

THE
BELIEVER'S
PATHWAY.

DEVOTED ENTIRELY TO

The Great Truths of God's Word for His People.

EDITED BY A. J. HOLIDAY.

VOLUME X., 1889..

(Coloured Diagram and Articles on "Feasts of the Lord.")

GLASGOW:

THE WITNESS OFFICE, 180 BUCHANAN STREET.

(HENRY PICKERING, MANAGER.)

LONDON:

JAMES E. HAWKINS, 17 PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.; 36 BAKER STREET, W.

QUESTIONS.

	PAGE.
1.—Have the gifts of healing and the working of miracles ceased in the Church? Those who believe in faith-healing say that they take Jesus for their bodies as well as for their souls, resting their faith on Matt. viii. 17, James v. 15, and other scriptures. Is this a right use of these scriptures?	23
2.—What is meant by "Not by water only, but by water and blood" (1 John v. 6)?	24
3.—Is there any objection to using the expression, "the brethren," when speaking of believers who are endeavouring to carry out the instructions of God's Word in their church fellowship? If there is, how can we distinguish between such and other Christians?	36
4.—In some parts of the country it is customary at funerals to hand wine, and sometimes spirits, round to the mourners, as well as to the coachmen and attendants. Would you consider custom to be sufficient reason for the compliance with such a habit?	48
5.—In your answer to Question 3, in the March Number, you use the expression, "Believers gathered 'to' the name of the Lord Jesus." On what ground do you say "gathered 'to' the name," instead of "in" the name, as in Matt. xviii. 20?	60
6.—Can you throw any light upon the following words from Matt. xvi. 18, "And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"?	71
7.—We sometimes hear it said in connection with the sinner and the Gospel, that the very simplicity of the Gospel often stumbles the sinner. Does not such a statement dishonour the work of Christ?	72
8.—Is there any scripture for or against the custom, found in some assemblies, of the same brother giving thanks for both the bread and the wine?	84
9.—Are the Lord's words in Luke xi. 13 a reason why believers in this day should pray for the Holy Spirit?	95
10.—Is there any reason why a Christian, who has taken the place of one gathered to the Name of the Lord Jesus, should not take part in mission-work with Christians in denominations, provided that he is committed to no wrong doctrine or false position, and that all know what he holds, and leave him at liberty to follow up young converts, and teach them all that he knows himself?	107
11.—What is implied in the phrase "owning the lordship of Christ"? and when may one say that he has owned the lordship of Christ?	119
12.—Should elders be appointed; and, if so, who should appoint them?	130, 143

CONTENTS.

Special Articles on THE FEASTS OF THE LORD—10, 16, 27, 40, 53, 66,
75, 87, 104, 113, 125, 137.

A Contrast,	100	" Lo, I have told you before," ..	45
" An Idle Soul shall suffer hunger,"	129	" Lo, this is our God,"	112
" An Odour of a sweet smell," ..	140	Ministry—Human and Divine, ..	44
" Bless the Lord, O My Soul," ..	1	" Not of the World,"	97
Baptism and Salvation,	32	Questions and Answers, 23, 36, 48, 60, 71, 84, 95, 107, 119, 130, 143	
Believing God,	111	" Ready,"	37
Comfort for troubled Saints,	13	Stumbling-blocks,	15
" Conflict in Heavenly Places," ..	51	" Strong in Faith, giving Glory to God,"	121
Christendom and her relationship to World-power, .. 63, 80, 101, 115		The After-meeting,	4
" Dull of Hearing,"	14	The Habitation of God and its Holiness,	8
" Disciples " or " Churches of Christ,"	32	The Sealing of the Holy Spirit, ..	61
Expediency,	91	" There they made Him a Supper,"	82
Feasts of the Lord (<i>see note above</i>).		" The Lord is my Shepherd," ..	85
" For ye are yet carnal,"	30	" The Easy-chair,"	119
" For Love's Sake,"	73, 93	What are you aiming at?	22
False Accusations,	109	When are believers sealed by the Holy Spirit?	56
Great Expectations,	70	" When the Hour was come," ..	69
Go Forward,	123	" Whatsoever doth make manifest is Light,"	118
Glorifying God,	133	Workers, not Loiterers,	135
How we strengthen or weaken the hands of God's servants,	25		
" Is there not a cause?"	2		
" In the bosom of the Father," ..	49		

POETRY.

An Example. (John xiii. 15.) E. B.	78	Heart Longings,	19
" Blessed are they that do His Com- mandments." W. A. G.	43	" Let not your heart be troubled." E.B.	7
" Christ in All." A. F. P.	31	One by One. A. W. P. S.	118
Excelsior. A. W. P. S.	90	" Stayed on Thee,"	142
Guidance. J. P.	128	" They watched Him there.' (Matt. xxvii. 36.) A. F. P.	65
God is Love. G. S. J.	55	Waiting for Thee. A. W. P. S. ..	103

THE PATHWAY VOLUME FOR 1889

will be posted free to any address. In Paper Covers, 6d; Cloth Covers, 1/. Quantities at a reduction.

Volumes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 are still on sale at above prices.

SPECIAL OFFER OF PATHWAY VOLUMES

for Sunday Schools, Bible Readings, Young Converts, &c.

☛ **THE SET OF 8 VOLUMES, IN PAPER, for 2/9, post free.**

☛ **THE SET OF 8 VOLUMES, IN CLOTH, for 5/, post free.**

☛ **The First Four Volumes, edited by William Shaw, in Paper, 1/6, post free, or in Cloth, 2/6, post free.**

The last four volumes, edited by A. J. Holiday, at same prices.

OUR MONTHLY MAGAZINES.

THE WITNESS. A Monthly Journal of Biblical Literature. Edited by JOHN R. CALDWELL. 1d. 1/6 per year, post free. 4 copies, 4/.

THE BELIEVER'S PATHWAY. For Young Christians. Edited by A. J. HOLIDAY. 1/2d. 1/ per year, post free. 6 copies, 3/.

THE HERALD OF SALVATION. Clear, pointed Gospel. 1/2d. 1/ per year.

BOYS AND GIRLS. Illustrated Gospel Magazine. Large Cuts. 1/2d. 1/ per year.

GOOD SEED. A Family Magazine. Illustrated. 1d.

THE EVANGELIST. For broadcast distribution. Pictures. 1/ per 100.

GOOD SEED LEAFLET. 4 pages. Large Illustration. 1/ per 100.

THE BELIEVER'S PATHWAY

IS PUBLISHED AT THE BEGINNING OF EACH MONTH.

PRICE ONE HALFPENNY.

Its pages are devoted entirely to the great truths of God's Word for His people; and it is humbly intended that the articles appearing in its columns should be the Message of God to His people in a dark and evil day.

To secure *The Pathway* regularly every month by post, you have only to send twelve penny stamps, or, if in Canada or United States, a 25 cent. note, stating how to be addressed. So there need be no difficulty at all, if you wish to have the help it affords.

Post free, for **One Year**, in the United Kingdom, United States, Canada, and other Countries in the Postal Union, payable in advance.

1 Copy, . . . 1/. | 2 Copies, . . . 1/6. | 4 Copies, . . . 2/6.
Six Copies or more at 6d. each Copy.

RATES FOR QUANTITIES, POST FREE, PAYABLE IN ADVANCE.

25 Copies Monthly, 1/ per month; 2/9 per Quarter; 11/ for One Year.

50 " " 2/ " 5/3 " 22/ "

100 " " 3/6 " 10/ " £2 "

One dozen Specimen Copies for giving away, post free, to any address, on application.

THE PUBLISHING OFFICE, 180 BUCHANAN STREET, GLASGOW.

TELEGRAMS: "WITNESS, GLASGOW."

HENRY PICKERING, MANAGER.

"BLESS THE LORD, O MY SOUL."

WE have most of us been taught that the name Jehovah, by which God was known to His people Israel, is composed by joining together the past, present and future tenses of the verb to be, and signifies, "I was, I am, I shall be." So that when the psalmist bursts out into a triumphant burst of praise, with the words, "Bless Jehovah, O my soul," he is calling to mind that the God of the past, with all its wonders of redeeming grace, and the God of the future, with all its store of coming glory, is also the God of to-day, "a very present help in trouble."

And do we not delight to call to remembrance the same precious truth? Many a time have we joined to sing—

" We'll praise Him for all that is past,
And trust Him for all that's to come";

and the oftener we sing it, the more precious the words become.

We are accustomed to regard the beginning of a new year as a sort of halting-place, where we should pause a moment, to look back over the past of our journey. And how every such review gives fresh occasion for Joshua's declaration, that not one good thing hath failed us, of all the good things which the Lord our God spake concerning us.

However, under the pressure of trouble, we may have been tempted to question and murmur, we cannot fail to perceive the good hand of God, even in the heaviest trial, as we look back upon it; and even of such deep sorrows as Job experienced, we can say that we have "seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (Jas. v. 11). In the same way we can look forward into the future, and exclaim with confidence, "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness" (Ps. xvii. 15).

But it is about the present we are so apt to break down. When we look back and when we look forward, we are able to get beyond circumstances and to see God in all. But when it is a question of to-day, the things all around us look so large, that we often fail to endure, like Moses, "as seeing Him who is invisible."

Jehovah, our Lord, who is the God of yesterday and the God of for ever, is also the God of to-day. Let us take fresh courage, then, and praise Him more worthily, as once again we lift up our New-year's song, and say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits."

"IS THERE NOT A CAUSE?"

THE evils of drunkenness ever since the days of Noah, the first recorded wine manufacturer, have been only too plainly stamped on the page of history, whether sacred or profane. Yet, while, on the one hand, the sinfulness of drunkenness is plainly taught, and, on the other, the virtues of temperance are everywhere enforced, God's Word does not insist on total abstinence.

True, we read that no drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of heaven (1 Cor. vi. 10, and Gal. v. 21); that a drunkard must be put outside the assembly as a wicked person (1 Cor. v. 11-13); that a deacon, or one recognised as serving the assembly, and also the aged women, must not be "given to *much* wine" (1 Tim. iii. 8, and Titus ii. 3); that the overseer must not be "given to wine" (1 Tim. iii. 3, and Titus i. 7). Yet it would be a straining of Scripture to say that total abstinence is directly enjoined in Holy Writ. The special order of the Nazarites (Num. vi. 3) and of the sons of Rechab (Jer. xxxv.), or the special instruction to the priesthood (Lev. x. 9, and Ezek. xliv. 21), are but the exceptions that prove the rule. Again, if we are to gather that Timothy did abstain, the fact that he is recommended to take a *little* wine as medicine, without words of further caution, shows that in Paul's time it was at least an open question whether Christians should abstain or not (1 Tim. v. 23).

The question then arises, does the same liberty remain *now*, or have the conditions of the case so altered in *certain* countries as to require a different line of action? For, be it remembered, that which is lawful is not always expedient (1 Cor. vi. 12). Given the altered facts, would Scripture justify the change in practice, or does God's Word contain principles which are in direct opposition to abstinence? If they do, then abstinence must go; for at *any cost* the authority of God's Word must be upheld. But is it so? Romans xiv. 21 settles it. The Holy Spirit, through Paul, writes: "It is GOOD neither to eat flesh, *nor to drink wine, nor any thing* whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak."

There was not sufficient evidence that moderate wine drinking in those days was a stumbling-stone to others, hence abstinence was left an open question. In Great Britain have the drinking customs of the people so increased as to make abstinence a good thing? We believe they have. We deny that any analogy may fairly be drawn

“Is there not a Cause?”

between the wine-growing countries of the east and the spirit and beer drinking countries of the west. The drink itself, its mode of manufacture and distribution, and the prevalence of excessive drinking all differ greatly.

No impartial historian will refuse to allow that at least three great benefits have been conferred on mankind by the silent power and force of Christianity: the raising of the woman from the position of domestic slave to that of the true helpmeet, the abolition of polygamy, and the abolition of slavery.

Yet all must also admit that these three citadeis, so to speak, of the enemy have fallen before the gentle spirit of Christianity, rather than before any express commandment; and we do well to remember that the upholders of these iniquities, like the upholders of the drink traffic, have always professed to find a covering for their wickedness in the seeming silence of Scripture. Now, we believe the drinking customs of the present age in this country to be as much opposed to the mind of God as any of the three iniquities named, and we would seek to press this matter home. Why should the use of strong drink as a beverage (apart from its medicinal use) be defended? It cannot be for righteousness sake, for the kingdom of God is not meat or *drink*; hence the apostle argues that while it may be a sin to take, it *cannot be a sin to abstain*. “*It is good* neither to eat flesh, nor *to drink wine*, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.” It is hinted here that circumstances *may* exist under which abstinence would be good. Not, we repeat, because wine and strong drink are in themselves sinful, but because the use of them may be harmful to others. Are we placed in such circumstances now? What are the facts? The national drink bill mounts up to 150 millions; the army of drunkards to 600,000; the number of deaths directly caused by drink each year is estimated at 60,000.

All admit drunkenness to be a great national sin. “It inflicts greater calamities than the three great historic scourges of war, famine and pestilence combined,” says a great authority, who is not himself an abstainer. Surely, then, the circumstances that make it “good” not to drink are now or never.

Ruined homes and blighted lives declare that the time is *now*. The awful army sweeping down to a drunkard's grave say “Now.” The wrecked lives of those who once ran well, the experience of shepherds in the churches, the histories of our assemblies, all help to swell the bitter cry, and one and all

The After-meeting.

unite to implore that the hand of Christian pity and of Christian love shall be stretched out to help.

The spirit of Christianity is the spirit of self-sacrifice. To be a follower of Christ is to deny oneself. Is there not a cause? One of the woes uttered by our Lord was against those who laden men with burdens and refuse to help with one of their fingers (Luke xi. 46). How shall we escape its force, if, whilst we exhort our brethren and sisters, to whom drink is a temptation, to abstain, we ourselves partake? Many a dear saint has to battle, even unto blood, against the craving for strong drink. Shall we share with these the burden, and strengthen them by our own abstaining, or shall we boast of our liberty to take, even though the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died (1 Cor. viii. 11)?

What will the unbeliever think of our earnestness about his soul in the meeting, if outside he knows that that earnestness and zeal will not suffice to make us give up one pleasure of the table? If we exhort fellow-saints to keep clear of the public-house, and proclaim the outside to be the only safe side, will our words have power if, all the time, it is known that we keep a stock in the cellar at home?

If our wish to keep our poor fellow-saints, *and, it may be, their children*, from such places is not strong enough to call for self-denial, can we wonder if our words seem to them to be but idle tales?

“Take heed, lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak” (1 Cor. viii. 9). “Abstain from all appearance of evil” (1 Thess. v. 22). “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men” (Gal. vi. 10).

THE AFTER-MEETING.

WE had been sent for to visit a sick man in the hospital one day. It was not the regular visiting day, and while we were talking by the poor man's bedside one of the doctors came in to make his round of the ward. He was accompanied by two or three nurses, and he had not been in the ward long when one of these nurses was sent to us with a message requesting that we would retire, as the doctor objected to any conversation going on while he was seeing the patients. We felt that this was only a reasonable request, and it has since occurred to us that the incident might convey a valuable lesson in connection with after or inquiry meetings,

The After-meeting.

as they are commonly called, following upon the preaching of the Gospel.

When the doctor came in to see the patients, it was necessary that everything should be stopped, which might in any way interfere with the important business he was engaged upon. There were just three classes of persons whose presence was required, and all others had to be shut out. These were, first, the doctor himself; second, the patients; third, the nurses. This is just what is wanted at an after-meeting. First, there is the Great Physician; next, we want the patients. All the people occupying beds in that hospital ward not only were ill, but they knew it. They were there because they were ill and wished to be cured. We do not believe it is to any purpose to try to detain persons at an after-meeting who are in no way convicted of sin and seeking salvation. If there are no anxious, seeking souls, the Christians had better give themselves to prayer for blessing on the word that has been spoken, than try to compel persons to stay behind against their will. This latter course hinders people from coming again, and gets the place a bad name, so that others are hindered too.

But in the hospital ward, besides the doctor and the patients, there were the nurses. These nurses were persons acting entirely under the doctor's orders, and in full sympathy with all the doctor was doing. Some of them might be comparatively inexperienced, for there must be a beginning in everything; but some, at least, would be wise, through past training, to deal with the many cases put under their care. The chief matter, however, was that everyone should receive instructions from the doctor about each particular case, and faithfully carry out those instructions. And how needful this is for all of us if we would be soul-winners! The circumstances and condition of the different anxious souls we speak to may vary as much as those of the patients in the hospital. Only He who knows what is in man can rightly judge concerning each one, and surely prescribe the needed treatment. We learn from Isa. l. 4, that it is by having our ear wakened each morning to hear Jehovah's instructions, we acquire the tongue of an instructed one, to know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary. At each bedside the doctor, having first considered the case himself, turns to the nurse to give directions how the sufferer shall be treated, and it is her place afterwards to carry out exactly what the doctor has prescribed. Is it not a pattern for us? We need to be in true sympathy

The After-meeting.

with the Great Physician, and entirely subject to His instructions. It is His infinite knowledge and skill that must search out the secret of each troubled heart, and determine the suited portion of His precious Word to meet the case. It is our place to hear Him speak and to act according to the guidance we get from Him.

What power there would be in an after-meeting where these conditions were present! There were times at the hospital when it was lawful enough for friends to be chatting with the patients, or for the nurses to be conversing together. But when the doctor was going round the ward, everything of that sort would have been completely out of place and could not be tolerated. Let us see to it, then, that we are like the nurses, helpers and not hinderers. When the Lord was about to raise up Jairus' daughter, He suffered no one to go in with Him except Peter and James and John, and the father and mother of the maiden. It was just like the action of the hospital doctor, who felt hindered by the presence of anyone who could not share with him in what he was doing. Have we ever been hinderers at a Gospel meeting? The Lord make us real helpers henceforth.

“RUNNING OVER.”—Neither God nor man gets anything till the vessel runs over! God wants us to be *running over*. ‘He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water’ (Jno. vii. 38). Head-work may be good; but it is not out of the head that these rivers flow. No; but, “out of his belly.” Heart-work is what we want; and the living water will not need to be pumped up.

SPEAKING TO THE HEART.—“I had often been spoken to about my soul,” said a man of God, “and often warned to flee from coming wrath. I felt there was truth in what was said to me, but it was often said in a harsh unfeeling way. I was addressed as a culprit receiving his sentence. A dear, godly young man linked his arm in mine one night, as I came from a Gospel meeting, and walked with me to my lodgings. He spoke of the wrath to come, but it was with such feeling and solemnity as I never had heard before. Before I slept that night I was converted.” Fellow-workers, seek to reach the heart with your words, and do not hurl the truth in a hard and unfeeling spirit at those to whom you speak. Words coming from the heart, go to the heart again.

“LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED.”

It was when the golden sunlight shed its glory o'er the land,
With the zephyrs gently blowing, that our vessel left the strand.
Scarce a ripple moved the water as we softly plied the oar,
While the Master's voice was wafted to the throng upon the shore.

We had left our occupations, for our hearts were all aflame
To proclaim the coming kingdom, in the true Messiah's name.
So, with blissful expectation, and without a doubt or fear,
We were waiting for the moment when His triumph would appear.

With a few small loaves and fishes He had fed the fainting crowd ;
And the common people hailed Him with hosannas long and loud.
He escaped them, but they followed, for they longed to crown the
head

Of the One who, by His mandate, had filled hungry souls with bread.

So our hearts beat high with courage, for the Lord was in the ship,
And the chalice of rich blessing seemed to press our very lip ;
And the waves that gently rocked us spread a calm in every breast,
While the breezes, as they kissed us, whispered hope and peace
and rest.

But the sun has set in blackness, and the clouds have mustered dark ;
The wild waves and waters threaten to o'erwhelm our tiny bark.
And the lurid lightning's glitter shows us toiling and oppressed,
Lights up faces pale with terror, as it shines from east to west.

Where is now the lofty courage of the calm and sunshine born ?
Where the hope and expectation that we cherished in the morn ?
They have vanished in the blackness ; and the raging waves and winds
Faintly picture out the tempest that is raging in our minds.

Yet the Master has not left us, He is wrapped in silent sleep ;
His repose untouched, unbroken by the turmoil of the deep.
And we break upon His slumbers with our wild despairing cry,
“Master, help us or we perish ; save us, Master, or we die.”

With serene, unruffled visage, and in accents calmly grand,
As a monarch wields his sceptre, so He issued His command.
He rebuked the angry surges ; they subsided at His will ;
And we marvelled at the silence, as He whispered “Peace be still.”

Then He turned His gaze upon us, with a look of sad surprise,
While our heads with shame were bowing, and we feared to meet
His eyes.

For our “little faith” He chid us, there was time for nothing more,
Ere the stars were shining brightly and our boat had reached the
shore.

Now the Master has ascended, we no more behold His form ;
But He's left us precious teaching in the lesson of the storm.
When the tempest roars the loudest, we can smile amidst the din ;
For the waters are but *round* us, whilst the Master is *within*.

E. B.

Letter to a Young Believer on the Habitation of God and its Holiness.

“**I** HAVE been enjoying a delightful Bible study on the subject of ‘God’s Habitation,’ and as I have been helped myself in this study, I would like to share it with you, for it is the will of God that we should edify and exhort one another, and so much the more as we see the day approaching. Solomon asks, ‘Will God indeed dwell upon the earth? Behold, the heaven, and heaven of heavens, cannot contain Thee ; how much less this house that I have builded !’ (1 Kings viii. 27). God replies, ‘I have hallowed this house which thou hast built, to put My name there for ever ; and Mine eyes and Mine heart shall be there perpetually’ (1 Kings ix. 3). ‘This is My rest for ever: here will I dwell ; for I have desired it’ (Ps. cxxxii. 14). Israel, through repeated backsliding and apostacy, so defiled God’s resting-place, that He could no longer remain amongst them; and so Jehovah *reluctantly* withdrew His presence, as narrated by the prophet Ezekiel, until ‘the times of the restitution of all things,’ when all the promises made to the Father would be perfectly fulfilled, and God would once more tabernacle amongst His ancient people. Meanwhile the heart of God desires a resting-place ; and on the day of Pentecost we find Him taking up His abode in the Church, which is ‘builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit’ (Eph. ii. 22).

‘The house which Solomon built has crumbled into dust ; but that one of which God is the architect will endure for ever, for Jesus Christ is the chief corner-stone. Time will only add fresh lustre to its beauty, for the living stones are very costly, purchased with the precious blood of Christ ; and day by day the wise Master-builder lays each in its allotted place, till ‘all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord’ (Eph. ii. 21). *Holiness is the law of God’s house in all ages.* ‘This is the law of the house. Upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about shall be *most holy*. Behold, this is the law of the house’ (Ez. xliii. 12). God appeared to Jacob and said unto him, ‘Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there.’ Jacob, conscious of what was suitable for Bethel (the house of God), said unto his household, ‘Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: and let us arise, and go up to Bethel’ (Gen. xxxv. 1-3). God had appeared to Jacob on a former occasion (Gen. xxviii. 16, 17) in Bethel, and the remembrance of that holy presence had filled him with awe. ‘Surely,’ he said, ‘the Lord is in this place ; and I knew it not. And he was

Letter to a Young Believer.

afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God.'

"What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?' (1 Cor. vi. 19). You and I individually are indwelt by God, and holiness is still the law of the house. 'As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation (living); because *it is written*, Be ye holy; for I am holy' (1 Peter i. 15, 16). The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life are the idols which defile the holy place. 'What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them' (2 Cor. vi. 16). May we remember that 'our God is a consuming fire,' and that He has said, 'If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy' (1 Cor. iii. 17).

"Surely our position is a lofty one, indwelt by God; and our responsibilities are also very great, to preserve the holiness of the sanctuary of God both inside and outside, from carnal thoughts and desires, and from worldly associations. And if, through the pressure of outward circumstances or the weakness of the flesh, we have departed in heart from God in the slightest degree, and allowed worldly lusts to occupy a place in our hearts, let us now put away the strange gods and cleanse the sanctuary from all 'filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.' I write to you having first allowed the Word of the Lord to discern the thoughts and intents of my heart, and I feel deeply humbled as I realise how feebly I have entered into the reality of such a truth as this; but I do believe that God never calls us into a place without intending and being able to sustain us in that place, if we are only diligent in soul in seeking His strength.

"May we be in earnest about this, for '*the time is short*,' and if the vessels are clean they will be fit for the Master's use. Finally, remember that holiness is the law of God's habitation, for 'holiness becometh Thine house, O Lord, for ever' (Ps. xciii. 5)."

OUR lack of walking in the Spirit often moves others to like negligence.

LET nothing keep thee from that hallowed intercourse which is the choice privilege of a soul wedded to the Well-beloved.

The more we have of Christ in our hearts, the less room for self.

THE FEASTS OF THE LORD.

I.

WHEN God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, He so ordered all His dealings with them as to make them types of things reaching far beyond themselves. He sheltered them under the blood of the Pass-over lamb, and brought them through the Red Sea, in such a way as to give us the most perfect instruction as to the great truths of redemption and sanctification. He then gave commandment to Moses as to the setting up of the tabernacle, and the setting apart of Aaron and his sons for the priesthood, so as to give us instruction equally clear and important as to how the redeemed people are brought near to Him, what is the order of His house, and the manner of our worship. As we get it in I Cor. x. 11. "All these things happened unto them typically," for that is the exact word which the apostle uses.

But these valuable and instructive types go further. In the 23rd chapter of Leviticus God spoke again to Moses and told him to proclaim "the feasts of Jehovah," as fully set forth in the whole chapter. These feasts were spread over the year, and a careful examination of them will show us that they too are types, setting before us in the most wonderfully complete manner the whole of God's dealings with man in redeeming grace, from the time that He first placed him in the garden until the end shall have come and the Son shall have delivered up the kingdom to the Father.

It is always necessary, when seeking to learn lessons from God's types, to remember that the types are given us as helps to our understanding of the direct teaching of the Scriptures. A schoolmaster prepares a diagram, or makes a drawing on the black-board, in order to make his subject clearer to the scholars. But suppose the scholars were to try and guess at the meaning of the diagram, without listening to the explanations of the teacher. They would probably get far away from the truth of the matter. The diagram will greatly help to make the teacher's instructions plain to their minds, and also to fix them there; but it must not be used as a substitute for the teacher's words, as it was never intended to be that. Just so with all types; and as we start upon the consideration of these feasts we need to bear this in mind, so that we may be helped by them to understand the direct teaching of other parts of the Scriptures, and not be found twisting them to agree with special thoughts of our own.

The Feasts of the Lord.

According to our promise, made last month, we have prepared a sketch or diagram, a copy of which is presented with this number of our little paper, simply putting down the feasts in the order described in Lev. xxiii. There is nothing of fancy or imagination in this diagram any more than in the arrangement of an ordinary almanac. In a long column are shown the successive weeks and months of the year; and wherever one of the feasts occurs, it is marked in its appointed place, so that the eye can take in at a glance how they are grouped together. The blue bars that cross the column so frequently are the Sabbath days, and the numbers to the left of these blue bars show the day of the month of each Sabbath day.

But now let us turn to Lev. xxiii. 1, and see how the Lord introduces this weighty subject. We will read from the Revised Version, because it makes one or two matters plainer than the older translation:—"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, The set feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are My set feasts." The first thing we notice is the expression, "set feasts." This is one of the things in which the Revised Version helps us, because it makes a clear distinction between this word and others which are translated "feast," and which contain the ordinary idea of a banquet or festival. This word is derived from a root that means to make an appointment, or to meet by appointment. We get the root word in Exodus xxv. 22, "And there I will *meet* with thee." The mercy-seat is the place where God meets His people by appointment. But as to the full word itself, we shall perhaps get a better understanding of it when we are told that it is the word translated "congregation," in every place where the tabernacle, or, more properly, the tent of the congregation is spoken of. The coming together of God's people in His divinely ordered way is no chance meeting, as when two friends meet in the street. It is a meeting by appointment, and God has stamped that name upon His own dwelling-place. It is the tabernacle or dwelling-place of Jehovah; it is also the place where His people meet Him in His appointed way. And now we get this same word in Leviticus xxiii., "The set feasts (literally, as we have seen, meetings by appointment) of Jehovah." But then these set feasts are to be proclaimed as "holy convocations." This last word, in the Hebrew just as in our English, means "calling

The Feasts of the Lord.

together." So these occasions, of which God is about to speak, are His appointed seasons, to which He calls His people together that He may meet with them. How important all this is. They are Jehovah's feasts, not Israel's. Israel are called together to keep them, but they belong to the Lord. The appointment was of His making, and must be kept in His time and way. It was not a privilege, in the ordinary sense of the word, which Israel could avail themselves of or let alone, just as they pleased. A privilege of the very highest character it assuredly was, but it was a commandment also. Nothing could have shown a more mistaken idea of their responsibility in regard to the keeping of these feasts, than for an Israelite to say, "I have a right to be there." What he should have said was, "Jehovah commands me to be there; for it is His appointed season, and He has called His people together to Himself." The one expression is the language of self-pleasing, the other is that of holy, happy obedience.

To-day we have no longer a number of feasts with widely different meanings. But the Lord has an appointed season, even in this dispensation; a special occasion when He calls His people together to Himself. Still He claims it as His own, as the expressions, "the Lord's table," "the Lord's supper," and "the Lord's day," all bear witness. And as those appointed seasons, to which Israel were called together, had a look backward and a look forward, as well as a present application, so it is with the feast that we are called to keep to-day. We eat and drink, and we show the Lord's death "till He come."

May God help us to see how utterly out of place the language of self-pleasing, "I have a right," is, in connection with all this. My right is hidden in the Lord's claim. If I can disregard that claim, my right disappears. When I own it, I do not need to plead any right of mine; for, coming as an obedient one, to keep His commandment, just because it is His commandment, I shall be subject to all His will about it, and my right will never come into question. (16)

THOU hast a difficult road before thee. See, O traveller to heaven! that thou go not without thy Guide.

WE may be certain that whatever God has made prominent in His Word He intended to be conspicuous in our lives.

THE more we know of God, the more our confidence in Him is increased; the more we know of self, the more we distrust it.

COMFORT FOR TROUBLED SAINTS.

“**G**OD, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, *hath in these last days spoken unto us by HIS SON*” (Heb. i. 1, 2).

There was once, in the days of King Jehoram, a great famine in Samaria; for the hosts of the Syrians had come up and encamped around the city, so that no one could pass in or out to carry provisions to the beleaguered town. Matters had gone so far that mothers, driven to desperation, were killing and eating their own little ones. Now was the time for God to act; for every human resource had been tried, and had failed to bring help to the sufferers. Israel was to experience the blessedness of the truth, that, “with God all things are possible” (Matt. xix. 26). And so God spake through His servant, Elisha—“*Thus saith the Lord, To-morrow, about this time, shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria*” (2 Kings vii. 1). This seemed to be an impossibility to the natural observer (ver. 2). But faith regards not difficulties; for when God has said, shall He not perform? And so it happened that “the Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host. . . . Wherefore they arose, and fled in the twilight, and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, even the camp as it was, and fled for their life.” And so it came to pass that, at the appointed time, “a measure of fine flour was sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the Lord” (2 Kings vii. 16).

Thus, in this, as well as in many other instances, was the word spoken by Jehovah *through His prophets* in times past fulfilled. And now that He has, BY HIS SON, spoken to us in these last days, will He not be equally true to His word? He hath said—“Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore *I say unto you, Take no thought (be not anxious) for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on . . . (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek); for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow*” (Matt. vi. 25-34). And the same comforting words are again repeated, as if to reassure us, now that the Son of God is bodily absent from this scene—“Be careful for nothing,” for “my God shall supply all your need” (Phil. iv. 6-19).

"DULL OF HEARING."

(Heb. v. 11.)

WHEN the apostle wished to unfold to the Hebrews some of the precious teaching connected with the priesthood of Melchisedec, he found it difficult to do so, because, as he told them, they were "dull of hearing." But the word "dull" is, in reality, "slothful"; and it is a pity that the keen edge of this solemn rebuke should be taken off by substituting any milder word. We often hear ignorance pleaded as an excuse for disobedience. But what if the ignorance is the result of slothfulness on our part? The diligent hearer shall not fail to get knowledge of the will of God; but we might ask, with profit, what makes a diligent hearer? Surely nothing but a heart that is set upon pleasing God. We turn to the one perfect, blessed Example, and what do we hear Him saying, as He steps down from the throne of God to do all the will of His Father? "Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire; mine ears hast Thou opened." The word is literally "digged," as in the margin. It will not bear the thought of the boring of the lobe of the ear, as in Ex. xxi. 6, but is a forcible way of declaring that every obstruction to a perfect hearing has been removed. "Burnt offering and sin offering hast Thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within my heart" (Ps. xl. 6-8). He who can say, "I delight to do Thy will, O my God," will be able also to say, "Mine ear hast Thou opened." The fiftieth chapter of Isaiah will help to carry on the thought. —"The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back" (verse 5). So, to reverse the whole picture, ignorant disobedience comes from slothful hearing, and slothful hearing from a lack of heart-desire to know and do God's will. "If ye love Me, keep My commandments" (John xiv. 15), implies, also, that we are to find out what they are.

But sometimes the want of knowledge results from something more than simple slothfulness in hearing. There is a positive resistance to the truth in the heart, because it condemns something we do not want to give up. Plain unmistakable scripture is pointed out, only to be pushed aside with the words, "Well, that's what you say; but I can't see it." We have all heard of Nelson at the battle of Copenhagen. In the middle of the action, one of his officers told him that the admiral's vessel was showing the signal to withdraw.

Stumbling-blocks.

Nelson put his telescope to his blind eye, and, turning it in the direction of the flagship, he exclaimed, "I can see no signal; blaze away." And so when we do not want to see a thing, it is easy enough to assume all the appearance of diligent looking into it, but the eye we are looking with is the blind eye of self-will, and is never likely to make anything out. "The meek will He guide in judgment; and the meek will He teach His way" (Ps. xxv. 9), is a promise that shall never fail of fulfilment; but blind eyes and stopped-up ears will never come to the knowledge of the truth.

STUMBLING-BLOCKS.

AMONG the many important lessons which the remembrance of the judgment-seat of Christ brings before us, we find this one in Rom. xiv. 13, "that no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall, in his brother's way." Stumbling-blocks may be of various kinds. There is no need to say that whenever a believer does anything that is plainly contrary to the Word of God, he puts a stumbling before his fellow-saints. But this by no means exhausts the list. There are many things that are not forbidden by name in the Scriptures, yet which must do just the opposite of commending the truth. When Paul was counselling the Philippian believers to meditate upon and practise whatsoever things are pure, lovely, and of good report, he added—"Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do" (Phil. iv. 9). True love to Christ and to our brethren will always lead us to do only those things which will commend the truth of God, and which we would wish others to imitate us in. As an example, take the practice of smoking. Many Christians indulge in this practice, and they have all some excuse with which to justify it. Now, we would ask such to try their habit by this test. Is it or is it not calculated to be a stumbling-block to other believers? While we have admitted that many Christians smoke, yet we should scarcely think of looking for a child of God in a smoke-room or in the smoking compartment of a train. How much weight will the lads of the Sunday-school class attach to their teacher's admonitions, if they meet him at another time with a pipe in his mouth? What will be the effect of exhortations by a brother in the assembly to "abstain from fleshly lusts," when it is well known that that

The Feasts of the Lord.

brother enjoys his daily cigar? We only quote this as one example; but we are very sure that if our sense of what we owe to the Lord who bought us is not deep enough to make us gladly give up whatever will either directly lead others astray, or indirectly hinder our usefulness to them, we have learned little of the mind which was in Christ Jesus.

THE FEASTS OF THE LORD.

II.

BUT before proceeding further it will perhaps be well to say a little more by way of explanation of the diagram. As already pointed out, the blue bars that cross the column are the Sabbath days; and it may perhaps be asked why some of them are so much nearer together than others. When special events have to be shown, rendering it necessary to count the days, sufficient space has been allowed to make this plain. But when the weeks pass over without anything to be taken note of, it would only lengthen out the diagram to no purpose if equal space were given. It will be understood, then, that from one blue bar to another is always a week; while the longer black lines across the column separate the months. The figures on the left-hand side of the Sabbath days indicate the days of the month on which they fall; but it must be remembered that these figures have reference to the year in which our blessed Lord was crucified.

But now we come to another question, which we imagine our readers will be ready to ask. If, as has been stated before, the Jewish year, with these feasts spread over it, is a representation of the whole of God's dealings with man, in redeeming grace, from the time that He first placed him in the garden until the Son shall have delivered up the kingdom to the Father, how comes it that the diagram only shows seven months, and begins a few days before the Passover? The Passover undoubtedly represents the death of Christ, and what becomes of the four thousand years previous to His coming into the world?

This question carries us at once to the very foundation of our subject. According to the commandment of God, the month Abib (Deut. xvi. 1), on the fourteenth day of which the Passover lamb was to be slain, was to become the first month of the year to the children of Israel (Exod. xii. 2). But up to that time it had not been the first month with them. Josephus,

The Feasts of the Lord.

the celebrated Jewish historian, tells us that Abib was the seventh month, according to the ancient reckoning before the institution of the Passover; and that, even after that time, all agricultural arrangements were reckoned according to the earlier mode of counting the months. This is confirmed by the fact that the year of Jubilee, the joyful year of restitution, commenced in the seventh month of the new reckoning, which counted Abib, with its Passover feast, as the first month (see Lev. xxv. 9). In this way the Jubilee year brought things back to what they were at first. When God was about to deliver His people out of Egypt's bondage, He changed the seventh month into the first; and as the year of Jubilee began with the seventh month, the seventh became the first once more.

But now we want to know what all this has to do with the typical teaching of the feasts. Let us consider it. When six months of the year had gone by, and the seventh month had begun, God sent a message to His people, saying, "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months" (Exod. xii. 2). Those past six months were to be blotted out, and God was going to make a fresh start with them. But if God was to make a new beginning with them, it must be upon a new foundation; and the next verse tells us what that new foundation was to be. The slain lamb, the Passover lamb, is the starting-point and foundation of all God's purposes concerning His people. What a flood of light this throws upon our subject. Let us look at our diagram again, the Divine calendar of redeeming grace, and what do we see? The first month—yes, but six months of the year had gone before this month, and where the line marks the beginning of the first month we may see those previous six months all cancelled at a single stroke. That is the world's history from Adam till the Son of God appeared on the earth. Man had had his opportunity, and, placed under every variety of circumstances, had only shown himself, more and more, to be utterly sinful and corrupt. Any covenant or promise of God, that was conditional in any way upon man's obedience, had broken down through man's utter and hopeless failure. And now God was going to make a fresh beginning on a new foundation. That foundation was His own blessed Son, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. And as God brings out this Lamb of His own providing (see Gen. xxii. 8), He sets aside all that had gone before. In this way we see that these feasts of the Lord

The Feasts of the Lord.

fulfil all that we were led to suppose, and lying behind the line which indicates the beginning of the first month we see the whole of man's unprofitableness set aside to make room for God's beloved Son.

But this brings us to another matter that we need to look into before proceeding further with our consideration of the Passover. Turning again to Lev. xxiii., we find that verse 4 repeats the statement of verse 2—"These are the set feasts of the Lord, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their appointed season" (R.V.). But in between these two proclamations of the feasts of Jehovah, we find, in the third verse, a renewal of the commandment as to the Sabbath—"Six days shall work be done: but on the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no manner of work: it is a Sabbath unto the Lord in all your dwellings." The introduction of the Sabbath in this way is not a little remarkable. The feasts that Moses was commanded to proclaim were spread over many months, some coming close together, while others were separated by long distances. But all the while each seventh day was to bring its own message of rest to Israel, while they were to keep it as a Sabbath unto the Lord.

"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God" (Ps. xc. 2). Thus wrote Moses, the man of God. In that far back eternity, before His first act of creation, God kept Sabbath. Then came the creation of the heaven and the earth (Gen. i. 1), while in verse 2 we find the earth without form and void. After this we have God's six days of work, in which all was made fair and good; and then, on the seventh day, God rested. But this rest was bound up with the creation; and when man, the crowning work of that creation, sinned, the whole work was marred, and the rest built upon it was gone. That rest could never be restored, except upon a new foundation. The feasts of the Lord, beginning with the Passover and finishing with tabernacles, set before us the whole work of redemption and its final and triumphant issue. But all the time, week by week, these constantly-recurring Sabbath days speak of God's rest and the part that His redeemed people are to have in it. They look back to the eternity that has gone by, while they look on to the eternity that is coming; and they remind us that, while the rest is Jehovah's rest, He has purposed in His infinite grace

Heart Longings.

that all His redeemed people shall share it with Him. "There remaineth, therefore, a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For he that is entered into His rest hath himself also rested from his works, as God did from His" (Heb. iv. 9, 10, R.V.).

In order to help in keeping this in mind, we have coloured the segments of circles at the top and bottom of the diagram with the same colour as the Sabbath days.

27

HEART LONGINGS.

"Oh, that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest" (Ps. lv. 6).

OH! for the wings of some swift dove,
To fly far hence away
To those bright realms of joy and love,
To heaven's unclouded day.

To rest myself at Jesus' feet,
To gaze upon His face,
In whom I stand e'en now complete,
Made meet for that blest place.

Where love's unhindered tide rolls on
Unruffled and unchecked;
No alien look or icy tone
Communion to affect.

No jarring note in those fair halls
Offends the ravished ear;
No foe can scale those jasper walls,
Or ever enter there.

My Father's house—why should His child
Not long to be at home?
This world is but a desert wild,
Where I a stranger roam.

Through narrow chinks my spirit peeps,
As from a prison cell,
Up through the gold and azure steeps,
Where saints with Jesus dwell.

What interchange of holy thought
Those saints in light must know!
What fellowship, with wisdom fraught,
From each to each must flow!

Heart Longings.

The learning of the greatest minds,
Of which earth loves to boast ;
The sciences of various kinds,
Acquired by toil and cost ;
All seem to that enlightened throng
Thoughts infantile and weak.
With god-like intellect and strong
In wondrous strains they speak.
For who can tell what knowledge there
Lies open to their view,
Of all things lovely, bright and fair,
The noble and the true ;
The course of stars, the paths of light,
The influence benign
Of gentle Pleiades, so bright,
The realms in which they shine ;
The laws which govern myriad spheres,
Orion's mystic bands :
While still, through everlasting years,
Each mind yet more expands ?
All that is known on earth will fade
Before such light away,
As taper, lighting up night's shade,
Is quenched in noontide's ray.
The love that flows from God's own heart
Spreads like an ocean there ;
That which we now but know in part
We shall in fulness share.
Our kinsman Saviour, He whose love
Than death proved stronger far,
Enthroned in light, sits high above
Or sun, or moon, or star.
But little know we yet of Him
Whose wounds have made us whole ;
So cold our hearts, our eyes so dim,
Earth's mists so wrap the soul.
That love, which passes angel's thought,
Shall there each heart engage ;
The blood by which our life was bought,
Which blots out sin's dark page ;

Heart Longings.

That shall be still the theme of themes,
While endless ages flow ;
It broke the spell of earthly dreams
And washed us white as snow.

But oh ! how much we then shall learn
Of Him whom we adore.
Shall not our hearts within us burn,
As we His ways explore ?

All is not told us of His path,
His pilgrim life below,
From childhood's days at Nazareth
To that dark hour of woe.

The Spirit spake through John, and said,
The world could not contain
The record of each wondrous deed,
Each word a golden grain.

The angels bent with wondering eye
O'er the incarnate Word ;
From Bethlehem to Calvary
They saw their humbled Lord.

No deed or word of His escaped
Their watchful eye or ear ;
Through lonely nights on Olivet
They marked each falling tear.

And many an unrecorded prayer,
In Psalm nor Gospel given,
For those who in His Cross should share
Was wafted up to Heaven.

How great will their delight be still
The story to unfold
To our enraptured ears, nor will
The half be ever told.

Through all eternity we shall
But be disciples still ;
Our blessed Lord, our all in all,
Our joy to do His will.

As with the wings of some swift dove
We'll soar to realms of day,
When He shall say, "Arise, My love,
My fair one, come away."

WHAT ARE YOU AIMING AT?

“**W**ELL, we are all aiming at the same place, so I don't see that you need to be so very particular,” is a phrase often used to ward off the edge of the truth, when some special claim of the Lord is being brought home.

But does not the very phrase itself betray, not only the mistaken idea, but the equally mistaken purpose of its user? If the root is corrupt the fruit cannot be good. It is sheer waste of time to look for grapes on a thorn bush. If the purpose is a mistaken one, it follows that the conduct cannot be right. You will never hit the target if you aim in another direction. Aiming at the same place, indeed! Who said that that was our business? Not the Word of God; for does not the good old book declare that “salvation is of the Lord” (Jonah ii. 9). It is “the salvation of God” (Acts xxviii. 28) we proclaim. Whom He calls, them He justifies, and afterwards glorifies. It is grace from first to last, blessed be His name. *He brings* the many sons to glory (Heb. ii. 10). As to salvation, we may sing—

“ This one great load is taken from the soul,
That, henceforth, on the Lord all burdens we may roll.”

What, then, is the proper aim of the Christian? We find the answer in 2 Cor. v. 9. The Revised Version reads thus—*“Wherefore, also, we make it our aim, whether at home or absent, to be well-pleasing unto Him.”* Yes; that is it. The Lord Jesus could say of the Father, “I do always those things that please Him” (John viii. 29). And should not our aim be to please the One who thus pleased His Father in accomplishing our redemption? Our absent Lord has gone up yonder to represent us, and it is our business to represent Him down here. Pleasing Christ, and not getting to heaven, should be the test of our every action. What a difference this would make! If the standard is a low one, the workmanship will be poor; but the higher the standard the better the result.

“Oh, you are so narrow; you think no one can go to heaven but those who are baptised;” or, “I suppose you think all who go to a concert will be lost,” are expressions which too plainly show that a false standard is being used. It is not getting to heaven, but the thought of what will please the One who died for me, that should settle all such questions.

If it is all of grace, then I owe everything to Christ; but if, in any measure, salvation depends on myself, then, in that very measure, there is room for self-pleasing (2 Cor. v. 14, 15).

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

WE gave notice in our December number that we should be glad to receive questions on subjects of general profit, which we would seek help of God to answer. The limited space that we can devote to such questions, as well as the necessity for exercising care as to what questions we take up, will doubtless lead to some being left unanswered. We ask the kind forbearance of our correspondents in all such cases.

Question 1.—Have the gifts of healing and the working of miracles ceased in the Church? Those who believe in faith-healing say that they take Jesus for their bodies as well as for their souls, resting their faith on Matt. viii. 17, James v. 15, and other scriptures. Is this a right use of these scriptures?

Answer.—Nothing can be more dishonouring to God or more hurtful to ourselves than unreality. We read in 1 Cor. xii. of various gifts, given by the Spirit to different persons; and among these we find “to another the gifts of healing; . . . to another the working of miracles” (verses 9 and 10). Now when God gave these gifts there was no mistaking them. They had nothing to do with answers to prayer, except in so far as all ministry is to be exercised in that dependence upon God, which calls for continual prayer. Those on whom the gifts of healing were bestowed spoke to the afflicted ones, or laid their hands on them, and the healing followed at once. Nay, the very shadow of Peter falling upon the sick folk, or a handkerchief brought from the body of Paul, was sufficient (see Acts v. 15, 16, and xix. 11, 12). The case in James v. 14, 15 is something totally different from all this. But in this case, too, if we are to take God’s word as the foundation of faith, we must see the conditions are carried out. When there is a church, according to the teaching of the New Testament, with elders, also according to the Scripture pattern, and the sick one sends for these elders, we may count upon God to fulfil His word. But what likeness is there to the gifts of healing, or to James v., in what is called faith-healing nowadays? We would recommend a careful consideration of the following scriptures—Mark xvi. 20; Acts iv. 30, 31, viii. 6, xiv. 3; Rom. xv. 19; Heb. ii. 4; 1 Cor. xiv. 22. From these we think it is plain that gifts of healing and other miracles were intended as signs to confirm the Word preached, while as yet the New Testament was not written. When the Scriptures were complete, and had been fully attested through the wonders wrought by the hands of God’s servants, the need for those signs had ended. This, at least, is what we believe the Scriptures show. But if any believe that it is God’s will that miracles and gifts of healing should still be with us, let them mourn their absence, but not

Questions and Answers.

pretend to have them by setting up something that bears no resemblance to them. That God hears and answers prayer is blessedly true; but nowhere in His Word have we warrant for expecting that sickness is to be done away with in this dispensation, either among the saved or the unsaved.

Question 2.—What is meant by “Not by water only, but by water and blood” (1 John v. 6)?

Answer.—Throughout the Scriptures the blood and the water present the two great aspects of the Cross of Christ. These two aspects are truly set forth in the well-known words—

“ Let the water and the blood,
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure ;
Save from wrath and make me pure.”

The simplest and most prominent occasion of the use of this two-fold figure is in connection with God's dealings with the children of Israel when He was bringing them out of Egypt. They were exposed to the judgment of God Himself, and they were in bondage under the king of Egypt. The sprinkled blood sheltered them securely from the one; the divided waters, through whose depths they passed, closing again behind them, cut them off for ever from the other. The blood speaks of Christ dying FOR ME. The waters tells of my dying WITH HIM. The one gives deliverance from hell; the other, victory over the world and its god. In 1 John v. the subject is, overcoming the world. This is only accomplished in those that have been “born of God.” But that is just what the water speaks of. “Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead” (Col. ii. 12). Israel must be born “out of the water” and of the Spirit before they could see God's kingdom. That is to say, they must be completely cut off from Pharaoh's dominion before, as the people of Jehovah, they can begin to serve Him. So we need to be delivered from the power of darkness that we may be translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son (see Col. i. 13). The believer in Jesus as the Son of God has been thus translated, born again; for Jesus Christ came by water as well as blood. But always remember it is not by water only. If the justifying character of His atoning blood is taken away, the separating power of His death can never be known.

HOW WE STRENGTHEN OR WEAKEN THE HANDS OF GOD'S SERVANTS.

NONE of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself" (Rom. xiv. 7). In the many ways in which the truth of this scripture comes home to us in our daily life, perhaps it is most strikingly shown out in the relationship between the shepherds and the flock.

When the feet of God's saints are kept, so that it may be said of them as it was once recorded of those in days gone by, that they walked "in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost" (Acts ix. 31), what a joy it is to those who watch for souls, as they who must give account (Heb. xiii. 17). John is not the only one who can say, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (3 John 4).

In such case, with what joy can the Lord's servants devote themselves to fresh labours for their Master. Was it not the joyful tidings brought by Timothy from Thessalonica to Paul at Corinth that braced up the apostle for his faithful ministry in that city? But, alas! how, on the other hand, coldness of heart and wrong-doing amongst God's children enfeeble the servants of God. "Our time is so taken up with keeping the saints right, that we have no time for anything else"; or, "If half the time and energy that is put forth in going after the straying sheep could be used in the Gospel, what different results we might expect," are expressions we often hear. Paul knew much of this, as bears witness the pathetic utterance, "Besides those things which are without, that which cometh (presseth) upon me daily, the care of all the churches" (2 Cor. xi. 28).

There is one notable example of this in the great apostle's life, which it is interesting to trace in this very epistle. Driven away from Ephesus by the violence of the mob, he finds refuge in the seaport of Troas. Here a door was opened for him by the Lord to preach the Gospel (2 Cor. ii. 12, 13). A door opened by the Lord, an evident desire to hear on the part of the people; what could better cheer the apostle? Think of his sudden flight from Ephesus where he had been used of God so greatly, and now, at his first halting-place, he finds an open door. Are you surprised to read the very next words, which tell of anxiety instead of joy, unrest in place of peace? Why did he go to Troas, and why could he not rest there? Listen!

How we strengthen or weaken the hands of God's servants.

"I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia."

Remember, that what Dover is to France, such was Troas to Europe. It was the port of departure. So we learn that Paul made for Troas in order that he might find Titus; and it was his disappointment at not finding him there which caused him to cross over the straits to Europe. Why did he so wish to find Titus, that the hope of so doing caused him to leave the open door and take a long journey? How was it he could not rest in spirit till he did find him? We read again, "For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, *within were fears*. Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus; and not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me." And so the whole secret is out. Paul had heard of sad disorder in the church at Corinth, and had written to them about it, sending the letter (probably his first epistle) by Titus; and the question uppermost in his mind was as to how that letter of loving counsel, and yet faithful rebuke, would be received. As time passed by, and he got no tidings, his anxiety increased, till at last it grew so painful that he could not rest till he had seen Titus and heard all about it. The waywardness of Corinth saints cost them something: it cost the beloved Paul much; but this does not tell the whole. If we would make up the total, we must try and count the loss to Troas sinners of that golden opportunity passed by, that open door not entered. Even then the half has not been told, for we have not counted that which outweighs all the rest, even the grief caused to the loving heart of Him who is the great and good, as well as the chief Shepherd.

Let us face it fairly; waywardness and folly in us is as costly as in Corinthian saints. May it be our desire and prayer that our ways may never turn an open door into a closed one! May it rather be ours, like the Thessalonians, by our conduct, to stimulate God's servants to nobler efforts.

Oh, may it never be our grief, when we look over life's finished story, to learn that our self-will so troubled the heart of some dear servant of the Lord, that he was unable to enter a door opened to him of the Lord.

THE FEASTS OF THE LORD. III.

WE may now return to the Passover, to consider it especially in its dispensational character. And the first thing we notice is, that the lamb had to be chosen out on the tenth day of the first month, and kept up until the fourteenth day. It was to be a lamb without blemish; and, of course, it must have been equally unblemished during the time before the tenth day, only up to that time no special notice had been taken of it. Now, from the time it was taken out from the flock and set apart for the Passover, the attention of all was directed to it, and its perfect freedom from blemish of any sort might be taken notice of by all. But there is a significance in the tenth day that we must not overlook. God has connected certain thoughts with certain numbers, and we learn His thoughts regarding them by noticing the connection in which they are used by the Holy Spirit. Let us call to mind, then, some of the uses of the number 10 in Scripture, and so endeavour to learn its typical teaching. First of all, we know that when God was about to give His law to the children of Israel, He summed it up in 10 commandments, which He spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, and afterwards engraved on the two tables of stone. Then this number 10 is particularly prominent in connection with the parables that speak of God's testing or approving the professed service of those who take the place of being His servants, as in the case of the virgins, the talents and the pounds. In the parable of the unjust steward, too, the claims of the rich man upon his debtors were represented in each case by the number 100, which is 10 times 10. It would need too much explanation, for those who have not previously considered the subject, to show the teaching of the number 10 in connection with the tabernacle, where it comes in very prominently; but probably enough has been said to show that the Holy Spirit uses this number to represent the claims of God upon our obedience, and the complete fulfilment of those claims. This being so, the 10 days from the first to the tenth of the first month correspond with the life of the Lord Jesus on earth up to the time of His baptism in which He had perfectly pleased God as a man upon the earth. He was under the eye of God all the time, but the attention of men had not been called to Him. He was, indeed, God's unblemished Lamb; but none on earth realised that it was so. At His baptism, however, He was *taken out*, to use the language of Exodus xii., the descending Spirit and the voice from the opened heavens, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well

The Feasts of the Lord.

pleased," both declaring Him to be God's chosen One; while from that time, John bore witness to Him as the Lamb of God. From the tenth day to the fourteenth day the lamb was to be *kept up*, and that period seems to correspond with the three-and-a-half years of the public ministry of the Lord Jesus, during the whole of which He was prominently before the eyes of men as the chosen out Lamb of God.

The lamb was to be killed on the fourteenth day of the first month, in the evening, or, literally, between the two evenings (see Ex. xii. 6, margin). It must be remembered that the Jewish day was reckoned from sunset to sunset. Consequently, it began in the evening and finished in the evening. A Jewish day, therefore, was said to be from even unto even (Lev. xxiii. 32); and, in a certain sense, the whole day might appear to be included in the expression, "between the two evenings." But a comparison with other places, where exactly the same expression occurs, shows us that this is not the case. In Ex. xxxix. 38, 39, we read, "Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year day by day continually. The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning, and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even." Here, the words "at even" are exactly the same as in Ex. xii. 6, "between the two evenings"; and here, there can be no question, the time indicated is in contrast to the morning. In the same way we are told that Aaron was to burn incense upon the golden altar in the morning and also in the evening (Ex. xxx. 7, 8); and here again the expression used is the same, "between the two evenings." From all this it seems very evident that these words are intended to point to the very time of sunset, as the one day is merging into the other.

In Lev. xxiii. 5, 6, we read, "In the fourteenth day of the first month at even" (between the two evenings) "is the Lord's Passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the Lord." As we have already seen, the Passover lamb was killed at the very close of the fourteenth day, or just at the hour of sunset. Immediately afterwards, the fifteenth day commenced. The leaven had already been put away out of every house, and there was no interval between the killing of the lamb and the keeping of the feast of unleavened bread, though the one belonged to the fourteenth day and the other to the fifteenth. On the first occasion of the keeping of the Passover, this was certainly the order of its observance. Moses commanded the people to kill

The Feasts of the Lord.

the lamb and sprinkle its blood over their doors, and then to go inside their houses and eat the lamb, and not come out till the morning; and at midnight the Lord passed through, and smote all the first-born of the Egyptians. Long after, when the Lord was about to keep the Passover for the last time with His disciples, the order was just the same. Two of the disciples were sent beforehand into the city to find the appointed place and make ready, and when the evening was come they all sat down to keep the feast.

There is an important point in all this. The death of the Passover lamb, as we have previously seen, was to be the foundation of all that is set forth in the other feasts. But in an especial manner it is seen as introducing directly to the feast of unleavened bread. The feasts that occupy a single day only, all point to some one definite act in God's gracious dealings with His people; but the two feasts that occupy several days,—the feast of unleavened bread, a seven-day feast, and tabernacles, an eight-day feast,—show us the whole condition of things resulting from God's previous dealings. In this way, the Passover and the feast of unleavened bread are related to one another in the closest manner. The seven days of unleavened bread are a picture of the whole character of the believer's life down here. They tell of communion with God amidst the most adverse surroundings; but this communion is based upon redemption through the blood of the Lamb, and the condition necessary to its enjoyment is that all leaven shall be put away. We get the application of the type very clearly in 1 Cor. v. 7, 8, "For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: 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." It is very important to distinguish between the foundation of our fellowship with God, and the conditions under which it is enjoyed. It would not have been the least use for Egyptians to put away all leaven out of their houses, while there was no blood over their doors. It was the blood alone that secured the safety of those who were sheltered beneath it; but, while that blood was thus the foundation for communion, unless the conditions required by God were complied with, the communion itself could not be realised. So it is in our case. Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us, and therefore we are at once called upon to keep the feast; but we can only do so, if we have put away the leaven of malice and wickedness.

40

“FOR YE ARE YET CARNAL.”

(1 Cor. iii. 3.)

IT is always a sad thing to see children of God, who, according to the years they have been converted, should be established in grace and truth, yet appear never to have got beyond a state of spiritual babyhood. This was the case with many at the time the apostle Paul wrote his first letter to the church at Corinth; and it will be profitable for us to consider what the Scriptures say on this subject, and to allow the sharp edge of “the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God,” to lay bare our weak spiritual condition. The apostle had to rebuke the Corinthian saints sharply for their stunted growth, and he declared that he could only feed them with milk, and not with meat, for they were not able to bear it. They seemed not to have got beyond the knowledge that their sins were forgiven and their souls saved. But, blessed as this knowledge is, it is only the milk of the Word and the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. The eyes of the saints were fixed upon men, instead of upon God; and so we read that there were envy, strife and divisions, while their walk is described as carnal, or “after the flesh.” They gloried in men, saying, “I am of Paul, and I of Apollos,” instead of glorying in the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world was crucified unto them and they unto the world. The same apostle, in writing to the Hebrew Christians, complained that they were *dull of hearing*, for when for the time they ought to have been teachers, they needed that they themselves should be taught what were the first principles of the oracles of God, and had become like those who had need of milk and not of strong meat. “For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness” (Heb. v. 13).

Meat is essential for the proper development of the natural body, and it is the same with the “inner man.” We need the strong meat of the Word, as well as the milk, to bring us to perfection or full growth; for it is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” The Holy Spirit renews the inner man, day by day, by the application of the Word to the heart and conscience, and He alone can feed our souls with the “deep things of God,” for He knows the mind of the Lord, and, dwelling in us, can communicate that mind to us (1 Cor. ii. 9-16).

In order that we may grow in the knowledge of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, we must *diligently* study the *entire* Scriptures, as God has given them to us; and if we continue in

"Christ in all."

this prayerful study, continually meditating on what we read, we shall by degrees get an understanding of God's ways and be exercised as to all His dealings with us. In this way it will become our delight to trace His hand and heart in all that befalls us, and our walk here below will be in accordance with what we know to be suitable to Him. Thus will our "senses be exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb v. 14); and we shall be like Timothy, who knew the Scriptures from his youth, *men* of God, knowing what to avoid and what to follow after.

"CHRIST IN ALL."

(Col. iii. 11.)

WHEN golden beams of joyous ray
 Illuminate the Christian's way,
 Tinting the path in roseate hue,
 And lending it a radiance new,
 Where shadow may not fall:
 Then doth the promise from above
 Of richest grace and fullest love,
 Like dewdrops to the wak'ning morn,
 Whose beauties, touching, they adorn,
 Proclaim *Christ in it all.*

Or when perplexities arise,
 As clouds bedim the azure skies;
 No guiding star before him glows,
 To mark the path the trav'ler goes;
 No onward beck'ning call;
 Then faith uplifts her drooping wings,
 And, soaring past the minor things,
 Finds sunshine waiting, still undim;
 For all is clear and known to Him
 Who guides, and is "*in all.*"

"In all"—in sunshine's beams we trace
 The fulness of His matchless grace;
 Or, if the cloudy pillar wait,
 In this He holds His kingly state,
 Perchance more trust to call.
 In sorrow's testing fire the same,
 His form is traced amid the flame.
 Ah, life, in every phase, would be
 A very heaven here, could we
 But *see* the "*Christ in all.*"

A. F. P.

BAPTISM AND SALVATION.

A Letter, in reply to an inquiry as to the people calling themselves
"Disciples" or "Church of Christ."

THE leading doctrines of the people you refer to are taken entirely from the writings of Alexander Campbell, of America, and hence the name of "Campbellites," commonly given to them, though, of course, they do not use that name themselves.

Campbell's doctrine is as follows: Four things are necessary to salvation—Repentance, Faith, Confession with the Mouth and Baptism. The New Testament may sometimes mention some one or two of these, when speaking of the means or manner of our salvation, without referring to all the others; but that is no warrant for saying that there can be any salvation till all the four are present. No one scripture, he says, gives us the whole of the conditions, but we learn them by comparing various scriptures together. "We sometimes find forgiveness, justification, sanctification, &c., ascribed to grace, to the blood of Christ, to the name of the Lord, without an allusion to faith; so we sometimes find faith, and grace, and the blood of Christ, without an allusion to water. Now, if they have any reason and right to say that faith is understood, in the one case, we have the same reason and right to say that water or baptism is understood in the other" ("The Old Paths." September, 1877. A. CAMPBELL).

Now, all this can be very simply tested. It is perfectly true that we are said to be justified by faith (Rom. v. 1); by the blood of Christ (verse 9); and by grace (chap. iii. 24); and that we may not separate one of these passages from the others and say that we can be justified apart from grace, or apart from faith, or apart from the blood of Christ. But it is utterly untrue that the Scriptures nowhere set the whole scheme of redemption fully before us. The very suggestion that such is the case is a dishonour to their character as the perfect and God-given guide and authority. Each of the epistles has its own special purpose; and the epistle to the Romans, placed at the head of them all, lays the foundation of all doctrinal teaching, by setting before us all the truth as to man's ruined condition and God's complete redemption. In chapter i. we get the condition of the Gentile world; in chapter ii. we see the Jew no better than the Gentile. Chapter iii. declares that in this way all are guilty and lost, and every mouth is stopped; but goes on to show that God, in grace, has provided redemption in Christ Jesus, through

Baptism and Salvation.

faith in His blood (verses 24 and 25). Chapter iv. emphatically shows that no works can come in, as having any part in procuring justification, for that justification is procured through the death and resurrection of Christ, and belongs to every one that believes in Him; and so chapter v. opens with the precious declaration, "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

This settles the whole question. God begins with the sinner in his lost, ruined condition, and carries him on till, as a justified one, he is enjoying peace with God, and has a sure standing in grace, while he is rejoicing in hope of coming glory: yet throughout all this there is no mention of baptism. But in chapter vi. we come to the question of the believer's walk, and at once we find baptism brought in as illustrating the justified one's deliverance from the power of sin that he should walk in newness of life. Any attempt, therefore, to make baptism one of the conditions going before justification and peace with God, is as wholly contrary to Scripture as the insisting on a life of holiness before salvation would be.

This is so clear that there is no room for question, even though some single texts, taken by themselves, might seem to bear a different construction. It will be well, however, to point out how misleading is the use the Campbellites make of the few passages on which they chiefly build their doctrine. Their stock scriptures are John iii. 5, Acts ii. 38, Acts xxii. 16; and a few words as to their treatment of these passages may be helpful. They say that the water in John iii. 5 is baptism, and that we cannot, therefore, be saved, without baptism. That the Lord is in no way referring to Christian baptism is perfectly plain when we remember that He was speaking to a Jewish leader, and that He upbraids him with his not understanding the matter. The water was a well-known figure of death, and Nicodemus, as a master of Israel, ought to have understood the meaning of the Lord's words, by remembering the time when God led His people through the depths of the sea, to separate them from Egypt, in order that they might be a kingdom for Himself (see Ex. xix. 3-6). But the people had been put under the shelter of the blood, and had eaten of the Passover Lamb before that. Besides this, we must remember that Nicodemus had never asked how he could be saved, or in any way taken the place of a sinner. He came as a disciple

Baptism and Salvation.

to a teacher, not as a sinner to a Saviour, and the Lord Jesus answered him by showing that he was beginning *in the wrong place altogether*. The laws and instruction of the kingdom of God are for those who have learned the power of deliverance from the kingdom of darkness. But before any can begin to learn that, they need something else. They need to see themselves under the judgment of God, and to know the power and reality of God's salvation from that judgment. So when He had brought Nicodemus to feel his ignorance and helplessness, the Lord turned to the great matter that poor Nicodemus really needed; and then there was no mention of water, but the blessed declaration that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The truth of which the water and baptism speak follows after this, and the Lord only took it up first, because Nicodemus began at the wrong place. It was as though one of the children of Israel, while still a bond-slave of Pharaoh's, had come to ask Moses to teach him God's commandments. "Those belong to the kingdom of God," Moses might have answered, "and you can have nothing to do with them till the power of God has brought you up out of the water. But there is something you need before even that. The judgment of God Himself is hanging over you, and would fall on you and the Egyptians alike, if God had not provided a remedy." And then he would tell of the Passover Lamb and the sprinkled blood. To confound the water of John iii. 5 with Christian baptism, and make it one of the requisites before a sinner can be justified, betrays, therefore, utter ignorance of the whole subject.

We turn next to Acts ii. 38, and we need to consider the whole circumstances under which Peter was speaking, if we are rightly to understand his words. It was just fifty days since Jesus rose from the dead. The Jews, who had all been gathered to Jerusalem then, to keep the feast of unleavened bread, were once more assembled to celebrate Pentecost. They had rejected Jesus; and now, from the throne of the Father, He had sent down the Holy Spirit, and in the power of the Spirit Peter had borne witness to Jesus, as the Christ, the Son of God. Not only so, but he had solemnly charged his hearers with the awful guilt of having crucified and slain this same Jesus, while he declared that the very Spirit, by whose power he and the other disciples had spoken, was the witness

Baptism and Salvation.

to the fact that Jesus was both Lord and Christ. Pricked to the heart, the people cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" and Peter promptly responded, "Repent, and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." "Repent" signifies "change your minds." You said this Jesus was an impostor: acknowledge then in your hearts that He is indeed the Son of God; and give a full and open acknowledgment of this by confessing His name, and submitting to be baptised upon that confession. This, as a whole, is unto the remission of sins. It corresponds with Rom. x. 9, 10, where we get faith in the heart accompanied by the confession of the mouth. On that day, and in those circumstances, baptism was the most complete confession they could possibly make. The passage in Acts xxii. 16 is precisely similar. The man who has persecuted even to death those who believed in Jesus as the Christ, is now called upon to make good his confession of that name by being baptised. The expression, "wash away thy sins," helps to show the real character of the passage. A sinner is justified before God when he believes in his heart; but when that justified one confesses the name of Jesus, owning Him as Lord, he puts away his sins from him, as Israel put far from them all the works of their bondage when they came through the sea.

It might be possible to mistake the force of these two passages, if they had stood alone; but when compared with the many Gospel declarations, and the constantly-repeated fact that "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life," there is not the least room for the mischievous interpretation put on them by those who pervert the Scriptures, to draw away the disciples after themselves (Acts xx. 30).

Let us sum up the whole matter. God, in infinite grace, gave His Son to shed His precious blood for sinners, and thereby to make an atonement for sin. On the ground of that atonement God proclaims forgiveness and life to every one that believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. In this way it is perfectly true that we are saved by the grace of God, by the blood of Christ, by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ; but to introduce baptism as either a means or a condition of salvation is to deny the truth of all the rest. John iii. 16 would be a falsehood, and all the thousands of sinners that have accepted its gracious declaration would wake up in hell to find they had been deceived by the word of God.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Question 3.—Is there any objection to using the expression, “the brethren,” when speaking of believers who are endeavouring to carry out the instructions of God’s Word in their church fellowship? If there is, how can we distinguish between such and other Christians?

Answer.—No plea of convenience, or even supposed necessity, can make it right to apply a title which belongs to all the people of God in an exclusive sense to a limited number of them. To call certain believers “the brethren” is practically to deny that name to others, and at once turns it into a sectarian title. At Corinth, while some said, “I am of Paul,” or “I am of Apollos,” there were others who said, “I am of Christ”; and the apostle equally condemns them all as carnal for so doing. To say, “I am of Christ,” in such a sense as to deny that other children of God are of Christ, is both carnal and sectarian. But, it is asked, what are we to say when we wish to refer to a particular company of believers, or to believers in every place, who are seeking to maintain scriptural order in their church fellowship, so that we may distinguish them from others, and that it may be understood of whom we are speaking? The answer seems to be very plain. What is it that really distinguishes these believers from others? Whatever it is, let us refer to that, and not to something about which there is no distinction at all. To say “the brethren” is no distinction, unless the term is used in a false and misleading sense. We might as well say “the Christians” or “the children of God”; and from this all would shrink, with an instinctive sense of the utter unfitness of such a use of these titles. What we wish to refer to is, that while most believers are still adhering to human associations, where the authority of the Lord Jesus and of the Word of God cannot be absolute, because of human traditions which are submitted to, there are some who have been led outside these associations, and who, being gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus alone, are endeavouring to walk according to no rule but that of the New Testament. This is not true of all believers; and there is nothing sectarian in referring to what is a matter of fact, however sad and regrettable it may be. We may, therefore, rightly speak of “believers gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus”; and, while this may cost us a little more trouble than the easy use of a shorter term, no pains can be too great to avoid grieving the Spirit of God by carnal language, even when we do not use it with a carnal intention.

"READY."

WHAT a blessed state of soul the apostle Paul must have been in when he declared to the Roman believers that, "As much as in me is, *I am ready* to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also" (Rom. i. 15). The more we turn these words over, and ponder them, the more do the faith and courage of the apostle shine out. Do we wonder that the Master could so use Paul? Does He not ever take up the instrument ready to hand, the vessel meet and prepared for His use?

"I am ready." These are not the enthusiastic words of an untried soldier, who knows not the toil of the campaign. They are rather the confident language of a veteran, who had already endured much hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Had he been content to live on past achievements, he might easily have excused himself from fresh toils, leaving younger ones to come to the front and break up the fresh ground. But no; a bond-slave to his Lord, he was ever ready to press forward into the "regions beyond" (2 Cor. x. 16), his feet, indeed, shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. It is easy to read now, in a slipshod way, how the apostle went from place to place, with his life in his hand, in obedience to his marching orders; but do we not often fail to realise what all this meant in hard work and self-denial? What had Paul done? Let us think of the geography of the matter for a moment. Sent out from Jerusalem (Acts xxii. 21), he commenced at home, his native city Tarsus, at the south-eastern extremity of the part now called Asia Minor; and such, doubtless, was the report of his labour and manner of life that, when Barnabas desired a helper during the revival at Antioch, he at once journeyed to Tarsus that he might bring Paul back with him. A man's gift makes room for him. The one who labours at home is promoted to the work abroad. From that time his influence grew, and soon Barnabas, "the good man," gladly took the second place, though the older in grace. Paul labours on. Time fails to follow his many journeys, but it will suffice us to say that at the time he wrote to the Romans he could say he had fully preached the Gospel of Christ in Syria, the whole of the many provinces that make up what we call Asia Minor (not to be confounded with the Asia of New Testament history), crossed the narrow strip of sea to Europe, and the whole of the present countries of Turkey and Greece, even to the borders of the Adriatic sea. What then? He looked across those blue waters, and his eyes of faith and

“Ready.”

love, more keen than those of natural vision, took in the countries beyond, still undisturbed in their awful sleep in the arms of the wicked one. I am ready to preach at Rome also. His heart, indeed, went out to far-off Spain, of which he had doubtless heard much from some enterprising merchant; but, ever practical, he does what his hand finds to do first, and would begin at Rome, though he faintly hoped to reach unto Spain.

Again, while this readiness was not born of an untried enthusiasm, yet neither was it half-hearted. “As much as in me is,” pressed every talent and power into this Divine service; not only to do it, but to do it well. He would seek to be all things to all men, so that he might by all means save some (1 Cor. ix. 18-27). That is, we take it, he would spare neither trouble nor time to understand, and enter into the circumstances and peculiarities of those to whom he preached, so that he might the better be able to drive the message home, reaching heart and conscience. Christ first, Christ last; and yet he would preach that same precious One in language that would suit his audience. The rough and hardy mountaineers of Galatia, the refined Athenians, the prejudiced Jews, or the idolatrous Ephesians, all needed the same Christ; but Paul would do his best to present Him in a way suitable to each. To preach the Gospel was to Paul a life work; not something taken up as a spiritual recreation when time allowed.

But let us not use up our energy in admiration of the apostle, and idly suppose that such self-sacrifice, such noble resolve, are too exalted for us to attain to. If that were so, the story would have been written for us in vain. Rather let us ask what led Paul along this path; and, as we arrive at the answer, let us also seek grace at least to enter on the pathway, even if we do not journey so far along it as he did. This epistle, this Gospel epistle to the Romans, supplies three great reasons why Paul so delighted in Gospel service. We will note them, and in doing so we shall find that they reach to us also.

I. He recognised that the service of the Gospel was priestly work; that is, that it was something to please the heart of God (see ch. xv. 16, and note the marginal reading of the Revised Version). Compare with this 2 Cor. ii. 15—“We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ.” Do we realise this? How it steadies us for service, not tossed about on the ever-changing tide of apparent success.

“Ready.”

II. He so realised the grace that had delivered him, the chief of sinners, that he could but own his indebtedness to all who were in the same sad plight that once he had been in himself (ch. i. 14). Right thoughts about God produce right thoughts about our neighbours. The second table of the law ever follows the first, and it does but work mischief to reverse the Divine order. It ill becomes those just rescued from the burning house to turn the back upon those still left in the place of danger.

III. He believed the Gospel was God's power (ch. i. 16). Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel; with all his heart he believed that it was not only a medicine, but the *only* medicine which could cure the dire disease of the human heart. He would have no stepping-stones to God's altar, no “helps” for the Gospel message. The simple belief of the Gospel story must produce the great change, for therein was the power of God. Had he not witnessed it? What was it that turned the world upside-down, the enemies themselves being judges, but the Gospel? What was it that turned the Philippian jailor from the lion into a lamb, but the same message which opened Lydia's heart first and then her house?

Corinth, Athens, Ephesus, as well as the regions of Galatia, all joined in the same confession of the power of the Gospel. Did not Paul's own life, the transformation of Saul the persecutor to Paul the apostle tell of the same wondrous power. More remarkable still is the picture set before us in Acts ii. That strange company at Jerusalem, made up of those who but yesterday were divided into bitter and hostile sects, but *now together!* Yesterday, remarkable in history for their fierce hatred of each other; to-day, equally remarkable for their love. A spectacle for the world to gaze upon, an evidence that the Gospel was God's power, such as the world has never seen before or since.

We, as much as Paul, declare by our words that this is true. If we did but realise it, in what mighty faith would we proclaim the simple message, without man's additions; knowing that dry bones shall yet, as in the vision of the seer, become an army for God.

WE please God by trusting Him.

WHAT a howling wilderness is this world without our Lord!
Let the thought of *what life would be without Him* enhance His preciousness.

THE FEASTS OF THE LORD.

IV.

THOUGH our present purpose is to deal with the prophetic and dispensational character of the feasts, rather than to dwell on every precious detail of their spiritual meaning, it will be well not to pass from the consideration of the Passover and the feast of unleavened bread, without taking notice of some of their more important features. First, let us put side by side the two expressions—

“They shall take to them *every man a lamb*” (Ex. xii. 3).

“The whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill *it* in the evening” (ver. 6).

For Israel there must needs be many lambs; yet this last passage speaks as though there was but one for all Israel, while the former command brings home the thought of the whole value and efficacy of the lamb for each one. How completely and how blessedly both these aspects of the truth are brought out in connection with our redemption. There is but one precious Lamb of God for all the redeemed family. “Christ loved the *church*, and gave Himself for *it*” (Eph. v. 25). But, none the less, there is an undivided Christ, in all the fulness of His grace, in all the infinite sufficiency of His own work and worth, for each redeemed soul. “The Son of God, who loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*” (Gal. ii. 20).

We may next call to mind what has been already referred to in connection with the putting away of the leaven, and we may sum the matter up as follows:—

The blood over the door for security.

The leaven put outside the house for communion.

Then, in verse 45, we read of two classes of persons who might not partake of the Passover. “A *foreigner* and a *hired servant* may not eat thereof.” But a servant bought with money could enjoy the privilege which was forbidden to the hired servant. Those who were born of Abraham’s seed and those who were bought with money could alike share in the feast. How beautifully this points out the double title of those who to-day are called to the table of the Lord. We may simply describe that title by the words—

Born of God.

Bought by God.

None of the human substitutes for these two essential qualifications are of the least avail. Reformation can never take the place of the new birth, and hired service can never stand instead of redemption through the blood of Christ.

The Feasts of the Lord.

And now, before passing on to speak of the waving of the first-fruits, it may be well to gather up the threads of the Divine story, as far as we have followed it. In the six months of the year that had passed, we see a picture of man on probation, so that he may be fully manifested as to what he really is. The result of this probation is, that man is shown to be hopelessly corrupt, and God has to set completely on one side the first Adam, and all that has come from him. For this reason, the seventh month is changed to the first, and God makes a fresh beginning with Christ, the last Adam, in place of the first. So the Passover lamb is chosen out on the tenth day, and kept up till the fourteenth day, and then it is killed; and, while the blood is sprinkled outside the door for the perfect security from judgment of those within, the body of the lamb, roast with fire, is the portion of the redeemed household. In this way, God shows us how He has laid the foundation of all that is to follow; and the character of redemption, and the blessedness of the redeemed people while still pilgrims here, are fully brought out.

But there was another truth connected with that Passover week still to be set forth. It was a truth, however, that could not have its proper display while Israel were in the wilderness; and so, while they could keep the Passover and the feast of unleavened all the time of their journeyings, there was something further held in reserve till they should be in the land of promise. Turning again to Lev. xxiii., we read, at verse 9, "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest unto the priest: and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it." It is necessary to read this passage in connection with the previous verses, 5 to 8, as otherwise we shall not know what Sabbath is referred to. While the Israelites were in the wilderness, they were always to kill the Passover lamb on the fourteenth day of the first month, and to keep the feast of unleavened bread for the seven days following. But when they were come into the land they were to add a further observance during the same week, on the day after the Sabbath day of that week.

It is well to bear in mind that the use of the words, "And the Lord spake unto Moses," always points out the beginning

The Feasts of the Lord.

of a fresh spiritual division of the subject, in all these instructions of God to His people from Mount Sinai. As an ordinary narrative, there may be no break, perhaps; but, as to the spiritual interpretation, we shall find the recurrence of these words an important guide to help us in distinguishing God's divisions of the matter under consideration. So here, the Lord is still dealing with the week of unleavened bread, and is only adding a further instruction as to something to be done in that week when His people were in Canaan; but a new subject altogether is being set forth in type by this additional ordinance, and it is therefore introduced by the distinctive words we have referred to.

We can readily understand how impossible it would have been for the Israelites to carry out this last commandment while they were in the wilderness. They must not only be in Canaan, but must be in possession there, before they could reap its harvest, and bring its first-fruits to God. And what are we to understand by this sheaf of first-fruits, waved before the Lord on the day after the Sabbath day in Passover week? The time appointed for its presentation leaves us without any doubt as to its meaning. It was on the day after the Sabbath in that very week that Jesus rose from the dead, and became "the first-fruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. xv. 20); and this waving of the first ripe sheaf of the harvest is, therefore, a fitting emblem of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus from among the dead. We may notice, too, that no sin-offering needed to be offered to God in connection with the waving of this sheaf. Verses 12 and 13 tell us of a burnt-offering, with its meat-offering and drink-offering, as the accompaniments commanded by God to go along with the sheaf of first-fruits; but we read of nothing in the shape of a sin-offering. There was only one other occasion when no sin-offering was to be offered to the Lord, and that was on each Sabbath day (see Num. xxviii. 9, 10). The Sabbath was a witness to the rest of God, resulting from a finished, perfect work, and there could be no occasion for sin-offering in connection with it. The wave-offering of the first-fruits represents the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. He was raised again according to the Spirit of holiness, in token that sin had been put away, and God completely glorified; and here, too, there was no room for a sin-offering. But on every other occasion throughout the Jewish year, as we shall find by a careful examination of the 28th and 29th chapters of Numbers, the sin-offering was never to be wanting.

"Blessed are they that do His Commandments."

(Rev. xxii. 14).

It is so sweet to serve Him
In every little thing ;
"Just doing all for Jesus"
Is what I love to sing.

So sweet 'tis to obey Him
With willing heart and hands,
Glad that He *counts* me worthy
To trust with His commands.

How blest to do His bidding
With quick and joyful feet—
Feet which will never weary,
By true love rendered fleet.

Ready, yea, always ready,
Whenever He may say,
"Thou art My chosen servant,
I need *thee* for to-day."

Ah, privilege most blessed
That unto me is given,
To tell the wandering outcasts
God's only way to heaven.

To point them just to Jesus,
The Saviour of the lost,
Who for their soul's full ransom
In life-blood paid the cost.

I thank Thee I can serve Thee
Even in little things ;
And "doing all for Jesus"

GLENVAR.

Is what my heart still sings.

W. A. G.

MINISTRY.

THE DIVINE SIDE.

THE HUMAN SIDE.

<p>“God had done” - - - (Acts xiv. 27).</p> <p>“God had wrought” - - - (Acts xv. 12).</p> <p>“God made choice” - - - (Acts xv. 7).</p> <p>“God wrought” - - - (Acts xix. 11).</p> <p>“God had wrought” - - - (Acts xxi. 19).</p> <p>“Help of God” - - - (Acts xxvi. 22).</p> <p>“Spake the Holy Ghost” - - (Acts xxviii. 25).</p> <p>“By the power of the Spirit of God” (Rom. xv. 19).</p> <p>“Putting me into ministry” - (1 Tim. i. 12).</p> <p>“Gave gifts” - - - (Eph. iv. 8).</p> <p>“Allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel” (1 Thess. ii. 4).</p> <p>“God, which put the same earnest care into the heart” (2 Cor. viii. 16).</p> <p>“Freely received” - - - (Matt. x. 8).</p> <p>“He gave five talents” - - - (Matt. xxv. 15).</p> <p>“Gospel of God” - - - (1 Thess. ii. 2).</p> <p>“The gift of God” - - - (2 Tim. i. 6).</p> <p>“Diversities of gifts” - - - (1 Cor. xii. 4).</p> <p>“Given by the Spirit” - - - (1 Cor. xii. 8).</p>	<p>“With them” (Acts xiv. 27).</p> <p>“By them” (Acts xv. 12).</p> <p>“By my mouth” (Acts xv. 7).</p> <p>“By the hands of Paul” (Acts xix. 11).</p> <p>“By his ministry” (Acts xxi. 19).</p> <p>“I continue” (Acts xxvi. 22).</p> <p>“By Esaias” (Acts xxviii. 25).</p> <p>“So have I strived to preach the Gospel” (Rom. xv. 20).</p> <p>“Approving ourselves as the ministers of God” (2 Cor. vi. 4).</p> <p>“Neglect not the gift that is in thee” (1 Tim. iv. 14).</p> <p>“So spake, that a great mul- titude . . . believed” (Acts xiv. 1).</p> <p>“Naturally care for your state” (Phil. ii. 20).</p> <p>“Freely give” (Matt. x. 8).</p> <p>“Traded with the same” (Matt. xxv. 16).</p> <p>“Our Gospel” (1 Thess. i. 5).</p> <p>“Stir up the gift of God” (2 Tim. i. 6).</p> <p>“Desire spiritual gifts” (1 Cor. xiv. 1).</p> <p>“Covet earnestly the best gifts” (1 Cor. xii. 31).</p>
--	---

"LO, I HAVE TOLD YOU BEFORE."

GOD has made the way of salvation so simple and plain in the Scriptures, that nothing but the gross dulness of the natural heart could make men fail to apprehend it. There are, however, many things in the Word of God which are not so easily understood, and which, in fact, were not understood by those whose mission it was to write them (see Matt. xiii. 17 and 1 Peter i. 10-12). Now, when these kings heard the word, when these prophets received the word, and did not understand it, what did they do? Did they say, "These things are too deep and too difficult for us," and did they content themselves thus? No; the Lord says they desired to see the things, and Peter tells us that they inquired and searched diligently what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify? And what, to them, was the result of desiring, inquiring and searching diligently? The result to them was a revelation! 1 Peter i. 12—"Unto whom it was revealed." Now, we shall do well to dwell on this, because we are commanded, "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James i. 5). Why did these prophets get the revelation? Because they desired, inquired and searched diligently. Prov. ii. 3—"If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding."

Now, have we got this answer from God? Have we desired, inquired and searched diligently? If we cried earnestly to God we should surely get something, no matter what the difficulties and discouragements might be. The gospels have many examples of this, as when the Lord explains the parables to His disciples, and on other occasions. A cry to God is always heard and answered; and amid the crowd the cry of faith always reached the ear of Christ and brought its answer, though the apostles even might think it unnecessary. Nay, our ignorance does not arise so much from the difficulty of the Scriptures, as from our own indifference. Prov. xxv. 2—"It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter." May we not be well assured that when we come to stand before God, in the likeness of Christ, it will, as it were, be an additional drop in our cup of bliss to find that, as each of His wonderful

"Lo, I have told you before."

purposes develops before our astonished gaze, it will be a seal of some long-known word of God, desired over, inquired over, searched over, ere faith was changed to sight, and all our feeble apprehensions of its truth outdone. We shall not have to say, "I never heard anything about this before"; but, like the Queen of Sheba, "It was a true report I heard, . . . howbeit . . . the half was not told me." How important, then, to bear in mind the present advantage of a good understanding of the Word of God." Not only is it a safeguard here, but it is a preparation for the place where we hope, through grace, to spend eternity—

"To find each hope of glory gained;
Fulfilled each precious word."

It is indeed true that however we read and search the Word of God, faith is not sight, and the realisation will be heaven. But remember that faith has its own peculiar sweetness, which is not only a present blessing, but which will have its abiding reward. A poor, tried believer confesses Christ before men: then Christ will confess that believer's name before the angels. And will not such an one be able to say, "I believed that it would be so; Christ gave me His word for this." "For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the Cross and despised the shame." Now, in so far as things could be communicated to us in our present state, for some things cannot be communicated (2 Cor. xii. 4), we have been prepared by the Scriptures for all that will happen. When the Lord Jesus was on earth, His doings, and even His words, were according to long-known scriptures. In Luke xxiv. He says, not that the two disciples did not know the Scriptures, but that they did not believe them. "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!" Again, when the Lord had ascended, what was the Spirit to do? John xvi. 13—"He will guide you into all truth." John xiv. 25, 26—"These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

How we should be helped to bear many things in this present time could we but see in each a corroboration of some precious word of God. When the apostles found themselves ill-used and hated and persecuted, and the Holy Spirit brought to their remembrance that the blessed Lord had told

"Lo, I have told you before."

them this would occur, how it would quiet their minds and give them boldness, as we see in Acts iv. 24-31. Every word of God which is thus, as it were, woven into the web of our daily experience, becomes a seal to us of God's truth, a fresh means of justifying God and of establishing our own souls. Fixing this anchor firm within the veil, one's mind becomes steadied in observing the accurate relation between circumstances and the word of God. There is a peace in it which preserves the heart from the bitterness which would, without this, arise and disturb us (Ps. cvii. 43). In the life of the Lord Jesus on earth all had relation to the scripture. When the disciples saw Him casting the money-changers out of the temple, instead of thinking this energy a strange change in the meek and lowly One, they remembered that it was written, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." We do not wish to convey that our personal histories are thus previously denoted in Scripture, but all our surroundings and our moral history are there to be found. The present state of Christendom is also to be found in the Word of God. Faith is believing that what God hath promised He is able also to perform. Faith rests upon a word of God. Faith acts upon it also; and thus, when the circumstances which befall the good as well as the evil occur, he who has acted on faith stands, while the very same trials overwhelm him who has not acted on faith (Luke vi. 47, &c.). When faith and hope cease, and sight takes their place, shall we not, more than ever, know, though heaven and earth shall then have passed away, that God's word shall never pass away; that what He had promised He was able also to perform.

The more we are now acquainted with the mind and purposes of God in His Word, the less shall we be strangers to His fulfilled designs. Let us suppose that, when Moses wrote, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him ye shall hearken" (Deut. xviii. 15), he was one of those prophets who did not fully, as Peter tells us, understand the message which it was their service to give. Well, then when Moses on the mount of transfiguration saw the glory of Christ, and heard the voice from the excellent glory say, "This is My beloved Son; hear Him," what a blessed, magnificent illumination would it be of those long spoken words, and how Moses could say, "I see it all now." Peter, in alluding to this very scene, sees in it a special value as being confirmatory

Questions and Answers.

of the word of prophecy. 2 Peter i. 18, 19—"A more sure word of prophecy," being a word of prophecy assured or made sure. This principle is of great value. Suppose we hear a man reasoning, as one may do, that the Lord's coming is a fancy, that there are no signs of it, and so forth. Instead of thinking over this poor man's reasons and arguments, what we do think is, "God has told us in His Word that men would say these things, and in the same connection He has told us that the Lord is coming. Your speeches fulfil half the text, and the Lord will come and fulfil the other half" (2 Peter iii). The advantage of a thorough knowledge of the Word of God is, that it prepares us for everything in *time and in eternity*. "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures" (Matt. xxii. 19). "The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple" (Ps. cxix. 130).

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Question 4.—In some parts of the country it is customary at funerals to hand wine, and sometimes spirits, round to the mourners, as well as to the coachmen and attendants. Would you consider custom to be sufficient reason for the compliance with such a habit?

Answer.—Where the customs of the people are perfectly harmless, and involve no compromise of truth or principle, it may be well to conform to them out of consideration for the feelings of others. "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God" (1 Cor. x. 32). But in the case referred to above, surely none will plead that the custom is a harmless one. Whatever believers may think as to their own need of wine, if for their stomach's sake and their often infirmities they judge it right to take some, there cannot be the smallest excuse for such an indiscriminate offering of it to all sorts of people, to many of whom the single glass thus taken may be the most tremendous temptation. Such a practice, though carried out, it may be, in utter thoughtlessness, seems to us to be a direct and grievous violation of the commandment to have "no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" (Eph. v. 11); for to such the pernicious wholesale drinking customs of this land most surely belong. Wherever such a custom prevails, it would seem very important to warn believers beforehand in regard to it; as when the time comes for making arrangements for a funeral, no thought may be given to the matter, and the undertaker, or other persons, may provide the wine without any particular instructions.

"IN THE BOSOM OF THE FATHER."

(John i. 18.)

GOD could only be rightly declared by One who knew Him, and the only One who really knew Him was the One who dwelt in His bosom. The Son of God is set before us in various ways as to His relationship to the Father. He is the brightness of His glory, the express image of His person, the sharer of His throne; but, when the Spirit of God will present Christ to us as the One who makes known the Father, then He is spoken of as in the Father's bosom. How much this says to us of the true character of ministry, and of the conditions needful to make us truly God's witnesses.

"In the bosom of the Father" tells of perfect fellowship between the Father and Him who dwelt in His bosom. Nothing could be kept secret by the one from the other, and when the only begotten Son was sent into the world, He spoke the things which He had heard from the Father. Even to the world He said, "He that sent Me is true, and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of Him" (John viii. 26). But to His disciples He could say, "*All things* that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you" (John xv. 15). It is just what we love to sing when we are gathered together around Himself:

"Here every welcome guest
Waits, Lord, from Thee to learn
The secrets of Thy Father's breast,
And all Thy grace discern."

"Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." God is light, and God is love, and in the Father's bosom the only begotten Son heard all that God is. So, when He came to earth, He declared God to men. It was no one-sided declaration. The light and the love were equally set forth. The grace and the truth went hand in hand. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Ps. lxxxv. 10).

Now as the Son dwells in the bosom of the Father, so it is our privilege to abide in Christ. John leaned on His bosom, and when the disciples had a question to put to the Lord, none of the others ventured to ask it of Him direct; but Peter beckoned to John, and John, lying on Jesus' breast, asked the question and received the answer. This is what ministry should be; a simple declaring to others that which we receive of God, as we lean on the bosom of the Lord Jesus.

In John's first epistle, that beloved disciple writes: "That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes,

"In the Bosom of the Father."

which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life, . . . declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us" (1 John i. 1-3). We are called to the same blessed place that John delighted to occupy, and we are to speak the things that we learn there. The highest fellowship of believers one with another is when both are sharing in common the rest and joy of the bosom of Christ, and are able to delight together in that which they are learning there. When the two disciples were going to Emmaus, listening intently to the wonderful unfolding from the Scriptures, which the Lord Jesus was giving them, of the things concerning Himself, even though they knew not that it was His own voice that spoke to them, they were truly learning from Him and learning about Him. Their whole being was taken up with the blessed subject, and when He had made Himself known to them in the breaking of bread, and had left them, they could say one to another, "Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?" They did not say "our hearts," but "our heart"; for those who are thus learning Christ are of one heart, their fellowship is complete.

And as this is the condition needful to perfect fellowship between saints, so, as we said before, it is the condition necessary to true ministry. Where this condition is maintained, the whole truth concerning God will be declared, and the whole of God's truth will be taught. There will be no one-sided gospel preached by him who is thus abiding in Christ; no exalting of grace at the expense of righteousness. Equally in our ministry to saints the love and light will both shine out. Oh, what mischief is wrought when we try to act for God, while we are not ourselves in fellowship with Him. We may rebuke sin, but we shall not reach the conscience. We may talk about love, but we shall not find our way to the heart. There is something in this that is beyond all gifts and all knowledge. The gifts and the knowledge are not to be set on one side, but they are dead and powerless without the unction that comes from abiding in Christ.

MEN of the world ought to be compelled to say not only "See how these Christians *love* one another," but likewise "How these Christians *work* for their Lord."

IF our *hearts* are not separated to Christ, how can our *lives* be?

"CONFLICT IN HEAVENLY PLACES."

IN order that the reader may rightly understand the meaning of the expression, "Heavenly places," as used in the epistle to the Ephesians, it will be helpful and instructive to turn to the books of Joshua and Deuteronomy, which contain, in type, Ephesian truth. When Israel had crossed the river Jordan, and entered the land of Canaan, a man with a drawn sword met Joshua, and declared himself to be captain of the Lord's host, to lead Israel on to battle. Canaan, is not, therefore, a type of heaven, where there is no fighting, but of the heavenlies of Ephesians, the scene of spiritual conflicts. Deut. viii. 7-10 describes the earthly blessings of the land: a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive and honey, &c., &c., while the "spiritual blessings in heavenly places" are unfolded to us in Ephesians i., ii., iii.: chosen in Christ; sons of God; accepted in the Beloved; one with Christ; sealed with the Holy Spirit; members of the Body of Christ; an habitation of God through the Spirit, &c., &c.

The captain of the Lord's host (Joshua v. 14), and Israel under his leadership, are figures of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the saints in association with Him, in heavenly places (Eph. i. 20; ii. 6). The *seven* nations of Canaan typify principalities, powers, and the wicked spirits in high and heavenly places (Eph. vi. 12). While the wars of Canaan have their counterpart in the subtle and fierce conflicts between believers, and the spiritual powers of wickedness, as described in Eph vi. 10-19. Thus we have:—

<i>Joshua.</i>	<i>Ephesians.</i>
(1) The land of Canaan.	The heavenly places.
(2) Earthly blessings.	Spiritual blessings.
(3) The captain of the Lord's host.	The Lord Jesus Christ.
(4) The Canaanites.	Wicked spirits.
(5) Israel.	The children of God.
(6) Battle.	Conflict.
(7) The wiles of the Gibeonites and the carnal weapons of the nations.	The wiles of the devil and the fiery darts of the wicked one.

Israel's success in battle depended on their strict obedience to the divine instructions given in Deuteronomy; and they were warned not to add to, or diminish aught from, the

“Conflict in Heavenly Places.”

commandments of the Lord. Their strength lay, not in any might of their own, but in Jehovah, who had promised to be their guide whithersoever they might go, and who would not fail or forsake His people, provided that they turned not aside to the right hand or to the left (Joshua i. 1-9).

Satan would seek to hinder us from the enjoyment of our spiritual blessings, and many and varied are the means he uses to bar our onward progress; whether it be by covetousness, as in the case of Achan; the friendship of the world, as in the case of the Gibeonites; or “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.” And the same commandments are given to us as were given to Israel, to take heed unto ourselves, to cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart, and diligently to keep ourselves in the love of God. He will then keep us from falling, and will never leave us or forsake us. The victory against the terrible foes of Eph. vi. can only be gained by those who, with an honest and true heart, seek to carry out the mind of the Lord contained in Eph. iv., v., and vi. 1-9. Such alone are “strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.” The sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, is our great weapon. Its *quality* is described in Hebrews iv. 12; its *power* in 2 Cor. x. 4-5—“Mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds”; and with the heavenly armour girded on, we can fight the battles of Canaan over again. “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity *every thought* to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor. x. 5).

May we all be very diligent in the study of the sacred Scriptures, that we be not barren or unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, and in whom alone we receive all the things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Peter ii. 1-8). Thus, filled with the knowledge of the Lord and of His will, we shall be able to stand in this evil day against all the powers of darkness. “For 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” (Rom. xiii. 12).

THERE is no happiness but in subjection to One who is absolutely perfect. We are continually bringing ourselves into trouble by our own independence, and doing our own will.

THE FEASTS OF THE LORD.

V.

BUT in this waving of the first ripe sheaf of the harvest, we have not merely the witness to the fact of resurrection. There are multitudes of believers to-day who expect a general resurrection of all who have ever lived and died, at what they call the "end of the world." This is far better than the infidelity of the Sadducee, who believed in no resurrection whatever; but it is not the truth, as set before us in Scripture. There is not merely to be a resurrection *of the dead*, but a resurrection *from among the dead*; that is to say, some will be raised up, while others still lie in their graves. In Rev. xx. 5, we read of "the first resurrection," and we are told that all who have part in it are "blessed and holy." But the very same verse tells us of the "rest of the dead," who lived not again till the thousand years were finished. That first resurrection is a resurrection, therefore, from among the dead; and the characteristic of such a resurrection is, that it distinguishes those who are thus raised up as the objects of God's grace.

Now, in the waving of the sheaf of first-fruits, we get this *distinction brought very plainly before us*. It is what we might call a selective resurrection, for there is a Divine order that must be observed (see 1 Cor. xv. 23), and there is no warrant for the popular notion of a general resurrection day. It will be well to turn to a few scriptures which bring out clearly the fact that a resurrection of some before others was a truth never revealed, till the calling of the church was made known. In the first place, we will turn to some passages that show us that the general truth, that the dead should rise, was no new thing in the days when the Lord Jesus was on the earth. Let us begin with Matt. xxii. 23, where we have the Sadducees, "which say that there is no resurrection," coming to try and entangle the Lord Jesus with their questions. In verse 31, the Lord says to them, "But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken to you by God?" The words are literally as they are given, "the resurrection of the dead," the word dead being in the plural. It is a broad, general expression, simply asserting that the dead will be raised again. Then in Acts xxiii. 6, we have a similar expression, but without the article "the." Paul claims the support of the Pharisees on the ground that he was contending for that which they all believed in, though the Sadducees denied it. "Of the hope and resurrection of the

The Feasts of the Lord.

dead (Greek, of dead ones), I am called in question." Then, again, in 1 Cor. xv., it was the fact that there was any resurrection at all that had been denied. "How say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?" (ver. 12). And again, it was that simple fact alone that the apostle included among the six foundation truths, known to the Jews of old, in Heb. vi. 2.

But, as we have already stated, while this was true, it was not all the truth. It was all that was known to Old Testament saints, but there was something further to be revealed. We may now, therefore, look at some portions which bring out this further distinct truth, that some would be raised up, while others were left for a future occasion. We will begin at Mark ix. 9. Peter and James and John had been with the Lord in the mountain of transfiguration; and, as they were coming down, He charged them to tell no man what they had seen, till the Son of Man were risen from the dead. The exact words here used are, "raised out from dead ones," and distinctly spoke of a resurrection in which others would be left behind. Now, this was a matter of astonishment to the disciples, and they questioned one with another what the rising from among the dead should mean. They would never have questioned what resurrection, or rising out of death, might mean; but it was this thought of rising up from among the dead that was altogether new to them. This is the form of expression always used in reference to the resurrection of Christ, making that resurrection a witness to the general truth, that the dead shall rise, and also to the special truth that there shall be a resurrection of His own, at His coming, from among the other dead, who will not be raised at that time. In the preaching of the apostles (Acts iii. 15 and xiii. 30), or in the teaching of the epistles (Rom. iv. 24 and viii. 11; Eph. i. 20; 1 Peter i. 3 and 21), this is the constant distinctive expression.

This is beautifully illustrated by the waving of the sheaf of first-fruits. There were other portions of the harvest, besides the whole of the vintage, yet to be brought in before Israel could keep the feast of tabernacles (see Deut. xvi. 13); and this day of the first-fruits not merely declares God's power in resurrection, but His distinctive grace in raising up His own in that first resurrection, in which the unredeemed have no part.

I MAY lose through a careless, disobedient walk "the peace of God"; but never my peace *with* God."

GOD IS LOVE.

YES, true, O God, Thou art of love the spring,
And all the love that we to Thee may bring,
First comes from Thee, Thou everlasting source
Of love, in all its living, mighty force.

Thy love is infinite ; 'tis like Thyself,
So vast a mine of untold, unreach'd wealth,
As none have ever fathomed or explored,
Except Thine own beloved Son, our Lord.

'Tis He, who ever in Thy bosom dwelt,
Alone could understand Thy heart ; He felt
Its beatings of true love, so He came down,
To make that love in all its power known.

His life on earth in every action proved,
It was Thy love that ever in Him moved ;
To do those kind and loving deeds of grace,
That dried the tear on many a mourner's face.

But in His death upon the Cross for me,
Thy love in all its height and depth I see ;
'Tis wonderful to contemplate it there,
When He my awful load of guilt did bear.

It is beyond my power to comprehend
A love like Thine, my God ! But kindly bend
My wayward heart, that I may, more and more,
Search into this eternal, boundless store.

Until I come to dwell with Thee above,
And ever be before Thee there in love ;
Then shall I see its length and breadth Divine ;
And know, as known, and ever know it mine.

GEO. S. JORDAN.

When are Believers sealed by the Holy Spirit ?

THE following is taken from a letter recently addressed to one who had been taught that a person might be saved and yet not have received the Holy Spirit. Such passages as Acts ii. 38 and xix. 2 had been quoted in support of this teaching, and help was sought as to the whole subject. We live in days when, perhaps, more than ever before, inward experiences are preached and sought after to satisfy the heart, apart from the *guiding into all truth* (John xvi. 13), and the *having and keeping all the commandments of the Lord* (John xiv. 21), which are the results of the Holy Spirit's working in the believer's heart. The "second blessing," the "baptism of the Spirit," "perfect love"; these are some among the many expressions used to describe an experience, which Christians are taught to suppose may be attained to by some single act of surrender or of faith. But when the supposed attainment has been made, the result, in many cases, is only in the feelings of the individual, while there is little fruit to God arising from it. Indeed, it is no uncommon thing to find absolute indifference to many commandments of the Lord Jesus, along with the profession of having received this special blessing. "I don't need to be baptised with water; I have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit," is by no means an uncommon answer when the test of John xiv. 21 is applied.

We do not for a moment deny that there is a true, God-given desire on the part of many who are seeking this "second blessing." Nay, more, we believe that many do truly receive much blessing in answer to their desire. But if God's gifts are to be used for His glory, and if there is to be a steadfast following on to know the Lord, we must be grounded in the truth; otherwise, mere experiences, however blessed, may actually be perverted to help on the wildest delusions.

We would commend the study of the following letter to our readers, as calculated to clear away many mistakes, and to enable us to start with a sound scriptural foundation. If the Lord will, we hope to come back to the subject again next month, and to deal with some of its other aspects.—E.D.

"I would say, in the first instance, that the positive doctrinal statements of the epistles must never be made to bend to inferences, drawn from things said about different classes of persons in the Acts of the Apostles, whose circumstances were by no means identical with those of the believers of this dis-

When are Believers sealed by the Holy Spirit?

pensation. Let us look, then, at those statements of the Word of God, which belong, beyond all question, to the Church, which is the body of Christ. First, take Ephesians i., where we have the special part of each person in the Godhead in our salvation. Chosen by God the Father, according to His eternal purpose; redeemed by the blood of Christ; and then, in verses 13 and 14, comes the part of the Holy Spirit.

“The Authorised Version is very faulty here, and quite destroys the sense by its additions to the words of the original. I therefore quote from the Revised—‘In whom ye also, having heard the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom, having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance,’ &c.

“As soon as we get the correct words of the apostle, we see that his main statement is simply, ‘In whom (Christ) ye also were sealed with the Holy Spirit,’ &c.; but twice he breaks off parenthetically to point out what led to this sealing, ‘In whom ye also, *having heard,*’ &c., and then he begins again ‘in whom,’ but only to break off a second time and add ‘having also believed.’

“The statement is absolute and unqualified as to all the saints at Ephesus. You were chosen *in Christ*, by God the Father; *in Him* you have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins; and *in Him* also you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit, as an earnest of the inheritance.

“The parenthesis which adds ‘having heard’ and ‘having believed’ only points out the means by which God’s salvation became theirs, for faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, but leaves untouched the absolute declaration, true of all Ephesian saints, and therefore true of all saints of this dispensation.

“Then again, in 1 Cor. vi. 19, the apostle’s weightiest argument against sins which dishonour the body is in the words, ‘Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you,’ &c.

“There can be no pretence of this referring only to specially holy Christians. It is addressed to those who were carnal and puffed up, and careless about the gross immorality taking place among them.

“We may refer also to the apostle’s question in Gal. iii. 2—‘This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?’ There was no question, in spite of their low spiritual condition, as to

When are Believers sealed by the Holy Spirit?

their having received the Spirit; and the question reminds them, in the most forcible manner, that there was but one way of receiving Him. Indeed, receiving the Spirit is put as the same thing as being saved.

“These scriptures settle the question, then, that all believers of this dispensation are indwelt by the Holy Spirit as surely as they are redeemed by the blood of Christ.

“Now, as to the supposed contradictory passages. First, let us turn to Acts xix. The A.V. is faulty again here, but the Revised has it very fairly. There is no word ‘since,’ or anything like it in the original. Then, again, the reply of those disciples is not, ‘We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost,’ but, ‘Whether the Holy Ghost be,’ in the sense of ‘be present,’ ‘be come’; exactly like John vii. 30—‘For the Holy Ghost was not yet,’ and where the translators have rightly understood ‘given.’ This helps to remind us that this was a transition time, in which the old covenant ritual had not yet been set aside for the Jew, because the nation itself had not been set aside. Though they had crucified Jesus of Nazareth, yet now He was once more offered to them as a nation, with the Holy Spirit’s testimony as to His resurrection, and His sending down the promised Spirit of God.

“So, in Acts ii., Peter addresses the Jews in their national character, bidding them confess Jesus as the Christ, by baptism, that they may receive the promise of the Spirit; and in chap. iii., in like manner, that the times of refreshing may come, and that God may send back the Christ (see verses 19-21, R.V.; the A.V. being again at fault).

“Perhaps it may be a help to point out the purpose of the only occasions on which the Spirit was given in a visible way. The Lord had told the apostles that they were to be His witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judea, in Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth, that is, to the Gentiles (Acts i. 8).

“We know how difficult it was to the Jewish mind to believe that the Samaritans, and much less Gentiles, could be partakers of the same privileges as Jews. God, therefore, was pleased to put this beyond doubt by causing the first bestowal of the Spirit upon Samaritans and Gentiles to be of the same visible character as what occurred at Pentecost, and to take place in the presence of apostles (see Acts viii. 17 and x. 44). But it is very significant that in the latter case, that of the Gentiles, it was while Peter yet spake. There was no question

When are Believers sealed by the Holy Spirit?

about any national Jewish position here, and the circumstances therefore corresponded with what holds good all through the dispensation. They received the Holy Spirit the moment they believed. Like Eph. i., having heard, having believed, they were sealed. But, in grace, God did it visibly, that Peter might be fully assured that God had made the Gentiles equal in privilege with the Jews, and that he might persuade others (see Acts xi. 17 and xv. 8, 9, particularly the latter passage, where he speaks of Gentiles generally, who believe, as having received the Holy Spirit).

“In Acts ii., viii., and x. we have, therefore, the three classes of persons into which the Lord Jesus had divided the whole world in Acts i., all receiving the Holy Spirit in a visible, unquestionable manner. But there remained a class who scarcely belonged to any of these—Jews who had heard and received John the Baptist’s preaching, and had been baptised by him, but had not learned anything further. Of such were the disciples at Ephesus in Acts xix.; and God, in His goodness, would not suffer them to be put in a less favourable position. After that we read nothing more of visible accompaniments to the reception of the Holy Spirit. The four cases recorded are representative ones, each of a class; and when the fact that there is no distinction now, but that all classes are merged in one, has been fully attested, the abiding condition, as taught in the epistles, is established, and those who hear and believe receive the Holy Spirit.”

“LOSS FOR CHRIST.”—What was it Paul counted “loss for Christ?” Not his sins—not his mistakes and shortcomings—not his life as a persecutor and blasphemer; but his *righteousness*—his religion as a Jew; all his own excellencies, so important in the eye of the natural man, the man according to the flesh! “Loss!” such was Paul’s estimate of his *righteousness*. The poor glimmering star, so laboured for by the sons of night, dies out before the eye that is fixed on Christ, the true righteousness, the “Sun of Righteousness,” the Righteousness of God!!”

A SOLEMN TRUTH.—How few of us seek diligently and unceasingly to be filled with that love which “*suffereth long and is kind, which beareth all things, hopeth all things, and endureth all things.*”

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Question 5.—In your answer to Question 3, in the March Number, you use the expression, “Believers gathered ‘to’ the name of the Lord Jesus.” On what ground do you say “gathered ‘to’ the name,” instead of “in” the name, as in Matt. xviii. 20?

Answer.—The exact translation of Matt. xviii. 20, is, “For where there are two or three gathered together unto My name, there am I in the midst of them.” It will help us to understand what is meant if we turn to Num. xii., where the Lord tells His people that when they have come into the land which He would give them to inherit, He will choose a place to put His name there, and thither they shall come, and there they shall offer all their offerings (see verses 5, 12, 14, 18). Verse 5 teaches us that where the Lord puts His name, there is His habitation; there He is Himself. Israel, therefore, in all their convocations, were to come to the place where Jehovah had put His name, and where He Himself dwelt. Being thus gathered, “called together,” by His own voice, for that is the meaning of the word “convocation,” as used in Lev. xxiii. 2, and elsewhere, they could receive His commandments and every other communication He had to make to them. Speaking of the mercy-seat, upon the ark of the testimony, in the holy of holies, God says to Moses, “There I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubims, which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.” Gathered *unto* His name, Jehovah Himself was in the midst of them, to command, to guide, and to keep; and what they did, according to His bidding, was done *in* His name, and with His authority. It is exactly the same to-day. Believers called together by the Word and Spirit of God, are gathered unto the name of the Lord Jesus, and He is in the midst of them, having all authority. In carrying out His commandments, they act upon His authority, and in His name. Hence, in 1 Cor. v. 4, the apostle commands the church at Corinth to act *in* the name of the Lord Jesus, being gathered together with His power; the word here being really “in,” not “unto,” as in Matt. xviii. 20. If Christians are formed into any association of human devising, the conditions are wanting which alone can enable them to act as a church in the name of the Lord Jesus, and with His authority and power. The one association that fulfils these conditions is that Divine one, “the gathering unto His name.”

THE SEALING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

WE remember once meeting a brother in Christ who had just come from a town where a "Revival Mission" was being held. "There has been a wonderful work going on," he said. "So many have been saved, and so many fully sanctified;" giving the numbers of each class. Now, this idea of being saved without being sanctified, of being born again without having received the Holy Spirit, is part of the old unbelief of the natural heart, that always puts off God's gifts, making them to follow some improved condition on our part, instead of recognising that they must be the source of everything good in us.

Let us turn to 2 Cor. i. and read verses 20 to 22: "For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." The apostle takes his place with the Corinthian believers, and declares that all these things are as true of the youngest and least spiritual of them as of himself. Are they believers? Then they have been anointed and sealed by the Holy Spirit, and the same Holy Spirit dwells in their hearts as an earnest of coming glory. And it is because of what they are, of that which the grace of God has made them, that the apostle exhorts them to cleanse themselves "from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. vii. 1).

We were noticing last month in the 1st chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians, that the apostle reminds the saints at Ephesus that when they heard and believed the word of truth, they were sealed with the Holy Spirit. In this case, again, he makes the fact of their having been thus sealed the ground of his appeal to them in chapter iv. 30: "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." How often we find Christians separating between what they call "high truth" and "practical teaching;" and the separation does not come from one side only. There are those who speak much of the heavenly calling of the believer, and delight to remember that we are raised up with Christ and seated with him in heavenly places; but they fail to give equal prominence to the exhortations to walk worthy of the calling wherewith we are called. There are those, on the other hand, who are what they consider to be intensely practical; but their practical teaching lacks a foundation, and

The Sealing of the Holy Spirit.

is void of power. Perhaps none of the epistles shows so clearly as that to the Ephesians that we need the whole power of the Three-one God to enable us to do the smallest as well as the greatest things. After telling the part of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Spirit in the work of redemption, the apostle goes on to pray that those to whom he was writing may know "what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places" (chap. i. 19, 20). Then at the close of the prayer in chapter iii. he adds the doxology, "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, *according to the power that worketh in us*, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." Immediately after this follows the exhortation of chapter iv. 1, "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called."

It is not a new power that is wanted, but to know the power that already works in us, and not to grieve the blessed Spirit, who, when ungrieved, is so mighty to fulfil in us all the good pleasure of God.

We might add a word as to the double character of seal and earnest in which the Holy Spirit stands to the believer. As the seal, He proclaims God's claim upon the saved one. As the earnest, He assures us of our claim upon God. And he fulfils both characters *until* the redemption of the purchased possession. Then God will enjoy all His inheritance in the saints, and we shall enter into the fulness of our wondrous inheritance in Himself. Meanwhile, He claims us as His own. "The firm foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His;" while our acknowledgment of His claim forms the reverse of the seal: "Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness" (2 Tim. ii. 19 R.V.). It is the indwelling Spirit, in His character of the seal, that witnesses to both sides of the truth. But He is the earnest also, for, as the Lord Jesus said in John xvi. 14, "He shall glorify Me: for he shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you." And in thus doing He becomes to us a pledge and foretaste of the joy that awaits us, when these bodies of humiliation shall be changed into the likeness of the body of Christ's glory.

Christendom and her Relationship to the World-power.

(Notes on Rev. xvii.)

THIS chapter gives us a graphic picture of the history of Church and State. Drawn by a Divine hand, every line of the picture calls for our attention, as full of meaning and solemn warning. Nothing is overdrawn; the proportions are all exact,

For a moment, let us look at the picture itself, before we go on to consider the inspired interpretation thereof. It is exceeding strange, and, withal, most fascinating. It represents that which most on earth would appeal to the *carnal* man! A woman, sumptuously arrayed, bedecked with costly jewels, seated on a proud and spirited beast, holding aloft a golden cup. Encircling her brow, her many titles are engraved, that all may know her greatness. To the natural man, the most beautiful sight earth could produce.

But look again. The woman is a woman of shame. She is drunk; not indeed with wine, but with *blood!* The blood of those most dear to God. Reach up on tiptoe and look into the cup. It is full of all manner of filthiness. Read her titles, and behold, they do but proclaim her true character: "The mother of Harlots and abominations of the earth." What a transformation. How loathsome does that become, which, at first sight, seemed so attractive. Verily, God seeth not as man seeth.

But continue your look at the picture. What see we now? The beast, that at first was so contented to carry the woman, becomes restive, and presently hurls her from his back, and, enspired with rage and hatred, tears her to pieces, whom, so short a time since, he patiently carried.

Lifted up with this victory, he impiously turns against the most High; but his time is short, and presently the Lamb, with His chosen ones, appears, and utterly overcomes the beast with eternal judgment. So ends Church and State. And so we learn God's thoughts about the reliance, in any shape, for help or support of the true Church upon the world-power.

Now, as to the explanation given. We find that the same words of introduction were used by the angel who showed this vision to John, as those used in the 21st chapter and 9th verse, by the angel who set before him the vision of the true Church, "The Lamb's Wife." In each case, the symbols used were a woman and a city. In the first case, a whore (chapter

Christendom and her Relationship to the World-power.

xvii. 1) and Rome (verse 18). In the second, the bride (ch. xxi. 9) and Holy Jerusalem (verse 10). This makes the connection manifest, and proves the woman of Rev. xvii. to be that false system Rome. Yet how significant that the woman is declared to be the mother of harlots. Every system then, that was begotten of Rome, no matter how reformed, and is partaker of her ways, is seen as identified with Rome, and is held to be partaker in her sins. The chief outward mark of this identification is alliance with the world-power. Every system then, that accepts the world's support, whether the patronage of the State, or the money of the ungodly, while professing to belong to Christ, is guilty of spiritual fornication. The word is, therefore, "Come out of her, my people," Rev. xviii. 4, for God would ever have us distinguish between the false system, which He hates, and His children ensnared therein, whom He loves.

What proof have we that this woman is Rome? We suggest the following:—Verse 9 says, "The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth," and it is notorious that Rome is known in history as the seven-hilled city. But the last verse gives another mark, "The woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth." Rome is the only city in all history which gives its name to an Empire. Again, Rome is the only city which gives its name to a false religious system, or church, so called. And that false system is the only one which boasts its claim to lord it over the kings of the earth. For it is well-known that Rome *claims* the obedience and submission of all temporal potentates or rulers. The other marks of identification, though true of Rome, apply also to her numerous children; but the special marks apply to Rome and none else.

We have now arrived at the following important conclusions: The woman represents false religious systems, as headed by Rome. The beast typifies the world-power, to be headed up in anti-christ. It is plain, therefore, that the beast must never be confounded with the papal power, for it is the beast which will be God's instrument to execute judgment upon Christendom, as headed up in Rome.

It is to be noted, that though the same angel shows the vision of the true and the false; yet the places from which the two visions must be seen, differ widely. To see the shameful caricature of Christianity, the apostle must needs be taken to a wilderness. To see the true bride of the Lamb, he was

Matthew xxvii. 36.

caught up into a mountain. Thus do these two places proclaim the moral difference between the false and the true.

We shall hope to continue this subject next month, seeking help to examine some of the details given in this most interesting chapter.

MATTHEW xxvii. 36.

AND sitting down, they *watched Him there*—

We marvel they could ever dare

To rest in such a place,

Where suff'ring love, when stricken sore,

Such awful weight of judgment bore,

As veiled Jehovah's face.

And *sitting down*, they *watched Him*—say,

Do not these mournful words convey

To us a solemn plea,

Who know the fruit of Calv'ry's night—

For bitter sweet—for darkness light—

“Could ye not watch with me”?

Yet sit we down, as though in vain,

For others than ourselves, His pain

A great salvation wrought.

Leaving the souls He died to claim—

For love of whom “despised the shame”—

Alone, unloved, unsought.

O Master, help, that we may be

In fuller sympathy with Thee,

In all Thy purpose here ;

Until Thy time of rest shall come,

And we sit down with Thee at home,

In glory's radiant sphere.

A. F. P.

THE Christianity of the closet, and the Christianity of busy life, are not, as is often fancied, conflicting things. The man who has fellowship with Christ in his solitude, knows how to carry the savour of that fellowship, even into the most common affairs of life.

TAKE away God, and leave all besides, we are in a waste, howling wilderness, and a land of drought. Take away all, and leave God behind, our joy is full.

THE FEASTS OF THE LORD.

VI.

THE present point seems to be a suitable one to say something about the way in which the Hebrews reckoned their year. It is well known that the actual length of a year, or the period during which this earth completes its circuit round the sun, is about $365\frac{1}{4}$ days. It is therefore customary, at the present time, to treat the year as consisting of 365 days; and, as the odd quarters of a day mount up every four years to a whole day, every fourth year an additional day is added, and we call these fourth years by the name of leap-year. To the Hebrews, however, this circuit of the earth around the sun was unknown; and to them the length of the year was only indicated by the changing seasons. There are certain divisions of time which are apparent to all, however little knowledge they may have of the subject. Of these, the shortest and most obvious is the day, or time during which the earth turns round on its own axis. An uninstructed savage may suppose that the earth is a vast plain, and that the sun actually comes up from one side of it, and, coursing through the heavens, sinks down at the other side. But even then, he can count his days as regularly as the enlightened astronomer. Particularly, as we draw nearer the equator, the regularity of the length of each division of the twenty-four hours is maintained; so that, the year round, there are days and nights of about twelve hours each. This accounts for our Lord's saying to the Jews "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not" (John xi. 9).

The next natural division of time is from one moon to another, or the period during which the moon runs its course around the earth. This is what we call a lunar month (a moon's month), to distinguish it from the arbitrary months of our calendar. The length of this month is about twenty-nine and a half days, and the Hebrews, who were in the habit of making their calculations of time largely from the lunar month, used to count alternately thirty and twenty-nine days to the month to equalise the odd half days. It is very plain, however, that no exact number of these lunar months would make up a year. Twelve of them only amounted to 354 days, or eleven and a quarter days short of a true year; and, while the Hebrews had no knowledge of the exact length of the year, or even of what fixed its length, it would very soon be apparent that the seasons were all getting out of place if they

The Feasts of the Lord.

had gone on reckoning their years as consisting of only twelve such months. As we already pointed out, at the present time we fix arbitrary lengths to our months, without any reference to the moon; and by making some of them to be thirty days, others thirty-one days, and February twenty-eight days, we arrive at a total of 365. The Hebrews, on the other hand, kept the natural, or lunar month; and at the end of twelve months, they would be eleven and a quarter days behindhand. At the end of two years the deficiency would have reached twenty-two and a half days, and at the end of the third year it would be thirty-three and three quarter days. At this point, however, they used to restore the balance by adding on an extra, or thirteenth month, which would leave them only about four days short; and from time to time they would add this extra month after the lapse of two years only, instead of three, as the progress of the seasons made it necessary.

The Scriptures do not contain any direct information on these matters; but all the references to them, contained in the Scriptures, correspond with the explanations given by other Hebrew writers, so that we are in no doubt on the subject. For example, we are told by Josephus and in the Talmud that the Hebrews reckoned their time by lunar months and by solar years, and that they fitted the one to the other by such a process as has been described above. This is entirely confirmed by the Scriptures. We find in the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth chapters of Numbers, the offerings appointed by the Lord for all the occasions of the year. First we have the daily burnt offering of a lamb every morning and every evening. Then come the special offerings for the Sabbath days; and next, those for the beginnings of their months (chap. xxviii. 11). After these follow the offerings appointed for all the set feasts, the same occasions with which we are now occupied, as set forth also in Lev. xxiii. Now compare all this with 2 Chron. ii. 4. Solomon was sending a message to Hiram, king of Tyre, about the building of the temple; and he describes the temple as "an house . . . for the burnt offerings morning and evening, on the Sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts of the Lord our God." Here we get exactly the same occasions as spoken of in Num. xxviii. and xxix.; but in Numbers the expression used for the monthly sacrifices was "the beginning of your months," while in 2 Chronicles it is "the new moons." This leaves us without any doubt that their months began with each new

The Feasts of the Lord.

moon, and were consequently lunar months. It is interesting to know that the word "seasons" in Ps. civ. 19, "He appointed the moon for seasons" is the Hebrew word "moed," translated "set feasts" in Lev. xxiii. 2, R.V., so that God specially regulated these by the moon, while the whole period of the year depends upon the sun.

Then as to the solar year, or year regulated by the sun's seasons and not by the moon. The commandment as to the waving of the first fruits, on the day after the Sabbath during the feast of unleavened bread, settles the point that each year must have begun shortly before the commencement of the harvest. The first ripe corn must be ready for the sickle during that particular week, and the year must therefore take its commencement according to the season. Barley was the first crop in Canaan, and we learn from Jewish historians that, as the twelfth month of the year drew to a close, the barley was carefully inspected to see if it would be ready to be cut by the middle of the month following. If it would, the year was allowed to close with the twelfth month; but if not, the extra month was added. The twelfth month being known as Adar, this extra month was called Ve-Adar, or another Adar. In this way the adjustment was made between the reckoning of their months by the new moon, and of their years by the seasons, which, of course, followed the sun.

It may, perhaps, be thought by some that these explanations are rather out of place, when dealing with the spiritual interpretation of the feasts of the Lord. But, as we go on with our study of the subject, we shall find that an understanding of the months and years, according to Jewish reckoning, is very necessary in order to a right interpretation of the dispensational and prophetic teaching of the feasts. We would, therefore, ask our readers to endeavour to master these matters of detail, that they may be able the better to follow the teaching arising out of them.

MANY things we must needs do and care about, while we are in the flesh; but the work to which Christ calls us, is to do and care about these things in such a spirit, as to make them part and parcel of our great work—the work of keeping close to Christ, and of following Him whithersoever He goeth.

NOTWITHSTANDING all our watchfulness, how sudden at last will be the Lord's coming.

"WHEN THE HOUR WAS COME."

DID you ever stand near the entrance of a large factory, as the operatives were coming to their work? Three times a day that living stream may be seen pouring in through the gates. At six o'clock in the morning, when the day's work starts; at nine o'clock, after breakfast; and at two o'clock, when the dinner hour is finished. They all know the hour and they are all there. As the clock strikes, a few stragglers are perhaps still outside; but how they hurry up to be in time before the gates shut, so that out of a thousand workers there will scarcely be one who is too late.

Suppose we take our stand at the meeting-room door on the Lord's day, shall we witness the same punctuality? When the hour is come will all be found in their places around the table? And the same as to the Sunday school, or address to believers, in the afternoon, and the Gospel meeting at night? Alas! why is there such a difference? Ask the time-keeper at the factory gates how it is the hands are so punctual, and he will tell you that it is because they get "quartered" if they are late. A quarter of a day's wages lost through being two minutes late, that is the secret. Is there no loss to those who are late in obeying the Lord's summons? Indeed there is; not only to the late comer but to all the rest. Is it possible, then, that we are more indifferent to that kind of loss, than the factory hand is to the loss of a quarter of a day's wages? Let conscience answer.

The truth is, we fear, that conscience has far too little to do with the matter. It is regarded as a trifle, and to say anything about it generally raises a smile. As long as this is the case there is no hope of our doing better. We want to realise, that not merely our being present, but being there in good time, is something that the Lord claims of us, and that we are robbing and grieving Him by our want of punctuality. When we do this we shall confess each breach of our responsibility in the same way that we do other sins; and sin honestly confessed to God will not be lightly repeated.

Even if this were a little thing, has not the Lord declared that "he that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much"? We little know how often the Lord has been unable to trust us with greater responsibilities, because of our want of faithfulness in the smaller things.

TRUTH will never be truth to thee, nor to thy soul, till it is translated into action.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS.

PHILIPPI, as the first city in Europe in which the gospel was ever preached, and where saints were gathered to the precious Name, must always be to us a place of interest. Though a space of eleven or twelve years intervened between the apostle's visit there in A.D. 52, as recorded in Acts xvi, and the writing of his epistle to them, yet there are many connecting links between the two. Let us try to gather up some of them.

It was at Philippi that a woman was the first convert; and in the epistle we find two sisters, Euodias and Syntyche, who labour in the gospel, and yet have to be besought to be of the same mind in the Lord. We may add that it was at Philippi that women's *public* ministry was so dishonouring to God.

The prison of Philippi was the only place where we are told that Paul sang, and the Epistle to the Philippians, more than any other, exhorts us to rejoice. Joy and gladness characterise the whole letter.

In no place do we read of so many personal attentions paid to the Apostle. Lydia says, "Come into my house." The jailor washes his stripes and provides him a meal, even at midnight. The Epistle tells of the same loving thoughtful fellowship, "from the first day until now."

Again, it was at Philippi that, by God's over-ruling providence, a cruel imprisonment became the means of blessing to the jailor; and, later, Paul writes declaring his confidence that this history shall be repeated, so that his bonds in Christ shall be for the furtherance of the gospel, manifesting Christ, even to those in the palace.

When Paul wrote from Rome, the two years of comparative liberty had passed away, and the bonds were being drawn tighter. How should it end? The outlook was indeed dark.

The Philippians had heard somewhat of the things that had fallen upon him, and were, doubtless, cast down. Unbelief would say, why should one so necessary for the work be laid on one side? What a waste for such a servant to spend his time in a prison cell! But no such repining, unbelieving thoughts had a place in Paul's heart. The prison of Philippi was the best place for God's servant, as the event proved; and why not so in Rome?

Listen to the words of triumphant faith—the language of the one who is more than conqueror! "According to my earnest expectation and hope, that in nothing I shall be

Questions and Answers.

ashamed; but with all boldness, as always, so now also, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death." Noble words! possible only to faith. If Christ would be magnified by his bonds, then he would wear them with greater joy than ever a nobleman had in putting on the insignia of his rank. If a prison be the place where he may best glorify his Master, then the joy of doing so shall transform it into a very palace of delight.

This is the magic wand which turns all ill to good. Come death, come life, come what may, Paul doth welcome all, because in each event he seeks a fresh opportunity so to act that Christ may be magnified.

The little things, as well as the great things, are our servants here. And if to us is granted the same precious supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, then shall our earnest expectations be the same, even in all things to exalt Christ. How would all life be changed. Nothing counted low or mean, but everything a lofty service, because the doing of it shall magnify our Lord. So shall we in our measure say, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Question 6,—Can you throw any light upon the following words from Matt. xvi. 18, "And I say unto thee that thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"?

Answer.—Peter had just before confessed the belief of his own heart as to who Jesus was, in the words, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"; and the Lord had declared that this precious truth had not been revealed to Peter by flesh and blood, but by the Father Himself. This truth, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, is the foundation of all truth; and it is in connection with the acknowledgment of it, that the sinner is saved, and that saved ones are built up into a house for God. Moreover, every one to whose heart this truth is revealed by God, is born of God, he becomes a partaker of the divine nature, he is akin in character to Christ Himself. It is to this fact that the Lord plainly refers in the passage enquired about. The words used for "Peter" and for "rock" are closely related to one another, indeed they are only two forms of the same word—*Petros* and *petra*. So the Lord said to Peter "Thou art *Petros*, and upon

Questions and Answers.

this *petra* I will build My Church." The rock is Jesus Himself, as just declared by Peter to be the Christ, the Son of the living God. Peter is a rock-man, a man who bears the character of the rock, because God had revealed Christ, the rock, to him; and it is of such that the Church should be built. We turn to 1 Peter ii. 4, 5, and we find the Holy Spirit's interpretation of the matter, by the pen of Peter himself. "To whom coming, as unto a *living stone*, disallowed, indeed, of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as *living stones* (the same word) are built up a spiritual house."

Question 7.—We sometimes hear it said in connection with the sinner and the Gospel, that the very simplicity of the Gospel often stumbles the sinner. Does not such a statement dishonour the work of Christ?

Answer.—In 1 Cor. i. 22-24, we read, "For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God." The salvation of God is provided for lost sinners; and the necessary preparation, therefore, for the reception of Christ, is to be convicted of sin. Those who are trying to fit themselves for God, by religion and doing their best, will be offended at the Gospel. Those who, by Philosophy, and humanitarian schemes, are occupied with improving man's condition, will count the Gospel as foolishness. It is not that the simplicity of the Gospel is a hindrance to the sinner's salvation, but that a finished salvation, a present, all-sufficient Saviour, is an offence, or stumbling-block, to every one whose heart has not been made ready through the sense of its own utter corruption.

WHATEVER spiritual disease we labour under, the cause of it is, invariably, and in every case, the existence in our hearts of some desire incompatible with the desire of Christ. We should search out the rebel desire which hinders our growth and straitens our goings.

WE must have fellowship at all times, either with "the spirit of the world," or with "the Spirit of God." There is no neutral ground between fleshiness and spirituality of mind.

IN small points of obedience, are found the best test of the soul's state.

"FOR LOVE'S SAKE."

PAUL was only acting as an "imitator of God," when he besought Philemon, "for love's sake," on behalf of Onesimus. And so true is the copy to the Divine pattern, that this brief epistle to Philemon becomes what every true copy ought to be, an unfolding or interpretation of the pattern from which it was taken.

A most interesting little story is told us in this epistle. In the first place, Paul had been the instrument in leading Philemon to Christ, as we gather from his words in verse 19, "Albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides." Then Philemon had had a slave (for that is the real word in verse 16), named Onesimus, who appears to have run away from his master, and so to have caused him some loss or damage. Onesimus found his way to Rome, where Paul was a prisoner, but allowed to live in his own hired house, and to receive all who came to him. At Rome, Onesimus had been brought into Paul's company, and he, too, had been led to Christ. In his love and gratitude towards the man who had been the instrument of his salvation, Onesimus had ministered to Paul in his bonds, and had been a source of much joy to him; but, presently, the story of his former life had come to light, and Paul had learned how Onesimus had run away from Philemon, and of the loss he had thus occasioned.

This was how things stood when the epistle was written, and now we learn that Paul was sending Onesimus back to Colosse, to his old master, as the bearer of the epistle to Philemon himself, and also of the one to the whole church at Colosse. The first point we notice, then, is that Paul acts in strict righteousness. Accordingly to the laws under which they lived, Philemon had a claim upon Onesimus, and Onesimus had done Philemon a wrong. True, the wrong was done while Onesimus was still unconverted, but that could not relieve him from the obligation to make it good now. Paul would greatly have desired to keep Onesimus at Rome; but, if Onesimus is still to minister to him, it must be with the full and hearty consent of Philemon. And so Onesimus is sent back. No thought of what Philemon might well do, or even of what he ought to do, is to stand in the way of Onesimus' carrying out to the full the plain demands of righteousness. But, all the more because he was sending Onesimus back, Paul

"For Love's Sake."

was in a position to press the other side of the matter upon Philemon. And it is here that all he says and does is so exactly according to the pattern of God's dealing with us. "I might be bold to enjoin thee, yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee," says the aged apostle to his son in Christ. It was a reasonable thing that Paul was asking, and one that he might well have pressed upon Philemon as a demand. But if Philemon had yielded to a demand, neither he in submitting, nor Paul in receiving his submission, would have had any joy to be compared with that which follows from the constraining power of love. So God delights to beseech. He beseeches sinners to be reconciled to Him (2 Cor. v. 20); He beseeches saints to yield their bodies to Him, as a living sacrifice (Rom. xii. 1); and it is always for love's sake.

In thus beseeching us, God counts upon the constraining power of love, and He reminds us of all His infinite mercies, in order that they may make the constraint greater and greater. But it is not merely in acts of praise and worship, presented directly to Himself, that He would have us show our love. Our behaviour one to another is always a standing test of our love to God. In the same way Paul makes Philemon's behaviour to Onesimus the test of his love for himself. "If thou count me as a partner, receive him as myself." It is no use for Philemon to make great profession of love to the apostle, if he is going to lay hands on Onesimus and have him punished for his former offence. No, nor even if he is only going to treat him coldly and with indifference. "I cannot come just at present," says the apostle; "you would give me a warm welcome, if I could, I am sure. Well, then, give my welcome to Onesimus. Receive him as myself." "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account." And which way would the balance be then? We cannot tell much about Philemon's indebtedness to Paul; but, applying the same principle to God's dealing with ourselves, we shall have to admit that we are always debtors. What a change it would make in all our dealings with one another, if each one of us were constantly to bear those words in mind, "Put that on mine account." How the wrongs and hard words, done and spoken by others against us, would seem as nothing, when set over against the mighty sum of our indebtedness to God.

We shall hope to follow out the profitable lessons of this epistle next month.

THE FEASTS OF THE LORD.

VII.

THE next in order of the feasts was commonly known as the Feast of Weeks (see Deut. xvi. 10-16). In the New Testament we also find it called the day of Pentecost. The one name arises from the fact that seven complete weeks, or a week of weeks, had to be counted from the day on which the first-fruits were waved before the Lord, and that this feast was celebrated on the day following the completion of the seven weeks. The other name refers to the number of days in the same period, for *pentecoste* is the Greek word for the fiftieth, and the day following the seven complete weeks was the fiftieth day.

First let us notice the fact that this feast is closely associated with the preceding one. Following the dividing lines given us in the repetition of the words, "and the Lord spake unto Moses," we find that these words occur in verse 9 at the close of the instructions as to the Passover and the feast of unleavened bread. This tells us that those two occasions form a distinct section of the whole subject. Tracing out the same clue we do not find these dividing words again till verse 23, in connection with the feast of trumpets on the first day of the seventh month. In this way the whole of the long period from the waving of the sheaf of first-fruits, in the middle of the first month, to the end of the sixth month, is seen to form the second section. The two leading events of that period, the waving of the sheaf, and the waving of the two loaves fifty days later, are also in the same way declared to be associated together. But there is a further link of connection between them, for each of them is spoken of as a "first-fruits" (see verses 10 and 17 of the twenty-third chapter of Leviticus).

Now, bearing all this in mind, we come to the question as to what this fiftieth day signifies in the Divine order of events. We can have no hesitation as to the answer, when we remember what we are told in Acts ii. 1. It was "when the day of Pentecost was fully come," and the disciples were all with one accord in one place, that the Holy Spirit came down and filled all the house, and also filled each believing one there. On the day after the Sabbath, in the Passover week, the Lord Jesus rose from among the dead, and so became the first-fruits of them that slept. In doing so He fulfilled the type of the waving of the sheaf of first-fruits before the Lord on that very day. Now, fifty days later, the Spirit of God comes down, and it is evident that this must have been the fulfilment

The Feasts of the Lord.

of the type contained in the presenting of the two wave loaves to the Lord. Perhaps, however, it is not equally evident how the waving of these two loaves is a figure of what took place in Acts ii. In Jas. i. 18, we read, "Of His own will begat He us with the Word of Truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures." The Word of Truth, the gospel of our salvation, is the instrument by which our regeneration is brought about; but the Holy Spirit who seals and indwells each believer, is the power that makes the instrument effectual (see Eph. i. 13, 14). The indwelling Spirit is the Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead, and He therefore is the pledge and earnest to us that these mortal bodies of ours shall presently be quickened. "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Christ from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit, which dwelleth in you" (Rom. viii. 11).

In this way we see how God has joined these two matters together. By resurrection, the Lord Jesus became the "first-born from among the dead" (Col. i. 18), the "first-fruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. xv. 20). By the new birth and indwelling of the Holy Spirit, we are become the "first-fruits of His creatures" (Jas. i. 18), the church of the first-born (first-born ones, literally, Heb. xii. 23). But the coming of the Holy Spirit was the direct result of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and His ascent to the right hand of God. "If I go not away," said the Lord to His disciples, "the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send Him unto you" (John xvi. 7). "This Jesus hath God raised up," was Peter's testimony on the day of Pentecost, "whereof we are all witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear" (Acts ii. 32, 33).

In this way we plainly see the inseparable connection between the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, as typified by the wave sheaf of first-fruits, and the making believers into a first-fruits for God by the indwelling Spirit, as typified by the two wave loaves. But there remain one or two matters about which question may arise. Why were there two loaves? and why were they baked with leaven? Previous to Pentecost, the middle wall of partition, the law of commandments, contained in ordinances (see Eph. ii. 14, 15), sharply separated between the Jew and the Gentile. By the Cross that middle wall of

The Feasts of the Lord.

partition was broken down, but it was only through the coming of the Holy Spirit that it could be made known, that, out of two, God would make one new man. So Peter, in Acts xv., speaking of the Gentiles, between whom and the Jews some wished still to keep up the middle wall of partition, declared "God, which knoweth the hearts, bear them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did to us; and put no difference between us and them" (verses 8 and 9). So, in Eph. ii., the apostle declares that Christ has reconciled both Jew and Gentile in one body unto God (ver. 16); and adds, further, that "through Him we *both* have access, by one Spirit, unto the Father" (verse 18). The two loaves, then, waved together before the Lord, fittingly represent this great truth, hidden in a mystery in other ages, but now revealed by the Spirit.

Next, as to the leaven. It was distinctly commanded that no leaven should be burned in any offering of the Lord made by fire (Lev. ii. 11). But these two loaves were simply to be waved before the Lord, and not burned at all. When Christ rose from the dead, He was the spotless, the Holy One. No sin was ever found in Him, and therefore no leaven was mixed with the offering of first-fruits that represented Him. For the same reason, no sin-offering was commanded to be offered in connection with the waving of that first ripe sheaf. Of all the occasions mentioned in this twenty-third chapter of Leviticus, there were only two in which no sin-offering was required to be offered. These were the Sabbath-day and this waving of the sheaf of first-fruits. The one was a type of God's rest in the finished redemption work of Christ; the other was, as we have seen, the figure of the resurrection of Christ from the dead. A careful comparison between Lev. xxiii. and Num. xxviii. and xxix. will prove the truth of the above statement. But when the two loaves were waved before the Lord at the end of the seven weeks, it was not to represent the Church glorified in resurrection, sinless bodies; but the inauguration of the mighty work of the Holy Spirit, by which Jew and Gentile were to be formed into one body, while still dwelling in mortal, sinful flesh. The leaven, with which the loaves were baked, is, therefore, the witness to the fact of the presence of sin, even in those who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. As a consequence of this, a kid of the goats for a sin-offering has to accompany the burnt-offerings and peace-offerings which were offered to the Lord on this occasion (see verse 19).

AN EXAMPLE. (John xiii. 15.)

“Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end”
(John xiii. 1).

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another” (John xiii. 34).

WE who were seated at the board
Provided by our blessed Lord,
Keeping the feast ordained by God
When Israel groaned 'neath Pharaoh's rod—
That feast the Master so desired
To eat with us ere He expired—
Heard words that, whatso'er our lot,
Can never, never be forgot,
And witnessed acts of heavenly grace,
Which time's rude touch can ne'er efface:
Words which our lips will still repeat
While memory retains her seat;
Acts prompted by a love Divine,
That in our breasts, as in a shrine,
Will live, till we from earth remove
To our abiding home above.

Yes, there are *words* that never die,
But echo through the earth and sky;
And there are *looks*, that, like a dart,
Carry conviction to the heart;
And there are *acts* that leave behind
Their image, stamped upon the mind,
In form so deep, in lines so clear,
That the impression will appear
In pristine freshness on the soul,
Long as eternal ages roll.

Such was His *act*, when from His seat
The Master rose and washed our feet;
The King of glory and of grace,
Stooping to take a servant's place,
That we, who bear His holy name,
Might for each other do the same.
Such were His *words*, as, looking up,
He broke the bread and blessed the cup,
Which, in their mystic meaning, stood
For His own body and His blood.
And such His *look* of utmost love,
When, speaking of the home above,
He sought our sorrow to beguile
In parting for a “little while.”

An Example.

The chamber where the feast was laid
A fitting illustration made,
To figure forth His heavenly grace
In finding us a resting-place.
An "upper room," the Lord within,
Above earth's sorrow and its sin ;
Free from the struggle and the strife,
Seated with Him—our Lord, our life ;
Type of a mansion in the sky,
Within the Father's home on high,
And "fitly furnished and prepared."
Again our Lord takes up the word :
" 'Tis to prepare a place for you,
I pass a while beyond your view ;
And then, within that 'upper room,'
Far, far above earth's mist and gloom,
In a 'prepared and furnished' place,
Encircled by My fond embrace,
For ever seated at My side
And in My love, ye shall abide."

He's gone ! His acts, His words remain,
Nor do they speak to us in vain.
Yielding beneath the foe's assault,
Is one o'ertaken in a fault ?
Or, by this evil world beguiled,
Are garments spotted and defiled ?
His loving *act* has made it sweet
To stoop and wash that brother's feet.

Alas ! we are not always free
From bitter thoughts and jealousy ;
Failures and faults we sometimes find,
To which true love would make us blind.
But when we meet the bread to break,
Remembering the *words* He spake,
All one in Him, who is our life,
His table is the grave of strife.
The bread and wine alike rebuke
The hasty tone, the angry look ;
And that dear word, "Remember Me,"
Restores our souls to unity.

E. B.

Christendom and her Relationship to the World-power.

(Notes on Rev. xvii.)

II.

“**A**ND I saw a woman” (verse 3). “The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a *woman* took,” &c. (Matt. xiii. 33). “Thou sufferest that *woman* Jezebel to teach” (Rev. ii. 20).

Why, it may be asked, should a woman represent the false church? The obvious reply is, That the woman is the chosen type of the true Church, and the man of Christ, as unfolded in Ephesians and other scriptures. Church authority, instead of Christ's authority, is the spring of all evil. “Hear the Church,” is the bold language of shameless Rome, but the false principle is far-reaching. It is the old story of man's traditions taking the place of God's commandments. From this evil root come the expressions, “Brethren's truth,” “It is our way,” &c. “Why were you baptised?” was asked of one. The sad reply being, “It is our way of receiving here.” This is the voice of the woman, and not of the man. Church rules, not Christ's commandments.

The woman, then, being typical of the Church, it follows that for a woman to teach in a public manner is a gross violation of the type. The first charge is that the kings of the earth, the world-power, have committed fornication with her. The first overtures came from the world; but she, instead of turning away, as true loyalty to her only Lord demanded, greedily accepted the world's patronage. Such was indeed the fact as related by history. The most cruel persecution failed. The blood of the martyrs became the seed of the Church. The fires of persecution did but purify the faith of the saints. But when the Emperor Constantine took upon himself the profession of Christianity, the Church, which had triumphed over oppression, fell before his flattery. The world was brought into the Church. The believers and the unbelievers were joined together. The fine gold became dim. The testimony was almost silenced in the choking dust of worldliness. Again it was proved that the hug of the bear is more to be feared than the growl of the lion; the world's caress is more dangerous than its frowns. Balaam, alas! may seduce, when powerless to curse. “The friendship of the world is enmity with God” (Jas. iv. 4).

But if the world-power makes the first advance, this false woman is quick to respond, offering the seductive and deadly

Christendom and her Relationship to the World-power.

cup, the "*wine of her fornication.*" Terrible and far-reaching are the ills brought about by that intoxicating cup. Not only the "kings," but the inhabitants of the earth, are *made drunk!* What is the deadly mixture? We reply, the prostitution of the things of God to gratify the carnal man.

What music is there which so charms the senses as the soft religious strain which floats down the fretted aisles of the ancient cathedral. Be it poetry or sculpture, painting or eloquence, each appeals most to man when something of God is mixed up with it. If the most telling speeches of the politician were examined, it would be found that the phrases which most moved the people were culled from Holy Scripture. Wine of fornication! What, know ye not that "the carnal mind is enmity against God?" What an abomination, to prostitute the sacred truths of God to amuse and please the carnal man. "That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" (Luke xvi. 15), might be suitably written above the programme of the religious concert. While Babylon, the mother of harlots, with her golden cup, would be the appropriate patroness of the bazaar, got up to raise money for the work of God.

The woman is arrayed in costly garments, and her adorning is the outward adorning of gold, precious stones, and pearls. The colours of her vesture, purple and scarlet, tell us that she claims a share in rule with the world-power. Christ declared, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John xviii. 36). He prayed (John xvii.) for His own, that they might be kept from the evil, saying before and after His petition, "They are not of the world." It is to be noticed in that wonderful prayer of John xvii., that "the world" is named nineteen times. Believers are described as "strangers and pilgrims" (1 Peter ii. 11). Strangers to earth; pilgrims towards heaven. How preposterous, then, that that which claims to belong to Christ down here, should stretch out its hands greedily to clutch a share in the world-power; albeit it must have that share in company with the very power which crucified Him whom she calls Lord, and hold it under the direct patronage of the god of this world, the prince of the power of the air! The "*cardinal prince*" of Rome, the "*lord bishop*" of the Church of England, are the present proofs of how audaciously the false woman wears the purple and scarlet.

Her adorning is outward of gold and apparel (1 Peter iii. 3). Faith is the principle of God's house; but where faith is not,

"There they made Him a Supper."

then sight must take its place. The lack of spiritual power must be supplied by something which can, and will, gratify the natural man.

Gorgeous ritual and splendid ceremonies satisfy one class; while intellectual oratory is pressed into the service, with a slight flavour of religion, to meet the requirements of another. But whether it be the ceremonies of ritualism, the Sunday evening lecture, or the more humble "service of song," what is it but the outward adorning, which must needs be resorted to to hide the absence of spiritual power?

"THERE THEY MADE HIM A SUPPER"

(John xii. 2).

IN both the 11th and 12th chapters of John's gospel we have the Lord Jesus visiting Bethany; but what a contrast there is between the circumstances of the two visits. In the 11th chapter He came to minister to those that were in deep affliction. Death had entered their household, and the sisters were mourning the loss of their beloved brother. But the Lord came to turn their sorrow into joy. His life-giving word of power called up Lazarus from the tomb, and if Jesus had wept at the sight of the sorrow of those He loved, how great must have been His joy in the happiness which now filled their hearts. This joy gave a new character to the very place itself. Henceforth Bethany was to the Lord Jesus the place "where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom He raised from the dead" (see chap. xii. 1).

This thought gives us the clue to the special character of the visit to Bethany in chapter xii. It was six days before the Passover, the last Passover that the Lord would ever keep. On the very night of that Passover supper, He was about to be betrayed into the hands of wicked men to be crucified, and He knew full well what awaited Him. But however the anticipation of those coming woes might press upon His spirit, it could not turn Him aside from the path appointed for Him by the Father. So He steadfastly set Himself to go up to Jerusalem the last time, that everything written concerning Him in the volume of the Book might be fulfilled. It was as He was thus journeying to Jerusalem that He reached Bethany on the occasion referred to, and there tarried for the night.

Bethany lay outside the walls of Jerusalem, and was a little haven of rest to the sorrowing spirit of the Lord. Jerusalem was to Him the place of the empty formalities of a lifeless

“There they made Him a Supper.”

religion, which denied God and rejected Him whom God had sent: the place where God's prophets were killed and His messengers were stoned. But Bethany was the place where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom He raised from the dead. And so, before entering Jerusalem, He would fain stay a night at Bethany, that His heart might be refreshed by the love of those who were waiting there to welcome Him. In the 11th chapter we found Him coming to Bethany to minister to their sore need. Now He goes there that they may minister to Him.

Every word of this touching narrative is full of deepest significance. “There they made Him a supper.” He is the guest—the beloved, the honoured guest; and they have been preparing for Him. Have we looked on with wondering awe, while the stone was rolled away from the tomb, and the dead came forth at the life-giving call of the Son of God? Then here is something more wonderful. For is it not indeed a greater marvel that poor sinful creatures on earth should be able to minister to the needs of Him who made them and all things, than that He should be able to reign supreme in His own creation? Yes, it is not the mere fact of our redemption that will so display the riches of God's grace, as that unto which He has redeemed us. To be the objects of His affection, to be able to serve Him, and to present to Him the sacrifice of our praise and worship, these are the mighty results of redeeming grace.

In that Bethany supper we have a beautiful picture of the three-fold character which belongs to the believer. Lazarus, who had been dead, but is now alive and seated at the table with the Lord, shows us the place of nearness and fellowship which grace has given to us. Martha is the picture of our service, so needful and so pleasant to the Lord, when it is fulfilled in harmony with the whole of our calling. And Mary shows us in our character of worshippers. There is no discord in all this now. The first time we read of the Lord's being at Bethany, Martha's service jarred with Mary's sitting at His feet. There was something wanting then to make the picture complete, and to bring all its parts into true harmony. But now all is perfect. The lacking feature, regarding the occasion in its typical character, is supplied by the presence of the man, raised from the dead and seated at the table with the Lord. The three members of this family are not intended as figures of different believers, but they form unitedly a complete picture of the Christian's standing, service and worship, and in this way help to teach us what it is that delights the heart of the Lord

Questions and Answers.

Jesus, amidst all the empty show of a dead religion, that gives Him a crown indeed, but only one of thorns.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Question.—Is there any scripture for or against the custom, found in some assemblies, of the same brother giving thanks for both the bread and the wine?

Answer.—The Scriptures give no instructions whatever as to such matters. Even when the apostle Paul is writing to set the Corinthian saints right in regard to the Lord's Supper, and is telling them that which had been directly revealed to him, he only repeats what the Lord had previously said to the disciples, as recorded in the Gospels. The Lord Jesus gave thanks and brake the bread, and again gave thanks and handed the cup; but He said no word as to the precise manner in which the disciples were to proceed on future occasions. It is not a little remarkable, too, that the Divine comment in 1 Cor. xi. 26 is simply, "For as often as ye *eat* this bread, and *drink* this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come." It is the eating and drinking that are declared to be the essence of the whole matter; not anything connected with the breaking or the administration. For this reason, all fixed customs in connection with the keeping of this feast of remembrance are apt to be mischievous. A custom that one brother shall always give thanks before both the bread and the cup, or a custom the other way, is alike a hindrance to the true simplicity of obedience to the Lord. By a fixed custom, we mean a custom so rigidly followed, that objection would be made, or, at least, surprise occasioned, if there were any departure from it. Where there is a simple and real dependence on the Lord to guide, step by step, by the Holy Spirit, there will surely be no fixed custom, amounting to something like arrangement or understanding, that, because a brother has given thanks before the bread, he shall necessarily do the same before the cup. But, equally, there will be no rule, expressed or implied, that would hinder one from doing so on any occasion when he might be so guided by the Spirit. Above all, there will be no custom, where godly liberty is maintained, by which the same brother shall always give thanks for bread and cup. We believe that in nearly all cases where such a custom has grown up, it is the result of slothfulness or false humility on the part of others who have practically refused to share in the privilege and responsibility of being the mouthpieces of the assembly in their thanksgivings.

"THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD."

(Psalm xxiii. 1).

MANY a time has attention been called to the special position occupied by this precious twenty-third Psalm. While Ps. xxii. tells of the past sufferings of the Lord Jesus, and Ps. xxiv. looks forward to His coming glory, Ps. xxiii. is full of the believer's present experience of what the Lord Jesus is to His people. It tells of what the Shepherd is, of His power and grace, and of the abundance and sufficiency of His resources. But it tells all this from the point of view of one who is proving the truth of it in his own personal experience. Just because it does so, it tells out the state of soul of the one who enjoys so blessed an experience; for only a humble, trusting heart can use the language of this Psalm.

The very first sentence in it is an acknowledgment on the believer's part of his relation to the Lord, as well as a declaration of the Lord's relationship to him. The sheep that says, "This is *my* Shepherd," is saying, in effect, at the same time, "and I am *His* sheep." That is the one ground upon which the sheep can claim a personal interest in the Shepherd, as his own Shepherd; and it is this that comes out so plainly all through the Psalm. "He maketh me," "He leadeth me." All such expressions tell not only of a Shepherd who provides all for the sheep, and leads the sheep into the place of rest and blessing; but also of a sheep who is willing to be provided for and guided and kept. True, the words, "He restoreth my soul," tell of wandering on the part of the sheep, but they tell that the wandering heart has been subdued and humbled, and once more made subject to the will and word of the Shepherd.

Is it not plain, then, that the solemn, searching, but yet blessed truth, that we are not our own, but belong to Him who redeemed us with His blood, must fully possess our hearts, if we are to be able to say, in reality, "The Lord is *my* Shepherd"? As soon as self-will comes in, there is an end of the green pastures and the still waters. How much can the sheep that has strayed away upon the mountains tell of these things? Of course, it can speak of them as things that had been in the past. "Once He caused me to lie down in green pastures. There was a time when He led me beside the still waters." That is as much as the strayed one can say with truth; and even that implies some measure of repentance and humbling. The believer who is still choosing to walk on in a way of his own, and has no mind to acknowledge the sin and sorrow of it, will seldom be found telling even of past experiences of the

"The Lord is my Shepherd."

Shepherd's tender care. It is quite impossible for such a one to speak of a present joy in the guidance and the keeping grace and power of the Shepherd.

But the very bitterness of the consequences of our self-will, the painful experiences of the bleak mountain side, are used of God to break us down. And then we find that the Shepherd has been following us in our wanderings, and is just at hand in our moment of deepest need. Once more the language of the Psalm becomes the true expression of the believer's experience. "He restoreth my soul," is the utterance of one who is being borne on the Shepherd's shoulder; and who understands something of the Shepherd's joy, as He brings back His strayed one.

This leads on, surely, to the next thought—"He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake." Perhaps we never so fully own the truth of the words

"Chosen, not for good in me,"

as when we are made the subjects of the restoring grace of the Shepherd. We thought we were our own, or, at least, we behaved as though we were. But the love that followed us in our wanderings has once again brought us to acknowledge that we belong to Him who died for us; and, as He leads our restored feet along in the straight path, we realise that it is for His own name's sake.

On earth, the Lord Jesus, as the obedient and dependent Servant of God, could use all the language of the twenty-third Psalm, except that which spoke of restoration. Its opening words, "Jehovah is my Shepherd, I shall not want," told of the trust which completely baffled the tempter, with his plausible suggestion, "Command that these stones be made bread." And we too shall overcome Satan's wiles, just as long as our hearts are resting in the experience of these precious words.

DAVID had a *private experience* with the *lion* and the *bear*, this prepared him not to fear Goliath. He must be *simple*, he could not act with the king's armour on. God had prepared him for His own service. So did He prepare Joseph. He forms us all for Himself.

THERE is no *real* faith that is not tested; and "*a life of faith*" is *a life of tests*. "It is the gift of God," and acts in opposition to the natural man. Simple faith in God as the Creator of all things *silences reason*. The weakest believer in the Lord Jesus *renounces himself*, and trusts in the virtue of that blood that alone cleanses from all sin.

THE FEASTS OF THE LORD.

VIII.

BETWEEN Pentecost and the next feast there is a long interval. Pentecost falls early in the third month, and there is no other solemnity to be observed till the first day of the seventh month. Thus, the greater part of the third month, and the whole of the fourth, fifth, and sixth months, passed by without anything to arrest the attention. Two other matters help to give a special character and significance to this long period. As far as Pentecost all dates had been reckoned from the Passover. The Passover was killed on the 14th day of the first month, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread commenced on the day following. Then, on the day after the Sabbath in that week, the first ripe sheaf of the new harvest was waved before the Lord, and fifty days were counted on from that date to Pentecost. But now there is no counting of days up to the next feast, for it falls on the first day of the seventh month, without any regard to the length of the interval between it and the previous feast. This brings us to the other special feature of this interval. It was of uncertain length, varying from year to year. A glance at the diagram will show the reason of this. The 14th day of the first month might, of course, fall on any day of the week. If it should occur on a Friday, the very next day would be the Sabbath, and the wave-sheaf would be presented on the 16th of the month. But suppose the 14th to come on a Saturday, the first Sabbath afterwards would be on the 21st of the month, and the wave-sheaf would not be offered till the 22nd. As Pentecost was always the fiftieth day from the offering of the wave-sheaf, it would vary in like manner, and might fall on any day from the 6th to the 12th of the third month. But the Feast of Trumpets was always to be held on the 1st day of the seventh month, and, consequently, the period between Pentecost and Trumpets is, as we have previously stated, an indefinite one, varying from year to year.

In this way we learn a good deal as to this long interval, which begins with Pentecost and ends with Trumpets. The very fact of its commencing from Pentecost, leaves us without doubt that it represents the present age of the calling out of the Church, by the preaching of the Gospel. Then its undefined length is symbolic of the truth that it is no part of the times and seasons of Jewish prophecy. This last point is further enforced when we call to mind that there is no more counting days from a previous starting-point, as must always

The Feasts of the Lord.

be the case in dealing with prophetic dates. And, lastly, the aspect of the whole period is one of waiting and expectation; waiting for the trumpet call that is coming, rather than reckoning back from what had gone before.

But there is yet another point of great interest that we must not overlook. Though this interval itself is of varying length, yet, taken with what had gone before, it completes the first six months of the year. This fact brings back to mind what we were learning at the commencement of these articles, about the previous six months that were all blotted out, when the month Abib, up till then the seventh month of the year, was changed into the first month. Those six months illustrate the whole time of man's probation, before the fulness of the time had come, when God should send His Son. They only served to show man's utter unprofitableness, and afforded no possible foundation for covenant relationship between man and God. Hence they were set aside, and God began afresh, changing the seventh month into the first, and making the Passover Lamb the foundation of all His relationship to a redeemed people. The close of this second term of six months, therefore, naturally suggests a comparison with the end of the previous like period. And what a contrast does such a comparison bring to view. The first, which spoke of man's works, only served to declare that it had yielded nothing that God could accept, and it was, as a consequence, wholly set aside. The second, which shows the character and consequences of redemption, brings us right up to the Feast of Trumpets; a feast, as to the meaning of which we can scarcely now be in doubt.

This Feast of Trumpets, then, represents the coming of the Lord Jesus for His people and our gathering together unto Him. At least, this is its interpretation as to the heavenly people. From this point we shall find that each feast has a double meaning. The two meanings, in each case, are closely allied to one another; but the one has reference to the Church, the heavenly people, while the other refers to Israel.

Before we go any further with our examination of the feast itself, we shall do well to look at the symbolic teaching of the Scriptures in regard to trumpets, for we shall find that these instruments played no small part in the history of God's dealings with His people. Let us turn to the tenth chapter of the book of Numbers and read carefully the first ten verses. The trumpets here spoken of were to be made of silver. All

The Feasts of the Lord.

who have at all been occupied with the teaching of the tabernacle types will be familiar with the thought that God connects with silver. It is His appointed type of redemption. The whole supply of silver used in the construction of the tabernacle was obtained from the tribute of half a shekel each man, commanded to be paid when the people were numbered. This half shekel of silver was called the ransom or atonement money; and it was a special acknowledgment on the part of each one who was numbered among Jehovah's host that he had been redeemed from Egypt's bondage by the power of God (see Ex. xxx. 11-16, and xxxviii. 25-28). Now let us apply this to the use of silver for the construction of these trumpets. Whatever commandments or instructions God had to communicate to His people, they were always to be conveyed by means of the trumpets. Were the camps to be summoned for their journey; was the whole assembly to be gathered before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle; were the princes, the heads of the people, to be brought together; was an alarm of approaching danger to be given: in each and every case Jehovah's message was to be conveyed to the people through the medium of the silver trumpets. The meaning of all this is plain enough. In Exodus xix., when God had brought Israel to Sinai, and was about to give them His holy law, He prefaced it with the words, "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself" (verse 4). It is to a redeemed people that He addresses His commandments; and every word that He speaks to them, from first to last, is on the ground of redemption.

In this way we see that the trumpets had a well-defined and unmistakable meaning. They were the constant memorial of the grace of God, according to which He had first brought His people out of the house of bondage, and was now guiding, instructing and warning them all through their wilderness journey.

104

PAUL needed to know his dependence upon God, so God suffered Satan to drive a *thorn* into his flesh. Paul prays three times to have it removed, but the reply comes, "My grace is sufficient for thee—for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Paul adds, "most gladly, *therefore* will I rather glory in my *infirmities*, that the *power* of Christ may rest upon me." Satan may drive a thorn into our flesh, but Christ will turn it to our profit. Can we say, "I ask nothing, Lord, but Thy grace."

EXCELSIOR.

THE shades of eve are falling fast,
Earth's fading scenes will soon be past ;
Then, as we upward fix our eye,
Be this our watchword and our cry,
Excelsior.

From strength to strength still on we press,
Though foes may harass and distress ;
No vantage ground we mean to yield,
But write this motto on our shield,
Excelsior.

Encumbering weights of fleshly pride
Must surely all be laid aside,
If we would higher heights attain,
And steadfast this resolve maintain,
Excelsior.

Forgetting what has gone before
Let us on eagle pinions soar ;
Nor once contentedly sit down,
But say, while future still the crown,
Excelsior.

'Tis time to wake each sleeping eye,
For lo ! the day is drawing nigh
When Christ, the Lord, will come again ;
How truly we shall find it then,
Excelsior.

When, with crowned heads and stainless feet,
We tread at last the golden street,
Our staff and armour all laid by,
No voice from Zion's height will cry
Excelsior.

A. W. P. S.

EXPEDIENCY.

“**T**HERE may be things in my position not quite according to the mind of the Lord, but it gives me so much influence, which may be used for Him. Were I to give it up, I should lose so many opportunities of doing good.”

This is expediency; so natural to the human mind, so contrary to the mind of God. In one brief word, we have the answer to all such sophistry: “To obey is better than sacrifice.” Honestly before the Lord, with His open Word in your hand, what is His mind about your position? Is it the place He would have you in? Does it please Him that you are there?

This is the first question. The good it may do others is secondary; indeed, out of sight altogether beside this. This alone must be the “one thing I do.” To obey Him is the first duty; to please Him, the first pleasure. We can have but one aim at a time. It should be our aim, as it was Paul’s, to be well-pleasing to Him (2 Cor. v. 9). “Study to show thyself approved unto God.” The apparent victor in the games was not crowned, except he had striven lawfully. Is there not a danger that many will lose the crown, after all the “opportunities” and “influence” of an unlawful position? It is quite right to be working; but the work must be of the right kind, in the right place, at the right time. Everything else is failure in service, however much it may look like success. The house may be beautifully swept and garnished by a disobedient servant; but duty is first to the master *himself*, and only through him to the house. To reverse the order is a great mistake. Yet this is being constantly done. Would that every child of God would carry this principle through his whole course—God first. Because this is not done, the Lord is dishonoured and grieved on all sides by those who profess the greatest zeal for Him. Putting Him first would not make their zeal less, but would direct it into right channels. “In the multitude of people is the king’s honour” (Prov. xiv. 28); therefore, the one most attached to the Lord personally, will be the most diligent to increase the number of subject hearts, translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God’s dear Son.

The example of Moses is very instructive. His position as “son of Pharaoh’s daughter,” “instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, mighty in his words and works” (Acts vii. 22),

Expediency.

would give him many opportunities of doing good to his brethren, the Israelites. Indeed, one might think he would ultimately have gained power enough to deliver them from their bondage. But he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and took his true place as one of the despised race. Instantly his power and influence were gone, and he was as helpless as any of them. His one effort on their behalf only resulted in his having to flee for his life, and become an outcast in the desert.

Is it unlikely that in moments of weakness the question would force itself upon him there, had he been right in giving up all those opportunities, or had it been a great mistake? Forty years would pass slowly in the solitude of the desert to one reared in courts as he had been. The thought of his brethren—God's people—still smarting under the taskmaster's whip, still groaning under their burdens, would be at times intolerable. Moses needed more strength in that forty years of helpless inactivity than in the succeeding forty of hard toil. It was so hard for a man with his powers to be thrown aside, to lie, as it were, bound hand and foot, useless.

But had he made a mistake? Ought he to have kept the secret of his identity with the nation of slaves, and sought power that he might wield on their behalf? We are not left in doubt; the answer is as plain as the Word of God can give it. This position, with its power and influence, would be sin to him, now that he knew his true place; and his pleasures would have been pleasures of sin. It was by faith that he turned his back upon it; faith in the destiny of this down-trodden people; faith which enabled him to grasp the promises made to them, and not yet forgotten in the darkness and degradation to which they had sunk. He would have been denying God had he maintained his position instead of taking his place by their side. He saw the one right step and took it, trusting the Lord to show the others, as they should be taken, likewise.

The next was unexpected indeed. Forty years in the desert! But were they lost? No, at the end of that time he had learned his own helplessness, and was therefore ready to be an instrument in God's hand.

Expediency would have given him no such opportunities as were his afterwards; would have lost him the soul-training which spiritual contact and dealing with God alone could effect, both in him and his people; and could have won no

“For Love's Sake.”

such commendation as we now find, not once, nor twice, in this Book of Truth.

If we want examples of the opposite course they are easy to find ; but the result is not encouraging.

We find even Abraham yielding to the too natural tendency, and exposing himself—the friend of God—to the rebuke of a Philistine king (Gen. xx.). Saul thought to keep the people from being scattered from him, but his expedient lost him the kingdom (1 Sam. xiii.).

David thought it expedient to put Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, to avoid bringing scandal upon the people of the Lord ; but He who is Light would not countenance His honour being associated with darkness, and the deed became known as a lasting blot upon the man after God's own heart, and Jehovah's protest against human expediency (2 Sam. xii. 12).


Walk in the light, as He is in the light. Let there be nothing in thy course which will not bear the light. *By faith* forsake every path whereon is shadow. Leave the result with thy Guide. His is the responsibility of that, both as regards Him, thyself, and thy fellows. If it lead into the desert,

“In the desert God will teach thee
What the God that thou hast found.”

“FOR LOVE'S SAKE”

(Philemon 9).

II.

“ PAUL have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it (verse 19). Here, again, the character of Paul's behaviour towards Philemon was just according to the divine pattern. In asking Philemon to show forgiveness and love to Onesimus, the apostle might have pressed his own claims ; as he hints in the words, “albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides.” But his delight was rather to own any kindness shown to Onesimus, as giving Philemon a claim upon himself. “I will repay thee.” And is not this the way of our God with us? In every sense of the words, we owe Him our own selves. As Creator, as Redeemer, as our continual Preserver, we owe Him all we are and have. Yet, while He beseeches us by all His mercies, He delights to promise us a reward for all true service. Very particularly He pledges Himself thus to reward the smallest act of love done to a fellow-saint for His own name's sake. “For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in My

“For Love's Sake.”

name, because you belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward” (Mark ix. 41).

“Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my bowels in the Lord” (verse 20). It was no small privilege to be able to gladden the heart of the apostle, while he was a prisoner at Rome, by showing compassion and love to one whom he loved. But what is that to the joy of making glad the heart of God? Yet that is what He would have us do? “My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine” (Prov. xxiii. 15).

And then there comes in a little word that serves as a test of Philemon's real state of heart towards the apostle. “But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you.” If this request had come by itself, there can be no doubt about the delight with which it would have been attended. The best room would have been got ready, and all that the house could afford would have been at the disposal of the beloved and honoured guest. But Paul couples this personal request with all that he had been asking on behalf of Onesimus. It would be of little use, therefore, for Philemon to carry out the one if he was not prepared to do the other. Just imagine what would take place. Paul comes to Colosse, and Philemon is waiting with open arms to receive him. All the household vie with one another in doing honour to the beloved servant of the Lord. And not only the household, for many other brethren have been invited to sit at Philemon's table, and join in making Paul welcome. But there is one face that Paul has eagerly looked for, yet fails to see, among the guests; and, at last, unable to restrain himself longer, he anxiously inquires, “And where is Onesimus?” Alas! Onesimus is in the common prison. He had broken the law and done his master serious damage when he ran away, and Philemon did not see why he should not bear the consequences of his deeds; so he hauled Onesimus before the judges, and the judges sent him to prison. Imagine, we say again, that this had taken place, and what pleasure would all besides have given to Paul?

Our blessed Lord's last word to us is, “Surely I come quickly”; and He has taught us to respond, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” If that prayer were to be answered to-day, and before night closes He should come again to receive us to Himself, how would He find us carrying out all His blessed

Questions and Answers.

will towards our brethren and sisters? Every word He has ever addressed to us about forbearance, and love, and patience, and meekness, one towards another, is joined on to the precious promise, "Surely I come quickly." We often sing fervently :

"I can almost hear His footfall
On the threshold of the door ;
And my heart, my heart is longing
To be with Him evermore."

But is there any unforgiven Onesimus, from whom we are claiming all our due, instead of giving heed to the entreaty that, "for love's sake," we will show our sense of how much we owe our blessed Lord by the freeness of our forgiving love towards our brother? If there be such a one, our song will utterly fail to gladden the heart of Him for whom we profess to wait.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Question.—Are the Lord's words in Luke xi. 13 a reason why believers in this day should pray for the Holy Spirit?

Answer.—The Lord Jesus promised His disciples that, when He had gone back to the Father, He would send the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, unto them (John xvi. 7). Referring to the coming of the Holy Spirit, He said, "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever" (John xiv. 16). At Pentecost this promise was fulfilled. Till then the disciples had been commanded to tarry in Jerusalem, till they should be endued with power from on high (see Luke xxiv. 49, and Acts i. 8). But from that time onwards they always declared that the promise had been fulfilled (compare Acts ii. 33 ; v. 32). In the same way, in the epistles, we find that all believers are declared to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. vi. 19), and sealed by the Holy Spirit (Eph. i. 13). It is surely, then, a denial of all this for a believer now to pray for the Spirit. At the same time we need to be careful in the way in which we seek to correct those who are thus praying. It is quite possible to be asking for a right thing, with a true heart, and yet to express ourselves very incorrectly. It is quite as possible to be strictly accurate and correct in the language of our petitions, while there is little or no prayer in them. "Be filled with the Spirit," is a commandment addressed to the same Ephesian

Questions and Answers.

saints, who had previously been reminded that they were sealed by the Holy Spirit, until the redemption of the purchased possession. It is true that the being filled with the Spirit must be brought about by the turning out of what occupies room that should be given to Him, and not by His coming in, for He is already there; and it is important to discern this. But the one who prays for the Spirit to be given him, may really be yearning, with an exercised heart, to be filled with the Spirit; while some of us, who are disposed to despise the lack of knowledge displayed in the words of his prayer, are perhaps but little concerned as to whether we are filled with the Spirit or not. It is always well that God-wrought desires should be expressed in God-given language; but the language may be acquired without the desire being a reality, and of this we need especially to take heed.

A MUCH-ESTEEMED brother in the Lord writes us in reference to an article which appeared in last February's "Pathway," entitled "Dull of Hearing." In that article reference was made to the words of the Lord Jesus in Ps. xl. 6, "Mine ears hast Thou opened" (literally "dugged," as in the margin); and it was stated that the word would not bear the meaning of "bored," as in Ex. xxi. 6, where another word is used, but is a forcible way of expressing that every obstruction to a perfect hearing has been removed. Our brother points out that the same Hebrew word is used in Ps. xxii. 16, "they *pierced* My hands and My feet," and that the late Dr. Tregelles considered that in Ps. xl. 6 there was a reference to the Hebrew servant. That the type of the Hebrew servant finds its fulfilment in the Lord Jesus, we are well assured of; so that, whether the words of Ps. xl. have reference thereto or not, the beautiful teaching of that type remains untouched. The fact that both ears are spoken of in Ps. xl. seems to be an additional reason for doubting any reference to the Hebrew servant. It is quite true that some of the manuscripts in Ps. xxii. 16 employ the same word; but this is one of the comparatively few cases where Old Testament MSS. differ. The word is used of digging wells, graves, pits, &c., in many cases, but there is no other instance of its being used in any sense like boring. However, we willingly call attention, as requested, to the fact that some, including so able a Hebrew scholar as Dr. Tregelles, have upheld a reference to Ex. xxi. 6 in the passage in question.

"NOT OF THE WORLD."

"God . . . did visit the Gentiles (Greek, the nations), to take out of them a people for His name" (Acts xv. 14).

THIS verse is a clear statement of the purpose which God is carrying out in this dispensation, and it shows at the same time the position of the Church in relation to this present world. He is taking out of the peoples *a people*; and this people we know as "the Church"—the assembly of called-out ones. His call, heard and obeyed, is salvation. But what is the position of the saved ones? Are they merely individuals saved from future destruction, but for the present in practically the same position as before? Their whole line of conduct depends upon the answer which the Word of God gives to this question. If they are saved members of the world, it is their duty to make themselves as prominent and influential in it as possible, that they may bring to bear an influence for righteousness on all its institutions. Every association, law and custom must bear the mark of their modifying power. There is no reason why they should hold aloof from such of its amusements or fashions as are not unrighteous. There are some who regard this as their true position, and act accordingly. They will even go where inclination would not lead them, in the hope that their presence may give an elevated tone to the proceedings. But is this the path indicated in the Word of God? Surely it is not. The passage before us says that God is "taking out" a people. The Lord Jesus speaks of His disciples as men given to Him "out of the world"; and, moreover, He declares that the world hates them because they are "not of the world." Again, He makes the plain statement: "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John xvii. 6, 14, 16). Our Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us "out of this present evil world" (Gal. i. 4). What is the meaning of these repeated statements? The people of whom they speak belonged to the world once; they understood it to include them, when they were told that "God so loved the world." But they are no longer of it, having been taken out of it; and now they are hated and unknown by it, and are forbidden to love it or to seek its friendship (1 John ii. 15, iii. 1; James iv. 4). God so loved the world that He sent His Son to be the Saviour of the world: for God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. But the world

“Not of the World.”

would have none of the Son of God, and cast Him out and slew Him. This was the world's answer; it refused to be saved. Then it was left to pursue its chosen course to destruction, and the individuals who believed were taken out of it, forming “a people for God's own possession” (1 Peter ii. 9; Titus ii. 14, R.V.), distinct from the mass, as a treasure hid in a field.

From that time the line in the sight of God has been sharp and clear, so that neutrality is impossible. “They are of the world . . . we are of God” (1 John iv. 5, 6). “All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 John ii. 16).

Paul, by the Spirit of God, illustrates in himself the believer's position. Through Christ, the world had been crucified to him, and he to the world (Gal. vi. 14). Jesus, in crucifixion, was in the position of condemnation to which the world was adjudged by the sentence of God. Though mercy delayed execution, Paul looked upon the world in the light of God as condemned already. All connected with it had the sentence of death upon it; he could, as it were, see the halter already round its neck. Then again, he saw that in Christ, on the Cross, he was represented, and that he had died to the past life altogether, and in that way had been delivered out of this present evil age. His old life and condition had not been mended and patched, but put an end to; he was crucified with Christ, and death and resurrection separated him now from all that was not of God (Gal. ii. 20). When any thought of association with the world suggested itself, “Christ crucified” reminded him that he was a dead man. This was the argument he used with the Colossians (Col. ii. 20).

“I have chosen you *out* of the world,” said the Lord Jesus (John xv. 19). The believer has therefore to take his place outside, and whatever he does must be done from outside. Association with the world in anything, when his Lord has been rejected by it, is disloyalty to Him. Not merely the evil part of it has to be denied, and the evil things in it, but the whole thing, because it is in insubjection to Him whom the believer owns as Lord.

Probably the young convert will not see, all at once, the details of his position; but the Divine Teacher leads on softly, as His young ones are able to bear.

“Not of the World.”

This people is taken out “for His name.” Israel were His people, whom He redeemed to make Himself a glorious Name; but they rejected Him. Though they were called by His Name, they would not hearken to Him, and Israel would none of Him. Therefore, He chose another people to bear His Name in the earth, to be the subjects of His special dealings, the stewards of His revelation. These are a royal priesthood, to show forth His virtues, to make known His Name; or, in other words, to declare His character. While they are taken out of the world, as to all moral connection with it, they are still left in it as to natural life; and, while in it, in the bodily sense, they are to live as those sent into it as ambassadors for Christ, to continue by lip and life the testimony that He bore, that the deeds thereof are evil, that it is condemned already by a holy God; yet also, that He will pardon every individual soul who desires to be reconciled to Him. Not as citizens of the world any longer, but as strangers in it, pilgrims through it, for whom its concerns can have no interest. It is not theirs to modify or improve, but to declare the message of God, in which He makes known the sentence, and warns each one to flee from the wrath to come. Their ease and their pleasure are to come in the Father's house: “For His name” is the only purpose of their being here. In the world they will have tribulation; for it will hate them as it did their Master in the measure in which they manifest His spirit and carry on His work. The world will not understand them because it knows not God. They can take no part in its amusements, for these are Satan's devices for satisfying souls without God. They cannot follow its fashions, for that would be a denial of their separateness. They cannot vote, for in so doing they would help the self-government of a rebel world, and would thereby be giving countenance to its rebellion. Taking their stand with their Master, they make it known, from outside the camp, that He still has a people on the earth, that He still has love in His heart for the perishing, and that He has a way of salvation for them; but that for a godless, sinful world that rejects Him, there is nothing but a fearful day of reckoning, when for all their ways God will bring them into judgment.

Except when forgetful of its doom, can a Christian find pleasure in the pastimes of the world? and can that be right, which makes it necessary for him to cast aside the thoughts of God?

A Contrast.

But some may say, I know these things to be evil, and I take my place outside them; but may I not join the world in doing good, in works of philanthropy? The Christian is told to do good unto all men, and not to limit himself to the household of faith; but how can he have fellowship with the world in so doing? Whatever the world's object in its benevolence or charity may be, it cannot be seeking to please the Lord, or to fulfil a stewardship received from Him. But this should be the one object of the believer in all he does. This is his ground, which the world cannot occupy. There is therefore no common ground upon which they can stand to have fellowship together, except the Christian come down to take the lower ground, with the successors of those who would provide a decent burial-place for strangers with the blood-price of the murdered Son of God. That cannot be done in His name which is done in fellowship with those who will not own Him.

A CONTRAST.

“Men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly Thou fillest with Thy hid treasure: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes” (Ps. xvii. 14).

“As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness” (verse 15).

WHEN the rich man, out of his place of torment, cried for a drop of cold water, Abraham answered him, “Thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things.” The condemnation lies in the word “thy.” No man is condemned for having abundance of the things of this life, but for making them to be his good things. It is a matter of the heart's choice—Christ or the world. The man who has chosen the world, in any of its varied forms, as his portion, may receive gifts from God, but only to fill his belly with them. “Whose god is their belly, . . . who mind earthly things” (Phil. iii. 19) fully describes them. The man who has set his heart's choice upon Christ is waiting to be perfectly satisfied till the resurrection morn, when “we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is.”

As the glory which awaits the believer is all to be enjoyed in the presence of God, it behoves him while here to seek enjoyment in nothing upon which the smile of God cannot rest.

Christendom and her Relationship to the World-power.

(Notes on Rev. xvii.)

III.

ISRAEL'S high priest of old wore on his forehead a plate of pure gold, on which was inscribed that which he was called to be—"Holiness to the Lord" (Ex. xxviii. 36). On the forehead of the false woman also is written that which she is, and those whose eyes are anointed can decipher the inscription which proclaims her shame—"Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth."

But this is not all; he who gets near enough to read her name soon perceives that there is a deeper depth of degradation yet—the woman is drunk! Drunk with blood; yes, with the blood of the saints, of the witnesses of Jesus!

At this point John breaks in and says, "I wondered with a great wonder" (R.V. v. 6). That which claims to be so fair is yet so vile. We are not surprised that he "wondered." We also wonder.

The victims of bloody Rome in every place where she has had sway, and, indeed, the persecutions, cruel and bitter, of every religious system that has for a brief moment wielded the sceptre of power, tell how the vision has become history. So it has been; so it must be. The child of the bondwoman persecutes the child of promise (Gal. iv.). He who is doing his best resents and hates the grace that blesses the undeserving. The Cains ever seek to kill the Abels. The grace, which accepts the sinners who comes by Christ, is the severest censure on the man who, coming his own way, is left unblessed. The welcome of the younger brother is the rebuke of the elder. John's burst of astonishment brings out the angel's explanation; and he begins with the beast, telling how the beast, which at first carries the woman, shall presently destroy her.

If the woman caused John to wonder, so, in time to come, will the beast draw forth the astonishment of earth-dwellers. Now the woman is to the front, presently it will be the beast; though even now it is less of the woman and more of the beast. Even now the mystery of iniquity works, so that he (the beast) may be revealed in his time (2 Thes. ii. 7). The woman and the beast represent the two great forces of opposition to the truth of God, devised, or, at least, energised by Satan—the strange woman and the evil man of Proverbs ii. The woman

Christendom and her Relationship to the World-power.

— imitation, the false church; the man — opposition, infidelity.

To return to the angel's explanation. He declares that the beast *was* and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit. This beast is, then, the Roman empire, as headed up in the man of sin—antichrist. Do any ask how we can be sure of this? Doubtless it becomes us to be diffident, when we are expressly warned that wisdom is needed to understand aright, and yet we judge that the proofs of our statement are forthcoming. The seven heads of the beast have a two-fold interpretation. *First*, they tell of the seven mountains on which the woman sitteth, or on which Rome was built. *Second*, they tell of seven kings or forms of government. Five had fallen or passed away; another was existing at the time John saw the vision; and the seventh was yet future, and, indeed, was to be modified and give place to another, which would be the eighth. The proof that the seven kings speak of forms of government and not persons is, that the seventh king is evidently the first phase of the Roman empire when revived, whilst the eighth is its last phase, when antichrist, having usurped supreme authority over the whole ten-kingdom empire, makes war against the Lamb to his own utter ruin and overthrow.

The form of Roman government at the time that Jesus was born was that of an empire, for there went forth from Cæsar Augustus a decree that all the world should be taxed (Luke ii. 1). But the present dispensation of grace being parenthetical, God is not dealing with nations as such, but is taking *out* of them a people for His Name (Acts xv. 14). Hence the Roman empire which was, *is not*, and the Roman Church takes its place in the front. When, however, the true Church having been caught up, Christ shall put forth His rightful claim to earth's dominion, Satan will raise up and revive, in opposition, the Roman empire. Does Christ seek a bride now? Then Satan has His shameless caricature—the false woman. Will Christ seek a kingdom? Then Satan will bring forth his kingdom. Blessed be God; He overrules all Satan may plot. Men may plan; they can but carry out God's will. He who looks on may well exclaim, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee" (Ps. lxxvi. 10).

This kingdom shall not last; it goeth into perdition. The little stone cut out without hands shall crush it. This kingdom, Satan's masterpiece, does but gather into a focus

Waiting for Thee.

the rebellious forces of earth, and so fulfil the ancient promise, "I will make Thine enemies Thy footstool." This kingdom, so short-lived, but paves the way for the kingdom of righteousness and peace which knows no end. The kingdom of man, brought forth by Satan, does but add to the glories of the kingdom which destroys it, and makes the joy of heaven and earth the greater, as the cry goes forth: "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. xi. 15).

The details of the destruction of the beast, and how it works out the final judgment of the woman, we reserve for our next number.

WAITING FOR THEE.

As the thirsty hart pants for the clear flowing rill,
As the fainting flower sighs for the dews that distil,
So long I, Lord Jesus, Thy beauty to see;
Thy love has chain'd me, I'm waiting for Thee.

'Tis Thyself, my Redeemer, I fain would behold,
It is not the jasper or pure shining gold;
It is not the sight of that glorious place,
But the joy of Thy presence, the light of Thy face.

It is not beloved ones in glory to greet,
Who sleep now in Jesus, though that will be sweet;
Whom have I in earth, or in heaven, but Thee?
How can my heart rest till Thy glory I see?

It is not the unsullied garments of white,
Nor even the diadem, sparkling in light,
'Tis the Lamb who was led to the slaughter for me;
'Tis Thyself, who so loved me, O Lord, I would see.

It is not the anthems that round me shall roll,
Nor the harp's sweetest note, that will thrill through my soul;
'Tis Thy voice, King of Glory, I'm waiting to hear,
That in words of glad welcome will fall on my ear.

Let Thy coming be hastened, our glorious Lord;
Fulfil the sure promise contained in Thy Word.
Arise in Thy splendour, Thou Morning Star bright,
And chase every shadow of sin's dreary night.

A. W. P. S.

THE FEASTS OF THE LORD.

IX.

THE application of the type of the silver trumpets to the circumstances of the present dispensation is obvious enough. We, too, have been delivered from bondage, and are journeying through a wilderness; and throughout the whole time of our pilgrimage God commands, admonishes, entreats us, as a redeemed people. It is on the ground of redemption that He claims the surrender of our entire being to Himself. "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body" (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20). "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Cor. v. 15).

But while silver, the material of which the trumpets were made, is God's appointed type of redemption, the very fact of the use of trumpets tells us that there is a distance between the speaker and those to whom he speaks. Most of us are familiar with the use of trumpets or bugles in military manœuvres. The commanding officer cannot make his voice heard by the large bodies of men that are under his command, scattered, as they are, over a considerable district. By his side, however, is a small company of buglers, and, according to a well-defined code, they translate every word of his into clear and far-reaching bugle notes. By means of these bugle sounds, troops, who are beyond the reach of the general's voice, and even completely out of sight, are made to understand his will. In 1 Cor. xiv. 8, when speaking of the exercise of spiritual gifts in the ministry of God's Word, the apostle compares those who declare God's message to these buglers or trumpeters, and points out the absolute importance of clearness in the utterance. "For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" If the buglers are bunglers, there will be nothing but confusion throughout the camp. And how true this is in regard to the spiritual camp. Wherever the clear ring of redemption is lacking, everything becomes confused and uncertain. The very first principle as to rightly dividing the Word of Truth is lost sight of, and that which belongs to the children of God, is applied to the children of this world, while the solemn warnings of God's Word to the ungodly are made to refer equally to believers.

It is little to be wondered at, if, under these circumstances, the blessed hope of the coming again of the Lord Jesus is lost sight of. Is there a sweeter note that ever sounds from the

The Feasts of the Lord.

silver trumpet of redemption, than the oft-repeated word of the Lord himself, "Behold, I come quickly"? But it is only to the ears of redeemed ones that that note is one of joy and delight. The more the power of redeeming grace is known, the more earnestly will the heart respond, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus"; and thus the whole attitude of the child of God will be one of waiting for the *last* trump, of waiting for God's Son from Heaven. And this shows us why the long-looked-for announcement of His coming is called "the *last* trump." "Behold, I show you a mystery," writes the apostle; "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52). The figure is still the same as in the previous chapter; only then the trumpet was calling to the battle, and now all the conflict is over, and the joyful *last* trump summons to perfect rest and endless bliss. It is the *last* trump; for those who had long been guided and encouraged and admonished by the word of their unseen Lord, are now caught up into His very presence, to see His face and to hear His voice. Thenceforward the trumpet sound will never be needed, for, as the bride of the Lamb, they shall share His throne and be "for ever with the Lord."

Some have attempted to connect this last trump with the seventh trumpet of Rev. xi., but a very little consideration will show that there is no connection whatever between them. The epistle to the Corinthians was written some thirty-six years before the book of the Revelation; and a letter, written to the church at Corinth to put them right in regard to serious false doctrine that was being introduced among them, would not have made use of language that could not be understood, except by reference to the symbols of a vision which was only to be given long after most of the saints then on earth had departed to be with the Lord. Moreover, the seven trumpets of Rev. viii. to xi. are angelic trumpets, whereas the trumpet that calls the saints up to meet the Lord in the air is called "the trump of God." "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God" (1 Thess. iv. 16). In this place, again, the gathering of the saints to be with the Lord is said to be by the trumpet sound, and thus we have abundant confirmation as to the meaning of the Feast of Trumpets. This, at least, as far as the heavenly people are concerned. But it is the

The Feasts of the Lord.

purpose of God to gather Israel also, and the Feast of Trumpets has undoubted reference to both gatherings. As already stated, the remaining feasts, from this point onwards, have all a double fulfilment. During the present dispensation the nation of Israel is set on one side; they are "Lo-ammi," not a people (Hos. i. 9). Consequently the accomplishment of God's present purpose is in connection with the Church, the heavenly people. After the Church is taken away, God has declared His intention to gather the nation of Israel again. Consequently, we have the heavenly people in heaven, and the earthly people upon earth, both enjoying the favour of God at the same time, and hence the double fulfilment of these remaining feasts.

It remains for us, therefore, to look at what the Scriptures say about the gathering again of the nation; and we may begin with the Lord's teaching to His disciples in Matthew xxiv. We must observe particularly that the whole subject before us in this chapter relates to the Jews and Jerusalem. In the previous chapter the Lord had concluded His solemn denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees, with a touching lament over Jerusalem. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matt. xxiii. 37). Directly after this he told His disciples of the destruction that was to fall upon the temple itself; and, upon their asking Him as to when these things should be, He went on to tell them of events specially relating to Jerusalem and the land of Judea. The close of the whole prophecy is in verses 30 and 31—"Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Here we have the trumpet once more, and it is for the gathering of the Lord's people; but yet there is a marked contrast between the two occasions. The gathering up of the Church is His own act entirely. "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John xiv. 3). But for the gathering together of the scattered nation, He employs angels as His instruments.

Questions and Answers.

Here it is as Son of Man that He is manifested, a title always connected with His judgment of the nations and His earthly reign; there we are told that the Lord Himself shall descend, a title specially indicating His relationship to the Church.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Question.—Is there any reason why a Christian, who has taken the place of one gathered to the Name of the Lord Jesus, should not take part in mission-work with Christians in denominations, provided that he is committed to no wrong doctrine or false position, and that all know what he holds, and leave him at liberty to follow up young converts, and teach them all that he knows himself?

Answer.—The above is a question that, in one shape or another, is frequently being put to us; and it indicates the honest conviction of many a true-hearted child of God, that, under the circumstances named, there is nothing contrary to the mind of God in sharing in such mission-work. Yet the very question itself reveals clearly enough one of the fundamental evils of every "Union Mission." The questioner considers himself free to work in the mission, because all there know what he holds, and leave him at liberty to follow up young converts, and teach them all he knows himself. But there are always two sides to every bargain, and the conditions expressed here constitute a distinct bargain. The one side of the bargain, here laid down, is that if I go to the mission, the other members of it will not hinder me from teaching young converts about baptism, breaking of bread, &c. But the other side of it is that I will not hinder them from teaching any of the human traditions belonging to the sects they are connected with. The one side cannot exist without the other. It is a system of give and take; and God's truth is only allowed on sufferance, and on the condition that the traditions of men are given an equal place. Most of the Christians who take part in such missions have an idea that God has given no particular instructions as to the worship and order of His church. They believe that it is therefore quite optional with each one to adopt the plan that most commends itself to him. As a natural consequence of this idea, they are prepared to consent to such an arrangement as is pointed out above, and this arrangement is an essential principle in all such missions, Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, &c. If ever you meet with a Christian who believes the practices of

Questions and Answers.

his own denomination to be really of Divine origin and authority, and who conscientiously acts upon that belief, you will find that such an one is unable to join with any of these associations. He is stigmatised as bigoted and narrow; but the charge is a false one. Blind and ignorant he may be, mistaking the traditions of men for the commandments of God; but he is perfectly right in refusing to make any compromise in regard to what he believes to be God's commandment. Through infinite grace, we have been delivered from vain traditions, and taught to esteem all God's precepts concerning all things to be right (see Ps. cxix. 128). What are we doing, then, when we join an association, or take part in a mission-work, on conditions that put those precepts on a level with human inventions? "You have your way, and let us have ours," is the common protest of Christians who do not wish to be interfered with; and it just explains the whole position. "Your way" and "my way" is as far as their thought has reached in regard to these matters, and the idea of God's way has never dawned upon their minds. What would be said if we proposed to introduce the same principle in regard to telling sinners how to be saved? Let us join in a mission with Romanists, Campbellites, and others, the only condition being that each of us is at liberty to teach what we think right. Oh no, it will be answered, we should all be contradicting each other; and who would know what to believe? Most true, but why does the application stop short at the telling sinners how they must be saved. Is it of no consequence that we are all speaking different things to the saved ones? Is it only important that the speakers shall say the same thing from the platform, and does it matter nothing that they contradict one another in their individual dealings with the converts? If we go into a fair or to a race-course to preach, the moment we name the Name of Jesus we separate ourselves from all our surroundings, and have no responsibility whatever regarding them. But when we go to work at a mission or Christian association, we identify ourselves with it, and sanction its principles in the sight of others. There is only one association that the Word of God recognises, God's assembly, the gathering of His redeemed ones around His blessed Son. In no other can Christ have His true place as Lord, and there is no place in any other, therefore, for those who would act according to the revealed will of God concerning Him.

FALSE ACCUSATIONS.

THERE are few things that so searchingly test our condition of soul as false accusations. It is often easier to bear positive injuries than to hold our peace when unjust charges are laid against us. Doubtless for this very reason, God, in the training and discipline of His children, frequently allows them to be tried by this searching test. It is an excellent exercise for the soul to look back and remember times when we have been falsely accused, and to consider how it has affected us. The natural thing with all of us is to wish to vindicate ourselves, and this is a more subtle snare than even the temptation to anger against the one who has wronged us.

The mightiest help under this, as under all other circumstances of trial, is to know that it is all ordered by God for our profit. If we are to have such a grasp of this thought as shall make it a real help to us, we must carefully distinguish God's part and man's in what is being done. As to the part of those who accuse us, they may be altogether acting in malice and wickedness; but, none the less, the whole of their doings are permitted of God for the fulfilment of His own purpose concerning us. When Shimei cast stones and dirt at David, and called him a bloody man in regard to the house of Saul, it was as foul a slander as could possibly have been uttered. Twice David had had Saul's life in his hand, and each time he had let his enemy go unharmed. Moreover, after Saul's death, David had made inquiry who was left of the house of Saul, that he might show them the kindness of God. It is clear, then, that Shimei was falsely accusing David, and that in the grossest manner, yet David could say of it all, "So let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, 'Curse David. Who shall then say, wherefore hast thou done so?'"

To take a yet greater example. When the Lord Jesus was arraigned before Caiaphas, dragged to the bar of Pontius Pilate, mocked and buffeted and spit upon by the Jews, crowned with thorns and scourged and crucified by the Roman soldiers, when the whole multitude joined in taunting Him as He hung on the Cross, He answered them never a word. To Him it was the fulfilment of the Scriptures; it was all part of what was written in the volume of the book concerning Him (Ps. xl. 7). He knew that Herod and Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles and the people of Israel, could do no more than the hand and counsel of God had determined before to be done (Acts iv. 27, 28). And He who had said "I delight

False Accusations.

to do Thy will" carried out that will to the end, till every Scripture was fulfilled and He could close over the book and say, "It is finished."

The guilt of all those sinful men remains the same; but, none the less, the will of God was done, and His obedient Son rejoiced in the accomplishment of that will. What is it that we are most concerned about—our way or the will of God? Whose honour are we most jealous of—God's or our own? These are the searching questions that the test of false accusations helps to press home upon our consciences.

A few verses from Psalm cxix. beautifully illustrate the attitude of the man whose heart is set upon pleasing God—

"Thou hast rebuked the proud that are cursed, which do err from Thy commandments" (ver. 21).

"The proud have had me greatly in derision; yet have I not declined from Thy law" (ver. 51).

"The proud have forged a lie against me: but I will keep Thy precepts with my whole heart" (ver. 69).

"Let the proud be ashamed; for they dealt perversely with me without cause: but I will meditate in Thy precepts" (ver. 78).

In the first of these passages we see that the psalmist recognises that God Himself will deal with the evil doers, and that all their sin is, in the first place, sin against God. In the second, his heart goes out in thankfulness that, however the ungodly may have scoffed at him, his own heart has not thereby been turned aside from the law of God. In the third, he tells how these wicked men, not content with mocking at him, have forged a lie against him; but this only increases his desire to keep the precepts of God with his whole heart. And, in the fourth, he appeals to God about their false charges, leaving it to Him to vindicate His servant's character, while the purpose of his own heart still remains unchanged—"I will meditate in Thy precepts."

Alas, how often we find believers, pleading the false accusations laid against them by others, as an excuse for their own disobedience to the commandments of the Lord. They have fretted themselves under the false charge, with the sure result—"it tendeth only to evil-doing" (Ps. xxxvii. 8, R.V.). The test has made manifest the failure of the heart to delight itself only in the Lord. When this is so, let us honestly confess our own sin, instead of going on talking of the wrong that has been done us, and God, who proves His people that He may do them good, will not be behindhand with a blessing.

BELIEVING GOD.

IS God true? We do not believe the witness of anyone to any fact unless we believe him to be true. He that believes what God says has set his seal to this, that God is true (Jno. iii. 33). On the other hand, he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar (1 Jno. v. 10); that is, he has set his seal to this, that God is not true. But it is not possible for God to lie (Heb. vi. 18); not merely He will not, but He *cannot* lie (Tit. i. 2). Therefore we may declare with the psalmist, "Thy word is true from the beginning," and "I have esteemed all Thy precepts concerning all things to be right." Not only is there truth in that Word, but there is truth without the admixture of error or exaggeration. After some experience of the world, it becomes a habit, so natural as to be unconscious, to expect exaggeration, and to deduct from the statements made, accordingly. How many believe all that is said to them in praise of a purchase they may be making? But "the words of the Lord are pure words" (Ps. xii. 6). Nothing has been left which might detract from their value. They are as silver when it has been purified seven times in a furnace on the earth, so that no dross remains. They may be taken at their full value, simply relied on as representing facts. In no other way can they be to any man the spiritual food upon which his soul is nourished.

Believing God is the condition of salvation, and of a stable, progressing Christian life. In the Scriptures it is seen as the ground of—

I. *Conviction* (Jon. iii. 5). The Ninevites heard the preaching of Jonah and recognised it as the message of God. Because God said they were doomed, they believed that it was so. "The people of Nineveh believed God." Because they were convinced of their sin and God's judgment upon it, they sought mercy, as men would to-day if they believed their condemnation. So few believe God, when He pronounces their judgment, that they will not trouble about the remedy.

II. *Justification* (Rom. iv. 3). Abraham believed God and was justified. Every sinner who believes God's witness concerning His Son is justified also. The condition is a simple one; but it is of faith that it may be according to grace.

III. *Joy* (Acts xvi. 34, R.V., margin). The jailor "rejoiced greatly," having believed God. Convinced of sin, learning that Jesus had been made sin for him that he might be justified, what wonder that he rejoiced greatly? But there

"Lo, this is our God."

would have been no joy had he not believed that all claims against him had been met. Why should he believe it? God said it, and he believed God. Was it presumption? Would it not have been something far worse if he had presumed to doubt?

IV. *Peace* (Acts xxvii. 25). Amid stormy seas and desperate men, Paul could stand forth with a calm confidence, and say, "I believe God." His heart was fixed, trusting in the Lord. A promise had been given him, and no storm could prevent its fulfilment. If they seemed in conflict, he knew the storm would have to yield to his God. What He had said must come to pass.

"The hope that's built upon Thy Word
Can ne'er be overthrown."

With such absolute certainty of His truth, is it a hard thing to believe God? Why should there not always be "joy and peace in believing" (see Rom. xv. 13)? These words were not first spoken to sinners about their conversion; but to saints about their walk, that it might be indeed a believer's pathway. Doubts and fears have no right there, even when it becomes a path of difficulty. Some promise may be found to suit the trial, and "I believe God" would put the fears to flight. Such resistance will put the Devil, with his doubts, to flight sooner than any other. But we shall have nothing to believe, unless we make ourselves acquainted with His Word, and know what He says.

First find what God has to say to us, then find joy and peace in believing Him. "Thy words were found and I did eat them, and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart."

"LO, THIS IS OUR GOD."

Is. xxv. 9.

- | | | |
|--|---------|------------------|
| "The God of PEACE," | - - - - | Rom. xv. 33. |
| "The God of LOVE and PEACE," | - - - - | 2 Cor. xiii. 11. |
| "The God of PATIENCE and CONSOLATION," | - - - - | Rom. xv. 5. |
| "The God of ALL COMFORT," | - - - - | 2 Cor. i. 3. |
| "The God of ALL GRACE," | - - - - | 1 Pet. v. 10. |
| "The God of HOPE," | - - - - | Rom. xv. 13. |

"We will be glad and rejoice in Thee,"

Song of Sol. i. 4.

THE FEASTS OF THE LORD.

X.

IN the Old Testament scriptures we have no direct prophecy concerning the taking away of the Church. It may be hinted at in types and shadows, but nothing more. Concerning the gathering back of Israel to their land, however, the case is far different. This was a frequent theme in the mouths of the prophets; and a reference to some of their mentions of it will help to confirm the marked distinctions between the instantaneous catching up of the Church into the clouds at the shout of the Lord, and the more gradual bringing together of the scattered nation from all parts of the world to the land of promise.

Let us turn first to Is. xi. 11, &c.: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth." In speaking of this as a "second time" of gathering His people together from their dispersion, the reference is, without doubt, to the first time, when He would bring a remnant back, by successive stages, from the seventy years' captivity. But lower down we get a reference to the time when God first brought Israel out of Egypt. Then He opened a pathway through the tongue of the Egyptian sea (the Red Sea); but now He will utterly dry it up, while He will smite the great river, the river Nile, into seven streams (see ver. 15, R.V.), so that neither the one nor the other may be an obstacle to His returning people.

We get the same subject again in the close of chapter xxvii.: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem" (vs. 12, 13). Here, again, we have the sound of the trumpet to gather back the outcasts of Israel to their land. But how great is the contrast between this and the catching up of the saints to meet the Lord in the air, "in a moment, in the

The Feasts of the Lord.

twinkling of an eye." In the two expressions, "beat off" and "gather," in verse 12, there is an exceedingly beautiful reference to the commandment God had given to His people not to closely glean their fields and vineyards and olive-yards, but to leave a portion for the poor and the stranger. In Lev. xix. 9, 10, it is written: "And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou *gather* the *gleanings* of thy harvest: . . . thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger." Again, in Deut. xxiv. 20, we read: "When thou *beatest* thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow." The word "beatest" of this last passage is the same Hebrew word as the "beat off" of Is. xxvii. 12; while the "gather" and "gleanings" of the Leviticus passage are identical with the "gathered" of the verse in Isaiah. The thought, then, seems to be as follows:—When Israel were gathering in their harvest, they were to leave some gleanings behind. But when the time of God's harvest-ingathering of the nation has come, He will beat off, bough by bough, till not a single olive is left behind; but, one by one, all are gathered in.

We might refer to many other passages of like import, such as Is. xlix. 11-23, Ezek. xxxvii. 15-28, Amos ix. 9-15, &c., for, as we said before, it is a subject that the prophetic scriptures of the Old Testament teem with. It may be objected that some of these prophecies refer to the gathering back after the seventy years' captivity; and, doubtless, they have such a reference. In the same way, there were many references to John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus, the complete fulfilment of which is postponed in consequence of Israel's rejection of their testimony; but they will all be fully accomplished "in that day." There is abundant evidence, moreover, that the blessings promised in the scriptures we have quoted have never yet been bestowed. "I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land" (Amos ix. 15); "I will make them (Judah and Israel) one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all" (Ezek. xxxvii. 22). These, and many such prophecies, still await their fulfilment. The unchanging heart of the blessed God awaits both events: the catching up of the bride that is to share the throne of the Son, and the gathering together of the long-scattered seed of Abraham to Immanuel's land. Both the one and the other will be with the great sound of a

Christendom and her Relationship to the World-power.

trumpet ; and therefore, a special feast, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, was instituted by Jehovah among the symbolic feasts of the year, to tell of His own mighty joy in the bringing of His redeemed ones to Himself.

Christendom and her Relationship to the World-power.

(Notes on Rev. xvii.)

IV.

IN Rev. xiii. the beast is seen in the full exercise of his Satanic power ; hence the ten horns are crowned. In Rev. xvii. they have received no kingdom "as yet." Not till the Church has been removed will the Roman empire be revived in its latest form of a ten-kingdom empire. *Now* the blessed Spirit, our Eliezer, is seeking a bride for the heavenly Isaac ; hence the energy of Satan is directed to bring forth his imitation, the woman of shame.

Israel, as such, rejected their Messiah, and thus delayed, though they could not annul, the fulfilment of the promise that He should sit upon the throne of His father David. This delay did but give God an opportunity for a more wonderful display of grace ; for where sin abounded, there did grace much more abound. The Church is surely God's masterpiece (Eph. iii. 9-11). Therein are brought together both Jew and Gentile, and to them is made known God's love as it was never before revealed ; while the objects of that love, so undeserving (oh, triumph of grace !), are brought into a place of nearness unknown in Old Testament scripture.

But when Christ, as Son of God, shall have shouted to Himself His bride, He will not forget His further glories, made doubly His by the cross, as Son of David and Son of Abraham. His title of Son of God connects Him with the Church, that of Son of David with Israel, and that of Son of Abraham with the larger circle of all nations.

Hence the first action of the Lord, when seen by the apostle in the midst of the throne and of the Church glorified, is the taking of the book, and the next is the breaking of the seals. As the breaking of the seals is followed by action on earth, which culminates in His enthronement as earth's rightful King, we may understand the book as the title-deeds to earth's sovereignty.

The breaking of the first seal calls forth the rider on the white horse going forth to conquer ; the crown given him is one of conquest, not of kingship. The second seal tells of war.

Christendom and her Relationship to the World-power.

A comparison of Rev. vi. with Matthew xxiv. at once shows their analogy, and the one explains the other. In Matthew xxiv. that which answers to the rider of the white horse is antichrist. Directly, then, Christ begins to assert His claim to dominion over the earth, Satan's champion begins also to move, and war results and its dread attendants follow on. These are the *beginning* of sorrows! Out of them are evolved the Roman empire in its ten-kingdom form; the ten kingdoms shadowed by the toes of Daniel's image. Ten kingdoms tell of division, and, therefore, incipient weakness. But the number ten is otherwise suggestive. Ten commandments to be kept; ten talents delivered up by the faithful servant; ten virgins to wait for the Bridegroom. The number ten in Scripture speaks of responsibility. Responsibility because of privilege bestowed. And surely man was never so responsible as now. Yet what is this great empire, the product of human power, the monument of man's boasted progress? Alas! it is but the most awful exhibition of the enmity of the natural heart against God. Ten kingdoms whose jealousies are swallowed up in one great hate. Ten kingdoms moulded together by one great will, despotic, cruel, tyrannical. "These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast."

But there is something before this. "The ten horns . . . these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil His will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, *until* the words of God shall be fulfilled" (Rev. xvii. 16, 17).

To summarise. First, there is the period during which the Roman empire is being revived, and during which the Jews are being gathered back to their own land, and numbered once more amongst the nations. Second, the period in which the democracy (pointed at by the clay of Daniel ii. 33) of the Roman kingdoms shall give place to the imperial headship of antichrist. Third, the time of the treaty made between the Man of sin and Israel. This period lasts three and a half years, during which time the cruel hatred of the beast is vented upon the woman. Fourth, the short-lived triumph of infidelity. The treaty is broken. The black lie of "Ye shall not die" gives place to the constructive lie "*Ye shall be as gods.*" The man of sin, helped by the devil and the false prophet, forming together the trinity of evil, claims universal worship. "So that

Christendom and her Relationship to the World-power.

he as God sitteth in the temple of God" (2 Thess. ii. 4). Then cometh the end, even his destruction oft foretold. "Whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of His coming."

How terrible is the judgment of the false woman, once so proud, now brought so low. As if the Lord would not deign to punish her Himself, He employs the wild beast to do His work. How little do Satan, beast and prophet, think that in all this, as in each subsequent step, while they wreak their mad hate, they but carry out the behests of the eternal Jehovah.

The church having gone, only the shell, the empty shell, o profession is left. The testimony of God is not with her; and another order of witnesses is called forth. Nevertheless, shameless to the last, the false woman gathers her garments of hypocrisy around her and continues to defy her bitter enemy. Rome can ill brook that the beast who carried her should now command her. Priestcraft, though for the time it may truckle and temporise, always opposes the liberties of the people. Now it is a hand-to-hand fight between the two; but, if sharp, the struggle is short. The rising waves of democracy sweep away every vestige of the unhallowed system. The iron claws of the beast tear to pieces the woman whom once he feared as now he hates. Who shall bewail her? As the smoke of her torment rises up for ever, the elders and the living creatures cry "Alleluia" (Rev. xix. 1-4).

Having tasted blood, the wild beast seeks more. Israel is a testimony for God, and against her he now turns his attention. Old and New Testament give many and varied details of this last scene. Enoch, before he was caught up, told of it; and, since his day, many are those who have foretold the impious doings of the man of sin and his utter and eternal ruin.

Brief, yet graphic, is the account given in our chapter. The power of this kingdom, with its ten kings, is gathered together against the Lamb, but He shall overcome them; for He is Lord of Lords and King of Kings, and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

We close our meditations on this solemn portion of Scripture with the remembrance that all the cruel hate of beast or woman, of dragon or false prophet, and of every other power of evil, can but work out God's purpose. They may seem to go on without let or hindrance, but he who is in the secret of the Most High shall know that it is only *until the words of God be fulfilled*" (verse 17). So do stormy winds fulfil His word (Ps. cxlviii. 8).

ONE BY ONE.

ONE by one earth's links are broken,
Sinking in the silent grave ;
Sadly last fond words are spoken,
As we stand by Jordan's wave.

One by one we miss the voices,
Once familiar to our ear ;
Tones that will no more rejoice us,
While we wait as pilgrims here.

One by one to dust returning,
There to wait till Christ appear ;
While we too, with heartfelt yearning,
Look and long to see Him near.

One by one the years are going,
Nearer comes the promised day ;
Tears of sorrow, sadly flowing,
Then shall all be wiped away.

One by one, not then the order,
But *together* caught away ;
Raised or changed we'll cross the border,
Shouting "Victory" all the way.

One by one we shall be folded
To our Saviour's loved embrace ;
To His form of glory moulded,
Brought before His Father's face.

One by one may we before Him
Hear the cheering words, "Well done" ;
Cast our crowns down and adore Him,
For the prize in weakness won.

A. W. P. S.

"Whatsoever doth make manifest is light."

(Eph. v. 13.)

THE old man sat down near us by the river-side, and we soon began a chat. After a while, seeming a bit puzzled to find out what we were, he suddenly said, "Ye'll no be perfectionists, then?" "Oh no; dear no!" we answered; "how can anyone be *perfect*?" "Aye, just so," he said; "they're no richt, they bodies. They mind me o' an auld wumman I kenned ance. She was aye botherin' her

Questions and Answers.

neebors to keep their hooses clean, for hers, she said, was that fine, she couldna' bear to see a hoose kept dirty like, ye ken. She tell't them sae aften aboot her braw room, that at last some said, 'We'll go and see it!' And what, think ye, they found? Sic a place! dust and dirt on a' things. The auld gouk never pulled up the blinds to let ony sunlight in, and *hoo was she to see the dirt i' the dark think 'e?*"

"THE EASY-CHAIR."

JUST a poor body living alone, that's all. Only a small cottage, somewhat distant from the town, and few folk living near to her. So she lived, but the Lord cared for her, and put it into the hearts of His people to supply her needs from time to time. My friend, hearing about her, paid her a visit, and found her alone. The room was bare and but scantily furnished. Just the bed, an old chair, a table, a stool, and cupboard.

"Do you never murmur at your lot?" he asked. "Well, sometimes Satan *tempts* me to murmur when things are bare." "And what do you do then?" "Why, I just ask the Lord to put me in the easy-chair, to keep me quiet." He looked all round to see this easy-chair, but saw nothing like it; only the hard stool, and the broken chair by the fireside. "I don't see any easy-chair here; I can't quite understand you." "No, you won't see it," she answered, "but it's just close by; and when He sets me in it, I just *rest*, and say to Satan, "Now, you be quiet. My easy-chair is Romans viii. 28." "And *we know* that *all* things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." Ah! truly she was comfortable there.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Question.—What is implied in the phrase "owning the lordship of Christ"? and when may one say that he has owned the lordship of Christ?

Answer.—In Phil. ii. 9-11, we learn that because the Lord Jesus humbled Himself, from the glory of His equality with the Father right down to the death of the Cross, therefore God has decreed that in the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, and that every tongue shall confess that JESUS CHRIST IS LORD, to the glory of God the Father. This word "Lord" is a word that signifies ownership, and the word that correspond-

Questions and Answers.

ingly expresses our relationship to Jesus, as our Lord, is "slave," or "bond-servant." It is by that very word that Paul describes himself and Timothy in writing to the Philippians. "Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus" (Phil. i. 1 —see margin of R.V.). Christ is our owner, we are His possession, His property. We own the lordship of Christ, then, when we truly say of Him with the apostle Paul, "whose I am, and whom I serve." If, in any department of our life, we allow our own will, or the authority of anyone else, to prevail above the authority of the Lord Jesus, we so far deny His lordship. A hired servant may serve his master for so many hours of the day, and be free to please another at other times, but the slave belongs to his master day and night. In his family, in his hours of leisure, as much as at his daily toil, the claims of his lord are above all others. He can never say, "Here I am free; I can please myself." But we are constantly in danger of doing that very thing. Is it not a striking fact, that in the very sphere where, of all others, one would suppose that implicit subjection would be yielded to the Lord Jesus, His authority is most completely disregarded? Christians who seek to make His laws their guide for the regulation of their individual walk, and for the ordering of their households, do not hesitate to submit themselves to human tradition as regards the house of God, the assembly of His saints. When the Spirit of God is about to give instructions regarding the exercise of spiritual gifts in the church, He lays the foundation for the whole matter by showing how it hangs upon the place of JESUS as LORD (1 Cor. xii. 1-3). And He brings the subject to a conclusion with the solemn words, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the LORD (1 Cor. xiv. 37). It is just because, in every sect of Christendom, these commandments are completely set aside, that it is so needful to press the claims of Jesus as Lord in regard to them. We need to beware, however, of danger in another direction. We may easily persuade ourselves that owning the lordship of Christ consists in being connected with saints who are gathered to His name, and who carry out His ordinances. We certainly cannot be owning His lordship in regard to the assembly, if we are not in such a fellowship. But the lordship of Christ does not stop there; and, alas for us, if, without saying in so many words that it does, we make much of His claims in one sphere, only to ignore them in another.

“Strong in Faith, giving Glory to God.”

(Rom. iv. 20.)

WHEN the Holy Spirit is calling attention to Abraham's unquestioning faith in the promise of God, He speaks of God as the One “who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were” (Rom. iv. 17). In this way God is revealed as the One who, in Himself, exactly meets all the difficulties in the way of the fulfilment of His own promise. God had promised Abraham that his seed should be as the dust of the earth and as the stars of heaven; but when Abraham was a hundred years old, and Sarah ninety, they were still childless. It was at this time that God appeared to Abraham again, and told him that Sarah should bear a son, whose name was to be called “Isaac.” Thus Abraham was brought face to face with two distinct considerations. On the one hand, as yet Isaac had no existence; while, as for Sarah and himself, they were both as good as dead, so far as any hope of having a child went. On the other hand, there was the promise of God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth the things that be not as though they were. Anything short of this would have offered no foundation for faith; but this meets the whole case. Abraham believed God, and was fully persuaded that what He had promised He was able also to perform.

“Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,
And looks to God alone;
Laughs at impossibilities,
And says, ‘It shall be done.’”

According to the best ancient manuscripts, the word “not” in the sentence, “He considered *not* his own body now dead” (verse 19), should be omitted, and the passage should read, “And not being weak in faith, he considered his own body now dead (he being about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb: yet he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.”

There is a sense in which it is right not to consider circumstances. That is to say, we should never let circumstances occupy our minds so as to control our belief, and, consequently, our actions. But there is a sense in which it is good to consider circumstances. It is good for the man who wants to build a tower to sit down and count the cost; but he needs to be able to count up his resources as well. The natural heart is always falling into one of two mistakes. It does not know God, and cannot, therefore, take Him into account. So it either under-reckons the cost, and thinks to

“Strong in Faith, giving Glory to God.”

complete the work out of its own resources, or, having made some truer estimate of the cost, it loses all hope and abandons the work. Faith, on the other hand, can afford to consider all difficulties, for it can set over against them a God who is more than enough for them all. Thus, though Abraham considered himself and Sarah as good as dead, he staggered not through unbelief, for he believed in a God who quickeneth the dead.

Many years after, Abraham's faith was further tested, when God bade him offer up Isaac as a burnt-offering; but once again the knowledge of God Himself caused Abraham to triumph. He counted that God was able to raise up Isaac, even from the dead, and so he delayed not to obey the commandment.

This is what we want, then, if we are to walk in the steps of Abraham's faith and obedience: to know God, to acquaint ourselves with Him. This is something more than knowing truth; nay, we are often in danger, through the very increase in our knowledge of the letter of truth, to blind ourselves as to our lack of growth in the knowledge of God. David had probably a very limited knowledge of much that the New Testament scriptures have made plain to us; but David sought after God, thirsted for Him, found Him, and was satisfied with God Himself, and then went on still to follow hard after Him.

We want more of God in our Bible-searching, so that the fruit of it may be, not mere ability to talk, but power to walk. Knowledge of the Scriptures may make an apparently good platform teacher; but it needs a real heart-acquaintance with God to make a teacher who shall be able patiently to toil on with the dull ones of the flock, and, with line upon line, and precept upon precept, backed up by a godly example, to lead them on in the ways of God.

It was confidence in God that enabled Abraham to abandon the best of all the plain to Lot, rather than that reproach should come upon God's name through disputes between Lot's herdmen and his own. Some of us are much more ready to admire the faith that could go out to attack the four victorious kings, than that which could give up all the richest pasture lands without a murmur. But faith honours God even more in what it gives up than in what it gains. When we trust God to give us some good thing, the thing to be received may occupy a large portion of our thoughts. But when trust in God enables us gladly to give up that which naturally we should have clung to, God Himself is evidently the absorbing object of the soul's desire.

GO FORWARD.

“**C**OVET earnestly the best gifts,” is a thrice-repeated commandment, and we are told that a three-fold cord is not quickly broken (Eccles. iv. 12). The twelfth chapter of 1 Corinthians tells of the source of ministry—God; the thirteenth chapter shows how the gifts should be used—in love; the fourteenth chapter shows us the gifts in exercise; and Paul clinches the truth of each by the home-thrust, “Covet earnestly the best gifts” (see 1 Cor. xii. 31; xiv. 1, and verse 39; and note that the word variously rendered “covet earnestly,” “desire,” and “covet,” is one and the same word in the original). At first sight does not this seem strange? If God *sets* in the church (1 Cor. xii. 28) the various gifts, what place, it might be asked, is there for human effort? We answer that God’s sovereignty never shuts out man’s responsibility. Like the lines of the railway, they run side by side and never cross.

The word at the close of chapter xii. is a rebuke to our laziness. “Oh, I have no gift,” and we fold our arms with an easy self-contentment. Then comes the word, short and sharp, “Covet earnestly the best gifts.”

The word at the close of chapter xiii. (for the first verse of chapter xiv. surely belongs to that part of the apostle’s teaching) is a rebuke to a false and cheap sentimentality. Yes, follow after love; yet desire spiritual gifts. There is a love that toils, such as Paul had towards the Thessalonians, and it made him a nursing mother to them (see 1 Thess. ii. 7). There is a love that talks, and sometimes sings, and that is the end of it. Avoid this kind.

The word at the close of chapter xiv. rebukes our selfish pride, and tells us we should *covet to prophesy*, so that others may profit.

The best gifts! “I would fain have eloquence,” cries one, “so that I might gain the ear of the multitude.” “I would have learning,” says another. “I would understand all mysteries, and expound the deep things of God,” says a third. Not so, my brother, not so. You have got the wrong measure. The gift is *great*, not because it makes self big, but because it magnifies Christ. This is the only true test of ministry. There was one, a fellow-servant, who could speak with rare power, expound mysteries, and talk with tongues more than most. What did he say? He would rather speak five words to profit others than ten thousand in an unknown tongue.

Go Forward.

It is true that all ministry comes from God the Father, through an exalted Christ, by the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, "*Covet earnestly* the best gifts." The Holy Spirit is not an excuse for laziness! The disciples must stoop and *pick up* the fragments ere the twelve baskets are full. The stone must be *rolled away* ere Lazarus comes forth. Timothy must *give attendance* to reading, notwithstanding the gift was in him (1 Tim. iv. 13). Archippus must *take heed* to the ministry which he had received of the Lord (Col. iv. 17). The workman must *study* to show himself approved unto God (2 Tim. ii. 15). The exhortation is still needed in many quarters—"Stir up the gift of God which is in thee" (2 Tim. i. 6), for the gift may be *in* and yet never come *out*.

How often do we, from false humility but real pride, excuse ourselves from service by the plea of not wanting to be thought forward. The servant who hid his lord's money in a napkin would doubtless, with a significant smile, tell his fellows that he wasn't one of those forward people who were always pushing themselves to the front. True love and true humility concern themselves only about the Master; nothing else matters. He is highest up who comes lowest down, and the best servant is willing to be a fool, if thereby Christ may be exalted.

But another thought suggests itself. Not only should we desire the best gifts, but that the gifts given should be developed. Gifts, like the senses, need use for this (Heb. v. 14). "To him that hath shall be given." To be faithful in what we have is the way to get more. A man's gift shall make room for him; but this does not mean, as some suppose, that we should make room for our gifts.

"Anything for Jesus" may have two meanings. "Anything for Jesus," says the Christian who willingly gives up his best thoughts and energy on a Lord's-day afternoon to lead one little one to Christ. This is commendable, and without being a prophet you may foretell that the one will soon be many. "Anything for Jesus," practically says the teacher, who, out of breath takes his place amidst the scholars, five minutes late, and even has to ask them what the subject is! Do you wonder that that class gets smaller and smaller?

Have you begun to speak to saints or to preach the Gospel to sinners? Then never be satisfied with any attainment. Go forward. Don't be offended with any who point out your mistakes. Never be too proud to learn. We would not wish to put any in bondage. There are those to whom much study

The Feasts of the Lord.

of a subject beforehand means loss of freshness and liberty. They must go through the texts they have looked out, and when they have at last done so they feel relieved, and so do the hearers. Nevertheless, self-examination will profit. Is our service *cheap*, or like Mary's offering, is it costly? If ours be the more lowly service of giving out the hymn-sheets or showing strangers to a seat, we may perhaps improve our method, so that to us, as well as to the teacher and evangelist, may be given the word of approval that Mary earned: "She hath done what she could" (Mark xiv. 8). "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might" (Eccles. ix. 10).

THE FEASTS OF THE LORD.

XI.

THE next in order of the feasts was the Day of Atonement, and it was commanded to be kept on the tenth day of the seventh month.

In order to understand the significance of this day, it will be necessary to go back to the beginning of the year, and to call to mind what we have already learned about the tenth day of the first month. It will be remembered that that first month had previously itself been the seventh month; and that it was only when the Passover was first instituted, that the seventh month was changed into the first. In doing this the Lord blotted out from Israel's calendar the six months of the year that had already elapsed, and made a fresh beginning in connection with redemption through the blood of the Passover lamb. From the beginning of the creation God had made the number six to represent the time for work, while the seventh was typical of the rest which resulted from a finished work. We also saw, in connection with the choosing out of the lamb, that the number ten is used as a symbol of the claims of God upon us for a perfect obedience. In accordance with this double type, the tenth day of the seventh month would represent the testing of the work of the previous six months according to the Divine standard, the glory of God, and the establishment of the rest which would flow from God's delight in a perfect work.

But, instead of this, that day brought out the most striking testimony to the worthlessness of all that had gone before. The choosing out of the lamb was the most emphatic setting aside of everything else; and, therefore, in connection with the bringing forth of the lamb, God completely blotted out every

The Feasts of the Lord.

trace of the previous six months, and declared that henceforth the seventh month should become the first.

This month thus became the beginning of a second period of six months, entirely connected with the Passover lamb; and the close of that period brings us for the second time to the seventh month, and the tenth day of the month. Applying the above thoughts as to the numbers six, seven, and ten, we shall be prepared to find that this seventh month exhibits a rest resulting from the work of the previous six; and that the tenth day of it will show us God's testing of that work, and the establishment of the rest which flowed from it. And this is just what is brought before us in connection with the solemn feast of the tenth day of the seventh month, the great Day of Atonement.

When the beloved physician commenced writing for his friend Theophilus the book which we know as the Acts of the Apostles, he referred to the third of the four Gospels, which he had previously addressed to the same friend (Luke i. 1-4), in the following words—"The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus *began* both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after that He through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles" (Acts i. 1, 2). By thus speaking of the whole of what the Lord Jesus had spoken and done, right up to His going back to the Father, as only the *beginning* of His doing and teaching, we are made to understand that the whole of the work of God's grace throughout this dispensation is the continuation of the same work. The choosing out of the lamb on the tenth day of the first month, its keeping up to the fourteenth day, the slaying of the lamb on that day, and the waving of the sheaf of first-fruits on the day after the following Sabbath, correspond to what Jesus began to do and teach, according to the Gospels. The Feast of Pentecost, and all the period that followed till the end of the six months, tell of the continuation of His work through the present dispensation. As the seventh month is ushered in, the Feast of Trumpets tells of the joy of the Lord in gathering to Himself the precious fruits of His toil. But now, on the tenth day of that month, the whole of the work of the past six months is tested, and the rest that it brought in is eternally confirmed.

A careful reading of the verses in Lev. xxiii., that contain the instructions as to the observance of this feast, will show us that three things are brought into special prominence: atone-

The Feasts of the Lord.

ment, affliction or humiliation of soul, and rest (see verses 26-32). In chapter xvi., which is entirely occupied with lengthy details of this day's observances, we have exactly the same three things (verses 29 and 30). This day, then, was to bring out the fulness of the atonement as it had never been seen before. But it was also, as a direct consequence of the exhibition of atoning grace and power, to lead to deep and true soul-humbling, while at the same time there was to be a full entering into the rest of God.

As in the case of the Feast of Trumpets, so here also we have to look for a two-fold fulfilment of the type: first, in connection with the Church, and afterwards as belonging to Israel. As regards the Church, the whole scene appears plainly to point to the judgment-seat of Christ. It is probably unnecessary to point out to most of the readers of these pages, that the judgment-seat of Christ is altogether distinct, either from the throne of His glory, in Matthew xxv., or from the great white throne of Rev. xx. Only saints stand before the judgment-seat, and they are there to have their works judged and to receive rewards according to their works. In Matthew xxv., the nations then living on the earth are dealt with, previous to the setting up of Christ's millennial kingdom. In Rev. xx., the wicked dead, who had slept in their graves all through that millennial reign, are brought up for judgment.

We will first endeavour to examine the incidents of the Day of Atonement, as recorded in Lev. xvi., and then compare these with what the New Testament teaches us as to the judgment-seat of Christ.

Turning, then, to Lev. xvi., we learn that after the presumptuous sin of Nadab and Abihu, which was visited with such swift and solemn judgment (chapter x. 1, 2), God ordained that Aaron and his sons should no longer have constant access to the holy of holies. Only on the tenth day of the seventh month should Aaron himself, and, after him, his successors in the high-priesthood, pass the veil and stand in the immediate presence of the Lord (see verse 29). Moreover, the entrance of Aaron into the holiest on this one day was to be accompanied by a very important and significant ceremonial; a ceremonial which was to bring into prominence the three special features of the feast: atonement, humbling of soul, and rest. The special offerings of the day were to be, first, a bullock for a sin-offering and a ram for a burnt-offering, on behalf of Aaron himself; next, on behalf of the congregation,

Guidance.

and provided by themselves, two kids of the goats for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering. In the first place, Aaron was to kill the bullock, which was to be his own sin-offering. Then he was to take a censer, full of live coals, and a quantity of incense, beaten small, and with these, and some of the blood of the bullock, he was to pass within the veil, and to sprinkle the blood once upon, and seven times before, the mercy-seat.

GUIDANCE.

NOT always unto quiet ways
He leadeth thee ;
Not always in the peaceful days
Shall thy lot be.
But, whether He send toil or rest,
Know that His way is always best,
Eternally.

Trust thou the Lord with simple heart,
Nor wish to know
More than His Spirit would impart,
Or His Word show.
Plain the commandments He has given,
Narrow the path which leads to heaven ;
Then onward go.

Firm be thy footstep all the way,
Turn not aside ;
His precious Word keep and obey,
Rightly divide.
Fear not to tread a darksome road,
For He will share thy heaviest load,
And safely guide.

Until at last He bringeth thee,
All sorrows past,
Where thou shalt never sorrow see,
Home, home at last.
Then shalt thou, entering into rest,
Own that His way was always best,
From first to last.

J. P.

"AN IDLE SOUL SHALL SUFFER HUNGER."

(Prov. xix. 15).

IF any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be *Anathema Maran-atha*" (1 Cor. xvi. 22). "Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty" (Judges v. 23). "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully" (margin, negligently), "and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood" (Jer. xlvi. 10).

"Moreover all these curses shall come upon thee . . . because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart" (Deut. xxviii. 45-47).

What the Lord requires of us is that we should be thorough. Whole-hearted, not faint-hearted or half-hearted servants, will by-and-by gain the "Well done." Men like Caleb, who will wholly follow the Lord, are much needed in the present day of lukewarmness. The double-minded man will never do much; but those who like Paul can say, "*One thing I do*," are the ones that God will use.

Those whom the Lord calls for His service are, as a rule, busy men. Moses was no idler; for he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds (Acts vii. 22). David was too busy keeping his father's sheep to come to the feast, and he had to be sent for to be anointed Israel's king (1 Sam. xvi. 12). Solomon saw that Jeroboam was industrious before he made him a ruler (1 Kings xi. 28). Elisha was plowing when Elijah called him (1 Kings xix. 19). And in New Testament scripture the same rule applies: for Simon and Andrew were fishing (Matt. iv. 18); James and John were mending their nets, while Matthew was sitting at the receipt of custom, when the Master called them to follow Him. On the other hand, the homely proverb, "Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do," finds many a full-paged illustration in the lives of Bible saints, as well as of those of modern times.

Half-heartedness is certainly a very near relation to laziness. Saul was half-hearted when he spared the Amalekites; but the Amalekites did not spare him, for a young man, an Amalekite, stole his crown on Mount Gilboa. Ahab was half-hearted when he let Ben-hadad go; but it cost him his crown and brought ruin to his people (1 Kings xx. 42, 43). Joash was half-hearted when he only struck the ground three times with

Questions and Answers.

the arrows, at the bidding of Elisha. Had he shown double energy he had wrought deliverance for his country (2 Kings xiii. 19). Twenty-two thousand of Gideon's army were half-hearted; for, when the proclamation was made that all who were afraid might retire, they left the ranks. The Lord could work no salvation by them. The men of Ephraim, who, being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle (Ps. lxxviii. 9), are a marked contrast to the Gadites who crossed over Jordan, when it had overflowed all its banks, to make David king (1 Chron. xii. 15).

When Paul bids the Corinthians receive Timothy, his commendation runs thus, "He worketh the work of the Lord" (1 Cor. xvi. 10). Rare words of praise. Some *think* of the Lord's work; it may be, more *talk* of it; but how few *do* it. Timothy was among the few; may we be also.

"What our hands find to do, let us do with our might,
For things done by halves are never done right."

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Question.—Should elders be appointed; and, if so, who should appoint them?

Answer.—Many have not hesitated to answer "Yes" to the first part of this question. Did not Paul and Barnabas ordain elders in every church? Was not Titus left in Crete to ordain elders in every city? Surely this settles the matter. But when we come to reply to the second part of the question, we find that it is not going to be settled in such an off-hand manner. Who are to appoint the elders? Suppose the question was asked, "Should miracles be performed in the present day; and who are to perform them?" what would be thought of the one who should answer, "Of course. Miracles were performed by the apostles, so we must perform miracles too?" The testing question would naturally follow, "Who is going to perform them?" There are not wanting those who boldly pretend to fulfil certain of the apostolic functions. So-called bishops of the "Church of England" lay their hands on the heads of would-be priests, and say, "Receive the Holy Ghost . . . by the imposition of our hands." They little think, while doing so, of the awful impiety of such a false pretence; and

Questions and Answers.

while, probably, few of God's children really suppose that the Holy Spirit is bestowed in any such fashion, there is no visible demonstration on the spot that the whole thing is a sham, and so it goes on from century to century. There are other powers that were exercised by the apostles, which it would be too risky to imitate in the same way. It is told of one of the popes of Rome that he was exhibiting to some illustrious stranger all the treasures of the Vatican. "You see," he said, with a complacent smile, "we cannot say, like our first predecessor, 'Silver and gold have I none.'" "No," answered the visitor; "neither can you say, 'Rise up and walk.'" That sort of pretence would be exposed on the spot, and so men have prudently to abstain from it. But in the matter of bestowing the Holy Spirit, and in this other matter of appointing elders, men assume that, because they were done by the apostles, they must be done now; and they then proceed to carry out some performance of their own, without ascertaining whether the Scriptures ever indicate that God has empowered any of His servants to continue such acts. It is undoubtedly true that in the apostolic days elders were appointed by the direct authority of the apostles, or by persons whom the apostles had authorised to act in their stead. But when we come to look for instructions as to who are to continue to make such appointments, we find no trace of anything of the sort. In the same way we are told how the Scriptures were written by men of old, who were moved by the Holy Spirit; but we have no hint as to a continuation of such men all through the dispensation. We have no more right to go on appointing elders, merely because the apostles did so, than to add to the Holy Scriptures for the same reason. What, then, does the Word of God teach us about the continued oversight of the assemblies of His people? First, that if any man stretches forward to oversight, he desires a good work (1 Tim. iii. 1). Oversight is a work, not an office. The word "office" in this verse, and again in verse 10, in connection with deacons, is an addition by the translators. King James the First gave certain instructions to the learned men who made the translation of the Scriptures which we commonly use, and which is known as the Authorised Version. One of these instructions was that they were not to alter the existing ecclesiastical names. In obedience to this rule given them by the king, they magnified "oversight" into "office of a bishop"; while for the simple word to "serve," they give, "to use the office of a deacon."

Questions and Answers.

It is needful to bear all this in mind, or we may fall into much confusion. What the apostle really wrote, then, to Timothy was, "If any man stretches forward to oversight, he desires a good work." Oversight is a good work, and it must have a beginning. How does a man stretch forward to oversight? By doing the work. He is not to be put into an office first, by attending an oversight meeting, any more than by the ordination of a State official, or the appointment of a conference or synod, or the choice of a congregation. "Elder ones, which are among you, I exhort," wrote Peter; and there is no article "the" before "elder." He was not speaking to official elders, but he was telling elder brethren how they were to become overseers. "Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, overseeing them, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock" (1 Peter v. 1-3). There is no hint of appointment here. The first epistle to Timothy tells us that it is well if men stretch towards oversight; but points out what sort of men they must be, if God is to use them in such work. The first epistle of Peter exhorts older brethren to exercise themselves in this good work, and bids younger ones to submit themselves to the older. For if there is to be no appointment, there is to be a recognition of the gifts which God has bestowed. Pastors and teachers are among the gifts which the ascended Christ bestows on His people (Eph. iv. 11). We dishonour Him, therefore, if we look to any other source for the supply of our need in this respect. But we equally dishonour Him if we fail to discern those whom He has given, and to thank Him for them. Hence we get such an exhortation as this, "We beseech you, brethren, to *know* them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake" (1 Thess. v. 12, 13). There would be no need to exhort a congregation to know a man whom they had chosen and set over themselves. But there is great need that we should be ready to recognise God's gifts, and to know them by the work His grace is enabling them to do. Perhaps the further question may be asked—Why were elders appointed at the first, if that was not intended by God to be His way for His people afterwards? As there are other important matters connected with this subject, we purpose, God willing, to devote a special article to its further consideration next month.

GLORIFYING GOD.

WONDERFUL as it is—too high for nature to contemplate—it is His people's privilege to glorify God. Jesus Christ could say, "I have glorified Thee on the earth"; but unless we had been told the contrary by Himself, we should have said it was impossible for us to do the same. The Lord has told us in His Word in what way it may be done. Paul speaks of his *conversion* as glorifying God (Gal. i. 24). They who knew of the great change wrought in him recognised it as miraculous, and ascribed it to the power of God. This is why Satan puts every hindrance in the way of conversion, and seeks by all means to prevent it. He was able to bring sin into the world by instilling doubt: every sinner saved is a fresh defeat; for "he that has received God's testimony hath set his seal to this, that God is true." Justifying God is not a work which Satan would further. In every sinner saved is seen the wisdom of God, for the Gospel is thereby proved to be the power of God unto salvation. Conversion also exhibits the goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering of Him who was not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. The declaration of salvation is also to His glory, for others are thereby encouraged to put their trust in Him.

And "whoso offereth *praise* glorifieth" Him (Ps. l. 23). This brings it within reach of all; for who has nothing to give thanks for? The converted soul must surely praise for deliverance—"O Lord, I will praise Thee; though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away." And the praise increases as time shows more clearly how great that deliverance is. As one grows in the knowledge of God, so must praise increase, and God becomes "my exceeding joy" (Ps. xliii. 4). To one who understands God, everything gives rise to praise, because the truth is grasped that *all* His dealings are good. "I will bless the Lord at all times, His praise shall continually be in my mouth." "I will yet praise Thee more and more."

There may be occasions when praise seems difficult; then *faith* is called into exercise. Only our short-sightedness makes it difficult. Knowing all things are in the hand of Him who sees the end from the beginning, we trust and fear not. Simple reliance upon His Word of Truth affords the greatest joy—resting upon His words as the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah (2 Chron. xxxii. 8). To lean one's whole weight upon His promise is the most glorifying to Him. It is our testimony to His trustworthiness and our protest

Glorifying God.

against Satan's libel upon Him. Abraham was strong in faith. (Rom. iv. 20, R.V.), with full knowledge of the difficulties. But he decided that God's character was above circumstances; they must give way, not He. In this age, when God is disbelieved, is our only opportunity of glorifying Him by trust and confidence in Him.

This confidence in Him is the only means by which one can *suffer* for Him, and by that too He is glorified (1 Peter iv. 14). That His people can part with comfort, position, life, for His sake, is His glory. So doing, they declare that they value Him above all. Among those who worship and serve the creature more than the Creator, these can suffer for Him the loss of all things. He is glorified when the reproach is for His name; not for any self-will of their own.

"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much *fruit*" (John xv. 8): because the world judges the Father's character by that of His children (Matt. v. 16); because praise is rendered to Him by His children for the fruit of His Spirit they see in one another (2 Cor. ix. 13); because it may lead others to glorify Him (1 Peter ii. 12), by conversion or by increased faithfulness. Every good work is not fruit; only when it is done in obedience to Him and with the object of pleasing Him (Col. i. 10, R.V.). The condition of much fruit may be much suffering. Much has to be taken away before the Holy Spirit can live out His life in the redeemed one. So much of the natural life remains, seeking to produce its fruit, that the Husbandman has to cleanse and cut before it is subdued and the fruit of the Spirit manifested.

One turns with relief from the memory of present failings to the prospect of that future day of revelation when He shall be glorified in His *saints* (2 Thess. i. 10). They shall be like Him at that day when they shall see Him as He is. They will be adorned with the "righteousness of saints," which will be to His glory, because it could be wrought only by His working who now worketh in them mightily. Their presence with Him will testify of His power to save, to all who know the hole of the pit whence they were digged; and to His power to keep, with the long-suffering which bore with them after they became His; to His justice, also, in rewarding those who, for His sake, suffered reproach, and recompensing tribulation to them that troubled them. Through eternity they will remain monuments to His glory, who could show grace to such as they were, and work in them such a change as to make them what they then

Workers, not Loiterers.

will be, so that there will be glory to Him in the Church and in Christ Jesus throughout all ages (Eph. iii. 21, R.V.).

Thus may God be glorified in body and spirit. No need to wonder how it can be done. The word is, "*Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God*" (1 Cor. x. 31). The saved one has no right to do anything which could not be done to His glory. Whatever is put in the hand by Him to be done may be done with the distinct purpose of pleasing Him, and so be for His glory. Surely, in one of these ways He may be glorified each moment by all His saints.


WORKERS, NOT LOITERERS.

"Patient continuance in well-doing" (Rom. ii. 7).

"In due season shall we reap, if we faint not" (Gal. vi. 9).

"If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small" (Prov. xxiv. 10).

"Having obtained help of God, I continue to this day witnessing" (Acts xxvi. 22).

N the things of this world, the man who *sticks to it* is generally the successful one. The plodder gets on, when the clever one fails. He who is everything by turns, is nothing long. So, in the kingdom of God, perseverance is a needed grace. Let us not be amongst those who despise the day of small things (Zech. iv. 10), for small beginnings often make big endings. The husbandman does not expect a crop the day after he has sown; but, as James tells us, he has "long patience for it" (James v. 7). The wise preacher says, "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that" (Eccles. xi. 6). So, having put our hand to the plough, let us not look back.

Failure, if we look upon it bravely and not grumblingly, may help us to our greatest victories. Failure is a reason for self-judgment, but not for discouragement. Sometimes on the eve of victory we are most cast down. Failure may open our eyes to what others have long found out, that we have put our hands to a work to which we were not called, and hence for which we were not fitted. This should lead to a change of employment, but not to a change of masters. A Christian should always be on "active service," and never place himself on the "half-pay" and no-work list. John Wesley's idea was not half bad—"All at it, and always at it."

Workers, not Loiterers.

“The winter months are coming on,” says one; “I think I must give up my tract district.” Yet Benaiah slew a lion in a pit on a snowy day (1 Chron. xi. 22). “My class is so troublesome, I must ask the superintendent to look out for another teacher.” Yet the gifts were given “for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them” (Ps. lxxviii. 18). “There was only one stranger who came in at the cottage meeting; I don’t see it is any good going on.” Yet Christ spoke to one woman at the well (John iv.), and His servant Philip went from Samaria to Gaza, which is desert, for one soul. “Everyone is against me.” Well, the devil often growls loudest when about to lose his prey. Paul had many adversaries at Ephesus, but then, also, there was a great door and effectual open to him (1 Cor. xvi. 9). The deeper the darkness, the more need of a light. The demoniac, when healed, wanted to go with Jesus; but the Lord sent him back to the men of Gadara, who loved their pigs more than Christ. And he so spoke that all did marvel (Mark v. 20). The precept runs—“Be instant in season, out of season” (2 Tim. iv. 2); for with some, like Felix of old, the convenient season never comes (Acts xxiv. 25). Epaphroditus was Paul’s companion in labour (Phil. ii. 25). It is a grand thing to have such a companion. Sometimes those who are most ready to attend an oversight or other meeting to talk matters over, and to arrange “the plan of campaign,” are the last to arrive on the day of battle. “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they *who labour in the word and doctrine*” (1 Tim. v. 17). “Know them which *labour* among you” (1 Thess. v. 12). “Submit yourselves to every one that helpeth and *laboureth*” (1 Cor. xvi. 16). That which marks those who are in the fore-front should also in measure be true of those of us who come behind. Workers, not idlers. “The night cometh, when no man can work” (John ix. 4). “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord” (1 Cor. xv. 58).

No amusement is innocent which takes away the soul from Christ, or does what it can to take it away.

No awakened soul should stop short of a realisation and experimental enjoyment of union with the Lord. No converted soul should rest satisfied till it thinks every thought, and speaks every word in communion with the Lord.

THE FEASTS OF THE LORD.

XII.

THERE are two distinct thoughts thus brought before us. The bullock for the sin-offering was to make an atonement (verse 11); but the blood of the bullock was not the only thing that Aaron was commanded to take into the holy place. As we have already seen, he was to take a censer, full of live coals, and incense beaten small, and to bring them within the veil. There is a special significance about the incense being beaten small. The incense was composed of fragrant gums, and in its ordinary condition would only burn slowly, with a very light smoke. But when it was beaten into powder, and cast in that state upon the burning coals, instantly a thick cloud of fragrant smoke would rise up from it. This is brought out in verse 13—"And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the *cloud* of the incense may *cover* the mercyseat that is upon the testimony, that he die not."

The Hebrew word for atonement is literally "covering," and in the blood and the cloud of incense we get two aspects of the wondrous covering by which we are brought near to God. The blood tells of the penalty of sin fully borne; the incense speaks of the fragrance of Christ's infinite perfection. Our sin is covered by the one, our persons by the other. In the case of Aaron, it was necessary that all this should first of all be done in reference to himself. He had to present the blood, first for himself, and afterwards for the errors of the people (Heb. ix. 7); and it was only after the first was done, that he became a true representative of Christ as the High Priest of His people. And now, when his own title to stand in the presence of the glory of God is fully established, Aaron comes forth from the tabernacle, and proceeds to act on behalf of the people. Having killed the "goat of the sin-offering, that is for the people," he goes a second time within the veil, and repeats exactly all that he did there before (Lev. xvi. 15).

But this was not all he had to do on behalf of the people. It will be remembered that the congregation had to provide two goats for a sin-offering (verse 5), and that Aaron had to cast lots upon them; one was to be for the Lord and the other for a scape-goat. It was the one for the Lord whose blood was carried into the holiest, and sprinkled upon and before the mercyseat; and now we learn what was done with the second

The Feasts of the Lord.

goat. "And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited (margin—a land of separation): and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness" (verses 21, 22).

In connection with the first goat, we see the claims of God's holiness fully and finally met by the atoning blood of Christ. The righteousness of the throne of God is manifested, and the way right up to the throne revealed. It is all the godward view of the atonement. But in the second goat we see our side of it. The sins of the people were confessed in their presence over the scape-goat, and then the goat was driven away into a land of separation, never to be seen again. The two goats are but two aspects of one great truth, and must therefore be looked at in connection with each other. The claims of God are met, and the consciences of God's people are for ever cleared.

But now we want to consider the bearing of all this in connection with the special day on which it was to be carried out, and the position which that day occupied in the whole series of the Feasts of the Lord. It was certainly intended to be something more than a general setting forth of the precious two-fold view of the atoning work of Christ. That general view was beautifully illustrated by the goats'-hair curtains, which covered over the whole tabernacle, and were hung outside the inner curtains of white linen and blue and purple and scarlet, wrought in the likeness of cherubim. Those inner curtains, which formed the visible roof of the tabernacle, as seen from within, were themselves called "the tabernacle" or dwelling-place (Ex. xxvi. 1 and 6). The goats'-hair curtains were called "the tent" (verses 11, 12, and 13). In the former we see the whole truth of Christ as the Burnt-offering, and, in consequence of what they set forth, the whole place is called the "tabernacle of Jehovah." In the latter we are shown the embodiment of all the truth of Christ as the Sin-offering, and it is in connection with these curtains of goats' hair that the place is called the "tent of assembly," for that is the real meaning of the words commonly translated "tabernacle of the congregation" in the Authorised Version. These goats'-hair curtains were made one width of 4 cubits, or nearly 8 feet,

The Feasts of the Lord.

longer from back to front of the tabernacle than the inner curtains, and the Lord commanded that this extra width should be doubled in the front of the tabernacle (Ex. xxvi. 9). In this way the doubled width of curtain would hang down nearly 4 feet along the top of the front of the tabernacle; one half, so to speak, looking inwards towards the throne of God, the other half looking outwards towards the congregation. Thus we get a perpetual witness to the two-fold character of atonement, as meeting the claims of God and the needs of the sinner.

But, as we observed before, when all this is brought up again on the tenth day of the seventh month, it is not merely a general view of this precious truth to which our attention is called, but a special application of it under circumstances typified by that particular day. Let us consider the position of that day. It followed shortly after the Feast of Trumpets, and was to be quickly followed, in its turn, by the Feast of Tabernacles. The former, as we have already seen, represents the gathering of God's people to Himself: whether it be the heavenly people, at the descent of the Lord Jesus to the clouds; or the earthly people, in connection with His coming down to the Mount of Olives on their behalf. The Feast of Tabernacles, as we hope presently to see, sets forth the final condition of the perfected joy of the redeemed with the Lord. Midway between these two is this Day of Atonement; and, as regards all who are caught up to meet the Lord in the air, there seems to be no room for doubt that it represents the judgment-seat of Christ. If we recall all the incidents of the day, as we have them brought before us in Lev. xvi., we shall find that they get their complete fulfilment in connection with that judgment-seat. Let us remember the three great features of the day—atonement, humbling, and rest. On that day the sins of the congregation for the whole past year were gone over with a fulness and minuteness exceeding all that had gone before. Individuals had brought their sin and trespass offerings time after time, and had made their own personal confession of this or that sin. But how incomplete this must have been in every case. How much must have been overlooked altogether, or, if remembered, considered not important enough for such special notice. But in this day it is not according to the failing memory or mistaken judgment of each individual that the confession is made. The High Priest himself, divinely empowered and instructed, makes a complete declaration of everything.

“AN ODOUR OF A SWEET SMELL”

(Phil. iv. 18).

OUR God is a giving God. He loved the world, and gave His Son, the Son of His love. Satan, in the garden, would have the woman believe that God had kept back that which was for her good. “God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened.” And when the belief of this foul lie had wrought her ruin, then did the Lord God unfold His remedy for the curse thus brought in. And though that remedy was that *His Son must be made a curse*, yet did God give His Son, and that freely. What love! Well does Paul insist that He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up, shall surely with Him also freely give us all things (Rom. viii. 32). In like manner, James reminds us that He giveth to all men liberally, and that every good and perfect gift is from the Father. Both in nature and in grace God is a bountiful giver, distributing His blessings with no niggard hand. And in the ages to come His delight will be to “show the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Eph. ii. 7); to “make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, . . . prepared unto glory” (Rom. ix. 23).

But if God is a giving God, then His people should be a giving people. “Freely ye have received, freely give,” was the Master’s word to the disciples (Matt. x. 8). One of the precious sayings of the Lord, unrecorded by the evangelists, but treasured up for us by the Spirit, and given through Paul’s lips, was, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts xx. 35).

Times of true spiritual blessings have always been times of giving. It was a blessed moment for Abraham when Melchizedek, the priest of the Most High God, met him coming from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; and we read, “He gave him tithes of all” (Gen. xiv. 20). Bethel was a blessed spot for Jacob, but it was also the place where he vowed a vow unto the Lord (Gen. xxxi. 13, xxxv. 1). When the tabernacle was pitched in the wilderness, as well as when the temple was built at Jerusalem, God’s presence with His people was specially manifested; and on both occasions the grace of liberality was marked, and the people gave. In Exodus, we are told, they had to be restrained from giving (xxxvi. 6); while 1 Chron. xxix., after telling of enormous gifts, winds up with the blessed declaration, “Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly.”

"An Odour of a Sweet Smell."

What is true in Old Testament scripture, is as strikingly manifest in New Testament history. Pentecostal blessing goes hand in hand with Pentecostal giving. If Philippi was not the least spiritual of the churches, neither was it the most backward in giving. Paul could say to them, "No church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only" (Phil. iv. 15). What is true of churches holds good about individuals. Barnabas was eminent in spirituality, and was also prominent in giving.

To stir up God's people to give, if done in the right spirit, is an honourable as well as a needful work. Having described and praised the great liberality of the Macedonian churches, Paul declares it to be his desire that Titus, who had begun, should also finish the same grace in Corinthian saints (2 Cor. viii. 6). Notice what the words imply. Nothing less than patient instruction of the believers as to their privilege with regard to giving. Not just an address, and then no more about an unwelcome subject, but rather systematic teaching. And neither was Titus slack to carry out the apostle's desire; for Paul could give thanks to God for the earnest care put into the heart of Titus in this matter; and it is in this very connection that we hear, for the first and only time, of the brother, "whose praise is in the Gospel throughout all the churches."

Achan's mournful history, just as Israel had entered the land, is sadly reproduced in the case of Ananias in the first days of the church. The dire judgment which overtook them both, like the tolling of the bell on the sunken rock, bids us take warning. Christ says, "Take heed and beware of covetousness" (Luke xii. 15). "Covetousness, which is idolatry," writes Paul to the Colossians (iii. 5). Teaching as to giving should never degenerate into mere begging. Rather let us remind one another that "God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. ix. 7); and press the question upon every conscience, Does God get what He loves from you?

Are we not apt sometimes to look round and say, "Brother So-and-so is well off, and he can well afford to give; he will see that there is no lack, and I don't think I need do so much."

But "there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty" (Prov. xi. 24). Poverty in more ways than one. Poverty in blessing to the assembly; poverty in power with the Gospel; poverty in our own souls; poverty, it may be, in our own pockets. The times of Haggai and Malachi fully illustrate this. "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed

"Stayed on Thee."

Me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings" (Mal. iii. 8). What a solemn scripture! And has it not a present-day application?

Let it be ours, then, to do good and to communicate; "for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Heb. xiii. 16).

Nevertheless, as we began so we end. "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. ix. 15).

"STAYED ON THEE"

(Isaiah xxvi. 3).

My Father, thro' these changing scenes of life,
I would be stay'd on Thee;
Amid the din of earth's conflicting strife,
Would hear Thee speak to me.
I'd hear Thy voice address me thro' the storm,
In calm, soft accents, 'midst my mind's alarm,
'Telling that in Thy care I'm safe from harm—
Bidding me rest in Thee.

In times of anxious fear, or joyous hope,
Calm and unmoved I'd be;
Since, whatsoever is in my portion'd cup,
All has been mix'd by Thee.
In constant love Thou dost o'er all preside;
My joys and sorrows each Thou dost decide;
Each moment's need is by Thy hand supplied;
And this sufficeth me.

'Thou wilt not leave me. Since Thy love I've tried,
I've ever found it sure.
E'en though created streams of joy be dried,
Thy comforts are secure.
And after all life's history is told,
Its changing years will but Thy love unfold;
And this, tho' human loves grow changed and cold,
Shall, without change, endure.

WE are never so well prepared for effectual service to man, as when we are holding fellowship with God.

THE habit of denying self in little things, will give us vigour in spiritual life.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Question.—Should elders be appointed ; and, if so, who should appoint them? (*Continued from page 132*).

Answer.—When writing on this subject in our last number, we promised to endeavour to answer the question—Why were elders appointed at the first, if that was not intended by God to be His way for His people afterwards? We would point out, in the first place, that this is by no means the only case in which God made special provision for the establishment of the new order of things belonging to the present dispensation. And, further, that when such special provision had fulfilled its purpose, it was not continued. We may look at a few examples of the kind. When the Holy Spirit was first given on the day of Pentecost, it was by visible, outward tokens, seen and heard, that He manifestly took possession of the disciples (Acts ii. 3, 4). The same was true in regard to the first inhabitants of Samaria who received the Gospel (Acts viii. 17, 18). Again, we have the same thing in connection with the first preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles (Acts x. 44-46). And, lastly, when some, who had only heard John's teaching and been baptised with John's baptism, accepted the further witness of the apostle Paul and were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus, there was the same visible bestowal of the Holy Spirit, accompanied with the gift of tongues (Acts xix. 6). But after these four representative cases, we have nothing further of the sort. Every believer, upon believing, is sealed with the Holy Spirit (see Eph. i. 13, 14); but we never hear of outward signs accompanying the gift. The purpose of the outward signs is clearly enough declared in Acts x. 47 and xi. 17, 18. Without them, Jews would utterly have failed to understand that all who believed, Samaritans and Gentiles, as much as Jews, were baptised into the one body, and made fellow-partakers of all God's salvation. That purpose fulfilled, the outward accompaniments to the bestowal of the Spirit ceased.

Look again at the position of apostles and prophets in the early days of the church's history. "Built upon the *foundation* of the apostles and prophets" (Eph. ii. 20), tells what that position was. In chapter iv. we read of the gifts bestowed by the ascended Christ for the edifying of His body, and the order given is as follows—apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (verse 11). This confirms the view previously given, and shows the work of apostles and prophets as belonging to the foundation ; while, for the carrying on of the

Questions and Answers.

work throughout the dispensation, evangelists are given to preach the Gospel, and pastors and teachers to shepherd and instruct the disciples. When the New Testament scriptures were complete, the work of apostles and prophets was ended. The voice of authority of the apostles was continued by the written word, and the instruction out of that word by teachers took the place of the revelations given through prophets.

We have dwelt at length upon these examples, because, unless the principle involved in them is clearly seen, believers are apt to be carried away with the idea that whatever was in the beginning of the dispensation must of necessity be continued to the end. In this way the hoary tradition of apostolic succession and the new-fangled pretence of revived apostles by Mormons and Catholic Apostolics (so called by themselves) have deceived many. Before the Scriptures had set the matter fully before the people of God, apostles, and those to whom they delegated authority, appointed elders in the newly-formed churches. For the guidance of the saints all through the age they left us the New Testament. There we search in vain for any hint of the continuance of such appointments. But we do find what was pointed out last month. Men who are earnestly desirous of doing oversight work are shown what character of persons they must be whom God will use for such work. Again, elder brethren are exhorted to do the work, being first conformed to the pattern. And, further, the saints generally are exhorted to recognise these gifts of Christ's bestowing by the work they do, and to honour them and submit themselves to them.

According to the human tradition, some person or persons in authority ordain the minister, who is thereupon appointed to be the overseer, pastor, teacher, and evangelist (all in one), to a parish or a congregation, with whom, in most cases, he never had the slightest previous connection. But God's way is, "Elder ones *which are among you*, I exhort, . . . shepherd the flock of God which is among you" (1 Peter v. 1, 2).

In thus setting aside the Word of God, God's children are setting aside Christ, as the risen Lord, bestowing all that His gathered saints need, and exercising His authority among them by means of these, His gifts. Would that our eyes and hearts were more opened to the grievous dishonour thus put upon the Lord Jesus, and the irreparable injury done to His people. We should not then treat these things as a matter of apparent indifference, and so, indirectly at least, help to maintain them.