

The Believer's Magazine.

A Monthly Journal of
Ministry of the Word of God,

*Bible Study, Expository and Practical Notes, with
Questions and Answers on Bible Subjects.*

EDITED BY

John Ritchie.

New Series—Vol. 3.

1902.—Twelfth Year.



Kilmarnock, Scotland:

John Ritchie, Publisher of Christian Literature,
Aberdeen: Gospel Book and Tract Depot, 45 Upperkirkgate.
And through all Booksellers.

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THE BELIEVER'S MAGAZINE.

“REVIVE US AGAIN.”

A WORD FOR THE NEW YEAR. BY THE EDITOR.

THE believer in Christ is a present possessor of eternal life (1 John v. 12), and in him dwells the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. vi. 19). This life is indestructible—it can never perish (John x. 28): this indwelling is for ever (John xiv. 16), it can never be forfeited. Yet, from very many causes, this imperishable life and this continuous indwelling may cease to be matters of daily enjoyment to the child of God. The life may be enfeebled, the indwelling Spirit may be grieved. Hence the need of restoration and revival. Under a sense of the loss of the dew of his youth, and the freshness of soul that he once enjoyed, the saint is thus made to cry, “Revive *me*” (Psa. cxxxviii. 7), for he knows that with God is “the fountain of life,” and that the fuller inflow must come by personal dealing with Him.

The Church is possessed of all the “fulness” of God, treasured in her Head in heaven, and she is in vital connection with that fulness by the indwelling Spirit who has come to make it good to her, and to administer that fulness through the varied channels, and by means of the varied ministries which the living Lord and Head has appointed. How rich, how full of grace and power, ought the Church to be! But is she? The answer need not be uncertain. Consciously weak, God’s saints cry out—“Revive *us* again” (Psa. lxxxv. 6).

As we step across the threshold of a new year, it becomes us to let the candle of the

Lord shine in upon us, and discover to us our true condition, individually and collectively. That there is need for a genuine revival of Divine life and Holy Ghost power in the hearts of God’s saints, and of the freshness and fragrance of a Spirit-filled ministry in the Church, few will deny. Saints in general do not maintain the freshness and energy of early days: worldliness is creeping in: the lamp of testimony is burning low. The old-time path of separation unto God, of fellowship with a rejected Christ, of being accounted as the filth and off-scouring of all things, is fast being obliterated, and nothing on earth can restore it, or make it a highway for the heavenly pilgrim, but a genuine revival from the Lord—a revival of Christ-life in the soul, of Holy Ghost power in the Church, and of the supreme authority of God’s Word to rule and dominate in both. There must be room made for God; a vacuum to be filled by Christ; clear and clean channels, through which the Spirit’s power may flow. There is an all-sufficient supply of all that the saints of God need, individually and collectively for all the days of their earthly pilgrimage in Christ: all at their disposal too, ready to be made good to them in actual, definite possession by the Holy Ghost, from day to day. There are longing hearts who want to go in for the enjoyment of this. They are crying to the living God for revival, and for times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. And no doubt their cry is heard and heeded in courts above. But by way of preparing for the answer, let us see that there is no choking of the channels, no hindrance in us.

LIFE IN THE DIVINE PRESENCE.

BY GEORGE STEINBERGER, NORTH SWITZERLAND.

“THESE words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, ‘Father!’” (John xvii. 1).

Jesus lived so constantly in the conscious presence of the Father, that wherever He went or stood, He could lift up His eyes to heaven, and say, “Father!” He needed but to look upwards and He had the consciousness of a direct inward link with the Father, and with His Father’s ear.

Life in the presence of God makes *prayer easy* and a real refreshment. He who lives in the divine presence need never seek his God. He is in the conscious possession of Him. He can touch Him. To pray is to touch God. But if I want to touch anyone I must, before anything else, be near Him. Do you enter the presence of God only when you pray? If so, do not be surprised if you have great difficulty to secure connection with the upper world, that your prayer does not seem to ascend, that it cannot reach the heart and ear of God. Do not wonder at it if you get up many a time off your knees, without having been able to touch Him and obtaining a renewal of strength from Him. Instead of being refreshed and filled, you become weary and empty. And why? Thy mind is enveloped, thy heart is taken up, and thy spirit is oppressed with so many different things that it takes a long time before thou hast worked thy way through, so that there is cast up an highway for thy God in thy heart (Ps. lxxxiv. 5).

Life in the divine presence makes *our intercourse with others a blessing*. Jesus lived in such a constant sense of the Father’s nearness that after every word that He

spoke He could lift up His eyes to heaven and say, “Father!” Do we also speak in such a manner that after each conversation we can say, “Father!” Father, bless and seal what I was just allowed to say. Put it in the furrows of the heart, and cover it with Thy hand, that it may spring up and bear its fruit! Or are we still obliged to cast down our eyes and sigh, “Gracious Father, forgive me for what I have just said, blot it out with Thy hand and let not the hateful seed grow up!” We owe to each other a holy life; I to you and you to me. But we can pay up this debt then only when we both walk in the divine presence and come together in His presence. Where man has to do with man can only be sin and confusion. John desired fellowship with others because his fellowship was with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ (1 John i. 3). He only who is in communion with God has the right to seek and enjoy communion with others. We can be a savour of life then only when we are in conscious connection with Him. ONLY HOLY PEOPLE ARE A BLESSING.

Life in the divine presence is the secret of *preservation from sinning*. Jesus, of whom we have prophetic statements in Ps. xvi., said in verse 8, “I have set Jehovah always before me, because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved.” Even He sought to be kept from every false step by keeping in the divine presence. Can you sin there? No? *There* we know of no hidden corner, no secret thoughts, no unheard word, no unobserved look, no unnoticed feelings and impressions. *All* things are naked and opened to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do (Heb. iv. 13). Each sin is preceded by a loosening of the inward connection with God, a leaving

of the divine presence. If we were tender enough we would feel this loosening quick enough, and know that now is the moment to flee to the throne of grace to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need (Heb. iv. 14-16), in order that we may not sin. When I sin, I have not obtained mercy at the right time. Because I have missed *succouring* grace, I must now seek *restoring* grace. Blessed be His Name, there is present grace for the present temptation. Because Jesus lived in the divine presence, He found readily in the hour of temptation and need the open ear and the mighty hand of His Father. He says in John xvii. 1: "*Father, the hour has come!*" Which hour? That solemn hour of Gethsemane and Calvary. There are people who watch over their besetting sin day and night, but by this means only keep it awake. Always to be looking at one's sin brings no power. To the contrary, it wearies, and becomes a temptation to fall into it the second time. Behold thy God, instead of thy sin. Each look at Him brings life.

Life in the divine presence *leads to a walking in the light*. In His light we see light. Nothing else but the presence of God will shew us clearly whatever is doubtful in our lives or convict us of whatever is crooked. Carry everything of a questionable nature, or what is not quite clear to you, into *His light*, and you will very soon find out what is *right*. Do as that faithful, simple Christian, did, who always asked himself: Would Jesus have spoken thus, or acted thus? Perhaps you are on bad terms with those around you, and you excuse yourself, saying: They have injured me and I have a right to be angry. Bring the matter under dispute into the presence of

Jesus and see if you can still be angry. Ask yourself: Would I like Jesus at His Coming to find me on bad terms with those with whom I have to live? How quickly you will then say to yourself: No, a thousand times no!

Life in the divine presence regulates everything in heart and house, in walk and talk. When Jesus entered the house of Zaccheus, His presence not only set the man right but the whole house. Dost thou believe in the presence of God in thy house? If so, then will His presence put everything straight—the wall decorations, the writing-desk, the chest of drawers, etc. There will not then be any lumber-room where everything is thrown in anyhow. Never will you be dressed in a disorderly manner. You will seek to have everything in such a state that your Lord may call you at any hour into His visible presence.

Life in the divine presence is *life in power*. Elijah could because of this very thing tell Ahab, the apostate king, the truth without fear. He stood in the presence of the Lord. He who stands thus does not see men any more, neither in their greatness nor in their low estate, he sees God, and souls born for eternity, whom God wants to save. A walk in the divine presence makes our life fruitful, because it gives us power and authority. He who lives himself in the presence of God brings others into His presence and light. Two means God uses pre-eminently, to bless His children and to lead them into a deeper life. And these two means are: (1) His holy Word, and (2) holy men and women, who hold forth the word of life, in whom it has, so to say, become flesh, *i.e.*, taken shape, incorporated itself.

(To be Continued.)

LECTURES ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

BY WILLIAM LINCOLN, OF BERESFORD, LONDON.

INTRODUCTORY.

WITH the exception of the last three verses of chapter ii. the first and second chapters should be connected together, ending at verse 22 of chapter ii. The theme of this gospel is, the Son of God, and there is not, as in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, any presentation of Christ to Israel, as to whether they would accept Him or no; but it begins with the assumption of Christ's rejection, and a deeper, higher glory brought out for those with eyes to see the glory of Christ as Son of God, the light shining in the darkness which comprehended it not. Chapters i. and ii. form a sort of preface to the entire gospel, beginning with Christ in the ages of ages past, and going on with Christ in His path to the ages of ages to come. It describes the outshining of the glory, all through the period between these two extremities. At the one end we have Christ with God, and that He is God (verse 2, being no repetition, but presenting His Christhead). At the other end, there is Christ celebrating His marriage, afterwards coming down to Capernaum, purging the Temple, and making everything down here fit for the presence of God. Intermediately is the Son of God in His entrance into the world, pitching His tent among us, His glory being seen in everyday life. Then coming lower, so that all those believing take of His fulness and become sons of God; and lower still, becoming the Lamb of God, and taking away the sin of the world. There are seen sinners around Him, not as God or as Christ, but He is seen gathering sinners around Him, after His

name is pronounced as Lamb of God. It is noticeable that as in the gospel of John, at the beginning, He is seen as the Lamb of God gathering sinners, so in the Revelation it is the Lamb that is married, not the Son of God. Sinners are seen coming to Him; others He goes that He may find them; both are true in the experience of ourselves. Then follows the marriage in Cana (possession) of Galilee, on the third day. The literal body is raised up now, but not the mystical body, for there is always peculiar honour given to the Head. But in three days He will raise the mystical body, as well as the mystical Head. And when the marriage has been celebrated, He will come down and cleanse the Temple, and make the earth a fit habitation for God.

Thus have we the pathway of the Son of God through time, traced for us in these two chapters. Chapter ii. 23-25 should form part of chapter iii., and the chapter should begin, "But when He was in Jerusalem," &c. Now, from chapter iii. to chapter xii. we have an account of the Son of God in the world; from xii. to xvii. the Son of God in His own circle; xviii. and xix. the crucifixion; xx. and xxi. the Son of God risen.

In chapters iii. to vii. Christ is spoken of as the *Life*; in viii. to xii. it is Christ as the *Light* or the *Way*, for the only way to God is in dazzling light. And in that section (iii.-xii., Christ in the world) which comprehends these two sub-divisions, we find seven different specimen cases passing before Him. Nicodemus, the woman of Samaria, the noble's son, the paralytic, the woman in adultery, the blind man, Lazarus. In Nicodemus, we begin with one at the top of the world's religion, and Nicodemus has to come down, though with reluctance.

Here he is seen with Christ as "the Teacher." In chapter vii. he is still in the Sanhedrim, but in chapter xix., Nicodemus can resist no longer, but is seen bending over the body of his Lord. Nicodemus, the highest in the world's account, only came to Christ slowly, and in painful stages; but the next, a woman at the bottom of society, finds Christ easily. Then in chapter v. it is the Jewish nation, and therefore the world, that is palsied, and cannot come, except with power from heaven. In chapter viii., it is implied that the world is sunk in sin; in ix. the world is blind, and then, as if that were not enough, comes the most damning stage, Lazarus, implying that the world is dead. In the woman in adultery there is the sinner as even men can see, but in the blind man there is the world as God sees it; and further, dead through the blindness in them, through the hardness of their heart. Thus the stages rise in gravity, and regard the state of the sinner as more and more desperate, but Christ is equal to all emergency. Nicodemus comes to Christ merely as "a Teacher," and Christ teaches him two things, earthly things as to being born again, and heavenly as to eternal life and not perishing, and shows him that he should have known these things before. Nicodemus comes with "we know," and goes away saying he was a fool, and did not know. Then Christ takes the position of a Teacher, saying, "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen"; speaks of the kingdom as to earthly things, and of eternal life, or the alternative damnation as to heavenly things.

In chapter iv. we have a woman, and Christ goes after her, to where she is, a place where murder had been committed, where

Simeon and Levi were guilty of their sin. There Christ meets with one, not to slay but to save. There is an appendix to each of the two chapters—to chapter iii. about the Bride, the heavenly people; and to chapter iv. in the noble's son, about the earthly people.

Chapter v. contains discourses ensuing upon the healing of the paralytic, and Christ speaks of Himself as dispensing life to whom He will; either life now, or judgment by and by. In chapter iii. Christ is giving eternal life; in chapter iv. the person has it in Him; in chapter v. the life is seen to proceed from the Sovereign Lord who is Life, and in resurrection; in chapter vi. the life is seen to need food, and in vii. that it needs drink. And observe the way in which Christ is the food of the new life; it is in three particulars. First, the living bread come down from heaven, a Christ in lowly form and rejected; secondly, "The bread that I will give you is my flesh," a Christ slain, feeding upon the death; thirdly, a Christ in resurrection and ascension. "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before." Christ in humiliation upon the cross and in resurrection. Then chapter vii. carries us still beyond, and Christ is seen to be glorified, and if glorified the Spirit of God coming down (verses 38-39). Living water flowing down, we drinking, and so largely, that we get full of Divine life, and that living water is flowing out from us to others.

(To be Continued.)

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"There is no happier, no easier, and no better way for the obtaining of pecuniary means, or anything else in connection with the work of God, than to deal with the Lord Himself."—*Geo. Muller.*

The Definition of the Word, "Church:"

By THOMAS NEWBERRY.

IN the Hebrew, there are two words, promiscuously translated "congregation," and "assembly." The one word "*heedah*" from *yahad*—"to appoint," is applied to the *whole* congregation of Israel. The other word "*kahahl*" from *kahal* "to call together" is used for a *portion* of the people as assembled together in one place.

In "The Englishman's Bible" therefore, the one word "*heedah*" is always translated in the margin "congregation," and the other "assembly."

In the Greek there is one word "*ecclesia*," from "*ek*"—"out," and "*kaleo*"—"to call," sometimes applied to the whole Church like "*heedah*" in the Hebrew, at other times to a local assembly as "*kahahl*."

In Acts xix. 32, 39, 41, the word "*ecclesia*" is twice applied to the craftsman of like occupation convened by Demetrius, the silversmith, and once to "the lawful assembly" alluded to by the town-clerk.

The word "*ecclesia*," signifies a *selection*, or "calling out," not merely a "calling together," which is expressed by the word "synagogue."

Hence in many cases to alter the word "Church," as used in the Authorized Version into the word "Assembly," may convey a wrong idea to the mind.

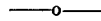
For example, it would not be right to say "Christ loved the ASSEMBLY, and gave Himself for it." The word "assembly" implies a gathering together at a certain time and place.

The English word "Church" from the Saxon "*Circe*," is derived from a Greek word "*Kuriakos*," signifying "belonging to the Lord," which Greek word occurs in only

two places in 1 Cor. xi. 20, "the LORD'S Supper," and in Rev. i. 10 "the LORD'S Day."

It will be wise, therefore, to retain this word "Church" in general, leaving it to the context to determine in what sense it is used, whether as including the whole of the saints, or as applied to a certain place or district, or to a local assembly. By the expression "the Church in the Wilderness" (Acts vii. 38), the congregation of Israel brought out of Egypt by Moses, is to be understood. The term "Old Testament Church" is incorrect.

The word "Church" in the New Testament is never applied to a building, though it is used of Christians as assembled together in one place (1 Cor. xiv. 23; 1 Cor. xi. 18). In James ii. 2, we read, "If there come unto your ASSEMBLY"; here the word as in the Greek is "synagogue." Quite a different word, and never applied to the assembly of God's people.



THE VALUE OF THE WORD OF GOD.

IN a day of scepticism and increasing departure from the faith as once delivered to the saints, there is nothing of more importance to press upon God's saints, especially the lambs of the flock—than the supreme value of God's inspired and perfect Word. To feed the inner life, to regulate the outward steps, to give light in all departments and each relationship of life, is the business of the Holy Scriptures. To read them daily, to meditate on them prayerfully, to obey them implicitly, to declare them faithfully, is the chief business of the child of God while here below. There is nothing of equal importance to this; it is the heart and core of Christianity.

GOING ON WITH AND FOR GOD.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS AT INVERURIE,
BY THOS. D. W. MUIR, OF DETROIT, U.S.A.
READ COLOSSIANS I. 1-10.

PERHAPS you have noticed that the mode of salutation used in the Epistles is invariably "Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father, &c." It is never "Peace be unto you and grace." The Apostle never uses these terms interchangeably—the order is divine. Before we, as sinners, could have peace with God, we had to know the grace of God. In like manner our enjoyment now of the peace of God is dependent upon our enjoyment of the grace of God.

Someone has remarked, that when we read the Acts of the Apostles, we would wonder if the Apostle Paul did anything else but *preach*; and when we read the Epistles, if he found time for anything else but to *pray*. It is suggestive that in the instance before us, he is praying for people regarding whom he knew little or nothing, except what he had heard. He had not been instrumental in their conversion, nor in the planting of the assembly at Colosse, yet his heart goes out unto them as the children of God, and makes him yearn and desire for them, the things mentioned in these verses.

He thanks God for three things: their *faith* in Christ Jesus; their *love* to all the saints; and the *hope* laid up for them in heaven. The Apostle Paul frequently groups these three things together. You will notice that here, the hope is spoken of as "laid up for them in heaven."

That is a good place to have our hope. The greatest difficulty we have with earthly hopes, is, that they are in danger of being

smashed to pieces. Many a hope which seems very bright and propitious for a time, comes to grief sooner or later. Oh, dear friends, God's world to-day is just a vast scene of wrecked hopes; and there are many of God's dear children who have not yet learned it. The only thing God would put before us, is the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ and the "hope laid up for us in heaven" is His coming again. For just as He is the "salvation" of God so is He the "hope" of the child of God (2 Tim. i. 1). It is not the many mansions that is the hope, or the golden street, or the pearly gate, or the jasper wall, or the harps—it is the Lord Himself! "I will come again and receive you unto Myself," is His own Word.

When writing to the Thessalonians, the Apostle thanks God for their work of *faith*, labour of *love*, and patience of *hope*. But when the Lord Jesus sends a message to the church at Ephesus, He remembers their work, their labour and patience; but alas! there is a sad lack. It is not work of faith, labour of love, and patience of hope (Rev. ii. 1-4). They had left their first love, the motive power was gone.

This Conference reminds me of a printed report I have at home, of the first Inverurie Conference. It appeared in the "Northern Intelligencer" of 1873. I have been wondering if there is as much simple-heartedness for God and His truth as there was then. There were burning words spoken then, and those who spoke seemed to have the liberty and power of the Holy Ghost in declaring the message of the Lord. Is it as well with us now? Are we as happy in the love of God? As simple and as desirous of pleasing Him? If not, it would be well to stand still and ask what is

the reason for it! Who are going to fill the places of the old men who are getting near the borderland, if the Lord Jesus does not come? The old men of whom I speak were self-denying, and counted not their lives dear, that they might make known the Gospel of Christ. They were men who prayed (as did dear Duncan Mathieson) that God might "stamp eternity on their eyeballs." Is that the character of the preachers of this day? It is an easy matter to get a few verses of Scripture strung together with one word running through them all, and standing up for an hour or so to preach; but what about the results? *Convicted* sinners seem to be getting out of fashion. And the *converts*, what are they like? I suppose it is a law in nature, that if parents are sickly, the children are not usually healthy; but strong, robust parents have strong healthy children. If this rule be applicable to spiritual things, does it not account for the manifest feebleness and degeneracy in godliness and power among many of the converts of recent years? May God search all our hearts!

The great need in the assemblies of God's people to-day is, reality. We need to humble ourselves in God's presence, where we shall see how little heart we have for God, for God's Christ, and for souls that are dying and going down to hell! May God arouse us and give us hearts that will go in for pleasing Him, and yearn over perishing men. David said, "One thing have I *desired*," but he also said "that will I *seek after*" (Psa. xxvii. 4). It is one thing to *desire* to please God, but it is another thing to *seek after* it.

In this chapter, we have the Apostle not only thanking God for these Christians, but also praying for them. He was not content

with knowing that they were saved. What more did he pray for? That they "might be filled with the *knowledge of His will*." After God has saved a man, there are many things in the Book that he needs to know. There are vast fields of precious truth in which are hidden the treasures in Christ for us that He would have us enjoy. And there are paths of obedience that He would have us walk in, both ecclesiastically and morally. God takes notice of the minutest things of our life. He tells the boy and girl how they should act towards their parents; the wife and the husband, the master and the servant, how to treat each other; as also how we are to act towards governors and those in authority.

"In all wisdom and spiritual understanding" What for? "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord." Some are making a sad mistake, in thinking that the reason why God would have us be filled with the knowledge of His will, is to enable us to talk at Bible readings and to speak from platforms. *He* would have us walk a "worthy" walk. Perhaps we do not realise it now, but there is a day coming, when your life and mine will be made manifest. What has my life been? Has it been a life pleasing to God, or of self-pleasing? May God impress upon us the solemnity of such a thing. Everything will be made known at the judgment-seat of Christ. But there is something more; there will be a manifestation before the world, and the world will then know us as it does not know us now.

In a certain part of Europe during the last century, a revolution was rising. It was thought well to send the heir—apparent to the throne away for a time, to a neighbouring country, disguised as a

labouring man. So he was dressed in labourer's clothes and got a position on a railway, where he worked with pick and shovel as a navvy—the other navvies supposing him to be one of themselves. One day, when the revolution had been quashed, a number of gentlemen on horse-back rode up to where he was, and made a great ado over him, to the amazement of the other men. Before they rode away, he explained to his fellow-workmen who he was, and that these were noblemen from his own country, sent to take him back. The navvies looked amazed, and some of them remarked, "We never would have thought he was a prince." "No," said another, "but did he ever do anything unworthy of a prince while he was with us?" And none of them could say he had. While to appearance he was but a peasant and a labourer, his life had been worthy of a prince of the royal blood.

"The world knoweth us not, even as it knew Him not," but when the day of manifestation comes, will this be their testimony, "We did not know them, and we could not believe that they were exactly what they said they were—born of God—but we never saw anything in their lives but such as we might have expected of those who were the sons of God." May He enable us to "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work." And then, last of all, "*increasing in the knowledge of God.*" We begin with the knowledge of the grace of God in truth; we go on to be filled with the knowledge of His will; but the climax is, that we might increase in the knowledge of God Himself. This is the pathway of real spiritual progress; going on from His grace to know His will, and the will of God leading us to

know Himself better than we have done. May God grant these blessed results for Christ's Name's sake.

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A NEW YEAR PROMISE.

"*Certainly I will be with thee*" (*Exodus iii. 12*).

—o—

"CERTAINLY I will be with thee!"
 Father, I have found it true;
 To Thy faithfulness and mercy
 I would set my seal anew.
 All the year Thy grace hath kept me,
 Thou my help indeed hast been,
 Marvellous the loving-kindness
 Every day and hour hath seen.

"Certainly I will be with thee!"
 I would prove it day by day,
 Know Thy presence ever near me
 All along my pilgrim way.
 On this day of solemn pausing,
 With Thyself before Thy throne,
 Lord speak o'er this word of promise,
 Let me claim it as my own.

"Certainly I will be with thee!"
 Starry promise in the night;
 All uncertainties, like shadows,
 Flee away before its light.

"Certainly I will be with thee!"
 He hath spoken; I have heard:
 True of old and true this moment—
 Is Jehovah's faithful word.

—o—

"The great thing which God is aiming at is the training of the worker, and the cultivation in him of a Christ-like spirit, in which he should come to do his whole life work. This is important beyond all conception, for that spirit shall be carried into a service which shall have Eternity as its term and Infinity as its sphere."—*John Dickie*.

The Bible Annotator.

FOR THE HELP OF BIBLE STUDENTS AND CHRISTIAN WORKERS.

OUTLINES OF GOSPEL SUBJECTS.

A sinner ready to Perish (Deut. xxvi. 5)—Nature.
 A God ready to Pardon (Neh. ix. 17)—Grace.
 Salvation ready to be Revealed (1 Pet. i. 5)—Glory.
 The Son of Man, ready to Judge (1 Pet. iv. 5)—Wrath.

SALVATION: IN THREE ASPECTS.

PAST.—To the Believer: "Us who *are* saved" (1 Cor. i. 18). "Who *hath* saved us" (2 Tim. i. 9). "Ye *are* saved" (Eph. ii. 9). "The way of Salvation" (Acts xvi. 31; Isa. xlv. 22).

PRESENT.—"Saved by His life" (Rom. v. 10). "Able to save evermore" (Heb. vii. 5-7' R.V.). "Grow unto salvation" (1 Pet. ii. 2, R.V.).

FUTURE.—"Now is our salvation nearer" (Rom. xiii. 11). "We look for the Saviour" (Phil. iii. 21). "Kept unto salvation" (1 Pet. i. 5).

THEMES FOR BIBLE READINGS.

Life *from* Christ (John iii. 36)—Through the Cross.
 Life *in* Christ (2 Tim. i. 1)—On the Throne.
 Life *for* Christ (2 Cor. v. 14)—In the World.
 Life *with* Christ (Col. iii. 4)—In the Glory.

THREE APPEARING IN HEB. IX.

He *hath* appeared (v. 26), Past—Atonement.
 He *now* appears (v. 24), Present—Advocacy.
 He *shall* appear (v. 28), Future—Advent.

A THREE-LINKED CHAIN OF SALVATION IN HEB. X.

The Will of God (v. 7)—The Source.
 The Work of Christ (v. 10)—The Cause.
 The Witness of the Spirit (v. 15)—The Seal.



The Young Believer's Question Box.

Can you tell me if there is anything in Scripture to indicate that the election of Matthias to the apostleship (Acts i. 23-26) was wrong? This is being taught. We know of nothing. The fact that he was filled with the Holy Spirit in common with the others, and that the inspired writer recognises him as one of "the twelve" (Act vi. 2), surely is sufficient to show that the apostles did right in filling up the gap that the enemy had thus early made in their ranks, by calling upon the Lord, according to the Jewish ordinance of the lot (see

Prov. xvi. 33) to choose one to be a witness with them of His resurrection. It has to be remembered that the moment was peculiar. The Lord had personally gone. The Spirit had not yet come, nor had "the Church" been formed. All was peculiar. It would be a very different thing for any to elect by vote, one to fill a place of ministry now. The distribution of gifts and administration of the Church, is in the hands of the One whom we are taught by the Spirit to call "Lord" (1 Cor. xii. 2-6).

Is it according to the teaching of the Scripture, to speak or sing of being brought "to the fold of Christ?" No: "the fold of the sheep" (John x. 1, R.V.), was the place in which the true people of God were enclosed before the true Shepherd came to lead them out into that liberty, which is now the birth-right of all who are His. The "fold" has now given place to the "flock," which is really the proper translation of John x. 16 (see R.V.)—"one flock, one shepherd." Why should God's people speak or sing, either to God or man, what is not true? "Hold fast the *form of sound words*" (2 Tim. i. 13), is an inspired commandment as surely as—"Thou shalt not steal."

I am a servant maid in a Christian household. Part of my duties are those of table-maid. I have frequently to serve wines and strong drink to my master who is a Christian, and takes a prominent place in the Church, and sometimes to guests who are evidently men of the world. I am unhappy in doing so. What is my duty as a disciple of Christ? We can scarcely conceive a greater inconsistency—we might rightly use a much stronger term—than a Christian householder treating his guests, whether God's people or worldly, to "wine and strong drink," or using them himself as a luxury of the table. What a testimony and example to his household! Are any who know of his habits likely to esteem his Christianity, or believe in the reality of it? Would he dare to let it be known in "the Church" where he is a "prominent" leader, that he keeps wines and spirits on his table and treats his guests thereto! We sincerely pity a church which has such rulers, and would advise their immediate "abdication;" failing that, their "expulsion" from such a position, until they learn not to cast stumbling-blocks in their brother's way, not to speak of the ungodliness of helping unsaved men to become

drunkards. We are amazed to hear of the free use of intoxicating drinks by some of God's people, and believe a decided and unmuffled testimony should be borne against it. We cannot dictate to you, what form your testimony should take. If you ask wisdom from God, He will no doubt guide you aright, in such a manner as is becoming your place as domestic servant. But we have a strong conviction that you should bear witness, and if pressed to continue to do what offends your conscience, rather leave than do it. God has plenty of situations, and if you act for Him and in a right spirit, He will not suffer you to be a loser.

Answers to Correspondents.

SAMUEL B.—The writer of the booklet, "Woollen and Linen," was the late J. G. Bellet, of Dublin. It now appears in a small volume of his "Miscellaneous Papers" recently issued, and forms a much-needed message for the present day of "mixtures."

R. L., GLOUCESTER.—"Binding and Losing" as used in Matthew xviii. 15-18, refers to the judicial act of putting away from the fellowship of saints and of the restoration of such upon repentance. For an example of such "binding" (see 1 Cor. v. 4-5), and of the "losing" or setting at liberty consequent upon repentance, see 2 Cor. ii. 6-9. In Young's translation, verse 18 is rendered—"Whatever things ye may bind upon the earth, shall be, having been bound in the heaven; and whatsoever things ye may loose on the earth shall be, having been loosed in the heavens." This makes it clear that the true meaning of the verse is, that heaven's judgment is to be carried out upon earth. This gives a very solemn view of all such cases of discipline, and reminds God's people of the need of being clear as to what the verdict of heaven is, alike in expulsion and restoration before they act in either. Need we wonder that verse 19, introduces the subject of prayer, for in waiting upon God His will, even in difficult cases, is often fully made known.

E. L., CANADA.—There is need for the greatest care in welcoming unknown and unaccredited preachers. The fact that one has "a good delivery," and can speak of great things in which he has played a conspicuous part, or that his name has appeared in some old country paper, as, having

preached in some hall where Christians gather to break bread, proves nothing as to his personal godliness or fitness to do the work of an evangelist. There are doubtless well-known brethren and accredited servants of Christ in your vicinity, or who may be easily communicated with, who would be able to give you the information you need, to enable you to welcome the stranger with confidence and he, if a godly man, will not object to such a precautionary measure. Undue haste, in such cases, has landed many a simple company of God's people in disgrace and disaster, which years have not wiped away.

F., NEW SOUTH WALES.—The papers and letters on "Reception" which you send, are, like some others which have appeared on the same subject, remarkable only for what they *do not say*. They are chiefly occupied in stating what—so far as we know—no assembly denies or questions, and in attacking what nobody believes or practices, but the *real matter* at issue is *omitted altogether*. There is plenty of reasoning; some strange illustrations used to prove that the end justifies the means used, but as will readily strike those who are accustomed "to prove all things," an entire lack of appeal to the *Word of God*. Such arguments and reasonings will be regarded as "conclusive" by some, but we hardly think they will satisfy saints in Australasian Assemblies or elsewhere, who are accustomed to be guided by "Thus saith the Lord" in all such matters. That there is need for an honest, exhaustive and well-balanced examination of the Scriptures on this subject in all its bearings is evident, and if the Lord so guide, we shall not hesitate to open *these* pages for a full and unbiased examination of the subject of "Reception" as taught in the Word of God.

Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION I.—If one taking a prominent place in an Assembly, has become bankrupt, or is deeply in debt, should this deter him from ministering the Word publicly, or taking oversight in the Assembly?

ANSWER A.—It would be necessary to know all the circumstances, so that "grace and truth" may have due consideration and effect. Diligent enquiry should be made (1 Cor. xiii. 5), before any judgment is expressed. If through neglect or ex-

travagance one becomes insolvent, and is unable to satisfy his creditors, then assuredly he would disqualify himself for ministry or rule in God's Assembly. But if he fully satisfies his creditors as to the cause of his insolvency, and hands over all he owns, and they agree to accept a compensation, and out of sympathy allow him to continue his business, supplying him with goods as before, there would be no cause to exclaim against him. If one is in debt, and has it in his power to pay but will not, then clearly he is unjust, and ought not to be allowed a place of any kind in the Church. Debt and bankruptcy are sometimes brought on by the dishonesty or insolvency of others, and in such cases Christian sympathy should be shown to the sufferer, as his loss is from no neglect or folly of his.

J. B. L.

ANSWER B.—There may be various causes from which a believer may fall into debt—such as ill health and loss of employment—which ought to draw forth Christian sympathy, and which even worldly men are ready to bear with, when they see it is from no fault on the part of the debtor. The same is true in bankruptcy—although it is a much more serious matter, and one which no honest and exercised Christian can do other than feel to be a blot on his testimony. But if either is brought about by indifference to a sense of righteousness, or by reckless trading, or extravagant living, it becomes a more serious matter, and ought not to be condoned or treated with indifference. Certainly one in such a position, whose testimony in the world has gone, is ill fitted to be a guide or a public teacher in the Church.—W. T. M.

ANSWER C.—One taking oversight among the saints must have the qualification of being "not covetous (1 Tim. iii. 3)—and that includes, whatever else, being honest. He is also to have "a good report of them that are without" (verse 7). One who is deeply in debt to the unconverted, or who has been in the Bankruptcy Court, has not such a report, and therefore ought not until such time as he has righteously and morally met all claims, take a public place in service before the world or in the Church. Apparent indifference to such matters of common honesty has stumbled many, and caused the truth which such profess to own and obey, to be discredited.—J. S.

ANSWER D.—Debt and bankruptcy seem to be

so common now-a-days, that even Christians in some cases view them with little concern, and those who have defrauded the world feel little shame. This is not as it ought to be. Even if the result of misfortune, one should be humbled before God and take a lowly place before men, until full confidence has been restored. Extravagant living and speculative dealing have much to do with both debt and bankruptcy, and should form the subject of warning and teaching from the Word oftener than they do. One who lives beyond his means, or speculates with other people's money, is manifestly dishonest, and ought not to be allowed to take a prominent place in God's Assembly. It is this and the like of it, that causes the Lord's Name to be blasphemed, and His truth to be dishonoured.—W. H. S.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—The above four answers cover most of the ground, and deal with the matters in question from various aspects. Each case must be carefully considered on its own merits, and dealt with accordingly. From long and careful observation our conclusion is, that in most cases where believers have fallen hopelessly into debt, it has been owing to their extravagant way of living. If one lives beyond, or even up to his means, leaving nothing for exigencies, keeping up a style in dress, house furnishing, and other things, which his income is unable to keep up, he *must* do it at other people's expense—that is dishonestly, and sooner or later he will come to grief. Better far to wear an out-of-date garb, with a good conscience, and live in a humble home where everything has been paid for, than keep up an extravagant show dishonestly. Our second observation has been, that most cases of bankruptcy have arisen through beginning without capital, or from inability to conduct business on sound principles, and from speculation with other people's money. There is need for a clear and certain sound on such subjects, and a ringing out with trumpet blast of the old Bible doctrine on such common-place subjects as "Let him that stole, steal no more" (Eph. iv. 28), and "Provide things honest in the sight of all men" (Rom. xii. 17). They might not draw the crowd, as some of the highly-seasoned subjects advertised do, but they would at least help to keep the threshing-floor clear of swindlers and fraudulent debtors, who too often find a temporary place of refuge, if not of honour, in the midst of the people of God.

GOD, A VERY PRESENT HELP.

NOT in the noon-day of prosperity and gladness, but in the night-season of sorrow—the “time of trouble,” is the reality of God nigh at hand, God a “very present help” in straits, experimentally known. When human resources all have failed; when there is no arm of flesh to deliver; then the soul of the saint taught anew that its only refuge is in God, turns with chastened confidence to Him who has said—“Call upon Me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me” (Psa. l. 15). Shut up to God, to God alone; cast upon Him, to deal directly and personally with Himself, the self-emptied, disciplined, weaned soul, learns afresh the reality of a present God, whose heart of love and hand of power are engaged to bring him safely through. Conscious of his danger, and fully aware of the “roaring waters” and the “swelling floods” that rage around, he is taught by the indwelling Spirit—whose ministry in such an hour is, to sustain his faith and strengthen his heart’s confidence by presenting the all-sufficiency of God’s grace to meet his every need—to say, “God is our refuge and strength, *a very present help* in time of trouble.” Confiding thus in God, he has, even before the manifest deliverance comes, the “peace of God,” guarding as a garrison his heart and mind (Phil. iv. 7), from unbelieving doubt and fear. The faithful promise, the word upon which God causes him to hope, “Thou called’st in trouble and I delivered thee: I answered thee in the secret place” (Psa. lxxxii. 7), comes as God’s sure pledge of coming deliverance, for which in patient confidence the trusting soul waits only

upon God, with its expectation upon Him (Psa. lxvii. 5), and upon Him alone.

Such experiences, however bitter to nature, are of inestimable value to the soul. We are so liable to rest in God’s blessings rather than in the Blessor; to find delight in God’s gifts rather than in the Giver, until He whose jealous love must ever claim the heart’s first confidence for Himself, stirs up the nest, or raises the stormy wind that melts the soul because of trouble, and swallows up all human wisdom. “Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and He bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh a storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad, because they be quiet. So He bringeth them unto their desired haven” (Psa. cvii. 26 28-30). It is the way of the Lord; the royal road along which the children of faith, objects of the Father’s love, subjects too of His parental discipline and care, are being safely led to their eternal home. This holy discipline may be *punitive*, to awaken the half-slumbering conscience, and cause deep heart-searching before the Lord; to lead to the unearthing of some wedge of gold or Babylonish garment, some cherished idol hid deep in the heart, which the voice of God, speaking through the Word, had failed to reach. Or it may be *preventive*, to fortify the saint against some gathering attack or subtle device of the great adversary to lead it away from God. Or it may be *preparatory* to some season of rich and heavenly blessing, which, apart from the ploughshare breaking up the fallow ground of the spiritual being, and laying it open to the light of God, it would be ill able to bear. The Divine Husbandman knows, and meets out the measure of the discipline as it seems good unto Him. We,

too, shall know the full meaning of all His dealings, when we read it in the light of the eternal throne. There, amid the pure and holy light of that sinless dwelling, the saints of God will learn with wondering joy, how perfect love had planned each step, each Marah and Elim of the homeward way, and all to wean them for self-reliance and the ways of the world, and to teach them to prove a *present God* the all-sufficient portion of His pilgrim people.

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HE HOLDS THE KEY.

"My Times are in Thy Hand" (Psa. xxxi. 15).

CHRIST holds the key of all unknown,
And I am glad ;
If other hands had held that key,
Or He entrusted it to me,
I might be sad.

To-morrow's cares I do not know,
But here I rest ;
I'd rather He unlock each day,
And as its doors swing open, say—
"My way is best."

The very dimness of my sight
Makes me secure ;
For, groping in the misty way
I feel His hand, I hear Him say—
"My strength is sure."

I cannot trace His future plans,
But this I know—
I have the smiling of His face
And all the fulness of His grace,
Whilst here below.

O Lord ! this covers all my want,
And here I rest,
For what I cannot, Thou canst see,
And in Thy keeping I must be
Supremely blest.

LIFE IN THE DIVINE PRESENCE.

PART II.

BY GEORGE STEINBERGER, NORTH SWITZERLAND.

OTHERS see this life. *The life* is the light of men, not the words. "Ye shall be a holy people unto Me," saith our God. Holiness is the adornment of an assembly, of a house, of a Christian. O, how much we lack this! There is a great deal of talk about our sanctification in Christ, but what we need is the practical side of sanctification (2 Cor. vii. 1). And this we find in the presence of God. The brightness of His presence will clothe us with power, strength and authority.

If you live in the presence of God *your heart will be filled with heavenly joy*. In Psalm xvi. 11, the Messiah exclaims: "In Thy presence is fulness of joy." Though we cannot have this joy in the same measure as He could, we are still permitted to taste thereof, when He lets us experience in our consciousness what His presence means. His nearness brings great peace into the heart, it lays a divine brightness into our eyes, and a heavenly rest upon our forehead. It envelopes us with the atmosphere of eternity, lifts us above all the heights of earth, causes that which is earthly to recede like a shadow, permits us to look with unveiled face into the abyss of His mighty grace, lets us draw water with joy out of the wells of salvation, lets us walk upon storm-tossed waves as upon the solid ground, thrills our hearts with the glow of a pure love, puts within our souls a deep desire after His visible presence, replenishes the powers used up in labour and conflict, satiates our souls with the sense of His good pleasure, and saturates our spirits with the hidden virtue of His life. Then

we are inwardly conscious that we are children of the eternal Father, sheep of the Good Shepherd. Stilled into adoring silence one loves thus to lie before our God, with open heart and closed mouth, *worshipping in Spirit*, because the lips are not able to utter the groans and sighs of the heart, the worship and adoration of the spirit and the soul. Our prayer ascends then as an even pillar. How can we pray without ceasing? One often hears this put. When we live in the divine presence, and when we do everything to the glory of God, then will every movement of the body become prayer.

Life in the divine presence *transfigures us into His image*. "We all, with unveiled face, *beholding* as in glass the glory of the Lord *are changed* into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. iii. 18). Changed by beholding! What you look at comes into the heart. Look upon *His* meekness, and meekness will enter *thy* heart. Look upon *His* poverty, and *thou* wilt mind and seek after high things no more. Look upon *His* devotedness, and it will not be difficult for *thee* to give up and lose *thy* life. Intimacy with God produces godliness. In this manner we set forth the image of the invisible God, and ripen for the visible divine presence and fellowship, which is the goal of our conversion and our eternal blessedness. "His servants shall see His face" (Rev. xxii. 4).

Life in the presence of God *preserves us in the true child state*. One walks before His countenance, asks counsel of Him in all things, obeys all His commands, takes everything, pleasure and pain, to Him, tells Him everything, without ever thinking of hiding anything from Him. In one word,

ONE LIVES UNDER AN OPEN HEAVEN. One walks hand in hand with his Father, and rests upon His heart. It is well frequently to remind ourselves, "Thou God seest me." Thine eye beholds my pleasure and my pain, my happiness and my need, my comfort and my sorrow, my labour and my resting, my conflict and my quietness. He beholds everything to take part in everything. Besides this, the Holy Scriptures speak of an *inward* divine presence (John xiv.) and of a *manifested* presence of God (1 John iii. 2). The inward leads to the outward as the outward leads to the inward (1 John i. 3). The inward presence of God is His indwelling, or the hidden life with Christ in God, the hidden salvation; the outward and visible presence of God is what all the children of light yearn after, their glorious manifestation of salvation (Col. iii. 3).

In closing, let us look and see what *entitles* and *enables* us thus to stand in the holy presence of God. Nothing but the blood of Jesus. He has loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father (Rev. i. 5). The place His blood gives us is before the Father's face. In the power of His blood He has passed through the heavens, and now appears in the presence of God for us. And wherever He has gone with His blood, there the way is open for us. Because of the virtue of the blood we can draw nigh each moment to God, and because of the virtue of the blood God can draw nigh each moment to us and bless us. The child of God may daily walk in friendship and communion with God. As intimates, they open their hearts to each other. The Father reveals to him His thoughts and

plans ; and the child just as freely makes all his wishes and thoughts known to the Father.

In God's near presence he has all he needs, no good thing does he lack. His soul is maintained in perfect rest and peace. The guidance and instruction he needs he finds there. The eye of God is ever upon him. God is his counsellor. There abiding he becomes sensitive to the gentlest whisper of the Spirit. He learns to understand and obey the smallest expression of his Father's will. Fellowship with God produces in him the same mind that is in God. Dwelling with the Holy One is that which will ever produce holiness.

TRANSLATED BY M. I. R.

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LECTURES ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

By WILLIAM LINCOLN, of Beresford, London.

INTRODUCTORY—PART II.

IN chapters viii. to xii. the subject is "the Light." In the first place a woman is brought to Him taken in adultery. He takes no notice of their accusation, but begins to work in the dust. They interrupt Him in His work of grace. He flashes light upon the accusers, then goes on with His work in the ground and finishes it. Now he flashes light upon the woman. "Where are thine accusers?" None ! Light has hurled them away, and comforts the poor sinner at His feet. Beginning with the accusers He deals with them, next with the woman, next with all the Jews around, with the devil, with those believing, with God, with Himself. Not a creature but is exposed by the light of God, whilst it reveals to us also the Divine Being. Then about this Light. How does it affect man? Man is born blind, but the Light is

sufficient, it can heal the blind. So in chapter ix. we see a blind man beginning to see. And because we were blind we were dead, as is implied by Lazarus. Chapters ix. and x. are properly one, suggesting to us that the blind man is one of the sheep, and therefore mark the solemn fact. He led him out of Judaism as now he leads us out of carnal and worldly religion. In chapter x. it is Christ dying, giving His life for the sheep ; in chapter xi. there is the sinner dead, and Christ saying, "I am the Resurrection and the Life" ; Life, with death and weeping all around, and One in solitary dignity saying, "Thy brother shall rise again."

Now, mark the important distinction between xi. and xii. Gradually, as the Light arises, the sinner's case is seen to be worse and worse. In chapter xi., where the world is represented as dead, and Christ as the only One who can befriend by giving life, there all is weeping and Christ alone living in resurrection. Then in chapter xii., when all are shouting for joy, mark what Christ is doing (and we know that at that time Christ wept over Jerusalem)—He talks of death. When men are weeping for death, Christ speaks of life ; when all are rejoicing and expecting glory, Christ speaks of death. Christ when the world is dead is equal for it, and can lift men out of death ; but when the world is content with its state of death, all he can do is to weep over it, and carry His disciples out of it. So at the outset we see the little remnant that know Him as the resurrection and the life in three classes : Mary, the worshipper ; Martha, the worker, preparing the feast ; Lazarus, the witness to His glory.

Chapter xiii. commences a new section, with the Lord in heaven, and in chapters

xiii. to xvii. Christ is seen as the Truth, telling out the truth of God's love and of His grace. In xiii. there are two seen to be incarnate; the devil incarnate and God incarnate; and then at the end of the chapter we have the Lord Jesus as the Truth, telling of what is the Father's love and purpose towards us. There are three things in chapter xiv.: that we are to be with God, to see God, and to be like Christ. Chapter xv. follows with exactly the other side of truth, the true Christian following Christ and daring to be Christ's against the world. "Arise, let us go hence," to the cross, and with Him. It closes with the world hating us and Him, and this repeated seven times over. In chapter xvi. it is the Spirit of God coming down from heaven, telling us all about the truth of Christ in glory. Hated by the world here, but the Holy Ghost telling of our position in Him. The truth is God manifested, the lie is man as he appears contrary to what he is, the devil's utterances as to the truth. The truth is the unveiling of God as to His love, His purposes; and who can unveil the truth? "I am the Truth." In one sense chapter xvii. is the end of the Gospel, the prayer of Christ presenting us to the Father. In chapter xiii. Christ is seen as having Himself gone to God, taking by anticipation a new stand in resurrection. But it is all "the truth," no exaggeration. Christ just tells us God; His thoughts, heart, purpose; and we as disciples are to drink it in.

Chapters xviii. and xix. give us His sufferings, but still it is the truth, about the *person* of Christ. Not merely as the King. In Matthew, when the mob came to apprehend Him, He only speaks of the twelve legions of angels his Father would send.

But in John, He utters that almighty word, "I am!" and they fall to the ground. In John, as the Truth, He puts His own imprimature upon His work, and says, "It is finished"; and delivers up His spirit, as if He had power to retain it or to let it go.

Now, chapter xx. and xxi. are the very opposite of chapter xvii. There it is the presentation of us to God, as if the cross were already past; but in xx. and xxi. it is the presentation of God to us, in resurrection. He says in xvii, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do," and so could present us to the Father, to God who sees the end from the beginning. But He could not so speak to us, as to peace and so on, till after the cross. But when that was an accomplished fact, He could come into the assembly in resurrection life, and say, "Peace be unto you." In chapter xx. He stands in our midst, telling us of Himself risen and assembled with us; but in xxi. He is seen taking us to Himself; first one going by death and then all the church disappearing into the glory together.

What Church does God's Word tell me to Join?

AN ADDRESS TO YOUNG BELIEVERS.

By ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

A GOOD many years ago now, I was staying behind at the close of a Gospel meeting that had been held in a theatre in Bradford. Amongst others who stayed behind, anxious about their souls, were a middle-aged man and his wife. I spoke to them, and God saved them both that night. They saw that Jesus had died for sinners, and therefore for them, and they trusted in Him.

It was about a month after, when the

services were still going on, that I saw the same couple staying behind again at the close of the meeting, after the Gospel preaching, and I went to them and asked what they wanted. "Well," said the man, "we want some of you to come and see us; there is something we want to ask you about, and we can talk better at home." I went next evening, and the man said, "Now, I will tell you what we want. We have been coming every Sunday night to the Gospel meetings, but we feel we want somewhere where we can go on a Sunday morning. So my wife said, 'Suppose we take sittings at the Methodist Chapel round the corner.' I said 'Very well,' and I was just going out to take the sittings, when something struck me, and I said, 'Perhaps, lass, there's something in the Book of God about where we should go after we are saved.' So she said, 'That's surely the right way.' And now that's what we want to know about. I can't read myself, but my wife can, and she'll read if you'll show her where."

So we turned from passage to passage, and I showed them some of the things I hope to show you to-night. The result was, that the same grace that taught them to obey the Gospel—for the Gospel is a command as well as an invitation—taught them also to obey the Lord's commandments. And so instead of joining this or that place, with different names men had given them, they just were baptized and assembled themselves with those who owned the Lord Jesus as Lord, Himself the only authority, His Word the only guide.

Now, the first steps are always the most important; and to be guided by the Word of God, directly after we are converted, is a most unspeakable blessing. I had not this

blessing myself. I was converted in the Church of England. Of course I had been sprinkled as a baby, and was told that I was an "heir of God and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven," though I knew perfectly well that I was not a child of God at all. Before I was converted, I simply didn't bother my head about these things, but after I was saved, I wanted to know the truth about them. And so for some years I was a searcher, and I wondered why it was there were no people, as I thought, who carried out what was commanded by God in His Word; why there was nothing like what there was in New Testament times! And then at last I found there were some, but very few compared with the great number who were carrying out man's traditions, and I was glad to unite myself with them.

Now this couple I spoke to you about, were just as willing to be guided by God through His Word when it was a question of following the Lord, as they were when it was a question of trusting in Him for salvation. That is the very first point I want to impress upon everyone here. When it was the question of salvation, nothing but God's Word was any use to you, and God gave you peace through that Word. Your own thoughts about how to be saved, could not help you; they would be nothing to stand on. For what use will anything be which man has set up, when we shall all have to do with God?

But if it is needful to have God's Word for that first step of all, don't you think it is equally needful to have God's Word for every other step of the way? Alas! how few believers there are, who say about every step of the way, "I want the teaching of God's Word about all this."

Let us turn to 2 Timothy, 3rd chapter, 15th verse. "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

You see that is what the Apostle Paul says about the Scriptures and salvation, they make wise unto salvation ; but that is not all they can do.

See verse 16. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God"—literally, "all Scripture is God-breathed"—"and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. Ver. 17, That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Now, there can be nothing more important than this, for this is the very foundation of everything. Ever since God began to give His Word, Satan has tried to oppose it, to make out that this part or that part is not correct, and if he can destroy one part, he has made void the whole, for God pledges Himself to it all. By the Scriptures, as we have them here, the man of God is "thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Thoroughly furnished ! There are plenty of people who think that more is needed than the Bible ; but anything that the Scriptures do not tell us, with regard to our doing the will of God, we had better not know, for it will only lead us astray. Now, let this be settled in your minds, that in His Word, God has made provision for everything. There is guidance there for every difficulty that may arise. So that wherever there is a heart that says, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" that heart is sure of His guidance and direction. But God has not only given us His Word, He has given us a teacher also. When a missionary goes to China, he not only needs

books out of which to learn the language, but he needs a teacher too. The books are all right, but he cannot understand them. If you will turn to the 15th chapter of John's Gospel you will find the Lord speaking of the teacher.

And let me say this—make a habit of having a Bible of your own, and get familiar with its pages, and whenever you hear the Bible read, open your own Bible and follow ; not with the idea of seeing if the reader is making mistakes, but to get yourself into the habit of reading it for yourself. Take it in at eye-gate as well as ear-gate, and the double impression that is got will be more enduring. Now look at the 26th verse.

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of me."

Again, 16th chapter, 13th verse.

"Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you in all truth."

So I say, we have not only got the God-given Word, but also a God-given Teacher to enable us to understand that Word. We find that God has supplied our needs when we become children of God, through the Scriptures, just as He supplied our need as sinners through that Word. That which taught us to own Christ as Saviour, teaches us to obey Him as Lord.

Now, the question that I proposed as our subject for to-night is—"What Church does God's Word tell me to join?" And, first, let me ask if you are really anxious to know what God's Word says about it. That was a solemn word which the Lord spake to the Jews in the 7th chapter of John's Gospel, the 13th verse—" . . . Jesus went up into the temple and taught. And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knows this man letters,

having never learned? Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me. If any man will do His will, He shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself."

Now, mark, that does not mean merely if any man is about to do His will; but, if he *wills* to do it, then he will know of the doctrine; but that is the first condition. Why did you who have found the Saviour not find Him sooner? I think it was because you did not want to do. As soon as you were willing to be saved in God's way, all difficulties were removed. The two difficulties in a man's way as a sinner are, first, that he does not realise that he is a sinner, and then, even after he has learned that, he is not willing to be saved in God's way, but prefers a way of his own like Naaman.

And it is just the same afterwards. The first necessity in order that we may be able to understand the will of God is, that we ourselves wish to obey Him; and then, says the Lord Jesus, "if any man wills to do His will," if he sets himself to do that, he shall know of the doctrine. It is the Spirit's delight to teach those who want to learn.

Now, if we are all agreed that we want to know what church God's Word bids us join, the next thing will be to find out what a church is, according to that Word.

(To be Continued.)

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NOT UNITS.—We are not saved that we may go each one by himself to heaven, but we are baptized into one body, brought into fellowship with one another, that we may grow up as a habitation for God in the Spirit.—*H. Groves.*

"GOD MOVES IN A MYSTERIOUS WAY."

LONG years ago, one who knew much of the Divine discipline, and who had learned that the way of the Lord is in "the deep waters," wrote—

"God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform,"

and to all who "observe these things," and seek thereby to "understand the loving-kindness of the Lord" (Psa. cvii. 43), fresh discoveries of His wonder-working power are still made known. The Word is full of this "mysterious way" of our God. Everywhere we see His hand out-working what His heart has planned, often using the most unexpected instruments. Yea, even causing the wrath of man and the hate of demons to work out His ends, and bring untold blessing to His people. A few instances of this "mysterious way" of our God may strengthen faith to trust Him, even when we cannot trace His way. Joseph was hated by his brethren, sold to strangers, and carried as a bondman to Egypt. All this seems wholly evil; a chain of heartless, godless deeds, without a redeeming feature. Yet in afteryears, when in "God's mysterious way" the wonder of preserving alive his famine-stricken brethren had been performed, he tells them what he had long ago learned in the experiences of his own soul from that dark deed, "It was not you that sent me hither, but God" (Gen. xlv. 8). Yes, God allowed the natural envy of his brethren's hearts, to become the instrument of working out His sovereign will.

The edict of Pharaoh, that Israel's male children should perish in the Nile, was a work of the enemy to overturn the purposes of the Most High. But what then? A rescued babe, nourished in his own palace,

skilled as he could not elsewhere have been in all the wisdom of Egypt, became under God's mysterious handiwork the deliverer of His people from their bitter bondage, and their leader out from that land which he by faith had himself in earlier years surrendered. Here again, we surely see the handiwork of God, who in His own mysterious and sovereign way, calls into action whatsoever He thinks fit to perform "his wonders," and fulfil His purposes of blessing to His own. But we need not pursue the story further in these minor scenes and histories, instructive and delightful as they are. The Cross is the great exhibition of this principle. There surely, as nowhere else, did the hand of God appear in wonder-working power. It was by "wicked hands" that the Holy One of God was nailed to the shameful tree. Envy and hatred burned in priest and ruler, as they hurried Him on to Golgotha. Yet that dark deed, we are told, was but the fulfilling of "the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" (Acts ii. 23). God was there working in His own "mysterious way," and performing the greatest of all His wonders, of which the half hath not yet been told. And this wonder-working God is our God; yea, more, He is our Father, and loves us with a Father's love. His heart is ours as well as His hand. He always does the very best for the objects of His love, however contrary things may seem for the moment. Of this we may rest assured, even in the midst of the tempest and the whirlwind—the day of faith's deepest trial. If the fiery furnace is part of His plan, why should we shrink back from entering it. There is a "need be" for its flame, and out of it—if faith fail not—we shall come "purified, made white, and tried," with

lowly thoughts of ourselves, a truer knowledge of God, and a riper experience of His goodness. Oh, to have confidence, unquestioning confidence in God; to trust Him even where we cannot trace Him; to say, "I will trust and not be afraid," even when His way is in the deep waters. "Satisfied the way He leadeth, must be always best." Our God makes no mistakes. He "worketh all things after the counsel of His own will," and we may rest assured that "all things work together for good" to His people. The knowledge of this gives rest and assurance that the results of His holy discipline, whatever the instruments He uses to effect it may be, will be untold blessing and fully-ripened fruit, in all who are exercised thereby. "All His paths drop fatness."

"His purposes will ripen fast,

Unfolding every hour;

The bud may have a bitter taste,

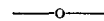
But sweet will be the flower."

"Blind unbelief is sure to err,

And scan His work in vain,

God is His own interpreter,

And He will make it plain."



Buy the Truth and Sell it not.

THE truth of believers' baptism (Matt. xxviii. 19, Mark xvi. 16), or of the Lord's Supper each first day of the week (Acts xx. 7), or any other part of "the apostles' doctrine" and fellowship, may seem even to God's children not sufficiently important to be always and everywhere adhered to. The fear of man, or the love of the fellow-creatures' company and smile, may tempt us to *sell* the truth of God in these matters, and not buy it. But let us never yield to this. That which is God's truth for this or that place, is His truth also for all times and all places.—*Henry Dyer.*

The Bible Annotator.

FOR THE HELP OF BIBLE STUDENTS AND CHRISTIAN WORKERS.

OUTLINES OF GOSPEL SUBJECTS.

FOUR STAGES IN GENUINE CONVERSION.

- Convicted of Sin. (Isaiah vi., ver. 5).
 Cleansed from Sin (" ver. 7).
 Converted to God (" ver. 8).
 Commissioned to Serve(" ver. 9).

FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

- The *Proclamation* of Forgiveness (Acts xiii. 36).
 The *Blessedness* of Forgiveness (Psa. xxxii. 1).
 The *Ground* of Forgiveness (Eph. iv. 32).
 The *Extent* of Forgiveness (Col. ii. 13).
 The *Knowledge* of Forgiveness (1 John ii. 12).
 The *Object* of Forgiveness (Psa. cxxx. 4).

" AT JESUS' FEET."

- The Place of Forgiveness (Luke vii. 38).
 The Place of Healing (Matt. xv. 3).
 The Place of Teaching (Luke x. 39).
 The Place for Comfort (John xi. 32).
 The Place of Prayer (Luke viii. 52).
 The Place in Fear (Rev. i. 17). ✓ 17
 The Place of Worship (Luke xvii. 16).

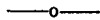
BIBLICAL WORDS AND PHRASES.

SCHISM.—Greek *Skisma*. It is translated "rent" (Matt. ix. 16: Mark ii. 21): "division" (John vii. 43: ix. 16: x. 19): "schism" (1 Cor. xii. 25): "divisions" (1 Cor. i. 10: xi. 18). The word is used to describe a rupture or breach among persons or things where formerly union subsisted. In order to understand its force, it is necessary to know what that union was in its first estate.

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES (John v. 39). The word "search" here, means to trace, to follow, to "scent as a dog"—hence to trace a subject throughout Scripture. There is another kind of searching mentioned in Acts xvii. 12, where it is said the Bereans "searched the Scriptures daily." The word here used, means to "examine closely," to scrutinize in order to give a judgment. Both are needed, and equally important in the accurate study of the Word of God.

BIBLE PREFIXES.—The Hebrew word for "Ben" signifies "a son," and is frequently used as a prefix to proper names in the Old Testament. For example—*Benjamin*, "son of my right hand." *Ben-ammi*, "son of my people." The Chaldee

word "Bar" also means, "a son," and is frequently used as a prefix in the New Testament. For example—Simon Barjona, is "Simon, son of Jonas": Bartimæus, the "son of Timæus."



The Young Believer's Question Box.

BESSIE T., asks—"Are all believers sealed with the Spirit?" Ephesians i. 13 fully answers this—"In whom also after that ye believed (literally 'in whom believing') ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." The steps are very simple and very clear. They had heard the Gospel of their salvation: they had believed: they were sealed. Equally clear is the word—"If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. viii. 9). There are many distinctions among God's children, such as the carnal and the spiritual, the weak and the strong, babes and fathers, but the great "Hall Mark" of heaven, the seal of the Spirit is found upon them all, distinguishing them from the world, and marking them as God's purchased possession.

Are we taught in the Scripture to expect "signs" or prophecies fulfilled before the coming of the Lord. Some of the Christians with whom I meet, say we are? There is no "sign" to be given, no prophetic word to be fulfilled before the coming of the Son of God from heaven (1 Thess. i. 10), to receive His people unto Himself (John xiv. 3), which is the proximate hope of the believer and of the Church. There will be "signs" (Acts ii. 19-20) given, and prophecies fulfilled, before His return to earth as Son of Man, but these concern God's earthly people, who in the midst of unprecedented sorrows will be looking for their Deliverer. It is by failing to distinguish these events—the Lord's coming for His saints, and His appearing with them: His coming to the clouds to receive them unto Himself, and His Epiphany to the earth with them to manifest His and their glory, and to punish His foes, and by mixing up the hopes of the heavenly and earthly peoples, that such confusions exist. Those who fail to see the distinctive calling and hope of the Church as taught in the Word, must necessarily postpone the personal return of the Lord Jesus, until prophetic Scriptures have been fulfilled and tribulation signs appear. But this robs the Church of her rightful place, and her

proper hope. "Rightly dividing the Word of truth" (2 Tim. ii. 15), all supposed difficulties disappear, and "the hope" shines forth in living lustre, causing gladness in the heart in which it abides, purifying the life (1 John iii. 3), and keeping the saint apart, waiting for Christ.

What is the difference between the words used in Psalm xix. 7-11 in describing the various aspects of the Word of God? "The law of the Lord" means His will *pointed out*; this "converts" or restores the soul. The "testimonies" are that to which He bears witness. The "statutes" signify that which has been *engraved*: the unalterable character of His Words, ever "right," and to those who obey them, cause of heart-rejoicing. The "commandment"—a father's word to His child. The "judgments"—the decisions of a judge, teaching our duty to others (see Exodus xxi. 1).

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Answers to Correspondents.

ANNIE S.—We fear there are no volumes of "The Northern Intelligencer" published by Mr Donald Ross in Aberdeen, from 1870 to 1875, now to be had. If any of our readers know of such, we will be glad to hear of them.

GEORGE S., GLASGOW.—The Revised New Testament is no doubt a help to accurate Bible study, and as such we constantly use it. But we would never think of surrendering our valuable and ever-precious Authorized Version, either in public reading or private study, for the Revised. You do quite right in giving the revised reading alongside the other where it is better, but we do not think it a wise plan to read publicly, either in the Assembly or in ministering the Word from the Revised Version.

E. J. C., LONDON.—The first responsibility of an Assembly is toward the poor and needy saints within its own borders; then, if it can stretch forth to aid in supplying the need of others, so let it do. But it seems incongruous, that an Assembly should be sending continuous sums for the relief of those in want in lands afar, while fellow-believers in its own fellowship are in deep need. There is, no doubt, a certain fleshly satisfaction in seeing the name and the sum on a subscription list, which, giving a cup of cold water to one in the next street

because he "belongs to Christ," does not yield, but in the day of Christ, the latter will shine forth as true gold. The same is true of giving for the spread of the Gospel. The first responsibility of an Assembly is, to carry on a vigorous, aggressive and continuous Gospel work in the district, town, or village where it exists, and to liberally supply those who have the care of the Assembly's Gospel work with finances for the same. But this is not always done. There are Assemblies whose names appear as being deeply interested in the spread of the Gospel in heathen lands, who never spend a shilling in bringing God's Gospel, or their own meetings for the preaching of it before the unconverted, within a stone's throw of their hall, with the general result, that they do not "get the people." God's way is "beginning at Jerusalem" and then onward and outward till "the uttermost parts of the earth" (Acts i. 8) are reached.

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Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION II.—Is it according to the Word, that an Assembly should choose and appoint certain of its number to look after money matters, and to administer the gifts of the saints, as in Acts vi. 1-6?

ANSWER A.—The words "look ye out among you" (Acts vi. 3), leave no doubt that those serving the church in its money matters should be chosen or approved men. But this need not be by ballot or popular election, as is common in the world's churches. Those taking oversight will readily "know" such as have "proved" themselves (1 Tim. iii. 13) by faithful service, and all that needs to be done is, to name such brethren to the Assembly, as being willing to administer its temporal affairs, and thus receive its sanction much in the same way as when one is received into the Assembly's fellowship. The less form and ceremony the better.—W. J. M.

ANSWER B.—Care should be taken to distinguish between oversight work and the care of temporal things. There is nothing in the Word as to the choice or appointment of the former, or for any spiritual ministry, but only in regard to those having charge of money or business matters. The word "deacon" has come to be applied to such only, and to give them an official position; but it is wrong to

use that word as a distinctive title, it belongs equally to all who "serve," whether in this or any other way.—J. S.

ANSWER C.—Brethren serving the Church in the management of its money affairs, should certainly be named to and approved by it, but there can be no "appointment," in the sense of Acts vi. 3, as there are no apostles nor any body of men having authority to do so now. Acts vi. 3 tells, what sort of men they should be. "Two are better than one," for in all such matters there should be the fullest fellowship.—J. B.

ANSWER D.—"The office of a deacon" (1 Tim. iii. 13), should be rendered, "who have served well," and has no idea of official appointment. The word "deacon," which occurs thrice in the Authorized Version (Phil. i. 1; 1 Tim. iv. 8 and 12), simply means "servant," and includes all who serve, whether in spiritual or temporal things, as a reference to the following passages where the word *diakonos*, is rendered "servant" or "minister," shows—see Matt. xx. 26. xxiii. 11; John ii. 5, xii. 26; Rom. xvi. 1; 2 Cor. iii. 6; Eph. iii. 7.—H. H. S.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—It is necessary to distinguish between the exercise of spiritual gifts which the Lord has given to men (Eph. iv. 12), and which those to whom they have been committed are responsible to use for Him, and the charge of money or other temporal and business matters, which may have been entrusted by the Assembly to certain of its number for administration. The church has no authority to "choose" or "appoint" any to perform spiritual functions, such as ministry of the Word, shepherding of the flock, or oversight. But it is wholly different in regard to mundane matters, such as the charge of the Assembly's funds, the administration of its bounty to the poor, gifts for the spread of the Gospel, and the conducting of its business affairs. We read of one who was "chosen of the churches" (2 Cor. viii. 5) for such a service, and again (in 1 Cor. xvi. 3), that it was those whom the church at Corinth "approved" that took charge of its bounty. Those chosen in Acts vi. are not called "deacons," nor should that term be restricted to those who serve the church in financial and business affairs. It has a much wider significance, as an examination of the word *diakonos* in an *Englishman's Greek Concordance* will show. Two of the "seven"—Stephen and Philip—were

preachers of the Word, but there was no choice or appointment to this; they exercised the gifts they had received from the Lord. Men of personal godliness, who have proved themselves by faithful service, in whom the saints have confidence, may well be entrusted with the Assembly's money, and they in the administration thereof will seek to have the fellowship of all who oversee and guide the saints, and as often as occasion requires will give a general account of their stewardship to the saints, keeping them well informed of all necessities. We feel assured that where such a ministry is faithfully and wisely rendered, there will be no need unmet, and no cause of dissatisfaction. Under the guidance of such brethren, "business" affairs will proceed smoothly and satisfactorily, giving no occasion for complaint to "troublers" in Israel.

Questions Requiring Answers.

We invite the help of those to whom the Lord has given understanding of the Scriptures and wisdom, in the answering of the following questions, bearing upon matters of real difficulty to honest and inquiring minds. Answers should be brief, concise, and clear, leading to the Word of God. We desire to have all sides of the truth, duly balanced.

3.—It seems to be becoming a common practice for certain Assemblies to invite evangelists to conduct "Missions," or have "Special Services," who are not gathered to the Name of the Lord, but who preach in any sect where their services are required. They "break bread," and "teach" the saints while their "engagement" lasts, and next appear in some worldly church, out from which in obedience to the truth, others have been brought at no little sacrifice. This is going on at present where the writer is in fellowship, and he with many others who have lately been gathered to the Lord's Name are stumbled, and much perplexed. Any help from the Word bearing on this matter, would be much appreciated?

4.—Should the Gospel work of an Assembly be entrusted to those in it who have the ability to preach, leaving the entire arrangements of it in their hands, or should the overseeing brethren as a whole have it under their supervision and control? This is a real difficulty in many places.

5.—Is it according to the Word of God, that the Lord's Supper should be eaten on other days beside the first day of the week?

The Attractive Power of the Name of Jesus.

THE Lord Jesus Himself has declared—
 “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me” (John xii. 32). In the plan of man’s redemption it might be said, that Christ is God’s “Centre of gravity.” Jacob, when blessing his sons, said of Christ, under the name of Shiloh, “And unto Him shall the gathering of the people be” (Gen. xlix. 10). We read in John viii. 55, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad.” We read of Moses that “he esteemed the reproach of Christ, greater riches than the treasures in Egypt” (Heb. xi. 26). When Paul got a revelation of the Lord Jesus, it so captivated his heart that he became blind to every other attraction but that one object. He cast everything else away, and with a zeal which never flagged, he continued to “press forward” to know more of Him, and to drink deeper of His unsearchable riches. When John the Baptist came to tell of the coming of the Messiah, his theme was, “Behold the Lamb of God.”

The Father’s testimony from the excellent glory was—“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him” (Matt. xvii. 5). When the Lord Jesus was on earth, His invitation was, “Come unto Me”; and there was a divine magnetism in His Name and character that drew the needy, the suffering, and the guilty unto Him. The woman we read of in Luke vii., who was known to be a “sinner” in the city where she lived, was drawn to Him. She saw in Him one who could meet her need, and the sinner was drawn to the Saviour. The woman who had the issue of blood for twelve years, and had tried every other

means of cure, was drawn to Him. Then His disciples would seem to have known little truth. They were drawn to a person. After He rose from the dead it was still Himself—the attractiveness of His person—that held them fast to one centre, and thus bound them to each other.

After He ascended on high, and the Holy Spirit came down, and the divinely-called heralds of the Gospel went forth with their message, it was JESUS they preached. The *focus* of Peter’s address on the day of Pentecost was, “that God hath made that same JESUS whom ye crucified, both LORD and CHRIST.” When Philip went down to Samaria, he “preached CHRIST unto them.” When he was taken up into the Ethiopian’s chariot, he “preached unto him JESUS.” Has that Name lost its power, or are we losing faith in it? Are we getting more concerned about gathering crowds, than about winning souls?

“All that the Father hath given Me shall come to Me” (John vi. 37) is still true. Just as true as “Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out.”

Let Gospel preachers keep to the simple lines of Gospel testimony as found in Scripture, telling out of hearts overflowing with the love of Christ, the sweet message of salvation through the blood of atonement, without anything to please nature; and, whilst the crowds around might be less, genuine new births will not be fewer.

We may need inventions of our own to attract people to meetings; but the FATHER needs no such helps to draw sinners, or saints either, to His well-beloved Son.

Here we touch another line of truth. As the saving power of the Name of Jesus is the spiritual magnet which draws sinners to Him, so it is the attractiveness of His

surpassing excellence which draws His disciples around Himself.

In the days of the church's infancy, there was no human organisation to keep the disciples together, yet we read that "all that believed were together." The multitudes of them that believed were "of one heart, and of one soul" (Acts iv. 32). There was one central object which engaged every heart, and that Object was CHRIST. There was one controlling power which was binding every heart to that Divine Centre, and that power was the indwelling SPIRIT. They had nothing else, and they needed nothing else, to keep them together. As the multitude of the disciples increased, difficulties cropped up, and these had to be met. As the adversary began to sow seeds of discord, and bring in evil doctrines, these had to be dealt with; but there is no trace, so far as I know, of any new organisation, or any other or additional centre of attraction, whereby the disciples were to be bound together, or the purity and unity of the church secured. They were kept together by the power of the Name of Jesus, as the planets of the solar system are kept in the courses by the attraction of the central sun. No doubt, as evils manifested themselves, and doctrines subversive of the faith were taught, greater vigilance on the part of those who exercised shepherd-care among the saints was called forth, but there was no new principle of gathering set forth, no fresh legislation to set aside that which God had already given. The attractiveness of the Name of the Lord Jesus as God's Centre, to which by the Spirit through the Word He gathers His people, was to abide as long as the church remains here below.

(To be Continued.)

GEO. ADAM.

LECTURES ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

By WILLIAM LINCOLN, of Beresford, London.

CHAPTER I.

ALL of us are conscious, I should think, that had we only Matthew and Mark and Luke by themselves, there would be some incompleteness about them, that something more would be wanting. The *King*, the *Servant*, and the *Man* are portrayed in these three, but in this Gospel of John, we have "the Mighty God," "the Father of the everlasting ages," "the Prince of Peace."

It is true, that many hundreds of streaks of Divine glory are to be found in the earlier Gospels, but here all seem gathered together, and here we are in the full blaze of the incarnate God. This Gospel seems to me somewhat like the innermost curtains of the Tabernacle. Others there were of commoner material, but the innermost of all were composed of gold, and of purple, and of fine twined linen. Here is something like these curtains.

"In the beginning." What human mind, what created intelligence, can go back to such remote period? For it does not mean the beginning of creation; creation is not alluded to, until we read verse 3. The first two verses contemplate a period altogether anterior to any creation whatever; like the beginning of Genesis, where it is solitude, except that God is there speaking. So in these first two verses. It is solitude again; no creature, only God is here. And it is more certainly the case, that emphasis is thrown upon this expression, because in verse 2 it is repeated.

"In the beginning was the Word." Not "He came into existence," not "He was made." But in the beginning He *was*. Of

John the Baptist, in verse 6, instead of the word "was," it should be "there became," or "there was made." And here let me notice, that throughout the beginning of this Gospel, John is contrasted with Christ; like as at the scene before the cross, Peter is contrasted with Christ. Four times over is this so. So here it is, "there was made" a man, John. "In the beginning *was*." I might look at a little moth fluttering round me, and consider it as a creature of a few days, whilst I had been scores of years in the world. That comparison is as nothing to that between the man that *was made*, and Him of whom it is said "In the beginning *was* the Word."

But this expression, "the Word," we must ponder a little. It is the expression which the Holy Ghost has distinctly chosen, both in the Gospel and in the Epistle, to designate the relationship subsisting between the Father and the Son. In the next clauses of the verse, we see the oneness of the Word with God, though first there is a clause stating His distinctness from the Father. "And the Word was with God." Distinct from the Father, one with God. What a mysterious being! Oh, what height up! Oh, in what a remote age it has pleased the Spirit to begin this wondrous Gospel! Mahometans say, that God has no Son, nor can have; that God is alone. If so, then that is like to the sun in the sky not shining out at all, nor gladdening creation at all, but keeping all its light and all its heat to itself. But if God is love and God is light, then the love and the light shine out. I believe that this, and that other expression in Hebrews—"the brightness of His glory"—are invaluable, as showing the relationship of the Son to the Father. If God were only Divine, He

could not communicate to me His nature; if we have God's nature, it is through God having become man, and revealing that wondrous, complex Being to our souls. "The Word"—the mind, the thought, the purpose, He who was in the bosom of God, in the heart of God, in the mind of God. We think with words, we could not think without. He who has never known words, has never known what it is to think. Then here is God's thought: "In the beginning was the Word." Not the word of creation, I repeat; that we have in verse 3; but simply His eternal thought, concentrated in this mysterious Being. Then I remark His distinctness, "the Word was with God"; and then I remark His oneness, "the Word was God"; and beyond it we cannot get. He was God. It needs no addition, admits of no subtraction—"the Word was God."

The second verse is very different in its teaching from the first. "The same was in the beginning with God": that is, the same Word. There is no repetition in this. Emphasis is now fixed upon the existence of the Word, as such, from all eternity. Not the eternity of the Person, but the eternity of His existence as the Word. In other words, in verse 2 we have the Christhead of the Lord Jesus; in verse 1 His Godhead. There are three other Scriptures which also very distinctly bring before us the Christhead of Jesus. Proverbs viii. 22, "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old." The Lord *possessed* me, not *created* me. "I was set up (lit., anointed, or Christed), from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills

was I brought forth. . . . Then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him; rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth; and My delights were with the sons of men." That by anticipation, because it was before the hills were brought forth. The word for "brought forth," which occurs once or twice here, includes the idea of piercing or wounding. God looks at the end from the beginning, and looks at the beginning from the end. It is a way of His; as if all time were but a moment with Him. Here He speaks of Christ as the Pierced One, before creation was; and speaks of us as with Him in glory before we existed. Thus, too, in the assaults against Jerusalem, in days yet future, by Gomer and all his bands, of which we read in the Prophet; He names them not by the appellations by which we know them (Gomer as Germany), and as they will then be known; but according to their families as they descended from Mount Ararat—as the descendants of Shem, Ham, and Japheth. At the end He looks to the beginning. But now the other two passages Colossians i. 15, speaking of Christ, "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature." Some render that "the begotten before creation." I think it refers to Christ as the pattern Being in the mind of God, and that God formed everything in reference to Him. Then we have another in Rev. iii. "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God"—Christ. Christ set up from everlasting—Wisdom. The word "Wisdom" and the term "Word" are very nearly the same. Wisdom is the word unuttered, the Word is wisdom uttered: that is the difference.

The same Word was in the beginning with God. But when this same Word was with God, God associated a people with Him. There are so many Scriptures which say so, that one is almost at a loss which to turn to. Take, for instance, Titus i. 2. "In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began," or "before eternal times." There are a people who are to have eternal life, and it is promised to their Head, Christ (Who is their eternal life), for them, before eternal times. So we read, too, in chapter iii. 7, "Heirs of eternal life according to the hope"; the hope referred to in chapter i. 2. The Epistle to the Ephesians is so familiar, that I need scarcely refer to it. "According as He hath chosen us in Him, before the foundation of the world." In God's account, there was the Christ, and there was the church, altogether; yet had they no existence except in Christ. Christ had an existence, because we have seen that He was, "in the beginning" (verse 1). I do not think that there is any reference to us until verse 2. In verse 1, it is the Godhead, God and Christ alone; but in verse 2, it is the Christhead, and the church in Him. So that verse 2 is very important, and we should read it with care, and not regard it as useless repetition. We should never slur, or hurry over, any statement of the living God. They only need our meditation, for their bigness and their grandeur to appear. Like the stars in the heavens: at their immense distance they appear almost nothing; yet, were they brought near to us, we should see that they are worlds immense. So, it may be, we find nothing in certain verses, because we hurry over them; yet, if we stayed and pondered them, their greatness would break upon our minds.

OUR OVERFLOWING CUP OF BLESSINGS.

"MY CUP RUNNETH OVER" (Psa. xxiii. 2).

A MEDITATION: BY THE LATE JOHN DICKIE.

I HAVE been musing on a word in the twenty-third Psalm—"My cup runneth over." Perhaps it will not weary you too much, if we meditate on the words a little together. We have just as abundant reason to utter these words as David, or any other saint of God. Our cup runs over, because it is so very full. God has filled it to the brim, and He keeps it filled. Every new day, brings a new consignment of great mercies. It is filled with sweetness: not indeed with what the flesh counts sweet, but it is all sweet to the spirit. There is not one tiny droplet of bitterness in it, except what my own unbelief and self-will may put in. God Himself mixed the cup, mixed it for His child, and He has expended on it a wisdom that is unerring, and a love that is Infinite. And the cup is a very capacious one. It is a human heart which God made originally for His own indwelling, and therefore He made it roomy enough. This cup would hold the whole world with all its contents: nay, all the unnumbered worlds which God has created would no more fill "my cup" than a tiny drop of water would fill the dried-up bed of the great ocean. But with all its size, "my cup *runneth over.*" What is it that fills it?

It is filled with the free gifts of Divine love. Every item in the cup is a wonderful gift of love, but it needs an anointed eye and a lively faith, to discern any love at all in many of the items which God has put into it. The thoughts of God about His people are all thoughts of peace, and not of evil (Jer. xxix. 11). So many are these thoughts, that even Christ as a Man

had to say "they are more than can be numbered" (Psa. xl. 5). So precious also are they, that we cannot appraise their value (Psa. cxxxix. 17, 18). Faith counts them to be sweeter than honey, and more enriching than fine gold. It was the enriching gifts of God the Creator, put into the cup of innocent Adam in Eden, that made him so happy. It is the gifts of God bestowed on holy angels, which fill all heaven with inexpressible blessedness. But I want to say—although the thought startles, and almost overpowers me—that God has put into "my cup" far more than Adam ever had. Yea, if all the cups of all the "Brightest and best of the sons of the morning" were poured into mine, "my cup" would hold them all, and would not run over. For unto the very least of the little ones who are now united to Christ, more grace has been shewn, than to the mightiest of the angels who excel in strength; and although we cannot sum up completely the contents of our cup—it will take Eternity to do that—yet we may examine it as fully now as we can, in order to provoke our hearts to trust and love, and to that whole-hearted obedience which faith and love never fail to secure.

To begin then, there is in "my cup" one sweet mercy, which innocent Adam never tasted, which never sweetened the cup of holy angels, that is the mercy of FORGIVENESS. God's *givings* are very blessed, but O how shall we speak of His forgivings. Ask the prodigal which of all the manifestations of his father's love was the most delicious to him that day when he was welcomed home. He will be able to tell you calmly about the "bread enough and to spare," which now satisfies his hunger. He will speak with unquivering lip of the

"best robe" on his shoulders, the "ring" on his hand and the "shoes" on his feet. But the strong man breaks down completely into boisterous weeping, as he goes on to speak of the rapturous moment, in which he received the clearest token of full forgiveness: that moment, when pressed to his father's bosom he felt his father's heart beat against his, and the tears on the cheeks of both met and mingled—tears of boundless joy of the one, and of heart-broken sorrow of the other. And now his sobbing hinders him from telling, how in one long, delicious kiss of Father-love, his full, free and whole-hearted forgiveness was sealed to him. Who is it that has passed through such an experience, who would not reckon it among the most precious of the unnumbered mercies with which God is filling his cup till, overflowed, it runneth over. But it were idle to attempt drawing up an inventory, of what makes the believer's cup to run over. We can only cast a hasty glance at some of the items in order to encourage joy in the Lord.

Let me say, "my cup" contains all the "exceeding great and precious promises" of God, thousands in number, fitted for every emergency, and the least valuable of them more precious than all the wealth of all the world. They are God's "Bank-notes," His promises to pay, and if men count with such confidence on the faithfulness and promise of a solvent earthly Bank, how much more should we count with certainty on the faithful payment of every issue of the Bank of Heaven. But then we must apply for payment, for the heavenly notes are payable "*On Demand.*"

And we must not think that even the Bible contains a full, exhaustive revelation of the exceeding riches of Divine Grace. Certainly not. It is such a revelation as

befits our present comprehension, but beyond all that has hitherto been expressed, there are yet depths and heights, and lengths and breadths, of unexplored and unrevealed love, the Infinite love of Him whose nature and whose name is Love. These it shall take ETERNITY to open up, but they are all even now in the cup of the believer, though as yet he is not able to understand how incalculably rich he is in having them.

And "my cup" contains nothing less than "all the fulness of God" (Eph. iii. 19) for it contains God Himself. Yes, He has put Himself into "my cup," and He has bidden me say with triumphant faith—"The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of My *cup*" (Psa. xvi. 5). No wonder then that "my cup runneth over," when God Himself—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—has condescended to enter into it (John xiv. 23). It were but a small thing after this, to add, that our cup contains everything. All the providences of God are in it, all alike working together in marvellous ways for our *best* good. The outward comforts which help to sweeten life, and the withdrawal of these comforts which sends the thirsting soul to drink more eagerly out of the rivers of pleasure which are at God's right hand: the season of health, and the more blessed season of sickness; the living and the dying, all, ALL are in the cup, and are put there as precious love—gifts from our Heavenly Father.

Are these things true, or are they the mere trash of a waking dream? If true, how far are we believing them? How far is our daily spirit and living taking shape and colour from this faith? How impossible would the faith of all this, make discontent or fretting! The happy soul

would say even amid its sorrows, as Jesus said amid His—"The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

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What Church does God's Word tell me to Join?

AN ADDRESS TO YOUNG BELIEVERS.

By ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

PART II.

WE have all been accustomed to hear buildings of brick or stone called "churches." But no earthly buildings are ever called churches in the Word of God. The Lord Jesus only uses the word "church" twice, and on these two occasions, He gives us the two different thoughts that God Himself connects with the word. These are very much alike, and yet very different. The first time Christ spoke of the church was in Matthew xvi. Let us read from the 13th verse, "When Jesus came into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am? And they said, Some say, Thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, but whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said unto Him, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven. And I say also 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."

Take notice of that; He is showing us the foundation of the church, and that foundation has to do with what He Him-

self is; and it is only as we give His right place to the Lord Jesus, that we shall be able to understand the truth about the church. Oh! dear friends, would to God that all of us here, might hear the Lord putting that question to our hearts. What a help it would be to us, to get a right answer to all our questions, if that question really searched our hearts through and through, "Whom do ye say that I am?"

The people all thought He was a great man; perhaps John the Baptist, or one of the prophets; but that would be no foundation for God's building. Peter answered for all the rest of the disciples when he said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Now, as soon as Peter makes that confession, Jesus answers, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven."

Yes, it was God who had taught Peter, and it is God who has taught every man, woman, and child that has believed ever since. "And," adds Jesus, "I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church."

Now, this needs a little explanation, because in our English, there does not seem to be any connection between the word "Peter" and the word "rock." This was spoken in Greek; and the Greek word for *Peter* is *petros*, which means a stone, or a piece of a rock, while the Greek word for the rock itself is *petra*. So that the Lord Jesus says to the man that has been taught by God to confess Jesus as the Son of God, "Why, you are a man having the same nature as the rock foundation; and it is of such that I will build my church." If you turn to Peter's epistles, you will find that this is exactly how he understood it.

The second epistle of Peter begins, "Simon Peter, a servant and Apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Then in the 4th verse he goes on, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature. . . ." Of whom does Peter say that this is true? Of all who have obtained "like precious faith" with himself. That is exactly what the Lord meant when He said, "Peter, you have believed, therefore you are a partaker of the divine nature. You are a stone, of the same nature as the Rock, and you are thus fitted to be built upon that divine foundation." "On this rock I will build my church."

The church, therefore, consists of all who believe on Him, from the time when the Gospel was first preached, to the time when He shall come again to receive His own. All these, without a single exception, form Christ's Church.

This, then, is the first use that Christ makes of the word "church." But if we turn to the 18th chapter of Matthew, we shall find Him using it in a somewhat different sense. He is now speaking about what we are to do when a brother sins against us. First, we are to try to win him alone; then, if he will not hear, we are to take one or two others with us, and, if he still refuse to listen, then, 17th verse—"And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church . . ." Now, the moment we read this sentence, we see that the Lord is using the word "church" in a different sense from that of the former occasion. I cannot go to all the believers of the past

nineteen centuries, so it is quite evident that the Lord is not speaking of the church that He told Peter He was going to build on the rock foundation. But we learn what He is now referring to, by turning to the 20th verse—"For where two or three are gathered together unto My Name, there am I in the midst of them." "Unto My Name," not simply "in My Name," and that makes a great deal of difference, though I must not stop to dwell upon it now. You will see, that there is a strong resemblance between these two uses of the word *church*, notwithstanding the evident difference. In each case, everything depends on what Christ is. In one, He is the foundation, in the other He is the centre. But in the one case it was all believers built upon Him, whereas now, it is a limited number gathered together unto His Name. Unto His Name; owning His Name as God would have us own it. You remember the wonderful words of Phil. ii.—"He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him and given Him the Name which is above every name . . . that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Yes, God has set the Name of Jesus above every other name; God has said He is the only one we are to acknowledge as Lord, and when the Lord Jesus speaks of believers gathering to His Name, He means that they own Him as Lord, and give Him the place that God has given Him.

Oh! if once believers give Christ that place, they will not suffer themselves to be called by any other name than His own.

But this leads us on to some words of His, in the last chapter of the same gospel. You know that all the time of the Lord's

life here before the cross, He was here as one who had laid aside His glory, and had taken the place of a dependent Man, trusting God, and obeying Him in everything. But after He was risen from the dead, He claimed His glory back again, and the Father delighted to give it to Him. Now, that glory includes complete and undivided authority. Whoever sets up to have authority in the church, is denying the authority of Christ. The Pope robs the Lord Jesus when he claims authority. It is true he says, "I am Christ's vicar, and my authority is derived from Him"; but Christ never committed His authority to any man.

Read the 18th verse—"All authority is given unto Me in heaven and earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. . . ."

There are two words in the New Testament translated *power*; the one means *strength*, and the other *authority*. The latter is the word used here; and the Lord Jesus, in sending forth His servants, declares that all authority belongs to Him, and that for this reason they are to teach all who believe to take the place of disciples, and to obey whatever He had commanded. You will notice that He does not delegate authority to the apostles. The Pope claims to be Christ's vicar on earth, and to have received authority from Him. But Christ expressly keeps all authority in His own hands, and does not tell His servants to make laws for His people, but only to teach them to obey His laws which He had given them. Whether, therefore, it be Pope, or Synod, or Conference, or the State, or private individuals that attempt to make

laws for the government of Christ's people, they are robbing Him of His authority.

Now, you notice that the Lord uses the word "teach" twice over; but the two words are quite different, and have different meanings. The first means *to make disciples*, while the second is literally *to teach*. But what is meant by the making of disciples? A "disciple" is one who owns another person as his teacher and guide. How, then, are any to be made disciples? By the same grace that saved them. No sooner did Saul of Tarsus believe that Jesus, the despised Nazarene, was indeed the Lord in the glory, than he enquires of Him, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" So faith must go before discipleship. The lost sinner must know the Lord Jesus as his Saviour first, and then he is bidden to own Him as Lord. First make disciples, then baptise them, and then teach them to obey all that Christ has commanded.

We were all enemies against God once; but God has broken down the enmity through the Cross, and in this way He has prepared us to receive His commandments.

I am speaking to many who have recently trusted in the Lord Jesus. Are you truly enquiring, like Saul, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Take care that your enquiry is not—What do these people, among whom I have learned the way of salvation, wish me to do? That would be putting us in the place of Christ. We simply desire, like the disciples of old, to teach you to obey whatever Christ has commanded.

(To be Continued.)

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THE SECRET OF BLESSING.—Obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ, is the secret, not only of individual blessing, but of the collective enjoyment of His manifested presence.—*Thos. Newberry.*

Letter From a Boer Commandant.

The following letter written by a Boer Commandant, who is a prisoner of war under British rule, to a well known servant of Christ labouring in the Gospel in the West Indies, will, we feel sure, appeal to many of the people of God. We have no doubt there are amongst those misguided people—the majority of whom were forced to take up arms, or suffer death at the hands of their leaders—many of the Lord's redeemed, and it is the privilege, not to say responsibility, of Christians in Great Britain to care for their wants as far as in them is, as well as to send the Gospel to those who have been conquered, and are in exile under the British Flag. We shall most cheerfully forward to our brother, and to servants of Christ labouring in these islands, Dutch and English Bibles, Scriptures, and Gospel Books, for the Dutch prisoners of war.

"In the name of the prisoners of war on this island, I thank you for the books I received from you. It is one of the blessings of our Lord Jesus Christ, to receive love-gifts from different parts of the world. It is a great consolation to us to know, that there are those who think of and care for us. Many of the prisoners on this island are sincere Christians, and experience the blessings of God in this time of sorrow. We desire that the prayers we daily pray to our Father, may be acceptable with Him, and that this time may soon end in peace. Most of those with me here are Dutch, and can only read their own language, but a number can read English well. I regret to say we have few Bibles, only two English Bibles I believe are on the island. A few more would be very welcome to us. Hoping we shall meet in heaven, if not before.—I am, yours very truly,

L. C. M. I., Boer Commandant.

The Bible Annotator.

GLEANINGS FROM BIBLE MARGINS.

The Place for Prayer—"Everywhere" (1 Tim. ii. 8).
 A Time for Prayer—"Always" (Luke xviii. 1).
 Subjects for Prayer—"All Saints" (Eph. vi. 18).
 Subjects for Prayer—"All Men" (1 Tim. ii. 1).
 Subjects for Prayer—"Everything" (Phil. iv. 6).
 Answers to Prayer—"All Things" (Matt. xxi. 22).

The Young Believer's Question Box.

BERTIE H., asks—"What do the words 'From faith to faith' (Rom. i. 18) mean?" From, or "out of," faith, refers to the principle or manner in which it is revealed; "to faith," the principle upon which it is received—"faithwise," as some put it.

J. S., EDINBURGH, asks—"Were there different

forms of Church Government, and diverse ideas and practices among the churches of early times, as there are now?" No doubt, even in the Apostles' days, there were those who taught "other doctrine" (1 Tim. i.), and soon after their departure, men arose "speaking perverse"—or distorted—"things, to lead away the disciples after them" (Acts xx. 33). But there was no room for diverse or conflicting forms of church government, such as we see in our day, in the Divine legislation given by the Lord to Paul, who was the chosen "master-builder" (1 Cor. iii.), and received from Him (1 Cor. xi. 23) the pattern of all that He desired to be in His church during the entire period of its earthly pilgrimage. It was according to this pattern that Paul formed and built up each assembly, and taught Timothy to do the same, which he did so fully and faithfully, that Paul could tell the Corinthian church that he, being "faithful in the Lord," would bring them into remembrance of his ways, which be in Christ, "As I teach in every church" (1 Cor. iv. 17). The pattern was the same for all; no improvements, no additions were necessary, simply because all was Divine, all had come from heaven. Had God's people been satisfied with it, no diverse churches would have existed. All divisions—then and now—have their origin in a departure from God's perfect plan. Men think they can "improve" upon it, and bring it "up to date" to suit the times. And need we wonder if unbelievers claim a similar liberty, and do with the Gospel what believers do with the church? For if 1 Cor. xiv, with its pattern of the church as gathered together, may be set aside to suit modern requirements, why not abrogate 1 Cor. xv., with its declaration of the Divinely-given Gospel also, to suit "modern thought"? Both the doctrine of the Gospel and the pattern of the church are alike from God, and He gives no hint that either is to be abrogated or altered.

Answers to Correspondents.

ANNIE E., LIVERPOOL.—There is a wide and little occupied field of work for earnest, godly sisters, among their own sex, especially in large cities, and we think there are few Assemblies of God's people, who would not rejoice to see such an effort as you propose, to reach girls and young women, and give the use of their hall, with every facility and help for the efficient carrying on of the same. May the Lord guide and bless you abundantly in it.

THE LIQUOR QUESTION.—Some recent remarks and answers to questions on the above subject, which appeared in the "Magazine," have drawn forth considerable correspondence, from which it appears that we have touched a "sore" point with many. The habit of using wine, strong drink, and beer as luxuries of the table, and treating guests thereto, seems to be more prevalent in professedly Christian households than we had any idea of. And so utterly indifferent are some to the danger arising from such habits to themselves, and the evil example set before their families and others, that they defend themselves by drawing fine lines as to what is lawful "in their own house," but not "in the world." Others claim that the words "Not given to much wine," and the word to Timothy, "Use a little wine" (1 Tim., v. 23), give them the "liberty" to thus indulge. We do not advocate "teetotalism," or say that believers are to "pledge" themselves to abstain: but in view of the awful curse that strong drink is to thousands of our fellows, and the number of God's people who fall beneath its power, surely it becomes those who are themselves the subjects of God's saving grace, to give no cause of stumbling to others, by using what would undoubtedly be a snare to many. We have known some who take a prominent place in the church, call for their "glass of beer," like any ungodly man, in a public restaurant. We wonder how any young believer, or newly-converted drunkard would feel, if they saw this, or what power the ministry of such persons would have with them? How could they "restore" one overcome by the power of strong drink, if their evil example led him into it? Or if it became necessary to excommunicate one for drunkenness, how could one who indulges in strong drink, presume to guide the church in putting such a person away? Or how would any audience regard a preacher, if they knew that he was a habitual "tippler"? We would most earnestly ask all who love the Lord, and seek the good of their fellow-believers and of mankind, to give this matter their prayerful consideration, and to remember the words of one who well knew his "liberty," but who also considered the "weak" among his brethren, and said—"It is good neither to eat flesh or drink wine, or anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak" (Rom. xiv. 21); and the noble resolve, "Wherefore, if meat maketh my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore,

that I make not my weak brother to stumble (1 Cor. viii. 13, R.V.).

Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION III.—It seems to be becoming a common practice for certain Assemblies to invite evangelists to conduct "Missions," or have "Special Services," who are not gathered to the Name of the Lord, but who preach in any sect where their services are required. They "break bread," and "teach" the saints while their "engagement" lasts, and next appear in some worldly church, out from which in obedience to the truth, others have been brought at no little sacrifice. This is going on at present where the writer is in fellowship, and he with many others who have lately been gathered to the Lord's Name are stumbled, and much perplexed. Any help from the Word bearing on this matter, would be much appreciated?

ANSWER A.—If an "evangelist" desiring to learn the way of the Lord more perfectly, or seeking to obey the truth by gathering to the Lord's Name, is led of the Lord to an Assembly so gathered, he will seek to be in fellowship with those gathered not in preaching only, but in all the privileges and responsibilities of the Assembly.—T. D.

ANSWER B.—There are some earnest evangelists preaching in connection with the sects, and God blesses His Word through them to the conversion of souls. But it would be anomalous to invite such to serve, where they would refuse on principle to worship, or to be associated with a company of Christians in their Gospel labours with whose church position they have no sympathy.—H. W. T.

ANSWER C.—Evangelists who call themselves "unsectarian" or "interdenominational" will preach in any sect, and while they are there, will associate themselves with it. Indeed, it is for the express purpose of building it up and bringing in fresh material to perpetuate it, that their services are requisitioned. If they happen to be "engaged" by a company of believers outside of all sects, they will do the same there, as a matter of course. From *their* standpoint there may be nothing very inconsistent in this, for they simply look upon such a company as a "denomination," or as a "mission" with baptism and "the breaking of bread" attached. But what shall we say of the consistency of those who have professedly seen the evils of sectarianism

and worldly religion, and have, in obedience to the Word of God, "come out" from all denominations to gather in the Name of the Lord alone, inviting or receiving one to preach and teach amongst them, who by his own choice not only remains in the world's religion, but makes it his business to build it up, and invites his converts to "join" it? Surely those who are responsible for such an anomaly, have never learned the first principles of the truth as to what separation to God and gathering to the Name of the Lord Jesus is, or if they once did, they must have let them slip.—R. S.

ANSWER D.—There are very few Assemblies of believers known to us, in which such evangelists would preach. These few, are either very "open" taking in all who professes to be Christians, or there are influential persons there, who do pretty much as they like, in inviting preachers to go amongst them. Assemblies composed of those who have gone forth "without the camp" to a rejected Christ, will never be an attraction to those who are of reputation in the religious systems of Christendom. They generally look upon such as beneath their notice. It is well that it should be so, for while they bear the brand of the Cross, there will be no danger of preachers of the type described, seeking "engagements" with them.—C. R.

ANSWER E.—If the Assembly where the writer of the question is in fellowship, allows one or two of its number to act on behalf of the whole without consulting them, in such an important matter as the bringing in of preachers and teachers, it is certainly blameworthy. The fact that they may have done so for years, affords no Scriptural reason for continuing a wrong course. In faithfulness to the Lord, it ought to be challenged, and if it be found that they are acting contrary to the Word, and without the fellowship of their brethren, then they should be plainly told it will not be allowed. Why should the peace and testimony of a whole Assembly suffer, because of the high-handed actions of one or two? The Diotrephes of John's day (see 3 John 8-10) refused Christ's true servants who loved and obeyed the truth, but the Diotrephes spirit of our day, is manifested by forcing in those who neither love nor honour God's truth, in many cases while they know they will grieve the most godly, and possibly cause division by so doing. In either case it is one or more assuming "lordship" over their brethren. And while they may talk long and loud

about "fornbearance" and "love," those who so act, plainly show by their overbearing spirit, that they possess neither the one nor the other.—T. E. L.

ANSWER F.—The question is one which Assemblies will have to face and deal with firmly according to the Word. Very recently, one who "engages" as an evangelist—and a teacher also—in connection with any sect that will employ him, sometimes with all combined, was brought to a conference of Christians professedly separated from all sects, and put on the platform to teach them. This conference is convened by representative brethren from many Assemblies, and the expenses of the conference, &c., have for many years been borne by these Assemblies. Yet, without the least consultation with their brethren, one or two took upon themselves the responsibility of bringing in this sectarian preacher, who flattered them greatly in his address, although only a few weeks before, in another town, he publicly made a burlesque of the same people and their principles. What was the result? Young believers and others who had been brought out, in obedience to God's Word, from the very sects where this preacher usually is found, were stumbled, and some driven to Exclusivism. Yet, when one dares to raise his voice against such lording it over their brethren, he is silenced by the cry of "narrowness." But the narrowness and bigotry, are on the part of those who *force* their own will and way, against the consciences of their brethren.—J. G.

The Editor's Note will appear next month.

Questions Requiring Answers.

4.—Should the Gospel work of an Assembly, be entrusted to those in it who have the ability to preach, leaving the entire arrangements of it in their hands, or should the overseeing brethren as a whole have it under their supervision and control? This is a real difficulty in many places.

5.—Is it according to the Word of God, that the Lord's Supper should be eaten on other days, besides the first day of the week?

6.—Do overseers act *for* the Assembly, or is their work to guide the Assembly in its acts, especially in receiving and putting away? There seems to be a great deal of misunderstanding as to the relation of overseers to the Assembly, and many troubles arise therefrom. A little clear help from the Word in this, would be welcomed by many.

A REVIVAL OF THE GOSPEL SPIRIT.

TO the Church, and to all who at any time compose it throughout the present age, has been committed the "word of reconciliation" (2 Cor. v. 19), the ministry of the gospel of the grace of God to men. It was a deep sense of this, a revival of the gospel spirit, that brought about the palmy days of ingathering of 1859 and 1870, of which we never tire to hear.

It may not be given to all to publicly proclaim the message to crowds—gift, grace, and gumption are needed for such a ministry, which all do not possess. But it is the privilege and responsibility of every child of God, to be in fellowship, that is, to have a common share in the great, the glorious work of making known the Gospel of salvation among the sons of men. Few rise to their privileges, or feel their responsibility in this great work. Those who do, in any measure, are even now amply repaid for their outlay, in being sharers of the joy of God over sinners saved, and of Christ seeing of the travail of His soul in wanderers welcomed home. No joy on earth equals this; it is heaven's own joy foretasted by the saints below.

O, that our young men and maidens, in the glow and ardour of early Christian life, could early be taught to throw themselves heart and soul, life and limb, into this holy, this honourable work of making known to their fellows the wondrous story, of Immanuel's saving Name. There would be fewer backsliders, fewer to mourn over as having "gone to the world," if their youthful energies were engaged in this joyful service, which above and beyond all others, lifts the thoughts away from self, and keeps them occupied with higher, nobler objects.

A ministry that has this as its object, is what should pervade the assemblies of the saints, and preponderate in the Conferences now so commonly held. But does it? We think not, generally. Platitudes, from men who have little heart for, and absolutely no experience of aggressive Gospel work, more frequently fill up the time. Nor is it individual effort only. The Church, the Assembly of God's saints, does not exist only for its own edification. It is not alone a place of pasture for the young, and of refuge for the oppressed. Not even as God's witness, His light-bearer (Rev. i. 20), the pillar and stay of the Truth (1 Tim. i. 15). All this it truly ought to be, while worldward it is to be "holding forth the Word of life" (Phil. ii. 16) to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.

It is just here, where many so sadly fail—where the Church in almost every age has failed. But we must not get lost in generalities. How is it with us? With the church, the assembly, of which we form a part? How is it with me? Is the fire of Gospel zeal and labour burning low? Are sinners not being reached, not being brought under the Gospel's sound, not being converted? Are our neighbours, our fellow-townsmen, passing into eternity without having heard the warning cry, or being definitely and personally dealt with about their souls? Then God has a controversy with us. He will not smile upon His people if they neglect His work, if they prove unfaithful to their trust. The annals of many a company of God's people would have been different, had they gone forth as one man, uplifting the Gospel standard, and carrying its victorious message into the camp of the enemy. It is needless to brood on the past. There is time yet to do the

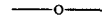
right. Let us as individuals and as assemblies look unto God, for a true revival of the Gospel spirit. Let those who minister the Word and tend the flock, foster and fan it, while they continuously encourage by precept and example the whole rank and file of their fellow-saints to "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind *striving together* for the faith of the gospel" (Phil. i. 27), and its furtherance among the sons of men.



Helpers and Hinderers in the Gospel.

IT is comparatively easy to preach the Gospel to a company of unsaved sinners, when you have a band of praying saints whose hearts are bearing you and your message up before God all the time. Who is there, that has not felt the benefit of such a company of "praying saints" at a Gospel meeting? Many a commonplace preacher, supported and upheld by the prayers of such, has been made "mighty through God" to accomplish great things. The message flowed from the preacher's lips as a living stream, while praying saints were occupied with God. The shafts of conviction sped their way, directed by the God who heard the heart-breathings of His remembrancers. The light of heaven burst the bonds of darkness in souls long under its shadow, as prayer for such winged its way to the throne. But when believers come to the Gospel meeting to criticise, or in a captious or careless mood, they not only do not help, but positively hinder the preacher. The same in measure is true of the light and flippant spirit, so frequently manifested by those who go to such meetings, without any higher aim than to be "singers." God dity the Gospeller, who is hampered and

weighted with such helpers! Better far to be single-handed, counting only upon God!



WITH JESUS IN THE STORM.

"It is I, be not afraid" (Matt. xiv. 27).

"Stormy wind fulfilling His Word" (Psa. cxlviii. 8).

I KNOW, O Lord, though all around is dark,—I need not fear ;
Rough are the waves that toss my little bark,—But thou art near.
The stormy winds Thy word alone fulfil ;
Their rage shall cease ;
And when Thy voice shall give the charge,
"Be still,"—All will be peace.

Yes ! I shall see (soon as this storm has passed—Across the soul)
That He, who slumbers not, held every blast—In His control ;
And though, o'ershadowed by the present woe,—The heart may quail,
Strong in the grace, the strength Thou dost bestow,—I shall prevail.

Thou precious Saviour, by whose life I live,—Lighten mine eyes !
Let me not miss the lessons Thou dost give ;—Oh, make me wise !
Keep me, while tempest-driven on life's dark sea,—Close to *Thy* side ;
There, anchored safely by sure hope in Thee,—Let me *abide*.

Saviour ! Thou art my all. What can I lose,—Since *Thou* art mine ?
Guide me, O best Beloved ! my portion choose,—For I am Thine.
To the desired haven let me come
In Thine own way ;
There will be no more night in that fair home,—But *endless day*.

The Attractive Power of the Name of Jesus.

PART II.

BY GEORGE ADAM.

MORE than half a century ago, the Lord put it into the hearts of a few godly men and women in various parts of this country to come together to search the Scriptures, looking to the Holy Spirit alone to teach them. As they thus continued to study the WORD, they were led step by step back to the simple ways and practices of the early church. They do not seem to have aimed at forming a new church or organisation. Their hearts were drawn to the Person of the Lord Jesus; and by the Spirit, through the Word, they were led to keep the ordinances as they had been delivered to the saints. Their numbers increased. Such was the godliness of their walk and testimony, and such the sweetness and reality of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in their meetings, that spiritually-minded believers, who were not getting what their hearts longed for in their various denominations, were led to cast in their lot with those who thus gathered in the Lord's Name alone. They were drawn, and kept together, by the power of the Spirit binding all their hearts to a common Centre; that Centre was CHRIST. As long as they continued to worship, and walk, in this simple, primitive way, all went well. The right sort of people were drawn towards them, and their godly testimony had no attraction for those who were not in the leading of the Spirit of God.

When spirituality began to wane, the presence and operations of the Holy Spirit in drawing and keeping the saints together became less real. Then other means were resorted to. That which began with separa-

tion to the Person of Christ, became in course separation *from* certain evils. No doubt separation *to*, involves separation *from*, but the undue prominence which was given to the latter, led many an honest soul away from the simplicity of God's way of gathering to Christ, as the Centre. It will not do for any of us to begin to "throw stones" at those who, in their zeal to "separate from evil," have manifestly got into an unscriptural exclusivism. We have all more or less allowed our hearts to become contracted, so that our manner of spirit towards fellow-saints who "do not see as we see," has not been according to the "bowels of Jesus Christ." If we have lost the power to *draw* fellow-saints, still held in sectarian bondage, we need not attempt to *drive* them. By hardness of spirit, and ungracious ways, many have been driven away from seeking out and following on in "the ways which be in Christ."

The question which confronts us is, How can we make the best of things as they are? A serious question it is, indeed. Would it be according to the mind of God for us to attempt to retrieve what we have lost, by going back to the "openness in receiving," and the other simple ways of those who are spoken of as "the early brethren," *without taking due account* of the altered condition of things, both in the assemblies and in the sectarian associations around us? In those "early days," there was a deep-toned spirituality in the gatherings, as well as a godliness amongst those who gathered unto the Name of the Lord, which attracted the spiritual and repelled the carnally-minded. The reality of the Lord's presence and power amongst His people, was "as a wall of fire round about, and the glory in the midst" (Zech. ii. 5).

All this has become so much changed that now, in many assemblies, the carnal believer is more at home than the spiritual; and instead of the spiritual being *drawn*, and the carnal *repelled*, it is in many cases almost the opposite. We are sometimes told that once it was the "cream" of believers in the sects who were drawn to those who gathered unto the Name of the Lord, but that the spirit and practice of the *exclusive principle* has now driven such all away. Well, I admit that the *unscriptural* exclusiveness of *ungracious*, men has done much to keep godly believers in the sects from coming to cast in their lot with those who seek to worship "according as it is written." But is that really the *root-cause* of our failure to *draw* the "cream" of believers of our day to the closer following of the Lord? Is our fellowship, and is our worship, really what we profess they are? Are they in the power of the Holy Spirit? Would one who comes into our assemblies for the first time be so impressed, that his confession would be, "God is in you of a truth"? (1 Cor. xiv. 25). Is there not an imminent danger of laying the blame of our weakness to "our narrowness and exclusiveness," instead of judging our own unspiritual condition in the presence of the Lord?

Again, are we to open the door of fellowship to all who "belong to Christ," without duly weighing the awful change for the worse, which has come over the so-called "denominations" during the past half century? Fifty years ago, the leading men in these associations were as a rule "sound in the faith." Where, or what, are most of them now? If some of those who really "belong to Christ" are content to sit under the ministry of men who deny

the *very foundations* of "the faith," and if such come to us (it may be for a day), are we to give them the right hand of fellowship, and yet take no cognisance of their unholy associations? Are we to extend unbounded charity to Christians who have no conscience at all regarding the truth of God, or the rightful place of the Lord Jesus in His Church, and yet have no patience with those who, in their zeal for purity and order, have set up bounds around the Lord's table which are not to be found in Scripture?

Whilst writing thus, I have no sympathy with "Exclusivism" in any of its phases; but has not God called out the Church to own the authority of His Beloved Son in this the day of His rejection by the world? When saints gather around the Name of the Lord Jesus, should not the highest thought be to bow before that Name, and "confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father"? (Phil. ii. 11).

In our rebound from an unscriptural narrowness, is there not an imminent danger of being swung to the opposite extreme, by teaching an *openness of reception* which puts the blessing of the disciple above the honour and glory of his Lord? May the Lord Himself raise up godly men, who have "understanding of the times," to act for the truth and honour of God with loyal hearts to the "MAN OF HIS RIGHT HAND."

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JESUS IN THE MIDST.

In the midst of the church universal, He is seen as walking in the midst of the seven golden lampstands (Rev. i. 10); and He is in the midst of the assembly of disciples gathered to His Name; not *in* His Name merely, but *TO* or *UNTO* His Name, that is, to His person.—*Thos. Newberry.*

LECTURES ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

By WILLIAM LINCOLN, of Beresford, London.

CHAPTER I.—(Continued).

NOW we come to creation. Not a word about it before. Here is Genesis i.; so that these first two verses of John i. are millions of ages before Genesis i. They carry you back to "In the beginning," and beyond that it is impossible to get. "All things were made by Him." Now we see this mysterious, wondrous Being coming into view. He is the Creator. The Word, this "brightness" (Heb. i.), this Wisdom, is becoming more distinctly discernible. The next words are very much stronger in the Greek. "And without Him, there became no not one thing that did become." Is it not strong? Yet we are prepared for strength of assertion, if we have grasped verses 1 and 2. It is remarkable, if we go down the chapter, how this Being comes gradually into distinct view. Let us just take a cursory glance at it. In verse 3, He is the Creator of all things: in verse 10 He is in the world, but that does not say in what way: so in verse 14 we are more distinctly told how. "And the Word was made flesh,"—was made is a strange thing to Him,— "and pitched His tent among us." Passing on, look at verse 29, and see Him coming nearer still: "Behold the Lamb of God." That reminds one of verse 2, and those inspired explanations that we have in Proverbs viii.: "And I was with Him as a pierced One"; "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." In verse 33, we have, "The same is He which baptiseth with the Holy Ghost." That is His gracious work now, to-day. Then in verse 36, again, "Behold the Lamb of God," but nothing about the sin; the sin

has gone, Jesus has put it away. Still "the Lamb" is His name. In Heaven our song will be "Worthy is the Lamb" Farther on we come to verse 51: "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." He is the centre in this bright supernal heaven, the worshipped of all. Chapter ii., is still part of the first: "The third day there was a marriage." A marriage! Have we not spiritual acumen enough to see what is contained in that reference to a marriage? Then He comes down lower, as He will to this earth, and cleanses the Father's temple. It is the same Being. Had you but wings to pierce into remote ages, not only when, as certain geologists say, this earth existed, millions of years back; even if that be the case, you must pierce far, far back, and infinite ages back yet, beyond creation and verse 3, and find verse 2—God choosing us in Christ, this wondrous One, before the foundation of the world, and yet find in verse 1 that "the Word was God," and was "in the beginning with God."

"All things were made by Him." Whether the tiniest fly that floats in the sunbeam, or the loftiest angel that basks in the presence of God. I am not exaggerating: I have no wish to exaggerate when I touch the Word of God; it is too solemn a thing. But I put it to you whether it is not so, when I read this verse, "All things were made by Him." Every angel, every man, every insect, all were made by Him,—Jesus, Jesus, the Creator of them all!

Attention is now directed to what is in Him, and the great thing in Him is life, life for men: "And the life was the light of men." I remind you here of a verse

(chap. viii. 12), "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." For in this Gospel all the chapters look back to chapter 1, and chapter 1, is brought out more fully in the others. Thus, I will instance a case. "Before Abraham was made, I am"? so the right reading of verse 6 here is, "There became (or was made) a man sent from God, whose name was John." The Holy Ghost using these particular words, I suppose, to bring out the contrast between him of yesterday, and Him who was in the beginning with God. John the Baptist existed, say, 2000 years ago; He of whom he spake, was in the beginning with God, and was God; and was, too, the Creator of all.

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THE TRUE REMEDY FOR BARRENNESS.

WHEN things become languid in the Christian Assembly, and spiritual power seems lacking, alike in worship and in ministry of the Word, how liable God's people are, to fix the blame upon some defect in organisation, or on some failure on the part of those who guide and oversee the flock. But the root cause of such barrenness, is most frequently to be found in heart-departure from the living God of the saints themselves, and this will not be remedied by some change of arrangements, or by "getting strangers" to conduct the meetings. A gathering of the whole assembly for confession, prayer and intercession before God, will do more to set matters right, than any amount of "cup and platter" washing, or reformation of outward things. True restoration and revival must always be preceded by honest and close dealing with God.

The Perfections of the Lord Jesus.

BY ROBERT C. CHAPMAN, IN HIS 100TH YEAR.

I WAITED patiently for the Lord; and He inclined unto Me and heard My cry." Every word of this psalm breathes out the soul of the Lord Jesus, and speaks to God and to us of His perfections. In verse 8 we see holiness, perfect holiness, "I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." In His case no allowance for imperfections could be made, and, blessed be His Name! none was needed. In Him, there was no law in the members warring against the law of the mind; there was nothing in the Son of God come in the flesh, that did not give perpetual, unspeakable delight to God who sent Him. And it was He alone—the Son of God, the Word of God, the Creator of heaven and earth and all things therein—that could become Surety of the everlasting covenant, (Heb. vii. 22.) It is as such that He speaks in this psalm, saying "*Mine iniquities*" (v. 12), for as Surety He made our iniquities His own.

The difference between *His* confessions and *ours* is unspeakable. In Psalm li. David, going to the root of the matter, speaks of himself as utterly evil, incurably evil; but when the Son of God speaks, even though *as Surety* He says "*Mine iniquities*," He can only as to Himself *personally* speak of holiness—perfect, immutable holiness—the spring of everything that can please God. Then again, *we* are forgiven our sin on confession, for sin cannot be truly confessed without being instantly forgiven and cleansed away. But Christ could have no forgiveness, and He needed no cleansing. He could only be

justified by full payment of the debt, and on that ground He can justify others.

The only death Christ could die was the death of atonement. That death He died, and now He lives at the right hand of God, and is the source of life and power to His people—all being due to His cross. The sinner dies a death of enmity to God: Christ died a death of infinite love to God. The sinner dies a death of despair; Christ died with the sure hope of resurrection. The sinner's death is no death of atonement, hence deeper and deeper must he sink. The death of the Son of God was the full revelation of all the perfections of God; it is therefore the perfect rest of God, and the perfect rest of faith.

And now, beloved, what is the song—the “new song”? “He hath put a new song into My mouth, even praise unto our God.” We sing acceptably to God, and our song is more acceptable to God than to our own ear. Why? Because Christ is the chief theme. Let us observe the contrast between “*our* God” and “*Mine* iniquities.” *Our* transgressions became *His*, and as they have been for ever removed from Him; so they are for ever removed from us, by His one sacrifice. And now being raised out of the depths, He sings the new song, the melody of which takes hold of and possesses the heart of God. In this song we can join, and all through the sorrows of the cross. Therefore no song can ever be so joyous, and no song ever so solemn as ours.

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A LARGE FIELD.—If the affections of Christ possess us, we shall always find a field of labour at hand. Everywhere, and always, there is plenty of room for the mind of Christ to reveal itself.—*R. C. Chapman.*

What Church does God's Word tell me to Join?

AN ADDRESS TO YOUNG BELIEVERS.

By ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

PART III.

WE will turn next to the 2nd chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. You know that in this chapter we have recorded the first preaching of the Gospel. After the Lord Jesus had gone back to the glory, the disciples were not allowed to go out and preach for several days; but they were told to wait in Jerusalem till they had been endued with power from on high. They waited day after day, praying that God would fulfil this promise; and on the fiftieth day following Christ's resurrection, as they were waiting in the upper room, the Holy Spirit came down and filled every one of them, and at once they began to preach. Read the 41st verse:—“Then they that gladly received his Word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” Now I want you to notice something about this verse. We are told that they continued steadfastly; how long do you suppose that means? It is plain that the Holy Spirit, here, at the very beginning of the Church's history, is taking a glance forward, and is not merely speaking of what took place that day. He sets the pattern before us of how those behaved themselves who were taught to obey all Christ's commandments.

A church, then, according to this pattern, is a company of persons who have been convicted of sin and have trusted in Christ, who then have been baptized, and who

continue steadfastly carrying out His commandments. The doctrine is put first, for that is the most important thing. It is the foundation, and is preserved for us in the Scriptures. The next thing is, "in the fellowship." What a precious word that is. It means something which we share in common with others. What had these in common? Why, they were all children of God, and all owned His blessed Son as their one Lord. This is what God calls *the fellowship*. "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" is asked by the prophet Amos. Every one of them had given up his own will, to own the will of the Lord Jesus as supreme. The moment we set up our own will, we break the fellowship. The fellowship is based upon the doctrine, and all true fellowship comes of our hearts being made subject to all the Word of God. Third, "the breaking of bread." The Lord Jesus had given His disciples the bread to eat, and the cup to drink, in remembrance of Himself, and He bade them teach all who believed on Him to do the same thing. He did not say, "Now I am sitting at the head of the table, but when I am gone, Peter or John will have to take My place." Why not? Because He promised them that He would be with them all the while, till He should receive them to Himself. "There am I in the midst of them." And as we gather round Himself, at the table spread by His commandment, though we cannot see Him, we know He is there. And where He is, there is no room for human authority. In all the different religious systems, the very names by which they speak of what they profess to be the Lord's Table, tell of a man presiding, without whom the whole thing must come to a stand. It is "celebrating

the eucharist," or "administering the sacrament" or ordinance. But the Holy Spirit says that all the believers continued steadfastly in the *breaking of bread*, and this expression shuts out all idea of a human president.

The apostle Paul, writing to the Church at Corinth, says, "The cup of blessing which *we* bless. . . The bread which *we* break." Not something which one man does for all, but a matter in which each takes the same part. Before I was converted, I used to partake of the sacrament in the so-called Church of England. I saw certain men in special garments at the top of some steps and enclosed by a railing. These men ate and drank first themselves, and then the rest of us knelt outside the railing, while the robed men inside handed bits of bread to each of us and afterwards gave us the cup. In this way, instead of showing that we all occupied the same blessed position of nearness to God, they were trying to show that they were in a very different position from all the others. But when a company of believers, gathered to the Name of their unseen but present Lord, break the bread together, they do indeed make manifest that God's grace has put them all into the same place of privilege and blessing. The last thing is "the prayers," which refers not simply to the private prayers of all individual believers, but to the united prayers of the assembly.

And now let me remind you that as once you had to make a choice as to whether you would have Christ for your Saviour, so now you are called upon to make a choice again. Will you have Christ for your Lord, or not? No tongue can tell how much of your soul's welfare and happiness depends

on this. What are you going to say about it? Oh! how many saints have made a mistaken choice, pleasing men instead of God, because they could not bear the reproach that would come from fully following the Lord. Dear friends, next to the grace that saved me from an eternal hell, I thank God for the grace that helped me to make this choice—just to cut all connection with everything that men had devised, and to start afresh with God and the Word of His grace; and I yearn for you that you may know the same joy and blessing.

Now, I must not keep you longer, but I would put the question to every heart, Who do you say Jesus is? What is He to you? Is He your Saviour? Do you say that you love Him, because He died for you? Then listen to His words, "If ye love Me keep My commandments." Are you going to turn aside and excuse yourself because some one wants you to do something else? For how much of your heart has He the right to ask? He never asked anything from us before we were saved, He only gave to us then. But now He says, "Son, give Me thy heart." and He wants the whole of it. Even a child who believes can obey Him thus. Perhaps it is easier for a child, for it has not formed other ties; while some of you may find it very hard. But I ask you, How much has the Lord a right to claim from you? Oh may God give grace to everyone to say, "Lord, here I am, with all that I have, for all is thine; the blood that Thou hast shed for me has purchased me for ever."

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If we would be much used *for* God we must be much *with* God. Intimate acquaintance with God is more to Him than brilliant talent.

CAST UPON GOD FOR HELP.

WHEN in a day of departure from God and His Word, David and the captains of Israel put the Ark upon a new cart (1 Chron. xiii. 1-8), there was no need for the power of God to carry the undertaking through. It was man's way, and wholly a matter for man's ability. But when David's eyes were opened to see his error, and he returned to the way that God had commanded, we are told that when the ark was laid upon the shoulders of the Levites, "according to the Word of the Lord" (1 Chron. xv. 15), and borne as He had commanded, then we read "God helped the Levites" (ver. 24). And thus we may surely learn, that the only safe and happy course for the servant of Christ to pursue is, to keep rigidly to the line laid down in the written Word, and to test his ways by that perfect standard. He will always find plenty in himself and others to mourn over, for the more honestly he applies the Divine line and plummet, the more will he be conscious of failure, but he will be able to count upon Divine grace and power to help him in a way and measure that under other circumstances he could not. And the very weakness of his position will cast him on the living God for His strength as no human device will ever lead him to do. God's way always needs GOD Himself. Man's way can go on without Him.

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In time and in eternity, the place which the Father gives to the Son is the Centre. In the bosom of the Father as the centre of Divine affections. In the midst of the throne, as the centre of universal empire; and in the midst of the Church as His proper and rightful place on earth.

The Bible Annotator.

FOR THE HELP OF BIBLE STUDENTS AND CHRISTIAN WORKERS.

SEVEN OPERATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

- He Convicts the Sinner (John xvi. 8).
- Regenerates the Believer (John iii. 8).
- Seals the Saint (Eph. i. 13).
- Indwells the Child (Gal. iv. 6).
- Leads the Son (Rom. viii. 14).
- Teaches the Disciple (John xiv. 26).
- Energises the Servant (Col. i. 29).

SEVEN FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS OF THE FAITH

- For which God's people are to "contend earnestly"
- The Inspiration of the Scriptures (2 Tim. iii. 16).
 - The Trinity of the Godhead (Matth. xxviii. 19).
 - The Divinity of the Lord Jesus (John i. 1).
 - The Atoning Death of Christ (Heb. ix. x).
 - Justification by Faith, alone (Rom. iii. 28 : v. 1).
 - Salvation, Present and Eternal (2 Tim. i. 9; Heb. v. 9)
 - Eternal Punishment of the Wicked (Matt. xxv. 46).
- Many more Texts on these Subjects may be found throughout the Word. "Search the Scriptures."

THE BELIEVER'S HEAVENLY POSSESSIONS.

He has

- A Saviour in Heaven (Acts v. 31; Phil. iii. 20).
- A Master in Heaven (Eph. vi. 9).
- His Name is written in Heaven (Luke x. 20).
- His Citizenship is in Heaven (Phil. iii. 20).
- His Hope is laid up in Heaven (Col. i. 5).
- His Inheritance is in Heaven (1 Peter i. 4).
- His Reward is in Heaven (Luke vi. 23).

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Answers to Correspondents.

"YOUNG BELIEVER."—The writer of the hymn, "Look, ye saints, the sight is glorious," was Thomas Kelly, of Dublin, to whom we are indebted for many more Christ-exalting hymns.

AGNES C.—Only one of the four brethren who met for prayer in the old schoolhouse at Connor, in the North of Ireland, where the great Revival of 1859 had its birthplace—Jeremiah Meneely—still survives. The others have been "with Christ" for many years.

A. N., GLASGOW.—An Assembly, like an individual, may act so as to shake the confidence of others in its discernment, and this might cause them to exercise extreme care in endorsing its acts. They would not, however, be "disowning" it, or

"cutting it off"—as is sometimes ignorantly said—if they hesitated in receiving, or were slow in excluding, one whom they considered had been unscripturally dealt with. But in such cases over-seeing brethren should seek to reach the erring Assembly, and not act independently of it, or contrary to its judgment, until all else has failed.

ANDREW C.—The words in 2 Cor. iii. 17—"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty"—do not refer to "meetings left open for the leading of the Spirit," but, as the context clearly shows, are used in contrasting the ministry of law and grace, the bondage of the one with the liberty of the other. We do not believe that a meeting for the preaching of the Gospel should be "open" for any one to take part. The rejection of "one man ministry," as it exists in the churches, does not involve the liberty of "any man ministry." Christ gave "some" evangelists, pastors, and teachers (Eph. iv. 14), and "God hath set *some* in the church" (1 Cor. xii. 28)—not all, to minister. That there ought to be "liberty" for all such to exercise their gifts is evident, but not for those who have no gifts, to fill up time, and thus exclude those whom God has called and fitted to minister to profit.

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Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION IV.—Should the Gospel work of an Assembly be entrusted to those in it who have the ability to preach, leaving the entire arrangements of it in their hands, or should the overseeing brethren as a whole have it under their supervision and control? This is a real difficulty in many places.

ANSWER A.—We believe the Gospel preacher—whether he be an evangelist who gives his whole time to the work, or one who works with his hands, and preaches chiefly in the hall where believers gather on Sunday evenings—should have a free hand to conduct his meetings as he thinks best. If several take part in the preaching, the details should be arranged by them together, care being always taken not to introduce, either in matter or methods, what would be offensive to fellow-believers, or hinder their fullest fellowship in the Gospel. In all matters of importance, they should consult and act in fellowship with elder brethren guiding the saints. If this were done, Gospel work would be very different from what it often is.—J. G.

ANSWER B.—An evangelist going to an Assembly for a Gospel effort, is not put under any bondage as to how he conducts his meetings; but if he values the fellowship of those who have the care of the flock, he will be careful not to do anything that will alienate their sympathies. The same in measure will be true of those resident in the place who have a measure of ability to preach the Gospel. Friction arises most frequently, by preachers adopting ways and means, which do not commend themselves to those who have the welfare of the saints at heart, and who fear their evil effects.—A. S.

ANSWER C.—I have found help on this question from Deut. xx. 9, with Phil. i. 1. The "officers" did not lead the army, but they had the right to say who were the fit men for that place. After that, the "captains" whom they had thus pointed out, undertook the order of battle. The Epistle to the Philippians gives special guidance as to the Gospel testimony of an Assembly. It is the only epistle in which bishops (overseers) and deacons (ministers) are so mentioned (chap. i. 1). Both have their special responsibility in connection with the Assembly's Gospel testimony. There may be those fitted to do oversight who cannot preach; but if in fellowship with God, they will have a heart for Gospel work, and discernment as to who is best fitted to occupy the platform in the Gospel meeting. It is sad when those who have some ability to preach, set aside the counsel of elder brethren whom the Lord has called to guide His people. They should cultivate fellowship in the work of the Assembly, and seek to co-operate together. Elder brethren would be responsible to give counsel, but not to fetter the preacher in fulfilling his responsibility to the Lord.—G. A.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—The above answers give what we believe to be Divine principles for our guidance, in carrying on the Gospel testimony of an Assembly. In wilderness days, the Merarites, whose service was in the foundations and structure of the tabernacle, walked and worked (Numb. x. 17) in closest fellowship with the Gershonites, who had the charge of the cords to strengthen and the coverings to protect what their brethren of Merari had wrought. So the evangelist and the pastor should co-operate, and not—as is too often the case—regard their work as "independent." It frequently happens, that the "Gospellers" of an Assembly are found among the

younger men, while those who take oversight are generally older, and ought to be more experienced in the Word and work of God. Where the energies of the younger and the wisdom of the elder brethren are harmonized, there is generally a good Gospel testimony, and God gives continuous blessing. But if, on the one hand, Gospellers claim the right to do whatever they please, to invite whomsoever they think fit to preach, and carry on the Gospel testimony of the Assembly, apart from the fellowship of those guiding and overseeing the saints, they need not complain if interest declines and friction arises. The injunction, "Obey them that guide you" (Heb. xiii. 17, margin) applies to Gospel preachers as well as to others, and the word, "Know them that labour among you, and are over you in the Lord" (1 Thes. v. 12) surely includes their recognition in the ordering of Gospel testimony, as in all else connected with the Assembly. On the other hand, those not actively engaged in preaching the Gospel should not be too exacting or punctilious in regard to the manner in which the preaching brethren conduct the meetings, so long as no principle or practice is introduced at variance with the Word, and the consciences of their fellow-believers.

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Questions Requiring Answers.

5.—Is it according to the Word of God, that the Lord's Supper should be eaten on other days, besides the first day of the week?

6.—Do overseers act *for* the Assembly, or is their work to guide the Assembly in its acts, especially in receiving and putting away? There seems to be a great deal of misunderstanding as to the relation of overseers to the Assembly, and many troubles arise therefrom. A little clear help from the Word in this, would be welcomed by many.

7.—Is it possible for a Christian to continue a member of a denomination, in which its acknowledged Professors of Divinity, &c., and many of its ministers, openly avow their rejection of the fundamental truths of the faith, and yet be reckoned free of all complicity with such errors?

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Sectarian Evangelists in Assemblies.

In years gone by, there would have been no necessity for asking if evangelists and preachers

who are generally found among the sects, and who presumably therefore believe them to be right, might be invited to conduct Gospel meetings in an assembly of believers, who have gone outside of all sects to gather in the Name of the Lord Jesus alone, and to own His Word as their only guide. Such evangelists, in common with most of the full-titled denominational ministers, gave these little companies a wide berth, and either scorned them as fanatics, or denounced them as heretics. They were preached against in pulpits, parodied in newspapers, and pelted with every offensive epithet that could be found. But, as is recorded of an earlier people, "The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew" (Exod. ii. 12), so God caused His Word to spread, and by its power to separate many of His people from the world's religion, to assemble in the simplicity of early times, to the Name of the Lord Jesus alone. In these days, many evangelists as well as others were brought out from sects, and the Word that brought them out will never take them back to these sects, or to association with their principles again.

In the progress of years, many changes have occurred, not the least being, that numerous "missions" and "unions" have been formed, chiefly for evangelistic purposes, mostly composed of those who have never seen or judged in themselves the evils of sectarianism and departure from God's Word, and consequently have not separated from them, save in so far as the clerical order of things in their churches denied them the liberty of "preaching." Most of these take the ground of being "interdenominational," and fraternize with all sects. Others call themselves "undenominational," and have the breaking of bread, welcoming all who call themselves Christians, irrespective of what they believe, or what their practices or associations. Evangelists moving in these circles, and engaged by them for special missions, have multiplied; indeed the "free lance" preacher, who boasts that he has no "church connection," but holds himself at liberty to go anywhere, or preach in any association, has so magnified the advantages of his position, that many of those who hear him have become endued with the same spirit, and claim the right to rove wherever they list. This "free and easy" line of things has its attractions, especially to those who have never been brought under the Divine authority

of the Word of God, or taught to regard its voice as their only guide in things ecclesiastical as well as evangelic and moral. Some, not established in the truth, especially such as never knew what it was to "buy" it, and others who, although in assemblies of believers, never had any sympathy with the place of separation, are frequently found in these circles, and do their utmost to introduce the practices they learn there, in the assemblies where they are. If they happen to be men of influence, they often succeed, even to the extent of bringing their favourite preachers, and placing them on the platform, without any consideration of others, not even consulting those who for long years have, by their godliness and devoted service among the saints, been "known" and owned as "over them in the Lord." If they happen to be possessed of this world's goods, or to have control of the bounty of others, they find it easy enough to get preachers according to their desire, for it is perfectly well known, that it is not small assemblies, or those composed of "the poor of the flock," that have any trouble with sectarian evangelists and those who announce themselves as "popular" preachers, coming amongst them.

It is due to the Lord, and to His Word, that a firm, uncompromising stand be taken by those who know and desire to honour the truth, against the bringing into assemblies of preachers and teachers who openly sneer at and hold up to ridicule, orally, and in their published writings, the fundamental principles of God's most holy Word that constitute and guide the Christian Assembly. If they have no conscience in filling such a place, others who have, should act for God and His truth. He will use a faithful and wise dealing, in keeping out these and other principles and practices, that are being thrust in upon many at the present time. The enemy's object is, what it has been in all ages, to blot out all definite and distinct testimony for God, by forming alliances with the world's religion; and well he knows there is no surer way of securing his end than by bringing in such practices as will quench the Spirit of God—the only source of real spiritual strength the Church of God possesses—and set aside the Word of the Lord—the only authority the Church is to acknowledge—reducing everything to Laodicean pride and self-sufficiency, all pleased with themselves and with each other.

THE CHURCHES OF THE SAINTS.

THEIR CONSTITUTION, PRINCIPLE OF GATHERING,
AND WAY OF RECEPTION.

WHEN a sinner trusts in the Lord Jesus Christ, and is born of God, by that very fact he has become an actual part of the Church, for which Christ died.

If that Church is regarded as a building, he is a living stone built into it. If it is spoken of as a body, he is a member of the body. It does not need the action or consent of any person, or of any body of persons, to accomplish this. It is the doing of God Himself, though no one else should have any knowledge of what has been done. The newly-saved sinner does not need to give his consent, or express his desire, to be brought into this relationship. He may even live and die in ignorance that he has been thus made a part of a living whole; but it is not any less true on that account. God has set him in the body: Christ has built him into the Church: the Holy Spirit, who dwells in every believer, dwells in this last born one, as in all the others, and makes him one with them in a unity that none can ever break.

Thank God for His perfect work. Man has no part in this, and no responsibility regarding it, therefore. No responsibility, that is to say, as to bringing the saved sinner into this unity or maintaining him in it. Those whom Christ has built into the building can never be removed from it, even as nothing can separate them from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

But the Scriptures speak not only of the Church, but of Churches. These Churches are called Churches of God (1 Cor. xi. 16),

Churches of Christ (Rom. xvi. 16), and Churches of the saints (1 Cor. xiv. 33). These expressions do not make a difference between one Church and another, calling one a Church of God, another a Church of Christ, and a third a Church of the saints. They regard the same companies of people, but from different standpoints. Every believer is a child of God, and so belongs to Him: is redeemed with the blood of Christ, and is thus a purchased possession: and is a saint, or set-apart one, because of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. In like manner the companies of believers, gathered together by God's power, and ordered according to His Word, are looked at in the same three-fold way.

Besides the above descriptive titles, we have mention of the Churches in a province or country—as the Churches of Galatia (Gal. i. 2), and the Churches of Judæa (ver. 22). These terms, however, do not in any way imply that the Churches thus grouped together had a different bond of union between them, or formed part of a different organisation from other Churches. They were the Churches of God, the Churches of Christ, the Churches of the saints that were situated in the provinces named.

While amongst most believers who have some intelligent understanding of the Word of God, there is a general apprehension of what is meant by the Church which is Christ's body, there seems to be the utmost confusion in regard to the Churches. Men put up buildings in which to hear the Word of God, or to pray to Him and praise Him, and then call these buildings "churches." And in this land not only is this done by the adherents of the religion established by the state, but the "Free Churches," as they

love to call themselves, put sign-boards outside their buildings describing them as "Congregational Church," "Baptist Church," "Methodist Church," &c., and this in utter disregard of the earnest warnings of the founders of their different bodies.

But we go a little further, and we find that various humanly—arranged and organised religious bodies use the word "Church" about their several organisations. Thus we have the "Church of England," the "Baptist Church," the "Congregational Church," used in a different sense from the above; and meaning the whole religious organisation indicated by each name. In this way, we get such an utter contradiction in terms as "The Church of England in France" or Germany, because adherents of that body have established themselves in those countries.

I do not refer to these things for the sake of pointing out the mistakes of others; but because these wholly misleading uses of the word "Church" have helped to bring about utter confusion in the minds of multitudes, as to what churches really are.

And now I would ask the reader's careful attention to the following Scripture references to churches; so that the mind may become duly imbued with what the Holy Spirit is speaking of when He uses this word.

"If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican (Matt. xviii. 17).

"And it came to pass that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church." (Acts xi. 26).

"When they had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them" (Acts xiv. 27).

"And when he had landed at Cæarea and gone up and saluted the church" (Acts xviii. 22).

"And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church" (Acts xx. 17).

"If therefore the whole church be come together into one place" (1 Cor. xiv. 23).

"I was unknown by face unto the churches of Judæa" (Gal. i. 22).

"No church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only" (Phil. iv. 15).

"If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged" (1 Tim. v. 16).

"I wrote unto the church" (3 John 9).
 "Neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church" (ver. 10).

These are only a few, out of a very large number of passages of a similar character. If we read them with a mind set free from traditional ideas, we cannot fail to see that, in each case, a company of persons is spoken of, belonging to one locality, in the habit of assembling together, and capable of being specially called together when necessary. They could be spoken to, or written to, and they could speak to an individual in such a way that he would know that the whole company was addressing him.

Here then, we have something very different from the Church, of which every believer from Pentecost onwards forms a part.

While, however, these churches differ so widely from the Church for which Christ gave Himself, it cannot be for nothing

that the Holy Spirit uses the same word for each. Nay, more! on the first two occasions when the word "Church" is used in the Scripture, the Lord Jesus is the Speaker, and He uses the word in the two different senses referred to. In Matt. xvi. 18, He says: "Upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it;" while, in chap. xviii. 17, He bids an individual tell something "to the church," and speaks of another who refuses to hear what the church says to him. In the first case, He alone is the actor, and nothing of His work can possibly fail; but, in the second, a responsibility is cast upon His people, and at once we see that there is room for failure.

But the use of the same word in both cases is by no means the only point of likeness. On each occasion He speaks of a binding or loosing on earth which is effective, because it corresponds with a binding or loosing in heaven. In the former passage, we find that this is based upon the confession of Himself as the Christ, the Son of the living God. This teaches us to look for a similar foundation to the declaration in chap. xviii., and we do not look in vain, for at once we read: "For where two or three are gathered together in (or, more correctly, unto) My Name, there AM I in the midst of them." The attempt is commonly made to connect verses 19 and 20 together, merely because the one precedes the other, and so to prove that the declaration of the Lord Jesus in verse 20, has merely reference to a "prayer meeting." Nothing but long prejudice, which so sadly blinds the mind, could make any one hold to this idea. In the first place, there is nothing about a prayer *meeting* in verse 19. The Lord gives a

precious promise to two persons, who shall agree on the earth concerning any thing they shall ask; but he does not say a word about their coming together to ask it. They might be on the opposite sides of the earth, but they would not be the less entitled to count upon this promise. Verse 20, on the other hand, speaks of persons GATHERED TOGETHER UNTO HIS NAME, and declares that He is in the midst of such. This gives us a fitting foundation, for what the Lord had said about the binding and loosing in verse 18; just as He makes Peter's confession of Himself, as the Christ and the Son of God, the foundation for the corresponding statement in chap. xvi. But the attempt to identify verses 19 and 20, leaves us without any foundation at all for the solemn words of verse 18, or else compels us to say that that verse also belongs to verse 19, and thus would teach that any two persons who have agreed about a subject for prayer are, therefore, able to exercise this binding or loosing.

It is quite clear, therefore, that verse 19 is not part of the subject the Lord is dealing with, though it is, of course, associated with it. The very wording of the verse shows the same thing. The words "again I say unto you" indicate that the Lord is wanting for a moment to introduce a distinct, though connected thought. Moreover, He no longer addresses the whole company, as in verse 18, but says "If two *of you* shall agree." He uses the same word as in chap. xvii. 9, "risen again *from* the dead." In both cases it can only be fully expressed in our language by saying "from among." "If two from among you agree." It will, however, naturally be asked why this promise is given here at all.

I believe the answer is a simple one. The Lord had first of all given instructions as to the action of individuals with regard to the brother who had sinned. The one sinned against was to go alone, and next he was to take one or two more with him. If that failed, however, they were to tell it to the church, and the Lord assures them of the authority that shall attach to the church's action. But, before explaining the foundation and source of that authority, He breaks off for a moment to give a gracious assurance to the individuals who had sought in the first instance to win their erring brother. As though He would say to them "Though the matter has passed out of your hands and the church has now acted, it is still your special privilege to wait upon God about the erring one." Doubtless they had prayed before they went to see him, and though he had not yet been won, their prayers have not been in vain; and the Lord encourages them to continue their request with oneness of heart. The promise is undoubtedly available on other occasions, and, as already pointed out, it in no way requires that the persons who plead it should be assembled together. Both the subject and the structure of the verse show it to be a parenthesis, and the Lord completes in verse 20, the subject He had commenced in verse 18.

(To be Continued.)

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CONVERTED OURSELVES FIRST.

THE Psalmist prayed to his God—
 "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, then will I teach transgressors Thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto Thee" (Psa. li. 12). He needed that

restored joy, ere he could speak so as to turn others to God. "You will have to be converted yourselves first, before God can use you to the conversion of sinners round about you," was the remark made by an earnest soul-winner to a company of believers with whom he had been tarrying for a night. They had been expressing a desire to see sinners around them awakened and converted. The Lord's servant discerned that they were living so worldly, so far from God, and so completely out of condition for God to use, that he felt constrained to remind them in these telling words, of the necessity of *their own conversion*. He did not mean that they were unregenerate; he knew quite well that they belonged to the Divine family; there had been abundant evidence of this in days gone by. But the fine gold had become dim: the fire of Divine love in their hearts had burned low, and they had settled down into that lukewarm condition so common and so fashionable now-a-days among children of God. This was why they needed to be converted themselves. They had gone back from God, and become worldly, and before God could use them to lead others to Him, they had to be turned again to Him in heart and life. Such conversion may take place frequently in the history of believers; the oftener the better if they so require. No truly "born again" person ever needs to be regenerated a second time, but may need to be converted—that is, turned again to God—many a time during his lifetime. Thus it was with Peter, when the Lord said to him, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke xxii.); and thus it must be with all of us, before we can expect God to use us as instruments in leading sinners to the Saviour.

THE HOME AT BETHANY.

John xii. 1-9.

AN ADDRESS BY MAX ISAAC REICH.

IN John xii., we get a sample company of the company which is now being gathered out for Christ—the Church. The Church is the company now given by the Father to the Son, in this the time of His rejection, a company to be His comfort and compensation because of the loss of Israel and His rejection by the world. The hopes, the glories, and the triumphs of the Kingdom are for the present postponed, and the Church, which is *now* His comfort, will *then* be His companion in that glory. We see these things clearly shadowed forth in the typical brides of Genesis. In Eve we see the companion; in Rebekah, the comfort; and in Asenath, the compensation. God's design is not only to save, but to win for Christ. The Church exists for Christ, for His joy, His comfort and His delight. It was His delight on earth to draw a company to Himself, a company who should be round Himself as their Centre. In Matt. xvi., Peter's confession of His personal glory is made the occasion of the promise "Upon this rock I *will* build My Church." He was not *then* building the Church, but we get in the Gospels sample companies of what the Church was to be; little groups to whom *He* was the attraction: of whom He was the centre, to whose hearts He was the object; little groups whom His grace and power had relieved of all the pressure that was upon them, in order that they might be drawn into His company to enjoy His love. Of these groups the little company at Bethany is a conspicuous example. Bethany was the last place trodden by His sacred feet, before leaving this cold, inhospitable

world. "He led them out as far as to Bethany," and while lifting up His hands in blessing, He was parted from them. To Bethany He will come again, for His feet shall stand on Mount Olivet, and Bethany was a village on its slope. There seems to have been no place where the blessed Lord was so appreciated, no place where He was understood half so well as at Bethany. Here His personal glory was entered into: His pleasure was ministered to, His presence was welcomed. Now it is God's desire that the assembly of His saints should be a Bethany. His will, is that a company of believers gathered unto the Name of the Lord Jesus in any place, should be a circle where the Lord is appreciated, where His presence can be made known. God's intent is not merely that the sinner should be saved. We get many settings forth in Scripture of what God's intent is. We see it in the cleansing of the leper. The leper was visited by the priest, the bird was slain, its blood was shed, the blood was sprinkled and the live bird let loose in the open field. But that was not all. All his hair, all his eyebrows, and all his beard had to be shaved off. It was all to be left behind. Every *emanation of the flesh had to go*, and he entered the camp shaved of eyebrows and hair. What an oddity! one might have exclaimed. And if the razor of God's truth is allowed by us to shave off what is of the flesh in us, we shall be odd too. Truth makes us odd; makes us peculiar; makes us different from other people. Christianity is in direct opposition to every thing around us. It is not an improvement on Judaism, not an elongation or prolongation of the old economy, but an entirely new thing where everything is heavenly. Christ is not of this world, and therefore

Christians are not of this world. If the Lord's prayer in John xvii., "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy Word is truth," were answered in us, the truth would shave off much from us. We would not be understood by other people, we would be conundrums to them. This is what the world said of the early Christians. We see in each member of the household at Bethany an object of *Divine love*. "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." It is beautiful to see Martha mentioned first. The one who had been most censured, is mentioned first as an object of His love, showing that there is no difference with Him. Martha was apparently the eldest, and should have taken the first place, the place taken by Mary. In Luke x. we read that it was Martha's house; she was evidently the mistress there. But Bethany is spoken of in John xii. as the *town of Mary*—she eclipses Martha, she takes, in a sense, the whole town for Christ. Is that what the district we live in looks like to the eyes of the Lord, as He looks down from heaven upon it? Does He associate the place with us? Can He say, "The town of this or that devoted saint!"

Well, we see in that little group a company that had been relieved of every pressure that was upon them, relieved and delivered that they might be at leisure from themselves, at leisure from circumstances and sorrow, to be with Christ, enjoying His love and His company. Lazarus had been brought out of *death*. The Lord had gone to Bethany to raise him from death and then to disentangle him from that which fettered him. First He gave him life, then He gave him liberty—"Loose him and let him go." And where does he go? Where is the next place we find him? "Lazarus

was one of them them that *sat at the table with Him*." That is the natural place for one who has been "let go," to be—at the table with Him. That is where the instincts of a new-born soul will ever lead it. The reason why we see so many who are brought into life not with us at the Lord's table is, that they have not been "let go." Man's schemes, man's traditions, man's organizations come in, to hinder. But if they were "let go" they would be *at the table with Him*. And it is God's desire for all His people, that they should know communion with Christ even in a wider and larger sense than that of which the table speaks. We are called to the enjoyment of *all* that there is in Christ, to feast on the things at God's right hand where Christ sitteth. In order to do this we need to be "loosed" from the world. "Love not the world," God says. Do you love the world? Perhaps you say, "How could I love the world that hated and crucified the Son of God?" Does not James say, "The friendship of the world is enmity with God?" But John does not stop there—"Neither the things that are in the world." I think I can say without being egotistical, without attempting to take a platform above other Christians, without exaggeration—I do not love the world; but the things that are in the world are a real snare to me. The things that are in and of the world appeal to nature. What are they? "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, the pride of life." Perhaps the lust of the flesh may be nothing to us; possibly we may be able through grace to live in superiority to it, and to the lust of the eye. But what about the pride of life? It is this that is such a real temptation, such a snare, such a distraction to the child of God. Nature says—

We must maintain our position, we must make a position for our children, and so on. Is not this the pride of life? And how often the Christian's home is furnished and ordered just like that of the worldling, who has no communion with the thoughts of God, no eternal communion with Christ to look forward to, when life's chequered story is over. This deliverance from the world must be made *real* to us, if we would enjoy Christ unhinderedly, and feast without distraction on His beauties and perfections, in fellowship with God.

(To be Continued.)

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LECTURES ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

BY WM. LINCOLN, OF BERESFORD, LONDON.

CHAPTER I, VERSES 6 TO 14.

“THE same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light,” that is, of Jesus. I never read that verse without thinking, how kind of God and of Christ it was, that there should be a witness of Him. For the Light is its own witness: no one needs evidence that the sun shines; think of a person writing a book to prove it. How good, then, that He should give a witness as to His being the Light. And why? “That all men through Him might believe.” What a solemn thing if, after all this stupendous, infinite grace, power, and love, any should not believe. Oh! after this One has come forth from God, it does not much matter whether you are a Mahomedan, and say God has no Son, or a Romanist, and put the Virgin Mary in His place; in the one it is the cutting off the emanation from God, in the other it is putting a shadow in its place. You might just as well argue that the sun has no ray,

as that God has no Son; as sure as there is a ray in the sunshine, so sure does God, must God, have a Son. But it is this mysterious Being against whom the hate and unbelief of the world and of Satan are specially directed. And it is this mysterious Being towards whom our faith is directed. We are to believe in Him who came from the Father, who came into the world, and died upon the Cross. The same Being who died upon the Cross, and burst the chains of death; for it is not possible that He should be holden of death, for He is life itself. Not merely that He has it, but He *is* life; and He has burst the chains of death, and lives for ever.

Let us carefully notice the beautiful arrangement by the Spirit of God of these opening verses of the Gospel. He is pleased to mark four stages in the coming down of our Lord Jesus Christ to our actual condition, and points them off by a reference to John the Baptist. In what we have looked at we see Him beginning at the very top. The third verse is His beginning to descend. Creation, whilst it is ascribed to Him, was a condescension on His part, an act of goodness. And yet, where then is the creation: “the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.” That is all it finds here—darkness. Then comes the first reference to John the Baptist.

Now we proceed with the second of the four stages in this descent. We might first just enumerate them. In the first, He is the Author of all creation; in the second, He is full of grace and truth; in the third, He tells out God; in the fourth, He is the Lamb of God. Anyone could see that the fourth was a descending indeed; from “the Word with God,” to that Lamb, “the Lamb of God” bearing away the sin of the world.

Yet associated with this we have the fact that He is risen, because it is said He baptized with the Holy Ghost, and that was not until Jesus was glorified. Verse 9 is the beginning of the second stage. The words "that cometh," in the original may refer either to the word "every man," or to "the Light"; and the question is whether it is "the Light" coming into the world, or "every man," which the Spirit meant. In my own mind I have no doubt it was "the Light." "That was the true Light, which, coming into the world, lighteth every man." Observe that it is not "enlighten"—for *that*, it must get inside—but "lightens," just as the sun gladdens creation. As we have it elsewhere, "the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." The true Light was shining, the sun was about to arise. "The people which sat in darkness saw a great light." Mark that it is "a great light," and not "great light" simply; that is not at all the force of it. In the humble, holy life of Jesus there was a wondrous light, and specially when He reached the cross and told out the true nature of God. The Light was coming, and on the Cross it may be beheld.

The next verse still proceeds with this descent. In verse 9 He is coming, in verse 10 He is here. "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." The darkness comprehended not the light. The tenth verse is no repetition upon verse 3; there all creation is ascribed to Him, but here only this little bit of a planet is ascribed to Him. But what a wonderful thought, the Creator of this world has visited this world personally, and, as we shall see lower down in this very passage, in the flesh—that is, in actual humanity. He, the Creator of this

planet; or if we take verse 3, the Creator of all things; or going back to verse 1, He who was in the beginning with God and was God, has been here. "And the world was made by Him."

"Wandering as a homeless stranger,
In the world Thy hands had made."

Thus the Lord Jesus gradually approaches us. The next verse brings Him yet nearer. "He came unto His own [property] and His own [people] received Him not." It is not quite the same word for "His own" in the two parts of the verse. All was His own. If we think of any action of His, say when He required the foal of an ass, to ride upon it in lonely state into Jerusalem, His message was "the Lord hath need of him"; He asked it not as a loan, for He was its proper owner. "His own people received Him not." That is Israel: they said, "This is the heir, come let us kill Him, and the inheritance shall be ours."

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THE DOUBLE-MINDED MAN.

WEIGHTY WORDS FROM THE PEN OF AN OLD WRITER.

ONE may be a true saint and an active and earnest servant, and yet for all that, a double-minded man, in spite of much knowledge of truth and intelligence. This is not a question of the common crowd that thoughtlessly throng the churches and chapels of our land, content alike with Evangelical or Anglican, Unitarian or Catholic, but of one who knows the truth, and whose conscience intelligently judges of the truth. Unfaithful to his convictions, he becomes a grieving thorn in the side of his associates, and, goaded by his conscience, is an unceasing source of worry and disturbance to his friends. A champion of orthodoxy, a

defender of the faith, he is at last reduced to a mere quibbler, a vain and ineffectual stickler at detail, dragged the while at the chariot wheels of the very doctrines and practices he rejects. Always objecting, he displays the humiliating spectacle of a man who is ever eating his objections, recanting his principles, and ends with searing his conscience. It is a terrible thing to play fast and loose with conscience, for it issues in judicial blinding to every divine principle. Evil is called good, and good evil; darkness put for light, and light for darkness; bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. Conscience disallowed, ends in avowed antagonism.

To protest moved by conscience, but at the same time to submit by reason of other influences, produces necessarily a crooked path. This, however, is not the worst effect of double-mindedness. Against those who not only protest, but obedient to the Word, *reject and separate from* that of which the conscience does not approve, a deep animosity springs up. The esteem of his brethren, the influence of numbers, the fear of man, propagandist zeal of an accredited party, prestige of leadership, weight of authority and place, covertly given to man in the flesh, all combine in the hand of Satan to induce dissimulation by which even a Barnabas is carried away.

The saddest symptom of double-mindedness is, inconstancy as regards the truth. The mind becomes a quicksand, in which the faith is swallowed up piecemeal until every vestige is gone. By a sort of moral dissolving view, the truth once boasted in is changed into a lie. A good conscience is first put away, then by slow degrees the faith is cast off, and finally the doctrine and the state of soul are both gone.

Shipwreck has been made. The man has been deceived; he is taken in the toils of systematized error. Doctrine without God is sweet to the flesh as a product of man's mind, and oily explanations smooth away all difficulties of conscience. But bitter as wormwood and sharp as a sword is the end. What was feebly rejected at the first, becomes at length zealously defended, and the man is left a beacon to the unwary on the sunken rocks of error, in the sea of plausible explanations. He is a spiritual Lot's wife, a standing momento of the danger of half-heartedness. And even where the *form* of orthodoxy and truth is still maintained, the case is no better, but far worse, for such a person is certainly not a beacon to warn. On the contrary, he is a wrecker to lure the simple one to shipwreck and destruction. One who acts the part of decoy to the saints of God, will not escape the judgment of their enemies. Like Samson, the city gates may sometimes be carried to the top of a hill, but to dally with the Philistines, is to be finally destroyed in their doom.

Peter is an example of a devoted, loving servant caught in the toils of a foe mightier than he. Yet, beloved servant of the Lord! the voice of reproof reaches his obedient ear. Grace learned through failure becomes an everlasting adornment, and the word that brought it to the soul is valued as a momento of love. Experimentally known, it is "as apples of gold in pictures of silver." It is man's honour indeed not to fail, but in confession and restoration the glory is all God's own.

ONE BOOK.—There is One Book which we need not peruse with doubt or suspicion, but where truth and *only* truth is to be found. This is The Bible.

The Bible Annotator.

JOTTINGS FROM BIBLE MAGAZINES.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IN FOUR ASPECTS.

- Sons* to love (1 John v. 2).
Servants to obey (2 Tim. ii. 24).
Soldiers to fight (2 Tim. ii. 3).
Stewards to occupy (Titus i. 7 ; Luke xix.).

THE CHRISTIAN RACE.

- Running after Christ (Song i. 4).
 Running in His commandments (Psalm cxix. 32).
 Running with patience—endurance (Heb. xii. 1).
 Running, not uncertainly (1 Cor. ix. 26).
 Running, yet not weary (Isa. xl. 31).

HOW GOD FORGIVES SINS.

- Frankly (Luke vi. 24 ; Isa. lv. 7).
 Freely (Mark ii. 28 ; Rom. iii. 24).
 Fully (Col. ii. 13 ; Heb. x. 17).

A SEVENFOLD TESTIMONY TO THE DIVINE SONSHIP OF CHRIST.

- Jesus *proclaimed* it (Matth. xxvi. 63).
 The Father *affirmed* it (Matth. iii. 17).
 The Resurrection *declared* it (Rom. i. 4).
 Paul *preached* it (Acts xi. 20).
 Peter *confessed* it (Matth. xvi. 16).
 Demons *acknowledged* it (Mark iii. 2).
 The Disciples *believed* it (Matth. xiv. 33).

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The Young Believer's Question Box.

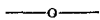
What is the meaning and the limit of the text—“I am made all things to all men” (1 Cor. ix. 22)? It is frequently quoted to justify going to places and indulging in practices, which are not according to the Word. Yes, it is a stock text with many who wander into worldly and ungodly company, as also unclean religious associations, under the plea of “saving some.” But what is it that the carnal mind will not wrest and pervert, to cover its own backsliding, and justify its departure from God? The contest clearly shows, what the apostle's meaning is. How did he become a Jew? Was it by going back and adopting his old religion, which he tells us he had counted “dung” or refuse (Phil. iii. 8), to show his liberality and gain the confidence of his kindred according to the flesh? Not at all. His testimony to them was ever clear

and distinct (see Acts xxviii. 23-27), as was his separation from the “Jew's religion” (Gal. i. 14), as he called their effete system. Did he go and mingle with the “lawless” or connive with the idolatries of the Gentiles in order to gain those who were “without law?” (Rom. ii. 14). Never. His address in Acts xvii. 17-21, shows how he acted toward these. The text simply means, that he adapted himself to the various conditions and made himself “at home” among the varied classes amongst whom he laboured, so that they might hear the Gospel and be saved. A prison, a dwelling-house, a market-place, a foundering vessel, each in turn became his place of testimony. Bonds, imprisonments, the Roman Prætorium, an Ephesian mob, a quiet lodging were all allowed by God and accepted by His servant, to work out God's ends, and reach those who would not have otherwise heard the message. But he never surrendered his liberty, or toned down his message, as *all* who go into forbidden or questionable places *must*, with the result, as we have seen again and again, that they sink down to their level.

*Is it Scriptural to speak of Christ as an Elder Brother? He is never so spoken of in the Word. True, “He is not ashamed” to call His people “brethren” (Heb. ii. 11), but they are taught by the Holy Spirit to call Him “Lord” (1 Cor. xii. 3). It is no evidence of a Spirit-taught knowledge of Christ to address Him or to speak of Him in terms not found in Scripture. “Dear Jesus,” “Blessed Jesus,” and such like expressions are often heard, and accredited as the language of spirituality and devotion, but when one of old who knew Christ well and suffered much for His sake, was recounting his gain and loss, he needed no such honeyed words to express his estimate of Christ's supreme worth. “The excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus *my Lord*,” was the grand confession of his love for, and relation to, the One for whom he had been able to reckon all that men esteem, “refuse.” Undue familiarity in words, is seldom associated with a genuine devotion expressed in deeds, which is after all the only true evidence of a living faith (James ii., 22-26).*

Is the observance of Easter commanded in Scripture? My friends, who are High Church people, quote Acts xii. 4 as their authority. The Revised Version gives “The Passover,” which is

right. "Easter" is a Saxon word, and is derived from Astarte, a heathen goddess called "the queen of heaven," in whose honour a festival was celebrated by our pagan ancestors in the month of April. To conciliate the Pagans, and get them to adopt Christianity nominally, Rome, by a slight adjustment of the calendar, got the heathen festival brought into close proximity with the Jewish Passover, which gave it the semblance of Christianity. The hot cross buns and dyed eggs which were used in worship of the queen of heaven, were adroitly transferred by the corrupters of Christianity, the former made to do duty as the symbol of Christ's death, the latter of His resurrection. The observance of "days" (Col. ii. 16-20) is a return to Judaism, or Paganism—the religion of the world, but God's Christianity centres around Christ seated in heaven (Col. iii. 1), where days and seasons are all unreckoned.



Answers to Correspondents.



NELLIE C., DUBLIN.—There is no Scripture to warrant the thought that earthly relationships are continued in heaven. Most that one hears on this subject is pure speculation, man attempting to guess what God in His wisdom has withheld from us.

"YOUNG PREACHER."—If you come out to the open air meeting warm in heart from the presence of the Lord, with a message from God to the people, you and your fellow-workers will not feel the lack of "an organ" to "draw" the people. Organs and choirs are usually most required where the preaching is thin and pithless, with nothing in it to attract the people or to grip and hold them when they come. We are told in Acts xiii. 44, that on a certain Sabbath day "came almost the whole city together to hear the *Word of God*"—and there was no organ, no solo singers, no choir, in fact nothing at all but two plain men FILLED WITH GOD, which after all is a great deal. If you give your first and chief attention to this, no fear about the rest. God will look after that. Go on with Him, and never look over your shoulder to the "beggary elements" copied from the world's religion.

T. B., Co. DOWN.—There is nothing in the Word to warrant the statement that a sinner *must* undergo

a certain amount of conviction of sin, before he can be received by Jesus Christ, or be converted to God. Whoever preaches this, puts an embargo on the sinner's belief of the Gospel which God has not put. At the same time we are fully aware that no sinner ever comes to the Saviour until he knows his need of Him. The true evangelist does not preach about conviction, or hold it forth as a pre-requisite to faith. He preaches what produces it, and leaves God to do the rest. We have found that it is possible to make spurious converts by preaching the terrors of the Lord, apart from the power of the Holy Ghost, as in other ways. What alone yields abiding fruit is, God's Gospel preached in the power of the Spirit by men of God, sent by Him and with whom He is working.

W. P., GLASGOW.—The chief lack of our time is the grounding of young believers in the truth of God; getting them to become acquainted with the Word itself, to search, study, and meditate upon it. To make the Book of God in short their counsellor in everything. Then they will have some backbone in them, and will not be easily blown hither and thither with every wind of doctrine, or taken up with every new theory that men advance. It is hopeless to expect strong, healthy, and well-established Assemblies if the individuals who compose them are not men and women well acquainted with God and His Word. If the innovations you describe, had been attempted in any Assembly gathered to the Name of the Lord Jesus twenty years ago, how do you think they would have been received? You may not be able to turn the tide of worldliness and lawlessness that has rolled in since then; thank God it is possible for the believer who knows and loves the way of God, not to allow himself to be carried down with it. If he keeps right with God and stands fast in His Word, he will not be moved. Young believers should be taught the truth, the whole truth; this alone will keep them from the world's religion, which some who once were clear enough about being separate from, have evidently returned to, and wish everybody else to follow. Let the trumpet give no uncertain sound; let the Word of the Lord be preached as in days of old. If it is not allowed in certain circles, leave them alone—there is plenty of scope—but on no account consent to quietly sit down as if there was no remedy.

Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION V.—Is it according to the Word of God, that the Lord's Supper should be eaten on other days, besides the first day of the week?

ANSWER A.—There is no restriction in Scripture that we know of. The word is, "*As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come*" (1 Cor. xi. 26).—J. S.

ANSWER B.—We have partaken of the Lord's Supper at a gathering of the Lord's servants on a week-day, and enjoyed the Lord's presence. But there is certainly need for greater care in ascertaining who on such occasions do partake of it.—G. A.

ANSWER C.—That the word in Acts ii. 46, "Breaking bread from house to house"—margin, "at home"—does not refer to the Lord's Supper, is clear from what follows:—"They did eat their meat with gladness." "The first day of the week" was evidently the set time for disciples coming together to break bread (Acts xx. 7), and there is no record of it having been done on any other day. The practice of believers coming together at a Conference once a year, and, to show their unity for that day, breaking bread together, then returning to their denominational folds, is common enough; but if it be so good and pleasant to observe the Lord's Supper outside their sects, and apart from priestcraft and clerisy for one day, why should they not continue it so all the year round?—W. J. M.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—While there is no direct commandment of the Lord, *when or where* the Lord's Supper is to be celebrated, there are guiding principles and apostolic practices which are our guide. In the Gospels we have the *Institution* of the Supper, in Acts its *Celebration*, in the Epistles its *Explanation*. Either of these may not be taken apart from the others. Like as the ark of the covenant found its final rest in the midst of Jehovah's temple, so we believe the Lord's Supper, in the last view we have of it in the Word, is seen where in the Divine purpose it was intended to be—viz., in the Assembly of saints, the Church gathered together in the Name of the Lord Jesus (see 1 Cor. xi. 23-34). Its celebration is to be regarded as the chief object of the Assembly's gathering together in one place, there also, when need be, the solemn act of excommunication is to be carried out (1 Cor. v. 4), and, by inference, the reception or restoration of those seeking fellowship

with the Assembly (Acts ix. 26-28; 2 Cor. ii. 6-9). There is no hint given, that the Lord's Supper is ever to be observed apart from the Church being assembled together, or that it is to be regarded as a separate privilege in which those who do not wish complete identification with saints so gathered may share. It is really a part of the fellowship of saints, and comes after the Apostle's doctrine and fellowship in Acts ii. 42. This, at any rate shows, that it is not to be isolated from either. And it is worthy of note that the two expressions, "The Lord's Supper" and "The Lord's Day," are characterised by the use of a word which does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament, and which might be rendered "The Lordly day" and "The Lordly Supper"—thus linking the Supper with the Day, and the Day with the Supper.

Questions Requiring Answers.

6.—Do overseers act *for* the Assembly, or is their work to guide the Assembly in its acts, especially in receiving and putting away? There seems to be a great deal of misunderstanding as to the relation of overseers to the Assembly, and many troubles arise therefrom. A little clear help from the Word in this, would be welcomed by many.

7.—Is it possible for a Christian to continue a member of a denomination, in which its acknowledged Professors of Divinity, &c., and many of its ministers, openly avow their rejection of the fundamental truths of the faith, and yet be reckoned free of all complicity with such errors?

8.—Conferences of Christians, which for many years have been convened and conducted according to the principles which are commonly believed by Assemblies to be according to the Word—viz., that the Lordship of Christ and the guidance of the Spirit should be owned and honoured; that God should be counted on to minister through whomsoever of His servants He sees fit to use, and to give the truth He knows His saints most need. The recognition of these Divine principles, which were once held to be of paramount importance, is gradually being set aside, without any explanation. Speakers are invited, their names announced, subjects chosen, and latterly a chairman appointed, who calls on the speakers in order, and sometimes fixes the extent of their ministry. Is not this going back to what we left?

THE CHURCHES OF THE SAINTS.

PART II. BY ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

WE find, therefore, that, in the only two instances in which we read of the use of the word "Church" by the Lord Jesus, He employed it in these two contrasted, yet closely associated, senses. In the one case He spoke of the whole of the redeemed of this age, and, in the other, of a company of believers, few or many, in one place, who owned Him as Lord, who were in the habit of assembling together, and who could be spoken to by one of their number, and could speak to him with a collective voice. This is abundantly confirmed elsewhere, for, as we search the Scriptures, we find that all the figures which the Holy Spirit uses to illustrate the character and functions of the whole Church, are used also in reference to the local assembly. In Ephesians ii. 21, we read, "In whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." But the next verse adds, "In whom ye also (the assembly at Ephesus) are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Again, in I Cor. xii. the Church is spoken of as a body, and in verse 12, the apostle says, "As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that body, being many, are one body; so also is the Christ." The Lord Jesus being the Head and His people the members, the whole forms the mystical body. But in verse 27, the apostle writes, "Now ye are body of Christ, and members in particular." He does not put the article "the" before the word "body." He could not say to the Church of Corinth, "Ye are *the* body of Christ," for that could only be said of all

the saints from Pentecost onwards. But the leaving out of the article in such a case simply means, that those addressed had the character of a body, though they did not actually form the whole body of Christ.

Another figure of the Church we find in the Lord's words in John x. 16, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be *one flock* (see R.V.), one shepherd." Those who were called out of the Jewish fold, together with sinners saved from among the Gentiles, should all form one flock. But here again we find, that the same figure is used in reference to each of the Churches of the saints. For the Apostle Paul, speaking to the elders of the Church at Ephesus, bids them "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers."

Thus, whether the Church is compared to a building, a body, or a flock, the same figure is used to teach us as to the character of the whole Church, and as to that of the individual Assembly. And in each case it is because the Lord Jesus occupies the same relationship to the company of believers who own Him as Lord, as He does to the Church of which He is the Head.

The great point of contrast, however, between the two, is one that has been already referred to. In the one case Christ alone is the builder. "Upon this rock I will build My Church" (Matt. xvi. 18). In the other, human responsibility comes in, and consequently, the possibility of mistakes and failures. "As a wise master-builder," writes the apostle, "I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he

buildeth thereupon" (1 Cor. iii. 10). And then he goes on to show, that it is possible to build upon the true foundation, wood, and hay, and stubble, which will not stand the test of the coming day. But he points out how grave a wrong this is, by asking them, "Know ye not that ye are temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" Here again the article "the" is left out, showing that the apostle is not saying that the Corinthian assembly was the whole temple of God, but that it bore a similar character. It was builded together for a habitation of God, through the Spirit, as in Eph. ii. 22. This is quite a distinct thing from saying that the body of each believer is a temple for the Holy Spirit, though this also is true, as we read in Chap. vi. 17-20.

We have seen then that human responsibility, with the consequent possibility of failure, is recognised in connection with the building of the individual assembly, and that the apostle presses upon all the Church of Corinth their share of this responsibility. But it is not only as to the bringing in to the assembly that this responsibility exists. It extends also to the care of those who are brought in. In regard to the whole Church the Lord Jesus had said, that He was the sole builder, but He also added, "and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." No living stone, built into the building by Christ Himself, shall ever be removed from its place. No member of the body of which He is the Head, shall ever be cut off. No sheep of the flock which He has called to follow Him shall ever perish. But as soon as we come to consider the "Churches," as distinct from "the Church," we find that what men had built into the building may need to be removed; and that those who had formed a part of the flock may so stray

away, as to have forfeited their place there altogether. 'It is in this connection, therefore, that the all-important character of shepherd service in the assemblies is pressed upon our attention.

Following on this thought, then, let us look at the Apostle's opening words in his Epistle to the Philippians. "Paul and Timothy, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons" (Chap. i. 1). These ecclesiastical titles, which appear in our translation, were used to obscure the real meanings of the words. King James I, of England, in his instructions to the translators, bade them retain all the old ecclesiastical words, so that they were obliged to use these titles instead of simply translating the words into English. The word translated "bishop" is derived from a verb meaning "to oversee," while the word "deacon" is taken from a verb meaning "to serve." The address of the Epistle is, therefore, to all the saints which are at Philippi, with those who oversee and those who serve.

It might be supposed, at the first glance, that, as the apostle thus addresses all the saints at Philippi, there is no suggestion of any assembly character, as being borne by these saints. But the very fact that they include those who oversee and those who serve, is sufficient to contradict this idea. A company that is furnished with those who oversee them, must needs be such a company as is referred to in the many Scriptures already quoted, in regard to the Churches. Moreover, later in the Epistle, the apostle definitely speaks of these Philippian believers as being a Church. "Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the

Gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no Church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity" (chap. iv. 15-16). This very act of communicating with the Apostle's need, is an evidence that they were associated together, and could and did take united action about matters.

Some, again, have supposed that, because the epistle is addressed to *all* the saints at Philippi, therefore all the saints in any one locality are the Church of that locality, without regard to whether or not they are associated together in worship, in service, and in mutual care for one another. But there is no warrant in God's Word for such an idea. It was happily true in the early apostolic days that all believers were thus associated together in their various localities, so that the Church in any town consisted of all the saints in that town. But the saints in the town would not have been a church if there had been no gathering together to the Name of the Lord Jesus, no being builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit. And those very words "with those who oversee and those who serve" bear witness to this. For godly rule and humble shepherd care, are among the most evident, as well as the most beautiful expressions of the assembly character. In our language, the connection between the shepherd and the flock does not appear by any likeness between the two words. But in the language of the New Testament the words themselves express their relationship one to another. The shepherd is "Poimen," one who tends; while the flock is "Poimne," that which is tended or cared for. It is this that the Lord so beautifully sets forth in John x. All the sheep, whether they came

out of the Jewish fold, or were saved from among the Gentiles, have heard His voice, have been brought by Him. He has given them life; He has led them to the pasture. He is with them, caring for them and keeping them, and so they are one flock, for they have one Shepherd. But we have already seen that the local assembly has the same characteristic features as the whole Church; so that all the saints, with those who oversee and those who serve, are a true picture of what each Church should be.

Now when we come to consider the exercise of this Shepherd care, we are very forcibly reminded of a matter that has already been touched upon. While God alone brings into the Church, which is Christ's body, and that without any need of the consent or even the knowledge of the one brought in, or of any other persons, exactly the opposite is the case in regard to the Churches of the saints. In Acts ii. 42, we read, that those who had gladly received the Word of God and had been baptized, continued steadfastly in the doctrine of the apostles, and the fellowship, and the breaking of the bread, and the prayers. Now all this could not have taken place without definite action on the one side and on the other. Here is a fellowship which those in it may or may not abide in. It could never be said of any believer that he continued steadfastly to be a member of the body of Christ. He is that, as we have already seen, whether he even knows it or not, and nothing can ever remove him from his place. So there is no room, as to this matter, for steadfast continuance on his part. But the position is quite different when we consider the fellowship of the local assembly. He must come into the fellowship by his own act, and he must be brought

into it by the act of the assembly. And being in it, he will abide in it, if he is steadfast, or, if he fails in steadfastness, he may depart from it again; while on the other hand the sad and solemn occasion may arise, when the assembly is commanded to put him away from among themselves.

It is very specially in connection with these matters of bringing into the fellowship of the assembly, of watching for the souls of those brought in, as being accountable to the Lord for them, and of putting away those whom He commands to be put away, that the guiding and care of those who oversee are to be exercised. And in all these things we see, that there is necessarily mutual responsibility. If elder ones are exhorted to shepherd the flock and to take the oversight thereof, younger ones are bidden to obey the elder (1 Peter v. 2 and 5). If those of greater experience who seek to be guides to the saints, are to warn the unruly, to comfort the feeble-minded, to support the weak, and to be patient toward all; the saints generally are exhorted to know them which labour among them, and are over them in the Lord and admonish them, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake (1 Thes. v. 12-14).

But, while the first responsibility in all these things must needs lie upon those who oversee, we must never let their special responsibility blind us to the fact, that the assembly has also a united responsibility in which each individual has a share. Hence, after Peter had exhorted elder ones to the work of shepherding and oversight, and has charged younger ones to submit to the elder ones, he adds, "Yea, all of you, be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility" (1 Peter v. 5). Or, as the Revised Version beautifully gives it, "Yea, all of

you, gird yourselves with humility to serve one another."

It is just the same as in the family relationships. Before bidding wives to obey their husbands and husbands to love their wives; children to honour their parents and fathers not to provoke their children; servants to be obedient to their masters, and masters to forbear threatening their servants; the apostle exhorts them all to submit themselves one to another in the fear of God (Eph. v. 21). How could all this be carried out if the members of the household did not know one another and recognise the relationships in which they stood one to another? Equally all the instructions to the saints composing each assembly take it for granted, that they recognise and accept the mutual responsibilities and obligations that belong to their places in the assembly. The measure of intelligence as to these matters will vary very greatly, but that will never cause any difficulty as to the reception of any who are children of God, and are willing to be brought in to the place which God would put His children in. For what is needful first of all on the part of the younger ones is submission, and however little they know or understand, if they are willing to learn and willing to submit, they can most happily take their place in the assembly of God's people.

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THE PRAISE OF GOD.—It is dangerous to be praised and flattered by men, even by brethren in Christ. The flesh is still in us, and all such flattering tends to puff it up. Better far to toil and labour with few commendations from men, patiently awaiting "the praise of God" (1 Cor. iv. 5) which will be given in the day of Christ to all who have lived for and served Him.

“ENTER NOT INTO TEMPTATION.”

BY GEORGE STEINBERGER, STUTTART.

IT is not enough that we do not fall into sin; according to the Word of God we are not to fall into temptation. We have fallen into temptation when the temptation has entered into us, and, taking possession of us, becomes a motive power, a burning fire, and a paralysing weight.

There is clearly a difference to be made between “being tempted” and “falling into temptation.” He who is tempted must “watch and pray” that he may not fall into temptation. One is tempted, when the temptation, like a thief, prowls about the house seeking to gain an entrance. One has fallen into temptation, when the temptation has, like the thief, broken into the house. Now there is combat, and the question is, “Who will win?” Will you force the enemy out, or will he bind you and rob you of your treasure? In many, the enemy has forced an entrance, and left them lying bound in their own house, i.e. the temptation has never grown into actual sin; but it has inwardly paralysed them, dried them up, and rendered them unfit for the Lord’s service.

When Jesus said these words to His disciples, they were tempted; therefore He warned them not to fall into temptation. And because He said these words during the struggle in Gethsemane, we may suppose that His struggle in Gethsemane principally consisted in gaining the victory over the temptation to doubt, to think “I cannot go through it!” What would it have been if He had said, “I cannot drink the cup!” For the soul who has fallen into temptation does not say, “I will not,” but, “*I cannot!*” I cannot bear that: I

cannot go through that: I cannot believe, etc. If you say that, you have already fallen into temptation. You have turned back upon yourself, taken your trouble or desire into your own hands—only one step more, and you will sin. Abraham had fallen into temptation when he said in a grumbling tone to God, “To me Thou hast given no seed!” (Gen. xv. 3). Moses, too, had fallen when he said, “I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me” (Num. xi. 10-18). Elijah had fallen into temptation when he prayed God in 1 Kings xiv. 4, “Now, O Lord, take away my life!”, David had fallen into temptation when he uttered the words, “I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul!” (1 Sam. xxvii. 5).

Many people prepare some temptation for themselves, and then fall into it. You wished for something, thought it out, pictured it to yourself, and in your heart took possession of it—and lo and behold, it has turned out quite differently! Or you would like this spiritual gift or that blessing. Others have it: you would like to have it too. “You say, “I must have it now: I won’t rise from my knees till I have it!” You shut yourself up in your room: you want to be quiet and have a meeting with God; but instead of that, you have a meeting with the enemy: instead of entering deeper into the peace of God, you enter deeper into temptation; yea, even fall into temptation. Why? It was not God’s moment to lead you aside; it was not God’s time to give you that. You led and tormented yourself. You fall into sadness—not a divine sadness—of which the enemy makes use to discourage and hamper you. On a seemingly godly path you have turned back to yourself, made a

centre of yourself; and that brings much pain.

Four things especially may give occasion for us to fall into temptation:—1. Suffering—one becomes melancholy. 2. Fear—one grows despondent. 3. Annoyance—one takes offence. 4. Lust—one becomes covetous. Ponder over this.

It is not enough if we ourselves escape from temptation: we dare not lead others thereinto. And yet how often have we done this, especially by our ungodly demeanour! We try to guard those around us against sin; do we think of guarding them against temptation?

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THE HOME AT BETHANY.

PART II. AN ADDRESS BY MAX ISAAC REICH.

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MARTHA had been delivered from her faulty views and deficient conceptions of the Person of Christ. She had been set at liberty—further instructed—that she might be free to serve. Her service was accepted then. She was serving in Luke x., but then there was a fussiness, a legality, a spirit of self-occupation, an irritability about it. Now there is a charm, a beauty, a calm in her service, and it ministers pleasure to the heart of Christ. What has brought this about? There has been a deep work in Martha's soul between Luke x. and John xii.! What she needed was to know Christ as Son of God. She had known Him before as the Messiah, had seen in Him the Son of David and the legal heir to David's throne. But in John xi. the Lord uses her blinding, crushing sorrow, to instruct her as to the greater glories of His Person. She is brought by this means out of the dim light in which she was before, into the clear sunlight of

the knowledge of the Son of God. By and by, when we re-read our sorrows in the sunlight of His presence, we shall see them to have been our greatest benefactors. When the Lord came, Martha rushed out of the house to meet Him, still like her old self—fussy. "Mary sat still in the house. Martha greets the Lord with—" Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died. But I know that even now, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee." She recognises in Him a Man who has great power with God in prayer, but there must be more than this. The Lord says—"Thy brother shall rise again," and Martha admits, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Any Jew could say that. But the Lord goes on to say—"I *am* the resurrection and the life," etc." He declares His divine *Person*. Believest thou *this*? Then the light begins to shine in. She owns Him as the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God. She gets an inkling of His glory. Then she goes and calls her sister. "The Master is come, and calleth for *thee*." Although we are not told that the Lord gave this message, her action appears to be correct. It is as if she had said—"The Master's teaching is too deep for *me*. I cannot understand it. You can. He calleth for *thee*." Then Mary comes with the same words—"If Thou hadst been here my brother had not died," but says nothing more. We do not read that Mary got any teaching. There was no need of that for her; she had received her teaching while sitting at His feet. She does not need to be taught now that Jesus is the Son of God. But Mary gets His tears. She gets a more blessed insight into the heart of Christ, in the divine eloquence of His

silence and His tears of sympathy, as together they walk to her brother's grave. He had been showing to Martha the perfection of His power. He shows to Mary the perfection of His sympathy. And now Mary has to be delivered from the bitterness of natural grief that she may be free to worship. Christianity does not chloroform our feelings. It enables us to pass through our sorrows in calm and peace, but does not make us stoical. Jesus passed through scenes of strife in unruffled peace, until the moment when He cried on the Cross, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" His groans and sighs give evidence of how keenly He *felt* the coldness in this inhospitable world, but nothing checked the flow of His love. But while it is right and proper to weep in the right place, tears have to be dried and sorrow assuaged before the soul can *worship*. In worship no natural feelings are allowed. In worship we must be free from care, free from a sense of our need. Prayer is the expression of the soul's need, but there is no need in worship, it is the cup overflowing. In John xii., we see Mary set free from human grief, in His presence, occupied with Him. Then she brings the box of ointment and pours it out on His feet, and the house is filled with the odour of the ointment. In Matthew it His head, in John His feet. To Mary His very feet are worthy of the very best. We surely see from this, that whatever side or aspect of His character we think, of whatever feature of His work we contemplate, from whatever standpoint we view Him, He is worthy of our best. The smallest part of Christ, if we may speak thus, where all is sacred, is as worthy as the most prominent. In John, the thought is worship, in Matthew

kingship, so there He gets the kingly anointing.

In the three in this chapter, we see exemplified the three things Paul longed to know in Phil. iii. "That I might know *Him*." Martha had needed to know Him as she had not known Him before. "And the power of His resurrection," this had been known and realised by Lazarus, but the "fellowship of His sufferings" was known only by Mary. The Lord said—"Against the day of My burying hath she done this." Divinely guided, Mary rose to the occasion. Mary had fellowship in the sufferings of Him who had fellowship with her, as He walked to the grave of her brother. Things had never been so outwardly bright for Christ as at that moment, but well He knew that the voice which should have cried "Hosanna" would soon cry "Crucify Him." No one seemed to feel it but Mary, but she felt it as a dark cloud hanging over Him. She knew that it was not to the Throne, but to the Cross and the grave He was going, and she goes in spirit with Him in His path of sorrow and suffering, through Gethsemane, Golgotha, and the grave, and in the face of all this, her best must be given and poured out on Him. But she knew that the Son of God could never be held by death, so she anoints Him beforehand, she comes in time. The other women came too late, and, blessed be God, found an empty grave, but we do not see Mary among them. The Israelites of old were divided into three classes—common people, Levites, and priests. In Lazarus we see the common people—all alike redeemed and delivered from death and bondage. In Martha we see the Levite character—serving; but the priests knew sanctuary communion, ate of

shewbread, and entered into the holiest of all, where no other feet dared tread, and Mary entered into priestly communion and worship.

But we see yet another character present, a character who enters into the holiest circles and intrudes into the most sacred company—the traitor Judas. He asks, “Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor?” and it seems so plausible, that the others agree with him. How plausible it sounded: how large-hearted! Judas here appears in the rôle of a large-hearted philanthropist. He advocates what some would call “practical Christianity.” And how solemn it is to see how one such man could lead eleven good men into error. Judas is a type of the flesh in us all. He had kept the most wonderful company it is possible for a man to keep, but he was Judas the traitor still. The flesh can never be bettered or improved by anything. One may have known the Lord for twenty years, have had twenty years of communion with Him, twenty years of studying His Word, twenty years of prayer, but the flesh is as bad as ever. But it is blessed to see that the Lord takes Mary's part against Judas, and He takes our part against the flesh. There is a beautiful word in Romans vii. It seems like a sad, dark wail of despair, but there is one bright gleam in it—“*It is no more I.*” Yes we can say “It is no more I,” the Lord takes our side against it. May He give us grace to take His side against it too, that we may know what it is to enjoy what was enjoyed in Bethany—the *love* and the *fellowship* of Christ.

A VAIN HOPE.—Many of the Lord's people indulge the vain hope that by remaining in false systems of religion, they will purify them of their corruptions.

“QUALIFYING” FOR THE MINISTRY.

DURING the great Revival of 1859-60, a young farmer was much used of God in winning souls to the Saviour. So far as the world's education went, he had only a very little: his gifts were of a very simple order, no eloquence or power of attraction was in his preaching. Yet the people hung upon his words; he got large congregations wherever he went, and hundreds were converted through his instrumentality. Some of the world's wise ones advised him to “qualify” for the ministry, by a college training, and the young man, anxious to reach forth to a larger sphere, took the advice given, and in a few years appeared in “holy orders.” No doubt he could preach with greater accuracy of language: his sermons were more polished, and he got the learned and wealthy to listen to his words. But the *power* of his early ministry was gone: there were no convicted sinners and no conversions under his preaching. His “qualifying” after the world's fashion spoiled him for God, and shelved him as a vessel meet for the Master's use. The best qualification for the soul-winner is a heart for Christ, and a yearning desire to see sinners saved. If God is pleased to use you in His service, be humble, and remain where you are, lest you “qualify” to such an extent that He will have no further use for you. We do not, in writing thus, despise education or encourage ignorance. On the contrary, we say—get all the education you can, in a godly way, but take care that you do not get so “qualified” in your own estimation, and so “puffed up” by your superior attainments, that God may have to pass you by, and use a humbler vessel, who will not rob Him of the

the honour belonging to His Name alone. When the Lord's servants are "small" in their own estimation, and not to much praised by others, they are safest.

THE BIBLE, GOD'S OWN BOOK.

THE Bible is a mirror in which the glory of God is seen in the face of Jesus Christ; it is also a mirror in which man beholdeth his natural face as in a glass, but presented as God Himself sees us—for God looks at the heart.

Though the Scriptures have been written by human hands, and in human language, yet all has been given by inspiration of God, for "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." He controlled, suggested, harmonized, and thus left on record the history of God's dealings with man from the first, and His message to man.

The Bible then, is the Word of God, who cannot lie: expressed in man's language, yet God-edited and Spirit-inspired throughout; divinely superintended by the Holy Ghost, it has been preserved from all error; so preserved that, as Christ has said, sooner shall earth and heaven pass away, than one jot or one tittle of the law shall fall or pass away, till all be fulfilled. *For the same finger of God that garnished the starry firmament with innumerable gems of light, wrote every letter on the sacred page.* They are written for eternity. Certain portions may not seem to be of much importace to us, but they are all-important as recording the transactions of time, designed for the use of the whole universe throughout eternity.

THOS. NEWBERRY.

HOW THE REVIVAL CAME.

WE had been preaching the Word for years with little apparent fruit, and some of the saints were getting somewhat discouraged. We were hearing of conversions in other places, and some of our number suggested that we might come together one night a week to pray for a Revival. The first prayer meeting was small—very small, and our faith was sorely tried. We "continued" in prayer, and our souls were much blessed. The following week a stray sheaf was gathered—a little girl was saved. That *was* a joy to us all, and made us pray more earnestly. We were really looking for a time of reaping, and God did not disappoint us. But it did not come as we had expected. We were looking for a Revival—a stirring time, with numbers broken down, and crying for salvation. But we did not see that. Never more than two in one day, were brought into the kingdom. And there was no excitement: only, quiet, solid work, deep conviction, often long periods of anxiety of soul, followed by real conversion and joyful thanksgiving. But at the end of three months over twenty young believers came to the Bible Reading, desiring the milk of the Word. The way in which that blessed season ingathering came, and the manner in which the Spirit of God continued it, has been a life-long lesson to some of us. We learned that great efforts, large meetings, and much excitement, are not a necessity to the work of God. We experienced then that God can and does work by ordinary means, and that a genuine revival does not always commence as a mighty, rushing wind, but sometimes as the dew upon the grass. Praise God for that.

The Bible Annotator.

JOTTINGS FROM BIBLE MARGINS.

Clean Heart (Psa. lxxiii. 1, Heb. x. 22) to *come to God*.

Clean Hands (Psa. xxiv. 4), to *work for God*.

Clean Feet (John xiii. 10) to *walk with God*.

BELIEVERS ARE

Partakers of Christ (Heb. iii. 14).

Partakers of the Holy Ghost (Heb. vi. 4).

Partakers of the Divine Nature (2 Pet. i. 4).

Partakers of the Heavenly Calling (Heb. iii. 1).

Partakers of the Inheritance of Saints (Col. i. 12).

Partakers of Christ's Sufferings (1 Pet. iv. 13).

Partakers of the Glory (1 Pet. v. 1).

SEVEN LINKS OF FELLOWSHIP.

Love one another (John xiii. 34).

Consider one another (Heb. x. 24).

Pray one for another (James v. 16).

Comfort one another (1 Thess. iv. 18).

Edify one another (Rom. xiv. 19).

Exhort one another (Heb. iii. 13).

Serve one another (Gal. v. 13).

OBSELETE AND OBSCURE WORDS

In the Old Testament, with their Meanings.

OBJECTS.—"The *Subjects* gathered themselves together" (Psa. xxxv. 15)—R.V. "smilers." The lowest of the people, the lawless mob. Such were gathered around the Cross (Matt. xxvii. 39).

ADVERTISE.—"I will *advertise* thee" (Numbers xxiv. 14)—inform, or instruct thee. God's warning to His people's enemies.

AHA.—"Aha, she is broken" (Ezek. xxvi. 2). An exclamation equivalent to "Hurrah." The triumph of the ungodly over the fall of the Lord's people.

AGONE.—"The days *agone*" (1 Sam. xxx. 13)—ago, gone by, past. How the devil and the world leave their slaves to perish.

ARTILLERY.—"Jonathan gave his *artillery*" (1 Sam. xx. 40)—his bow and arrows.

AVOUCH.—"Thou hast *avouched* the Lord" (Deut. xxvi. 18)—openly avowed, declared. The confession with the lips of Jesus Christ as Lord (Rom. x. 9).

ASTONIED.—"I sat down *astonied*" (Esa. ix. 3)—astounded, stunned. The man of God's astonishment at his people's disobedience.

AWAY WITH.—"The calling of assemblies I cannot *away with*" (Isa. i. 13)—bear, or endure. Jehovah's rejection of the people's formal religion.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

A SERVANT MAID asks—"Is it having fellowship with false religion, or an unequal yoke with unbelievers, to attend what is called "worship" in the family where I am a servant? It is observed daily, by a chapter being read, followed by a prayer from a book, read by one who does not profess to be born of God? There is a vast difference between the recognition of God in the family, and the worship of what professes to be the church of God. In the latter, the union of believers with unbelievers is strictly forbidden: not so in the family or the household. No rigid rule can be laid down in such cases, but unless there is some particular cause for it, we do not know any reason for absenting yourself from the reading of God's Word and the recognition of His care—even if it be in the reading of a formal prayer—in the household, by its head. There is no "yoke" or "fellowship" involved by your presence there as one of the household.

J. E. H. GLASGOW, asks—"What is the meaning of the laying on of hands as in Acts xiii. 2? A sign of the church's fellowship or identification, with those whom the Lord was sending forth from their midst in His service. Later, the same servants of Christ received "the right hand of fellowship" (Gal. ii. 9), from the apostles at Jerusalem, "when they perceived the grace" that was given unto them. In neither case was their any gift or grace conferred, it was simply a sign of their fellowship. But in 2 Tim. i. 6: Acts viii. 17, xix. 6, it was instrumentally the means whereby spiritual gifts were imparted, which it would be daring assumption for any to lay claim to now.

W. B. asks—"What does the *sheepfold* of John x. 1, represent? The Jewish nation, perhaps in its religious character, in the place of privilege in which God had set it. There is no fold in this dispensation, but there is "one flock, one Shepherd." as the proper rendering of verse 16 is—see R.V. It is to be regretted that in some popular hymns, this distinction is entirely ignored, and as a consequence we sing to God of the Love that "brought me to the fold," when as a matter of fact, it did no such thing. It is a solemn thing to ascribe to God what is contrary to His Word, and to testify to men what, as a matter of fact, is not the truth. Sound doctrine should be sung as well as spoken.

Answers to Correspondents.

ANNIE B.—The author of the Tractate "Thou and thy House" was the late Charles H. Mackintosh (C. H. M.). It is published by Morrish, London.

YOUNG BELIEVER.—There are hundreds of villages and country hamlets in which no clear Gospel message is heard from one year's end to the other. If you and your companions will provide yourselves with a supply of sound Gospel tracts and go forth among such as you can reach—say on the afternoon of the Lord's Day—when, as a rule, the people are at leisure, you will find many who will gladly receive them, and listen to your testimony to the Gospel's saving power. This is the "school" in which not a few who are now able preachers and successful soul-winners "graduated," and we know of no better or happier service for young men who have a heart for Christ and a desire to spread the Gospel. Seek guidance from God, and if we can render any help to you in any way, in such service, we shall be delighted to give it.

D. L., MIDLOTHIAN.—There are many young and gifted preachers who would be glad to give a Lord's Day in such assemblies as you describe, where there are few who can preach the Word publicly. Let the need be known in the assemblies where such are, and no doubt the Lord will send the right messenger with the right message, at the proper time. Many an interesting and fruitful Gospel work is sustained by this means.

J. H., GLASGOW.—Phil. iv. 17, shows, that the "Church" at Philippi "communicated" or had fellowship with Paul in his service in the Gospel, by sending their gift to him when he was absent from them, and we believe this is an example which should be followed by churches still. There are many servants of Christ labouring in the Gospel at home and abroad, approved and faithful men, who are working "the work of the Lord" (1 Cor. xvi. 10), with whom it is the privilege and responsibility of assemblies to communicate in like manner, and there is no better or more Scriptural way than to send their gifts to such *direct*. A loving letter accompanying the gift, is a special cheer to the lone servant of Christ, who is reminded of the faithfulness of God in thus supplying his need, through those whose hearts are exercised toward him, when he is far away from them. The

assembly will also be blessed and cheered in hearing direct from the receiver, and of the work in which he is engaged, and led forth in prayer and praise on behalf of the Lord's servant, as they cannot possibly be, if their gift is merged in a general fund, no matter how well or wisely administered. There are godly and approved men, diligent in the service to which God has called them, who, it is to be feared are sadly neglected, simply because they do not advertise themselves and their work as some others do. It is surely the privilege and responsibility of assemblies who know and have confidence in such, to see that they are cared for, and their wants supplied. If their whereabouts are unknown at the time, they may be easily found out, or the gift passed on through some one who will put them in communication with such. It would further tend to intelligent and liberal giving by the saints, if when the gift is being made up, it were made known to what purpose it is to be devoted, and to whom it is to be communicated.

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Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION VI.—Do overseers act *for* the Assembly, or is their work to guide the Assembly in its acts, especially in receiving and putting away? There seems to be a great deal of misunderstanding as to the relation of overseers to the Assembly, and many troubles arise therefrom. A little clear help from the Word in this, would be welcomed by many.

ANSWER A.—In the New Testament churches, elders, or overseers—words which describe the same ministry (see Acts xx. 17, 28)—were those who fed and led the flock (1 Peter v. 2), and who by reason of age, experience, and wisdom, were able to give counsel and guidance, but they did not act *for*—in the sense of taking the responsibilities of the saints upon themselves.—J. S.

ANSWER B.—Overseers are not absolutely necessary to the existence of a Church (see Titus i. 5), where the Churches evidently existed before elders were ordained. But they are essential to its growth and godly order. They are not officials delegated to act *for* the churches, but as the word used in Heb. xiii. 17, margin, "guides" indicates, to go before and lead the saints. Where they have the *character* and *qualifications* (1 Tim. iii 1-10) and

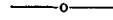
do the work (1 Thess. v. 14-17), they will be owned and followed, by the spiritual, at least, among the saints.—J. M'K.

ANSWER C.—Overseeing brethren would first have an applicant for fellowship brought to them (Acts ix. 27), and they being satisfied as to the genuineness of the case, commend to the assembly, but it should never be forgotten, that *it* receives, and when occasion arises *it* puts away from its fellowship (1 Cor. v. 13). It is not necessary that each individual in the assembly should personally satisfy themselves as to the fitness of those seeking association with them—many are quite unqualified for such a service, being lacking in discernment—but in the wisdom of God all are to be associated in receiving and putting away, so that neither may be regarded as a party act, but as the action of the whole Assembly.—W. J.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—The above three answers embody others we have received, and cover most of the points of the question. Those whom the Lord has called and fitted to shepherd and guide the saints, will ever seek to inform and instruct them on all matters in which their fellowship is necessary, and never act apart from, or out of touch with the assembly. In order to appear before the assembly of one mind, it is needful that those serving the Lord among his saints in this capacity, should come together by themselves and speak of things it would be unprofitable to bring before the assembly in detail. They should always be of one mind, before they bring any matter before the saints.

Nothing can be more disastrous to an Assembly, than for elder brethren to appear divided, and take opposite sides in matters brought before it. To this is due the greater number of assembly troubles. Better far to wait for weeks or months, until God gives oneness of mind, than for one party to force an action which the other is unable to take part in. Of course this implies that only those are recognised as overseers who have the qualifications, and the confidence of the saints. We have known those unqualified for oversight attend such meetings, for the purpose of objecting to everything that would be proposed, but such should be graciously but firmly told, that their presence there is not in order. We do not claim to have that power to "ordain" elders, which the apostles possessed (Acts xiv. 23), but we are not on this account under the necessity

of acknowledging any man who thinks fit to appoint himself to this work. Those who are acting together in guiding the saints, would be best able to discern whether one seeking to share the work, has the required fitness, or otherwise. It is to be feared that some presume to *lead* who have never learned to *follow*, and to rule who have only feebly learned to obey.



Questions Requiring Answers.

We invite the help of those to whom the Lord has given understanding of the Scriptures and wisdom, in the answering of the following questions, bearing upon matters of real difficulty to honest and inquiring minds. Answers should be brief, concise, and clear, leading to the Word of God. We desire to have all sides of the truth, plainly stated, and duly balanced.

7.—Is it possible for a Christian to continue a member of a denomination, in which its acknowledged Professors of Divinity, &c., and many of its ministers, openly avow their rejection of the fundamental truths of the faith, and yet be reckoned free of all complicity with such errors?

8.—Conferences of Christians, which for many years have been convened and conducted according to the principles which are commonly believed by Assemblies to be according to the Word—viz., that the Lordship of Christ and the guidance of the Spirit should be owned and honoured; that God should be counted on to minister through whomsoever of His servants He sees fit to use, and to give the truth He knows His saints most need are evidently changing their character. The recognition of these Divine principles, which were once held to be of paramount importance, is gradually being set aside, without any explanation. Speakers are invited, their names announced, subjects chosen, and latterly a chairman appointed, who calls on the speakers in order, and sometimes fixes the extent of their ministry. Is not this going back to what we left? What ought to be done?

9.—If in an Assembly there are six or eight brethren who are recognised as guiding and overseeing the saints, is it according to God for two or three of these to appear as representing the Assembly or the oversight, at meetings where matters of difficulty involving the fellowship of all are to be considered, virtually acting on their behalf, whereas as a matter of fact, neither the one nor the other have any knowledge of them being there?

“HONOUR THE KING.”

THE BELIEVER'S RELATION TO THE THRONE
AND THE KINGDOM.

THE believer in the Lord Jesus, the Christian, is heaven born and heaven bound. His citizenship (Phil. iii. 20), his inheritance (1 Pet. i. 3), and his hope (Col. i. 5), are all in heaven. On earth he is a stranger and a sojourner. Crucified to the world by the Cross of Christ, he walks no longer according to its course, he conforms no more to its ways, he is governed no longer by its prince. The grace that has called him out of darkness into light, the love that has opened heaven and given him eternal interests there, has also won his heart and set his affection on them. Even now, while yet in mortal flesh on earth, his spirit longs for heavenly things, the eye of faith is erected toward his inheritance, and the Holy Ghost who is the earnest of that inheritance, and whose mission is to lift him up to the enjoyment of its blessings, and make them good to him, already dwells within his heart. He is as regards his calling and ought to be as regards his state, a heavenly citizen, the subject of a heavenly kingdom, governed in all things by the Lord Jesus, who sits upon the throne above, with all authority in heaven and on earth given into His hand, Whom he acknowledges in all his ways, and yields obedience to that Word of His, which He has given to His people, in which are written “laws from heaven for life on earth,” and perfect legislation on all that pertains to him personally, socially, commercially, ecclesiastically, all the days of his earthly pilgrimage. Passing through the world as a pilgrim to the land of his inheritance, he walks circumspectly as one who treads

enchanted ground, for well he knows his feet are on the plains of danger, where at any hour he may be assailed or beguiled by his wily foe who lurks in secret places, seeking whom he may devour. Thus, with quickened step he passes on, reaching forth to that which lies before. With uplifted eyes he watches for the Son of God from heaven, at whose coming he will be translated in a moment to his native land, in the full image of the heavenly, in a body fashioned like to that of his Lord, suited to his new abode, with capacities for the full enjoyments and employments of that heavenly city, to which he at length has been brought, to see with his eyes what his heart had loved so long,

Even now in the days of his pilgrimage, and while mingling among the sons of men below, he is called to let the light of his life so shine, that others who are in quest of something better than the world can give, may be thereby guided to the hidden Fountain from which he is supplied.

Such in brief is the believer's relation to earth and to heaven, during the days of his pilgrimage, and such too, is the relation of the church, God's testimony in the world during the entire period of its militancy. Had this been better known, and held its place in the consciences and affections of the saints; had its holy truth been allowed to form their minds, and its sanctifying influence to purify their lives, there would have been no desire to form unholy alliances with the world, no temptation to surrender the place to which grace had called them, to court favour with great ones of the world. No intermeddling with the politics of earth, or aspiration to fill the place of being its rulers, simply because such a position is not contemplated or provided for in the

Word of the Lord, while for all other relationships—husbands, wives, parents, children, masters, and even subjects—there are full directions given. This silence is surely of itself sufficient, for all who are accustomed to be guided by a “Thus saith the Lord” in all their ways, to prevent them from launching forth on a course upon which no ray of heavenly light is shed, and in which there is no commandment of the Lord to guide them. But while there are no instructions given in the Word to Christian rulers, there are many to Christian subjects—that is to those who, while by birth and citizenship they belong to heaven, are for the present in some of the world's great empires or kingdoms, as were the saints of earlier days. Surely in a day of lawlessness and disorder, when men are despising government and casting off authority, it behoves the people of God to set themselves to inquire diligently in the Word of the Lord, what are their relations and responsibilities toward the throne by which they are ruled, and the kingdom of which they are the subjects, and to seek grace to fulfil them worthy of God :

SUBJECTION TO AUTHORITY.

In the days when the Scriptures were written, and in which the early Christians lived, the government of the land in which they chiefly dwelt, was in the hands of the Romans. A heathen, generally a tyrant and a persecutor of God's saints, sat upon the Imperial throne. Yet it was of this government that the Holy Spirit inspired an apostle to write, “The powers that be are ordained of God” (Rom. xiii. 1), and commanded implicit subjection to them. It was far from being what we would call a “good government,” nevertheless it was to

be owned as being “ordained of God.” Corrupt, and opposed to Christianity as it often was, yet the pilgrim people of God were not to revolt against it, or seek to overturn it, but to render to Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's, and to God the things that were God's (Matth. xxii. 21); to pay their taxes and tribute, with the same readiness of mind as they did the necessities of life. Regarding their relation to the person of the King, the Word is equally explicit. “Fear God. Honour the King” (1 Pet. ii. 17), are words of the Holy Ghost, set side by side. Not because of his personal character, but because of the position in which God, who setteth up kings and putteth down kings, and who sometimes permits authority to fall into the hands of “the basest of men” (Dan. iv. 17), has placed him, is this honour to be given. And if such honour and subjection were to be given to tyrant Emperors and Governments who opposed Christianity, surely we, whose lines have been cast in better times and places, in which Christianity has the patronage of the Sovereign and the protection of the Government, in which liberty to worship God as His Word has commanded, and preach the Gospel without fear are granted, we ought not to be less loyal, but more thankful. Such liberty is not given even now in every land. To live “in all godliness and honesty,” to separate from the State religion because of its corruption, to gather as the Lord has commanded His people, means imprisonment or transportation in many lands.

PRAYER FOR THE KING.

Although the arena of politics is denied to the Christian, a higher and more honourable sphere of influence is open continually

to him. He has access to the place of intercession and prayer, and who can tell what God has done in answer to His people's prayers, in hushing the sounds of war, restoring peace, preserving liberty, and causing the spread of civilization to prepare a way for His blessed Gospel and His Word among the sons of men. And while it is the privilege and duty of believers individually to so pray, the words of 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2, "prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks," being all in the plural, as also the connection in which they occur, point to the fact that these are to be the exercises of God's assembled people; in other words, of the assemblies of the saints when gathered together. How seldom in times of peace and prosperity do such prayers ascend, but let liberty be restrained or war break forth, then the saints remember this neglected precept, and cry to God to put forth His over-ruling hand.

That the King and Queen of these realms, with all the Royal House, may be individually made the subjects of God's saving grace; that they may personally be led to put their trust in the Lord Jesus, and enabled to confess Him before men; that peace may long be continued to the great Empire over which King Edward rules; that His Ministers and Government may be so endowed with wisdom, that they shall make such laws as shall preserve the liberty we so richly enjoy, and enable the children of God to "live in all godliness and honesty" till the moment comes, that shall bring them to their Fatherland and their eternal home, is our heart's desire and prayer. There the Lamb is on the throne.

Soon, soon 'mid yonder ransomed sacred throne
We at His feet shall fall;
Join in the everlasting song,
And crown Him Lord of all.

SYMBOLS OF THE CHURCH.

BY DR. J. NORMAN CASE, OF CHINA.

I.—INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

IT is our present purpose, in a few short articles, to examine New Testament symbols of Christians in their collective capacity; that is, as the Church or Assembly of God.

It is generally recognised that in the New Testament the word "Church" has at least two applications: (1) As embracing all believers on the Lord Jesus Christ from Pentecost till His second coming; (2) As applying to two or three or more believers in any place, who are gathered as the Scriptures direct, unto His Name. These two uses of the word we trace back to the earliest mention of the Church, by Christ Himself in Matt. xvi. 18, xviii. 17.

In recent years much has been said and written on different aspects of the Church; leading on in some cases to strife and division among children of God. We write for edification, not for controversy, although controversy cannot be always or wholly avoided. Indifference to truth, to what concerns the honour of the Lord Jesus and the good of His people, is even a greater evil than controversy.

It is not our object in these papers to critically examine the subject as a whole, but rather to meditate on some symbols employed by the Spirit of God to give us a true conception of the calling, privileges, responsibilities, and future glories of the Church which is His body.

A careful examination of the Scriptures will show us that several of these symbols are used in both of the above-mentioned aspects of the Church, as also of the individual believer.

I.—*A Body.* “He put all things in subjection under His feet,” writes the Apostle, “and gave Him to be Head over all things to the Church, *which is His body*, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all” (Eph. i. 22): and again, “He is the Head of *the body*, the Church (Col. i. 18). These and kindred passages clearly apply to the Church in the broadest scriptural use of the Word.

But we have a statement as follows: “Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular” (1 Cor. xii. 27). The “ye” of *this verse undoubtedly refers, in the first place, to the Corinthian Church.* Many of my readers are aware that the definite article is not in the original. It should read either, “Ye are a body of Christ,” or “Ye are Christ’s body.” In English, we cannot say “Ye are body of Christ.”

Hence we learn from this and other Scriptures that it was God’s original purpose that each local Church should stand for, have the character, and be a miniature of, the Church as a whole. One would indeed be blind who did not see from this, that it was the Divine intention that *all* true members of Christ in every locality should be united together, and that sectarianism is a cause of dishonour to the testimony of Christ, and of harm and loss to His people.

II.—*A Bride.* As to the application at all of this symbol to the Church, it may be necessary to say something, and this we will later on attempt. Now we simply point out that the figure, in the New Testament is used in regard to three circles.

(1) The well-known portion in Eph. v. 23-33, refers to the one Church made up of true believers of all countries and centuries since Pentecost.

(2) In another epistle, the same Apostle

writes: “I am jealous over you with godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ” (2 Cor. ii. 2). This again, in the first place, had in view the Church at Corinth.

No one, I think, who by residence in the East has become familiar with the marriage customs of those lands, but will see in this verse an allusion to the inevitable go-between or “middle-man” of a wedding. He corresponds to “the friend of the Bridegroom” of John iii. 29.

Such the Apostle counted himself to be in relation to Christ, and the Church at Corinth. And so wholly did he identify himself with Christ, that he was of himself as the middle-man, a word which properly belongs to the Bridegroom: “I am JEALOUS over you,” we writes. There the matter is looked at wholly from the standpoint of human responsibility. Faithfulness to Christ as the Bridegroom, and spiritual chastity of the saints as His espoused, are the points insisted on.

In the epistle to the Romans (chap. vii. 1-4) in a very striking way, this figure is used to illustrate the present relation to Christ of the *individual* believer. “Wherefore, my brethren,” writes the Apostle, “ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be *married to Another*, even to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God (Rom. vii. 4).

The ground of our subjection to Christ as Lord, and the method and completeness of our deliverance from the old husband, are here set forth. But on these we do not now enlarge. Two matters only, we briefly call attention to. In this portion, the marriage is looked upon as *already*

consummated; not so in 2 Cor. or Eph. v.; and in the last clause of the verse just quoted, there is surely a reference to one of the original present purposes of such union, namely, *fruit*. And surely one of the most blessed result of the union of Christ and the believer will be, the bringing forth of "fruit unto God.

III.—*A Temple*. In the same three-fold way this symbol is also used.

All the redeemed and regenerated of this dispensation are formed into a house or temple. This building, in a very special way, becomes the dwelling place of God. Christ, through His death and resurrection, forms its foundation and chief corner stone. It is now in process of building in one aspect; though in another it is completed as a habitation of God "*in the Spirit*" (Eph. 2, 20-22). What a solemn, as well as a blessed thing, to belong to this one Church of the Lord Jesus!

The figure is also undoubtedly applied to a Church in a place. "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. iii. 16, R.V.). In this manner the Apostle appeals to the saints at Corinth. Since this is so, what zeal for holiness and purity should mark every company that takes the place of being a Church of God! Nothing in doctrine or morals should be tolerated that will grieve or bring dishonour on the Holy One whose Temple they are.

"Know ye not," the Apostle asked of the same church, "that your BODY is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God?" (chap. vi. 19, R.V.). From the use of the word *body*, and more clearly still from the whole connection, we see that here it is the individual believer who is the temple of God. In this passage

those who confess Christ's Name, are most solemnly warned against the sin of unchastity. The exhortations were called for at that time, by the evil lives of some in the Church at Corinth; and they are not unneeded now, even among those who profess and call themselves Christians. Several most weighty reasons are brought forward why Christians should keep themselves pure. One of the most searching is, the fact we are looking at, *viz.*:—that every Christian's body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. If we remembered this continually, how careful we should be never to use our bodies except in a lawful and God-honouring way. We should consider well, even what we eat and drink and what we wear, the amount of work we do, of rest we take, &c. In pondering such a passage as the one before us, we can see the fitness, the reasonableness even, of the word: "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Nothing less is becoming to a person whose body is a temple of the Holy Spirit.

Here we must pause. In future articles we purpose, if the Lord will, to examine a little more in detail the figures already glanced at, as well as several others. That, by the unction of the Holy Spirit, the series may prove truly profitable, to fellow-believers, is our heart's desire and prayer.

TRIALS IN THE CHURCH.—It is a great mercy that we have trials in the Church. They are a mine of wealth to us, and a set of polishing instruments. But by taking them into our own hands, we make them instead a hedge of thorns. We have always to watch lest what marks us naturally should mislead us spiritually.—*R. C. Chapman.*

THE CHURCHES OF THE SAINTS.

PART III. BY ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

IT is very evident, from what has been brought under our notice, that the solemn and weighty responsibilities of Shepherd work and oversight care can only be rightly carried out where there is a recognition of the assembly character of believers gathered together after the Scripture pattern. But so important, so fundamental, I would say, is this to any right understanding of what churches or assemblies are, that it seems necessary to press it still further.

Let us carefully consider, then, the following Scriptures:—

“And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord” (Acts xiv. 23).

“From Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the Church” (Acts xx. 17).

“Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers” (Acts xx. 28).

“For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city” (Tit. i. 5).

“Obey them that have the rule over (margin, guide) you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account” (Heb. xiii. 17).

“The elders which are among you I exhort, . . . feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof” (1 Pet. v. 1-2).

All these passages have to do with distinct companies of believers, cared for by men to whom the Holy Spirit has

committed the responsibility of the care they are exercising. The saints know those who guide them; and the guides know individually every soul entrusted to their care.

The Gospel may be preached to thousands at a time. The Word of God may be profitably administered from the platform to a large audience, though the speaker is not personally acquainted with one individual before him. But watching for souls is quite another matter. It must be individual and personal in its character. “I am the Good Shepherd,” said the Lord Jesus, “and know My sheep, and am known of Mine.” And this will most surely be true at all times of real shepherd work. Not that the shepherds will talk of *their* flocks, for it is always God’s flock and not ours, however well He may have enabled us to shepherd it. Still the principle holds good, and each God-given shepherd will be able to say, “I know the sheep that have been entrusted to my care, and they know me.” How, otherwise, can he watch for their souls? And how, in any other way, can they be subject to his word? “As they that must give account.” Surely this speaks of care for each individual soul, a care that must begin and end in the servant’s dealings with the Lord Himself. For how can he carry the burden of this responsibility, unless he commits each one to Him who has committed them to his care?

All this seems simple and plain, and indeed it is. But what, then, becomes of the attempts that are being made on every hand to deny the distinctive character of the assembly? We are told that, as in a family, when a child is born into it, each member of the family receives the little one, not into the family or household, for its

entrance there is by birth, but to the affections, and care, and privileges, and joys of the household, because it has been born into it, such is the reception of a believer, according to Scripture. But those who speak and write thus, always forget to tell us when and how, any person is *born into an assembly*. They confound entirely between the Church of Matthew xvi., into which new born souls are indeed brought by birth, and the church of Matthew xviii., with its local limitations.

There is no such thing as being born into an assembly. For even though a child of believers who are in an assembly, be converted through the preaching of the Gospel in their meeting-room, and has never gone to any other place, he is not, therefore, born into the assembly, but must be brought into it by his own act and the act of the assembly also. On the other hand, if he be saved in the solitude of the desert, or through the preaching of the Gospel in church, chapel, theatre or anywhere else, that one is born into the family of God, and is there and then a member of the body of Christ.

This is so obvious, that I feel almost ashamed to lay so much stress upon it. And yet it is necessary to do so, because of the utter confusion that commonly prevails in regard to the whole subject. The very teachers, who compare the bringing of a believer into an assembly with the birth of a child into a family, will speak of the care that has to be exercised in some cases, and will draw distinctions between the reception of one newly converted and that of a believer of many years' standing. Of course, all such distinctions completely destroy the first position taken up by those who urge them;

for they admit that the reception of an individual into an assembly calls for discernment and godly care on the part of those receiving. This, evidently, puts an end to all thought of analogy between the birth of an infant into a family and the reception of a believer into an assembly. But not only is this godly care called for on the part of those who receive, there should equally be a perception on the part of the one brought in, that he is coming into something of God's ordering.

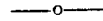
Very frequently, when this point is urged, objection is instantly made that this is making light, and not life, the ground of reception. But those who make this objection do not consider what they are saying. How can life be separated from light? The sinner must have received light from God, or he could not have believed. It is as true that he has been called out of darkness into light as that he has passed from death to life. It is, of course, true that he knows but very little of the wonderful consequences involved in the step he has taken, but none the less he has believed, because the blessed, simple truth of the Gospel has been made plain to him. How often have our hearts been filled with joy, when some burdened soul to whom we have been speaking the words of God, has exclaimed, "Oh! I *see* it all now." We do not tell such an one this will not do, as it is making light the ground of salvation.

In the same way, with regard to the coming into the assembly, there must be a measure of light on the part of the one coming in. True, he can know but very little of all that this step involves, and we must not think of keeping him back on this account; but unless he at least knows

enough to be able to say, "I believe this is what the Word of God teaches those who are saved to do," there can neither be faith nor obedience in his doing it. If we consider this same point in relation to baptism, it will perhaps help to make it plain. Would those who talk about making light the basis, instead of life, ever think of baptizing one who had no measure of light as to what he was doing? I do not suggest that we should insist upon light as to the symbolic meaning of baptism, or as to the doctrine attached to it. But would any right-minded man baptize one who said, "I wish to be baptized because my friend is going to be baptized," or "I wish to be baptized because that is your way"? Surely not. But if the most uninstructed were to say, "I don't understand what it means, but I see in the Bible that the Lord Jesus said that all who believed were to be baptized, and I wish to obey Him," that would be abundantly sufficient reason for baptizing him. Yet, what is that but light? And yet no one is so blind as to say, that we should be making light the ground of baptism in such a case. We are willing to baptise and to receive into the assembly those whom we believe to be born of God, and that is the only ground on which we are to do the one or the other. But on their part it is needful for them to have at least so much intelligence concerning the matter as will enable them to say, "I believe this is what the Lord tells believers to do, and I desire to be obedient to Him." Without this, how can there be the obedience of faith?

In the Lord's commission to His apostles, at the end of Matthew's Gospel, He bids them first to make disciples, next to baptize them, and afterwards to teach them to observe

all things whatsoever He has commanded them. It is, therefore, of the first importance that those who are brought into an assembly should be assured that the step they are taking is really what the Lord Himself has commanded. Otherwise, how can what they do, be obedience to the commandments of the Lord?



PILGRIMS TO HEAVEN.



"Confessed they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Heb. xi. 13).

"Reaching forth unto those things which are before" (Phil. iii. 13).



ACROSS the will of nature
 Leads on the path of God ;
 Not where the flesh delighteth,
 The feet of Jesus trod.
 O bliss to leave behind us
 The fetters of the slave,
 To leave *ourselves* as sinners,
 The grave-clothes and the grave.

To speed unburdened pilgrims
 Glad, empty-handed, free,
 To cross the trackless desert
 And walk upon the sea :
 As strangers among strangers,
 No home beneath the sun ;
 How soon the wanderings ended,
 The endless rest begun.

We follow in His footsteps,
 What if our feet are torn ?
 Where He has marked the pathway,
 All hail the briar and thorn !
 Scarce seen, scarce heard, unreckoned
 Despised, defamed, unknown,
 Or heard but by our singing,
 On happy pilgrims! on !

LECTURES ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

BY WM. LINCOLN, OF BERESFORD, LONDON.

CHAPTER I. VERSES 11-13.

NOW there gleams out an allusion to God's eternal purpose. Once Christ is rejected, God can do as He likes in grace. When Christ has cried upon the Cross "It is finished," the flesh is judged and disposed of. That is assumed in verse 11, "His own received Him not." We know that they did more; they crucified Him. And then what is God's purpose? The reproduction of Himself in man, by the presentation of Christ to their souls. So when the way is cleared for Him to begin, then, "as many as received Him, to them gave He power [or authority] to become the sons of God." Mark you, what it is "to become"; He *was* God. Nothing is said of His becoming aught, until it is said that "the Word became flesh." But now we see what He has come down for; that hell-deserving sinners may be picked up and made partakers of the divine nature, having had their sins washed away in the blood of the rejected One. Oh, what a purpose was His in coming! And achieved by such simple means: "Even to them that believe on His Name." It implies that you know something of Him, as the manifestation, the outcoming, the unfolding of God; that your spirit has had to do with Him. This is contained in the words "believe on His name"; that is, in His character, in what He really is. Thus believing, we are at once sons. At the same time, there is no doubt the further thought suggested of how, if we are sons, we grow son-like. "As He which hath called you is holy, so *become* ye holy in all manner of conversation, because it is written, *Become* ye holy; for I *am* holy."

Thus, if we are sons, the son-nature is gradually to be developed in us. It is first formed by faith—the soul gazing at Christ, God's uncreated Son; then developed by continually gazing upon that Christ, and copying Him. "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." This suggests what a tremendous thing is the new birth; and that the flesh, in no way whatever, has aught to do with it. It is His own operation, and to Him be the glory. To explain briefly the exact force of this negative, let me quote an extract. "Blood, the whole corporate frame, the will of the flesh, the appetites of man inclined to evil, the will of man, his personal being. Not according to the laws of nature, nor according to the appetites of man, nor according to the will and reason of man." Born of sovereign grace, by the presentation of the crucified, risen, glorified Christ to the soul; and faith looks at Him and receives Him, and the new nature is formed. And then we are to keep on beholding Him, and the new nature is developed; and to keep on following Him, and the son-life is carried out.

THE SECRET OF REST.

I CAN afford to let Him choose,
And lay my care to rest;
For well I know my loving Lord
Will give to me the best.

Then cease thy tossings, oh, my heart,
And cast thy anchor here;
He keeps His own "in perfect peace"
Who trust Him without fear.

Lord Jesus Christ! my all in all,
What have I not in Thee?
All blessings for the life that is,
And that which is to be.

Robt. C. Chapman, of Barnstaple.

CALLED HOME TO BE WITH CHRIST IN HIS
HUNDRETH YEAR.

AT the advanced age of ninety nine years, and five months, this greatly beloved and honoured servant of Christ was called to his rest on the evening of Thursday, June 12th, at 8:50. His last audible words were, "The peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Phil. iv. 7).

Robert Cleaver Chapman, was born on January 4th, 1803. He was the son of Sir George Chapman, who was attached to the Copenhagen Court. His school days over, he was trained for the law, but having heard and received the Gospel of God's Grace, his heart was won for Christ, and he was called by that grace to give his life and energies to the spread of the Gospel and the truth of God.

Converted in early life, Mr Chapman was led with others to take the Word of God alone as his counsellor and guide, and by the teaching of the Spirit was led into the deep things of God treasured therein. Throughout a long and diligent life in the service of the Lord, whom he loved, his great delight was in the Scriptures, and by daily meditation therein, his soul was filled with their riches, so that his ministry in public and in private, was like the springing fountain, bearing life and refreshment to those to whom it came. His love for the whole household of God, his continual intercession for all saints, his deep humility of mind, and his unswerving devotion to the truth which he esteemed his chief treasure, characterised the life and service of the departed one. Thousands who never saw his face, were the subjects of his prayers, and the whole company of the redeemed he bore upon his heart, continually before the throne. He was in reality a stranger on earth: a pilgrim to heaven.

A couple of verses from one of his earlier hymns, express more fully than any words of ours, his real attitude towards both worlds.

The cords that bound my heart to earth
Are broken by His hand,
Before His cross I found myself
A stranger in the land.
My heart is with Him on the throne,
And ill can brook delay;
Each moment listening for the voice,
"Rise up and come away."

Mr. Chapman was not a great writer, but some of the precious portions of his ministry have been preserved in a series of small volumes. *Choice Sayings* contains several hundreds of short extracts from his addresses, and has been widely circulated. *Hymns and Meditations* contains most of his verses, and a little volume entitled *The Shepherd and his Flock* containing a number of his addresses, especially his ministry at the Leominster conferences, to the publication of which he gave his consent a little while ago is in the press, and will be ready shortly.

For over forty years Mr Chapman lived and laboured in Barnstaple. His home was the resting-place of hundreds of the Lord's people, many of whom came from far to see and share the spiritual fellowship of the man of God. His Bible readings were sources of spiritual help to many, and most of all the savour of his Christlike, godly life. He was an early riser, usually about 4 a.m., the early hours of each day being spent in intercession and with the Scriptures. On June 2nd he was seized with paralysis, and after ten days of weakness, during which his spiritual vision was as clear as ever, and his heart and mind, stored with the Word, poured forth its riches. To the saints gathered at the annual fellowship meeting the week before he passed away he sent the message—"We know that God is love, and if with love of which there is no measure, is conjoined wisdom that makes no mistakes, what becomes us His children but to be full of thankfulness." At 8.50 on Thursday evening, June 12th, he peacefully "fell asleep" without a struggle, and was "at home" with the Lord whom he loved so well.

The aged pilgrim has reached the goal for which he sighed. The church below has lost a true helper, and the world—although it knows it not—is poorer, because of the absence of one whose daily supplications on its behalf were never forgotten. May the gracious spirit, the loving heart, the humble mind, and the deep reverence for God's Word, that through grace characterised Robert Chapman throughout his long and beautiful life, lead us who remain to the same source of supply—the living Christ at God's right hand above, revealed through the written Word by the Spirit to our faith below, to whom cleaving closely and following fully, we too, in our feeble measure shall be

conformed, and thus be enabled to shed some little ray of heavenly light on those who are yet in darkness and the shadow of death.

THE FUNERAL.

After a life of over 70 years devoted service to the Lord, this beloved servant of God, was called home at the ripe age of 99½ years. His body was laid to rest in the Barnstaple cemetery on Tuesday, 17th June, amidst scenes of mourning and respect such as are seldom witnessed. The streets were crowded with respectful observers, and it was computed that not less than 2000 mourners and spectators surrounded the grave, while brethren from all parts of the country paid their last tokens of loving regard to the memory of this greatly honoured servant of Christ, who had so long and so consistently led them in the path of testimony, "outside the camp."

The first part of the service, in connection with his interment, was held in the Bear Street Hall, which had been associated with most of Mr. Chapman's ministry. Mr. Saunders spoke of his sixty years acquaintance with Mr. Chapman, and over twenty-five years association with him in pastoral work in this place. He dwelt upon Psalms i. and xxiii. as marking some of the characteristics of Mr. Chapman's beautiful life as a man of God, and setting forth an example in word and deed to believers. He dwelt specially on the grace which characterised his speech and actions, and which left such lasting impressions on his hearers. This he attributed to the life of communion with God, in whose fear he walked, making the law of the Lord his meditation and delight, so that it was his meat and drink to do the will of God, and live to the praise of the glory of His grace.

Mr. W. H. Bennett, of Yeovil followed, and spoke from Phil. i. 20, telling of Paul's ambition that "Christ might be magnified in his body," and that, like the great Apostle to the Gentiles, his motto was "to live is Christ," and give Him the pre-eminence. He then read 1 Thes. iv., and Phil. iii. 20-21, dwelling upon the heavenly citizenship, or "manner of life," of Mr. Chapman, which was so beautiful, and so heavenly in its character, after the similitude of Him who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." Like Paul, he had seen "Ichabod" written on "things under the sun," and "forgetting the things that are behind," he had "pressed toward the mark and prize of the

high calling of God in Christ Jesus." We were told that once in his early history, someone had said that Mr. C. would not make a good preacher. This he admitted, but said that by the grace of God he hoped to make a good witness for God by a reflection of the life of Christ in his walk. In telling of his life of intercession for others, we were told that it was his habit to pray daily for Queen Victoria and the Royal family, so that the very British nation was doubtless blessed by his life and labours. Like Caleb of old, he was one who had "followed the Lord fully."

At the grave side, Mr. Bergin, of Bristol, spoke from Acts xx. 20-24, as to the faithfulness of his ministry. But Acts ix. 6, was the key to his marked success as a servant of Christ, in that he apprehended and submitted in an exceptional manner to the Lordship of Christ. This is summed up in Phil. iii. 8., "The excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." He pointed out two special characteristics of the life of Mr. Chapman as (1) an intense delight in, and reverence for, the Holy Scriptures; (2) a full recognition of the fact that "To this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be LORD, &c." So, he realised the deep import of the fact that he was a subject of divine grace, a debtor to all, and called to walk in fellowship with God, doing the will of God from his heart. We were reminded that there was no royal road to Christian happiness and blessing, such as was enjoyed by our departed brother; but that Psalm i. indicated how this happiness might be enjoyed by all so that we might live "days of heaven on the earth," as we walked in the narrow path of God's commandments, enjoying "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and communion of the Holy Spirit."

Mr. H. Soltau concluded the grave-side service, by some touching Gospel appeals to the unsaved, young and old.

EVENING SERVICE.

The evening was given to a memorial service in Bear Street Hall, when many assembled, and God helped in turning the occasion into a time of profitable ministry of God's Word for those who are left to pursue the warfare and the testimony.

Mr. E. H. Bennett, of Cardiff, directed attention to Dan ix. 22, where God spake of Daniel as "a man greatly beloved." This was also apparent in the marked tokens of esteem seen in the gather-

ing of believers that day. We also saw that Daniel was "a man of excellent spirit." This had been a marked characteristic of his beautiful life, and partly accounted for the universal love bestowed upon the dear departed one. We were exhorted to study chap. i. of the Book of Daniel, and mark the *heaven-born manners* of this servant of God. "I beseech you," &c. So, in an exceptional manner, it characterised dear Mr. Chapman, and marked his dealings with all classes and conditions of believers and unbelievers, bearing deeply solemn impressions on their memories. The need of all of us having "our speech with grace seasoned with salt," was enjoined upon us, and that this was possible, under the power of the Holy Ghost, and becoming to saints. Instances were given to show how God used the "*wayside services*" of dear Mr. Chapman, and how this great sphere was, *day by day*, open to all saints. Then, we were reminded of Daniel's love for the Holy Scriptures, from which he got "understanding of the times," and it led to "*intercession and confession*," such as we find such a beautiful example of in chap. 9, and these virtues characterised dear Mr. Chapman in a remarkable degree. Also, from Daniel i. 8 we saw that both were men of "*purpose and principle*," who regulated their acts and deeds by "the Word of the Lord," whom they set above and before them.

Mr. H. B. Thompson then spoke more fully on Psalm i., dwelling on the blessedness of those who delight in the law of the Lord, and meditate therein, and who walk the Nazarite path of separation to God, and from every form of evil. He warned believers against the snares of these days, in being drawn aside by the light literature that abounds, and reminded us that the beautiful life of the departed saint could only have been formed and fostered by a diligent study, and conformity to "the law of the Lord."

Mr. S. Bourne, of Birmingham, followed with seasonable words from 2 Tim., as to cleaving to the Lord and His faithful Word, and thus becoming vessels unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, &c.

Mr. Stanley, of Bristol, told of the good influence that had affected his own life, and that of thousands of others, by the words of grace and truth, and blameless life of Mr. Chapman, whose memory was revered by all.

E. H. B.

EDITOR'S NOTE. — A Brief Memoir of Mr. Chapman's Life and Ministry, with an excellent Photograph of the aged pilgrim, is in preparation, and will be ready (God willing) about July 10th, written by Mr. E. H. Bennett, of Cardiff, who had much spiritual intercourse with the late Mr. Chapman. Any fellow-believers who have incidents, letters, or items of interest which they can send to Mr. Bennett, within the next few days, he will be glad to receive at 12 Piercefield Place, Cardiff. To allow of a wide circulation, especially among young believers, who, by God's blessing, will there learn the secret of a godly, happy, and useful life in the service of the Lord Jesus it will be issued at *One Penny*. 12 Copies 1s, Post Free; 7s 6d per 100.

Answers to Correspondents.

J. B. GLASGOW.—"Philip the evangelist" (Acts xxi. 8), is the honourable title given by the Holy Ghost, to the man who was used in leading the Ethiopian treasurer to Jesus, in reaping the harvest fields of Samaria, and in preaching in "all the cities" between Azotus and Cæsarea (Acts viii. 40)—an honourable record indeed. Yet he is simply "Philip the evangelist," without prefix or affix. The announcements you send of "singing evangelist," "artist evangelist," and "song preacher," are childish in the extreme, and coming from the quarter they do, are a sad exhibition of how far the religious world's "buffoonery" has been brought into the service of God. A few "praying evangelists," seem to be needed, who will count upon GOD and His Gospel doing the work of "drawing" sinners. It is amazing what people will do to cover their departure from God, and to keep up an appearance, when there is the consciousness of a want of GOD in their work. And the counterfeit "takes," and is glorified beyond measure by some who never knew anything better, while those who have seen *the hand of the Lord as in ancient days, and long for a renewal of the same, weep in secret places over these attempts to corrupt the service of God, by bringing into it the principles and ways of the world.*

A. L., MANCHESTER.—There is nothing, so far as we know, in the Word, to support the practice of singing a hymn between the passing of the bread and wine at the Lord's Supper. The Divine pattern as given in Matthew xxvi. 26-29, and 1 Cor. xi. 23-26, ought to be adhered to unaltered; to add to it is equivalent to saying it is imperfect.

REVIVAL.

INTRODUCTORY ARTICLE. BY THE EDITOR.

MANY of the Lord's remembrancers are sighing and crying for a genuine Revival of spiritual life and power in their own souls and in the assemblies of God's people. They see and feel that, notwithstanding the extraordinary amount of effort that is put forth in what bears the name of the service of the Lord, there is no corresponding return in abiding fruit. In spite of the apparent zeal and energy displayed in the outer courts of service, there is a lamentable lack of spiritual freshness and fragrance in the holy place. The tone of worship is generally low: fervent, effectual prayer that opens heaven is sadly lacking, and ministry like unto a river carrying life and health wherever it flows, is exceedingly rare. The result of all this is, an artificial Christianity, largely made up of that which does its utmost to hide the nakedness of the land. And while this is quite according to the heart of all who are "at ease in Zion," and gives the sought-for opportunity for carnal and worldly-minded men to gain positions in which they may keep the machinery going with little of grace or of God, there are many of God's hidden ones, whose "scent" is still in them, and who remember the former times, when the dew of heavenly freshness was upon the assemblies of the saints, and "the smell thereof was as Lebanon." They will never be satisfied until they see the hindrances removed and the channels of blessing cleared, so that God the Holy Ghost who is the source of all revival and refreshing, may again fill them, and the assemblies of the saints again become as "gardens by the river's side" (Numb. xxiv.

6), which is just what God, who planted them, desired them to be, and is both able and ready to make them.

Whatever of outward strength and beauty may have passed away, never more to be restored to the Church of God; however stripped of form and comeliness in the eyes of the world because of divisions and unholy alliances; however feeble in testimony, and bereft of signs and wonders seen in ancient days, God is pledged to keep those fresh and fruitful who are true to Him. He will keep that man "whose delight is in the law of the Lord," as "a tree planted by the rivers of water" (Psa. i. 3), ever fresh and ever fruitful, and that assembly—be it small or large, composed of two or three, or as many hundreds—where Christ is held as Head, and owned as Lord, where the Written Word is the only standard, and where the Spirit of God is honoured and counted upon as the supreme power to give effect to all that the Lord demands and the Word commands—there, even in these last days, the Lord will command the blessing. There He will give continuous revival and refreshing in the midst of His saints, making them as "a field which the Lord has blessed," to which the buffeted and weary, the hungry and thirsty, and those dear children of God who, by reason of the increasing corruptions of their churches, are perplexed and ready to faint, will be attracted, not so much at first by the truth, as by the streams of refreshing that make glad the heart, and the word in season that uplifts the drooping spirit to its God. That there are many and potent hindrances to such recovery and revival, in this our day of increasing worldliness and ever-growing departure from God and His Word, of human device and expediency in Divine

things we fully own, but, over against this, and as the sovereign remedy for all our spiritual barrenness, there is the living Christ at God's right hand, in whom, for all His saints, all fulness dwells, and there is *here* with us, and in us, the sovereign Spirit of God, the Paraclete, sent from the glorified Head, to make good to the members of His body, and to His Church, all that fulness, all the days of their earthly course. We have no hope of deliverance from our low estate, by means of extrenuous measures: these have been tried and found wanting. Nor do we expect a better spiritual condition to arise as the result of multiplied energies—a form of conscience-salve which the devil sometimes applies to keep saints from being exercised about their own spiritual condition. Least of all, do we look for better things from the innovations of men, which in many cases are in direct opposition to the revealed will of God, and can only lead His people further away from Him, whatever their apparent success may be. There is one open way—only one. It is an old path, trod by saints of all ages, to whose confessions, intercessions, and supplications the Church owes more than it will ever know, till the day when the secret things are revealed and rewarded openly. Through departure from God, and by neglect of His Word, declension sets in, and barrenness results. By a return to God, and by testing ourselves and our ways by that Word, is the true, yea, the only way of restoration and recovery.

As by choking up the channels of spiritual supply, dearth, decay, and declension are reached, so by clearing them out, is spiritual health restored and revival assured. And, as this must begin between the soul and God—in the secret, rather than

in the public sphere: with the unit before it can reach the aggregate—it becomes the first business of those who see the need for revival, and are crying to God for it, to search themselves, and invite God to search them (Ps. cxxxix. 23), to bring themselves and their whole manner of life, personal, social, commercial, ecclesiastical: their motives for and manner of service, with all their ways in detail, to the light of God's Word, and test them there. And whatever is found, either in motive or manner, in the kingdom within or without, in the heart, the conscience, the mind, the ways, at variance with the revealed will of God, to judge it, confess it, renounce it, and flee from it, as that which has dishonoured God, grieved His Spirit, and withered up their spiritual life, and then draw near to God, forgiven and cleansed, to be restored in soul, and re-filled with His fulness. Thus, and thus only, can true reviving and refreshing come to the individual believer, and to the Church.

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AN APPEAL TO FELLOW-BELIEVERS.

“LORD REVIVE THY WORK” (Hab. iii. 2).

Saints of God! redeemed and precious—
 Children of a heavenly birth,
 Why do ye, like veriest worldlings
 Grovel low among the earth?
 What tho' ye gain earthly treasures,
 Tho' possessed of wealth untold,
 What will all the struggle profit,
 If ye lose your crown for gold?

Child of God, His grace has saved you,
Saved to serve a Master, true—
 For He has, in His vast vineyard,
 Some appointed spot for you.

Has He not redeemed and left you
That your tongue His praise might swell?
That you might, in working with Him,
Save poor souls from death and hell?

Dare you trifle, while around you
Thousands perish, day by day?
Perish in their sins, not knowing
Christ, the true and living WAY.
What tho' all the world despise you,
Christ was *hated* long ago—
You have heard His voice command you
“Preach the Gospel!” therefore go!

Not perchance to distant places,
Will He first direct your way—
Home, and friends and old companions
Need the warning word to-day.
Go to them, proclaim the message,
Warn, entreat to flee from hell;
“Preach the Word,” be not discouraged,
God will fight the battle well.

Stay not there—tell other sinners—
Tell the freeman or the slave,
God will prove to all who trust Him
He is “mighty” still to save.
Mighty, for the wondrous power
Wrought in Christ, brought from the dead,
Quickens still, and saves from judgment,
All the flock for which He bled.

Hasten, then, for Christ is coming,
Coming soon, His own to claim,
And each soul won for that glory,
Swells the honour of His Name!
Hasten, ere the shadows lengthen,
Love's demand no longer shirk;
Time is flying—men are dying,
Night draws near when none can work.

T. D. W. MUIR

Detroit, U.S.A.

THE CHURCHES OF THE SAINTS.

PART IV. BY ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

PERHAPS the greater part of the confusion as to the matter of reception is, in connection with the question—Into what do we receive? A recent writer on this subject of “The gathering and receiving of the children of God,” says, that there are three questions to be considered:—*Who* are to be received? *How* are they to be received? and, *Into what* are they received? He says a good deal about the first two; but we search in vain through his book to find a word about the third. Yet, manifestly, it is useless to enquire as to *who* are to be received and *how* they are to be received, unless we who receive and those who are received both know *what* they are being received into.

Any one who has considered with any care the Scriptures concerning the Churches, to which attention was called in the first of these articles, together with others of like character, can be in no difficulty as to the true answer. We found presented to us companies of believers, in the habit of assembling together, with mutual responsibilities one to another. In each company, older ones are commanded to feed and guide the flock; younger ones are bidden to obey the older ones, who are over them in the Lord, while they are reminded that these watch for their souls as having to give an account. When any persons were saved within the reach of such an assembly, they would at once be taught that it was the commandment of the Lord Jesus that they should unite themselves with the disciples. At the beginning none hesitated about obeying the command, any more than they did about being baptised; and

no church had any difficulty about gladly receiving these new-born souls. Moreover, when they were received, there was no possibility of confusion as to what they were received into. They had joined themselves to a company of disciples, called a church, and that church had received them to form a part of itself. They had not made themselves a part of the whole church of God. God had done that when He saved them. Neither had the whole church of God received them; but the church that they had joined themselves to had received them, and all the privileges and responsibilities of that God-ordained fellowship became theirs. Of these privileges and responsibilities they might know but very little at the time, but God's purpose was that the churches should be nurseries, where His little ones should be fed and cared for and guided and taught; so that while on their part it was enough that they took their place among the disciples, the responsibility was at once laid upon the older ones to carry out towards them all that the Lord had commanded.

Two great mistakes seem to be prevalent in regard to this subject. On the one hand, it is supposed that when a believer is received by an assembly, he is therefore received into a much larger body, of which that assembly is a part. This is, of course, the theory of such ecclesiastical institutions, as the Church of Rome or the Church of England. When a baby is sprinkled by any one of the official priests of these so-called churches, it is thereby received into that church as a whole. But this form of error is not confined to such institutions as are referred to above. The late Mr John Nelson Darby, with all his wonderful insight into much of the teaching of God's

Word, never wholly left behind him the traditions of the Church of England; so that he could not be content without forming a federation of associated companies of believers, so bound together, that the act of one of these companies was binding upon all. Nay more, it was the act of all, and all must acknowledge it, or the unity of the body was violated. And, while the federation which he organised at the first, has long since been split into numerous fragments, each of those fragments is organised on the same mistaken basis, and anything that differs from this is rejected by them as "independency."

The other error referred to is the result of a not unnatural recoil from the first. Because it is discerned that the inevitable fruits of the federation system are mischievous and dishonouring to God to the last degree, many have gone to the opposite extreme, and have supposed that there was nothing to which believers could join themselves, and that none could exercise the responsibilities of receiving believers to be one with themselves, to be cared for and instructed in all the will of God. We are not surprised to find that those who have been carried away the furthest by the first error, when at last they find out that it is an error, fall the most easily into the second. As pointed out above, in almost all cases, they have been brought to see that there was something utterly at fault about the federation system, because of its manifestly evil results. But this is a very different thing from having tested it by the Word of God, and so detected the unscriptural principle which underlay it. Such testing, humbly carried out, and in dependence on the enlightening of the Holy Spirit, will not only lead to the detection

of the error at one extreme, but will save us from falling into the counter error that lies at the opposite extreme.

And we need to remember that all this holds equally good as to starting from either extreme. The sad results arising from ignoring the true character of the churches, and the great foundation principle upon which they are formed, are only too apparent on every hand. Believers who have learned something of the unscripturalness of the practices prevalent everywhere among the sects of Christendom, and who have withdrawn from formal association with those sects, are found going back to build them up again by ministering among them, or attending their services to get spiritual food and instruction. These, and many similar sorrowful results of want of apprehension of the truth, force home the conviction that there is something utterly at fault. Then, instead of patiently waiting to learn the mind of God about the matter, many have jumped to the conclusion that the remedy lay in forming a new federation, where only those should be admitted, who pledged themselves to refuse all association with any who had not submitted themselves to the federal rule.

It is not a little remarkable that the results of both errors are commonly found existing together. People talk about "joining the Brethren," or "belonging to the Open Brethren," and yet those who thus talk are generally among the first to associate themselves afresh with all the unscriptural things they have professedly withdrawn from. Such expressions as the above can only arise from the notion that they have joined an organised body; yet, on the other hand, they consider themselves at liberty to set at nought the principles of

this supposed body. This combination of the two errors is evidently the result of not having learned the divine principles that form the foundation of the whole subject; nor yet the more elementary matter of simple obedience to what the Word of God teaches, and the entire withdrawal from every false way.

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LECTURES ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

BY WM. LINCOLN, OF BERESFORD, LONDON.

CHAPTER I. VERSES 14-18.

"AND the Word was made flesh." Now we come to something that Christ *became*, something that was new to Him. "The Word *was* God, the Word *became* flesh." "And our minds might go a step further, "He was made sin for us." And dwelt among us"; or, as it is literally, "pitched His tent." As if God was pleased to dwell with man, and as He had done in the wilderness, in a tent and a tabernacle, so again now would He have a tent, and "pitch His tent among us." I think it is suggestive that the Lord was, as is probably the case, born during the feast of tabernacles. I have for years maintained that the Lord was born in September, and not in December; and though we cannot say that it is proved here, I believe that there is an allusion to it. He took human nature that we might be sons of God. Understand, not fallen human nature. We are fallen men; but we might as well say that the nature in Him and in us is the same, as to say that a shattered mirror is the same as a mirror whole. Adam was innocent, Christ was holy; therefore, as a man, He was more perfectly human even than Adam. Thus it is that the Holy

Ghost speaks of "the *second* Man." Not only did He not take our fallen nature, but not in every sense Adam's. And the word "holy," used about Christ, is not the common one, but the strongest possible in Greek. He was a perfect man, but not a fallen man; not even an innocent man; He knew holiness, and knew God, which Adam did not.

"And we beheld His glory." We can see something of the force of this from Exodus xl. 34. "Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle." That is the thought here. First the tent is reared, the perfect humanity provided, and then the glory of the Lord floods it. Not merely the glory of God, but His own glory. The glory fills it, that tent of humanity. It does not refer to the transfiguration, nor to any outward glory whatever. There is a reference to outward glory in chapter ii. 2—"This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory." But this is not so. It is the glory that was in Him, and shone out of Him in every feature, in every glance of His eye, every word that He spake, every action that He did. What was needful was, not to be blind, and to be with Christ five minutes, and you want to be seeing that glory. The actings of the God-man, in that tent of humanity, and His example, is to us one continued precept of the highest kind.

"My gracious Saviour and my Lord,
I read my duty in Thy Word;
But in Thy life Thy law appears
Drawn out in living characters."

An example we cannot but do well to imitate. "We beheld His glory" *We*, not anybody; we who had been made

sons; we who had been up and down with Him; we who could not return to our fishing, for we had heard His voice, and that voice had gone to our souls; we who had caught the glory of His eye, and fell at His feet worshipping; we beheld the glory filling that tent.

"The glory as of the only begotten of the Father." The word "as" is but a little word and easily skipped, but it has here a very mint of meaning. It denotes that the glory seen was the very glory of the One who had ever been in the bosom of God, of the only One who had come out from God. Could you not suppose God, and someone coming out from God? You would be supposing that such would be some very illustrious person. And we saw it all: "Jesus "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." I may remark that He takes another character in resurrection: the *First-begotten* from the dead." His descending is with that real, divine, beautiful purpose. Once the only Son, but presently we will be made sons too. "Full of grace and truth." Full, full! However much grace He showed, still as full as ever. In chapter ii. 2, it speaks of a "*beginning* of miracles," as if to say it was only a beginning. Had He been received, He who could turn water into wine, would have turned a blasted creation into a glorious abode, and would have been none the less rich, however much He had poured out of God. For that is the force of verse 18: "He hath told Him out." Truth is the revelation of God, the letting forth of what God is. There is no truth outside of Christ. If we want to learn the character of God, we must look at Christ. If we want to feel the thoughts of God, we must have the Spirit of God, for the Spirit also is the

truth. The Father could not be said to be the truth, for truth is the manifestation of God. And Christ is full of it, and could tell you all about God in word and action, and make you glow again to know what God was. And though once by nature you hated God, He could tell you so much as to make you rejoice to know God, and to know that that God is your God for ever and ever. In this third stage of the Lord's descending, there are only three verses about the Christ, several more about John the Baptist. In this stage He is regarded as here, in the world, and the question is anticipated. What has He brought us? What has He to dispense? If any great man visited you in your house, it would put you probably to some expense, and the greater the personage you had to entertain, the greater the expense you would be put to. Or, in other words, the great men would not give to you, but you would have to give to them. The Son of the living God has been in this world, but He did not come (at least in the first place) to get, but to give. He gets us to be His own, but He first gives, and gives largely, and of the very best.

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BAPTISM AND FELLOWSHIP.

PART I. BY GEORGE ADAM, STRANRAER.

IN the following remarks I wish to keep before me the need of young believers, who are just beginning to learn "the ways which be in Christ."

No question regarding divine order in the church can ever be rightly understood, until it is clearly apprehended and practically acknowledged, that "Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." That in the church His will is law. In

this the day of Christ's rejection by the world, God has "called out" the church to own His authority, and in the New Testament—especially in the Epistles—we get a revelation of the will of the Lord Jesus, concerning the order and ordinances of the house of God. In seeking to find out the place which the ordinance of baptism holds, we need to be careful not to confound "things that differ." The baptism of John may not be taken as a precedent. He evidently baptised those who came unto him with a "view to repentance." Neither can we take the baptism of the three thousand of the house of Israel of which we read in Acts ii., as a safe precedent to be followed by us for Christian Baptism. The apostle Peter is addressing the "House of Israel" as such (see verse 36), and when those who were "pricked to the heart" asked the question, "Men and brethren what shall we do? Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized 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" (verse 38). The "House of Israel" being especially guilty of the rejection and murder of Jesus Christ, were commanded to be baptized in His Name in order to their sins being remitted, and their receiving the Holy Ghost. If we claim Acts ii. as a precedent for baptising *believers*, then to be consistent, we must take the ground which those known as "Latter Day Saints," and others known as "Campbellites," take, and baptize them, for, or *unto*, the remission of sins. I presume there are few who are prepared to lay claim to the passage for that. The next case is in Acts viii. Philip preached Christ to the Samaritans, who received his message with joy, and were baptised *before* they

received the Holy Ghost (see verses 15-17). There are no such believers now. These were what might be called "transition" days. During the period that intervenes between Acts ii. and viii. inclusive, the "Kingdom" and the "Church" seemed to have overlapped each other; but after the martyrdom of Stephen, and the conversion of Paul, "the Kingdom" disappears as God's testimony on the earth, and "the Church" comes prominently into view. After this crisis, the first case of baptism recorded is the house of Cornelius (Acts x). The same apostle who had opened the "door of faith" to the Jews, in Acts ii., is now sent to open the door of faith to the Gentiles, a work that continues till the present time. Here we are on solid ground. Let us mark well the place baptism occupies here, and also how it was gone about. Whilst the Apostle was giving testimony that "*Whosoever* believeth on the name of Jesus Christ shall receive the remission of sins;" "The Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word." Then answered Peter, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptised, which *have received* the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptised in the name of the Lord" (verses 43-48). In Acts ii. it was: Be baptised in order to the remission of sins, and the receiving of the Holy Ghost. Here, they are to be baptised because God Himself had attested that their sins were remitted, by giving them the gift of the Holy Ghost. And to silence all Jewish prejudices, He bestowed on these Gentile converts the *manifest gifts* of the Spirit. Now mark how God gave clear testimony to the reality of their conversion, *before they were baptised*. Also, notice how the Apostle who was

used as the instrument in their conversion pointed out the genuineness of that conversion to those brethren who came with him, *before* he handed them over to others for baptism. We will now pass on to 1 Cor. i. 12-17. Here we have the example of the Apostle Paul. In Acts xviii. 8, we read that "many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptised;" and whilst it is evident that Paul was used to the conversion of "much people" in the city of Corinth, he tells us how he baptised only a few, and they were the first-fruits, who became the leading men in the assembly at Corinth (see Rom. xvi. 23). No doubt all who believed were baptised, and if Paul did not baptise them himself, then it must be evident to all, that those whom Paul baptised, and who became leading men in the church, baptised the others. I point this out particularly, because the way in which certain evangelists go on baptising their own converts without seeking the fellowship of the "guides" in the assembly, often causes much irritation and subsequent confusion. Where an evangelist is labouring in an isolated position (as Philip was when the Eunuch was converted, Acts viii. 26-38), he cannot have such fellowship, but where a church has been planted, it is a most unscriptural way of doing the work of the Lord, for an evangelist to baptise those who profess conversion, without the fellowship of that assembly. In these days when so many "*profess*," who are not really saved, no evangelist who is doing his work in the fear of the Lord, will object to pass on his converts to be taken by the hand by those whom the Lord has fitted and called, to feed and guide the flock. But when preachers have an eye to their own *popularity*, and are in haste to

advertise their converts, they cannot wait to consult the more sober judgment of those who are called to do pastoral work, and who, by living in the midst of them, have better opportunity of discerning as to the reality of their converts' faith. Regarding the introduction of the young believer to the Assembly, we hope to have something to say next month.

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PRAYING, WHILE HE PREACHED.

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IN the midst of a time of ingathering, when large numbers of the unconverted, of a class not generally reached, were coming to hear the Word, the evangelist whom the Lord was using became suddenly ill, and was unable to take the gospel meeting on a Sunday night. There was no one to take his place, and no time to seek help from a neighbouring town. The little assembly of believers were greatly distressed, and in their distress they cried unto the Lord. It was within half an hour of meeting time, and the large hall was filling fast. The only one in the company who had any "gift" in the way of gospel preaching, was a young man, who had sometimes "said a word," along with another, in the gospel, in their own little hall, but had never attempted to speak to such an audience as was gathering that night. He was godly, had a good testimony in the world, and was of a humble mind. A few of the saints waited upon him, laid the matter before him, and said they would pray while he told the story. The young brother was much agitated: it was a great undertaking, but he saw the position, and felt he was cast upon God. He remembered that He had used a "ram's

horn," the "jawbone of an ass," and one who was the "least in his Father's house" as His instruments before, and knew if God was with him He would give the victory. Surrounded by the praying circle, he went to the platform, spoke for thirty minutes simply, making no attempt to give a polished address. God marvellously helped, and there were more conversions that night than any night before. God was there, and no doubt the secret of all was the little circle that prayed while he preached. If there were more praying circles, some of the most commonplace preachers would be "mighty through God." The lack of them causes even the most gifted preachers often to be flat and pithless. It is the lack of a prayerful spirit, and consequent lack of God, that is the chief cause of barrenness.

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THE PREACHER'S AIM AND OBJECT.

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THE preacher's aim—whether in preaching the Gospel to sinners, or unfolding the Word to fellow-saints—should be to exalt Christ, with the one object of magnifying Him, and by the power of the Spirit, through the Word, drawing sinners to Him as the Saviour, and saints closer to Him as Lord and Lover. All ministry that fails in this, falls short of the mark. Judged by this, how poor in Heaven's estimation some "grand" addresses and "clever" speeches must be! They are very polished and profound, or it may be clear and cleverly arranged; but what then? If their aim is to magnify the speaker, to leave an impression that the preacher is "some great one," then they must have eclipsed the glory of Christ, and in God's sight have been utterly worthless.

The Bible Annotator.

OUTLINES OF BIBLE READINGS.

SEVEN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD.

- The Spirit of Life (Rom. viii. 2).
- The Spirit of Truth (John xiv. 17).
- The Spirit of Grace (Heb. x. 29).
- The Spirit of Adoption (Rom. viii. 15).
- The Spirit of Promise (Eph. i. 13).
- The Spirit of Holiness (Rom. i. 3).
- The Spirit of Glory (1 Peter iv. 14).

THE BELIEVER'S CONVERSATION,

As set forth in Peter's Epistles. The word in the original in each case means "Manner of Life."

- Our former conversation (Eph. iv. 22).
- Was "Vain" (1 Pet. i. 18).
- Or "Filthy" (2 Pet. ii. 7).

It ought now to be

- "Holy" before God (1 Pet. iii. 11).
- "Chaste" in the home (1 Pet. iii. 1).
- "Honest" in the business (1 Pet. ii. 12).
- "Good" in the world (1 Pet. iii. 16).

A SEVENFOLD USE OF THE WORD.

- Born again by the Word (1 Pet. i. 23; James i. 18).
- Cleansed by the Word (Eph. v. 26; Psa. cxix. 9).
- Growing by the Word (1 Pet. ii. 2; Isa. xv. 16).
- Sanctified by the Word (1 Tim. iv. 5; John xvii. 17).
- Enlightened by the Word (Psa. xix. 8; cxix. 105).
- Kept by the Word (Psa. xvii. 4; Rev. iii. 10).
- Saved by the Word (James i. 21; 1 Tim. iv. 16).

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The Young Believer's Question Box.

Will the Church pass through the great tribulation, or be taken to heaven before it begins?—John xiv. 3, 1 Cor. xv. 51, 1 Thess. iv. 15-16, and many kindred passages, leave no doubt that the Church will be removed from earth, before the unparalleled period of tribulation spoken of in Matthew xxiv. 21-28 comes upon the world. "Tribulation" (John xvi. 33) at the hand of men is the common heritage of all God's people, but "THE tribulation, the great one—which is an infliction of Divine judgment—no believer of the present age of grace can ever share.

I am invited to take part in a Temperance Mission, the object of which is to reclaim drunkards. I do not think that all who are working together are children of God, and am not clear about it?—The reformation of those who have become victims to strong drink is no doubt a work of philanthropy, and has bettered many for time at least, but the Word sets before God's people and Christ's servants something higher. They are sent into the world as Christ was sent into the world (John xvii. 18), which was to accomplish greater and grander objects than the mere reclaiming of sinners from certain vices. He came to "give life," to "save sinners," to "seek and save the lost." Now He has entrusted to His people the Gospel, which is the chosen instrument by which that work is to be continued all through this day of grace. Individually and "striving together" (Phil. i. 27), they are to "preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark xv. 15), and all who believe will be saved from the power of strong drink and all other sins. The world can *reform* its own, and usually succeeds far better than Christians who dabble in such work—but the object of the Gospel is to regenerate, to bring the sinner to Christ to be saved. None can share in this, until saved themselves. All who are, should, and never leave it for other efforts conceived by men, for which no promise of Divine power is given, and which at best leave men unconverted and as unfit for heaven as before. The idea that men must be reformed before they can be saved is not according to God. And even if the thing itself was right, to go under a common yoke with unbelievers to accomplish it, is going straight in the teeth of God's command in 2 Cor. vi. 14. Bring Christ to sinners, and sinners to Christ, and if you need a helper, God can give a "true yoke-fellow."

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Answers to Correspondents.

ALEXANDER R.—The hymn, "Closer to Thee," you ask for, is in "The Enlarged London Hymn Book," No. 621.

E. R., LANARKSHIRE.—The Assembly's Gospel work, including the receiving of evangelists and others who may come to preach, should certainly be under the supervision and care of those in whom

the saints have full confidence, and not left to, or allowed to drift into the hands of one or two whose modes of action are not approved of by the assembly as a whole. It would appear that in certain quarters there is an organised attempt to set aside all godly rule and order and to utterly ignore brethren who have served the Lord and the saints for many years, to make way for what is called an "up-to-date" style of carrying on the Lord's work. We know exactly where all this comes from, and where it is leading to, and believe it is the responsibility of all who fear God and desire to honour His Word, to set their faces firmly against it, counting upon God to give wisdom and grace to act for Him in the matter. It is a mistake, for the sake of peace, or possibly because no one likes to incur the displeasure of those who will be affected, to allow things to go on in a wrong course, until remedial measures are hopeless.

YOUNG PREACHER.—An open Bible in the hand of an open-air preacher always commands attention." "Preach the Word," is one of the Holy Spirit's last commands to all who speak for God to men, and we have never found the preaching of the Word in its plain, unvarnished simplicity to fail. Stories, illustrations, singing and all else, may serve the purpose of a feather to an arrow, but it is the Word itself as directed to the conscience and heart in the power of the Holy Ghost, that we count upon to do the work. May God richly bless you and your young co-workers, and give you much joy in making known the Gospel, and much confidence in its power—apart from human embellishments and carnal attractions—to effect the conversion of many sinners to God.

S. D., CUMBERLAND.—We agree with you that there is far too much attention given to singing at the average Gospel meeting, and too little care taken that the right preacher, with the right message, fills the platform. A hymn of praise to God, or a hymn declaring the Gospel to sinners, sung by saints in fellowship with God, is most fitting, and has often been used in conversion, but what is virtually a "Service of Song," with a small "preach"—pithless and pointless—is not in our estimation a Gospel meeting at all. Is it any wonder if conversions—real abiding fruits of the Gospel in the power of the Spirit—are few and far between, if what produces them is wanting?

Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION VII.—Is it possible for a Christian to continue a member of a denomination, in which its acknowledged Professors of Divinity, &c., and many of its ministers, openly avow their rejection of the fundamental truths of the faith, and yet be reckoned free of all complicity with such errors?

ANSWER A.—There are no doubt some earnest, simple souls in the most corrupt religious systems, who maintain their personal love to the Lord and reverence for His Word, notwithstanding their nominal association with the system where error is condoned, and even welcomed. But it cannot be said they are free from complicity with those who corrupt or deny the truth of God, while they are in open association with and help to support the system, which by choice and consent retains these destroyers of the faith.—T. S.

ANSWER B.—Membership in a denomination in the reckoning of many, carries with it no responsibility in regard to the doctrines promulgated by its ministers and representatives. But this betrays a lamentable, probably wilful ignorance of the principles of God's Word. Gal. v. 9, clearly shows, that erroneous teaching, tolerated and welcomed in any association, has the character of "leaven," which goes on contaminating and imparting to all with which it comes in contact, its own corrupting influence, until the whole lump or mass in which it is allowed to work without restraint, becomes of the same character as the original element of corruption. To remain by choice in a church, whose leaders have openly avowed their rejection of the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures, the Divinity of Christ, the eternal punishment of the wicked, or any other fundamental doctrine of the faith, is in God's reckoning to bid them "God speed" and thus to be "partakers" of their "evil deeds" (2 John 10).—W. H.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—The theory that so long as a believer is personally sound in the faith, he is not responsible for errors openly taught, or evils condoned and welcomed in the church or association where he is, is untenable in the light of the Word of God. It is reached by human reasoning, or what is worse, by wresting the Scriptures and making them mean the opposite of

what they say. Fellowship has been described as 'joint-participation,' "partnership," and the persons who are thus associated as "partners" (Luke v. 7; 2 Cor. viii. 21), "companions" (Heb. x. 33), as the original word is variously rendered. Surely this points to a community of interests and responsibilities proceeding therefrom, which cannot be disposed of by the personal character and testimony of the persons concerned. If (as we are fully aware has been) some have exceeded the principles of Holy Scripture, so far as to charge all who in any sense are associated with systems in which error is sheltered, with the same measure of responsibility, and hold them to be as equally guilty and defiled as the original perpetrators, the other extreme—which in our time gains favour, and is by many accepted as if it were a canon of Divine interpretation—is, that one may be a member of a church or any such organisation, without being in any sense responsible for its teaching or practice, or defiled by association with its errors. Thus, a believer in Christ of this day, who is a member of what is known as the "United Free Church of Scotland," whose name is on its membership roll, and who is by that fact alone a registered upholder of its principles, and who contributes to the support of its offices, is to be regarded as having no responsibility whatever in the retaining of its acknowledged teachers who have openly avowed their rejection of the Scriptures as the Divinely inspired Word of God, and as having no complicity with the guilt of its General Assembly or Supreme Court which only a few months ago, by a large majority, rejected with scorn the attempt of a few who dared to bring the destructive teachings of one of its Professors before it. Are they simply to sit down and let the leaven work unhindered, as if the claims of God and their consciences had been satisfied by that feeble attempt? Such are not the thoughts of God, or the principles of His holy Word. To eat in an idol temple, is, God says, to have fellowship with devils (1 Cor. x. 18-21 : to give a bare "greeting" of common courtesy—as the Word implies—to a teacher of evil doctrine, is to be a partaker of his evil deeds (2 John 10) in the reckoning of God, and assuredly if one who is a believer in Christ remains in corporate association with a church or other organisation where its leaders and others who guide its counsels, are either avowed unbelievers, or

openly take part with those who are, and shelter them, allowing no appeal to the Divine standard of the Word, and hindering those who would expose their guilt, then it is clear that system is hopelessly "leavened," and the only way the godly can show their non-complicity with its iniquity is, by entire separation from it.

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Questions Requiring Answers.

We invite the help of those to whom the Lord has given understanding of the Scriptures and wisdom, in the answering of the following questions, bearing upon matters of real difficulty to honest and inquiring minds. Answers should be brief, concise, and clear, leading to the Word of God. We desire to have all sides of the truth, plainly stated, and duly balanced.

8.—Conferences of Christians, which for many years have been convened and conducted according to the principles which are commonly believed by Assemblies to be according to the Word—viz., that the Lordship of Christ and the guidance of the Spirit should be owned and honoured; that God should be counted on to minister through whomsoever of His servants He sees fit to use, and to give the truth He knows His saints most need. The recognition of these Divine principles, which were once held to be of paramount importance, is gradually being set aside, without any explanation. Speakers are invited, their names announced, subjects chosen, and latterly a chairman appointed, who calls on the speakers in order, and sometimes fixes the extent of their ministry. Is not this going back to what we left?

9.—If in an Assembly there are six or eight brethren who are recognised as guiding and overseeing the saints, is it according to God for two or three of these to appear as representing the Assembly or the oversight, at meetings where matters of difficulty involving the fellowship of all are to be considered, virtually acting on their behalf, whereas as a matter of fact, neither the one nor the other have any knowledge of them being there?

10.—If one who has given no satisfactory evidence of being called to "do the work of an evangelist," leaves his employment and goes forth uncommended by the assembly where he is fellowship, should he be received and supported as a preacher without inquiry?

REVIVAL.

II.—WHERE AND HOW REVIVAL BEGINS.

ALTHOUGH we have come to associate the word "revival" with the awakening and conversion of sinners, and to speak of such seasons as "Revivals," the proper use of the word is toward the children of God. It primarily describes an awakening from spiritual lethargy, a restoration to God, a return to the ways of the Word among God's own people, and where such conditions exist, it goes without saying that the Gospel will go forth in power, and sinners will be brought to God. The order is beautifully expressed in the memorable words of the Psalmist—"Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and uphold me with Thy free Spirit. Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto Thee" (Psa. li. 12-13). Restored joy and renewed strength are followed by effectual testimony, and the conversion of sinners to God. Such are the lineaments of a genuine revival, but alas! what is sometimes called by that name is brought about by other means, and has sadly different results. A stir created in the kingdom without, apart from a work of restoration and renewal within, is, and ever must be, a sham, not unfrequently got up by the enemy to hinder real work for God being done, and to bring a fresh brood of false professors into the ranks of God's people, to further vitiate their testimony and cause the way of God to be evil spoken of.

True revival begins with the individual, and it begins *within*, in the depths of his spiritual being. The order is, "Revive *me*" (Psa. cxxxvi. 7), then "Revive *us*" (Psa. lxxxv. 6), and last of all "Revive

Thy *work*" (Hab. iii. 2). Many seem to be quite satisfied to know, that they are in possession of spiritual life, that they are saved, and will one day be in heaven. If they are in their places on the Lord's Day as mute listeners, or at most, doing a little to forward the work of the Gospel, they consider they are quite fulfilling the purposes of God, and take it very badly if any should ever suggest that they have departed in heart from the living God. There are others in whom the same life dwells, but they have known the supreme blessedness of walking in communion with the Father and the Son, of being filled with the Spirit, of having the life of God in them in full health and vigour, enabling them to soar aloft as on eagles' wings, far above this lower earth; to enjoy the things that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, but which are revealed unto, to be enjoyed by all whose hearts seek after God. They who have never known such experiences do not miss them, but the heart that knows its bitterness by forsaking the fountain of living waters can never rest satisfied until, like the wandering swallow, it finds its nest in the altars of its God (Psa. lxxxiv. 3).

There may be no outward sin, not even departure in walk or life from the course of rectitude. "The faith" is firmly held, the position is perfectly Scriptural, yet there is a lack of spiritual freshness, of spiritual power. The dew of spiritual youth is no longer there; the fragrance and beauty of heavenly things are not enjoyed as once they were; the head lacks ointment, and the hands of intercession hang down. If at this stage the evil is corrected and the restoration effected, it is easily done. There may have only been neglect of the daily "renewing" of the "inner man" (2 Cor. iv.

16), by feeding upon the Word (Jer. xv. 16), or the missing of the quiet hour alone with God, owing to some extra work or worry, in the family or the business. But this is quite enough to account for the dew of spiritual freshness being gone from a soul accustomed to abide in the presence of God, and to walk in the light of His countenance.

The shadow of a bird is cast on the path in the full blaze of noonday summer sunshine, but a thunder-cloud is unnoticed on a dull November day. And thus may two believers be affected by failure and sin. Be it ever so little, it casts its shadow on the pathway of him whose habit is to walk in the light of God and keep a tender conscience, whereas another who has become accustomed to the shadowy path, can do grievous things with little apparent concern. And this latter condition necessitates a deeper work in the soul, before there can be genuine revival. For this there must be self-judgment. The cry goes up to heaven, "*Search* me, O God, and know my heart" (Psa. cxxxix. 23), "*Examine* me, O Lord, and prove me, try my reins and my heart" (Psa. xxvi. 2). The source of weakness is within, and that prayer is an appeal to God to discover to the honest soul what it knows exists, but is beyond its ken. And as surely as such a cry ascends from a soul truly seeking after its God, desiring to be right with Him, and have all causes of spiritual decay searched out, confessed, and put away, so surely shall the sharp two-edged sword of the Word lay bare the inner man, and the light of the throne search out and discover where the hidden plague-spot is. It may be some Babylonish garment or wedge of gold lies buried deep from human eyes (Josh. vi.); some unsuspected motive working in the depths below, something too

far down, too well covered for even fellow-saints to see, but it acts as the cankerworm to spiritual health, and it must be unearthed and dealt with before the Lord, ere restoration and reviving can be known. O the deceitfulness of sin at such a moment! What excuses, what pleadings it will make! How "delicately" it will come like that Agag of old, whose head had been spared in the day of a general slaughter of all the "vile and refuse," saying, "Surely the bitterness of death is past" (1 Sam. xv. 32). But there must be no truce with any Amalekite; all must be dragged to justice and put to the edge of the sword "before the Lord in Gilgal." This is the only prelude to a genuine reviving of soul, and just because it is the only royal road to reach the longed-for goal, many are content to do without it. It is just because God has associated with genuine revival, a thorough searching out and dealing with the causes that leads to departure from Him and consequent loss of spiritual power, that few are found who will pay the price for such an experience. To be set right with God, to have the heart restored to Him, to experience again the sweet renewings of Divine grace, may necessitate the removal of that, or the separation from this which has become as a right eye or a right hand. But if it be an alien in the kingdom, a Canaanite in the land, it must go, else the channels of blessing must still be stopped up. Do not let us hasten from this without an issue. "As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying, so the curse *causeless* shall not come" (Prov. xxvi. 2), no more does spiritual barrenness and the curse of heavenly drought settle on any soul without a cause. It may be some neglected commandment of God which has long ceased

to exercise the conscience, or some long-drawn feud with some fellow-heir of God, or some wrong long inflicted on one whose God has at last taken up the avenging rod. The only way of getting restored and revived is to deal with the causes of decay and departure, honestly and fully before God. Then when there has been full confession and renunciation of these, He will according to His faithful promise "*revive* the spirit of the humble, and *revive* the heart of the contrite" (Isa. lvii. 15).

Thus when the channels of inflow are cleared out, God will fill the vacuum renewing spiritual strength, and the restored soul, revived in spiritual freshness and reinvigorated as in the days of spiritual youth by the fulness of the Spirit of God, will go forth anew with firm and steady step, to walk in the paths of righteousness, yea, to run in the way of God's commandments.

:o:

"THOU REMAINEST."

THOU remainest!" Blest endurance,
In an everchanging scene!
Calm us, Lord, with this assurance:
"Thou remainest!" Peace serene!

Everlasting, all undying,
All unchanging is Thy love;
On Thy faithful Word relying,
"Thou remainest!"—this we prove.

Swift the stream of Time is flowing,
Loved ones go from love's embrace;
Many gone, and others going—
"Thou remainest!" Lord of grace!

Here we find sweet consolation
To the heart, when sore oppress;
'Mid surrounding desolation,
"Thou remainest!" This is rest.

Should the sun of Time be setting,
Breaks a bright eternal day;
Sorrows of the path forgetting,
"THOU REMAINEST"—ours for aye!

THE CHURCHES OF THE SAINTS.

PART V. BY ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

IT will probably have been a matter of surprise to some, to find it spoken of as an error to suppose that when a believer is received by an Assembly, he is thereby received into a larger body of which that Assembly forms a part. They had been accustomed, when leaving home for a time, to ask for a letter of commendation to an Assembly in the place to which they were going. They have also found that upon presentation of such a letter they were readily received, and that all the privileges of Christian fellowship were at once accorded to them. In what, they may ask, does this differ from being received into a body of which all such Assemblies are constituent parts?

This seems to be a very natural question, and it is certainly one of grave importance. If it be true that the individual, on being received into an Assembly, is thereby received into a body composed of a number of Assemblies, either that body is the whole Church of God, or it is a sect. For the Scriptures know of no body except the Church, which is Christ's body (Eph. i. 22-23; Col. i. 24), and that is composed, not of a number of associated Assemblies, but of all saints (1 Cor. xii. 12-13).

Except, perhaps, the Church of Rome, no community ventures to assume that it is THE CHURCH. Other denominations generally describe themselves as branches of the Church, yet they would search in vain to find anything in God's Word about a Church with branches. We read of the Churches in a country or a province, as the Churches of Asia (1 Cor. xvi. 19), the Churches of Macedonia (2 Cor. viii. 1), the

Churches of Galatia (Gal. i. 2), the Churches of Judæa (Gal. i. 22); but not of "the Church" of the province, as though all the Churches in the province formed a branch Church. Some have urged that Acts ix. 31, is an example of many churches being grouped together and forming one Church. It is quite true that the reading of the Revised Version in this place is confirmed by all the best manuscripts. There we find, "So the Church throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria had peace." But let us look at the surrounding circumstances. In chapter viii. 1 we read, "And at that time there was a great persecution against the Church which was at Jerusalem, and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria, except the apostles." "As for Saul, he made havoc of the Church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison. Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word" (verses 3 and 4). But in the ninth chapter we have the account of Saul's conversion, and the arch persecutor becomes a bold proclaimer that Jesus is the Son of God. The blessed result of this is given in verse 31, already referred to. "So the Church throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria had peace." It is quite plain that this Church is the Church of Jerusalem, of whose scattering we had been told in chapter viii. 1. They would not cease to regard themselves as belonging to the assembly at Jerusalem because persecution had compelled them temporarily to leave the city. The word "throughout" is the same word as that used by the Holy Spirit in chapter viii. 1, where we learned that the Church of Jerusalem was scattered. The word clearly speaks of one

assembly scattered for a time. In Acts xi. we read for the first time of a church away from Jerusalem. In verse 19, we find some of those who had been scattered abroad, in consequence of the persecution that arose about Stephen, travelling as far as Antioch in Syria, and preaching the Word there, so that a great number believed. But the Spirit of God carries the narrative much further than this. Tidings of the work of grace reach Jerusalem, and Barnabas is sent to Antioch to help the new converts. He, again, seeks the co-operation of Saul, and together they remain there a whole year, assembling themselves with the disciples, who are now called a "Church." The same thing took place elsewhere. The scattered saints in many cases continued in the places they had been driven to. Paul and Barnabas, and later Paul and Silas, journeyed extensively, preaching the Word.

Wherever sinners were saved they were instructed in the will of God as to their coming together, and all that was connected with it (1 Cor. vii. 17: xi. 16: xiv. 33); and after this, though we have frequent references to the Church at Jerusalem, and to churches in provinces, including the churches of Judæa (Gal. i. 22), we never hear of a church of a whole province.

It appeared desirable to deal carefully with this point, because this particular passage (Acts ix. 31) has been grievously wrested to justify the unscriptural actings of one of the many human federations, with which men have vainly sought to improve upon the teaching of the Word of God.

But we must return to the question already raised, as to what is involved in believers being commended by one assembly to another; if these assemblies are not parts of an organised whole, so that any

person received, by one of them, therefore belongs to the whole body.

Let us first enquire whether, even in New Testament times, there was any such organization; and whether it was necessary, in order to a true church character, that an assembly should form a part of it. In order to answer this enquiry, we must go back to Matt. xviii. 20. It is not because the believers here assembled form part of a vast association, that they are assured that weight and efficacy shall be given to their act. It is solely because they have recognized the Name and place and glory that God has given to His beloved Son, and that their coming together is the direct acknowledgment of this.

This is the exact opposite of what prevails in most of the denominations of Christendom. It is not their relation to the Lord Jesus, but to the bodies of which they form a part, that gives them their church character. It is true that Independents and Baptists act on a different principle. But who could venture to assert that it is because of the presence of the Lord Jesus in the midst that they take the name of Churches? Where the democratic principle prevails, and members vote for choice of ministers, for election of fresh members, and for all other matters, the voice of the majority settling every point, how can Jesus be the Lord there? The same test makes manifest where all the different sections of the party of the late Mr Darby have entirely missed their way.

A company of believers is only recognized as a church, because of its association with this or that fragment of the original federation; and not because they own Jesus as Lord and are gathered unto His Name. It is considered sufficient proof

that they are not gathered to His Name, to show that they are not a part of this or that section, which claims to be the one representative of the Church of God on earth. In this way they are called churches, not because of their relationship to Christ, but because of their allegiance to a human system. Thus, while differing so greatly from the great world-systems of Christendom, they have fallen into the same mistake as to what constitutes a church.

That there should be the truest fellowship between assemblies builded together, in each place, for a habitation of God through the Spirit, is beyond question. In the measure in which such assemblies are walking in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Spirit, and are continuing stedfastly in obedience to the Lord's commandments, their fellowship will be real, and deep, and far-reaching.

But it is not because of their fellowship with other assemblies, but only because of their relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ, that He calls each company of saints, who own him as the Lord in the midst, a Church.

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THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS CROSS.

(*Phillipians iii. 10.*)

BY GEORGE STEINBERGER, STUTTGART.

AT the Cross, our Head took the lowest possible place; and to us, His members, He has given the lowest place too. "The brightness of the glory and the express image of the person" of the unseen God (Heb. i. 3) became the most "despised and rejected of men" (Isa. liii. 3). Since then, we have only *one* right, and that is the right to be the lowest and the least. If we lay claim to more than this, we do not yet understand the Cross.

We seek higher life! We shall find it if we enter more deeply into the fellowship of His Cross with our Head. God has given the crucified One the highest place (Rev. v. 6), and should not we give Him the same? We do this, if we hour by hour reckon ourselves as crucified with Him (Gal. ii. 19-20). Thus we honour the crucified One.

We desire completer victory! We shall find it, if we enter more fully into the fellowship of His Cross. With nailed hands and feet, the Lamb gained the greatest victory. Only so long as we abide under the shadow of that Cross, do we abide under the shadow of the Almighty (Psa. xci. 1). The Cross must become our home. There alone can we find shelter.

Only then can we understand *our cross*, when we have learnt to understand His Cross. Let us draw so near to it, that we not only gaze at it, but touch it; yea, yet more, even let it operate *within* us (Gal. v. 24), that it may become an *inner cross*. Then the Cross lives on in us, and we experience its power, displayed primarily in the fact that we are not conquered by our own cross, but bear it gladly.

The enemy always aims at taking away our cross, that we may go through life without one. The forty days' temptation of our Lord (Luke iv. 1-13) consisted in the devil's wanting to rob Him of the Cross. Therefore he said, "If thou be the Son of God": he reminded Him of His greatness and of His rights. But He renounced His greatness and His rights, and remained the Son of Man, the Lamb. And as such He overcame. Had Jesus allowed His Cross to be taken from Him, His whole life, all His doings, had been

worthless, and the enemy had had the mastery. The enemy would have had no objection to our Lord's going, as Son of God, from one revelation of power to another, if He had only let him take away the Cross; for He knew well enough that His nailed feet would bruise His head, and His nailed hands (Matt. xii. 29) take everything out of His hands. Now we understand why the enemy wants to rob us of our cross. What are we without a cross? (2 Cor. iv. 16-17). What Jesus would have been without His cross! O, do not give away your cross, hold it fast! For by the cross the Lord knows His followers. Do not shorten your cross, for by so doing you only diminish your glory. Do not choose your cross, but take up the one He has prepared for you. Do not carry your cross before you like a hero; do not, on the other hand, drag it behind you as if you were disheartened, but bear it with patience on your shoulder, so that God may see the greater part, and others the lesser. The Cross is holy—and our cross too: therefore we must treat it in a holy manner, and not give our holy things to the dogs, and throw pearls before swine. This we do, if we show our cross to those who are not God's priests.

The more glory you desire, the greater cross you desire with it (Matt. xx. 22). James and John desired to sit, one on the right hand, the other on the left, of the Son of Man. Jesus answered them, "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" In our Lord's case the baptism of the Holy Ghost was followed by the baptism of suffering, and the revelation of love on Mount Tabor by His being forsaken of His God at Golgotha.

He was "made perfect through suffering" (Heb. ii. 10), and do we imagine there is another way to the same end for us? Very many people get no further, because they will not take up the cross God has placed in their way. On the broad way one can avoid one's cross, but on the narrow way one cannot do this; one is obliged to take it up, or else it is always in the way, and one can come no further. Do not take offence at your cross. Faithfulness is followed by the Cross, as Jesus says of Himself in Matt. xx. 28, and as He says to His own in Matt. xvi. 24.

LECTURES ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

BY WILLIAM LINCOLN, OF BERESFORD, LONDON.

CHAPTER I. 14-18.

"AND of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath told Him out."

Now, in looking at these three verses, we shall see three matters specially pressed upon our attention. The first is, that we all get from what He has got; the second, that grace and truth only exist through Him; and the third is, that He brings all God down to us, nothing is kept back. Now as to the first, "And of His fulness have all we received." "All we," alluding to verse 12, "as *many* as received Him"; we who receive Him and none else. "Of His fulness." Fulness of what? I think it is an allusion to verse 14, "fulness of grace and truth." Now these two words, "grace and truth," crop up a good deal here, therefore we had better tarry on them a little. What is grace? What is truth? And

what is the evident connection between them? Now I think there is a passage which tells us very distinctly what grace is. "That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace, *in His kindness towards us* through Christ Jesus." Grace is His kindness towards us by Christ Jesus. For, as the verses before show us, we were dead in trespasses and sins; and the verses next, that we are raised together with Christ; and there we read of "His grace in His kindness towards us by Christ Jesus." Such, then, is what I take to be a definition of what grace is.

Then, as to the next question, What is truth? Truth is the revelation of God to the soul. All that has got away from God, all that is not of God, is a lie. He that once sees God—has seen God in Christ—knows the truth. So is this eternal life, to know God. There is a connection between truth and eternal life; truth unveils God, life is through the knowledge of God. Very many saw Jesus in the days of His flesh, but got neither life on the one hand, nor truth on the other, because they saw nothing in Him.

But what is meant by the words, "and grace for grace"? Two interpretations may be given. One is, that grace follows grace; that as sure as God shows grace to-day, He will do it to-morrow; as sure as we get favour from Christ to-day, we get it, and more, to-morrow. That is not an interpretation that I should accept. This, I believe, is the true one, though the more difficult. That the grace we receive from Christ is identical with all the grace that is in Him. For example: if we take a vessel to a fountain, and draw of the water, the water in the vessel is the same water as in the fountain. That is part of the meaning,

though by no means all. It is identical in many ways. Thus, grace in Christ is infinite; grace in you is infinite. I trust that you will admit that. Do you think that if it had not been for infinite grace in you, you could have been picked up from being dead in sins to be raised with Christ? Grace in Christ is abundant: Romans v. says that "we receive abundance of grace. Grace in Christ is precious, grace in us is precious. Grace in Christ is lasting, is divine; grace in us is lasting, and is divine. So in these varied ways, and in many others, we may see that grace in Christ, and grace in us correspond. Only we get it from Him, so it is well for us ever to be living upon Him.

" Oh, Christ, He is the fountain,
The deep, sweet well of love."

"For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came"—or rather—"became by Jesus Christ." Another instance of how in this chapter there is a contrast constantly being drawn by the Spirit between the word "was" used of Christ, and the word "became" used of everything else. The thought here is, that kindness and truth could never have got at us but for Christ. God might have loved us, and did, in His heart, from all eternity; but the love would have been kept there; out of His heart it could never have come but for Christ—Christ who brought us it. Now remember what we are considering, for it seems so sweet. He is no mere nobleman, coming with expectation to receive from us—that is rather the wish in Matthew; but here in John it is God, and the Son of the living God, giving, coming to tell us, not in words only but in action fully, of the kindness of God, of what God is. He is coming to make us acquainted with God, and to know God is the highest bliss of the creature.

Moses could say, "Do, do, do"; and Moses was the greatest prophet that ever lived; God spake with him face to face, as a man speaketh with his friend. But all that Moses could do was to inculcate law. But that Holy One came to tell us of the heart of God, of the kindness of God to sinners, and then of the kindness of God to His people; and as we drink it in, it is indeed a delicious draught.

The next verse is still more striking: "No one hath seen God at any time"—that is, God *as God*. Moses saw God, and the prophets, but they did not see God in unveiled glory and beauty; that was impossible. In the original, there is no article, and the word would be better rendered "Deity." Moses or Adam might behold a form, but it was God veiled. Then do you not feel that the next words introduce you to very high ground? "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath told Him out." As if only such a wonderful Being could do it. These words, spoken of Christ, we must ponder, "The only begotten Son." There is the exact and full relationship in which Jesus stands to God—the Only Begotten. I have before remarked, and need not again enlarge upon it, that it is the prime essential that Christ be the Son of God, the outcome of God; and that is what all shades of infidel deny. Whether Mohammedans or all others—fools that they are—they cut at the very root, as far as they can. If one has not come out of that God, God is unknown. We cannot understand the words, "begotten of the Father." There are many things in this passage, more than I am going to suggest, beyond our ken at present. "The Only Begotten": He is called "the First-begotten from the

dead," that puts Him in relationship with us. But here it is "the Only Begotten of the Father," and the very words make us feel that we ought to worship.

RECEPTION.

BY GEORGE ADAM, STRANRAER.

LET us now look at the Divine principle of the introduction of the *individual* into the confidence of the *collective* company of believers. In looking at this question I will avoid the use of the expression "Reception into fellowship" for the following reasons:—(a) It has been the cause of so much controversy; and (b) I have a growing conviction that to many minds it conveys an unscriptural thought. Hence I simply call it, the introduction of the individual disciple into the confidence of fellow-disciples. In looking at this, I must use the case of the Apostle Paul in Acts ix. 26-28. That this has been much abused I fully admit, but to set it aside as of no value as a precedent to guide us in cases of special difficulty, I believe is simply to trifle with the Word of the Lord. Paul writes of himself as a "pattern man" (1 Cor. xi. 1, 1 Tim. i. 16), and in his "assaying to join himself to the disciples at Jerusalem," he was as much a pattern as in anything else. I do not believe that his case teaches that there ought to be a *fixed form* gone through in every case; but his example does teach that, in every case, the Divine principle of *confidence in one another* should be maintained amongst those who would claim all the privileges of discipleship. Apart from this confidence, fellowship cannot exist—it is only a mere word without a meaning. I also believe that there are cases in our day, quite as difficult to deal with as Saul's case was in his day, and I see no difficulty in

applying the Holy Spirit's way in Saul's case to such cases of difficulty. Let us notice first, that neither Barnabas nor the apostles found fault with the disciples for refusing Saul, until they were satisfied that he was a disciple. Then observe how Barnabas acted. He was acquainted with Saul's case: he was also a man "full of the Holy Ghost" (Acts xi. 24). He did not take Saul to the meeting on Lord's Day morning and give out his name, as one "wishing to break bread." Nor did he take him to such a meeting and "propose him for fellowship," leaving it to any who might be in doubt about his discipleship to go and satisfy themselves. This is a most unscriptural practice. It practically sets aside Divine rule in the church, and for the time being, constitutes the whole assembly into a "bench of bishops," to sit in judgment on every case which comes before them. Barnabas took Saul to the apostles, who were then "guides" in the church at Jerusalem, and satisfied them as to Saul's conversion, and as to his testimony *after* his conversion. Then we read—"He was with them, coming in and going out at Jerusalem." The account of his case, as recorded by the Spirit, is beautifully simple, and clearly teaches two Divine principles that ought to be maintained in every assembly of believers gathered according to Scripture precedent. First—Confidence in the discipleship of every one who is added to the number. Second—A clear recognition of Divine rule in the assembly. No one ought to be brought in, without the approval and fellowship of those whom the Lord has set over His flock. Let these two principles be maintained in ever so simple or informal a way, but let them never be given up or put to one side by any pretext.

The Bible Annotator.

SEVEN "COMES" OF THE LORD JESUS.

- Come Down (Luke xix. 5). To the self-righteous.
 Come Forth (John xi. 43). To the dead.
 Come and Rest (Matth. xi. 28). To the burdened.
 Come and See (John i. 39). To the seeking.
 Come and Drink (John vii. 36). To the thirsty.
 Come and Dine (John xxi. 12). To the hungry.
 Come follow Me (Luke xviii. 16). To the converted.

ETERNAL THINGS FOR SAVED AND UNSAVED.

- Eternal Redemption (Heb. v. 9). Secured by Christ's Death.
 Eternal Salvation (Heb. ix. 12). Assured by Christ Risen.
 Eternal Life (Rom. vi. 23). Possessed by the Believer.
 Eternal Glory (1 Pet. v. 10). Awaiting the Saved.
 Eternal Fire (Jude 7). The Doom of the Lost.

DIVINE RICHES.

- Riches of His Goodness (Rom. ii. 4). For Sinners.
 Riches of His Grace (Eph. i. 7). For Salvation.
 Riches of His Glory (Eph. iii. 16). For Satisfaction.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Is there any light given in the Word as to what and where Paradise is? There seems to be much perplexity in the minds of some regarding this.

The simple reader of the Word who has no preconceived theory to sustain, and no display of critical knowledge to make, may, by comparing Scripture with Scripture, gain all the information that God has seen fit to give on this, or any other subject. Where Scripture is silent, conjecture is forbidden. To covet knowledge on things which an allwise God has kept secret, is to venture out on dangerous ground, on which many have been caught in the foils of error. To go as far as the light of Revelation leads and no further, is the only path of safety. It is said concerning the Lord Jesus, that at His ascension, He was "received up into heaven" (Mark xvi. 19), and that He "passed through" the heavens (Heb. iv. 14, R.V.) to the right hand of the throne (Heb. xii. 2), to the heaven of heavens, the immediate dwelling-place of God (see 1 Chron. vi. 18; Heb. ix. 24). To this third or inner heaven, Paul was caught up (2 Cor. xii. 2-

(4), and this is said to be "paradise." To be "with Christ" (Phil. i. 23), to be "at home with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 8), the unclotted spirit of the believer goes at death (see Acts vii. 59), and there, is "very far better" than it could be under any possible condition while in mortal flesh. "The Paradise of God" mentioned in Rev. ii. 7, may have reference to the future resurrection condition of the saints in heavenly glory (comp. Rev. xxii. 2).

Answers to Correspondents.

BIBLE STUDENT.—The "Newberry" Bible is the ordinary Authorised Version, with signs arranged in the text to show the tenses of the original. These are explained on a page inside the Bible, and are easily acquired by any English reader. But the chief feature of interest in the book, as we think is, the beautiful marginal readings and carefully chosen references and parallel readings, by one who was not only a scholar, but a Christian with deep understanding of the things of God.

N.B., DEVON.—The best proof that a man's gift is exercised in a proper manner—which is not always by doing all the preaching himself, but surely includes the fitting of others to carry on the ministry—is, that when he is called by God to another sphere of labour, the saints to whom he has ministered, go on as well or better without him, than they did when he was with them. The saints at Philippi "obeyed" when Paul was present, "much more" when he was absent. Alas! it is more frequently the case, that when one gifted to minister leaves a place, another has to be got to fill his place, else the work would collapse.

CHRISTIAN MOTHER.—We do not believe that Christian parents who seek to obey the Word concerning their children, to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. vi. 4) will ever send them to a dancing school. What object would they have in sending them there, but to fit them as worldings to take part with the children of the devil in revelries and carousals that help them to forget God, and stifle His voice in their souls? When you send your children to graduate in this barely modest and always frivolous art, with which is associated every vice and form of ungodliness, you virtually confess that you do not expect them to be converted, but that you intend to

so educate them that they may be accomplished worldlings. If professedly Christian parents who thus wilfully—in order to be in line with other worldlings—send their children to such places, could but see some of the ruined lives and wrecked testimonies, and hear the bitter repinings that arise from broken-hearted parents who in early years sent their children to acquire what would better fit them for a place in a godless world, which now claims them wholly as its own, they might surely be deterred from such an utterly godless custom, if from no higher motive than the harvest it will bring upon themselves to reap, to say nothing of the dishonour to Him whom they profess to own as their Lord.

A.E.L. Co., DUBLIN.—An assembly of God's people has certainly the right to refuse their meeting-place to a preacher who is of doubtful reputation, or who conducts his meetings in a manner that causes the truth to be lightly esteemed or evil spoken of. As spiritual power decays, and world-pleasing preachers multiply, whose chief aim seems to be to stand high in the estimation of the crowd, extracting as much from it for their own aggrandisement as possible, it surely becomes more and more the responsibility of those who "watch for souls," and have the care of the spiritual interests of assemblies and their work, to withstand all efforts to introduce men and practices whose influence is to blight and blast all real work for God, leaving behind them a wilderness of empty profession, which those resident in the place have to pay the penalty of for years to come.

A. D., FIFE.—Those who stand at the door of the hall or room in which believers meet, to welcome strangers, receive letters of commendation, &c., ought to be such as the assembly recognise as taking oversight, men in whom the saints have confidence, and who, in all the service they render in introducing visitors and such like, are careful to act in fellowship with others who are associated with them in caring for the saints. Nothing could be more unscriptural or more unseemly than for one to act contrary to what he knows to be the mind of his fellow-saints, and what they believe to be according to God, in receiving persons, arranging preachers, and introducing practices which, because *he* considers right, *he* will do, acting as a lord over God's heritage. If there is one principle more

clearly taught than another in God's Word in regard to assembly action, it is, that there ought to be oneness of mind in all that is done (see Phil. ii, 2; 2 Cor. xiii, 11), and if this should take time to attain, it is better to wait (Phil. iii., 15-16), than to hasten action, which may result in division. If those guiding the saints are not of one mind regarding any matter, they should seek unto God and His Word together, for help, which—as many can testify who have found themselves in such a difficulty—if there be an honest desire to learn and no personal point to carry, He always gives. If they appear before the assembly divided, how are the saints to follow their leading? If one should force *his* way, or act according to his individual predilection, apart from the rest, he would thereby manifest by his selfwill and unsubmission how utterly unqualified he is for doing shepherd or bishop work (see Titus i. 7) in God's assembly.

Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION VIII.—Conferences of Christians, which for many years have been convened and conducted according to the principles which are commonly believed by assemblies to be according to the Word, viz., that the Lordship of Christ and the guidance of the Spirit should be owned and honoured; that God should be counted on to minister through whomsoever of His servants He sees fit to use, and to give the truth He knows His saints most need. The recognition of these Divine principles, which were once held to be of paramount importance, is gradually being set aside, without any explanation. Speakers are invited, their names announced, subjects chosen, and latterly a chairman appointed, who calls on the speakers in order, and sometimes fixes the extent of their ministry. Is not this going back to what we left?

ANSWER A.—It is generally acknowledged that the "open platform" has given opportunity for unqualified men to occupy the time of such meetings with ministry which was not to edification. But a human remedy such as is described in this question, will not ensure God-given and spiritual ministry suited to the present need of God's gathered saints. To fix subjects and appoint speakers is simply a ready way to evade the difficulty. It requires no exercise of heart, and it gives God but little opportunity of reaching the consciences of His people with the Word they most need, for it is fairly certain that when they are away from God and in danger of departing from His ways,

they will neither "fix" the subject they most require, nor "appoint" the speakers who will give them God's message straight and plain.—J. S.

ANSWER B.—There are times when those who guide the flock in any town or locality may discern that a certain line of teaching is needful either to instruct, stir up, or restore the Lord's people whose condition and needs they have particularly at heart. If they should arrange a meeting for ministry on such subjects, and announce the names of qualified teachers to minister the Word accordingly, no one would find fault; indeed, such gatherings have been, and are—given that those who arrange and conduct them are in the hands of the Lord—seasons of help to many. The same is true of a teacher giving addresses on special subjects in which he has been exercised before God for any place, or people, or need. But to deprive the saints of that special form of ministry which—however individuals may have failed in estimating their ability to rightly share it—is set forth in 1 Cor. xiv. is surely to set aside that which Divine wisdom has appointed, because needful, for the edification of the saints. A chairman, with time-limit for speakers, is virtually a confession that the Divine principle is unworkable, or that it has been abandoned for that which can be, and generally is, carried on without any felt need of God to send the right message for that particular occasion. And it is a solemn fact, as many painfully know, that where this principle has been adopted exclusively when saints are gathered together for conference and ministry, it has, sooner or later, crept in and wrought, until it became acknowledged in the meeting for worship also.—A. G.

ANSWER C.—In earlier years such a question would never have been asked. It was then recognised that there was room and opportunity for all God's servants to minister His Word. This was a distinctive mark of all gatherings, and, unless it can be shown to be contrary to the Word, should be so still. Failure in practice does not set Divine principles aside, and the principles taught in 1 Cor. xii.-xiv. are just as applicable now as ever. To go back from them to human arrangements such as are described in the question, is to return to what some of us left many years ago, at much cost, for conscience sake. If gatherings of believers were characterized by more real waiting upon God, and less haste in speaking, 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25, might again be known, and the former times of power and blessing restored.—H. G. L.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—The principle of ministry set forth in Acts xv. 27, where Paul and Barnabas "gathered the church together" and "rehearsed all that God had done with them," and in Acts xx. 17, where Paul called "the elders" of the Ephesian church together and ministered to them, is still available and frequently used by teachers and ministers of the Word, individually and together.

The character of such gatherings is, that those who call them or undertake to minister to saints who thus gather, are responsible for them. The saints may, and do pray, that the Lord may give His servants the right message, and prepare the hearts of the hearers to receive it. Yet primarily, the burden of having and giving such ministry as will be to their edification, rests with those who bring the saints together to hear them. The principle of ministry set forth in 1 Cor. xiv. is essentially different. There the church has "come together into one place" (verse 23), and those who speak, speak "in the church" (verse 19), not by arrangement, but under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (chapter xii. 7-8) in subjection one to another (verse 32), unto the edifying of the church (verse 12). If irrelevant or obtrusive ministry should arise, godly rule would be brought into exercise to restrain those who, either ignorantly or lacking discernment, would occupy time not to edification (Titus i. 10-11). This, where it has arisen—and, so far as our experience goes, it has been very rare—has brought the whole assembly into exercise before God, and caused deep heart-searching and self-judgment, for it has been found that where there was much of God among the saints, restraint was upon the flesh in those who otherwise would have been a source of trouble in this respect. Conferences, or united gatherings for praise, prayer, and ministry of the Word, have been convened according to this principle for many years, and, as many know, have been wonderfully used of God to the edification and refreshing of His people, by ministry through varied channels meeting the manifold needs of the children of God. As one correspondent says, occasionally unedifying ministry has crept in, for Divine principles always need Divine power and godly discernment to render them efficient in practice; but, as a rule, as many can testify, God has marvellously guided and blest in the ministry of His Word at such gatherings, giving help to thousands of His people through one and another, such as no human arrangement or selected subjects or speakers could possibly have supplied. We do not plead for this principle to be *uniformly* adopted at all seasons and for every kind of gathering of believers. In some cases an individual teacher, exercising the gift the Lord has given him, and for the use of which he is accountable, may find it better to arrange meetings for which he is individually responsible, or if an assembly has, say an afternoon meeting for ministry, one or more fitted to minister the Word, who have the confidence of the saints, may be primarily responsible for it, but the principle must not be abandoned as out of date or unworkable, of the church, or churches (as at Conference times) coming together to wait upon God to minister what He sees they need, by whomsoever of His servants He may see fit to use.

APOSTOLIC FELLOWSHIP :

IN ITS OUTWARD AND INWARD ASPECTS.

ACTS II. 38—47 : I JOHN I. 1—4.

An Address by Max Isaac Reich.

WE get in these Scriptures the subject of apostolic fellowship, and it is a subject on which we need to be instructed. We get clear instruction in Scripture in connection with outward and inward fellowship. In Acts ii. we get outward fellowship. In I Cor. we get teaching as to the order of the outward ; in the whole of John's epistle we get the blessed possibility of the inward, they are both in Scripture. As to the outward, it is well to reassert its importance. It was what the apostles laboured to bring believers into, "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and in the fellowship." It was a definite fellowship, and young believers were instructed that Christ was not only the Head of the body in heaven, but also a Divine Centre on the earth. They were commended to the *Lord*, they were added to the *Lord*, they were brought into a circle of fellowship where Jesus was owned as *Lord*, where His claims were acknowledged, where His authority was paramount, where His will was carried out. It is well to be clear as to this, as confused and unsatisfactory views about it obtain generally. In Acts ii. they continued in the fellowship which the apostles called into existence, into which they received, and from which they put away any whose walk was not in harmony with the holiness and purity befitting that fellowship. In I Cor. we see what a sacred character this fellowship has, it is called "the Church of *God*," it is called "the temple of *God*." His temple was once in Jerusalem, but that temple had been forsaken; the solemn words

had been uttered, "*your* house is left unto you desolate," the Lord had turned His back upon it. But in Corinthians we get the magnificent truth that though the Jewish house had been forsaken, God had a temple then among Gentiles, a circle in which the Holy Spirit could make His blessed manifestations, a place where God was, a place where His voice could be heard, a place where they could see the shining of divine light amid the surrounding darkness of heathenism; a place where God's presence was enjoyed, where His power was felt, so that when a visitor came in contact with it he would fall on his face, and own that God was among them of a truth. It was a place moreover, where God's priestly people could eat of the shewbread and wave the incense of worship before the throne. This is the assembly of God wherever gathered. It may consist of only two or three, but wherever there are two or three with faith to take the stand, they shall not miss the blessing promised to those who gather according to the principles of the New Testament—this is the outward fellowship. But in the first epistle of John we get another fellowship, equally important and necessary for us here on the earth, and this is also called fellowship with the apostles. It is not of outward fellowship that John writes, he never speaks of outward things at all, so we get nothing about baptism or the supper. He writes at the finish up of the Canon of Scripture. Thirty years of silence had elapsed since the last book had been added, and during these thirty years the evils Paul predicted to the elders of Ephesus had had time to develop. Evil men and seducers had waxed worse and worse, drawing away from Christ and making false centres of themselves ; wolves had come in

and the flock had been scattered. John's special line of teaching is in view of all this. In the Revelation he sees the evil going from bad to worse. In the ii. and iii. chapters he gets a panoramic view of the down-grade of Christendom's history. First love is left, and then one truth after another is given up, until at last the Lord is outside of the whole thing. But he sees yet deeper depths than these. He sees apostate Christendom as the scarlet-clad woman seated on the beast, until the whole history is closed in the terrible cataclysm of the 18th chapter of the Apocalypse! It was an awful picture to him, for he must have remembered the 2nd of Acts. I wish to draw attention to the character of John's teaching in the face of all this. He is able to draw our attention away to that which all the outward ruin and confusion can never touch. He brings before us the blessed possibility of enjoying that which is inward, while the outward thing is in disorder, and shows how we in this twentieth century can have real, living, inward fellowship with the apostles of the first. "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us." This is a wonderful thing! We are called to the enjoyment of the same life, the same power, that worked in the apostles; called to enter experimentally into the same divine realities that they enjoyed. Is not this the special need of our day? What was the religion of the apostles? (I use the word "religion" for the want of a better). It was a *supernatural* religion. Is ours of the same character? Does our Christianity consist of what we have learned intellectually, or by supernatural power from *God Himself*? The Christianity of the apostles was supernatural in its origin, triumphant in its character,

and aggressive in its effects. If we had a greater experience of the same mighty power which filled the hearts and lives of the apostles, we too should know more of its inward triumphs and its outward aggressiveness. How long did it take in the first century for Christianity to spread throughout the whole length and breadth of the great Roman Empire? But it is solemn that to-day, in spite of all the teaching, in spite of all the churches and chapels, in spite of all missionary enterprise, there are more people sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death than since the beginning of creation. It is a solemn thing, and should put the mantle of shame over our faces. The progress of Christianity does not keep pace with the population of the world! But we are apt to forget that conversion is not a trick of the evangelist, something brought about by working on the emotions and natural understanding of men. *Christianity is not a religious science for one to master, but a divine experience to master men. It is the establishment of the Kingdom of God in the soul of man, the inbringing of a power which is able to subdue all things to the authority of Him whom God has enthroned.* Oh! that we may know more of this. It was this that John ministered. He had lived to see antichrists seducing the babes, errors brought in touching the Divine Person of Christ, every truth of Christianity undermined, but in the midst of all this he shows how we may have true fellowship with the apostles. God would raise up a people to-day who have the same life, power, and mighty experience the apostles knew. Beloved friends! if we knew what this means we should be a power great enough to shake London! What I want is to know a power which can overcome all

that is natural ; a power in me which can displace the self-life by bringing in the Christ-life ; a power which can triumph over my flesh, that nature which is proud, vain, foolish, the nature of fallen Adam ; a power which by divine teaching and the development of the divine life in my soul, will end in practically setting aside "the old man" in order that the life of the meek and lowly Lamb of God may be seen in me. How is this to be brought about? No mere orthodoxy will do it. We see here in the first few verses of this epistle how it can be. The apostle brings before us a life which was *before the fall*, a life which sin cannot touch nor life destroy—"that which was from the beginning." He shows how that life which was before the fall can be brought within the experimental reach of believers *now*. That life was manifested in the Person of Christ on the earth. "That which we have *heard*." This is inward hearing, the Lord Himself said "he that *heareth* My Word," and "they that *hear* shall live." This is much more than hearing preaching ; many hear that without hearing the voice of the Son of God. Then we read "which we have *seen*." In the mystic language of Revelation, "I turned to *see* the voice which spake unto me ;" first we get the inward hearing and then the inward seeing. The inner man has senses as well as the outward. There is such a thing as the senses being exercised, and it is as these inward senses are exercised that the life of God in the soul grows. First there is the voice, the Son of God has spoken to my soul, and then there is the inward vision, personal knowledge, personal acquaintance with Him. "We have seen with *our eyes*," we did not get it from anyone else, our own eyes have seen it. We go on to closer

intimacy and acquaintance with the Word of Life. But some may say "Is not the apostle referring to the outward historical manifestation of divine life?" I believe that he is in verse 2, "for the life was manifested and we have seen it," but in the 1st verse, he is showing how the same life can be inwardly realized and be known by us. We must be careful to guard this subject ; the life which is inwardly imparted to us, realized by us, and which maintains us in blessed superiority to the life of Adam, is the very same life in its character that was outwardly, historically manifested in the life of the Son of God on the earth. In the four Gospels we see the divine life coming out, we see God's character revealed, we see its heavenly beauties, its blessed attractiveness in the life of the lowly Carpenter of Nazareth. "That which we have *looked upon*"—attentively contemplated—the Holy Ghost ministers the very same life to my soul. But we get something even closer than this, "our hands have *handled*." This is something more than hearing, seeing, or looking upon. How much do I know of this inward handling of the very Word of Life? There are things in a shop window which I have seen, but never handled, because the glass is between me and them, I cannot handle them. Is it not like that with us often. There is something in our lives which comes between, something which needs to be removed before we can handle the Word of Life. We hear about these things, we talk about them, we sing about them ; but beloved friends, it is possible to *handle* them and *that* is fellowship with the apostles. Don't let us think because we have been baptized and brought into fellowship that that is all we need. That is like the outer shell, and

God made the shell to preserve the kernel. We need the shell ; if ever we needed it, we need it now. There is not a single religious Society of the present time where fundamental truth is not denied. But, brethren, beware, lest in rightly maintaining the shell we lose the kernel. Let us go in for the outward thing, but let us go in for the inward too, in life and power.

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THE CHURCHES OF THE SAINTS.

PART VI. BY ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

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THE notion seems to prevail with many that the commendation of a believer by one assembly to another is of the same character as the passing on or transferring of a member of a Trades' Union, or Sick Benefit Society, from one Lodge or branch to another, when such member is changing his place of abode. But there is really no likeness between the two things. In the case of the transference of the member from one Lodge to another, all the Lodges are part of an organised body, and it matters not to what Lodge he has been in the habit of paying his contributions, he was a member of the Association as a whole. In the case of the churches, however, the matter is quite different. When an assembly receive a believer to be one of themselves, that is all they can do. They do not, as we have already shewn, receive him into an organisation of which they form a part. The Scripture calls for the exercise of godly care in this reception, that due regard may be had to the claims of the Lord Himself, to the well-being of the assembly and to the real good of the one who is being received. When one who has been thus received is going, temporarily

or permanently, to some different locality, the assembly that has exercised such godly care regarding him, will fittingly commend him to the loving care and fellowship of an assembly in the place to which he is removing. He is not a member of this assembly simply because he was associated with the other. But if the second assembly believe that the other acted with due care in the first instance, they will not hesitate to accept the evidence which the commendation of that assembly affords them, that the believer in question is one whom they may gladly receive. But this second assembly receive him as truly as the first did, though they do so on the testimony of the first, and not as the result of a separate inquiry made by themselves regarding him. So, when the Scriptures speak of a believer passing from one place to another, they tell how he is received by the church of the place he goes to. For example, when Apollos left Ephesus for Corinth, the brethren wrote exhorting the disciples to receive him (Acts xviii. 27). Or again, when Phœbe was going to Rome from Cenchrea, Paul, who was sending a letter by her hand to the Church at Rome, wrote in it "I commend unto you Phœbe, which is a servant of the Church which is at Cenchrea: that ye receive her in the Lord as becometh saints" (Rom. xvi. 1-2). Those who are accustomed to note the care with which the Holy Spirit chooses every word, in perfect accord with the subject in hand, will not fail to see the force of the use of the words "exhorting the *disciples*," in the one case, and "that ye receive her *in the Lord*," in the other. The first reminds us of the commandment in Matt. xxviii. 18-20: Make disciples, baptise them and teach them to observe all that I have commanded

you. While the second is an expression always implying the recognition that Christ is Lord, and is therefore more than the simple declaration of relationship implied in the words "in Christ."

But let us look at another case where no written commendation was carried by, or preceded, the believer who was removing to another locality. We need not wonder, when the disciples at Damascus let Saul down by the wall in a basket, during the night, to escape from his enemies who were watching the gates to kill him, that little thought was given to sending a letter of commendation with him. Consequently, when he reached Jerusalem, and desired to join himself to the disciples there, there was considerable difficulty in their minds concerning him; for they were not satisfied that he was a disciple. The difficulty, however, was got over in consequence of Barnabas having a previous acquaintance with the facts concerning Saul. Barnabas took him to the apostles, told them how the Lord had met him and spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus (Acts ix. 27). This testimony answered the same purpose that a letter from the disciples at Damascus would have done; for the necessary thing in each case is that the disciples should be assured that the person seeking to join himself to them is one whom they can rightly receive.

Let us take notice in all these cases that it is a reception by the disciples that is in question. It is not a matter of the Lord's Table or the Breaking of Bread. Of course this would follow, but only as part of a whole, and not as a thing by itself, to which any one could be received apart from the whole fellowship to which it belonged. The

phrases "receiving to the Breaking of Bread," "putting away from the Lord's Table," are utterly unknown to the Scriptures, though in such common use to-day. They are not to be found in the New Testament, because the divine order there is, First, the Doctrine of the apostles; Second, the Fellowship; Third, the Breaking of Bread; Fourth, the Prayers. But they are common enough among believers to-day, because the relation of the Breaking of Bread to the Fellowship of the assembly is so little apprehended, and persons are received "to the breaking of bread" who not only do not desire to share in the privileges and responsibilities of the assembly's fellowship, but would strongly resent any suggestion that they had a part in them.

Saul did not ask to be allowed to break bread. He sought to join himself to the disciples. And when the difficulties that stood in the way at first had been removed, the result was, not that he took his place at the Table the following Lord's day, but that "he was with them, coming in and going out." So when an assembly is called to the sorrowful and humbling business of putting away one who has sinned and not repented, the commandment is not to put him away from the Table but "Put away *from among yourselves* that wicked person" (1 Cor. v. 13).

Some have sought to evade the effect of the example given us in the case of Saul's reception at Jerusalem, on the ground that, as he had formerly been a persecutor, and the disciples were without sufficient evidence as to his conversion, the case was altogether exceptional. But all this has nothing whatever to do with the matter. It is quite true that his well known antecedents may

have made them more than usually careful before they could feel assured that he was really a disciple. But this would not in any way affect what Saul sought at their hands, and what they ultimately accorded him with gladness. He desired to join himself to them, and, as soon as their difficulties were removed, they received him to an entire fellowship.

But here we are not unnaturally reminded of the greatly altered circumstances of to-day as compared with apostolic times. Then there was not a multiplication of denominations, all claiming to be Christian, and many of them, including a large number of undoubted believers, having a good report, and holding the foundation truths of the faith. What authority, we are asked, do you find in the Word of God for refusing to receive such? Without a moment's hesitation we answer — None whatever. Nay more. Not only does the Word of God not suffer us to refuse them, it bids us teach them their responsibility to obey all the Commandments of the Lord Jesus. But this only brings us back to the root error of the practices that are so prevalent to-day. When we are asked what authority we find for refusing to receive the persons referred to, the questioner really means, why do we not allow such believers to break bread, without their being received by the assembly at all. It is taken for granted that receiving them and letting them break bread are one and the same thing, and hence the confusion. We must, however, reserve the answer to this question till next month.

SCHISMS.—Were the hearts of all God's people in perfect subjection to the Scriptures, all schisms and division would vanish away.—R. C. CHAPMAN.

PROFESSION.

“Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof (2 Tim. iii. 5).”

SATAN has had many weapons, and has wielded them well. Persecution, superstition, and infidelity, have served his purpose long, and still have their place; but none of these, nor all of them, have secured to him such a harvest of victims as his last and most fatal weapon of *profession*. He slays so ruthlessly, yet so skilfully, that no alarm is excited; and many thousands are lulled to the sleep which ends in eternal death, because their nakedness is covered by a cloak that deceives not only the world and the church, but also their own blinded hearts. I do not here refer to the downright hypocrite who deceives no one, nor even to conscientious souls who have been religiously trained from childhood, and are going on in the good works which are only dead works; but to the ever-increasing number who know the necessity of a new birth, yet who after years of consistent striving for growth, realize no power in their innermost life, although the apparent fruit deceives all. Incalculable harm has been done by the pernicious teaching, that doubt is necessarily of the devil. Certainly it may be so, but oftentimes it is God's own voice speaking to the imperilled soul; and in either case it must be faced. Doubt can assuredly attack those who are sheltered under the blood of Christ, for His arch-enemy loves to harass and scatter the sheep he cannot destroy; but let those doubts be honestly, willingly faced, and the tender Shepherd will not long be silent. He is well able to speak, and His sheep “*know His voice*,” as He leads them to the water of rest. And truly, those

Marah-waters are sweeter than if they had never been bitter! But though this is true of the child of God, it cannot be the experience of a lifeless professor, for Christ never deceives. When Satan brings doubts, the Lord stills the tempest with His own Word of assurance, and when the Spirit of God raises doubt in the deceived soul the arch-imitator does his utmost to still that awakening voice.

But there are some to whom such doubts have never consciously come, who for years have gone on striving, doing much and suffering much for truth's sake, controlling outward faults, but making no real progression in the inner life, never getting beyond effort, and always hoping for some great change to take place some time, when they will have what they yearn for, and see others possess. I do not hesitate to say, that long continuance in such a state is impossible. The Spirit of God indwells the children of God. The growth from a tiny seed has been known to split rocks and lift heavy weights, until it towers triumphantly over the ruined obstacles that lie at its foot; and if this be true of mere human, perishable life, what must be the result of eternal life implanted in a soul, indwelt by the Triune God? Omnipotence is here, and it is an absolute libel to imagine that there can continue to be no growth where He is. It is sadly true that the children of God can grievously rebel and sink to awful depths; but though the Father's love is infinitely long-suffering, it will discipline so heavily as to *compel* submission. The conflict may be long and sharp between the disobedient child and His Father, but the results are sure. Our Lord has made the definite, absolute, statement that "*every good tree bringeth forth*

GOOD FRUIT." And it is well to understand what fruit is, as God reckons it. We have seen in unsaved souls such victory over temper and appetite that had they made any profession, this would have been looked upon as growth; but this is not fruit. Many will be able to plead that they prophesied, cast out demons, and did many wonderful works—in His Name, too—but these things are not fruit. Only what the Spirit of God is able to produce, to conquer, to do and to suffer through us (the "fruit of the Spirit") will pass the searching eyes of the Lord when He separates the true from the false. Some have naturally a morbidly sensitive conscience—grand soil for the enemy to work in—and have struggles and conflicts which they conclude are of the character described in the seventh of Romans (and are a good imitation of it), but there is no Divine life, no new nature, and consequently no ultimate victory or song of deliverance (see Romans vii. 25). These are endless battles, some victories outwardly, but utter failure inwardly, and no "fruit unto God" (Romans vii. 4), because no union with Christ. Others may be perfectly well satisfied with themselves and their attainments, engage actively in Christian work and receive the flatteries of others, who are like themselves, in commendation of their successes. Yet all the while, there is nothing save a lifeless, fruitless profession in the sight of God.

It will take more than the ordinary oft-repeated axioms of evangelical teaching to reach such deceived souls. They are impregnable to the usual appeals and warnings to the "unconverted": they let these pass to others: *they* are of those who are "within." There is little, very little, in this easy going day to reach them, God

knoweth. And if in sovereign mercy some messenger should be sent with the word that in the Spirit's hand might tear aside the veil and lay them open to the searching light of God, he is very often branded as "extreme," and the edge is thus taken off the message by those whose reputation or "cause" might suffer by the collapse of what they have built up with "wood, hay, and stubble." O the sad amazement, the consternation, and the loss that the day of Christ will bring to some who least expect it!

The truly heaven-born soul, in whom Divine life has been begotten, in whom the Spirit of God dwells, who has been ploughed and broken up until the heart has become "good ground" wherein the seed has brought forth, is known not by his outward profession, but by his inward possession of that to which all others are strangers. Christ is formed within: the Divine image is on him: he grows in conformity to Christ (2 Cor. iii. 18). For lack of growth there can only be two causes: the one is *lack of life*, the other *wilful disobedience*—not the helpless disobedience that would obey but cannot, but the stubborn rebellion that will not yield, and this second cause positively *cannot* go on for long in a child of God apart from the Divine discipline, the Father's chastisement being exercised on the erring child. The old nature may be energised by all the power of the evil one, but God lives, and the Spirit indwelling, though grieved and almost silenced, wars against the flesh, so that we may do the things that we would (Gal. v. 17). And God's love in government is no less than omnipotent; it will stop at nothing to accomplish its purpose. No circumstances need hinder growth, for God puts His

child in what His unerring wisdom sees to be the best place, and the only place: circumstances, no matter how adverse, are just channels whereby the abundance of supply may flow to meet the need; and though the daily trials be very heavy, they need not be hindrances, but helps; "not weights, but wings." If wilful, persistent disobedience is not the cause of long dearth of fruit, of want of spiritual growth, there remains only the one awful conclusion, that there is no Divine life, no indwelling Spirit, no possession of Christ there. The only way to get the matter settled is to go direct to God and deal honestly, definitely, searchingly, with Him. Meetings, ministers, men, may misguide; not God. Never did a truly contrite soul, humbled, self-abandoned, truly desiring to be right with God, go to Him, keeping back nothing; convicted of sin, yet confiding in the grace of God, and the atoning death of Christ, without being born of the Spirit, born of God. The presence of the new life and the working of the new nature will attest themselves in desires after God. And with this new life throbbing, pulsating, reaching out, overcoming, overflowing, in spite of self, in spite of circumstances, in spite of the marshalled hosts of evil, there will be life, will be a testimony to the world of the One who dwelleth in you, and who fills and satisfies the heart. What the world needs to-day is, to see—not so much the long-talked of "Revival" in the professing church among the worldly, frivolous professors who are known and recognized as such by all—but a mighty work of the Spirit of God among those in the inner circle, the outwardly consistent ones whose lack of power puzzles themselves, and continually disproves God's promises, not only to themselves and to the

watching world, but most of all to children of God, who, realizing the mighty force indwelling and energising their own souls, are constantly perplexed by the weakness, the unreceptiveness, the lack of real heart-fellowship, the absence of spiritual wisdom in those whom they believe to be indwelt by the same Spirit. But when the life of God is there, there will be no such doubt, but rivers, and fountains, and pools; springs in the dry place, and trees in the desert. God's Word will be gloriously fulfilled; the glory of Him who gave His life on the Cross, and lives on the throne of God will be secured, and Christians will recognise and rejoice, and the world will see, and know, and consider, and understand, that "the hand of the Lord hath done this" (Isa. xli. 20).

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AUTHORITY IN THE CHURCH.

TWO things are essential so as to secure the seal of Divine authority on the Church's actions.

1. The presence and authority of Jesus in the midst of His gathered saints (Matt. xviii. 18-20).

2. The present power of the Holy Spirit (see John xx. 21-23).

The risen Christ having breathed on His disciples added the words, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," thus investing them with power to remit and retain sins. Also in Acts xv. the whole Church at Jerusalem being assembled, and the authority of Christ represented by the apostles of the Lord and Saviour, under the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit; they were able to write, "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us."

Individuals who exercise authority in the Church, are to do so, not as though they were possessed of authority in themselves, but as men under authority to Christ, and as stewards of the mysteries of God, and as such required to be found faithful servants of the Lord Jesus, who will have to give account to Him, not being as lords over God's heritage, but as ensamples to the flock.

Holiness, truth, and the authority of the Lord Jesus, must be maintained at all sacrifice, and at all cost, not for the credit of a sect, but for the honour of God, and of Christ.

THOS. NEWBERRY.

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THE SERVANT'S PATH.

"TO me to live is Christ,
To die is gain;"
Blest pathway mine, through earthly scenes
Of joy and pain.

Ever my feet to place
Where HIS have trod;
Who lonely walked, forsaken stood—
Faithful to God.

I learn, midst daily cares,
My will to lose,
Christ, in my body magnified,
Ever to choose.

No weary path is mine,
No doubtful fight,
Bright for me beams the "Star of Day,"
Far spent's the night.

Daily "*to live is Christ,*"
Oh blessed life!

Whence are for me for ever fled
Fear, doubt, and strife.

Such be my life below,
And I content,
For those for whom my Saviour died,
Spent, and be spent.

The Bible Annotator.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE READINGS.

SYMBOLS OF GOD'S CARE OF HIS PEOPLE.

1. As a *Mother* comforteth (Isa. lxvi. 13).
2. As a *Father* pitieth (Psa. ciii. 13).
3. As a *Nurse* cherisheth (1 Thess. ii. 7).
4. As a *Shepherd* seeketh (Ezek. xxxiv. 12).
5. As a *Hen* gathereth (Matth. xxiii. 37).
6. As an *Eagle* fluttereth (Deut. xxxii. 11).
7. As a *Bridegroom* rejoiceth (Isa. lxii. 5).

GOD'S TRUTH IN ITS DIVINE ORDER.

In GENESIS, is the *Election* and *Call* of God's people.
 In EXODUS, their *Redemption* and *Separation*.
 In LEVITICUS, their *Acceptance* and *Worship*.
 In NUMBERS, their *Walk* and *Warfare*.
 In DEUTERONOMY, their *Government* and *Testimony*.
 In JOSHUA, their *Warfare* and *Inheritance*.
 In JUDGES, their *Declension* and *Defeat*.

DOCTRINAL GEMS FROM BIBLE MARGINS.

"Hold fast the form of sound words" (2 Tim. i. 13).

THE LORD'S CHILDREN.—Believers are never so called in the Word. "The children of God" (Gal. iii. 26), and "the people of God" (1 Pet. ii. 10), they are called, but never "the Lord's children." The word, in Heb. ii. 13, refers to God's children whom He has given to Christ. He calls them His "brethren" (John xx. 17; Heb. ii. 11).

IN JESUS.—This expression, sometimes used in letter-writing, when one signs himself "your brother in Jesus," is not according to the language of Scripture. Believers are addressed as "in Christ" (Rom. xvi. 7), "in Christ Jesus" (verse 3), "in the Lord" (verse 8), but never as "in Jesus." Jesus was the personal Name given to Him as the Saviour, the Only begotten, and as such He was alone. Apart from death and resurrection (see John xii. 24), there could be no association with Him. But that same Jesus, whom men crucified, God hath made "Lord and Christ" (Acts ii. 36), and His people are seen by God as already raised and seated together "in Christ Jesus" (Eph. ii. 6).

ELDER BROTHER.—There is no example or precedent in the Word for addressing the Lord Jesus or speaking of Him as "our Elder Brother." True, He calls His people "brethren," but they are taught of the Spirit to call Him "Lord Jesus" (1 Cor. xii. 3) Paul, who knew Him more intimately than

most, never uses the familiar term of "brother," but says "Christ Jesus my Lord" (Phil. iii. 8). In prayer and praise the language of reverence should never be wanting. Expressions such as "dear Jesus," "sweet Saviour," although pardonable in a young believer, are not to be regarded as suitable in addressing the Lord of heaven and earth.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

What is meant by the words of Isaiah l. 3, "He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death? If it refers to the Lord Jesus, in what sense did He make His grave with the wicked?" The Revised Bible gives, "they made His grave with the wicked," which may indicate that the crucifiers of the Son of God intended His grave to be amongst criminals, possibly that He should be buried with the robbers crucified with Him. But God had willed it otherwise. Joseph's new tomb became the place of His burial. There in the garden, by the loving hands of His own disciples, He was laid in honour to rest on a bed of spices until the appointed hour that He should be raised by the hand of the Father in triumph. Lowth's rendering of the verse is very expressive and beautiful. It is as follows:—

"And His grave was appointed with the wicked,
 But with the rich man was His tomb."

What do the words "that there should be time no longer" (Rev. x. 6) mean? Evidently the end of all things is not reached then. The margin of the Revised Version reads, "There shall be delay no longer," that is, that time should no longer intervene to delay the appointed judgment. That the hour of its execution had come.

Answers to Correspondents.

HELEN A.—The remarkable work of grace you refer to in Aberdeenshire, was in the years 1870-71. We have good reason to remember it, for it was the time of our spiritual birth. Some day (God willing) we hope to write the story of it for the help of generations following.

J. A., BIRKENHEAD.—We do not know any Assembly of saints gathered in the Lord's Name,

owning His Word as their guide, who would knowingly receive one into their fellowship who had been put away from another Assembly for sin. We know that such reports have been circulated, but when investigated they were found to be incorrect. If such a thing should be done, it would clearly be necessary to inquire into the matter and find out their reasons for so acting, before rejecting others commended by that Assembly or refusing to give fellowship to any who are in it.

A. M. K., CANADA.—Prayer-meetings are not usually of much account where the greater part of the time is used up with an address. A Scripture read, or a brief word spoken, may be used to quicken the spirit of prayer, but when saints come together to pray, pray they should. A hearty prayer-meeting is a token of a good spiritual condition.

A. S., GLASGOW.—An overseer in the church of God is not only to be personally such as the Word of God sets forth, but his household is to be a pattern of godly rule and care (see Tim. iii. 4). Insubject or unruly children, a neglected or ill-ruled house, would surely unfit one to stand before the saints as an ensample, or to “take care” of the Church of God. If this were better understood and brought into exercise, it would no doubt affect some who aspire to places in the “oversight.” Such matter of fact things are apt to be overlooked, yet they are the cause of much barrenness. God will not bless, where His Word is disregarded, nor will believers taught in the Word “own” an overseer who lacks the qualifications.

“INQUIRER.”—The marginal reading of Matthew iii. 11, R.V., “in water,” is undoubtedly the proper translation, only the Revisers were under certain restrictions, as were also the Translators of the authorised version in 1611. The American Revisers, who had a more free hand, put “baptise in water” in the text, and “with” in the margin. It goes without saying, that when one is baptised *in* water he is also baptised *with* it. But the practicers of sprinkling are sorely puzzled to make putting a few drops of water on a child's face accord with being “baptised in water,” so they make it to mean “sprinkled with water.” Instead of the authority of the Book being brought to regulate the practice, it is to be feared that in this case the long-continued practice—unscriptural as it is—was made the rule for the mistranslation of the Book.

Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION IX.—If in an Assembly there are six or eight brethren who are recognised as guiding and overseeing the saints, is it according to God for two or three of these to appear as representing the Assembly or the oversight, at meetings where matters of difficulty involving the fellowship of all are to be considered, virtually acting on their behalf, whereas as a matter of fact, neither the one nor the other have any knowledge of them being there

ANSWER A.—The words addressed to those doing shepherd or oversight work in the Assembly (see 1 Thes. v. 14, 1 Peter ii. 3) imply, that they are found acting together. Nothing is further from the mind of God, or more likely to bring in division among the saints, than *party-making* or independent action among those standing before them as shepherds of the flock.—R. E. S.

ANSWER B.—The Apostle's words to the elders at Ephesus, “Take heed unto yourselves” (Acts xx. 28), if heeded, would surely prevent any section or clique acting for or apart from their brethren. To appear as representing either the oversight or the Assembly without their knowledge, and to transact important business involving them spiritually or financially without their full fellowship and approval, is scarcely conceivable as possible, for any man who has the sense of common honesty, let alone Christianity, unless it be that he thinks being an overseer carries with it the right to act *for* the church rather than to guide it in its acts as the Word directs. From various things one hears and reads, it would appear that some entertain such ideas. The sooner they learn otherwise the better for all concerned. Oversight is lowly work, requiring much wisdom, grace, and patience, and usually with little to attract those who like the chief place. If all who attend “oversight meetings” were tested by the *Word* as to their fitness, and the saints asked if they knew them to be overseers by their *work*, very likely the numbers attending would be considerably reduced. And this would be no loss, possibly a great gain, as it is painfully evident that many who have no claim whatever to be regarded in this capacity are to be found at the front, when there is any chance of distinguishing themselves, or letting their voices be heard.—J.S.

ANSWER C.—Such questions indicate that uncalled and unqualified men have forced their way or been brought by others into a position which they have no spiritual fitness to fill. Possibly they have been accustomed to be on “committees” in Trades’ Unions, political clubs, and sectarian religious Associations, where a “quorum” or a “majority” may act and rule, and never having really seen the error of such Associations, or in heart been separated from them, they bring their principles with them into the things of God. This we are persuaded is the chief cause of such utterly unscriptural actions as are described by the questioner. The idea of bringing a number of such men, and others equally disqualified from lack of spiritual fitness together, to deal with Assembly and other matters throughout a county or a district, and to “arrange” things in general on behalf of Assemblies is an innovation, and the best way to render it inoperative is, to take no notice whatever of its enactments and proposals. The rule of each Assembly as surely as its guidance must be within itself, and no outside interference ought to be tolerated from any source whatever. If this were better understood, there would be fewer of the class indicated in the question in “oversight,” for the toilsome work of feeding and tending the flock, with all its burdens and cares, would have little attraction to the class who are most at home in discussing “matters of difficulty,” and letting their voices be heard at district meetings of overseeing brethren.—W. J. M.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—One of the most common causes of barrenness and frequently of division in an Assembly is, the divided condition of those who take the place of being its “guides.” If any lack the spiritual qualifications set forth by the Holy Ghost in 1 Tim. iii. 1-11; Titus i. 6-9; or do not the work as described in 1 Thess. v. 14, Heb. xiii. 17, they have no title whatever to be regarded as overseers, and it would be a kindness to them as well as a safeguard to the Assembly to tell them so. There were fewer aspirants to oversight, when it was understood to chiefly consist in feeding and leading the flock, a service which involves much waiting upon God, not only to have the truth, but the truth “in season,” that special message from God suited to the present need of the saints, whether spoken to them individually at the fireside, or from the platform when assembled together. In

days of difficulty when dangers are abroad, and it may be evils and weaknesses are within, the burden and the care of such service is immeasurably increased. Wakeful and prayerful nights, with every energy strained to shield and guide the flock, are the experiences of the true shepherd at such seasons. But alas! some who have never known or care to know such burdens, have elbowed their way into places of prominence in some Assemblies, and we assume it is regarding the actions of such that the question before us deals. No godly, Spirit-taught, and heaven-qualified man will ever act or help others to act in a party spirit, nor will he be found acting for or committing his fellow-saints to anything of which they have no knowledge, and concerning which he gives them no information. All such actions are of the nature of “clerisy,” lording over God’s heritage, and will sooner or later expose the real character of those who share them. Frequently such a condition of things grows up unchecked through the sheer indifference of God’s people, until it is all but irremediable. The truth of the Assembly’s responsibility needs to be constantly kept before the saints, ever reminding them that the work of guiding brethren is, to bring such matters before the Assembly having themselves first agreed about them, but in no case do they act on its behalf. The Assembly as a whole, and not a part of it, is the executive.

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Questions Requiring Answers.

We invite the help of those to whom the Lord has given understanding of the Scriptures and wisdom, in the answering of the following questions, bearing upon matters of real difficulty to honest and inquiring minds. Answers should be brief, concise, and clear, leading to the Word of God. We desire to have all sides of the truth, plainly stated, and duly balanced.

10.—If one who has given no satisfactory evidence of being called to “do the work of an evangelist,” leaves his employment and goes forth uncommended by the assembly where he is fellowship, should he be received and supported as a preacher without inquiry?

11.—Is it according to God, that the Assembly’s bounty should be in the hands of those who use it for the upholding of men who openly set at nought the truth which the assembly holds dear, while others who are known to be serving the Lord faithfully, are allowed to be in dire want?

REVIVAL.

III—MARKS AND FRUITS OF TRUE REVIVAL.

BY THE EDITOR.

WHERE God has wrought by His Spirit and His Word, quickening the "smouldering embers" of spiritual life and restoring the soul to communion with God, the results of such a reviving will be made manifest to all. Like all true operations of the Holy Ghost it begins within, but its marks and fruits are visible without. A closer walk with God, a deeper devotion to Christ, a firmer cleaving to the Word, a fuller measure of practical separation from the world, and a higher and holier manner of life, are among the marks of genuine revival. Where these are wanting, we may well question whether there has been any work of restoration or reviving at all. Where all vanishes in excitement and smoke, it is the devil's counterfeit, no matter what its professions and pretensions. It lacks the stamp of reality and of heaven, and must be regarded as a positive hindrance rather than a help in the kingdom of God. "Revivals," so called, like all else in our day, are of two sorts, the real and the false: that which is the deep and lasting work of God, and that which is the shallow and artificial work of man. The former will abide; its fruit will be manifest; whereas the latter, after making a flourish of trumpets proclaiming its own virtues, exalting those who were the "instruments" in bringing it into being, and probably leaving a heritage of empty profession behind it, will pass away as it came, leaving the spiritual thermometer lower than it found it. O the untold mischief, the deep dishonour to God, the havoc wrought on Gospel testimony, the ruin brought on misguided and deceived souls, by these

spasmodic efforts got up and carried through by the ingenuity and wisdom of men with which the name of "Revival" is falsely associated! They are part of Satan's devices to bring the work of God into disrepute, and to perpetuate an apostate Christianity and empty profession by bringing fresh relays of unregenerate professors into the "churches." Genuine revival is known by its fruits. It has been seen in individual saints and in communities; its chronicles are engraved and preserved to us in the pages of Holy Scriptures. To these imperishable records we are able to turn, and by their use we are enabled to discover and discern the marks and fruits of true revival.

In the history of Abraham there are several well-marked periods of revival recorded, in which the pilgrim, the man of faith, is seen in a recovered and restored condition, after seasons of declining in or departure from, the path of faith.

His departure from Haran was such a season. There, he had halted and settled for long years, evidently hindered by ties of nature, which he had failed to shake off when the call of God came to him at the time of his conversion (see Gen. xi. 30, xii. 1-5, with Acts vii. 2-4, Isa. li. 2). Like others since, he only obeyed in part, halting short of that to which God had called him. The time spent at Haran was evidently barren; no fresh communication from God reached him there. He was a saint, but not in the path of obedience; a saint in a false position and a bad condition, as all must be who, having heard, fail to obey the Word of the Lord, and allow themselves to be hindered by nature's claims from following fully in that path along which the "God of glory" leads.

The death of Terah seems to have been the means used to bring afresh to Abraham's soul the neglected Word of God, as his life had been the hindrance to his obedience thereto. The clog being removed, he starts anew, and at length reaches the land to which he was at first called, and upon the soil of which he should have at that time entered. Thus do we sometimes hear of a "second conversion" and the like, which in all such cases is, but the recovery and reviving of one who from some cause had stopped short of that to which the grace of God had earlier called him, and which others who had "obeyed the Gospel" in full measure at first had already reached. Such revivings, thank God, are still known, and their results are seen in a further separation from the world, and a fuller enjoyment of heavenly things. Further stages in Abram's history tell of other, if less important, restorations and revivings; notably that of his return from Egypt, where he had been living far beneath the standard of a man of faith, and acting out of all character with his confession. His return to the place of the altar and the tent (Chap. xii. 4), to the position of a worshipper and the path of a pilgrim, tell how fully he had been recovered and revived in soul, only to find that another separation from his kinsman, Lot, awaited him. Now that his conscience had received a fresh setting, he had higher conceptions of what the testimony of those who were "brethren" ought to be, and the uncomeliness of the strife of herdman was a burden upon his renewed mind, now freed from the manners of Egypt, and exercised as to what was worthy of God. And this is surely the chief want of our times. Low standards and ideas prevail. Need we wonder if

unworthy practices become the rule? A yet fuller measure of liberty and experience in the goodly land (chap. xiii. 14-18) was entered upon, after the separation of his worldly-minded kinsman, as if he had been the hindrance, as Terah was in an earlier day to his enjoyment of it, reminding us that if in the way of obedience to God we lose earthly friends or substance, the God whose love shed abroad in the heart constrains us to make the sacrifice, will more than compensate the loss. He will be no man's debtor. Thus are we encouraged to pursue the path, to trust in God and do the right.

In the household of Jacob at Shalem (Gen. xxxiii. 18, with xxxv. i) there was a revival, after a long period of declension and disaster, which came upon him by leaving the pilgrim path and settling down in too close proximity to the ungodly. The call to "Arise, go up to Bethel"—the House of God—came as a fresh reminder of his low estate, and of the unfulfilled vow made in the day when God met him as a lone wanderer many years before (chap. xxvii. 43). That call awoke Jacob's slumbering conscience, and we read he called to his household to "Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments." There was nothing said about these "strange gods" while living on the low plains of Succoth, but immediately a start is to be made to "go up to Bethel," there is felt to be a need for "putting away" strange gods, and of a general cleansing and changing of garments. Why? Because they were out of character with a dwelling at Bethel, the place of the presence of God. They might do in the land of the Hivites where God was unknown, but instinctively these must be

put away before they go to Bethel, where His house is. So "all the strange gods" are sought out and buried; then the record runs, "And they journeyed, and the *terror of God* was upon the cities that were round about them." Changed conditions surely, from the previous chapter of dishonourable testimony to God and disaster to Jacob's house! God had been honoured by the putting away of what was contrary to Him, and room made for a display of His power.

Here again are the marks and fruits of true revival. There is a great cleansing, a wonderful searching out and putting away of "strange gods." Principles, practices, and ways borrowed from the world, and long persisted in, have to go, when the soul is recovered, revived and brought to the presence of God. There is a judging of inward motives and a cleansing of outward ways, in the day of a genuine revival. We have heard of partnerships dissolved, compacts ended, unequal yokes severed, unholy alliances broken up, long-loved associations separated from, all as the result of a revival of spiritual life and a renewal of spiritual power. Indeed, nothing short of such a Spirit-wrought revival among the people of God, will bring about the practical holiness enjoined in the Word and so much needed in this day. And nothing short of such a work will truly separate the saints of God from unclean and unscriptural associations, in which so many of them are ensnared and practically buried. For this have we learned, that to recover, revive, and renew a declining or down-fallen believer, and set him up in spiritual freshness, right with God in soul condition, and right in position before men, is the work of the Spirit and the Word of God, as surely as is the conversion of a sinner.

SYMBOLS OF THE CHURCH.

BY DR. J. NORMAN CASE, OF CHINA.
II.—THE BODY.

THE spiritual union of Christ and His people is here set forth by this figure, as it could not be by any other, or by pages of statement or explanation. It tells of union in *life* and *nature*. Let us try and take it in. The living, quivering organism, the human body, is used by God to teach us the relation in redemption established between Christ and His saints, and among the saints themselves. Every true believer in Christ, becomes at the time of his heavenly birth a member of a spiritual body, of which Christ is the living Head! When we read: "Know ye not that your bodies are members of Christ" (1 Cor. vi. 15)? we must understand the question as a reference to Christ mystical. Listen again to the profound and convincing reasoning of the inspired Apostle: "For as the body (*i.e.*, the natural body) is one and hath many members . . . SO ALSO IS CHRIST" (1 Cor. xii. 12).

The Church, though composed of a vast multitude of saved sinners, forms one body, and His personal title is here given to the whole, with Christ the Head, literally—"the CHRIST." They possess the same life, bear the same name, rejoice in a common hope, and shall share the same glory. In meditating on this figure, we briefly notice a few points of analogy between the head and body, and between Christ and the Church.

1. *All nourishment comes through the Head.*—This is the normal way in the natural body, and the *only* way in the spiritual. As it is written, "The Head from which all the body, by joints and hands

having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God" (Col. ii. 19). There is no food for the soul apart from Christ. Prayer, study, work, Christian intercourse all fail, unless in them we are receiving from the Head.

In one sense, all the children of God are always "babes," and must seek for and feed on the "sincere milk of the Word," that they may grow thereby. For in feeding on the milk of the Word they feed on the living Christ, and taste that *the Lord is gracious* (1 Peter ii. 1-3). Yes; Christ alone is the soul's true aliment! We can only grow, as we are "holding the Head" and receiving from Him.

2. *Wisdom and knowledge dwell in Christ as the Head of His Body the Church.*—Just as the head is the seat of all knowledge, and perception in the human body, so the Church's truest wisdom is to learn from and follow Christ. By his own wisdom, man has never come to know God. His highest wisdom, in the spiritual realm, is only folly. On the one hand the Cross of Christ shews us the folly and sin of man, while on the other, it displays the wisdom, grace and power of God. Those who know the power of the Cross, should certainly have learned the uselessness and folly of trusting in the wisdom of the creature. Yet history proves, that again and again the Church has been shorn of power, through relying on the wisdom of this age. The one remedy is, for the Church to more and more discover and utilise the treasures of grace, wisdom, knowledge and power, laid up for her in the glorified Head (Col. ii. 8-9).

3. In a healthy body *every voluntary action originates with the head.*—The head might say to all the members: "Nothing good or useful can you do without me!"

So Christ says to his members. In the natural body it is only in disease that a member acts on its own account or refuses to obey the head. In its application to Christ and His people such a fact is very significant. When the members of Christ are away in heart from Him, out of communion with Him, out from under the control of the Head, they are acting in the strength and wisdom of the flesh.

4. In the Word of God, the main point in this connection insisted on is, that the body as a whole and every member thereof should be *under the control of the Head*. No rule or authority can be permitted to come in between the Head and even the least member of the body. We cannot but mourn over the failure in this respect in this day of profession. It is the responsibility of each believer to see to it that He is where the authority of the Head is practically owned; and being there, he should endeavour to be individually right with Christ, and with every member of His body.

It may be well to notice that in three out of the four epistles where this symbol is employed, ministry in the Christian Assembly is the special matter dwelt on in that connection; and in the other epistle it is also referred to. This is in character. For in no sphere has the energy of the flesh been so displayed, as in the saints ministering the Word to each other. All God-given and truly helpful ministry, comes from those having understanding of the great truth which lies beneath this figure; and one cannot do a more useful or Christ-honouring service than to find out one's proper place and function in the body, and then to seek ever to act under the guidance of the Head.

5. With reverence let it be said that, in this relationship, the Body is as necessary to the Head as is the Head to the Body. (a) It is necessary for carrying out the designs and purposes of the Head. In the natural world how useless would a head be without a living, healthy body. For the doing of His work in the world, Christ needs His members. He is the Worker, but He works not directly, but through His people. The Evangelist Luke sums up his Gospel as giving an account of "all that Jesus BEGAN both to do and to teach." The order is significant: the *doing* comes before the *teaching*. So should it be with us. But the record of His earthly ministry is only what Jesus *began* to do and teach. Since Christ ascended on high, He has continued working, but it has been through the Church; through the members of His body, in all lands, and in all the centuries. Through them He is gathering into the flock the "other sheep" for which He bled; He is carrying on a world-wide gospel testimony; and developing the divine life in every member. And for the accomplishment of these ends He has chosen to make His people the means.

Every saved sinner has his own place in the body according to the sovereign grace and wisdom of God (1 Cor. xii. 18). In the spiritual, as in the natural body, there are not only the seen and evidently useful members, there are also "joints" and bands." These are necessary for the usefulness as well as for the completeness of the body. Every "joint" has its place and plays its part in the building up of the body (see Rom. xi. 3-8; 1 Cor. xii. 14; Eph. iv. 1-16). (b) Every member of the body, even the least useful or honourable, is necessary for its completeness. As in the natural so in the

spiritual: "The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again, the head to the feet, I have no need of thee." Among other things, what an argument might be based on this for the eternal security of all who are in Christ! One can scarcely conceive of a person once being a member of this body and yet finally lost. And it may well comfort and cheer any soul who is fearful lest after all, a true child may fall away and perish. The only point is, that each one makes sure that he has a *God-given assurance* that he is in Christ. For we may rest satisfied that in spite of the world, the flesh, and the devil, no true member of Christ's body will be missing in that day. In the epistle to the Colossians Christ is shown to be the *pleroma* of the body. As the Head, he fills up and completes it (Ch. ii. 9, 10). In the epistle to the Ephesians the Church is seen to be the *pleroma* of Christ as Head of the body. It becomes the fulness—*pleroma*—of Him that filleth all in all (Eph. i. 22, 23). May the truth beneath these words be taught us by Him who alone can do it, the Holy Spirit!

The headship of Christ over the church as the body should not be confounded with other headships possessed by Him. He is the *Head of the Church as the husband is the head of the wife* (Eph. v. 23). He is also Head of *every man* (1 Cor. xii. 3). Again, He is the Head of *all principality and power* (Col. ii. 10). In a coming age He shall be the recognised *Head of the Gentile nations* (Psalms xviii. 43). And finally, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, *all things in the heavens and in the earth* shall be "headed up" in Christ (Eph. i. 10). And the Church as the body shall be associated with Him, when He receives

these glories. But none of these headships go so deep as the blessed one we have briefly considered. May we more and more understand what it means to be *members of Christ!*

“Lord Jesus! are we one with Thee?
Oh, height, oh, depth of love!
Once slain for us upon the tree,
We're one with Thee above.

Soon, soon shall come that glorious day,
When, seated on Thy Throne,
Thou shalt to wondering worlds display
That Thou with us art one.”



THE CHURCHES OF THE SAINTS.

PART VII. BY ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

IT may be well, at this point, to quote the words of a recent writer on this subject, as illustrating the utter confusion of mind that prevails with many as to what reception and rejection mean. He writes as follows:—“When the position assumed is such as to necessitate, for the sake of consistency, the rejection, as unfit for fellowship, of true, devoted, spiritually-minded, experienced Christian persons, whose character and doctrine will bear the strictest investigation, it is surely time to set about a thorough revision of the various steps which led to so grievous a result.”

But no position has ever been assumed by those whom this writer is opposing which necessitates any such action as he describes. Wherever a confederation of meetings has been formed, and persons are required to acknowledge the confederation as the only representation of the Church of God on earth before they can be received, there it may be truly said that godly people are rejected as unfit for fellowship. Such a position, as has already been shewn, is as

entirely sectarian as that of any of the religious systems which unblushingly adopt human titles, and submit themselves to human forms of rule. It is not to these, however, that the above writer is referring; but to those who belong to no such confederation, and who seek to impose no such unscriptural test as to fitness for fellowship.

The real difficulty is not as to what constitutes fitness for fellowship, or what would be a valid ground for rejection. There is little difference of judgment as to these points. But the difference is manifested as soon as the question is raised as to what is meant by reception. It is commonly assumed that reception means *suffering a person to break bread*. And what is the outcome of this view of the matter? That the so-called reception is unaccompanied by any exercise of heart or conscience towards God or the individual supposed to be received. That it is divorced from all godly care for the honour of the Lord Jesus and for the well-being of the one who is thus casually allowed a place.

I am well aware that in many assemblies where this mistaken notion prevails as to what constitutes reception, there is much real care exercised about bringing certain people into the assembly, and in shepherding them after they are brought in. But this care is exercised as to those who are truly received, and not as to those who were simply allowed to break bread on one or two occasions. We only need to consider what actually takes place in many such assemblies, to see plainly the hopeless inconsistency of their position as to this matter. A believer from a neighbouring church or chapel has been invited to be present at a Bible-reading or at a meeting for the ministry of the Word. He greatly

enjoys the meeting and comes again. His heart and conscience become exercised through what he has heard, and he seeks for further help from the Scriptures; and this leads to his coming on a Lord's Day morning, and witnessing the Breaking of Bread and the worship of the assembly. At last, having searched the Scriptures diligently, and being fully satisfied that what he has been learning is what those Scriptures teach, he expresses his desire to be baptised, and to join himself to the disciples whose obedience he would fain imitate. Thereupon he is visited by some of the guides of the assembly, and probably asked to see them together at their weekly meeting; and, if they are all satisfied concerning him, his name is mentioned to the assembly as one desiring to share in their fellowship, and a statement is made giving the grounds on which the overseers feel warranted in commending him to the saints. If no objection is raised, he is received to be one of themselves; and the following Lord's Day, as one result of his reception, he takes his place with them at the Lord's Table. But, in startling contrast with all this, it may be that on the very day when this brother breaks bread for the first time another individual is brought in. Someone belonging to the assembly has brought him, and whispers to one of the older brethren, "I have brought a friend of mine with me who would like to break bread with us this morning. He is a believer, and is a member of the Congregational Church in John Street." And, upon this introduction, the individual in question is allowed to break bread. And this is supposed to be reception; and it is for this that so much contention is raised.

But let us follow the matter a little

further. After a few weeks the believer first referred to is absent from the Lord's Day morning meeting, and is not seen at any other meeting during the day. The earliest possible opportunity is taken to visit him and ascertain the reason of his absence. If he is ill, loving care and sympathy are shewn to him. If he has been in any measure turned aside by the arguments or entreaties of those he was formerly associated with, godly care is shewn in seeking to further instruct and establish him in the Word and will of God. But what about the other individual? He has never been near again, and no one has ever asked why. Or, if a question has been raised about him, the friend who brought him says, "Oh, he thought he would like to see what our meeting was like; but he had no thought of leaving his own chapel." And there the matter ended. Possibly, some months later, it becomes known that the person in question has been carried away with false doctrine, or has fallen into moral sin, but no one deems it necessary to take any action regarding him. Now what does all this prove? Simply, that while the two lines of action referred to are both called by the name of reception, there is no real likeness between them. In the first case the person was indeed received, and this reception carried with it the most important consequences. In the second there was no reception at all, and the simple permission to break bread had not moved anyone's conscience to a corresponding care for the soul of the person to whom it was accorded.

Someone will perhaps say that this is an extreme case. Even so, it faithfully illustrates the confusion involved in calling both these ways of acting by the term reception. But in reality there is nothing

extreme about it. Those who take pains to maintain an unscriptural course are very fond of imagining a kind of case that seldom or never occurs in actual experience. A simple, godly, humble soul, who does not see any further than the breaking of bread, says, "I desire to remember the Lord with you this morning." And where, we are asked, is there any warrant in Scripture for refusing such an one? We would answer that a simple, godly, humble soul will never be stumbled if it is graciously pointed out to him that God's order is, first, reception by the assembly, and afterwards the breaking of bread and all the other privileges and responsibilities of the fellowship. Moreover, a very little consideration will show that there is something altogether misleading in what is said concerning the person who is thus asking to be allowed to remember the Lord's death. Has he been content for years past to share in an ordinance that is only administered once a month, or once in six months? And has he no thought but to go back to the same thing in future? What then has made the difference to-day? Is it simply that he happens to be on a visit to some friends or relations who come to the meeting, or that he had a wish to see what the meeting was like, and whether it was anything better than what he was accustomed to? Even should his thoughts reach far beyond this, he will only be helped and not hindered by being kindly shewn what God's order is, and encouraged to prove this from the Word of God, and then act in accordance with it.

SATAN'S SKILL.—Satan, the cunning tempter, knows how to suit his temptations to meet every diversity of temper, of character, of understanding, apprehension, custom or habit. And we may be sure that his skill does not diminish.—*R. C. Chapman.*

LECTURES ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

BY WILLIAM LINCOLN, OF BERESFORD, LONDON.

CHAPTER I. VERSES 16-18.

THE next words are, "which is in the bosom of the Father." The other expression speaks of the supreme height in which He ever was, but this speaks of the perfect intimacy with the Father which He ever had; the two together are very complete. But about that word "is." In chapter iii. 13, we read, "No one hath ascended up to heaven but He that came down from heaven"—that is, He must come down before He could go up; but notice the last clause particularly, "even the Son of Man which is in heaven." Yet at that very moment He was talking to Nicodemus; that makes it rather difficult to understand. Sitting in that chamber, conversing with Nicodemus, He Himself asserted that He was in heaven. The word used in the original here for "is" is rather a special word, and exception has been taken to it, so that some have thought that it might be rendered "was." But let us take two other places in Scripture where the very same expression occurs, and when we can all see that it means *is*—Romans ix. 5, "Who *is* over all, God blessed for ever." Then again, in 2 Cor. xi. 31., "Which *is* blessed for evermore." In neither could we use the word "was." To these, whatever difficulties of interpretation there may be, we must keep to the *ipsissima verba* of Scripture; they are God's own words. At the time this was written, He "*is* in the bosom of the Father;" and when Christ was speaking to Nicodemus, "the Son of Man which *is* in heaven." I remember hearing one say, in speaking, that Christ left the bosom of the Father. I do not say that he was wrong, but I would not like

to say he was right. I feel that these are such very high attitudes of truth that all I would do is to keep close to the very words of Scripture, and not attempt anything more, for they are beyond me. This I know, that in John xvi. 27-28, I read—"Ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth (or out) from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." Now do you observe a change in the word when talking about the world from what He uses when speaking of the Father? Of the Father He says, "I came out from Him"; but, "I leave the world," not "I *leave* the Father. There was a time He knew, glanced at in the next stage of His descent, when He became sin for us, who knew no sin, and God hid His face from Him. But upon the Cross it was rather God who left Christ, than Christ leaving the Father; "My God, my God, why hast *Thou* forsaken Me?" But there, again, is something full of mystery. Then, enough for me to believe that He was in heaven when talking with Nicodemus, and that His native home, so to speak, is the bosom of the Father. I believe from John xvi., that He came out from God; and I believe, thirdly, that there was a time when He got down so low that He shrieked out, "My God, my God, why hast *Thou* forsaken Me?" But anything like an explanation of the profound mysteries of this truth I cannot give. God alone can comprehend God. I believe and I adore, just what is written, and add not a word. "He hath told Him out." He has fully revealed God. There is not a thought of God, nor a purpose of God, nor aught of God, that the embosomed One has not brought down to us. And the next verses

tell us of the Cross; and there we see Him, who has ever been in the bosom of the Father, made the Lamb of God, taking away the sin of the world, the mystery of grace, the mystery of divine love. Ah! the salvation of your soul was a costly affair to God. To save you from everlasting ruin, and bring you to everlasting bliss, cost God more than you can ever calculate.

QUALIFYING FOR THE MINISTRY.

DURING the Revival of 1859-60, a young farmer was much used of God in winning souls to the Saviour. So far as the world's education went, he had only a very little; his gifts were of a very simple order, no eloquence or power of attraction was in his preaching. Yet the people hung upon his words; he got large congregations wherever he went, and hundreds were converted through his instrumentality. Some of the world's wise ones advised him to "perfect" himself, and "qualify" for the ministry by a college training, and the young man, anxious to reach forth to a larger sphere, took the advice given, and in a few years appeared with his "degree." No doubt he could preach with greater accuracy of language; his sermons were more polished, and he got the learned and wealthy to listen to his words. But the *power* of his early ministry was gone; there were no convicted sinners and no conversions. His "qualifying" after the world's fashion spoiled him for God, and shelved him as a vessel meant for the Master's use. The best qualification for a soul-winner is a heart for Christ. If God is pleased to use you in His service, be humble, and remain where you are, lest you "qualify" to such an extent that He will have no further use for you.

The Bible Annotator.

TEXTS MISINTERPRETED.

"By Grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Eph. ii. 8). The gift of God here is not "faith," but salvation. To read it as though faith were the gift, would be to render irrelevant the words of verse 9, and to destroy the meaning of the entire context.

"In that day there shall be a fountain opened... for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. xiii. 1). Not of blood—as much of our hymnology revoltingly describes, with sinners "plunging" themselves in it—but of water, "The water of the Word" (Eph. v. 26), the Word bringing the awakened sons of Israel in that day into contact with the great sin-offering once by them rejected in unbelief. The passage primarily refers to Israel in a future day. In principle it is the same with the sinner. What brings him into contact with the sacrifice of Calvary, and gives him personal cleansing from sin by its efficacy? It is "The Word of the truth of the Gospel" (Col. i. 5). "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the Word" (Eph. v. 26 R.V.). "Already ye are clean because of the Word which I have spoken unto you" (John xv. 3, R.V.).

The Young Believer's Question Box.

GEORGE B. asks—"What is the stumbling-block referred to in Rom. xiv. 13? Is it something forbidden?—Yes, and more. Things lawful might by inconsiderate use, be a stumbling-block to others. What one claims as his "liberty," has often emboldened another to indulge and "fall." Hence the need not only of asking: "Is it lawful; can it be done before God?" but "What will its effects be upon my brother, especially one weak in the faith?"

A. L. H., DUMFRIESSHIRE.—"What is the meaning of 'As ye see the day approaching' (Heb. x. 25)? Is it the coming of the Lord?"—Rather that which will follow the personal return of the Lord Jesus, the apostasy or "falling away" referred to in 2 Thess. ii. 3, the fully-developed fruit of man's will and of the rejection of the Lordship of Christ, of which the beginnings were already manifest when the apostle wrote, and more so now. There will be

no signs of the Lord's coming to the air for His saints, but of His return to the earth with them in judgment, there are. The apostasy will precede the "day of the Lord" (2 Pet. iii. 10), which, when it arrives, will find men in open rebellion against God. Believers "see the day drawing nigh" by the ever-increasing lawlessness of men. They are to watch lest the same spirit be found in themselves, the very beginnings of which are manifest in "forsaking" the assembling of themselves with fellow-saints, and thus giving way to their own self-will, which, if unjudged and unrestrained, will lead them further astray.

Answers to Correspondents.

ANNIE C.—The author of the hymn "Only the sinner finds the Saviour," was the late John Dickie. We believe it was written by him while in Kilmarnock working as a missionary among the poor and neglected. It has a clear Gospel ring, and has been blessed to many. We are glad it has been such a means of comfort to you.

A. M., AYRSHIRE.—If two brethren give out hymns, or rise to give thanks or pray simultaneously, one at least is not in the guiding of the Spirit; neither may be. Such an occurrence ought to bring those immediately concerned into deep exercise before God, and if the assembly be in a healthy condition, and accustomed to know what the guidance of the Spirit really is in its worship, it will not fail to be humbled by the unseemly event. We have seldom known such a thing to happen where believers taught of God come together to wait upon Him, and to prove in blessed experience the leading of the Spirit, using whomsoever He will to express the assembly's prayer, praise or thanksgiving. It most frequently happens where men are in haste to let their voices be heard, without much exercise or care whether their utterances are in the Spirit's leading and suited to the occasion or not, or where someone has pre-arranged to "do something" and seizes the first opportunity to thrust in his hymn or prayer. True, spiritual worship, in the guidance of the Spirit, is very rare, and can only exist where there is real dependence on and subjection to God, which is the opposite of every man doing that which is right in his own eyes.

A.D.—If one has become guilty of immoral conduct, of such a character as necessitates excommunication by the assembly, it does not relieve them of this solemn responsibility when they become acquainted with the facts, if the guilty individual has for some time absented himself from the meetings. In the absence of the assembly's discipline in putting away, he might one day appear and claim his place as still in fellowship, or private intercourse might be maintained between him and others, under the impression that his position is different to one put away. The name of the one who "leaves," in order to avoid excommunication, should be mentioned to the assembly and he henceforth regarded as one no longer "within."

R.J., CANADA.—There is nothing so far as we know in the Word of God to warrant the oft-repeated statement that "Christ bore the sins of all men, and that sinners will not be condemned for their sins but for their unbelief." "Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. v. 6); "He died for all" (2 Cor. iv. 15), are the words of Scripture, and on the ground of that death God proclaims forgiveness of sins to all (Acts xiii. 38). But where sinbearing and justification are spoken of, the words of the Holy Ghost are different. "Who His own self bare our sins" (1 Pet. ii. 24), "Having forgiven you all trespasses" (Col. ii. 14), are words true only of believers. To tell sinners they will not be judged for their sins, is surely going straight in the face of Rev. xx. 12, where those whose names are not found written in the book of life are to be judged "according to their works." It is never safe to depart from Scriptural language, in speaking of the things of God.



Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION X.—If one who has given no satisfactory evidence of being called to "do the work of an evangelist," leaves his employment and goes forth uncommended by the assembly where he is in fellowship, should he be received and supported as a preacher without inquiry?

ANSWER A.—It has been said that an evangelist's threefold qualification is "gift, grace, and fruit." If these are clearly marked, his fellow-believers—providing that other things such as bodily strength,

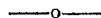
family affairs, and a good testimony among them that are without—correspond, will not be likely to be slow to commend him to the work to which he is called. One going forth without such credentials or commendations, needs to be treated with care. Experience has taught some of us, that unsent men do more to hurt and hinder the work of the Gospel than its worst opponents.—J. S.

ANSWER B.—There are brethren wholly engaged in evangelistic work who had no thought of giving up their daily employment when they began to preach the Gospel, but God so used them and opened doors for them, in places where it was impossible for them to carry on business or work at their trade, and at the same time preach the Gospel, that they felt constrained to give their whole time and strength to "do the work of an evangelist." They were evangelists before; their ceasing to be employed in daily toil did not *make* them evangelists (although the name is usually monopolised by such); and if in the will of God one should at any time go back to his daily work—as Paul did when he made tents at Corinth (Acts xviii. 3), after preaching for years—he would not cease to be an evangelist according to Eph. iv. 11. If there is no satisfactory evidence of one having the gift of Christ, with moral and spiritual fitness to use it, coupled with testimony from those among whom he has lived and served, it would assuredly be wrong to accredit such an one, or for assemblies to receive and support him.—W. J. M.

ANSWER C.—Acts xiii. 1-4 with 1 Cor. xvi. 10, Phil. ii. 22-23, clearly show, that one who is unknown to the saints among whom he goes, should have the commendation either of the church, or of some well-known servant of Christ whose testimony will give confidence in receiving him as a preacher where he is not personally known. It is a well known fact that some, who have no great desire to work for daily bread for themselves and their families, have ventured out in "the preaching business," only to dishonour the Lord's Name and leave a bad testimony behind them which others have to suffer for. If a preacher comes, or wants to come to a place where he is unknown, it would surely be wise to make inquiry, in places where he has been before, as to his antecedents, fitness, etc., or to the assembly of which he forms a part, and where his home is (Acts xxi. 8).—R. S.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—There are many well-known and godly evangelists, giving all their time and energies to the blessed work of proclaiming the Gospel, especially in "regions beyond" the reach of those who have business responsibilities, men on whose work the Divine blessing rests, and whom saints individually and assemblies esteem it an honour and a privilege to "help on their way" and have fellowship with in their arduous and self-denying labours. It is sometimes forgotten, that those who are called to "do the work of an evangelist," and who seek to hold themselves at the Lord's call, as to where and for how long they serve, are practically cut off from the comforts of home, and often from the fellowship of saints, for long periods—while they have frequently to face the foe single-handed, in places where utter indifference reigns, or false religion holds sway. It is not given to all to fill such high places in the field; very few indeed have spiritual or bodily strength to sustain such a service, or to use in a way worthy of God their whole time and energies in spreading the Gospel, and it would be wrong for those who have not, to attempt it. When God calls one to a special service, he furnishes and fits him for it, and sustains him in it. Nor can it be said that every man who *is* able to preach the Gospel is an evangelist, or could use his *whole* time well and wisely in the Lord's business of spreading the Gospel and winning souls. Many who at first gave their evenings to this service and wrought with their hands during the day, were, as their gift increased and grace was given "according to the measure" (Eph. iv. 7) of that gift, led out to give their whole time and strength to the work, especially in reaching places where the Gospel is little known, and in founding assemblies of believers where non exist. The faith of such may oft be tried, but where there is a Divine call to the work, God will sustain His servants and provide for them (even should He command the ravens to feed them 1 Kings xvii. 4), as long as He requires them in that particular service. They may at times be called upon to work with their hands for the supply of their own and others' need (see Acts xviii. 3; xx. 34; 1 Thess. ii. 9), or because the character of the service which for the time is appointed to them, can be better sustained in this way than otherwise. It is no "breach of faith" on God's part, no break down on their's; simply the Lord's appointment in

which His servant gladly concurs. Were these simple, Scriptural principles regarded and remembered, there would be no difficulty. There would be no sharp-drawn line between the "official" evangelist, whose chief mark is that he has "gone out to preach," and puts the word "evangelist" on his bills, while the man, who works all day and preaches every night, with power and blessing too, is never spoken of as an "evangelist" at all, although he may be in a higher degree than the other. The fact is, the word has become, like some others, "churchified," and needs to be shaken free from the clerical meaning it has acquired. Then we believe the solution of the difficulty raised in the question would be simple. Wherever God's people see "gift, grace and fruit," with a heart for the Gospel and a life and testimony becoming it, there they see an evangelist, whether working with his hands, or spending all the day, and every day, in spreading the Gospel of Christ. They will own him, give full scope for the exercise of his ministry while he is with them, and if God call him further afield, they will joyfully commend him, follow him thither with their prayers, and support him with their substance.



Questions Requiring Answers.

We invite the help of those to whom the Lord has given understanding of the Scriptures and wisdom, in the answering of the following questions, bearing upon matters of real difficulty to honest and inquiring minds. Answers should be brief, concise and clear, leading to the Word of God. We desire to have all sides of the truth, plainly stated, and duly balanced.

11.—Is it according to God, that the Assembly's bounty should be in the hands of those who use it for the upholding of men who openly set at nought the truth which the assembly holds dear, while others who are known to be serving the Lord faithfully, are allowed to be in dire want?

12.—Is any believer at liberty to give a letter of commendation to another, without seeking or receiving the fellowship of his brethren? It is often done, and is a common source of trouble.

13.—Is one who absents himself for months from the Assembly, and after being often visited, refuses to give any reason for his absence, at liberty to return whenever he thinks fit without anything being said regarding him to the saints. If not, what is the proper course to take with such a person?

HOW ARE WE GOING?

BY FRANKLIN FERGUSON, NEW ZEALAND.

THERE can be no such thing as a Christian being stationary. We are moving. Either there will be a forward movement in Divine things or there must be declension from God. We do well to study so gravely important a question as our motion, seeing how, on the one hand, so serious a loss is incurred by the backslider; and, on the other hand, such great gain accrues to the progressive child of God. The annual or bi-annual stocktaking is of vital importance to the tradesman, when an investigation is carefully made of how he stands financially; and, should times be hard, stocktaking day passes anxiously. None save fools, or madmen courting bankruptcy, would venture carrying on business without periodically putting up shutters and calling a halt to see how it fares with them. Can we regard it of less importance that we should now and again come to a standstill, facing the enquiry, "How am I getting on?" There can be nothing more necessary for the true believer than to shut his door, and investigate the business of his soul with God. How shall the mariner know that his vessel, owing to adverse winds and currents, is now far out of her course unless he takes his bearings and consults his chart? It is of great moment that he speedily solve the problem "Where am I?" for a fine ship and valuable freight has been entrusted to his care. Neglect is criminal. That precious life, entrusted to us of God, may be wrecked on some submerged rock or shoal, because we did not trouble to learn our whereabouts. "To the law and to the testimony" became the

shibboleth (test word) of the faithful in Israel in the days when the nation's propensity was "backward and not forward." Their example of repeatedly referring to the Word is recorded for an incentive to spur us on in a like holy practice; for then we shall keep the course, and then shall we make fair headway.

At this point we think someone may exclaim "What you tell us is all very well, and we cannot deny that our conscience condemns our condition; but you know an advancing Christian life is very hard to maintain, and few there be that succeed." We know it. From the records of the past, right back to the patriarchal days, we gather there were comparatively few who forged ahead. Still every dispensation had its roll of heroic men bent on accomplishing the will of God in the face of opposing forces; and who can read the records of their lives without being inspired to nobler aims? They were a credit to their day and generation; their end was peace; their works follow them; their reward is sure. To be continually "facing fearful odds" has apparently fallen to the lot of some men, but by the grace of God these obstacles only became incentives to renewed exertion, and stepping-stones to blessing. Continuous resistance strengthens bone and muscle (as in natural law, so is spiritual), the fibre of our spiritual frame is invigorated by withstanding the world, flesh and Devil.

Remember, nothing that is worth having can be achieved without determination. The formation of godly habits in life, and these persisted in from day to day, is the sole secret of growth or progression. There is no "royal road" to anything. No; it is a patient continuance in the will of God that crowns life with success.

REVIVAL.

IV.—SOME OLD TIME REVIVALS.

WE have said that revival begins with the individual and in the heart. But it does not end there. Where the individual believer has known and experienced the blessing of being restored to God and renewed in spiritual strength, he longs and yearns to see his fellow-believers sharing the same blessing. Binding them upon his heart he carries them before the throne, while his heart breathes the prayer: "Wilt Thou not revive *us* again, that *Thy people* may rejoice in Thee" (Psa. lxxxv. 6). The truly revived and healthy believer will never rest satisfied until he sees a revival of spiritual life and of Divine power among God's people, first, in that circle in which he moves, extending and embracing within its scope the whole family of God. Such has been the way of the Lord in ages past, and such is His way now. He reaches the individual first, and through him the community of His people. The revived soul becomes the channel of blessing of others, and the instrument used in leading back God's people to the paths of holiness and of truth, from which they had departed, and which departure was the cause of the blight and the barrenness that followed. Evade or explain it away as we may, the fact remains, that no individual or company of God's people was ever found in a spiritually withered or barren condition save by departure from the living God, and by declining from the way of obedience to His Word. Outward orthodoxy may remain in the individual or the assembly: the form of worship, of prayer, of testimony, may be continued, but the sap and substance have been wanting, not because God had

decreed it, or failed to fulfil His promise, but because the connection had been disturbed through which the supplies from heaven are wont to come, or because the conditions under which they are promised were not fulfilled by God's people. Hence, a genuine revival includes a return to God and to His ways, with a cleansing from, and putting away, of all that is contrary to His character, His Name, and His revealed will. Such has been the character of all "Revivals" recorded in the inspired Word—recorded there, too, for our instruction—to which we shall now briefly turn to seek help in discerning in our own day the hand of the Lord when He puts it forth for the recovery of His people and for the revival of His work and ways, in these last days in which our lot is cast—days characterised by imitation and counterfeit of everything wrought by God, which bear no resemblance to the genuine work of the Spirit.

The days of the Judges, succeeding the palmy days of Joshua and the victories of faith in Canaan, have been rightly spoken of as the "dark ages" in Israel's history as a nation. This they truly were. Instead of driving out the enemies of God as they had been commanded (Deut. vii. 2), the people of God made leagues with them, put them under tribute, and permitted them to dwell among them, intermarrying with them, serving their gods, and finally were overcome by them (see Judges i. 21, 28, 30). This is the key to the condition of things described in the early chapters of the book, with Bochim (weeping) (iii. 5) as its centre. Here, the first of what may be termed Old Testament revivals occurs. Othniel, Ehud, Shagmar, Barak, Deborah, Gideon, Samson, Jephthah were raised up. "The Spirit of the Lord came upon them"

(see iii. 10; vi. 34; xiii. 25; xiv. 19), and by them gave deliverance to His people. There was recovery and revival, with a return to God's ways for a season, as the result of these fresh operations of the Spirit, God using most unlikely instruments, and unheard-of means to effect His purposes, for God is Sovereign, and He works—especially when things are out of course—by men and methods of His own choosing. Such revivings are known in our own time, which is a day of feebleness, chiefly because of the union of the Church with the world. They are the work of the Spirit, using individual servants of Christ, some of them in strange associations, to accomplish His purposes and bring blessing to His people. It is worthy of notice, that in these revivals in the days of the Judges, while Israel may have been blessed, and deliverance wrought, they do not seem to have regained their early power for victory, or to have wholly severed themselves from the associations and unholy alliances formed in earlier times; so they declined again.

In the times of Samuel and the prophets, when the priesthood had failed and judgment had fallen on the house of Eli, God brought back His people to Himself again and again, by means of the prophet's message, and prayers. This was characteristic of Samuel's ministry throughout. "Samuel among them that call upon His Name" (Psalm xcix. 6) is the honourable distinction made of this dear man's name by the Holy Ghost, who in the midst of a backsliding people found his solace in prayer, and his strength in God. Restorations, revivals, and victories came to Israel by means of his prayers, and the same effectual way of reaching saints in a low spiritual condition

is open still, to all who know what it is to "draw near to God."

When the sons of Samuel failed, the people demanded a king to be like the nations, and Saul was given them. Individuals, like Jonathan, "wrought with God" under strange conditions while yet in Saul's house and under his rule, but the flower of Israel, and those with whom God was working, were in the case of Adullam with David the anointed of the Lord. The king was the chosen vessel in those days, and by him God gave deliverance to Israel. In the times of the kingdom, the palmy days of Solomon were quickly followed by declension. When they had sunk to the lowest, Jehovah, in mercy, visited His people and gave seasons of recovery and revival, notably in the days of Hezekiah and Josiah. The lineaments of these revivals may be summed up in this, that the Book of God was brought forth, and men and things were judged according to its standard. Room was made and left for God, and He then came in and wrought mightily, as He would have done all along the line, if His people had continued in His ways. So mightily did God work, so marvellous was the measure of the restoration, that in Hezekiah's revival it was likened to the days of Solomon (2 Chron. xxx. 26), while in Josiah's time it was of a still earlier character, like unto the days of Samuel the prophet (2 Chron. xxx. 18). But among the revivals of former times, the return of the remnant of Judah from Babylon to Jerusalem to restore the altar of Jehovah, to build His temple, and to again cause to ascend from earth to heaven, from the place where He had chosen to place His Name, true worship such as did not and could not ascend to

Him in Babylon—although there were faithful individuals there—holds the chief place. That “little reviving” (Ezra ix. 9), with its joys and sorrows, its songs and its tears, its conflicts and victories, the character of its leaders, the craft and cunning of its foes, and most of all the weaknesses and failures of those who were its subjects, “whose spirit God had raised to go up,” offer much instruction and give both encouragement and warning to all who in this day seek to share and be in the midst of revivings and restorations which are the work of the Spirit of God. We learn here as in an object lesson, how such revivings are begun and sustained, how they are frequently hindered and caused to cease, and how the enemy seeks by fair means and foul, by foes without and craft within, to make spoil of the fruits and to render the results of such seasons null and void.

By the message of His prophets, by the faithfulness of men of God within the walls of Jerusalem, and most of all by the secret working of His power in the hearts of those who “feared the Lord and thought upon His Name,” who spake “often one to another” (Mal. iii. 16), and of the Coming One, as they looked for redemption, the lamp of testimony was kept burning, until the Messiah came.

And if we trace the origin and growth of such Revivals as in later years have been given—those times of refreshing to God's people and of awakening and conversion among the lost—we shall find that their secret springs were in the sanctuary of God, where individual saints first and communities later, prayed and wrestled with God, confessing their own sins and the sins of their brethren, while they sought restoration to God and to His ways.

Prayer—continuous, believing prayer, with a free use of the Word of God, characterised the origin and growth of all these Revivals. Before the wave of blessing passed over the North of Ireland in 1859, a few young men had met continuously for prayer in a country schoolhouse. The Revival in America was born in a little prayer meeting in Fulton Street, New York. Cambuslang in the days of Whitefield, Kilsyth in the days of William Burns, Shotts in the days of John Livingstone, with the many lesser seasons of ingathering of our own time, in which sinners have been converted and saints restored to God, recovered from the world and brought back to the old paths of the Word, have all been in answer to the deep, heart-searching, agonising prayers and continuous intercessions of God remembrancers.

And thus, by the continuous operations, revivings, and renewings of the Spirit of God—still present in the believer and in the Church, to testify of and for the Lord Christ—shall the stream of life be kept flowing and the lamp of testimony be kept burning till Jesus comes.

THE CHURCHES OF THE SAINTS.

PART VIII. BY ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

WHEN the apostle Paul, by the Holy Spirit, sent instructions to Timothy regarding oversight and service among the saints, he concluded that portion of his letter with these words—“These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: but, if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. iii. 14, 15).

Here, as in Philippians I, the reference to those who oversee and those who serve, makes it plain that local assemblies are in question. And the language used exactly accords with this thought. The definite article "the" is absent in the original before the words "house," "church," and "pillar and ground." This, as we have already seen, tells us, that while the local assembly is not THE House of God or THE Church of God, it bears the same character. Just as in Eph ii., not only is the entire building growing up unto an holy temple, but the Ephesian believers also are being builded together for a habitation of God. These two words, "House" and "Church," set before us the two characteristic marks of the whole body of the redeemed of this dispensation; and equally, of each local company of believers who own Jesus as the Lord, in relation to their gathering together.

The word "Church," or "*Ekklesia*," means that which is called out; while a "house" speaks of something builded together. Both of these thoughts are combined in the general use of the former word. When the Town Clerk of Ephesus reminded the tumultuous gathering that, if there were matters needing to be enquired into, they should be determined in the "lawful assembly," he used this word *ekklesia*. When this assembly of the citizens was summoned, they were, of course, called out from their homes; but they were also gathered together to hear and deliberate concerning the matter regarding which they had been summoned. In the same way the word *ekklesia*, as applied to the people of God, while it declares that they have been "called out" from the world, is everywhere used in the New Testament as including the other thought, that the called out ones are also

"gathered together," or builded together.

It has been objected by some, that it is unscriptural to speak of the saints forming a local assembly as being gathered to the Name of the Lord. Those who raise this objection argue, that believers can only be spoken of as gathered when they are actually assembled together in one place. But a careful examination of the use, throughout the New Testament, of the word employed by the Lord Jesus in Matt. xviii. 20 will show, that this is a mistaken argument. Much the most frequent use of the word is, in its noun form of "*Synagoge*." This was the name given to the local assemblies of the Jews. It was also applied to the buildings in which they met, as we have it in its English form of Synagogue, which is literally "a gathering together." But the title of synagogue, or the gathering together, was not given to these companies of Jews only, when they were actually assembled, any more than it was only applied to the building when the people were in it. When the Jews agreed that if any man confessed Christ (John ix. 22), he should be "put out of the synagogue," they did not refer to ejecting Him from the building, but to putting Him away from among their company. It was a similar act to that which the Corinthian assembly were commanded to carry out in relation to the wicked man, in 1 Cor. v. 13. "Therefore, put away from among yourselves that wicked person." This is a moral, not a physical act. No one would venture to say that you could not put him out, unless he were present in the room. Hitherto he has been a part of the gathering together, and by that act of putting him away, he ceases to form a part of it.

We read of a "Synagogue of the Liber-

tines" in Acts vi. 9. Here, again, they did not bear this name of "gathered together," only when they held their meetings. When Saul of Tarsus asked for letters to the Synagogues of Damascus (Acts ix. 2), the same thing holds good. And when the Lord spoke of certain persons who said they were Jews, but were not, as being a "Synagogue of Satan," He was declaring that which was always characteristic of them, whether they were actually assembled together or not. Again, if we turn to Acts xi. 26, we are told that Barnabas and Saul for a whole year "assembled themselves with the Church at Antioch." At least, this is how the Authorised Version puts it. But if we turn to the Revised, we get a more literal and more correct rendering. There we read—"And it came to pass that even a whole year they were gathered together with the Church." No one will attempt to say that the Church, including Barnabas and Saul, spent a whole year in their meeting-room. But if not, there is an end of the argument that we must not speak of a company of believers who, in their coming together, own Jesus as the Lord, as being gathered unto His Name, as much when they are not met in one place as when they are.

This notion arises from the failure to apprehend that the local assembly, even though it consists of but two or three, bears the same character as the whole church, and is formed of "called out" ones who are "builded together." The importance of this becomes increasingly manifest, as we consider how much is involved in this two-fold character. We have seen above, that the Apostle Paul was regulating the ministry and oversight of the local assembly, when he reminded Timothy that it is in its

character of a called out and builded together company, that it is "pillar and ground (or stay, as in the margin of the R.V.) of the truth." We look round upon all the so-called churches of professing Christendom, and with sorrowful hearts we ask how it could be possible that such words should be used of them. Their whole organisation has robbed the Lord Jesus of His place as Lord.

Instead of being the witness to and the stay of the truth, their manner of coming together and their arrangement as to ministry all proclaim, that they own another authority than that of Him whom with their lips they call Lord. They have thus, at the very outset, undermined the whole position that every assembly is responsible to maintain. Little wonder then that it is hard to find a congregation among all the denominations of Christendom, where acknowledgment of the foundation truths of God's Word is an absolute essential to membership.

I know that it is the habit of some, whenever these things are referred to, to say that there are many Christians in the sects who put to shame, by their godliness and devotion, those who occupy a more scriptural position. And it is implied by this, even when it is not always stated, that we had better hold our tongues as to such matters. But this is a very mistaken way of treating the subject. Let us thankfully acknowledge all that we see of the grace of God in any of His people. Let us be imitators of them in everything in which they imitate Christ. And, further, let us humble ourselves when we, with far greater opportunities and fuller understanding of the Word of God, are outstripped by those who have been less favoured, in devotion of

walk and life to our Lord. But let us never, on that account refrain from proclaiming that God has raised up His Son, not only to be Lord to each individual saint and to the whole church ; but also to be the Lord in the midst of His gathered ones in every place. However great the confusion prevailing on every side, we may always come back to this, rejoicing that His words are as true and as sure to-day as when first they were uttered, "For where there are two or three gathered together unto My Name, there am I in the midst of them."

Note.—For some who would like to enquire into the exact force of the remarkable construction, "where there are two or three gathered together," I add the following further remarks. It is not possible to express this force precisely in our tongue, but a reference to some of the versions we are acquainted with, may give us some help. Take Newberry for instance. Here the editor adopts throughout the authorised version, without alteration : but he employs a number of signs to indicate, among other things, the tenses of verbs employed and their exact significance. On reference to the passage in question, it will be found that he has marked the word "are" with the sign of the present tense, shewing that it is a separate verb, and not merely an indication of the passive mood ; while before "gathered" he has placed the double sign, indicating the perfect tense, combined with a present sense. This, in the most emphatic way, confirms the rendering "where there are two or three, having been gathered." Indeed the full force, as indicated by Mr. Newberry's signs, would be "where there are two or three, having been

and being gathered." Again, Bagster's Interlinear gives "For where are two or three gathered, etc.," which sufficiently indicates that "are" and "gathered" are separate verbs. Young's Literal Translation also reads, "For where there are two or three gathered together, etc.," and while translations can scarcely convey the exact force of the perfect participle preceded by the verb "to be," these show plainly that the translation "where two or three are gathered," fails to express the full meaning of the original.

But of far greater importance and interest than any translation, is a comparison of the various places in the New Testament where the word *sunagō* (to gather together) is used in the passive or middle voice. There are 32 such occasions, and in only four of them is this remarkable form used. One of these is the passage under consideration, while the other three are John xx. 19, Acts iv. 31, and xx. 8. A reference to these will make it plain, beyond doubt, that the Holy Spirit uses this form of words, as the Lord Himself had done in the first instance, not merely to express that the persons referred to were assembled together, but that they were present together, as having been and continuing to be gathered by divine power. The marks in Newberry's Bible make this special form quite clear in each case. Perhaps it is well to mention that many of the earlier MS. omit the word "gathered" in John xx. 19 ; but if it did not occur in the original, as written by John, it is evident that the person who added it was acquainted with the form which the Holy Spirit had sanctioned for such a case.

OBEDIENCE.—The test of our obedience must be the written Word. The Spirit's teaching and guidance will always be according to that Word.—R. C. CHAPMAN.

DRESS, AT THE LORD'S TABLE.

ONE of the most incongruous sights that men and angels have to look upon, is, gaudily-dressed, jewel-bespangled and costly-apparelled Christians seated around the table on which are the emblems of the bruised body and poured forth blood of their Redeemer, the memorials of that death of bitterest anguish and deepest shame to which they owe their present salvation and their future glory.

Modest apparel is befitting for a child of God, an heir of heaven, a stranger here at all times; but surely of all places, the Lord's Table is the last at which worldly dress, gay apparel, or whatever else occupies the thoughts and attracts the attention of either *the believer himself or his fellow-worshippers* there should be displayed.

The supreme object at the Lord's table is, to remember Him, and to do this worthily we must forget ourselves. It is difficult to see how one who has spent much of the early part of the Lord's Day decking the person with gay clothing in order to be admired by others, whose personal appearance has been the chief subject of his or her thoughts all the morning, can when "the hour has come," suddenly forget what has been their chief concern, and become occupied with Him who was despised and rejected of men, whose visage was more marred than any man's, and who for sins that were not His own was "stricken, smitten, and afflicted." It is hard to believe that those who come to the table of the Lord adorned with finery, decked with gay clothing, with flashing jewels on their fingers, and flowers and feathers on their heads, can realise that they have come to meet with a holy God; to enter into His

most holy presence. Then, if the appearance of such a person is half as striking as he or she thinks it is, it must sadly interfere with the devotions of fellow-worshippers gathered there. Worldly-minded ones gazing on, and possibly coveting, the devil suggesting to them to follow suit and outdo their neighbours; young believers stumbled and possibly led away from God, into debt, if not dishonesty in order to keep pace with the fashion of the times, while the treasury of the Lord is impoverished and the poor of the flock neglected to keep up the vain show. Some may think this is descending to small matters, but straws show how the current flows, and we have never yet found much of God, either in the individual or the assembly where gay clothing and jewellery are conspicuous. We do not plead for sackcloth, but modest apparel befitting the presence of God, and such outward appearance as will neither occupy our own thoughts or attract the attention of others, while we meditate on the Man of Calvary, and muse of His Cross of shame, in which we profess to glory.

EMPTY TALK.

THOSE who are afflicted with the desire to hear themselves talk, ought to start cottage or other meetings on their own responsibility, and make full proof of what sort their ministry is—if profitable their sphere will be enlarged, but if they cannot keep a meeting together by their own ministry they are a source of weakness if talking at other meetings, and ought to confine themselves to personal and individual ministry till God brings them to the surface. We have known meetings killed for ever by talkers, who were not called by God to preach.—DONALD ROSS,

STEADFAST TO THE END.

IN days of corruption, there is a temptation to throw up all as lost, to look on all as hopeless. It was thus in Jeremiah's day. And the days contemplated in 2 Tim. are like Jeremiah's days of moral relaxation and general corruption in the very place where truth and righteousness should have flourished. But Paul cannot let Timothy yield to this temptation. He calls on him to stir up the gift of God that was in him. However hopeless the scene of labour might be, still there was a gift of God in Timothy, and that gift was to be used. Jeremiah had to struggle in the strength and title of such a gift, in the midst of such another scene of corruption and disappointment. And he did struggle—it may be with some infirmity but still honestly and successfully to the end. And Paul would have Timothy do likewise. He arms him, however, for this struggle. He exhorts him to be "strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus." And he reads out to him his title to be thus strong. He tells him that he had not received from God a spirit of fear, but of love and of power: that God had already saved him: and by the appearing of Jesus, death had been abolished and life and immortality brought to light: and that the One whom he believed was able to keep all that was committed to Him, so that nothing should be lost, but all should be found in the forthcoming day of His power and glory. Here was title indeed, to be "strong in the grace" of God. Timothy, like David (though in a day like the day of the capture of Ziklag), might well "encourage himself in God."

J. G. BELLET.

ONE CHURCH AT LAST.

Divided now!

The chiselled stones; all joined together then,

The Corner stone whom builders disallow,
Made chief at last: when Jesus comes again.

Divided now!

The blood-bought sheep, far scattered o'er the plain,

Care furrows deep on many a shepherd's brow,
One flock at last: when Jesus comes again.

Divided now!

The Lots, the Abrams, winning diverse gain,
Let pilgrim souls their strangership avow,
One land at last: when Jesus comes again.

Divided now!

The Church of God; one Church with Christ to reign,

And yet the glory round His thorn-pierced brow,
Is hers at last: when Jesus comes again!

THE MEETING IN THE AIR.

THE suddenness with which the entire church, and all the Old Testament saints, shall rise together into the presence of the Lord, is called in 1 Cor. xv. 51 a mystery, *i.e.*, a secret revealed. First, the Son of God descends, and gives the triumphant signal so long expected. It will bear on the destinies of earth, being the voice of the archangel. It will be the consummation of the heavenly call, and hence is termed "the trump of God." In instant and joyful obedience, rise from their graves all the dead in Christ, all those to whom death was only a "sleep through Jesus" (1 Thes. iv. 14).

WM. LINCOLN.

The Bible Annotator.

JOTTINGS FROM BIBLE MARGINS.

THE GOSPEL IN VARIOUS ASPECTS.

The Gospel of God (Rom. i. 3)—Its Source.

The Gospel of Christ (Rom. i. 16)—Its Subject.

The Gospel of our Salvation (Eph. i. 12)—Its Object.

"HIS OWN BLOOD."

This expression is four times used by the Spirit in the Word. In each case it is the procuring cause of some blessing Christ has secured for His people.

Redemption is obtained by it (Heb. ix. 12).

Sanctification is secured by it (Heb. xiii. 12).

The Church is purchased with it (Acts xx. 28).

The Believer is loosed from sin in it (Rev. i. 5 ; R.V.).

THREE CIRCLES OF CHRIST'S LOVE.

"Having loved His own" (John xiii. 1).

"Christ loved the Church" (Eph. v. 25).

"Who loved me" (Gal. ii. 20).

THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE.

"I Am the Way"—Come unto Me (Matt. xi. 28).

"I Am the Truth"—Believe in Me (John xiv. 1).

"I Am the Life"—Receive ye Me (John i. 12).

Without the *Way* there is no going.

Without the *Truth* there is no knowing.

Without the *Life* there is no living.

NOTE.—Some valuable and helpful "Notes" from the well-used Bible of the late Mr William Lincoln of Beresford, which has been presented to us, will appear during the coming year.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Who is the Rider on the white horse in Rev. xix. 11? The description given in the following verses can apply to none save the Lord Jesus. Here He is seen coming forth in victorious power and glory to deal with the nations, while His session on His throne (Matt. xxv. 31) judging them, shews His governmental power. He must put down and cast out the false, ere He can govern the true.

Does the word "everlasting" in Matt. xxv. 46 mean "for ever"? Some say it does not. The word in the original is exactly the same as is translated "eternal" in the latter half of the verse. The punishment of the lost and the life of the saved, are therefore of equal duration.

Is there anything in the Word to guide in choosing a profession or trade? That it be an "honest" trade (Titus iii. 14), and that the Christian may "abide therein with God" (1 Cor. vii. 24). And in businesses concerning which there may be no doubt as to the character, there is the principle of Prov. iii. 6, which is always and everywhere applicable—"In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."

Answers to Correspondents.

"INQUIRER."—We do not believe it to be right that a Christian should open his place of business for the sale of confections on the Lord's Day. Such conduct indicates little love for, or reverence of Him in whose honour that day is set apart, and little concern for the welfare of others who are stumbled thereby. Any one so acting, should certainly be "admonished" (1 Thess. v. 13-14).

G. M., GLASGOW.—The common saying and boast—"I have a clear conscience before God, and do not care what my brethren think, I have to please Him not them" sounds very well, but is generally either the language of selfwill or hypocrisy. Those who so speak, usually do so to justify their conduct in walking in disobedience to the truth, and with a view to silence those who would point out their evil ways. It is true, our first concern ought to be to please God, but we have also to consider what effect our example will have upon others (see 1 Cor. x. 23). A "liberty" that sets this aside is self-pleasing, and the claims to "please God" while walking in disobedience to His Word and in open association with evil, is rank hypocrisy.

J. B.—There is a kind of government in the Church, which, while it appears to maintain unity and keep peace, is only in reality keeping discontent under the surface by human device. When occasion offers or trouble arises, the true condition appears. Then it is seen how flimsy is the bond by which such communities are held together, and how little real fellowship exists in their midst.

A. D., AYRSHIRE.—You are perfectly right in resenting the interference of outsiders in your assembly troubles. To seek the counsel of experienced and godly brethren in a matter of difficulty is sometimes necessary, and when it is

done with an honest desire to know the will of the Lord as bearing on the matter, help is often received by this means. But when a clique or party go to some one ready to listen to their one-sided story and get him to champion their cause, or to personally, or with others, "judge" the matter, nothing but mischief can result. It cannot be too well remembered that the shepherd care—which alone can restore such broken bonds as you describe—in an assembly, is usually to be found within itself, and that outside influences—least of all the uninvited interference of party men—cannot heal divisions or restore true fellowship where from want of confidence it is lacking. GOD is needed, and nothing short of honest confession of departure from Him and a return to Him and His "ways," will ever effect the desired restoration.

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* Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION XI.—Is it according to God, that the Assembly's bounty should be in the hands of those who use it for the upholding of men who openly set at nought the truth which the assembly holds dear, while others who are known to be serving the Lord faithfully, are allowed to be in dire want?

ANSWER A.—Those who have the charge of the Assembly's funds should be such as all have confidence in (see Acts vi. 3). Then such a state of things as is suggested by this question could not exist.—J. S.

ANSWER B.—It is scarcely conceivable that any entrusted with the assembly's bounty would use it for purposes other than those to which it is intended, unless it be, that they are left to distribute it as they think fit, which is not a desirable or a Scriptural state of things.—W. M.

ANSWER C.—That there is need for definite help in this matter, the writer by experience knows. The assembly of which he forms a part, had for years been, without its knowledge contributing to the support of one who ridicules the truth of gathering unto the Lord's Name, and who, when he visited the district, went among sects both to preach and to tell of the work in which he is engaged in another land. Since then, we have arranged that two shall undertake the service of communicating, and that the assembly's gifts to

labourers be sent to such as the saints approve of and name. This has increased our liberality, and enabled us to give intelligently.—C. M.

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EDITOR'S NOTE.—It is well to be exercised as to whom the Lord would have us as His stewards "to help on their way," and have fellowship with in their service by communicating to them of our substance. It is to be feared that in many cases when the coin is dropped into the box, that is the end of all exercise in the matter. But surely what is accounted in heaven as being "of a sweet smell, a sacrifice well pleasing to God" (Phil. iv. 18) should not be disposed of in such a manner by us. It is a happy thing when those who are entrusted with the assembly's bounty, seek the counsel of their brethren who share the work of guiding the saints, and their fellowship in how it is administered. A common, and we believe a proper method is, to name the servant of Christ for whom the gift is intended before it is taken—giving opportunity for any who are especially interested in that one to contribute accordingly—and when the period for which the contribution is to be taken is completed, to name the sum gathered to the assembly, then to send it with any message of cheer or word of greeting, which would be greatly valued (as coming from the entire circle) by the Lord's servant, and in most cases would bring a letter giving some direct information regarding the work in which he is engaged, and frequently telling how seasonably the gift received came in answer to prayer, thus providing that which calls forth praise, and encourages saints to do God's business in God's appointed way. If it should be inconvenient to communicate directly with the individual servant, or if the currency of the country in which he labours makes it difficult to negotiate the gift, there are well-known brethren who will either give the necessary information, or communicate the gift to the servant for whom it is intended. We believe there is no lack of liberality among God's people, but in order to draw it out, it is necessary to give such information as to its objects, as will enable them to give intelligently and heartily, and not with the possibility that they may be giving to support those who are helping to build up sects and systems, from which they have, in obedience to God's Word, come out from, with all their belongings.

TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS AND READERS.

We desire to continue *The Believer's Magazine* during 1903—which will be the *Thirteenth* year of its issue—on the same lines as hitherto, ministering *all* God's Truth to ALL God's people, in words easy to be understood, giving a certain sound, keeping back nothing profitable, nor exalting any line of truth beyond its measure of importance. The days in which our lot is cast are, as the apostle foretold, "difficult times," in which everything that will test, is being tested. The ancient landmarks are fast being removed: the old paths in which God's power and blessing have been proved are being left for bypaths, and not even the foundations of our most holy faith are free from assault. It is not given to us to cavil with the enemies of the truth, or to enter the arena of controversy with men who have left off faith in God's Eternal Word. With the Judge of all mankind is their account. Ours it is, to "strengthen the things which remain" and to build up ourselves on our most holy faith, and it is to this end that these pages appear month by month.

It will be of interest to our many friends who have so diligently helped to circulate the Magazine and recommend it to others to know, that during the present year its circulation has substantially increased. It has found its way into many new circles, chiefly through the energies and recommendation of those who value and are in sympathy with the truths it teaches. We shall greatly value the continued fellowship of all such in still bringing it before fellow-saints, and in prayer, that grace and wisdom may be given to minister the Word in due season through its pages.

We are happy to be able to announce the following among other papers for 1903:—

THE SEVEN GOLDEN CANDLESTICKS; or, *The Church in Testimony* as set forth in Rev. chapters ii. and iii., By Alfred J. Holiday, whose papers on "The Churches of the Saints" have been so much valued.

THE CHILDREN OF GOD: Their Position, Possessions, Progress and Prospects. Addresses to Young Believers. By the Editor.

FOUNDATIONS OF THE FAITH. By the late Thos. Newberry.

SYMBOLS OF THE CHURCH. By Dr. J. Norman Case of China.

CLERISY: Its Rise, Character, and End. By the late Wm. Lincoln.

BIBLE READINGS (hitherto unpublished). By the late Robert C. Chapman. The cream of the Weekly Bible Readings held for so long in his house at Barnstable.

MISUNDERSTOOD TEXTS, difficult passages, and disputed doctrines, often used by the enemies of the Truth to perplex Young Believers and others, will be dealt with by several writers, as the Lord may guide and give help.

Conference Addresses by Donald Munro, Donald Ross, T. D. W. Muir, and papers by our valued contributors Max I. Reich, Geo. Steinberger, Geo. Adam, and others; with Question Box, Bible Annotator and Intelligence Columns as before. A Packet of Specimen Copies will be cheerfully sent to any who at this season desire to introduce the Magazine to Christian friends, or to the Assembly where they are.

There are very many of the Lord's people in this day of increasing departure from God, who are sadly perplexed regarding their path and who need a word of help and holy cheer. We are constantly hearing from lonely and isolated believers, to whom some Christian friend has sent a copy of the "Magazine," and who now desire to have it sent monthly: of little companies of believers in which there is little oral ministry, who look for its message and items of intelligence monthly, with great interest, and we know that much prayer has been called forth for the Lord's work and practical fellowship with His servants, by means of the items of intelligence regarding them that appear in these pages. We heartily thank all who have so faithfully sent us reports of work, items of interest, intelligence of conferences, and reliable information of the Lord's doings in their midst. It is a great matter to have such information as can be presented to our readers with confidence, and this we hope to be able to continue, through the help of brethren in assemblies who have care and discernment in supplying it. May the Lord be pleased to still use the Magazine as a channel of help and blessing to His own, by means of the Word of the Lord ministered in grace, and the Work of the Lord rehearsed and reported in such a manner as shall draw forth thanksgiving and prayer, make little of man and much of that Name which is above every name. To whom be glory in the church throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.