Lord's coming, when held in the soul in power, is a purifying hope. It separates from the world and conforms the soul to the likeness of Christ. As the stars go out of sight when the sun rises, even so when this hope arises in the soul with its brightness it eclipses all earthly hope and ambitions.

This subject has fallen into the background for various reasons. One of them may be because of the different views held by many of the children of God on the details of prophecy. Perhaps in order to avoid conflicting views this blessed hope has been somewhat put on the shelf. Because we have not had grace to bear with one another, and to listen and weigh what others have to say, we prefer to let the subject drop. And so Satan gets the advantage. The practical power of the truth does not so much depend upon this view or that view, as upon Christ Himself being in the heart.

It is some years since I spent three days with a few brethren considering the subject of the Lord's coming. They were selected and invited purposely because of their divergent views. The subject was fully discussed, and everything which could be said from scripture was brought forward freely. During these three days there was not a single disagreeable unkind word spoken. There was love and harmony, although opposite views upon many points were discussed. At the close of our conference one brother (Mr. Henry Groves) said, "How little diversity of views held on prophecy has to do with the power of it in the heart." Let us, by all means, seek to arrive at the truth and at oneness of mind in the Lord. But don't let us judge those who differ from us as having a bad conscience; or, because of their difference, being on a lower spiritual level than we. Let us believe that whilst "we know in part," there may be differences of opinion held by those equally godly and equally in their hearts near to and loyal to the Lord Jesus.

I would remark in connection with the coming of the Lord that it is a hope. Popular theology for centuries has set death before the believer; and "the grave, not the sky, has been the goal." Within the last sixty or seventy years God has opened up to His people the truth of the "blessed hope": the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ to quicken the sleeping saints, and to change the living ones, and take them both up together to meet Him in the air, and so to be for ever with the Lord. That blessed hope has been brought by the Spirit out into light and prominence, and made very precious to many hearts. It is embraced by many of God's people in the different denominations, and preached in many pulpits, and for this we thank God. God never meant that death should be before us in this dispensation as a hope. Death, at the best, is an enemy. It is like a serpent that has lost its sting, but it is a hateful creature still. Death is God's judgment upon sin in one aspect, and cannot be loved by us. As I have lowered the coffin of some loved one into the grave, and heard the clods fall down upon it, I have thought, "That is the last that sin and Satan can do. The next is resurrection, the triumph of Christ."

Meantime, "to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord"—surely that is "*multum in parvo*" ("much in little"). It is all that heart can wish in a very few words.

Paul said, "To depart and be with Christ is far better." He knew and rejoiced in Christ here. He had sweet communion with Him whilst in the body; notwithstanding all that, he says, "It is far better to depart and be with Christ." Is it far better to be annihilated and to be nothing at all? "We walk by faith, not by sight," as long as we are in the body. Whenever we are absent from the body it is sight, and no longer faith. To be in the presence of the Lord is far better than toiling and suffering down here, albeit there is consolation, comfort, and communion with the Lord here. It seems to me as if the Lord had gathered together in one focus every thought of gladness and glory that it was possible for Him to bring together—He has gathered them all up in that one blessed hope, the coming again of our Lord Jesus. If Satan can in any way get us to look forward to the future

with apprehension, then he has succeeded in directing our eye earthward. Only think of John, who had leant on the breast of his Lord, being in doubt or dread of His coming again. Why, it is impossible! The very thought of that right hand being laid upon him set him at perfect rest, and raised him up in His presence. The Lord means us to look off to His coming again; that coming which is laden with the grace He purchased for us. We are exhorted to "look for the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ." He went up to heaven in the act of blessing, He lives to carry on the blessing, and He is coming again to take us from grace to glory, and to invest with that glory those whom He loved and died for, kept, guarded, washed, and sanctified, presenting them at last to Himself, all glorious, without a spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

It is for that moment He is waiting in patience; and we are companions in the kingdom and patience of our Lord Jesus. "The Lord direct our hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ."

"We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face." Just now, as it were, we look at Him through a distorted lens. We look at Him with thoughts that are mingled with our own unbelief. But when we see Him at His return "we shall see Him as He is." If there is one thing more than another that makes us groan in our spirits in our quiet moments it is that we are so unlike the Master. God has predestinated us to be conformed to His glorious image. When He comes again we shall be perfectly like Him, and every eye shall see in us the family likeness of the first-born amongst the many brethren. Not that varieties of character and dispositions will be obliterated. They will remain as perfections of God's handiwork. How blessed the thought of seeing the one that loved us unto death, to see that brow that was wreathed with thorns, to look on those very hands in which there are still the marks of the nails. There will not be a single mark or trace of imperfection in our bodies when we are perfected in resurrection, for the body of every saint must be changed. But there is no change in the

precious incorruptible body of the Son of God. He burst the bonds of death and went up to the throne of God without the taint of death upon Him—He needed not to be "changed," therefore His incorruptible body bears in the glory the marks of death.

In John xvii. 24 the Lord Jesus in that wonderful intercessory prayer makes request for those whom the Father has given Him. It is His last request, and it includes us here. He asks with authority, "Father, I will." He asks that they may be with Him where He is, never more to part. He asks that those who beheld His sufferings, revilings, and sorrow while He was with them down here; and who were about to see His anguish in the garden, His rejection, reproach, and condemnation before the bar of man and on the Cross, might behold His glory.

We, too, who by the Holy Spirit have beheld Him as the humbled, sorrowing, and suffering one, will one day behold Him in His glory. There must be a change wrought upon us before we can behold that glorified one. When John beheld the Son of Man in His glory on Patmos he fell at His feet as dead. That change will take place in a moment. I asked an electrician how long it took a telegraph message to come from Australia to here. He said it took three-sixteenth's of a second. "Such are the powers of nature. But mightier powers are His who is "the Head of all principalities and powers."

He has waited long; He is waiting the time appointed of the Father. Then He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry. There will be no tarrying, He will "come quickly." If we think there is delay it is because we don't understand His heart who said, "Behold, I come quickly." When He comes it will be to accomplish all that His heart is longing to do for every saint, and He will do it in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

In the Gospels there are three instances recorded in which the Lord exercised His mighty resurrection power. One was in raising the daughter of Jairus. Having raised and restored her to the hearts of her loved parents, He commanded them to give her meat, and left her with them. The second instance was raising the widow's son, who was being carried to his grave. He touched the bier and com-

manded the young man to arise, and delivered him to his mother. The next was the raising of Lazarus after having been four days dead. After he had been raised from the dead a feast was prepared, at which he sat with his sisters, the Lord being there also as a guest.

In each of these cases the Lord restored the broken links by His resurrection power. That is a blessed thought to all who have loved ones who have died in the Lord. When this corrupt flesh is dropped, and when we are changed into His image and filled with the Spirit, and we see Him as He is, then every link that had been formed on earth by grace divine, but which had been severed by death, shall be restored for evermore. May that blessed hope take possession of each of us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

#### FOUR NEW TESTAMENT CHARACTERS.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY THE LATE MR. RICHARD  
LEDGER SMITH OF DUBLIN.

Passages read—Phil. ii. 12-30; Col. iv. 12.

**M**Y desire is to bring before you some lessons from the characters of these four men mentioned in these Scriptures, viz., Paul, Timothy, Epaphroditus, and Epaphras. It is a good thing for us to consider the splendid characters which God has given us in His Word to be our examples in so far as they follow the example of Christ. It is the way of the world to exhibit pictures, to erect monuments, and to write histories of those who have gone before; to record and recount their deeds of valour, the battles these mighty heroes have fought and won by sea or on land, for the purpose of stimulating the zeal and ardour of the present generation to follow their steps.

It is with a similar purpose that in Heb. xi. God has given so great a list of His heroes of faith. Each and all witness to the power and faithfulness of God. In considering them our own faith is encouraged and increased.

We begin with Paul. O the love he had for his Philippian people! And not for them only, but for all the children of God. "Yea, and if I be offered" (or poured out as the drink offering) "upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all." Paul

was ready to die, to lay down his life at any time for the sake of God's people. It was in this spirit that he accomplished such mighty things for God. He knew that in serving and helping and suffering with and for the children of God he was serving God Himself. He was the great preacher through whom this and other churches had been founded, but he never ceased to long after them, or to help them, and at all times could truly say that his love for them was such that he was ready to die for them. So deeply had he drunk of the Spirit of his Master.

We next come to Timothy, Paul's son in the faith. What about him? Timothy means "the honour of God." He was set in those dark days to maintain and uphold the honour of God; to stand firm for the truth of God. Now mark the character of the man who stands for God and maintains His honour. As a son with the father, so had he served with Paul in the Gospel. He was "like-minded" to Paul. He was not one of the many who sought their own, but of the few who sought after that which was Jesus Christ's. He loved and served the saints, and was affectionately desirous of them because they were Christ's. As a tender nurse he cared for the people of God, and was faithful to the truth of God. We try to be faithful to them with a black-thorn stick! It won't do—it makes them afraid of us and afraid of the truth. And Timothy served them "naturally" as though he was born to it, to care for the saints as a nurse cares for and fondles her little child. Timothy had a natural affection for Paul, as a son for a father, and so when he in turn becomes as a father he naturally cares for the state of the younger ones. What a contrast! "All seek their own." Is this true of the believers here? When all around us is error and wickedness—false doctrine rampant everywhere—is there any man or woman here content to live for nothing else than that which is Jesus Christ's? I believe we are set for the honour of God in these dark days. God has given us a knowledge of truths of which many Christians around us are in ignorance, and for these things we are responsible. If He has set us in an especial way for His honour in this dark day let us be men and women with soft hearts

and strong backs—not to bow to any image of man's setting up, but going on treading the path of faith with hearts of love.

The next man we come to is Epaphroditus. His work rather concerned the temporal needs of the saints; and, do you know, there is a great deal in the Scriptures about the temporal needs of the children of God. So long as you and I are living here in bodies that need to be fed and clothed so long is there opportunity for mutual help and fellowship. Paul was working away at a distance, but Paul had a body to be fed and clothed. We sometimes forget that those who are labouring in the Gospel have bodies at all! A man's religion is not worth a straw if it does not make him a giver!

This is illustrated in Barnabas. He was a Jew and a Levite, one always used to *getting*, but as soon as he was converted he became a *giving* man. Each of us should be a giver towards the necessities of the saints and servants of God. The saints at Philippi remembered Paul, and sent after him Epaphroditus. But it is the man himself I want you to look at—ready to give his life for the purpose of taking this communication of the Philippian Church to the Apostle Paul.

He did not go as a preacher of the Gospel, or in any great spiritual work, but only as the bearer of temporal things for Paul's support. How many of us are ready to give our lives, or even any considerable proportion of our temporal means in the service of the Lord?

It is for each of us to do that which lies to our hand. James says, "pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." If a man is not doing these things which are at hand then he need not talk of high truth and great service.

The next character is Epaphras: "Always labouring fervently for you in prayer," &c. The other day a brother was making great complaints against an assembly I know, and certain persons especially came under the lash of his upbraidings. The brother to whom he was speaking quietly said to him, "What length of time have you spent on your knees praying for those people?" Ah, dear children of God, here is a service much neglected. We

teach, and indeed it is a good thing to teach and exhort, and we write, and we sometimes scold; but look at the ministry of Epaphras—his fervent prayers "that they might stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." Is this not also our desire for ourselves and all the saints we know? Now what time do we spend praying for this? Let us take these things to heart. If you and I pray to God that these meetings be a success, He can't help answering so many prayers.

Let us arise from our indifference, and, each one laying hold on God, see to it that those who preach are like Paul, ready "to be poured forth"; others, like Timothy, set for the honour of God yet tender as a nurse; others, like Epaphroditus, ready to yield their lives in the temporal service of the saints; and others, like Epaphras, praying that they may obey as they learn. Keep praying, all, and pray heartily.

A few days ago a brother called my attention to the signal at the battle of Trafalgar, "England expects that every man will do his duty." So is it with us; CHRIST expects every man and woman to do their duty. The next signal was "Close action!" It spread through the whole fleet, and when a ship of the enemy was running down one of the British ships, another would run in between and so save the one that was attacked. Let us be ready to run in between the suffering, the weak, the injured, the tempted, and the foe—ready to give our lives one for the other. Oh, that God would give us this heart, "every man to do his duty!" There would then not be much room for bickerings and disputings. It is "close action" with the devil in these days. But working at it by the power of God—the Holy Spirit teaching us out of the Word to refuse that which is evil and to do that which is good, we shall be more than conquerors.

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#### BAPTISMAL REGENERATION.

OUR attention has been drawn to a paragraph in article by Mr. J. J. Sims, in June number of *Witness*, page 87. It commences—"IV. The baptismal regeneration theory, which I do not need to take up, as it is rejected by all those for whom I write." The sentence should end here, and a new paragraph should begin alluding to I., II., III., previously stated, but not again referring in any way to IV., which touches foundation truth and is much more serious.

## REFLECTIONS ON THE EPISTLES TO THE ROMANS.

### CHAPTER III.

FROM the reasoning of the two previous chapters, in which both Jew and Gentile are represented as occupying common ground as to their natural standing before God, a Jewish mind would draw an inference which the apostle anticipates and corrects in his suggestion of, and reply to, the query, "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?"

The Jew had every "advantage" over the Gentile, and chiefly in the fact of God's having made him the depository of His oracles or inspired utterances; and while unbelief debarred the nation, as a whole, from entrance into the enjoyment of covenant blessing, individuals who had faith in God were, proportionately to their faith, the recipients of the "profit" of the covenant of which their circumcision was the seal; and thus the faith of God was not without effect, or, in other words, God never broke faith with Israel, although they did with Him. And this faithfulness of God will be experienced by restored Israel hereafter.

The unique advantage and profit accruing to the circumcised people in covenant relationship to God is fully admitted and established here, but to their condemnation; and this is very solemn. The point in the argument is that this possession of privilege did not render the Jew a whit better than the Gentile, for it could not lift him above the level of a fallen nature; but, on the contrary, served only to disclose the morbid enmity of the human heart toward God, inasmuch as His goodness was as readily abused as it was received, and His laws were as quickly violated as they were hastily avowed. The same voices that were raised in the unanimous cry of "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do," when in view of His glory, could soon afterwards unite in bursts of acclamation around the golden calves, saying—"These be thy gods, O Israel!" &c., as soon as the manifestation of the glory was withdrawn (Ex. xix. 8, and xxxii. 8).

The subsequent history of Israel, with all its records of Jehovah's faithfulness to them, and their gross treatment of Him, bears melancholy

witness to the same truth concerning the desperate wickedness and deceitfulness of the heart of man.

But the righteousness of God remains immutable: He is ever true to all that He committed Himself to in revelation—His faith (or faithfulness) cannot be made void, either in His promises of blessing, or in His predictions of judgment. The quotation here from David's confession in Ps. li. is beautifully to the point, for it declares God "clear" in the execution of judgment as well as "just" in His pronouncing of it. And so human sin becomes the effectual, though dark, background to throw into bold relief the righteousness of God (verses 1-4).

Hereupon another question arises, but merely from a human point of view—"But if our unrighteousness commendeth the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who visiteth with wrath?" To this we reply that if He were so He could not *judge* the world; but we have had it proved from a previous chapter that His judgment of the world is a sequence of His maintaining all that He committed Himself to in revelation; therefore, the fact of the creature's sin having afforded occasion for a perfect demonstration of His righteousness, gives neither excuse for the practice of evil nor exemption from the penalty of it, for Divine sovereignty never eliminates human responsibility. Therefore God's judgment is just, and more especially so in the case of those who advance the sovereignty of God as a license for evil practice, and this is how the apostle, with holy indignation, but not too severely, disposes of the character with which he and his fellow-labourers had been slanderously branded (verses 5-8).

The charge of guilt having been laid upon Jew and Gentile alike, and God's righteousness in His judicial attitude toward their common sin established in that charge, the apostle now proceeds to "the law and the testimony in confirmation of it." The following quotations from the Psalms and from Isaiah embody a brief but perfect summary of what is "written" (see verses 9-18), and are termed *law*; and we observe that the application of this word "law" to the entire Old Testament revelation is constant throughout our epistle, while there

are instances also of the use of the term in reference to the Decalogue and ceremonial code of observances. Here it is, *primâ facie*, the authoritative testimony of the entire Old Testament as to human sin which is advanced, addressed primarily to Jews of course, but also to all who acknowledge the voice of Old Testament Scripture. Now, with the acknowledgment of this voice, the controversy must end as to human guilt; every mouth is stopped; the whole world is brought in guilty under the judgment of God. Reformation is of no avail; "deeds of law," or, in other words, efforts to obey the precepts and commandments of the Scriptures, which are the standard of the Divine requirements, cannot justify a sinner, because by these very Scriptures conviction is brought home to the conscience; "by the law is the knowledge of sin." As is the straight-edge to the rugged piece of timber, so is the perfect law of Divine requirements to the human heart—the application of which can only reveal, but cannot remove the crookedness (verses 19, 20).

This is how Holy Scripture disposes of human nature with all its boasted dignity, wisdom, and progress. While we are bound to own all dignities governmentally appointed by God, and to render honour to whom honour is due; while we are not to despise any useful knowledge; while we may gratefully receive the benefits of all legitimate progress; yet we must see in all down here the results of the forbidden fruit, the partaking of which on the part of our first parents has degraded the human race, and made it a subject for the judgment of God. Human honour cannot rise above the dust where the track of the serpent lies.

The great ones of the earth wish to be rid of the Bible just because it tells them the truth, and points to the corruption which works throughout all in which they boast. Ruin is stamped upon all. The verdict of the supreme court of righteousness cannot be altered. Nineteenth-century criticism refuses to believe, but it cannot change facts. *Sin is present*. The mirage of a golden age may deceive the day-dreamers, but *judgment is future*. On these things the Bible insists, therefore it is to them as the *troubler of Israel*.

But let men cavil as they will, the Bible is a

faithful mirror to the deceitful heart. The perfection of a mirror consists in the precision with which it can reflect the images of surrounding objects. That which characterises the Bible as infinitely superior to the greatest productions of mere human intellect, is its faithful delineation of the righteousness of God and of the true condition of men: its words penetrating with enlightening efficacy the secret places of the heart, leaving the impression of God there. Men reason and speculate; but Scripture reveals and settles, carrying the whole moral being into the presence of God; and thus it convinces men of sin before Him.

The human-merit question having been closed by this irrevocable decision, which includes all men under sin, grace divine, full, and free, now comes in. Read verse 21 (R.V.)—"But now, apart from *the law*" (i.e., from the Sinaitic covenant, with its conditions), "a righteousness of God hath been manifested, being witnessed by *the law and the prophets*" (i.e., by the entire Old Testament revelation, with its promises and prophecies concerning Christ). Here we are now about to see a display of God's righteousness, apart from Mount Sinai's flame; how He can abide by His whole revelation of Himself, and yet save the guilty sinner, as the Scriptures had foretold in their predictions concerning the Saviour's death and its results. Had God essayed to clear the guilty while the righteous claims of the Sinaitic law remained unsatisfied, He should have compromised His Name and His revelation; but this He could not do, great as was His desire to save and bless our ruined race. But He was determined to save. Then how was the difficulty to be obviated?

Blessed be His Name, there was no difficulty which His sovereign love failed to overcome. His own revelation comes forward to solve the problem by redemption. The Scriptures, "the law and the prophets," testified concerning a certain way in which God would declare Himself righteous in the justification of men apart from human efforts to satisfy the demands of the law, for they set forth in types, promises, and prophecies, that sacred blood by virtue of which He could, without one compromise, extend His overflowing grace to guilty sinners at large. How was this to be effected? By

the Gospel; for "the Scriptures, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the Gospel beforehand unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all the nations be blessed" (Gal. iii. 8).

Therefore the Gospel of the grace of God now takes us up where the law had left us. Our condition as sinners was analogous to that of the man who fell among thieves on his journey from Jerusalem to Jericho: having left the place of blessing for the city of the curse; stripped of all covering for our moral nakedness; bruised under the crushing hand of the enemy, and lying in our death-state; all through Adam's disobedience. Neither the priest nor the Levite, representatives, respectively, of the preceptive and ceremonial law, could render the slightest aid, for they dare not contract the defilement of a touch, for the standard of legal requirement could not be lowered; and so their coming that way only declared the hopelessness of the case so far as deliverance by law was concerned.

But a despised Samaritan does for the poor victim what neither preceptive nor ceremonial observances could do. Christ came where we were, "into the world to save sinners," and applied the "oil and wine" of His own "grace and truth"; lifting us out of the "dust of death" into which He was brought for our sakes; raising the beggars from the dunghill and seating them with princes; and providing for their welfare at His own expense (see Luke x. 30-35, with John i. 14-18).

E. L.

### SPIRITUAL INFLUENZA.

A COLD in the soul means a spiritual chill,  
And is the precursor of many an ill;  
Constricted and short is the breathing of prayer,  
For lungs earth-congested inhale not much air.

The appetite soon gets perverted—depraved—  
Refusing the food which in health it had craved;  
Oft dimness of vision and deafness ensue,  
With stiffness of neck and head-giddiness too.

The hands, as if paralysed, hang by the side,  
The faltering footsteps incline to backslide—  
Most feeble the knees, scarcely able to stand,  
Or run in His way at the Master's command.

In sympathy with such discordance within  
The memory fails, 'tis forgotten that sin

Was cleansed from the soul at a terrible cost,  
True sense of its sinfulness thus being lost.

The Hope which at all times the Christian  
should cheer,

But faintly is seen; for the eye, once so clear,  
No longer can scan the horizon afar—

Perceives not the beams of the bright Morn-  
ing Star.

These symptoms are common, but all are aware  
Still more might be named, such as \* greyness  
of hair—

Great swellings and tumours of pride and  
conceit,

Disease of the heart well concealed by deceit.

Bone troubles appear, caused by envy and  
strife—

Twin poisons, corrupting the fountains of life;  
Inflamed is the tongue, almost seeming on fire,  
While through the whole system the fever runs  
higher.

Exhaustion, prostration of strength, and decay,  
Are felt in the soul when disease holdeth sway;  
It may be faith falters so far as to say,  
"I'll fall by the enemy's onslaughts some day."

When conscious of weakness, ah then is the  
hour

To consult that Physician whose wonderful  
power

Heals all who to Him in their sickness apply,  
Without Him the patient must hopelessly die.

He knows how to bind up the broken in heart,  
Fresh life into broken reeds He can impart;  
His eye-salve the clearness of vision renews,  
One touch of His hand the hot fever subdues.

† Jehovah Ropheca, as such He is mine,  
Restoring my soul by His skill all divine;  
I am healed by His stripes, yet He *healeth*  
each day,

While leading me on through the wilderness  
way.

Made perfect at last, in His likeness complete,  
Beholding the marks in His hands and His  
feet;

More fully we'll know what it cost Him to be  
Jehovah Ropheca to you and to me.

A. W. P. S.

\* Hosea vii. 9.

† The Lord thy healer.

## SATAN:

## The God and Prince of this World.

THAT Satan is "the god of this world" we learn from 2 Cor. iv. 4. This title presents him to us as the *religious* head of the world just as the title "prince of this world" (John xii. 31, xiv. 30) presents him as its *political* head.

Satan is the great instigator of all human religions. Man's conceptions of God, apart from the revelation that God has given of Himself in creation, in Christ, and in the Scriptures, are invariably false. Idolatry almost universally represents God as cruel, vindictive, selfish. Hence the worship of idols is generally associated with painful, cruel, destructive, deadly rites. Where these are not found there is utter absurdity and folly, or else vile and licentious orgies. In every case without exception the idea of love, compassion, consolation is excluded.

This exactly corresponds with the first entrance of Satan into Eden. The insinuated lie against God was to the effect that God did not really love them, the evidence being that He had withheld from them the tree that would have made them wise like God Himself.

Man has been thus inoculated in his very nature with this lying thought of God. It is fallen nature's thought, it is inherent in the carnal mind, it is the very essence of its enmity, and Satan ever seeks to develop it, to fan it into flame, and so to blind the minds of those that believe not.

And thus it is that even in the child of God, when, through unbelief, nature asserts itself, he is ever found harbouring hard thoughts against God. The love of God manifested in the gift of His Son is that which alone can meet the satanic lie. It is at the Cross of Jesus, it is there as we see Him wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, that we learn that God is love, and so the enmity is slain.

"He spared not His Son,  
'Tis this that silences each rising fear,  
'Tis this that makes the hard thought disappear,  
He spared not His Son."

Hence Satan's enmity against the Gospel. So long as souls are possessed with the lie against God they are under Satan's power, and he knows it. One look of faith to the Lamb

of God on Calvary dispels the darkness of error and brings in "the light of life." The chains of darkness and of falsehood drop broken to the ground, and Satan's captive is set free.

"The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God" (1 Cor. x. 20). The idol is nothing in itself. It is but a piece of wood or stone or metal; that which is offered to it is not in itself either the better or the worse for it; but nevertheless the idol is the embodiment of a satanic conception of what God is. It is constructed by man, but the design of it is Satan's devising, and the worship of it is at Satan's instigation. It is the embodiment of a lie. All false religion is a lie; it is all satanic in its origin; and as Satan beholds the world ignorant of God, and of God's revelation of Himself, as he sees it bowing down to idols which are his own lying caricatures and misrepresentations of God, he proudly claims to be its god, and drives his votaries according to his will.

All this applies to heathendom. But what about Christendom? Alas, here is Satan's masterpiece! Here he beholds the world not only ignorant of God's revelation, but guilty of rejecting it. The world of professing Christendom hates the light because its deeds are evil. The Gospel which reveals the righteousness of God, and asserts the claims of God at the same time that in the grace of God it brings salvation to all, is rejected. Either it is counted "foolishness" by the wise, or it is hated by the lovers of sin. Like Christ Himself it is "despised and rejected" by all but those whose consciousness of guilt and need drive them in despair of self to Him as their salvation.

And all such Christian unbelievers are doubly under Satan's power. They are, so to speak, "twice dead." Yea, under the profession of Christianity have been perpetrated enormities and cruelties that surpass the heathen. False Christianity is "the mystery of iniquity"; it is the mother of harlots and of abominations of the earth, and in her pre-eminently is found the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. It is in false Christianity that the Word of God is undermined, that its blessed truths are corrupted, till its solemn warnings and judgments are rendered power-



less to arouse, and men and women drugged by Satan's lying opiates are lulled to sleep, held fast in total indifference about eternal things.

It is false Christianity that at last becomes the habitation of demons and the hold of every unclean spirit. To the children of God even now is the Word sent—"Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins."

But Satan has his part in the world's politics as well as in the world's religion, and this will be increasingly evident as the end of the age draws near. He is the prince as well as the god of this world, and has a larger share in instigating, directing, and developing the great political movements of the world than is generally supposed.

The political course of this age, as shown in vision to Nebuchadnezzar, to Daniel, and to the apostle John in Patmos, exhibits not the thoughts of God as to government in the earth, but the very opposite, and it is not hard to see even at the present time how the principles are developing which will issue in the purely satanic dominion of the last days. The modern attempt to render trade unionism international, and the recently-adopted coercive measure called "boycotting" taken together, point unmistakably to the tyrannical edict of the Antichrist, that no man may buy or sell throughout the entire sphere of his dominion who refuses to receive the mark of the beast.

Two elements are at work in the earth, the autocratic and the democratic, represented by the iron and clay in the image of Daniel ii. The will of the people is constantly asserting itself, and limiting more and more, even in such empires as Germany, the autocratic power of the sovereign. The popular cry is *vox populi, vox Dei*—"The voice of the people is the voice of God." Every question in politics must now be referred for final decision to the will of the people. That politician has most power who most panders to the popular demand, and judges of the right or wrong of a political move by the acceptance it meets with at the poll.

All this is supposed to mean liberty to the subject. But no thralldom or coercion ever exercised by a responsible government has equalled the arbitrary bondage and coercion of the trades union and the land league.

In fact, the will of the people will become so burdensome, so intolerable, that the inevitable reaction will in due time set in, and as the only escape there will be by universal consent (the kings of the earth and their subjects being brought by satanic power to have one mind), a sovereign elected, into whose hand shall be committed the whole authority of Europe's confederated kingdoms.

This mighty potentate will be the creature of the dragon. From the dragon he receives his throne and his authority, and by satanic power he and his false prophet shall deceive the world, the blinded, deluded, apostate world that has rejected the Christ of God, and lead it on to its final rebellion and destruction.

The religious principles which, as the god of this world, Satan is devising and propagating, are giving force to the political principles which shall issue in the world's election and admiration of the devil-possessed monarch of the end of the age.

All this is clear to anointed eyes, and the heart that is in fellowship with God will ever seek to walk in separation from the world's religion, and will equally refuse any part in the world's politics.

J. R. C.

## THE NEED OF THE WORLD, AND HOW WE CAN HELP TO MEET IT.

WE are told of the Lord in Matt. xiv. "He saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion."

Of late the great need of the masses of mankind has been opened up in a way never before known. The continents and nations of the world have been brought so close together by means of electricity and steam that we know more of China or Africa than our forefathers knew of neighbouring countries; and the view brought to light is appalling. Africa, with its millions in gross darkness; China and India, with their teeming millions in a semi-civilised paganism; South America, with its millions, either in out-and-out heathenism, or in the bondage of a superstition nearly as bad, the Christian countries of Europe wrapt in a darkness that might be felt. The only two countries in the world from which light can be said to be emanating

in any great degree being Great Britain and her daughter across the sea, America, and in both of these the sister evils of Ritualism and Rationalism spreading rapidly, together with many other "doctrines of demons." Such is the scene of ruin the eye of the seeing one can gaze upon. One can hear the cry for help going up from the depths of dark Africa, from China, from India, nay, from all Asia, from South America, from so-called Christian Europe, from districts in the very countries that send out missionaries to the heathen. Within half-a-day's ride from the greatest centre of Christian activity in the world will be found in Ireland a spiritual darkness that is appalling! As we thus take a world-wide glance at the need there arises the question—"How can we help? What can I do? I, an atom amongst millions of atoms, a mere speck in the universe. What can I do to meet this awful darkness?"

The answer is, face it fully and unreservedly in the presence of God. Look the need fair in the face. As we look we shall learn compassion, and compassion will lead to prayer, to real, earnest, pleading, persistent prayer. And we, finding out our own insufficiency, will be cast on God.

In the second place let us "have faith in God," not merely faith in the power of God, but faith in the love of God and the wisdom of God. He knows the need as we do not begin to know it. He loves the world—so loved—that *He gave His Son*. In His love He is working—and working in all wisdom. And He has all power to carry out the plans which His infinite wisdom has designed according to the compassions of His eternal love. Let us, therefore, who have been saved ourselves by His grace be in fellowship with Him. **GOD IS THE MIGHTY WORKER.** We are but instruments in His hand. Let us yield ourselves to Him unreservedly, and go on in the work He gives us. The need of souls is all around us. The work lies to our hand. Let us be up and doing, and if *God calls* to China, or to India, or Africa, let us be ready; but if God calls to work nearer home, or right at home, let us be just as ready. Let there be a willing mind, and each one working in his own sphere of labour under the eye of the Master. Let the teacher teach,

the evangelist preach, the helpers toil together, the business man work well at his business, for the Lord. Let each one in their own sphere "make all they can, and give all they can" (Romans xii. and 1 Peter iv. 10, 11), is the Divine rule.

God is *over all*. He is the "Despôt," we the slaves. He the Master and Lord, we the servants. Christ is the Head, and we but the members. And to all His own has He given His Blessed Spirit, who is not only the witness of our relationship, but our mighty power and sufficiency for service. Let us, therefore, get right with God, and keep in happy fellowship, feeding on the Word of God, so shall His Spirit work unhindered in us, giving ability for worship "within the veil," and power for witness and service "without the camp." And "yet a little while, He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry," and what joy it will be at His coming to have His approval!

J. J. S.

LANDMARKS OF THE FUTURE.—IX.

## THE MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST IN GLORY.

I WANT to lead up to the point of the subject of this morning's lecture, and then we shall read about the prospect that shall be unfolded, the manifestation in glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It has been a gradual dealing with Scriptures, relating first unto the difference between the Church of God and the Jew and the nations of the world, that God has classed as "the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God." We first saw what the Church was, that it is redeemed to God, and its position in this world is as a witness for its absent Lord, and then the hope of His coming again to take it to Himself. There is no mention of *time*, but the precious thought is set before us in Scripture that it is the appropriate position of the Church to be looking for the Lord. Then we saw that the Jews would then be dealt with again as a nation according to God's covenant promise, and would return to their own land, and be set to be a nation in the earth. But we saw that before this there must necessarily be tribulation upon them, such as the world never witnessed, and they as a nation never knew, for a given time. But the

days of it should be shortened, and the tribulation, though severe, would not eventuate in the destruction of the nation; but in thus purging, purifying them from all rebellious elements, so that the remnant left should be a godly remnant, who should cry for the One they had rejected. And when this remnant seemed about to be annihilated by the nations assembled round Jerusalem, the Lord Jesus would appear and deliver the people out of their grasp, and institute the kingdom of which He is destined to be King.

Our purpose, then, to-day, is going on these lines of thought to show that there will be certainly the return of the Lord Jesus personally in glory. That He is now present by the Spirit, working by the Spirit, and doing wondrous works of grace through His operations, we assume as granted. No one denies the present authority and power of the Lord Jesus through the Spirit; but this is different matter from the fulfilment of the promise of His personal coming in glory, and *that* we deal with to-day, for which let us turn to Luke xvii. 20-37.

Verses 20-21—"The kingdom of God cometh not with observation" (or "outward show"). "Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." Now mark, that was His answer to the Pharisees, and it is in relation, *not* to the coming of the Lord in glory, but to the manifestation of the kingdom of God in their very midst. Had they had the heart for it, they would have perceived by the wondrous things the Lord was doing that the kingdom of God *was* in their very midst, not in them individually; but the manifestation of the operations thereof was in their very midst, had they only the heart to hearken to the very words and take note of what the Lord was doing. Now, to the disciples He gives very different teaching (verses 22-25), and then we get two moral statements as to the condition in which the world will be at His advent.

Verses 26-32—"As it was in the days of Noah," and "as it was in the days of Lot." Now, that this is immediately prior to the revelation of the kingdom of heaven is clear, but whether it hath been fulfilled in part, or whether it is ultimately to be fulfilled, is a question that we must honestly look into.

I would submit that both are true, that it had its *primary* fulfilment in the desolation of the nation at the siege of Jerusalem seventy years after the birth of our Lord, but that the *major* fulfilment hath yet to be. Immediately before the return of the Lord Jesus Christ will this condition obtain, as in the days of Noah and Lot, before their destruction and the hand of the Lord being upon them; as the moral state here described, so will the moral condition that nation is in then be answerable thereto. The Lord speaks of it as a "carcase" (verse 37), and when that nation is in that corrupt condition, then must come that destruction foretold concerning them. But mark this, this is immediately before the revelation of the Son of Man. And I dwell on this, in order that we may see the link between what we spoke of last time and the present subject, that we may see that the great tribulation eventuates in a great deliverance, that the tribulation hath bounds, and immediately precedes the deliverance by the Lord Jesus and His manifestation in glory.

Now we have to look at scriptures which speak, *firstly*, of the Lord Jesus coming *for* His Church, and, *secondly*, those which speak of the Lord Jesus coming *with* His Church. On the first of these we have dwelt before in measure, and shown that the hope of the Church is the advent of the Lord Himself to take her to be at home with Himself. That the Lord will return, with all His saints, and to be glorified in all His saints, is a fact that none can gainsay who have in any measure studied Scripture; but the question as to whether the taking up of the Lord's people to Himself will be at the same moment with, or immediately preceding, His advent in glory, is a question I don't presume to dictate upon. I won't for a moment dare to speak of *times* and *seasons*. All who do so are liable to be stultified. But I give my reasons for believing the great fact, that the Lord Jesus will take His people hence, at any moment, *before* His manifestation in glory, to carry out the things I have just sketched.

So the question, in connection with His advent in glory, whether it is immediately preceded by the taking up of God's people, or at the same moment of their being taken up, the question is—What will the Lord Jesus Christ

do when He appears again? Now let us look at those scriptures which speak distinctly about this matter. Look at the answer of the Lord Jesus to the high priest, in Mark xiv. 60-62—"Ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." From His own lips we get this. Now it is about this glorious advent that we would speak. We have it here from His own lips that hereafter it should be (and in similar scriptures in Matthew and Luke), so we need not dwell further upon it than that we have gotten the point: the Lord Himself says, "Ye shall see the Son of Man . . . coming in the clouds of heaven." Now I want you to see the sequence of this. Turn first to Acts iii. 19-21—"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." ("Restitution," viz., setting in proper order.) The heavens must hold the Lord Jesus till God shall send Him again unto the restitution of all things. Matt. xix. 28—"And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." "Regeneration" is a sister word to "restitution." Here is the promise to His faithful followers—"Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones," &c. There was a "Genesis," this is a re-Genesis, when the Lord Jesus puts in order; and He will share not only the joy, but the service of that day. Matt. xxv. 31-46—"When the Son of Man shall come *in His* glory," &c. Then follows the judgment. But I don't dwell on it now, as I purpose linking it with "the great white throne" in a future lecture. My purpose now is to show that from the lips of our blessed Lord came the statement—"The Son of Man shall sit on the Throne of His glory." Now, I want to turn to referential Scriptures as to this time. Matt. xvi. 27—"For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His

angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works." This does not refer to the great White Throne, which is immediately before the new heavens and earth, but it is a general statement concerning the Lord Jesus Christ coming in the glory of His Father at the time of which we are now speaking. Dan. vii. 13-14—"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, One like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." You see how fitting that scripture is to the time of which we are speaking. The kingdom is given to the Son of Man on the throne of His glory, for His reward. "Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession." I shall be glad when He comes and puts things to rights. No king or potentate ever ruled this earth properly, but I know One who can do it. I do long for Him to come, and I know you do too, and as to times we can leave them in certain hope of the future. Zech. xiv. 3-5—"Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle"—just at that time when the nation is being threatened. "And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." He will have a wondrous following in that day. I have already submitted that the Church will come with Him in that day, for though the scriptures as to "all the saints" may be rendered "holy ones," "heavenly

beings," yet many, with equal authority, so render it as meaning the holy ones gathered from earth, when He comes to be "glorified in His saints and admired in all them that believe." The coming of the Lord Jesus is spoken of in Rev. i. 7, and the quotation there from Zechariah gives us the very hope for which the Church of God is looking. And I want to link the Old Testament foreshadowings and gleams with the New Testament statement of the fact, and I cannot but read Rev. i. 7 as the Spirit taking Old Testament truth, and making it the property of the saints to-day. And I would point out what many do not think of sufficiently, that He is not coming to unmingled hope, if, as it is said—"Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him"; it shows He will cause sore trouble when He does come, sore trouble to some, and exceeding blessing to others. So that I want to disabuse our minds of the thought that the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ will be one of unmingled blessing. There must come the hand of wrath upon the rebels, there must be a gathering of the tares, so that the advent of the Lord Jesus will bring two things with it, rest and deliverance to His own, but sorrow, ay! and eternal misery to those who have rejected His testimony or ill-treated His people, as we find in Matt. xxv. These sample scriptures will give a lawful argument to show from His own lips that He will come from heaven in glory, and to show that His advent will be the deliverance of His own, and sore trouble upon those who have misbehaved themselves.

A. O. M.

### OUR COUNSELLOR.

"His name shall be called . . . Counsellor"  
(Isa. ix. 6, 7).

THE office which our precious Lord Jesus sustains is "Counsellor." Now there are numberless things before us continually in our earthly pilgrimage, regarding which we need counsel, we need advice, and then, under these circumstances, we should go to our Lord Jesus Christ and say to Him, "My Lord, my precious adorable Saviour, I

am ignorant, now what am I to do? Thou art my Counsellor, now show me clearly and distinctly how to act under these circumstances." And what will be the result? We shall be taught.

But our danger is to think ourselves wise, to say, "I have lived many years, and know how to act; I am a man of experience, I do not need to take advice." This is the very way to make mistakes—to be left to ourselves; but, feeling our ignorance, what we have to do is to own that we are little ignorant children, and to ask the Lord to teach us. When the apostle John was asked a question (Rev. vii. 13, 14), he said, "Sir, Thou knowest"; in other words, "I do not know," and as soon as he acknowledged his ignorance he was taught.

And thus it will be with regard to ourselves directly there is found in us a heart of humility, so that we come asking of God that He would tell us, we shall find what it is to have a Counsellor in heaven.

You need never to take a step in the dark. If you do, you are sure to make a mistake. Wait, wait, wait till you have light. Remind the Lord Jesus that as He is Counsellor to the Church of God, that He will be in your particular case Counsellor and Guide, and will direct you. And if you patiently wait—believingly, expectantly wait—you will find that the waiting is not in vain, and that the Lord will prove Himself a Counsellor.

Here is an aged servant of Christ before you, who in his long life has had to pass through many, many, many a trial, and many heavy trials. And what has been his experience? That without a single exception, every one, every one, every one of these numberless trials has been a blessing to him, and many of his greatest trials have proved his choicest blessings.

And as it has been with this aged servant, so it will be with you, my beloved brethren and sisters in Christ; be not discouraged with the difficulties, look to the end of the journey; yea, before the journey's end you may find, in numberless instances, how trials and afflictions prove real blessings, as I have found it times without number. GEO. MÜLLER.

THERE is no darkness but the sun can dispel; so there is no sin but God can forgive. Full, frank confession of sin secures at once Divine forgiveness.

## VALLEY OF DEATH'S SHADOW.

## PART II.

DREAR and weird, the gloom yet deepens,  
 Each step doth but intensify the darkness.  
 The vulture brood, unclean, obscene, swoop o'er my  
 head,  
 Mid-air, they screech, their wings they flap.  
 With maw insatiate, wolves skulk and prow around,  
 Thirsting for blood, the fount of life to sap.  
 Dismal, their howls betray their lurking place ;  
 With peering eyes they track the footsteps of the  
 simple and unwary ;  
 Intent to prey and to destroy, impatient they to steal  
 upon their victims.  
 Anon swells up the hum of human voices, blatant,  
 Confused and heated, in close vociferation.  
 Their jarring tones tell out man's innate greed of gain,  
 his lust of wealth.  
 But in fiercer notes, of deeper tone, o'er-booming all,  
 Ominous of battle and of gore,  
 Ambition's fiery voice is heard.  
 But hist ! Yet sadder still—  
 From far, from life's by-ways, and crowded haunts,  
 Up-borne upon the air, above the din of lust's con-  
 tention,  
 Plaintive the wail of woe is heard,  
 The groan of agony,  
 The shriek of fell despair,  
 Vibrations sore of throes of human hopelessness,  
 These sounds commingled, contrasted and diverse,  
 Do but intone the dirge of man's living death.  
 The orchestral dissonance, discordant, harsh, and wild,  
 Echoes from crag to crag, from cliff to cliff,  
 Beetting the rugged way that wearied feet must tread ;  
 Premonitory of deeper tones of misery and woe,  
 When time hath swept away the vanity and folly of  
 to-day.  
 Guerdon of life misspent, consumed in sin and disbelief :  
 Sum of Time's addition, sequence logical, doom  
 inevitable !  
 Ah, me ! how sad ! One's heart doth fail !  
 But why this scene of desolation, of ruin and of woe ?  
 Because "the whole creation," domain of earth and sky,  
 Erst so good, so beauteous, so fair,  
 Lapsed from Elohim, its Creator—God.  
 Beguiled and lured by serpent-wile, of purpose fell,  
 A lie believed, man lapsed from God, from innocence  
 and life,  
 Became a rebel sinner, antithesis of good,  
 Cowering with fear, to hide his shame, he shrank from  
 God.  
 Creation fell in Man—its federal Head !  
 Serpent-trail polluted hath, and poisoned all !  
 The curse of sin hath scathed it !  
 Spirit-life extinct, sapped at its fount,  
 Ere yet, in stream perennial, it forth had flowed.  
 Blighted and disorganised,  
 It then became the stronghold of Diabolus,  
 And mortal strife hath raged for lordship, rule supreme,  
 Throughout successive ages, as Time unwound its coil.  
 Time's vista, all dark and drear, begirt with cloud,  
 Charged with thunder-bolt and lightning flash !  
 Man's soul bewildered, filled with dread dismay,  
 Labour and sorrow doth that soul weigh down.

Chequered and sombre man's day.  
 Faithless, he recks not of the future,  
 Eternity to him a quantity unknown,  
 He lives but for the *now*, the instant of existence,  
 The only hold of time, that breath may him permit.  
 The heart doth shudder, as it contemplates a scene,  
 Stripped of its æsthetic guise, its meretricious glare,  
 Creation ruined, wreck of its pristine self.  
 Man, its lord, fallen and debased, in darkness wandering  
 far from God,  
 Spending life's fleeting day, in vain attempt,  
 By scintillation of his intellect, to break the spell  
 Which sin hath cast upon his whole environment.  
 But here we pause, we cannot farther go,  
 Lest, peradventure, we might terrify, should we deeper  
 penetrate  
 The slough of sin's arcana, the charnel house of death.  
 Lest corruption's reeking fumes should quench the  
 lamp of life,  
 Turn we to scenes of brighter hue, from man to God.  
 W. R. V.

## Questions and Answers.

We shall greatly value remembrance in prayer that special wisdom and grace may be given for this service.

We desire to express our thanks to all who have sent answers.

Replies to appear in the next number require to be sent in not later than 15th of present month, and so on ; the 15th of the month being always the latest to which we can defer making up for press.

We again urge the importance of replies being *short* ; it is essential, in this particular line of things, to be *concise*.

When more than one question is replied to, let the answer to each question be upon a separate piece of paper. THE EDITOR.

## Replies are invited to the following :—

INSPIRATION OF ECCLESIASTES.—Is the teaching of Ecclesiastes divine? and if so, does it apply now, or could the book be regarded as an inspired record of human wisdom?

SEVEN TIMES.—What is the meaning of the expression "seven times," four times repeated in Leviticus xxvi. ? Is it possible by this chapter to decide in what year the times of the Gentiles will end?

THE OLIVE TREE.—Does the olive tree in Romans xi. refer to Christ? if so, in what sense are we to understand the wild olive branches being broken off again?

THEM OF OLD TIME.—What is the correct reading in Matthew v., "by them of old time" as in A.V., or "to them of old time" as in R.V. ? And was Christ on that occasion teaching in opposition to the traditions of men?

THE LAST TRUMP.—Is the "last trump" of I Corinthians xv. 52 identical with the seventh one of Revelations xi. 15? Paul evidently had visions somewhat similar to John (2 Corinthians xii. 1-4).

THE LORD'S BODY.—Please explain, through the *Witness*, I Corinthians xi. 29, "Not discerning the Lord's body." Would we understand this "body" to be "the Church" or His own "glorified body"?

FORMS OF WORSHIP.—What answer can we give those who tell us that a form of worship is right because Christ Himself attended the temple service?

FAITH.—Why is "faith" mentioned as *precious* faith in 2 Peter i. 1? Does Psalm ciii. 6 refer to millennial times? Please explain I Cor. viii. 11.

**THE TEN VIRGINS.**—To what period or dispensation does the parable of the virgins (Matthew xxv.) refer?

**THE KINGDOMS.**—Are the terms “kingdom of God” and “kingdom of heaven” synonymous? and if not, please explain the difference.

**WATCHING CHRISTIANS.**—What answer can we give those who tell us that only those Christians living very near to the Lord, and looking for His appearing, will be caught up to meet Him in the air?

**JESUS IN THE MIDST.**—Are we to gather from Matthew xviii. 20 that our Lord is in our midst otherwise than as Christ *in you the hope of glory*; or is He further manifested in our midst when thus gathered?

#### THE RESTS OF HEB. III. AND IV.

**QUESTION 454.**—Kindly explain the several meanings of the word translated “rest,” and what rests they signify in Heb. iv.

The replies to this question are so numerous, so interesting, and so instructive, that we only take up the one question this month, and give a larger proportion than usual of the replies received.—ED.

**Ans. A.**—In seeking to give a little help on this question, I do not attempt to give the “several meanings of the word ‘rest;’” but only to throw some light on Heb. iv.

I. There is creation rest (verse 4). “And God did rest the seventh day from all His works.” (See Gen. ii. 1, 2; Ex. xxxi. 17.) Man broke and defiled this rest by sin. II. There is Canaan rest (Deut. xii. 9, xxvi. 1; Ps. xcvi. 7-11, cxxxii. 8-11). It is this rest which the Spirit uses, in Heb. iii. and iv., in order to warn and exhort believers now. This rest Israel failed to enter into. Not because it was not ready for them, for “the works were finished from the foundation of the world” (verse 3). Compare Deut. xxxii. 8. “They entered not in because of unbelief” (chap. iii. 19).

“Their carcasses fell in the wilderness.” Only two men of that whole generation entered the promised land; and even those who did enter in never possessed nor enjoyed Jehovah’s rest in Canaan according to His gift and purpose. The nearest approach to it was during the reign of Solomon (1 Chron. xxii. 9); but the rest Israel then enjoyed was but a shadow of the perfect rest they will enjoy in Palestine during the millennial age (verses 7 and 8). The rest spoken of in verse 9—“There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God”—may have two applications: one to God’s earthly people, and one to His heavenly people; with this difference, that His earthly people will have their rest on the earth, whereas we, His heavenly people, will have our rest in heaven—“in the Father’s house.”

Let us now come to the moral teaching of the passage. It is evident from the whole context that the rest we are exhorted to “labour to enter into” is not the rest which “remaineth” for us in

heaven. It is a present rest, which is attainable by the believer now. “Let us fear, therefore, lest haply, a promise being left of entering into His rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it” (chap. iv. 1, R.V.). It is also clear from Scripture that there is no risk of any child of God *coming short of heaven*. When Scripture speaks on the point of a believer’s eternal safety there is no ambiguity or doubt (see John v. 24, x. 27-30; Rom. viii. 35-39). Canaan, or the land of promise, which was given to Abraham and to his seed, was not intended, as many think, to be a shadow of that “place” which the Lord Jesus has gone to prepare for His disciples. It was rather a shadow of the heavenly *places* where the believer’s present blessing is in Christ Jesus (see Eph. i. 3). This is not heaven as a place, but heaven as a present experience of the soul entered into by faith. Man defiled God’s rest in creation, man also polluted God’s rest in Canaan; but since Christ finished the work of redemption God has found a rest in Him, which man cannot break nor pollute. At the cross of Calvary sin was avenged, God’s law was magnified, all His righteous claims against man on account of sin were met. All the attributes of His holy character were glorified; and in testimony of this He has set the Man of Calvary at His right hand, and He is now resting and delighting in Him. Believers are now called to enter into the fellowship and enjoyment of “that rest” which our God has found in Christ. But as the enemies of the LORD were in actual possession of Canaan, and although God had “given” it to Israel, yet they had to take it by conflict. So the principalities and powers of evil are now in the “heavenlies,” where that rest alone can be enjoyed, and the believer now is exhorted to “put on the whole armour of God,” in order to take possession of what is already man’s in Christ (Eph. vi. 11-17). Much more might be said, as the question embraces a great deal, but I only add that this conflict is not one of *struggling*, it is one of *believing*. It is “the fight of faith.” Israel did not fail because they could not fight; they failed because by unbelief they became *disconnected* with Jehovah’s power. That is where we fail too. Instead of being “strong in the Lord and in the power of His might,” we try to obtain this rest by being strong in self and in the power of our own might.

There is rest from the burden of sin, and from care, in Matt. xi. 28; also the rest of service by learning of Him who was the perfect servant, in verses 29, 30. But the rest of Heb. iv., which we are in danger of never reaching, is a rest beyond sin and care and service, and everything else, which can only be attained to and enjoyed through entering into God’s estimate of Christ Himself, and of the infinite value of His precious blood.

It is a foretaste of heaven, and cannot be explained. To be known it must be experienced. Our conceptions of the cross, and of Him who died on it, are so low and imperfect, and the practical holiness of life, and of separation from the world, which are involved in entering into this rest are such that few of us know anything of it experimentally. It is also quite possible, and is a too common experience, to lose this rest experimentally after it may have been enjoyed. It was prophesied of Isaachar of old—"And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant, and he bowed his shoulders to bear, and became a servant unto tribute" (Gen. xlix. 15). There were those of old who "fell in the wilderness." There were those who were carried away into Babylonish captivity; but there was the condition of being "bondmen in the land." So we may have entered into God's rest in Christ, and may be able still to talk and pray correctly about it, while we may have entirely lost the savour of those who *dwell* in the presenc of the Lord.

G. A.

**Ans. B.**—I would reply to the latter part of this question only. Clearly there are at least five different rests spoken of in those two chapters. Two have passed away, two are going on now, and one is yet future. They are as follow:—

I. God's rest as Creator (Heb. iv. 4, with Gen. ii. 2)—"God did rest the seventh day from all His work." He needed no rest, for the "Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary" (Isaiah xl. 28). He simply ceased from His work of creating for it was "finished."

II. The rest of the "pleasant land" (Heb. iv. 6-8, with Ps. xcv. 11; cvi. 24-26). This rest was forfeited by those who came out of Egypt—Joshua, Caleb, Eleazar excepted, and probably the Levites. The first generation entered not into that rest. This is most solemnly used in Ps. xcv. and in the chapters before us.

III. The rest of the Lord Jesus (Heb. iv. 10). This verse has been translated thus—"For He that is entered into His rest, hath Himself also rested from His work as God did from His own." The true Workman finished the work which was given Him to do. As God rested from His work of creating, so His Son rested from the work of redeeming. (See John v. 17; xvii. 4).

IV. The rest of the believer (Heb. iv. 1, with Matt. xi. 28). This rest is a spiritual one, and is from sin. There can be no doubt but it has several aspects such as in relation to sin, service, and circumstances. It is a real rest, a reflection of the Lord's own.

V. The rest eternal (Heb. iv. 9-11). This is the long eternal Sabbath-keeping which lies before all saints. A rest which will not, cannot be disturbed. Multitudes have already entered

upon that which will be the prelude to this perfect age-enduring repose. They rest from their labours, and their works do follow them. Of this we often sing—

"When the weary ones we love,  
Enter on their rest above."

It may be that underneath those "rests" there lie other two—the rest of an earthly Sabbath of one-seventh part of time of which Christ is the body (Col. ii. 17), and of a rest for Israel in the land when restored and saved.

J. H. I.

**Ans. C.**—The argument of this chapter with regard to rest runs thus:—God's rest is Christ. Into this rest we are exhorted to enter. Verse 3 shows that true *believers* in Christ do rest. Verse 4 shows a Sabbath rest as foreshadowing this. Verse 5 shows *unbelievers* as failing of God's rest. Verses 6 to 8 show some must enter it in the day of grace, and that the Canaan rest was not the true rest. Verse 9 asserts that there is a real rest *now* (the word used meaning "the essence of the Sabbath rest"), into which all believing in Christ enter now, ceasing from any trust or rest in their own doings. Verse 11 is an urgent exhortation to receive Christ as God's rest and full salvation.

A. O. M.

**Ans. D.**—Chapter i. 3 is the key. Christ in the glory, "When He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." His rest (lit., settled rest) in the very presence of God; His work finished—*redemption rest*.

Chapter iv. 1—"Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into *His rest*" &c. John xiv. 3—"I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Entering into *His rest*. Verse 3—"We which have believed do enter into *that rest*." . . . "As I swear in My wrath they shall not enter into *My rest*" (R.V.)—*Canaan rest* (chapter iii. 11-18; Ps. xcv. 11). Verse 4—"And God did rest the seventh day from all His works" (Gen. ii. 2)—*creation rest*. Verse 5—"They shall not enter into *My rest*" (R.V.); Ps. xcv. 11. Verse 8—"For if Joshua had given them rest" (R.V.)—*Canaan rest*. Verse 9—"There remaineth therefore a *Sabbath rest* for the people of God" (R.V.) The Sabbath rest was a type of redemption rest, heaven, where Christ is, at the right hand of God—*His rest*. Verse 10—"For He that is entered into *His rest*, He also hath ceased from His own works"—*redemption rest*—"as God did from His"—*creation rest*. Verse 11—"Let us labour therefore to enter into *that rest* (chap. i. 3). The writer in this epistle keeps his eye continually on Christ seated in the glory (chapters i. 3, viii. 1, x. 12, and xii. 2); so must we to understand it.

E. J. S.



**ON THE FIXING OF DATES FOR  
PROPHETIC EVENTS.**

**A**T the outset of our inquiry, I would adduce a few instances of the accuracy with which dates were fixed for events that have long ago taken place.

The duration of the Captivity in Babylon was foretold by Jeremiah (Jer. xxv. 11, 12), and Daniel understood it, as it was intended he should by the Spirit of God, and set himself to seek the Lord as to the fulfilment of the promise (Dan. ix. 2, 3).

On a careful examination of the periods mentioned in Dan. ix. 24-27, they will be found to define accurately when the Messiah was to appear and to be "cut off."

The 70 weeks are not weeks of days, but weeks of years. The word signifies periods of seven, and is not the word ordinarily used for a week of seven days.

Therefore 7 weeks represent 49 years.

62	„	„	434	„
1	week	„	7	„

Total,	490	„
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The date affixed in the margin of our Bibles to the going forth of the command to rebuild Jerusalem is 446 B.C. (Neh. i.).

The canon of prophecy closes with Malachi in the year 397, thereby fulfilling the first-named prophetic section of "7 weeks" or 49 years.

From that to the birth of Christ was	397	years.
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To which add the well-known chronological error of	4	„
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And for the life of the Lord on earth,	33	„
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These together amount to	434	„
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or exactly 62 periods of 7 years.

The remaining or seventieth week is postponed to "the time of the end," and after the cutting off of Messiah there comes in a dateless period of war, destruction, and desolation, as regards the people of Israel and the city of Jerusalem.

No date or clue to the exact time of the destruction of Jerusalem is given in verse 26; we are only told that it would be accomplished by the people of the "Prince that shall come."

This, as we know, was the Roman power,

and by a necessary consequence the coming Prince will be the last great Head of the resuscitated Roman Empire.

Scriptures that refer to the time of Israel's dispersion always assign to it a lengthened period—e.g., Hosea iii. 4, "many days." But no clue is given at any point by which its termination can be fixed.

That many in Israel were full of expectation at the time when Christ was born in Jerusalem is evident. Those who "looked for redemption" were aware of the significance of Dan. ix., amongst whom were Anna and Simeon. To Simeon it was revealed, not that Christ should at that time be born, but that he should not taste of death until he had seen the Lord's Anointed. It can hardly be questioned that this grace was accorded to him in response to the deep desire of his heart.

There are two scriptures directly bearing upon the point which I will now refer to, and which may be accepted as settling authoritatively the question as to fixing dates in this age.

The first is Mark xiii. 32. By reference to verse 26, it is clear that the "day and hour" referred to is that of the coming of the Lord Jesus as the Son of Man.

We hold that the Old Testament Scriptures are absolutely silent as to His coming as Son of God to quicken the dead and change the living saints, and take them instantaneously in one glorified company to be for ever with Himself.

This is a mystery unfolded by the Spirit in the New Testament. But the coming of the Lord as Son of Man in judgment to the earth—to take possession of His kingdom as the rightful Heir—is abundantly spoken of in the Old Testament Scriptures.

And for this event data are given in the most detailed and accurate way, whereby it will be possible to know the exact day of the Lord's appearing, so soon as that which is fixed as the point at which the calculation must begin has taken place.

How could the sixty-nine weeks of Dan. ix. have indicated the date of the cutting off of Messiah had not the point been fixed and stated at which the calculation must begin? "The going forth of the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem" is the starting point. Calculating from this all is plain.

And so shall it be at "the time of the end."

The starting point for calculation is fixed and stated; it is the day upon which a covenant will be signed and sealed between the nation of the Jews and the Prince that shall come.

It is a covenant arranged for one week—*i.e.*, one period of seven years. In "the midst of the week" he will break the covenant—*i.e.*, after three and a half years, and then will begin the final "three and a half years," or "forty-two months," or "1260 days," or "time, times, and half a time," all which are different forms of expressing the same period.

In this way, and at that time, shall be fulfilled that momentous seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy.

If it were possible to calculate the time of the coming of the Son of Man from any of the data given in Daniel, who so able to have done so as the Son of Man Himself?

Those who nowadays with an effrontery almost, if not altogether, amounting to blasphemy, fix dates for coming events, every one of which has been in turn falsified, have no further data from which to calculate than were familiar to the Lord Himself, and yet it was He who said—"Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, nor the angels, nor even the Son, but the Father."

But it is in this way, and for reasons which those best know who publish the lying predictions, that the whole subject of prophecy is brought into disrepute and ridicule, and the very Scriptures of truth discredited.

The other passage which might be accepted as conclusive is Acts i. 7—"It is not for you to know the times and seasons which the Father hath put in His own power."

Here, then, is plainly the instruction to the disciples and to us also that this knowledge is not intended for us.

And not only so, the reason is identical with Mark xiii.—The Father has retained that knowledge "in His own power."

Those who traffic in prophetic dates are only pandering to the ungodly curiosity of the carnal mind. There is a demand for it, and it pays!

I would now shortly indicate how other New Testament teachings harmonise with this absence of revelation as to dates in the present age.

Take, for instance, Peter's answer to the scoff—"Where is the promise of His coming?" It is not a reference to prophetic data to show that this event could not take place till so many prophetic years had expired, but rather a violent dismissal of all calculation with the words—"One day is with Jehovah as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day." Who shall dare to calculate dates in the face of such a statement? No, there is no accounting for the apparent delay but "the long-suffering of our Lord."

Then, again, take together all the passages which so abundantly show that the attitude of the saints in this age is one of ardent expectancy of readiness for an event which might happen "at evening or midnight, at cock-crowing or in the morning."

Such words are inconsistent with any theory of dates, but harmonise perfectly with Mark xiii. and Acts i.

And the date character of the Book of Revelation definitely links it from chapter vi. to xix. with the Book of Daniel, and shows unquestionably that the instruction of this part of the book synchronises with "the time of the end" referred to so often by Daniel.

A careful examination of every passage where this expression occurs will convince the unbiased inquirer of two things—first, that none of the events connected with "the time of the end" have yet taken place; and secondly, that it really refers to the last "week" or "time," the seventieth of Daniel's prophecy.

J. R. C.

## CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP.

**C**HRISTIAN fellowship is a thing of the heart, not of the head. It is well for believers "all to speak the same thing"; but even this, desirable and scriptural as it is, will not secure what the Holy Spirit calls fellowship.

The followers of Mohammed all speak the same thing, but they cannot have scriptural fellowship one with another. The Roman Catholics as a rule all speak the same thing, but they can have no spiritual fellowship because they have no spiritual capacity for it.

It is only those who are quickened, and also indwelt by the Spirit of God, that can

have fellowship one with another; and even they can only enjoy such a blessed experience in proportion as they walk in the light of the presence of God. (See 1 John i. 7). "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." Many believers have learned that there can be no fellowship between light and darkness as far as the unsaved are concerned; but it is also true regarding those who are saved. All who are "sanctified in Christ Jesus" are called unto the fellowship of the Son of God (1 Cor. i. 2-9); but all do not respond to that call in their experience. All the saved are in that fellowship as far as *union* is concerned, but many saints know little of this fellowship as to *communion*. Believers who are walking in spiritual darkness may enjoy many things in common. They may enjoy each other's society in a way, and yet there may not be a spark of what Scripture calls fellowship. The danger in these days is to apply that word to a carnal thing which may be, and often is, outside of God's reality altogether. A certain church position, important as that may be, can never make nor maintain a scriptural fellowship. Position may secure a certain kind of fellowship, but it cannot ensure "fellowship of the Spirit." That can only be secured by believers walking in the light and enjoying the efficacy of that blood which gives them a right to be there, and which keeps them clean whilst they walk there.

Another thing which is often little understood is the impossibility of a child of God, who is walking in the light, and one who is walking in darkness, having fellowship one with another.

They may both hold the same doctrines, and contend for the same church polity. They may both be in the same assembly, both attend the same meetings, they may even have the most kindly feelings towards each other; but if one is enjoying God and the things of God, and the other enjoying the world and the things of the world, there cannot be fellowship between them. Not because they do not desire it, but simply because such a thing is morally impossible.

To illustrate what I mean, let us take the case of Abraham and Lot. They were both "righteous men." Not only justified men,

but they were righteous in their lives. (See 2 Peter ii. 7, 8, 9). But there was a great difference between their sources of enjoyment. Lot had set his heart on the well-watered plains of Sodom. He was seeking a portion for himself down here "under the sun." Abraham "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." He "desired a better country, that is, an heavenly" (Heb. xi. 10-16). There was no ill-feeling between them; Abraham loved Lot, and no doubt Lot respected Abraham, but so long as the heart of the one was filled with God, and the heart of the other was filled with the world, fellowship between them was an utter impossibility. So is it now in many assemblies of saints. There are a few—we hope many—whose hearts are in heaven: who are daily seeking to yield themselves unto God, and to live for the glory of His Son; and there are many who in heart have turned aside from following the "Rejected One," and are living wholly to themselves and the world. Two such Christians may meet together weekly. They may eat the same bread and drink of the same cup, but so long as one is "walking in the light" and the other "walking in darkness," fellowship between them is but a mere name for a thing which does not exist. And more, so long as such a state of things continues, no amount of conferring together could bring about fellowship. The carnal Christian may not be conscious of this lack of communion, or if he is he is sure to blame the spiritual man, and the spiritual who longs for Christian fellowship is in great danger of coming down out of the presence of God in order to get what his heart longs for. The days we are living in are peculiarly trying. Such is the low condition of many saints spiritually, that the more habitually believers walk with God the more will they find themselves out of touch with their surroundings. Believers who are seeking a position for themselves, either in the world or in the Church, can never understand those who are seeking the honour and glory of Christ. Such can afford to yield a point when their own glory is in danger, but they can never yield when the glory of Christ is at stake.

In the days of Malachi there was a circle within a circle. There were those who were

in a right position, who gathered unto the place which Jehovah had chosen. But within that circle there were a few that "feared the LORD, and who thought on His name." These few were the objects of Jehovah's special interest and care. He took down a record of their conversation. He will not be less careful now. "He knoweth the way of the righteous." The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him." He who "walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands" is cognisant of all that is going on. He is no indifferent spectator; and by-and-by "He both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart" (1 Cor. iv. 5). It is well to cultivate all the Christian fellowship we can consistently with truth, but it is better to walk alone with God than to purchase fellowship at the cost of losing His blessed presence in the soul. Malachi days are being repeated. There are many saints in a right position who have been overcome by the world; and who are walking after the flesh. In such a state of things, those who would seek to secure the presence of the Lord now, and His approval in "the crowning day," require to exercise the strictest watch over their own hearts, lest they too be "led away with the error of the wicked," and thus "fall from their own stedfastness."

G. A.

## REFLECTIONS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

### CHAPTER III.

WHEN Bildad the Shuhite considered the exceeding inferiority and sinfulness of man in the light of God's power and holiness, he gave expression to his feelings in the interesting inquiry, "How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?" (Job xxv. 4). This reminds us also of Isaiah's sentiments in the presence of the glory of the same high and lifted-up One whose train filled the temple, sentiments which found relief in the cry, "Woe is me! for I am undone; for I am a man of unclean lips . . . for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (Isa. vi.).

The answer to Bildad's question is given here in this portion of Romans iii. which we

now enter upon—an answer forcibly demonstrated by the Lord's dealing with Isaiah, as recorded in the above-mentioned passage of the prophetic book. First we have to notice again the phrase, *the righteousness of God*, as it occurs frequently in this portion between verses 19 and 27, and has a twofold application: not only is it that which God maintains in connection with His revelation, but it is also that which He imputes to the believing sinner, *justification* here meaning *to be declared righteous*. Both applications of this phrase appear to me to be present in every instance of its occurrence here, because if God justifies or imputes righteousness to a sinner it can only be to the maintenance of His own glory.

Now this is just how the Gospel answers the Shuhite's question. God meets sinners upon the ground of their common ruin, both Jewish and Gentile. He justifies all those who believe in Jesus, and does it to the maintenance of all He ever committed Himself to in revelation; hence His righteousness is here declared to be "upon all them that believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God: being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth a propitiation, through faith, by His blood, to show His righteousness because of the passing over of sins done aforesaid, in the forbearance of God; for the showing of His righteousness at this present season: that He might Himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus" (verses 22-26).

There is a sublime simplicity and force in this inspired reasoning in which the *terra firma* of living faith is so clearly announced. The great primary object of the Cross was the glory of God, "to declare His righteousness." The creature had wronged God; the Cross was to clear Him of that wrong, and it is only as the Cross has been effectual to this end that it has been effectual to the salvation of men, because the declaration of God's righteousness before the intelligent universe which had witnessed His dishonour was the first essential in the development of the redemption plan. In a word, salvation comes to us on the ground of God's having been glorified and satisfied through the death of His Son. It was in view of this solemn transaction, so

gloriously fruitful to the maintenance of His own honour, that God passed over the sins of the previous ages of human history in His forbearance; for the Cross was ere long to justify that forbearance when the judgment due to those sins should be meted out to Christ, the holy Substitute, in whose atoning sacrifice the earliest patriarchal faith found rest prospectively.

As the efficacy of redemption extends backward over the history of believers of a past dispensation, declaring God to have been righteous in the remission of their sins, who looked onward by faith to that blood in which the sacrificial stream, which flowed down these ages, found its antitype, so also it extends forward toward all who look back by faith to the same source of peace, declaring God to be righteous still in the justification of every believing sinner. This is rest indeed for the anxious soul—"That He might be just and the Justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus"; that He can save a guilty sinner who simply confides in Jesus, and that to His own praise and honour! Light and love radiate from Jesus, who is the express image of God's person—the exact impress of His substance; the "Image of the Invisible God" in whom "we have redemption through His blood" (*vide* Col. i.). In Jesus "mercy and truth have met together"; in Jesus "righteousness and peace have kissed each other." It is an integral feature of my salvation that I have been acquitted upon the authority of inflexible holiness which has found its every demand satisfied in the blood, and that therefore God is honoured in my acquittal; otherwise salvation were an impossibility.

Christ set forth as a propitiatory (correct rendering) answers to the typical mercyseat or lid of the ark, the "propitiatory" of the Mosaic institution (*vide* Ex. xxxvii. 6-9). That this is the allusion in the argument here there can be little doubt, although opinion is divided about it. Some see only the efficacy of a slain sacrifice in this term *propitiation*, and we are far from denying the presence of this thought in the apostolic reasoning, when we maintain that the primary allusion is to the mercyseat; for the efficacy of the slain sacrifice and the use of the mercyseat stood together in the type; and a careful perusal of Lev. xvi. will

show that the value of the sacrifice was really only fully known at the mercyseat. The salient point is that the mercyseat or propitiatory, before and upon which the blood was sprinkled, was that upon which the claims of divine holiness were maintained; and since any ceremonial defilement, either in priest or sacrifice, should have occasioned the death of the former on the great day of atonement, when he went into the holiest with the blood of the latter, therefore his coming out again evidenced the reception by Jehovah of the sacrificial blood sprinkled before and on the seat whereupon His glory rested, and also His righteousness in that reception.

This view of the *propitiation* is confirmed by a simple comparison of the statements in verses 21-26 of our chapter with the prominent features of the mercyseat and their relation to the blood: even the cherubim of beaten gold figures of "justice and judgment" which are the "foundation" of His throne—at one time seen in connection with the flaming sword which was placed at the entrance of Eden to intercept any attempt on the part of fallen man to return there; but here seen with their faces *inward*, as though looking upon *the glory and the blood*—precious couplet! No flaming sword here; and why? Because it awoke against Jehovah's Shepherd, against the Man that was His fellow, to smite Him as the substitute. This is the figurative language of that wondrous type, in which was foreshadowed the glorious gospel of the blessed God.

Hidden in the ark, upon which the propitiatory rested, was the <sup>3</sup>handwriting of ordinances which was against us"; and in Christ we find its shadows fulfilled, its claims honoured, its integrity maintained, its sword sheathed through the death of the cross. Thus has Christ cleared the name of God from all the dishonour which the creature's sin cast upon it, and so we give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness; the same holiness, a conception of which, apart from the knowledge of redemption, drives the convicted soul in upon its own endeavours to work out a fitness for the Divine presence, resulting in heartrending disappointment even unto despair, as the strivings of legal fear are realised to be as fruitless as they are torturous. Thank

God, we can go to all such upon His own authority, saying, "Holiness itself invites you near" (verses 21-26).

Hence the apostle's reasoning as to a man's being justified by faith apart from deeds of law; man is placed in the position of a passive recipient; God in that of an active benefactor; and so the truth as to human ruin and divine righteousness are confirmed, so that, as it is written, "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

This, of course, shows the universal attitude of grace toward the world, whereby faith breaks down the ceremonial enclosure which excluded Gentiles as strangers from the covenant of promise. The Gospel now declares God to be the God, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles: He is the Saviour of all men, but especially of believers, be they circumcised or not. All must occupy common ground in the reception of salvation, even as they do also in the matter of guilt.

Does faith, then, reduce the law to a non-entity? Does it neutralise the purpose and action of the law, as of a thing unnecessary and objectless? Assuredly not; for both the law and the Gospel are components of one revelation, and cannot in that sense, therefore, militate the one against the other, although they characterise different dispensations; for the law, that is the expression of Divine requirement throughout the Old Testament Scriptures, *pronounces men sinners*; while grace provides justification for them *because they are sinners*; and thus the two testimonies acquiesce in their proof of human guilt, the one declaring God to be righteous in the judgment of the guilty, the other declaring Him righteous in their justification. But since the conviction of man and the glory of God together constitute the end or aim of the law; and the end or aim of grace is the justification of believers to the glory of God, for which they are "found sinners" (Gal. ii. 17)—so that the law and grace which saves by faith (Eph. ii.) establish the same conclusion, *the guilt of man and the glory of God*—therefore faith establishes the law.

A further proof of faith's establishing the law is found in the fact of the law's righteous requirement being fulfilled in those who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit; but of

this more subsequently, in chap. viii., the Lord permitting.

It may be inquired how this is to be reconciled with statements found in Ephes. ii. 15 and Col. ii. 14, which distinctly declare the law's having been abolished in the Cross.

But this merely apparent difficulty disappears when we see that if, in Romans, we read of the law being *established*, it is as the standard of divine requirement and the exposition of human ruin; but that if, as in the last-named scriptures (Eph. and Col.), the law is spoken of as having been *abolished*, it is as the ground of man's approach to God. See also Heb. viii. 13. It is noteworthy that in the ark of the covenant which supported the propitiatory, the law was both *preserved* and *hidden from view*.

E. L.

### SATAN'S DEFEAT AND DOOM.

SATAN is already a vanquished foe. To frustrate all the purposes of God concerning man, and to compass his utter destruction, has been his object from the beginning.

In order to overcome the One whom God sent to be the Saviour of the world, all his most subtle devices were presented; but temptation having failed, the Second Man having stood firm in His allegiance to God where the first man had so signally fallen, nothing was left for Satan but to bring about His destruction. To this end, by Satanic influence, kings and rulers, Gentiles and people of Israel, were joined together and of one mind in their enmity; finally condemning to death the Holy One of God, and killing the Prince of Life.

Possibly Satan imagined he had scored a victory, and rejoiced, as did his deluded slaves, at the supposed defeat of the Great Deliverer. Evidently Satan was as blind as the world he had deceived as to the true character of the redemption which Christ had come to accomplish. Even those who had received the Lord Jesus were in great ignorance as to the nature of it. "We thought it was He who should have redeemed Israel," was the hopeless, despairing complaint of the two disappointed though true-hearted ones on the road to Emmaus.

Had the princes of this world known who He was, or understood the nature of the work He came to finish, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. Had Haman known that he would be hanged on the gallows he erected for Mordecai, would he ever have devised the scheme?

But the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God stronger than men.

The Cross of Christ was Satan's direst defeat. First, it was the fulfilment to the last detail of all the prophecies that had been uttered and of every prophetic type and shadow. Ignorant of the Scriptures as they were, they fulfilled them in condemning Him. The natural intelligence and perception of Satan is no doubt far beyond that of the most acute of human intellects, but, not being enlightened by the Spirit of God, he was blind to the significance of the Old Testament scriptures, he knew not the things that were written in the law of Moses and in the prophets and in the Psalms concerning the Christ, and so he urged his deluded votaries on to the fulfilment of them all in the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus.

But the Cross of Christ was also Satan's defeat, because it was the opening up of the way for God to be just and yet the justifier of the ungodly.

Little did Satan know that the death of Christ would establish the righteousness of God in the passing over of the sins of all who had believed during the previous 4000 years of the world's history; or that, on the ground of that atoning death, salvation, full and free, would be provided for and proclaimed to all.

And, further, the Cross of Christ was Satan's defeat because through it He spoiled him that had the power of death (or the authority over the dead), that is, the devil, and delivered those who, all their lives, through fear of death, had been subject to bondage.

Satan had for ages been, so to speak, the custodian of the dead. He disputed with the archangel about the body of Moses, asserting his claim over it against the mandate of the Most High. But One, and One alone, was "free among the dead." One only had acquired the right to enter the domain of death as a conqueror empowered to liberate a multitude of Satan's captives and lead them up in His own triumph to the paradise of God.

Hail, mighty Victor, Thy cross was Thy title to the keys of hades and of death! No longer has Satan the custody of the spirits of those who have died in the Lord. The gates of hell could not prevail against those whom He had redeemed. He who liveth and was dead, and is alive for evermore, is now the Lord both of the dead and of the living, for to this end He died and rose again.

Meantime the claims of the rightful Heir of the world are being disputed and contended against by the usurper who, from his place of authority over the demons that occupy the heavenly places, is deceiving by his emissaries the whole world.

In this respect God in His wisdom has granted him a large permission. Blinding the minds of those that believe not, he holds them in his grasp, and worst of all they know it not. They imagine they are free!

The war in heaven of Rev. xii. indicates some action on the part of God which Satan resists with all his might. Whether it is an organised attempt to intercept the ransomed of the Lord on their way to the heavenly inheritance, or a determined resistance of the divine edict for his expulsion from the heavens, we are not told.

It is sufficient for us to know that he will be defeated and expelled with all his angels from the heavenly places no more to gain admission there.

The Church "caught up" will be for ever beyond his reach.

Of his great wrath on being cast out into the earth, and of his terrible workings during the short time that intervenes till he is cast into the bottomless pit, we are fully informed in the Book of Revelation.

Well may we value the blessed hope that secures us from that hour!

But even the pit of the abyss is not his final doom. A thousand years is the term of his imprisonment. After that he must be loosed a little season.

Again, he receives permission to exercise his influence on man, in order to prove that man, after 1000 years of the display of the government and glory of God, is in his nature unchanged. At last, as at first, he listens to the lie of the adversary, and finally perishes in high-handed, open rebellion against God, together with Satan and his angels.

The lake of fire is Satan's final doom. For him and his angels it was prepared. Those only will share his doom who choose to do so, who despise the grace of God, who reject the Son of God, who disbelieve the Gospel of God.

J. R. C.

### "THE ESTATE OF THE ELDERS."

IT is our purpose to direct attention to the duties of elders, and the mutual responsibilities resting between such and the younger ones in the flock of God. We shall look first at the subject as it is seen in the law, the Psalms, the Prophets, and the Gospels.

We find a most important, yet seldom quoted, verse in Lev. xix. 32, "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the Lord." We may take it as a general principle that there is to be respect and special esteem shown towards elders. The thought in this verse is not honouring an individual because of his superior wisdom or intellectual capacity, but respect for the old man for the simple reason that he is aged, if for nought else. The hoary head is not to be classed with the rank and file. It has to command our reverence. In conjunction with this we might consider the commandment "Honour thy father and thy mother." Here, again, we have the same principle. The child is to respect the parent because of the difference in age. It may happen that the "child is father of the man" in wisdom; yet the parents are not to be disregarded or slighted because of their ignorance, and, it may be, their folly. There is to be due consideration shown to both parents because of their age.\* We have a beautiful picture of what we have been stating in Elihu's conduct towards Job and his friends. Elihu waited until the three friends said all they could say. It was not that they were wiser than he. Their words showed the reverse of this; but we are told that it was because they were elder than he (Job xxxii. 4). Surely this behaviour of Elihu lent enchantment to his words. It was a most beautiful trait in his character, and one which we do well to consider. Elihu was afraid to give his opinion. He said to himself, "Days

should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom." It will be found as a general rule that days do speak, and that experience gives a person the capacity for directing others.

The House of Israel was not ruled by novices (Deut. i. 13-15). Moses, Joshua, and David were all put into prominent positions, but it was after a season of humble work. Moses had forty years of lonely shepherd life before God took him up to deliver His people; Joshua served first as Moses' minister (Jos. i. 1) ere he was the leader of God's host; and David had to prove God with the lion and the bear in the desert before God saw fit to send him forth to do battle with the Philistine giant. The teaching thus eliminated is valuable. We cannot overlook the courteous way in which Moses took the advice of his father-in-law (Exodus xviii.), or the subordination of Joshua, who was jealous for the honour of Moses (Num. xi. 28). The humble manner of David, too, whether as Saul's armour-bearer (1 Sam. xvi. 21) or even after his victory over the Philistine (1 Sam. xix. 5) gives a fine pattern for the young servant of Christ. There was energy combined with humility. There was true-heartedness to the Lord, accompanied with becoming subjection to elders more carnal and less talented than he. It will be found that for active service God fits special persons, endowing them with peculiar gifts, and He expects that we shall make room for such instead of seeking to retard them in the work of the Lord; but we will also perceive that God has placed persons of experience and age in the place of counsel, and to act representatively on behalf of His people (Lev. iv. 15, Deut. xxxi. 28). We could not do better than refer to Ex. iii. 16, where Moses is commanded to go and gather the elders of Israel together. He was careful to obey this injunction (Ex. iv. 29). He was to get their ear first, and then there was little doubt that things would go smoothly so far as the rest were concerned. It is notable how many instances we have of gatherings of the elders. See Ex. xii. 21, xix. 7; 1 Sam. viii. 4; 2 Sam. iii. 17, &c. It will be seen that where there is no regard for the elder ones it is a black era in the history of Israel.

No wonder that Jeremiah records in his

\* The relationship also emphasises the necessity for respect.



lament that "the faces of elders were not honoured" (Lam. v. 12). The picture delineated for us in 2 Chron. x. is too clearly painted to need comment. Rehoboam found out to his cost that it was a grave mistake to turn aside the counsel of the elder and experienced, and follow the advice of the young men. In all important matters the elders figure prominently in Old Testament times (see Ruth iv. 2-11). When a man was found slain (Deut. xxi. 4) the elders were summoned, and when a rebellious son had to receive sentence and punishment it could only be done after a declaration had been made to them (Deut. xxi. 20). We have no difficulty in finding out God's mind on this subject, for we have such an array of passages bearing upon the point. The whole tenor of those referred to serves to show that the elders were consulted in all things referring to discipline and judgment (Deut. xxii. and xxv.). The question may arise, "Who appointed them to the place of rule?" One thing is certain, it was not the people, for scriptural rule is never communistic or mobocratic, but aristocratic. The congregation did not appoint their rulers. This work fell to the lot of Moses, who was God's apostle. After his day we have little said as to how elders were appointed. It appears as if it were to a great extent a voluntary service. It may be asked—Are we always to obey the elders? Is their dictum law? The answer to this is plain. We ought to obey God rather than men, and whatever clashes with God's Word we are not to listen to. Elders may, and do, make mistakes, and should on this account be open to confer even with their juniors, and be willing to be guided by God's Word. If we contemplate the failures of Noah, David, or Solomon, and if we direct our attention to the days of Ahab, or even later when the Lord Jesus trod this earth, we are forcibly led to see that even amongst the ancients there is fallibility and sin. In the days when Ezekiel prophesied the iniquity of elders is specially marked, for God held them more responsible than the others. Thus we find God tells Ezekiel, "Son of man, these are the men that devise mischief, and give wicked counsel in this city" (Ezek. xi. 2).

It was the chief priests and the elders of the Jews that took the lead in withstanding the

Lord (Matt. xxvii. 1). They took counsel to put Him to death. It was they who persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus (Matt. xxvii. 20), and it was they who said, "He saved others; Himself He cannot save." They spoke of Him as "that deceiver," and when they knew He had risen from among the dead they gave money unto the soldiers to spread the false report. We have thus seen that the responsibilities of those of age and experience in a bygone day were to guide the sheep, to give the needed words of counsel. On them devolved the important duties of shepherding the flock and looking after the lost ones (Ezek. xxxii. 2-4). Alas! alas! they miserably failed to discharge their responsibilities. The flock was not fed or shepherded, and the sick and diseased were neglected. Not only so, but they took the lead in wickedness, and led on the others to put to death the Son of God.

We now come to consider the "estate of the elders" under the grace of the present dispensation. We find that one of the things which Paul commended Timothy for was "that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel" (Phil. ii. 22). Thus we have Paul the aged and Timothy the younger serving in the gospel as father and son. This shows the analogy that exists between the relationship between parents and children, and the elder and younger ones. God has so ordered that the elder and the younger be co-workers. The elders are to be treated as fathers (1 John ii. 13, 14) and the younger as sons. An elder should not be rebuked, but entreated as a father (1 Tim. v. 1), and the younger are to submit to the elder as children to a father (1 Pet. v. 5). The father should correct his children (Heb. xii. 9) without provoking them to wrath (Ephes. vi. 4). The children should be obedient (Col. iii. 20). The Lord Jesus subjected Himself to His earthly parents (Luke ii. 51), leaving us an example that we should follow His steps.

With the development of the Church the apostles of the Lord came into prominence. To these was given a special place, just as, under the old covenant, Moses, the apostle, was the leader. Moses, we saw, appointed elders to the place of rule; so the apostles, we are expressly told, appointed elders in every

church (Acts xiv. 23). Only on one occasion is it recorded of one other than an apostle doing this work (Tit. i. 5), and his power was limited to a certain area, and he was simply to do as Paul had prescribed unto him. In the Old Testament it is not mentioned that in any other than Moses was vested the authority to put elder ones in the place of rule, so in the present dispensation we have no warrant from the Scriptures to appoint elders. It is true that the elders laid their hands on certain persons (1 Tim. iv. 14), but this is quite another thing from appointing. The laying on of hands implies identification, and not ordination. The present subject, however, is not the appointment of elders, but their responsibilities in connection with the younger ones. With the Israelites an elder was of necessity a man of years, but it is obvious that elders in the Church are not necessarily so. The Israelites were born by nature into the commonwealth, but it requires a spiritual birth to be one of God's family now; hence men of experience may be found amongst us who are comparatively young in years. On the other hand an aged man may be newly converted, and quite a novice in the things of God, and we have definite instructions with regard to those newly come to the faith. They are not to be put in the place of rule lest they be lifted up with pride, and thus fall into the snare of the devil. We do well to notice that just as the elders put in the place of rule were to assist Moses, and not to work independently (Deut. i. 17), so the elders appointed by the apostles were to assist them in their work of shepherding the flock (see carefully Acts xv. 6, where we have a meeting composed only of apostles and elders, but the apostles occupy the more prominent position); but the decrees were sent out as coming from the apostles and elder brethren (Acts xv. 23, and xvi. 4). When we come to chapter xx. we find a meeting of elders with only one apostle. Paul on this occasion charges the elders to feed the Church of God. This shows that the work of caring for the Church was to be soon in the hands of the elders only, and that there was not to be a succession of apostles. It seems evident from 1 Thess. v. 12 that the appointment of elders was to cease after the days of the apostles, for we are there exhorted

to "know them that are over us in the Lord." Had they been appointed to the place of rule there would have been no need for such an injunction. It may be asked, How are we to know them? Heb. xiii. 7 will give us a clue to an answer. There we are told to consider, *i.e.*, sit down and ponder the issue of their manner of life. An overseer must be a man that is above the average in his walk, and a guide should go before and show the way, and not be found lagging behind. Show us a man whose faith we should imitate, and we will point out to you one who is fit to watch for our souls, and exercise oversight. If these considerations in any measure tend to promote unity amongst God's people, and to help to prevent friction between the elder and the younger, the labour involved will not have been in vain. May the Lord grant us that as elder ones we may attend to the responsibilities that rest with us in shepherding the flock, and as younger ones may we not set aside the aged, even though they may manifest declining energy or lack of gift, but look up to them as fathers, and submit to them, in so far as we can, with a good conscience, and in accordance with God's Word.

R. S.

### SANCTIFICATION.

"TO sanctify" means *to set apart, to separate*. Consideration of the following passages will show that to sanctify a person or thing does not mean to change its nature (Matt. vi. 9, xxiii. 17, 19; John x. 36, xvii. 19; Heb. ix. 13; 1 Peter iii. 15; compare Jer. i. 5).

The Holy Spirit is said to be the agent in the sanctification of the believer in four passages (Romans xv. 16, 1 Cor. vi. 11, 2 Thess. ii. 13, 1 Peter i. 2). In these we have truth supplemental to that taught in Romans viii. 28-30, Eph. i. 4, 5. Inasmuch as sanctification by the Spirit is mentioned before faith, obedience and the sprinkling of blood, we learn that our salvation had its origin in the work of the Spirit, and that faith, manifesting itself in obedience, brought us under the shelter of the blood of Christ. To this category we should probably refer Acts xx. 32, and xxvi. 18.

In one passage Christ Himself is said to be

the Agent (Eph. v. 26), which runs thus in R.V.:—"And gave Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the Word." The procuring cause of our sanctification, then, is "the offering of the "body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. x. 10); and that this sanctification is independent alike of our experience and of our apprehension of the truth we are assured a little later, for "by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (verse 14). Sanctification by blood is thus seen to be positional—*i.e.*, we have, in virtue of our union with Christ in His death, been brought into a new relationship with God (compare Heb. x. 29, xiii. 12). 1 Tim. iv. 5 offers an illustration. Sanctification, then, is that relationship with God to which we were set apart by the Holy Spirit, and into which we have been brought by the death of Christ. Only in association with Christ is such relationship with God possible (Heb. ii. 11). Sanctification stands, moreover, in virtue of that association, apart from any question of walk, as is abundantly evident from the Corinthian epistles. For the Corinthian Church is carnal, sectarian, full of envy and strife; their moral standard is low, and the table of the Lord spread among them is such only in name (1 Ep. xi. 20-22 R.V.), and the Divine displeasure has been marked already by the judgments of God (verse 30). Yet in the introduction to the very epistle from which we learn these things they are addressed as "sanctified in Christ Jesus" (see also chapter i. v. 30). As with justification so with sanctification, they depend not on our works but upon His work, not upon our experience but upon His one righteous act (Rom. v. 18). Man would have us gain a standing before God in virtue of our good behaviour; God would have us behave well since He Himself has given us such a good standing. "Put on therefore, as God's elect, sanctified and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving each other . . . as the Lord forgave you" (Col. iii. 12).

Romans vi. 19 is typical of quite a number of passages; to it we devote a few words. Before, as men in the flesh, unconverted, we

yielded our members to serve uncleanness and iniquity, bearing fruit unto these, thus manifesting in our behaviour our standing in, our relation to, the world. Now as converted spiritual men we present our members servants to righteousness, that, bringing forth fruit unto sanctification, we may make manifest our standing in Christ, our relationship to God. 1 Thess. iv. 3, 4, 7 has a like purport, thus elsewhere epitomised "Let your manner of life be worthy of the Gospel of Christ" (Phil. i. 27). It is incumbent upon us, whom God has made responsible members of His family, to continue in sanctification, to follow after it, for without it no man shall see the Lord (1 Tim. ii. 15, Heb. xii. 14).

Degrees of sanctification are not contemplated in Scripture. Under Moses' law to touch a dead body with the skirt was as disastrous as to lay the hand upon it. There were but two states, the clean and the unclean. Under the gospel men are either in or out of Christ, either in the kingdom of His dear Son, or still without God and without hope; justified and sanctified, or under the wrath of God, and unfit for His presence.

But whilst it is perfectly true that I cannot gain a standing by my life, it is equally true that my character as a man in Christ grows day by day. No character can be vicarious; Christ's character, exhibited in the gospels, cannot be transferred to me. Character is built, and for that building God has furnished both power and material. "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth" (John xvii. 17), and in proportion as we come in contact with and under the power of that word, do we "perfect sanctification in the fear of God" (2 Cor. vii. 1). But the word translated "sanctification" here is not the word we have hitherto dealt with. The latter denotes the standing into which we were brought, the former the character which befits that standing. It is of the grace of God that we are sanctified in the first sense, it is of our patient continuance in well-doing and unquestioning submission to the Word that enables Him to "establish our hearts unblameable in sanctification before our God and Father at the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints" (1 Thess. iii. 13). Akin to this is Eph. v. 26, where the purpose

of Christ for His Body is, stated, "having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that He might present the Church to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be sanctified and without blemish." Lord help us to cleanse our ways, giving heed thereto according to Thy Word (Ps. cxix. 9).

C. F. H.

LANDMARKS OF THE FUTURE.—IX.

## THE MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST IN GLORY.

**N**OW, I want to show you from Matthew, Mark, and Luke that this is immediately after the tribulation spoken of. I have dealt with the fact of the tribulation, and from these three scriptures we gather the moment of time when this shall be. Matt. xxiv. 29—"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened," &c. Here is an intertwining of the past tribulation and the great tribulation. Luke xxi. 24 tells of the down-treading of Jerusalem, and then follows another statement—"There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, &c." "Then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory." Then verse 28—"And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." I submit that this is to the *Jews* distinctly—"Your redemption draweth nigh" *as a nation*. I don't say it does not include others, but the primary thought is that when these signs appear, it is immediately prior to the appearing of the Son of Man for the redemption of His chosen nation.

Now, if this be so, what will it bring about with it? Because the mere statement of the abstract truth that the Lord Jesus will come, without saying what He will bring about when He does come, may enter the *mind*, but the *heart* must be stirred before the mind can enjoy. And I want you to see from 1 Cor. xv. what it is destined to bring about. Verses 23-28—"But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits: afterward they that are Christ's at His coming. Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the

kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith, "all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." Then shall we see Ps. viii. fulfilled, the whole creation told to sing, "O Lord our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth!"

Now, in Rev. xix. and xx., where you get mention made of the reappearing of the Lord Jesus, what do you get? You get the powers that oppose Him crushed; Satan bound; you get the Lord with His saints reigning; you get mention made of a thousand years blessedness, and after the thousand years you get Satan loosed again for a little season before he is finally bound. I shall submit next lecture what shall be the condition of the habitable earth during that time of a thousand years. I have a vast mass of scripture to give you next time as to the condition of the world after this has taken place, after the Lord Jesus has come and literally taken the reins of power into His own hands, and when He hath commanded His faithful of every generation to execute His purpose. I believe that unto the Son of Man is given not only authority and sceptre, but it is given also to Him to utilise the service of His saints in that kingdom and that day. It is given to the redeemed to have the joy of sharing with their kingly Redeemer the rule of that day, in seeing their Lord crowned with potential majesty, and to have the joy of sharing this with Him. The Christian's heart longs, not for earthly power, but for *spiritual* power. The Christian's heart never takes up earthly power to bring about earthly things, but longs for *spiritual* power. And to us is given the power of the Spirit of the Lord to carry out the Lord's desires and intentions. *That* is simply majestic in its influence. You have no conception of the might of the Spirit against the hosts of darkness; better give up Christian

work if you do not believe that the Spirit of God is mighty against these enemies. And the time is coming when this shall be given to His people in full, that it may empower them to execute the will of their beloved Lord wholly.

Now, lastly, it is written by one of our poets that,

“Six thousand years have well-nigh spent  
Their tardy and disastrous course.” . . .

The great creation Sabbath dawns, and if a thousand years are as a day, on the seventh day shall rest be given to groaning creation. I want you to see that this is intimately connected with the rest of His people. Rom. viii. 22, 23—“For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” Not only does creation groan, waiting for Ps. viii. to be fulfilled, but “we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption; to wit, the redemption of the body.” Thus we get the unfolding of that great Sabbath day which is close at hand. Nearly six thousand years have gone, and a thousand years are but as a day; and when the clock striketh yonder, when the seventh day of creation is ushered in, there will be rest. But the seventh day must be ushered in by the One who has destined His Son to reappear for the restitution of all things, and of whom He has spoken by all the holy prophets since the world began. Don't fear, we shall see the Lord Jesus set all these things in order when He comes. Don't expect the world to get better first. Scripture gives no hope of it, but links every blessing with the day to come, when it will be restored by the Lord Jesus Himself, the day of the manifestation of Christ in glory. For when the Lord Jesus shall appear, we shall appear with Him in glory. Then shall come what we have been looking at before, that will be the Sabbath day for creation; then God will look upon His re-creation again, out of the hand of His Beloved Son, and God will rest in what His Son doeth.

This, then, brings before us virtually, that there cometh a time (and when that time

cometh it will be a blessed time), linked with the return of the Lord Jesus, when He will be empowered of God to put down all rule and authority and power; that the saints, God's people, God's redeemed, will then, in new-creation vigour and in new-creation power, serve Him day and night, and that then will be fulfilled all that the holy prophets have foretold as to the condition yet to be upon this earth, such as earth never yet has known since sin came into it. Now for this we wait, we look, and this will be as certainly as we are living beings here.

Now, “what manner of persons” ought we to be, looking for, and hastening that day; looking for, longing for our Lord to come and usher it in. May God grant that it soon may be, for Christ's sake. A. O. M.

### THE GREAT SALVATION.

THE sin and folly of rejecting a *gift* is increased according to the *value* of the gift. To reject a mere trifle is one thing—to reject a great blessing is another. Everything that God gives is good, and therefore *everything* ought to be received by us “with thanksgiving.” This glorifies God, and keeps man in his proper place. God the *giver*, man the *receiver*. But in salvation the free *gift* of eternal life and glory is so immense that the apostle cannot but exclaim, “How shall we escape if we neglect so *great* salvation?” (Heb. ii. 3).

In proportion to the height of blessing despised, so is the weight of punishment assigned. Nothing can be greater than the *privileges* of a present truster in Christ—nothing past, in the way of salvation, and nothing to come, can possibly equal them. Eternal association in glory with the risen Son of God, to be the “sons of God” and “joint-heirs with Christ,” is the portion of every poor sinner who now believes the gospel. How immense, then, is the sin of despising *this* grace! If those who despised the law of Moses died without mercy, of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot *the Son of God*? “If they escaped not who refused Him that spake *on earth*, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that (now) speaketh *from heaven*” (Heb. xii. 25).

## VALLEY OF DEATH'S SHADOW.

## THE TRUTH THAT SANCTIFIES.

## PART III.

My soul, awake! Turn thee to God,  
Uplift thy gaze,  
From out the Valley of Death's Shadow;  
Trammels of flesh and self shake off.  
Above the atmosphere of sin's domain,  
With eagle flight, soar thou to heights sublime,  
Soar heavenward, gyrating upward ever—  
Upward, still upward, wing thou thy flight,  
Till thou the empyrean breathe, in pure, unsullied light,  
In altitude of spirit-life, of bliss supreme.  
E'en afar, beyond the ken of human thought,  
Extend thy view, scan thou the vista, beyond the bourn  
of Time;

Gaze thou upon the unsearchable, the unknown,  
Drink in the vision of the invisible;  
Satiated thyself in depths profound of Love Divine,  
For in yon glory-land, Emmanuel, God with us,  
illumes the scene.

No darkness there, no lust, no pride of life,  
No wail of woe, no outcry of despair,  
No heartache there, no corroding care;  
Troubles of the pilgrim pathway all forgot,  
Thy sufferings o'er, thy wounds all healed,  
Doubtings and failings ne'er can enter there;  
Environment of sympathy, sincere and true,  
Salvation's Cup with love brims o'er.

Conscious thou of bliss supernal, fount perennial  
Of Love Divine, overflowing from its depths profound.  
Thou now canst learn, e'en in the wilderness,  
The dreary waste of sin and shame,  
Amid the conflict and the strife,  
God's school of discipline paternal,  
That thou art blest.

Thou art not left unguarded, unsustained;  
Thy daily food, the living bread,  
Like dew distilled from heaven.  
From riven rock, once cleft by judgment stroke,  
Forth flows the living stream to cheer thee on the way;  
And now thou canst, in evidence of faith,  
By grace of love, unsought, immeasurable,  
Assume thy place, as fixed by royal decree,  
One with Christ in God, thy Father He!  
Shut in with God, thou art at rest, within the veil,  
Fellowship divine, ineffable!

Vicissitudes of Time no longer thee perplex,  
Willing art thou to drink the cup thy Father gives—  
To do the work He calls thee to.  
The heavenlies thy spirit's dwelling place,  
The Holy Ghost thy Comforter.

In fellowship with Father and with Son,  
No care hast thou, no fear, no dread.  
In faith unshaken, in sure and steadfast hope,  
In confidence unbroken, the peace of God  
Doth keep thee, heart and mind, in calm repose,  
All weak and feeble, nothing in thyself,  
Yet strong in strength omnipotent, invincible in might,  
All things to do canst thou, thy path to triumph leads.  
Erst awhile, the crown of life awaiteth thee,  
At the dawning of the day, Christ Himself shall come,  
His own to gather home, copartners of His throne.  
O soul respond, in energy of faith, yearn out the cry,  
"Lord Jesus come!" O quickly come! W. R. V.

THERE is one thing absolutely certain:  
no truth can be known to any sancti-  
fying purpose that is taken up as a  
mere dogma. Christ Himself is the truth.  
The truth, therefore, can only be learned to  
purpose as *He* is known. The Word reveals  
Him; but the Word is only understood through  
the Spirit, while in the new man only can that  
be received by faith which the Spirit opens up.

The truth, in fact, is *life*; for Christ is life  
as well as truth; and in the harmony in which  
truth is presented to us in the Word, it is  
intimately connected and interwoven with our  
daily life and walk in Christ.

The truth is *sanctifying* only as it is *thus*  
known; and *thus* known, it *will be* sanctifying.  
What *the Spirit teaches* is received in the  
channel of experience; the heart is *prepared*  
to receive it. Nothing is put there by God  
(who *only* can put it there) that does not make  
manifest its divine origin, and lead to com-  
munion with Him from whom it came. The  
heart, however, is not simply *prepared* to  
receive it, but *needs* the truth for which it is  
prepared. Nothing can satisfy, nothing still  
the conscience that is awakened to a sense of  
shortcoming and need, but the fitted truth,  
known in power, about which it is exercised  
before God. When the matter of forgive-  
ness of sin through the blood of the cross is  
settled, the Holy Spirit having demonstrated  
in the conscience the present and eternal  
efficacy thereof, the craving of the new man is  
after conformity to Christ. Like water, it  
never can be still till it has found its level;  
hence, in the healthy action of the new man  
there is a continual growth, continual growing  
up into Christ, though struggling with the  
flesh notwithstanding. There is *satisfaction*,  
indeed, with the measure attained, so far as  
that which *is* reached is truth, and, therefore,  
real gain; yet what we know through the  
unction received only seems to show us how  
little we do know. Hence there is a forgetting  
of the things which are behind, and a reaching  
forth to the things which are before. But in  
the day in which we live—and that is the day,  
practically, which we have to do with—it is  
well to consider what a vast amount of that  
which is really the truth of God, and which

we talk of "holding," is only picked up on the authority of some teacher (I object not, surely, to human instrumentality; "Feed My sheep" was the Chief Shepherd's charge to His servants), and not being carried to God, and weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, and then fed upon in the inner man, it is held in the head apart from living communion with Him whose truth it really may be; the consequence of which is, that it puffs up, and devours with spiritual pride, those who make their boast in it; and then, with lowly words on the lip, practical lawlessness in the life is the wretched result.

"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children *walk in truth*" (3 John 4).

### Questions and Answers.

We shall greatly value remembrance in prayer that special wisdom and grace may be given for this service.

We desire to express our thanks to all who have sent answers. - Replies to appear in the next number require to be sent in not later than 15th of present month, and so on; the 15th of the month being always the latest to which we can defer making up for press.

THE EDITOR.

#### Replies are invited to the following:—

SEVEN TIMES.—What is the meaning of the expression "seven times," four times repeated in Leviticus xxvi. ? Is it possible by this chapter to decide in what year the times of the Gentiles will end?

THE OLIVE TREE.—Does the olive tree in Romans xi. refer to Christ? if so, in what sense are we to understand the wild olive branches being broken off again?

THEM OF OLD TIME.—What is the correct reading in Matthew v., "by them of old time" as in A.V., or "to them of old time" as in R.V. ? And was Christ on that occasion teaching in opposition to the traditions of men?

THE LAST TRUMP.—Is the "last trump" of I Corinthians xv. 52 identical with the seventh one of Revelations xi. 15? Paul evidently had visions somewhat similar to John (2 Corinthians xii. 1-4).

FORMS OF WORSHIP.—What answer can we give those who tell us that a form of worship is right because Christ Himself attended the temple service?

FAITH.—Why is "faith" mentioned as *precious* faith in 2 Peter i. 1? Does Psalm ciii. 6 refer to millennial times? Please explain I Cor. viii. 11.

THE TEN VIRGINS.—To what period or dispensation does the parable of the virgins (Matthew xxv.) refer?

THE KINGDOMS.—Are the terms "kingdom of God" and "kingdom of heaven" synonymous? and if not, please explain the difference.

WATCHING CHRISTIANS.—What answer can we give those who tell us that only those Christians living very near to the Lord, and looking for His appearing, will be caught up to meet Him in the air?

JESUS IN THE MIDST.—Are we to gather from Matthew xviii. 20 that our Lord is in our midst otherwise than as Christ *in you the hope of glory*; or is He further manifested in our midst when thus gathered?

### INSPIRATION OF ECCLESIASTES.

QUESTION 455.—Is the teaching of Ecclesiastes divine? and if so, does it apply now, or could the book be regarded as an inspired record of human wisdom?

Ans. A.—Most certainly the teaching is divine. The chief advantage which the Jews had was that unto them were committed the oracles of God. In consequence of this there was in the days of Jesus Christ on the earth a recognised canon of Scripture, which included the books we now know as the Old Testament and none other. Ecclesiastes was among them. They had these books in two languages, viz., the original Hebrew and a Greek translation thereof, known as the Septuagint. Our blessed Lord quoted out of this recognised canon from the first chapter of Genesis to the last chapter of Malachi. He called it "the Word of God," and also said "the Scripture cannot be broken." Thus He endorsed the Old Testament Scriptures with the weight of His authority. Therefore the Bible and Jesus Christ are bound up together. Jesus Christ and the Bible stand or fall together. He bore testimony to the Scriptures, and the Scriptures bore testimony of Him. This is an effectual answer to all who seek to invalidate small or large portions of Holy Scripture, whether Genesis or Ecclesiastes, whether Isaiah or any other book. I shall not touch on the splendid internal evidences of the Divine origin of Ecclesiastes, although they are abundant, being fully satisfied with the endorsement of Jesus Christ.

"Does it apply now?" says the questioner. Most certainly, being Scripture given by God, it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfected, thoroughly furnished to every good work.

J. S.

Ans. B.—May we not take Ecclesiastes as the experience of a man whom God had endowed with all that heart could wish for, apart from God Himself. We find the key in the words "*under the sun*," &c., (chap. i. 9, 13, 14, &c.). He tries all things under the sun, apart from God Himself; and seeking only to gratify self, he says, "*I made me, I gat me.*" God allows man all these apart from Himself, and when he has tried everything he gives his testimony. "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." This view explains chap. vii. 16. It is written from the standpoint of a man who is seeking only his own ends.

A. J.

Ans. C.—Ecclesiastes is in large part an amplification of such New Testament passages as I Cor. vii. 31, I Tim. v. 6, 8, I Tim. iv. 8 (which see, to save quotation—taking such portions only as relate to matters of this present life). Many passages of the book show that the scope of its

inquiry into human affairs is specifically limited by the purpose of its writer to time things. Prove this by reference to chap. iii. 20, 21, ix. 3, as examples. This is an essential feature of the book, and must be remembered to profit in reading it. However, it is not forgotten that the present has an all-important relation to the future. (See chaps. xi. 8, 9, xii. 13, 14). The general conclusions the preacher enforces are that a moderate use of the things of the world is the truest wisdom for this world; that the libertine on the one hand and the ascetic on the other both miss the mark, and that even on the low count of happiness in this life to fear God and keep His commandments is the only true wisdom. Ecclesiastes deals with the *ordinary* circumstances of life, fellowship with Christ Jesus makes an *extraordinary* life, and of this we have something in the next book of the sacred canon, "The Song of Songs," which is Solomon's. W. P.

**Ans. D.**—Ecclesiastes is the divine *record* of Solomon's experience given for our instruction, wherein Solomon, at God's bidding, recounts his misspent years and their vanity, and concludes by "Fear God and keep *His* commandments" as the whole duty of man. A. O. M.

**Editor's Note.**—There is a marvellous variety in God's methods of teaching. He uses not only direct command and prohibition, doctrine and reproof, but also types and illustrations, histories and prophecies, and very frequently and abundantly the experiences of men.

The book of Ecclesiastes is one of experience. Without it the Scriptures would lack an essential part of their teaching. The expression in ii. 12—"What can the man do that cometh after the King?"—sheds light upon the character of the book.

God purposely allowed Solomon in his unparalleled reign of peace and prosperity to possess the means of gratifying to the fullest extent of human capacity every natural desire. He attained actually to what the whole world has ever been striving after—*viz.*, the full gratification of "the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life."

One man was permitted thus to reach the goal of human desire, and he records for the instruction of all ages what the net result amounted to in his case. It yielded no satisfaction. It is summed up in the sad and solemn words—"Vanity of vanities all is vanity." Happy are they who are content to profit by the experience of another.

That there are points of obscurity and difficulty in the book we frankly admit; but such are common to Scripture, and we should question the divinity of a book in which there was nothing that presented difficulty to our finite, and often biassed, understanding.

## THE LORD'S BODY.

**QUESTION 456.**—Please explain, through the "Witness," 1 Corinthians xi. 29, "Not discerning the Lord's body." Would we understand this "body" to be "the Church" or His own "glorified body"?

**Ans. A.**—Faith's eye loves to behold and contemplate the body of our blessed Lord hanging bruised and broken on the Cross. It is that sight which is "meat indeed," and without which none can eat "the supper of the Lord," though he may carnally eat the loaf. He that does not by faith discern in the broken loaf the broken body of the Lord is eating carnally, and is not in communion with the Lord, indicating a condition of heart and life that calls for judgment. If, however, we discern ourselves as crucified in and with Christ, and necessarily then all saints likewise crucified, we shall thus eat worthily and not be judged. Therefore the words, "If he discern not the body" (R.V.), do signify: If he discern not "the Lord's body" on the Cross primarily, and also subordinately, himself and all saints there crucified in Him. Oh! how catholic is the true supper of the Lord; how unsectarian. M. T. B.

**Ans. B.**—"Not discerning the Lord's body," means not discriminating between the memorial of Christ and an ordinary meal. The apostle wrote to the Corinthian saints: "When ye come together therefore into one place this is not to eat the LORD'S Supper, for in eating every one taketh before other his OWN supper, and one is hungry and another is drunken." In verse 29 the word "Lord's" is omitted by the R.V., but this does not necessarily change the sense. The allusion is unquestionably to the Lord's body, as also in verse 24—"My body"; verse 27, "body and blood of the Lord"; and in each of the first three gospels, "Take, eat: this is My body." To bring in the Church here is to introduce something altogether out of harmony with the context. The wrong was entire forgetfulness of the Lord's self-sacrificing love. God could not tolerate such indifference on the part of His people, the result being that, under His chastening hand, many were sickly and many had already fallen asleep. J. D.

**Ans. C.**—Verse 24 shows us that the broken bread signifies His body broken for us, *i.e.*, given unto death on the Cross. To eat unworthily was to eat not discerning spiritually the solemn meaning of the ordinance as showing forth the Lord's death—not discerning that it signified the very giving up of the life of the blessed Lord Jesus on the Cross. What grievous condition of soul to be in—to carelessly partake of the ordinance unaffected by the deep reality it signifies!

A. O. M.