

The
Believers' Magazine.

A MONTHLY JOURNAL

OF

Ministry of the Word of God,

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

EDITED BY

JOHN RITCHIE.

— New Series—Vol. 5. —

Fourteenth Year, 1904.

KILMARNOCK:

JOHN RITCHIE, PUBLISHER OF CHRISTIAN LITERATURE,
And through all Booksellers.

CONTENTS.

A Church of Soul Winners	129	Maranatha. Alfred J. Holiday—	2, 15, 30, 41, 51, 66, 88, 102, 113
A Spiritual and Healthy Church	13	Mr. Alfred J. Holiday	141
A Word to Young Preachers	61, 79	Mutual Recognition in Heaven	100
A Word to Mothers	104	No Sunday Spirituality	69
All Things Working for Good. Alfred J. Holiday	73	Notes on the Epistle to the Romans. George Adam	6, 42, 53, 57, 103
ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS—		Overseers and their Work	119
34, 46, 58, 70, 82, 95, 106, 118, 131, 142		QUESTIONS REQUIRING ANSWERS ...	12, 36, 60, 96, 108
ANSWERS TO SPECIAL QUESTIONS—		Reading the Word	137
11, 35, 47, 59, 71, 83, 96, 107, 119, 131, 143		“Revive us again”	125
Character and Service. Max Isaac Reich ...	14	Shepherd's Work and its Reward	31
Current Events	12	Symbols of the Church. Dr. J. Norman Case—	33, 77, 127
Decline and Restoration	139	The all-sufficient Word	45
Divine Light and Protection	18	The Bible Annotator—	
Dry Preaching and its Effects	116	10, 22, 34, 46, 58, 70, 82, 94, 106, 118, 142	
Faithful Service and its Reward	121	The Book of Esther. J. G. Bellett ...	25, 38, 54
FALLEN ASLEEP. Mr. Peter Hynd	24	The Brand of the Cross	3
” ” Mr. James Nairn	24	The Children of God	85, 100, 114
” ” Mr. James Forbes	24	The Divine Elements of Christianity. Max Isaac Reich	37
“Feed My Lambs”	109	The Nazarite's Vow	4
Gems from the Revised Version	34	The Gospel. Alexander Stewart	136
Godly Men in Wordly Associations	117	The Opening Year	1
God's Hidden Ones	16	The Responsibility of Believers. George Grove	27
God's Way of Unity	5	The Recognition of Overseers. W. R. Lewis	97
Gospel Work. Alexander Stewart	111	The Testimony of Christ to the Scripture.	
He never gave Thanks	137	C. F. Hogg	7, 17, 31, 44, 56, 115
Holiness, Purity, Peace	92	The Triumph of Christ	123
POETRY—		The Two Trees of Eden. Henry Dyer ...	49, 63, 80
A Law of the Kingdom	9	The Unselfishness of Love. A. J. Holiday ...	133
A True Witness	128	The Walk of Faith	29
God Knoweth	15	The Will of God	100
He is not Here	93	The Word Tried Them	138
He is Faithful	105	The Young Believer's Question Box—	
Hidden Workers	57	10, 22, 34, 58, 76, 82, 94, 130, 142	
My Goal is Christ	69	To Our Readers	144
The Appointed Service	76	What Hinders Spiritual Worship	81
The Cross and the Pilgrimage	87		
The Race and the Victor's Crown	138		
The Walk of Faith	29		
With God	113		

Index of Bible Annotations, Questions, and Answers.



Acceptance	106
Believers in Bankruptcy	35
Believers in Denominations	11
Believers who Reject the Truth of Baptism	71
Believing in a Lie	106
Bible Trees and their Significance	22
Cases of Discipline and the Assembly	11
Christ the Living One	22
Collections from the Unconverted	60
Contested Claims between Christians	71
Co-operative and Joint Stock Companies	47
Degrees of Faith	34
Delivered from the World	130
Divine Inspiration of the Bible	22
Divine Discipline	94
Election	118
Exclusion of Error... .. .	59
Fixing Dates of Lord's Coming	94
Four Great Transactions	82
Fourfold Justification	106
Good Works	22
Gospel Work	107
Gospel among the Working Classes	130
Grace	58
How God Forgives Sinners	46
How to conduct Assembly Gospel Work	95
How to Use the Holy Scriptures	10
Immortality of the Soul	34
Individual Responsibility	131
Interdenominational Missions	46
Jehovah's Seven "I will's"	70
Laying on of Hands	10
Liberty of Ministry	118
Look, Learn, Live	118
Look Up	94
Majorities in Assembly Matters	119
Millennial Dawn Doctrines	46
Ministry at Conferences	82
Names of the Cities of Refuge	70
NOTES ON SCRIPTURE TEXTS—	
Psalms v. 3	94
John v. 43	22
Acts xiii. 2	10
Romans iv. 19	34
I. Cor. vii. 39	34
I. Cor. xi. 24	34
I. Cor. xiii. 13	94

NOTES OF SCRIPTURE TEXTS—Continued—

Galations iv. 14	34
Colossians ii. 18	34
II. Thess. ii. 2	70
I. Peter ii. 2	94
II. Peter ii. 4	70
Oversight Meetings and those who attend them	107
Overseers and their Work	119
Pauses in Worship Meeting	131
Persuading	136
Progressive Legislation	82
Psaln xxiii.	58
Recognition of New Assemblies... .. .	131
Rejoice in the Lord	10
Rest in Various Aspects	130
Reports on Work	23
Ritualistic Preachers	94
Salvation	82
Salvation in Three Aspects	106
Salvation in Four Aspects	58
Scriptural Form of Marriage	82
Seven Links with the Lord	22
Sin	130
The Atonement of Christ... .. .	142
The Believer Is	34
The Christian Conflict	94
The Day of Judgement	106
The Fall and its Consequences	142
The Gospel Call	82
The Personality of the Spirit	142
The Ruin and the Remedy	130
The Red Sea	70
Three Appointments	118
Three Calls for Christ	118
Three Christ-filled Psalms	34
Three Divine Words	106
Three Gracious Words	46
Three Looks	34
Three Present Blessings	130
Three Solemn Facts	46
Threefold Glory of Christ... .. .	46
Threefold View of Christ	130
Titles of Christ	142
Young Men's Meetings	35
Zionist Movement	58

THE BELIEVER'S MAGAZINE.

THE OPENING YEAR.

THE wheels of time have brought us to the threshold of another year, and it is fitting at such a time that we should look backward, onward, and upward. Concerning the past, we can say, "Surely goodness and mercy hath followed us all the days." Notwithstanding failure and feebleness, God has been the strength and portion of His people, and they remember with thankful hearts "all the way" the Lord their God hath led them (Deut. viii. 2). To the glory of His grace they confess—"There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken: all came to pass" (Josh. xxi. 45). Regarding the future, the people of God need have no distrust or fear. What their God has been, He will be: "Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail" (Heb. i. 12), is the sure word upon which they may calmly rely, fearing no evil. True, the world is waxing worse and worse as the years go by. The hosts of evil combine themselves to plot against the Lord: the enemies of the Truth become bolder and more defiant as they seem to gain ground and gather force. The professing Church, enfeebled by worldliness and fondling the enemies of Christ and the Truth in its bosom, yet highly pleased with itself and its doings, has no future before it, but that of increasing corruption and departure from God.

The path of the godly in separation from it and all its belongings, cleaving in consciousness feebleness to the Lord, seeking to be sustained in the way of His commandments by the indwelling Holy Spirit, will undoubtedly become more rugged and

trying to nature as the end draws near. Men of faith and purpose, who for long have cheered by godly example and faithful ministry the little flock, become fewer as the years go by, and few of the same stamp are being raised up to fill their places. Others seem to be gradually surrendering the truths their fathers gained in many a conflict, and which they themselves acknowledged to be of God, but which they possibly never felt the power of or were greatly in love with, to the enemy, or, like the ark of old in the keeping of Eli's sons, they are wrenched from their hands. All this is what the unerring Word of God has foretold, and what the "man of God" may therefore expect. But he need not be, he is not dismayed. He knows that God is behind and above it all, that He will keep alive a witness to Himself and His Truth in spite of all opposition and declension. "God is in the midst of her: she shall not be moved: God shall help her and that right early" (Psa. xli. 5). He will be a wall of fire around and the glory in the midst, to all who own and honour His Name, however few or feeble they may appear in the eyes of men. There the Lord will command the blessing, and the remnant of His people shall be in the midst of many "as a dew from the Lord, as showers on the grass" (Mic. v. 7). Upward there is a cloudless sky. The personal return of the Lord, the proximate hope of the believer and the Church is nearer than ever. God is winding up His business of grace, working by many and marvellous means to complete the heavenly people, and hasten the advent of the Lord.

"Watching and ready may he be,
As those who long their Lord to see."

MARANATHA

("THE LORD IS COMING").

PART I.—BY ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

FOR many centuries the people of God had gone to sleep, as regards the blessed hope set before them in such plain and simple words by the Lord Jesus Himself in John xiv. 3—"If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Some seventy years ago, there was a blessed waking-up on the part of many believers as to this precious truth; and to many of God's children it has been once more a source of comfort and strength, as well as a stimulating and purifying power.

But the adversary who for so long was successful in keeping this hope out of sight, will not now allow us to hold it undimmed and real, if he can prevent it. It is one thing to be quite clear as to the teaching of Scripture about the coming of Christ. It is quite another thing so to have this hope in (or "upon") Him, so as to lead us to purify ourselves, "even as He is pure" (1 John iii. 3).

We need, then, to stir up one another's minds as to this matter, and to watch against every device of Satan by which he would seek to rob God of His glory and us of our joy in connection with "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him." One of the readiest weapons the enemy always resorts to in order to weaken the force of any portion of God's Truth, is the introduction of division of mind about it among believers. Whenever any doctrine becomes the battle-ground for strife and contention, there is great danger that the life and power

of it will be lost, and only the form retained. This is, perhaps, especially the case in regard to the truth of Christ's coming for the Church. We believe that many feel this so strongly, that they keep silence about it altogether, rather than risk making it the subject of argument and strife. In this way we fear that the blessed hope is not having the prominent place in the ministry of the Word that it had twenty or thirty years ago; and we cannot but regard such a condition of things as one that calls for much humbling before God, and earnest prayer that He will graciously grant us a fresh reviving as to a matter so dear to Himself and so important to us.

We are disposed to think that one of the most serious difficulties, as to agreement about what the Word of God teaches us in regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus, lies in the following question—Do the Scriptures set anything before us, that must be fulfilled before Christ comes for His people? Or, in other words, are we warranted in looking for the Lord Jesus to come AT ANY MOMENT to fulfil 1 Thess. iv. 15-17? We do not hesitate to express our own full conviction that we are thus warranted to wait for our blessed Lord day by day. And we would say, further, that we believe that any system of interpreting Scripture which puts anything between the saint and the expectation of Christ's appearing, must needs take largely away from the power the hope is intended to exercise. While, however, we speak without reserve on this point, we desire to say, with equal plainness, that we do not for a moment look upon brethren who hold and teach otherwise, as therefore not loving the Lord's appearing. We do not believe that the *whole* value of the hope is

gone, if we are not looking for its momentary fulfilment. Still, we are quite sure that no truth can fulfil all its purpose, unless we have it just as God has given it.

With this in view, we purpose, as the Lord may enable us, to consider some of the Scriptures, and the arguments based on them, which are relied on by those who believe that there are prophecies awaiting their fulfilment before ever the Lord Jesus can shout that blessed shout, which shall call us all to be with Him for ever.

(To be Continued.)

THE BRAND OF THE CROSS.

THE boast of this evangelical time is, that Christ crucified is preached, that the doctrine of the Cross is universally accepted by all true believers. But is that doctrine in all its bearings apprehended by those who make it their boast? Let their walk and conduct answer. It is not to be supposed that they are morally loose, or chargeable with anything that the world takes account of as sin. Where such is the case, the genuineness of their profession may well be called in question. But what of the worldiness, the regard for personal popularity, the luxurious dress and profuse expenditure in house decoration to keep pace with worldings, the trimming to please the flesh and escape the reproach and the brand of shame for Christ. All this tells how little practically is known of the Cross, which is not only the means of deliverance from wrath, but the instrument of their own crucifixion with Christ, and their death to the present world. "The offence of the Cross" is not the grace which it brings, but the brand of Nazarite separation to God which it imparts to all who come under its power.

THE NAZARITE'S VOW.

Numbers, Chapter vi.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

BEFORE considering this searching and solemn subject I desire to say that I fully own the sinner's salvation depends *solely* upon Christ and on that perfect work which He accomplished on the Cross, and that this salvation is received by the sinner *only* through faith. Prayers, good works, self-denial, and the devotion of the believer cannot add one iota to the salvation of God. Suppose for a moment that it depended in the slightest measure upon ourselves. This would destroy grace, and plunge us in this matter into darkness and uncertainty. But when we see that Christ is the Alpha and the Omega of it all; that his expiatory work has answered every question which sin had raised between our souls and God; that his precious blood has purged us from every sin, and that we are upheld and kept by the Good Shepherd, who has said that none of His sheep shall ever perish (John x. 28), the knowledge of this gives peace, and the uncertain hope, mingled with fear, gives place to Divine *assurance*.

The question of salvation has been settled for all who thus believe for ever.

An important fact in respect of this salvation, and one often misunderstood or neglected, is, that it is coupled with the acknowledgment of the rights of the Lord Jesus. It is said, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth *Jesus as Lord* (R.V.), and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. x. 9). Soon every knee shall bow before Him, and every tongue confess that He is Lord; but the believer

owns Him as such now. In a little while the true King, now rejected, shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth; but His authority now is only recognised and confessed by the few who truly believe in His Name. There is, as it were, a little millennium now in the heart of the believer, for he confesses Jesus as Lord.

But it is to be feared that many who profess the Name of Christ fall short in this respect. They recognise Jesus as Saviour, but they do not fully own him as Lord. They receive Him on board their vessel as a passenger, but do not own Him as captain. The authority of the captain extends over the entire ship, and he directs it where he will; all is under his control. It is well we should ask ourselves—"Have I taken Christ on board as a passenger only, or as Captain of the entire vessel? Do I confess and joyfully own that all I am and have is His, and that He is to direct and govern His own?"

Many, like Jacob, give Christ the tenth part of their substance, and others even a larger portion; but to give Him a tenth or *nine-tenths* would not be to really give Him His rights. The inhabitants of a besieged city desire to put conditions to their enemies, but these last reply—"No conditions; absolute surrender; nothing less!" This is what we must do, if we would be Christians worthy of the name. We must not make a single condition with Christ, but surrender ourselves completely to Him, recognising loyally and without reserve His rights as Lord.

And is He not worthy? Think of His unconditional surrender; of all that He endured for us! Behold the Lord of Glory descending to the dust of death! He

sacrificed all. He laid down His life that we might be His own. The love that Christ manifested in His death has so great a power on the heart that knows it: His argument is so strong, that nothing but unbelief itself can prevent us from surrendering ourselves to Him. Do we not believe that He gave Himself for us? Why then shall we not surrender ourselves unto Him without reserve?

Oh, that every cold calculation, every compromise, every reserve, may be henceforth banished from our hearts! Oh, that the question so short, and so to the point, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" may be ours to-day and every day!

We surely could not say peacefully, that because our sins are forgiven we need not ask ourselves whether or no we are devoted to Christ? Let us not forget the judgment-seat of Christ, and let us remember that there are some who are saved only as by fire. Our present happiness and our future place in the glory, depend upon our faithfulness to Christ on this earth. Oh, that God may cause to burn in our hearts this fire that burned in the heart of the true Nazarite!

Nobody was obliged to become a Nazarite. The Lord desires willing hearts and not "pressed" men. The Nazarite devoted himself *voluntarily* to the Lord. It was not of necessity but of good will. Grace wrought in his heart the desire to be entirely for the Lord, and grace also prepared a way in which this devotion could find expression. How much need has the Israel of God of to-day, of Nazarites; of godly, devoted men and women who are wholly the Lord's, yielded up to be possessed by Him, spirit, soul and body, set apart and kept apart from the course of

this selfish, self-seeking age, to do the will of God and to be the bond-servants of Jesus Christ. Spiritual men are a valuable testimony for Christ in the midst of a worldly Christianity. God is pleased that they have in their hearts the interests of the glory of Christ. If any have not this intense desire to be wholly the Lord's, may God Himself give it to them now. Consider these words, several times repeated in this chapter,

"HOLY UNTO THE LORD."

They are the key to this subject. Therein was the motive for the Nazarite's vow. Neither servile constraint nor legal bondage, but a heart yearning with the desire to be set apart and entirely devoted to the Lord.

Now I affirm, that I know of no argument or no power in Nature, which can press our hearts to real devotion, save the knowledge of the Lord Himself and of His love. We may read many books and listen to precious expositions during whole years, without knowing the Lord as a living and glorious Object. I will even say, it is *impossible* to know the Lord and see Him by faith without having an intense desire to be wholly devoted to Him down here. Do you think we could contemplate this glorious Person, to whom the angels and the principalities are subject, and yet refuse Him the fidelity of our hearts? Could you suppose that we can gaze upon the hands, the feet, and the side, where are the marks of His eternal love for us, and remain in a state of indifference to the subject of His glory in this world? We could not contemplate Him who is the object of Heaven's adoration, and who Himself forms its delight, and at the same time compromise His glory, and dishonour His Name, by our conformity to a world which has cast Him out, and be satisfied.

If we contemplate this glorious Man, this impious and corrupt world will have no attraction for us. Its charms and its trumperies will not deceive us. Our heart will say "What have I any more to do with idols? I have heard Him and observed Him" (Hos. xiv. 8). When He, who is now in the glory, becomes the precious Object that fills and satisfies the heart, then a new life commences. The affections and the desires then run in the current of Numbers, chapter vi., instead of finding their place and their object in the world and in self. It is not from any selfish motive, or to mend one's position, or spiritual standing but there is before the soul a *positive* object, a Person of infinite worth, and for love to this Person, that which would otherwise be a painful denial, because a source of the greatest happiness to the soul. And I will dare to say, that the Nazarite who really devoted himself to God, was richly rewarded for his self-denial by the blessing and the joy given him in abundant measure by the Lord. So, too, with all who, constrained by the love of Christ, yield themselves to Him, to be wholly, unreservedly His, to be used by Him in His service and to bear witness for His Name, His Lordship, His honour and His Word.

—o—

GOD'S WAY OF UNITY.—By getting closer to Christ as revealed in the Word, His people get also closer to each other. As the rays of light which are spread over all the earth, the higher men were to ascend up them towards the sun, the nearer they would get to each other. So by more hearty identification with Christ, and close following of His Word, do Christians become increasingly knit to one another.

WM. LINCOLN.

NOTES ON EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

BY GEO. ADAM, STRANRAER.

THE special subject of this Epistle is the Gospel, or glad tidings of God concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord (chap. i.-3, 116-17). Here God is seen as the righteous *Judge*, becoming the *Justifier* of all who believe in His Son. The Epistle tells how "grace reigns *through righteousness* unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (chap. v. 21).

In verse 17, we have those to whom it was addressed, "Beloved of God"—"called saints." From verses 8 to 15, is a courteous introduction. In verse 16, the writer returns to the "Gospel of Christ," and in verse 17, makes the statement that this Gospel is a revelation of the "righteousness of God." Not here of His love and mercy, but of the infinite righteousness of the character of God. At verse 18, the Holy Spirit turns aside to lay bare the total ruin of the whole human family by sin.

In the end of chap. i. He reveals the awful moral condition into which man had sunk, when left with nothing to guide him but the light of his conscience, and the works of God in creation. Left thus, man had sunk below the beasts that perish.

From the beginning of chap. ii. on to chap. iii. 8. we see the Jew, to whom was committed "the oracles of God" brought to the bar of divine judgment. Thus, whilst the Jews were exalted in point of privilege far above the Gentiles, yet the law as given at Sinai could not meet man's need as a sinner. It might reform him *externally*, but could not reach the seat of his ruin. It served as a "plumb-line" to the wall; it manifested the extent of man's departure from God, but had no power to help him.

At chap. iii. 10, the Spirit goes on to sum up the evidence, and bring in the whole human family—both Jew and Gentile—one mass of moral corruption, without a single exception, or one redeeming trait of good condition. Verse 19, states man's judicial standing in the sight of law. That is "guilty" with every mouth stopped, and not one word to say in self-justification. Verse 20 of chap. iii. effectually and for ever shuts the door against man working his way back to God by deeds of the law. The law had done its work, and that was to manifest the completeness of man's ruin.

At verse 21, the Spirit begins to unfold God's remedy for man's ruin. The whole human race has been entirely set aside as a hopeless failure, under every dispensation, and by every way in which God has tried man. "But now" God begins to reveal what He is. He has fully proved what man is, and from this point He begins to deal with man on the ground of sovereign grace; of what Christ is; and on the ground of what He has done. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood" (verse 25). Here is now the meeting-place, and the only meeting-place between a holy God and a guilty sinner, and on the ground of the propitiation made by Christ, God can righteously declare the believing sinner "just" in the reckoning of His own inflexible justice. This is what is called "justification *meritoriously*": that is, because of the merits of another. We are "justified by His blood" (chap. v. 9). At chap. iii. 28, and on through chap. iv., the Spirit is unfolding "justification *mediately*." That is the medium through which, what Christ is, and has done, becomes the possession of the sinner—by faith alone without works (see chap. iii. 28, iv. 5.)

In chap. v. the inspired writer takes solid ground. "Justified by faith we have peace with God" through our Lord Jesus Christ. In the following verse he goes on to unfold some of the wonderful blessings connected with a sinner's reconciliation to God. A perfect standing in grace before God now (chap. v. 2), and a certainty of final salvation through the life of Christ now in heaven (see also Heb. vii. 25). Verses 13 and 14 of chap. v. are very important. Adam in the garden of Eden was under law, and he broke that law. Israel at Mount Sinai were placed *under law*, but those who lived between Adam and Moses could not sin as Adam sinned because they had no law to break. They had the same sinful nature in them, but it could not be manifested in the same way until the law was given through Moses.

In verses 15 to 19, we have the disobedience of the one man Adam contrasted with the obedience of the One Man Jesus Christ. And this last far exceeds the guilt of Adam's transgression. Not only has it virtue in it to bear away the sin of Adam, but there is merit in the vicarious death of Christ to meet all the many offences that are the results of Adam's fall.

Versé 20 teaches the design of the law given at Sinai. It entered, or "came in by the way" that the "offence might abound," or that the true nature of sin might be made manifested.

Verse 21, introduces a new line of truth which forms the subject of chap. vi. There we see sin, not in its power to *condemn*, but in its power to *enslave*. The *reigning* power of sin is here introduced, and chap. vi. teaches how the believer finds a way of deliverance from sin's reigning power by crucifixion with Christ.

THE TESTIMONY OF CHRIST TO THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

PART VI. — BY C. F. HOGG.

WE shall next consider some passages of Scripture which show that sources of information denied altogether to men were at the disposal of the Lord Jesus.

Notice, for example, the tone of confidence and spontaneity with which He spoke to Nicodemus, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, we speak that we do know" (John iii. 11). That modest hesitation which should mark the language of a good man dealing speculatively with the things of another world, of which he may have intuitive convictions but can have no certain knowledge, is entirely lacking here.

The past of the individual was not hidden from Him. His startling words to the woman of Samaria, "Thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thine husband" (John iv. 18), did not merely express a happy guess at her sin-stained history.

When Peter came in to tell about the question put to him by the collectors of the redemption tax and his reply thereto, the Lord anticipated him (Matt. xvii. 25), and before they left the house in which this incident occurred the disciples received proof of His knowledge of their private communications among themselves, as well as of their intercourse with the wider circle of men (Mark ix. 33).

At Bethany, beyond Jordan, He showed them that He knew of the last sorrow that had overshadowed the distant home at Bethany near Jerusalem, for neither distance nor material obstacle hindered His power to know. That Peter, whose character for steadfastness his new name

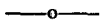
expressed, would deny Him (Mark xiv. 27-31); that Judas, the trusted treasurer of the little band, would betray Him (John xiii. 10-11); that the rest would forsake Him in His hour of sore distress, leaving Him to face the threatened danger alone (John xvi. 30-32), all this He knew. He directed His disciples where to find an unbroken colt tied with its mother, the owners of which would not oppose them when they led the animals away (Matt. xxi. 2-3). He told them, too, that at a certain juncture a man who had in his house a suitable room, furnished and ready, and who was willing to place it at their disposal for the Passover Feast, would send his servant to replenish the water pots (Mark xiv. 12-16). He knew the evil thoughts and perverse reasonings of the Pharisees who opposed Him, though they uttered no word aloud (Matt. ix. 4, xii. 25; Luke ix. 47). Long years after, John, who saw and heard these things in which the Lord gradually revealed Himself to the wondering hearts of His disciples, wrote—"He needed not that any one should bear witness concerning a man; for He Himself knew what was in the man" (John ii. 24-25 m.).

He spoke confidently of His own origin and destiny, of what He must endure at the hands of both Jew and Gentile, of the identity of His betrayer, of the manner of His death and of its unprecedented issue in resurrection (Matt. xx. 17-19; John vi. 44, xiii. 3, xviii. 4). He foreknew and foretold the destruction that awaited Jerusalem (Luke xix. 41-44), the preaching of the Gospel throughout the world (Matt. xxiv. 14; Mark xiv. 9) and the manner of its reception by mankind (Matt. vii. 22-23; Luke vi. 22).

There remains another consideration of great weight. After His crucifixion and burial the Lord Jesus was raised from among the dead. The physical limitations to which He had voluntarily submitted Himself had disappeared (John xx. 19-26). All authority in Heaven and on earth had been given to Him (Matt. xxviii. 18). History witnesses that ignorance and authority go hand in hand to disaster. Absolute authority in an unlimited sphere can be safely associated only with infinite knowledge. The humbled Peter, finding now no way to prove his love, cast himself on that knowledge, the infinitude of which he did not doubt—"Thou knowest all things" (John xxi. 17); once again affording an opportunity to correct a misapprehension, did such exist. But the Lord withdrew nothing, modified nothing. On the contrary, He reaffirmed what He had taught them, delivering it to them as a sacred deposit to be committed in turn to all who afterward would become obedient to the truth (Matt. xxviii. 20). And the one subject which He singled out for more emphatic confirmation in the record of the forty days spent with His disciples between His resurrection and His ascension (Acts i. 3) was the immaculate veracity and the Divine authority of the Old Testament Scriptures (Luke xxiv. 25-27, 32, 44-45).

In the face of these facts we are asked to believe that the Lord's knowledge of the Scriptures was inferior to that of those modern scholars who ask us to accept instead their own judgment of the Book. Strange that the truth about these writings should have escaped the keen eye of One Whose insight and foresight were otherwise unique, and Who, moreover, stood two thousand years nearer the original writers than we do to-day.

Strange that though He detected so readily the accretions of centuries, and so unhesitatingly brushed them aside in order that the pure Word of God might be restored to His people, His insight should fail Him here. And if it did fail Him, however well and strongly He may have built His house, it was founded on the sands of ignorance, and the flood of modern scholarship must inevitably carry it away. Most strange the critics should outstrip Him on this one point with such facility, and yet fall so completely behind Him in everything else. Well for us if we can profit by their folly, seeking ourselves to cultivate that humble spirit of reverence which is the indispensable condition for hearing in the Scriptures the voice of God. Sin blinds and misleads us all, and the sins of the mind, if less gross and palpable than the sins of the flesh, are not less offensive to God, not less deteriorating to men (Eph. ii. 3). Above all do we need to learn that the Spirit of God is the sole interpreter of the Scriptures. Till we learn that, we read them in vain.

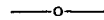


It may be safely asserted that the greater part of the popular preachers of the times are not born again, or God-made ministers at all. They are in the business for money only, and when they see their craft in danger, by others preaching for the love of Christ and of souls, they oppose and talk against the preachers and the work. No wonder that infidels are on the increase.

Going to a strange place with the bare Word of God would not cost us a thought, but we hesitate in going where there are cold and carnal Christians; their covetous, worldly lives often proving a great hindrance to the Gospel.—DONALD ROSS.

SINGING THE TRUTH TO GOD.

THE words made use of in addressing God, whether in praise or prayer, should surely exercise the minds and consciences of His saints. How often words expressing intense devotedness to God, and entire surrender to the Lord Jesus, are flippantly sung by persons rigged out in the world's fashion, and fully in sympathy with its ways. Is this the meaning of "consecration," of "full surrender," of being "all for Jesus?" Alas! how the bleating of the Amalekite herds bewray the loud-sounding professions of having devoted all on God's altar. And the eager haste among professed disciples and followers of the rejected Nazarene to secure positions of worldly greatness and affluence, tell how feebly they have apprehended the lessons of that Cross which was the witness of the rejection of God's Son and the brand on His earliest followers for reproach and death. God will not be mocked; He will have reality. Unless we are prepared to share the rejection, the shame of the Cross, and joyfully accept a place with the Outcast Christ of Calvary, such expressions are sheer hypocrisy on the lips of religious worldlings.



A LAW OF THE KINGDOM.

"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Gal. vi. 7.)

IT is a law of life, that retribution
 Shall follow wrong;
 It never fails, although its execution
 May tarry long.
 Sin unrepented of and unforgiven,
 Must bring the rod,
 On every child of grace and heir of heaven,
 From Father-God.

The Bible Annotator.

OUTLINES AND NOTES ON BIBLE READINGS.

REJOICE IN THE LORD (Phil. iv. 1).

In Prosperity (Neh. viii. 10; xii. 43).

In Adversity (Hab. iii. 18).

In Persecution (Luke vi. 22, 23).

In Suffering (Acts v. 41).

Greatly (Phil. iv. 10).

Always (Phil. iv. 4).

Evermore (1 Thess. v. 16).

"And again I say—Rejoice" (Phil. iv. 4).

"HIMSELF."

The Lord Jesus from Incarnation to Eternal Glory.

He made *Himself* of no reputation (Phil. ii. 7).

Christ pleased not *Himself* (Rom. xv. 3).

He *Himself* hath suffered being tempted (Heb. ii. 18)

Who gave *Himself* for our sins (Gal. i. 4).

Who loved me and gave *Himself* for me (Gal. ii. 20).

Christ loved the Church and gave *Himself* (Ep. v. 25)

To make in *Himself*...one new man (Eph. ii. 15).

Jesus Christ *Himself*...chief Corner Stone (Ep. ii. 20)

Present it to *Himself* a glorious Church (Ep. v. 27).

Then shall the Son *Himself* be subject (1 Cor. xv. 28).

HOW TO USE THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

Search the Scriptures (John v. 39). The word means "to trace, to investigate," as a dog on the scent.

Looking into the perfect law (James i. 25). The word here implies bending down to closely examine it microscopically

Comparing the Scriptures (1 Cor. ii. 13). To estimate by comparison, bringing text alongside text to get the whole truth in all its aspects.

Mediating on the Word (Psa. i. 3). This means to muse, to think, to eat, chew, ruminate and extract the strength and sweetness treasured in it.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

What is the meaning of the laying on of hands in Acts xiii. 2 and 2 Tim. i. 6? The former was simply a sign of identification, or fellowship with the Lord's servants, in the work to which the Holy Ghost had called them. In the latter Scripture, the laying on of the Apostle's hands was the occasion and instrumentally the means through which some

gift was imparted. The former—or its equivalent, "the right hand of fellowship (Gal. ii. 9)—is both right and comely where it can be done in full confidence, that those going forth have been "separated to," and "sent forth by the Holy Ghost for the work they desire to do—and this needs discernment—but we presume no living man presumes to have power to confer the latter.

What is the sin for which the person, mentioned in Matthew xviii. 15-18, is to be regarded by the Church as a heathen man and a publican? None is specified, but the Scriptural mode of dealing with the offender, whatever his trespass may have been, taken with a view to his restoration to God and to those whom he had wronged, had manifested such a proud, unbroken spirit, and strength of self-will, that fellowship in the things of God with such a person is impossible.

Answers to Correspondents.

E. G., NORTHUMBERLAND.—Go on quietly in your service for the Master, but have nothing to do in discussions with Christadelphians. They want you to get them an audience to which they may disgorge their doctrines. Let them find one for themselves; you go on preaching Christ.

C.A., GLASGOW.—It does not require either spiritual power or vital godliness to carry on a worldly religious system, consequently it may go on for years in what is regarded as "a flourishing condition"—numbers, funds, and all else overflowing, without a breath of the Spirit of God or a single open channel for Him to operate through. That there are many such "churches" is, alas! too evident to those who have eyes to see. And be it remembered that it is perfectly possible for what bears the name of being an assembly of God, or if that be considered presumptuous, "a meeting of believers," to fall into the same condition from exactly the same causes, namely—God shut out the world brought in. But it would *never* do to admit this, consequently the favourite device of the devil in all such cases is, to keep up an artificial enthusiasm, and thus hide the nakedness of the land. There are many besides you who are crying to God for deliverance from such a condition of things, and however it may come, we believe it will

be in the way of humiliation, confession, and earnest prayer. It would be well if those so exercised, could come more frequently together for such purposes.

P. R. G., AYRSHIRE.—We regret if any word of ours has given you the impression that we do not appreciate or put any value on "good singing." We believe that all that is given to God either in worship or testimony should be of the very best. It is no sign of spiritual worship to have bad singing, either in words, music, or harmony. Nor should we go before the world with that which is unworthy of the message we bear. A circle of hearty, capable Gospel singers, we regard as a true auxiliary in the proclamation of the Gospel, and all godly means to obtain such should be adopted consistent with the measure of its importance. But there is no use blinking the fact, that in our day far *too much is made of music* in the way of attraction and entertainment in evangelistic work, and wherever this is the case, the tendency is for the preaching to become "thin," and lacking alike in pungency and freshness. Let godly men who are "set over the service of song in the house of the Lord" (1 Chron. vi. 31) make full proof of their ministry in leading forth the praises of the saints, and sounding forth the Gospel, but never let the Gospel testimony dwindle into a "service of song," interspersed with pointless anecdotes and pithless remarks. "Preach the Word."

D. B., LIVERPOOL.—We readily acknowledge that there are gifted and able ministers of the Word in most of the denominations, and in whatever measure you can benefit by their ministry, either oral or written, you are surely at liberty to do so. The Risen Lord gives His gifts—not to any denomination or sect—but "for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. iv. 10-12). If some who are thus gifted become the servants of an unscriptural system, and spend their energies in building it up, they will have to answer to the Lord for that in the day of his judgment seat. We may grieve over their loss to the whole body of Christ, while still regarding them as the servants of our common Lord. But it is quite another matter for one to whom God has shown the evils of denominationalism, to go into the systems to which some of these gifted men have attached themselves, and are pledged, and in most cases paid, to build up, in order to get the benefit of their ministry. This would be to recognise the false system, and to virtually

renounce the place of separation from it, to which they have professedly been guided by the Word of God. This is where many miss their way, and attracted by one whom they esteem as a "good minister of Jesus Christ," they become entangled in the meshes of a system which is of the world. It is no doubt one of the devices of the devil to use good men in an unscriptural position to attract to and retain others in it, by means of their gifts, and it may be graces. But what is wrong in God's sight, and opposed to His Word, can never be made right, by any apparent blessing given in connection with it, nor even by the presence of gifted men in it who are personally godly.

Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION I.—Should each case of excision from the assembly, be brought before the whole in all its details, or should only the results of investigation of overseeing brethren be named to enable the whole assembly to act intelligently in carrying out the Word of God?

ANSWER A.—The fundamental principle of the Word clearly is, that the assembly receives to, and when necessary excludes from, its circle (see Rom. xvi. 2; 1 Cor. v. 4, 12, the "ye" in both being the aggregate), but it would be alike impossible and undesirable that each individual should have to investigate all details. The latter calls for discernment, ability and experience, which all do not possess. Those who do oversight work and guide the saints would primarily be responsible to do such work, and having done so to bring the facts before the assembly for its united action. J. S.

ANSWER B.—It would be disastrous to bring all the details of certain cases that have sometimes to be dealt with by experienced and capable brethren before young and unlettered believers. In the actual giving effect to the Lord's commandment regarding such, the whole church must act together, but the investigation of details, and the sifting of evidence where such is required, should surely be the work of those to whom the Lord has given the wisdom and ability for such service. If they have the confidence of their brethren there will be little difficulty. They should always seek to arrive at oneness of mind about the course to be pursued, so that whoever brings the matter before the assembly

speaks the mind of all. Few things have caused more trouble than the ignoring of this. A divided oversight always results in a divided church.

A. M. K.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—The function of overseers in their relation to the action of the assembly may be illustrated by what is daily seen in our law courts. The witnesses are heard, the evidence is recorded. Then the judge marshals the facts, calls attention to the salient points and shows the bearing of the law upon them, leaving the jury to come to their decision. The work of those who guide the saints would be (as stated in the above answers) to give the results of their investigation to the Church. Having done this, overseers can go no further as such. They then act as part of the church—never *for* it—along with others in giving effect to the Lord's commandment; and when the action of the assembly is according to the will of God, it becomes in reality His sentence, being backed with His authority (see Matth. xviii. 18-20).

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.

QUESTION II.—Is there anything in the Word to show how an assembly of believers ought to regard one of their number who has become a bankrupt?

QUESTION III.—Does having a share in a Co-operative Society, or other Joint Stock Company, involve an unequal yoke with unbelievers, and is such a form of trading in keeping with the letter, spirit and principles of the New Testament Scriptures?

QUESTION IV.—If an evangelist consents to preach in a place where a collection is taken from the ungodly, can it be said that he is "taking nothing of the Gentiles?" (3 John 7).

Current Events.

Dr. John Watson, Presbyterian minister of Liverpool (better known perhaps to the world as Ian M'Laren the novelist), told a great gathering

of ministers and others, in Bristol lately, "that the evangelist is a spent force." That depends. If he has got away from God, and lost the "force" of the Holy Ghost in his ministry, he will be; but then the remedy is not to be found in a "Gospel of social deliverance," whatever that may mean, but in confession and restoration to God. Then, and only then, will the old Gospel of God—and there is no other—go forth in fresh power. Men may become "spent" (some never had anything to "spend") but it never can be "a spent force." No, no, "it is the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. i. 16), in all ages. Let novelists and humanitarian theologians stick to their business of reforming the masses, if they will, but God's Gospellers will cling to the old sword and use it, because they know its power.

Romanism is stealthily creeping into high places in this land. Monks and nuns expelled from France find a refuge here, and a soil ready to receive their seed in the Ritualistic parishes of England. Would to God that Christians were alive to the danger, and seeking to spread that Word of God which alone can arrest or retard the leaven of Romanism.

Great companies have been gathered in Manchester and other English and Scotch towns to hear the Gospel preached by Dr. Torrey, and no doubt many who never hear the truth in their own churches and chapels have been reached and some of them converted, although we have no confidence whatever in the numbers given. But what they will get to feed the new life from some of the shepherds to whose tender mercies they have been committed, is hard to see. Yet it seems to be a necessary arrangement in all such interdenominational "Missions," that all preachers and sects alike, irrespective of their conversion and spiritual condition get their quota of the converts, who are advised to "join" the church to which they formerly went. It is much happier times when a servant of Christ can say—"I commend you to God and the Word of His grace."

God has gathered home a great many of His servants during 1903, who for long have stood in the front of the battle and borne the heat and burden of the day. Few seem to be raised up to take their places. Is this one of the many signs that the end is near?

A SPIRITUAL AND HEALTHY CHURCH.

BY THE EDITOR.

THE spiritual condition of a church—whether large or small in numbers—is determined by the spiritual state of the individuals who compose it. There is no other road to a spiritual community than by each individual member seeking to attain to and maintain such a condition in the kingdom of God within him. The spiritual state of churches to which the apostolic letters were primarily sent was gauged after this fashion. The words addressed to the Thessalonian Church—“Your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of *every one* of you all toward each other aboundeth” (2 Thess. i. 3), reveal the secret of that church's healthy spiritual state, while the low condition of the Corinthian Church is attributed to this, that “*every one* of you saith I am of Paul, I of Apollos, I of Cephas (1 Cor. i. 12). The community became carnal, because the individuals had made it so.

It is a rare thing to find a church composed of spiritually healthy, godly, and active saints, each contributing his part to the maintainence of a glow of spiritual warmth within, and to the holding forth of a clear and bright testimony to the world without. In most cases, the actual maintainence of both devolves on a few, and they eventually come to regard their business to be to provide for and serve the rest, who quiescently fill the seats all the year round as consumers. If the “ministering brethren”—or whatever else those who do the deputy work of the whole may be called—are godly and spiritual, they will provide and give out seasonable food to nourish and enrich the flock, by means of

which they, even in their indolence, may for a time, and to a certain degree, be kept from open backsliding, but they will be far from being a spiritual or an active people. Wherever ministry, or rule, or any outside aid whatever, takes the place of personal dealing with God in heart-searching, prayer and the Word, with the daily exercise of heart and conscience in regard to the place He has called the individual to fill, and the work He has given him to do, then there is, there must be decline in spiritual health and vigour, with an arrest of the development of those functions which God has set in the body for its health and growth. Alas, for the church, where the bulk of those who, in theory, claim to be “priests unto God” never open their mouths from one year's end to the other; who take credit to themselves that they belong to a church where “the liberty of the Spirit” is unhindered, but who are never “led” to do anything, save to seek pastures green for their own enjoyment, never thinking of the need of others, or that such words as “Stewards of the manifold grace of God (1 Pet. iv. 10), have any particular reference to them or to anybody else, except perhaps the few special “gifts” who are expected to do all the work of ministration, and to feed a people who have practically become dependants, and have ceased to either dig or gather for themselves. This is a perversion of the functions of Divinely-given gifts of ministry, which we are told are “for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministering” (Eph. iv. 12, R.V.), to fit and furnish *all* saints to serve, each in his own sphere, according to the measure of grace given, and where this is attained and in operation according to God, there you have a spiritual and a healthy church.

CHARACTER AND SERVICE.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY MAX. ISAAC REICH.

LET the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it (Psalm xc. 17). These are the concluding words of "The prayer of Moses, the Man of God," and this Psalm is, I suppose, the only one in the collection written by Moses. To his inward eye how beautiful did God appear! And what a beautiful people would we be with the beauty of the Lord our God upon us! These words mean no outward material beauty (though we may look upon the works of His hands as the outward garment of God), but the beauty of His ways. These *ways* were made known to Moses; His *acts* to the children of Israel (Psalm ciii. 7). Moses was not like the people under the law, they could not draw near to God; but of Moses the Word says, "Thou hast found *grace* in My sight," and his communion with God had become so intimate that he spake with God face to face as a man speaketh with his friend. He was so in communion with the glory of God that his very face reflected the light of that glory. You remember once when Moses was peculiarly near the Lord, he was emboldened to say "Shew me Thy glory!" What answer did he get? "I will make all My goodness pass before thee, and . . . while My glory passeth by, I will put thee in a clift of the rock" (Exod. xxxiii. 18-23). Thus he was in the clift of the rock as the glory of Jehovah passed by, that unfolding of the divine manifestation of God in His matchless grace. And as he pondered those ways they seemed beautiful to him, and his

desire was that the people of Jehovah might be like Jehovah, both in their words and in their acts, and that not only in public but in secret when no eye but God's was upon them.

Where do we see the beauty of Jehovah to-day? "In the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 6). "The only begotten Son . . . He hath declared Him" (John i. 18). What a declaration! "Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. iii. 16). And as you ponder the character, the ways, and the words of Jesus, you get the heart of God, the glory of God told out. And O! how beautiful is our God as revealed in the Lord Jesus? Is there a ray of the divine glory that is not shining forth in Him? Is there a single outshining of the divine glory that has not an adequate and perfect expression in Him? God is manifest, the Father is declared. I know my God now; the revelation of Him in Jesus has attracted this poor heart of mine, and I can nestle on the bosom of everlasting love as the Son has declared it.

Now for "the beauty of the Lord" to be "upon us," simply means to be Christlike. Oh to be Christlike! That is the grand end of all the ways of God with us down here; that we may so know the power of the Cross that the first love may not be set aside, but the life of Christ manifested in us from day to day.

See what follows: "And establish the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it." Character first, then service. Do not begin to work for God until you become godly. This is the danger of the days in which we live. Popular evangelists set young converts to work at once after they profess conversion.

But the order here is : " the *beauty* of the Lord " upon us, and then " the *work* of our hands " is established. God's way is, *being* and then *doing*. After the beauty of the Lord our God is upon us, then the work of our hands will be established. I do want the work of my hands to be established. I do not want those years that I have already been privileged to spend in professed service for the Lord Jesus, to be blotted out. I do not want when I see my blessed Saviour face to face to have Him say to me, " You are here because I redeemed you by My blood, but your ways and doings on earth did not please Me." How the remembrance of that would, if it were possible, bring the blush to my cheek, even by the very throne of God.

Let us seek time, take time, for that beauty to be formed in us in retirement with God. Then shall we experience the meaning of 2 Cor. iii. 18, " We all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord," and thus shall we be fitted to go forth in service. Thus we will have a calm serenity that we are working for eternity, where the work of our hands will be established for ever.

GOD KNOWETH.

" Your Father knoweth " (Matt. vi. 8).

" He knoweth the way that I take " (Job xxxiii. 10).

FROM human eyes 'tis better to conceal
 Much that we suffer, much we daily feel ;
 But oh ! the thought doth tranquilize and heal
 That all is known to God.

That all by Him is ordered, chosen, planned,
 Each drop that fills our daily cup, His hand
 Prescribes, for what none else can understand,
 All all is known to God.

MARANATHA

(" THE LORD IS COMING ").

PART II.—BY ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

FOR the present month, we desire to lay before our readers a sketch of the various epochs or dispensations, from the beginning to the end of time. We believe that a clear grasp of God's arrangement of these epochs will greatly help to remove difficulties. We shall find God beginning with a world that was " all very good," and man in innocence dwelling there. That, after man had sinned, God had a people, saved by His grace, but that they were strangers on the cursed earth, while those who did not know God made themselves at home there. From that time onwards, God has acted alternately on two distinct lines. A period such as we have just described, is followed by one in which God has again an earthly people with an earthly inheritance. This, in turn, is succeeded by another period when the people of God are strangers here, and so on. But at every change of dispensation, it is the sin and failure of the earthly people that lead to their rejection ; and, on the other hand, it is only by judgment on the earth that God again prepares it to be an inheritance for His saints. We trust that these few words of introduction will be sufficient to enable our readers to follow out the thoughts presented in the following sketch. We would ask for the special prayers of all who seek to know the power and joy of the hope, that we may be guided by the Spirit of Truth in the labour of love we have thus sought to take up.

THE DISPENSATIONS.

I.—God creates man innocent, and the undefiled earth is his proper habitation (Gen. i.).

Man sins, and the earth is involved in the curse of his sins (Gen. iii. 17-19).

II.—Hence, while Cain and his seed are finding a suitable dwelling-place in the cursed earth, and are making it pleasant for themselves, the godly seed of Seth's line are a heavenly people; and their only record as to this world is, that they died (compare Gen. iv. 17-22 and v. 1-31).

God purges the world with judgment by the flood, and so fits it for habitation by Noah (Gen. vi. 13).

III.—Hence the conditions under which Adam was first placed in the world are renewed to Noah (Gen. viii. 15-17).

Noah's descendants depart from God and first build Babel (Gen. xi. 3, 4), *then defile the world with idols* (Josh. xxiv. 2).

IV.—Wherefore God calls out Abram, and, while promising him the land of Canaan for his seed, makes him a pilgrim and stranger there (Heb. xi. 8-16).

God cleanses the land of Canaan by the judgment of its wicked inhabitants. (Num. xxxv. 33, 34; Deut. vii. 1-6).

V.—And so fits it to be a dwelling-place for Israel, and to put His own Name there (Deut. xii. 1-11).

Israel closed a long course of departure from God by rejecting and crucifying their Messiah. The land is defiled and Israel rejected (Matt. xxiii. 37-39).

VI.—And God gathers out, from among all nations, a people for His Name, who are strangers here (Acts xv. 14; Eph. i. 3, 15-23; ii. 6, 7).

Having called the heavenly people home, He purges the earth by judgment upon His enemies, granting repentance to Israel (Deut. xxxii. 43).

VII.—And so re-establishes Israel in Canaan—His earthly people in their earthly home—while Satan is bound (Zeph. iii. 14-20; Rev. xx. 1-3).

Satan having been let loose for a little season, rebellion once more takes place on the earth, and God visits it in final judgment with complete destruction (Rev. xx. 7-9; 2 Pet. iii. 10-12).

VIII.—God creates new heavens and a new earth. (Rev. xxi. 1; 2 Pet. iii. 13).

GOD'S HIDDEN ONES.

IN the kingdom of olden time, there were some whose service was "among plants and hedges," belonging to the king, and the record reads—"There they dwelt with the king for his work" (1 Chron. iv. 23). There are "plants" to be tended and cared for still, some of them tender and feeble, exposed to elements and dangers which only a spiritual eye can see and only such as "dwell with the king" have the heavenly skill to cultivate and guard from danger. "Hedges" may be less comely, but are yet needed, to bound the king's vineyards and keep out from them those who have no right to be there. There are hidden ones in the kingdom, dwelling with the king, within sight of His face and hearing of His voice, who do such service still, and although they are little heard of now, they are not forgotten, nor will their service be unrewarded in "that day," when the records of the kingdom are unsealed and its lowly servants are rewarded. But they must be content to occupy the lowly place, and to fill the hidden sphere in which their service lies. For this "the mind of Christ" is needed, and the power to sustain them in it is found in the words—"There they dwelt with the king for his work."

THE TESTIMONY OF CHRIST TO THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

PART VII.—BY C. F. HOGG.

THE way is now clear for us to consider the question postponed to these preliminary, but most important enquiries, namely, what were the Old Testament Scriptures to the Lord Jesus Christ? and as we do so we remind ourselves once more of our purpose to esteem them as He esteemed them, and to seek grace from God, that what they were to our Lord they may be to us.

To the Divine origin of the Scriptures the Lord bears unequivocal testimony in the following statements (Matt. iv. 4):—“It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

In Matt. xv. 4-6, “Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? For GOD said, Honour thy father and thy mother (Exod. xx. 12), and He that speaketh evil of father or mother, let him die the death (Exod. xxi. 17)—and ye have made void the Word of God because of your tradition.”

In Matt. xix. 4-5, “He which made them from the beginning (i.e., God), made them male and female, and said—For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife; and the twain shall become one flesh,” quoting Gen. ii. 24.”

In Matt. xxii. 31, “Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? words which are supplemented in the Gospel by Mark as follows:—“Have ye not read in the Book of Moses, in the place concerning the

Bush, how God spake unto him saying” (xii. 26).

In Matt. xxiv. 15, “When, therefore, ye see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of through (marg.) Daniel the Prophet, standing in the Holy Place—let him that readeth understand”—(Daniel ix. 27, xi. 31, xii. 11).

In making these quotations duplicates are of course omitted, and no account is taken of those indirect testimonies which, from their spontaneity and conviction, make such a strong impression on the mind. Thus, for example, in every statement of the authority of the Scriptures there is an implicit assertion of their Divine origin, inasmuch as it is to that origin their authority is due. We now transcribe His testimony to that authority as follows.

In Matt. v. 18, “Verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished. Whosoever, therefore shall break one of of these least commandments and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.”

In Matt. xxii. 29, “Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures.”

In Matt. xxvi. 53-54, “Thinkest thou that I cannot beseech my Father, and He shall even now send me more than twelve legions of angels? How then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?”

In John x. 35, “The Scripture cannot be broken” (spoken with reference to a direct quotation from Psalm lxxxii. 6).

The terms in which the Lord Jesus asserted the authority of the Scriptures are definite and uncompromising. He made

it abundantly evident that the key to His own life lay in His submission to their authority as the Word of God. Not even the prospect of the acutest personal suffering, mental and physical, could make Him waver. Legions of angels, able and willing to save Him from the power of Jew and Gentile alike, at the momentous crisis awaited His Word; but in that case, He asked, How can the Scriptures be fulfilled? Thus the controlling thought of His heart in that dread hour is revealed. Thus do we learn how purely voluntary was His determination that no jot or tittle of the Scriptures concerning Himself should fail of its fulfilment (Matt. xxvi. 51-56).

Solemn indeed is His warning to the Pharisees, that the man who is so given up to the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of its riches, that he cannot receive and obey the word of Moses and the Prophets, will not be persuaded by the testimony of an apparition from the tomb (Luke xvi. 31). Solemn, too, His warning to the Sadducees that rationalism arises from ignorance of the Scriptures, and consequent ignorance of the pervasive and illimitable power of God. Conversely, for here it is impossible to be too explicit, ignorance of the Scriptures leaves the mind open to the deadening influences of rationalism. God's thoughts expressed in God's words, lift the heart of the lover of His precepts into that spiritual atmosphere which is our only refuge from the materialism which to-day invests the mind and the heart as closely as the air invests the body. But the Living Word, from His place at the right hand of the Majesty on High, by the ministry of that other Comforter, the Holy Ghost, still opens the willing mind to understand the written

Word, as He opened the minds of those who walked with Him to Emmaus (Luke xxiv. 45), so that we also may draw deep, soul-invigorating breaths, of the life-giving air of Heaven.

(To be Continued.)

DIVINE LIGHT AND PROTECTION.

2 Kings vi. 1-23.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH, BY J. S.

I HAVE little to say about the details related in this portion of Scripture. I simply take this passage as an illustration of the grace of God.

The ministry of Elisha differs from that of Elijah in that it is a ministry of grace. It corresponds to that of the Lord, which was altogether different from that of John the Baptist. Elijah's mission was to recall the people to faithfulness to Jehovah, and even if unsuccessful, the rights of God were maintained. It was then that Elisha appeared on the scene in the midst of the weakness and ruin of Israel, with a ministry characterised by the grace of God. He had a double portion of the spirit of Elijah, the portion of the first-born.

The condition of Israel at this time was very dark, indeed; Joram, the successor of Abab, was on the throne. The preceding chapter shows us how profound was the darkness at that time, as also the Lord expresses it in Luke, "Many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha, the prophet, and none of them was cleaned, saving Naaman, the Syrian." It was a stranger, not Israel, who profited by the light which shone at that time.

The testimony was in Israel, but the truth was not there; it was with the

prophet. When everything is in confusion one has to distinguish between the vessel of testimony and the light, for the protection of God is with the latter. The king of Israel profited by the light, although it was not with him. The king of Syria was opposed to the testimony of God and of Elisha; he was greatly troubled because the king of Israel had knowledge of all his movements, and he thought he had a traitor among his servants, but they showed him that the light was with the prophet in Israel. Thus the king of Israel profited by the light. It is the same in Christendom. It benefits by the truth which affords it protection. If the truth was not maintained what would become of Christendom? It would speedily fall into apostacy. It is much more important than is generally thought to possess the light, though it be only with the few; yet it is a great gain to those who have it not.

We have already said the protection of God is with the light, as seen plainly in the following verses—"And he said, go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, behold he is in Dothan, therefore sent he thither horses and chariots and a great host; and they came by night, and compassed the city about. And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold a host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray Thee, open his eyes that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw; and behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots

of fire round about Elisha" (verse 13-17). If our eyes have been opened like the servant of Elisha, we shall see that the protection of God is with the light; there it is that God's care is displayed.

If we consider the seven churches of Asia, we cannot but see the Lord is particularly interested in that of Philadelphia. It has but little strength, but the Lord can say of it, "Thou has kept My Word, and hast not denied My Name." His help and His protection encompassed it. It was thus with Elisha; the spot where he was, was well protected; the chariots and the horses were not around the king of Israel, but around the prophet.

If it were not for Divine protection we should have good reason to fear that the little light we have would soon disappear; but while it is there I am convinced God will take care of it to the end. The Divine protection cannot be where there is presumption or anything approaching to it, but if the truth is maintained with *humility* the protection of God will never be lacking. It is impossible to say where the truth shall be found at a future day. Supposing *we* possess it to-day it does not follow that *we* shall have it to-morrow, but there, wherever the truth is, will be found the protection of God.

There was then no fellowship in Israel except for evil. Elisha lived in isolation, but he was the object of the Divine protection. I believe that God has given us the light, though little appreciated. He gives us also to enjoy the communion and the protection inseparable from that light. When we possess the light of God then we have a profound sense of grace. He who possesses it can truly preach the Gospel, for the more one has of it the greater the

sense of Divine grace (verse 19-23). Here we have a beautiful picture of grace.

The Syrians were opposed to the testimony of God, and as a consequence they were rendered impotent. In answer to the prayer of Elisha they were struck with blindness. The prophet did not ask that extreme judgment should fall upon them, but only that they might be rendered absolutely powerless in a strange city. What a sad condition! I have seen blind people walking with the aid of a stick by the side of the kerb, but I am not sure if there were many kerbs in the streets of Samaria.

They were then led to Samaria, the town they desired to reach. And what did they meet? An enemy? No, nothing of the sort. They found themselves in the presence of grace. The king of Israel could not rise to this grace, for he said, "Shall I smite them; shall I smite them?" "No," replied the prophet, "wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? Set bread and water before them." What a lovely picture of grace!

Saul of Tarsus gives us another example of God's way of acting. He was not going to Samaria but to Damascus, the city of these same Syrians. On his road he was struck with blindness and rendered so impotent that he had to be led to the place, which in his fury he meant to go to. Little did he think he would arrive in such a manner.

But God had His thoughts about Saul, and for this reason He rendered him powerless. It is easy for Him to break down the strongest man. The thief on the Cross and the Phillipian jailor are further examples of how He works.

As we have seen, Saul was going to Damascus, breathing only threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord; but see what happened. He was obliged to be led by the hand into Damascus. What a humiliating thing for a man like Saul! For all that the disciples of that city were afraid when they heard that Saul was there; but Ananias went to him and, instead of reproaching him, he placed before him "bread and water." It was there that Saul learned the grace of God in the forgiveness of sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. In the Scriptures bread is, I believe, the symbol of grace. Saul was thus made a partaker of grace, and refreshed by the Holy Spirit.

We read afterwards "the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel" (verse 23). We have something similar in the Acts, "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea;" the persecution had ceased.

Do you not think the Syrians would have changed their minds after such an experience? Would they not have something to say of this grace? Does not their experience somewhat resemble that of a newly converted man? They could say "We have met the man of God, and we have been struck with blindness in His presence, and made powerless: then he led us to Samaria where we found, not what our conduct deserved, but food in abundance." What a beautiful picture of the grace of Him who accomplished His purpose by rendering man impotent.

The grace of God brings salvation, then teaches us. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men hath appeared, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly."

Many think that when we possess the knowledge of salvation, grace has done its work ; but it has yet to have its teaching and its moral effect upon the heart. It will lead us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live in this present age soberly, justly, and godly. The manner of live of the one who has the sense of grace is all changed ; the law could never produce such an effect.

This grace produced these happy effects in Saul of Tarsus, and we do not see him return to his old master. The Syrians were sent home to theirs in the same manner as the Lord sent home the demoniac to tell out what had been done for him. As for Saul the Lord had other work for him. He did not return at that time to Jerusalem, but he witnessed at Damascus where he had had the happy experience of the grace of God, and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

I am fond of reading the incidents in the life of Elisha. I see the same principles throughout the Scriptures. The principles of the grace of God never alter ; that which is manifested in the gospel has always existed in the heart of God. Grace only and not judgment could help Israel.

The light was a protection for Israel, though as a nation it received it not, but the Divine help was with those who possessed the light. It is so always. God will never fail to protect those who have the light, even in a providential manner ; and the more we have of it, the more do we have the sense of what is in the heart of God for man ; and the more efficacious will be the ministry of grace. May God give us to know increasingly the riches of His grace, so that we may be better fitted to communicate it to others.

SHEPHERD WORK AND ITS REWARD.

THANKLESS often is the service here, but rich is the reward hereafter of going after the wandering sheep of the blood-bought flock of God ; seeking out the backsliding, recovering those led aside into byways, and delivering such as have been entangled in the fowler's snare, "because they belong to Christ." This is a service held in little esteem in the present time. It does not bring the servant into publicity as the preacher on the platform. It does not gather the crowd, or excite enthusiasm like the work of the evangelist. It does not provide the stimulating soul-enriching occupation with the Word, that falls to the lot of the teacher who feeds the people of God on the deep and precious things of Christ. It is a work of healing and restoring ; it occupies itself chiefly with those who are out of soul health and out of rank, with whom spiritual intercourse is either impossible or of a character little calculated to cheer or encourage. It receives no praise of men ; it is scarcely regarded as being worth recording in what is called "the Lord's work." Yet no work more closely approximates to that of the Good Shepherd, who came to seek and save the lost, and we are sure no brighter crown will be awarded on that day than "the crown of glory" (1 Pet. v. 4) to the faithful shepherd of the little flock. But it needs much grace, much patience and close companionship with the Lord, to enable anyone to fulfil such a service worthy of Him, and yielding blessing to those to whom it is rendered. A tender heart and a firm hand are both needed in dealing with the wilful and the wayward sheep of Christ's flock.

The Bible Annotator.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE STUDY.

SEVEN LINKS WITH THE LORD.

Knowing the Lord (Heb. viii. 11).
 Confessing the Lord (Rom. x. 9).
 Following the Lord (Josh. xiv. 8).
 Serving the Lord (Acts xx. 19).
 Honouring the Lord (Prov. iii. 9).
 Magnifying the Lord (Psa. xxxiv. 3).
 Present with the Lord (2 Cor. v. 8).

CHRIST THE LIVING ONE.

The Living **STONE** on which we *build*. (1 Pet. ii. 5).
 The Living **BREAD** on which we *feed*. John vi. 51
 The Living **WAY** by which we draw *near*. (Heb. x. 20).
 The Living **PRIEST** through whom we *worship*.
 Heb. xiii. 25
 The Living **HOPE** for which we *wait*. Pet. i. 3).

GOOD WORKS.

The Believer in Christ is
 Created unto good works (Eph. ii. 10).
 Furnished unto all good works (2 Tim. iii. 17).
 Careful to maintain good works (Tit. iii. 8).
 Prepared unto every good work (2 Tim. ii. 21).
 Zealous of good works (Tit. ii. 14).
 Rich in good works (1 Tim. vi. 18).
 A Pattern in good works (Tit. ii. 7.)

BIBLE TREES AND THEIR SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICATION.

ALMOND TREE.—The hastening tree (see Jer. i. 2, R.V.). The first to awake and bloom in Spring, as in resurrection life, and fruitfulness. Aaron's rod was an almond twig, which budded before the Lord (Numb. xvii. 8), an emblem of Christ in resurrection, God's chosen High Priest. The golden lampstand bowls were fashioned like unto almonds (Exod. xxxv. 33-35), foreshadowing Christ and the Church, one with Him in resurrection, life, and power.

CEDAR (1 Kings iv. 33). Emblematic of incorruptibility and strength. The wood is hard in texture, and enduring in nature. It was used for the walls and floors of the temple (1 King vi. 15-20). Lebanon was famous for its cedars, which are in their strength and beauty a fit emblem of the righteous (Psa. xii. 12).

OLIVE (Judges ix. 3), or oily wood, emblem of resurrection spirituality, and fulness of the Spirit

of God. Israel was likened to it (Jer. xi. 16) when redeemed and planted in their earthly inheritance, in beauty (Hos. xiv. 6), and fulness (Rom. xi. 17). The cherubim and doors of the temple were made of it (1 Kings vi. 23, 31). It is an emblem of the believer, full of the Spirit, in communion with God as a worshipper "in His house" (Psa. lii. 8), and as a light-giver (Zech. iv. 12), and fruit-bearer (Hag. ii. 19), among men.

FIR, OR CYPRESS (Hos. xiv. 8). Figure of resurrection glory, in its strength, freshness and durability. Musical instruments were made of it (2 Sam. vi. 5), and it has a chief place in the glory of coming days (Isa. xli. : lv. 13). So shall the saints praise increasingly in glory (Rev. v. 9), and serve without weakness or weariness (Rev. xxii. 3).

PALM (Rev. vii. 9). Victory in resurrection. Used in the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. xxiii. 40), and carved on the inner walls of the Temple (1 Kings vi. 29). It was found at Elim, where Israel encamped in the wilderness (Exod. xv. 27), the pledge and earnest of glory (Eph. i. 14 : Rom. v. 2). Even now the righteous are to be like it (Psa. xcii. 12, in uprightness and victory over the world (1 John v. 4).

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Who is the person referred to in John v. 43—"If another came in his own name him ye will receive?"
 The Antichrist of days to come, who will be received by the Jews, with whom he will make a covenant and break it, demanding their homage as God (Dan. ix. 27, Rev. xiii. 6-8). They despised the meek and lowly Lamb of God, the Man Christ Jesus; they will welcome and acclaim the beast-king, the Man of Sin, as their Messiah, under whose despotic rule they will suffer greatly, and become at last convicted of their sin in rejecting their King.

Am I right in refusing to attend a Bible Class conducted by one who does not believe in the Divine Inspiration and perfectness of the Bible?
 Perfectly right. No man can lead you on in the truth of God, who himself rejects or questions any part of the inspired Word. The surrender of one jot or tittle of that Word makes way for undermining the authority of the whole. No man, whatever his ability or virtues may be, who tampers with the oracles of God, is to be regarded as a safe teacher or spiritual guide.

Answers to Correspondents.

J. B. DUBLIN.—The late John Dickie, of Kilmarnock and Irvine, was author of the hymn beginning—"All gone, all gone, for this life gone." It was his own experience.

"ARMENIAN."—There is a Bible in modern Armenian issued by the British and Foreign Bible Society. It costs 2s.

E. H., LIVERPOOL.—There is nothing of greater value to a company of young believers than an early acquaintance with the Word of God. If you can gather over a dozen around your fireside with an open Bible, and have quiet reading and mutual conversation on its sacred subjects, you are doing a real service for God and toward the little ones of His family.

J. B., QUEENSLAND.—There are many of the "Reports" of work to which you refer, that we have no hesitation in saying are grossly exaggerated. We ourselves have gone to places where it was said thirty, forty and fifty had been converted, and a month after, not a soul of them was to be seen, and what is worse, it was affirmed by those who had the best opportunity of judging, by seeing by their daily life and walk, that there was no mark of true conversion to God about them. And not much wonder. If there is nothing of God in the means used, little sound and solid preaching, no deep ploughing or Holy Ghost awakening, but the feelings played upon by touching stories, the intellect appealed to by clear reasoning, and faith reduced to a mere assent to certain verses and words, how could there be aught else than lifeless profession or untimely fruit. Be content to go on preaching the Word, breaking up the fallow ground, holding forth the Word of life. Leave room for God to work, count upon Him to do so, but do not "get up" revivals for the sake of counting converts, whose after-course will give untold trouble and bring dishonour on the Lord's Name.

A. G., GLASGOW.—When small companies of believers began to gather in the Lord's Name in Glasgow and elsewhere nearly half a century ago, in much confessed weakness and ignorance of God's Word, they were clear at least on the two great fundamental truths that characterize the present dispensation, namely, (1) the supreme Headship of the Lord Jesus over the Church, and (2) the presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church as the source of all

power-for worship, ministry, and testimony. They at the same time had learned by long and bitter experience, that there was not a denomination or church in existence, where these truths were owned and room left for their practical operation. So in order to be free to give practical effect to the truth they had learned, they had—at much personal cost to many of them—to leave the systems in which most of them had been brought up and connected with which there were many natural and spiritual ties. As these truths were owned and honoured, light was given on others, but it has been again and again testified by those who shared the blessing and the shame (for they were hated and branded as heretics by the sects) of these early times, that it was the power of these great truths that brought and kept them out of the world's religious systems, Wherever these truths were proclaimed in the grace and unction of the Holy Ghost, believers were laid hold of, exercised as to their position, and many of them eventually brought out from their churches, being unable to longer continue where the truths that had become dear to their hearts, were either ignored or rendered inoperative by human tradition and clerical assumption. What you are now asked to believe is, that these godly men and women were altogether wrong; that they were entirely mistaken in believing that their denominations were fundamentally wrong, that their constitution was opposed to the pattern given in the Word of God and that in order to render obedience to that Word and honour Jesus Christ as Lord, it was necessary to "come out" from these systems and to "be separate" from them henceforth for the same cause. You are now told that this was all a mistake on the part of these earnest but unlightened Christians, that we who have attained to more intelligence and are possessed of greater "largeness of heart," can go in and out, or work hand in hand if we so desire, with these same systems, only more corrupt and corrupting than they were fifty years ago, and still retain our position as teachers and leaders among those who have professedly come out from them, and that if anyone dares to call in question such conduct, he is to be told that "individual conscience" has to decide all such matters, and that to "his own master" each individual is responsible and to no other. We may be considered uncharitable, perhaps prejudiced, but in our humble estimation these godly ones of former

time were right, because they had the plain Word of God as their authority for so acting; and the advocates of inter-denominational intercourse with all sorts and conditions of worldly religion wrong, simply because they cannot show a line of Divine authority for such theories and practices. Plenty of human reasoning and ingenious interpretations there may be, but no principle or precept of the Word of God to guide, or give light on such a path.

—o— Fallen Asleep.

Mr. Peter Hynd, of Troon, was suddenly called to be "with Christ" on Tuesday, January 19th. He had for some years been in the habit of using a remedy for asthma, applied through the nostrils, which he took by mistake inwardly that morning, instead of a simple remedy he was using for a cold. All that human skill could do was done, but without avail. He passed away at 10.30 the same night, never having regained consciousness, at the age of 54. Converted in early years, he became a diligent student of the Word and an active sharer in the work of the Lord, in Troon, to which, in 1870, he went with his wife to reside, where a very few believers had then begun to gather in the Name of the Lord in a room belonging to the late Miss Perston. Diligent Gospel labours in the open air and inside, with ministry of the Word to the Lord's people, increased the number, until a small hall in Academy Street was opened, under the same roof was Mr Hynd's home, where many of the Lord's servants and people were for many years hospitably entertained, while the work of the Lord went on and the numbers of the little assembly increased. Within recent years, a disused Presbyterian Church has been transformed into what is known as Bethany Hall, and is used by the assembly. Besides taking the leading part in the work at Troon, Mr Hynd was diligent in preaching and teaching in many parts, especially in his later years, as well as in ministry of the Word at most of the principal conferences in Glasgow and elsewhere. Of a kind and cheerful disposition, ever ready to help in time of need or difficulty, he will be greatly missed by many who sought and valued his counsel, and most of all by his sorrowing wife and family for whom much true

sympathy goes forth. A very large company, including Christians representing almost all the West of Scotland assemblies, with many of his townsmen, followed the remains on Saturday afternoon, January 23rd to the grave, where they were reverently laid amid many tears, to await the resurrection morning. The sudden home-call of our brother in such a mysterious manner, from the midst of a life of activity, has its solemn voice to us all, and may surely remind us of the need of so living and so serving, that we may be joyfully ready when the Master calls.

Mr. James Rairn, of Aberdeen, a quiet and godly brother, long in the Assembly of believers meeting in the Gospel Hall St. Paul Street, was called home on January 5th after a brief illness. Although not a public speaker, he was a wise and ready helper in the work and had a real care for the saints, sharing with others in shepherding and guiding the flock. He leaves a wife and family to mourn his loss.

Mr. James Forbes, of Footdee, a beloved and saintly brother, associated with the assembly in Footdee, near Aberdeen, for many years, went to be with the Lord on New Year's Day, aged 56. His loss is keenly felt amongst those who knew him best.

Thus the Lord removes His servants from the place of their toil to rest in His own presence. Few, very few of the younger generation seem to be raised up and spiritually furnished to fill the gaps thus being made. The present world with its claims, seems to command the best energies of the many, leaving little heart or time for that which should rank first and chief with all who are the Lord's, namely, His Word and His Work. Unless the inner life is cherished and kept in health and vigour by continuous dealing with God and His Word, there will be little desire for or energy in His service, and what is, will be shallow and sapless. Second-hand knowledge of God's truth is of little value: it must be learned from God Himself. May the voice that comes to us from these removals of earnest and devoted workers, call us to deep and prayerful searchings of heart and supplication that the Head of the Church may raise up and spiritually fit those who will serve Him in reverence and godly fear according to His Word, while the day of grace to the world and of testimony by the Church is continued.

THE BOOK OF ESTHER.

SUFFERING first, and then glory, mark the due path or history of the saint, This has been illustrated from old time. Joseph, Moses, and David, may be remembered in connection with this truth. But it is the *common* history—in a great moral sense the *necessary* history—of those who adhere to God, in a system or world that has departed from Him, and set up its own thoughts. For such must ever be stemming a contrary current.

But there is more than this. The moment of deepest depression has commonly been the eve of deliverance.

In Egypt, the burthens of the Israelites had grown to their *highest*, just when the Lord was preparing Moses' deliverance for them. In the ministry of the Lord, just as He was bringing redemption, the devil would commonly throw his poor captive in the midst, or cause him to cry out under a still *sorer* affliction. Our own souls are led to Jesus and salvation by a light, which has also discovered to us our *full* moral ruin and degradation; and in the latter day, when Israel's "strength is gone," and "there is none shut up or left," and the enemy is coming in *like a flood*, then the Spirit of the Lord will lift up His standard. "For the hour of preparation for a better order of things," as has been said, "it is not a time of *favourable* appearances, but the reverse."

All this, however, is happy and encouraging. The bud is bitter, the very moment before it opens to the scented flower. So that it is not only sufferings first, and then glory, but sufferings, commonly in their sorest form, just before the glory and salvation break forth.

But there is a truth standing in company with this, yet, as I may say, over against it. I mean the pride first, and then the overthrow or judgment of the man of the world, and that, too, in the hour of his highest, loftiest arrogance.

The builders of Babel were in one great confederacy, and the proud design, which filled their heart, and which their hand was stretched out to accomplish, was nothing less than to raise a tower that was to reach heaven. But in that hour of *proudest* daring, the Lord comes down in judgment (Gen. xi.). Pharaoh had been raised to be the *first man in the world*, and in the thought of his greatness, and in the pride of his independency, had forgotten Joseph, and declared that he knew not the God of Israel. But it was *then*, that the vials of wrath from the Lord's hand began to be poured out upon him (Exod v.) Nebuchadnezzar walked in his palace, and admired his magnificence, and said, "Is not this great Babylon that *I have builded*?" But the Lord was watching upon that evil, and while the word of pride and importance was in his mouth, *he that exalted himself was abased* (Dan. iv.) And Herod, after all this, was lauded as a god, and in a moment the judgment of God made a spectacle of him (Acts xii.)

These were awful visitations in the hour of such prosperity and mighty pride of heart. And such things are foretold in prophecies, as well as illustrated in histories. The "Lucifer" of Isaiah, the "Prince of Tyrus" of Ezekiel, the "Man of sin" of St. Paul, and the "Beast" of the Apocalypse, are all prophetic of the doom of a proud one in the moment of loftiest presumption.

These serious and interesting truths—the exultation of the righteous in the

moment of deepest depression, and the abasement of the proud in the hour of their stoutest self-sufficiency—may easily connect themselves with our recollections of the Book of Esther. It closes the volume of the historical books of the Old Testament, and it is, of all parts of Scripture, the most full and vivid expression of these two great principles; and thus at the close of the histories, we get, in fit and beautiful season, the most complete illustration of the sweet springs of the whole movement.

In the catalogue of those proud ones who meet their doom in their height of pride, I might have mentioned Haman the Agagite. He was of the genuine seed of Amalek, with whom the Lord had a controversy for ever, and who of old defied the glory as it began to unfold its brightness in the gloomy desert, in the freshest moments of Israel's history (Exod. xvii.) Prosperity had attended him in a remarkable manner. He had the ear, the hand, and the ring of his master the Persian (the chiefest monarch upon earth) at his command. And his pride, because of all this, could brook no refusal; and if the servant of God will not worship, the whole nation of God's people must pay the penalty.

In the day of this Amalekite, Esther appears in the scene. She had been a poor captive from the land of Israel, and was now in the land of the Persian; not only, however, in the common sorrow and degradation of her people, but with a grief and affliction that were peculiarly her own. She was an orphan, and in every sense a destitute one, save in the kindness and care of her godly kinsman, Mordecai.

In process of time, without any effort or desire on her part, she becomes the favourite

wife of the Persian king. Nay, not only without effort or desire, but after she had, like another Daniel, purposed, though in the court of the Gentile, to preserve her Nazaritism, or separation to God from the customs of the peoples (chap. ii. 15). She will be no debtor to man. She will not, as it were, take from the king of Sodom (Gen. xiv.) beyond the necessary things. It is the Lord, and not ornaments, which gives her favour in the eyes of all who behold her; the king himself is won, and the crown royal is put upon her head.

And yet, she is simply the Jewish maiden still, and obedient to Mordecai, as in the day when she was brought up by him in his own house.

This was a happy beginning. She began with *herself*—with a full purpose to keep herself pure. And such will be found fit for the Master's use (2 Tim. ii.) Jerusalem might have boasted of such a daughter, though in the palace of Shushan. She might have stood a witness to the prophet's truth, "Her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, they were more ruddy in body than rubies, their polishing was of sapphire." And when, in further process of time, she heard of the sorrows of her people, like another Moses, or Nehemiah, she forgets all that was her own, the ease and security and honours of the palace, and went forth to look only on their burthens.

This was going on happily. She who had kept herself from defilement, was the one to throw herself amid the afflictions of others. She had watched against personal entanglements, and was thus free to serve. She was already girded, and waited only for a call. Right condition of every follower of Jesus. The only due and

suitèd attitude of one called to the holy honour of serving in God's house. Esther, the queen, now carefully acquaints herself with the state of her people throughout the realm of the king's domain, and casts herself at once under their burdens.

J. G. B.

(To be continued).

CHRIST'S FAITHFUL SERVANT.

O NOBLE heart, true-beating, strong,
and pure,
God shall reward thee well ;
'Tis thine the cross in meekness to endure,
'Tis thine His truth to tell.

Oh, not in vain thou holdest on thy way,
Through good report and ill ;
Thy path clear, shining toward the perfect
day,
Thy joy, His perfect will.

God shall reward thee, His divine applause
He strengthened thee to seek ;
His power sustained thee, fighting for His
cause,
When flesh and heart were weak.

Doth He forget the holy work of love,
Wrought out for Jesus' Name ?
Ah, no ; thy record is inscribed above,
God shall thy deeds proclaim.

Rest in the Lord ; toil on, and wait the end,
Receive His words of cheer ;
For sweet the summons soon thy Lord will
send.

To one He holds so dear.

His eyes are on thee, walking in His sight,
Intent His will to do ;
The day is near, far spent is now the night,
O noble heart and true !

THE BELIEVER'S RESPONSIBILITIES.

An Address at Aberdeen New Year Conference.

BY GEORGE GROVES, OF AUSTRALIA.

STARTING on the Christian life, we need to know our responsibilities as well as our blessings, and we must search the Word for them.

In John i. 12, we learn the responsibility of the one needing to be saved is to receive Christ, and, receiving Him, we receive salvation in all its aspects and bearings—we become children of God. It is 43 years since God opened my heart to receive the Lord Jesus Christ, and there was a double reception then. Christ received me (Luke xv. 3), and I received Him (John i. 12). But remember the one who received Christ 43 *minutes* ago, is just as much a child of God as one who received Him 43 years ago.

As soon as we receive Him, the Epistle to the Colossians applies, as giving our responsibility to Jesus Christ as our Lord, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him" (Col. ii. 6). How did we receive Him? Without any will of our own. And that is the way to walk. It is the way Christ walked. "I have meat to eat," he said, "that ye know not of"; and the disciples thought that secretly He had received food from some unexpected quarter; but He said His meat was "to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work" (John iv., 34). We gather from this, that the Lord Jesus lived by the will of God; and this is how we should live. He means that we should be delivered from lawlessness, which is self-will. We received Christ by faith, and so are we to walk. Turn to 2 Cor., v. (which chapter may be read in order from bottom to top), and there we have a new standing,

a new attitude, a new creation, and at v., 8, *a new walk*—the last thing (the first thing in the chapter) being a new body. We are to walk by faith in our individual capacity, in our home capacity, and in our assembly capacity, as those gathered to the Lord's blessed Name. To explain what I mean by our assembly capacity. A little company of believers in Ireland were one Lord's Day morning gathered to shew forth the Lord's death, as the Word commands (1 Cor., xi., 23-30). A lady visitor to the place, stepped in to the meeting room and remained to the end. When she returned to her lodging she said to her friends: "I went to such a peculiar little meeting this morning; I have never before in all my life seen such a meeting. It was in an upper room, with just a few sitting round a table. I did not go to the table. I noticed they had their heads in their hands and looked disappointed, because, as I thought, the minister had not turned up. They, however, began to recover themselves, and one gave out a hymn, another prayed, and a third read from the Bible. Then, after a time, they broke the bread and drank the wine, and made the collection. I really believe they got on quite as well as though the minister had come." Yes, they were acting on the principle of faith, carrying out the mind of the Lord; and although the stranger did not understand the principle of their so gathering, she felt there was blessing with it. The result of walking by faith is our being "rooted and grounded" and then "built up." We want roots as well as branches. Get good roots and you will have good branches. If we are "puffed up" we will soon be pulled down. To be "built up" is like the stone wall on a good foundation, but to be "puffed up" is like a

balloon, which goes up into the air only to come to grief.

We have another responsibility—that is, to "Honour the Lord" (Prov. ii., 9). In John v. and 23 we read "That all men should *honour* the Son even as they honour the Father." The world will have to honour the Son when He comes in judgment; every knee will bow to Him then. But while the world now rejects Him, it is the believer's privilege to honour Him. Yes, before father, mother, sister, brother, or dearest companion, we must honour the Lord. The claims of Christ Jesus the Lord must be kept to the front. David said—"I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to mine eyelids until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob"; and again—"I have set the Lord always before me" (Psalm xxxii., 16). Keep the Lord in His right place, and everything else will be in order. Do we want to be kept from backsliding—from an unfruitful life? Then let Christ have the place of honour—put Him first. Do not be tempted to move from one town to another for the sake of a shilling or two more wages, if there is no assembly of Christians there, or opportunity for serving the Lord. Many have been spiritually ruined by allowing a little worldly offer to isolate them from God's people, and from where His Word could be heard and carried out. How many dishonour Him in the Assembly too? For example, by coming late. We come to meet Him, and what a dishonour to keep Him waiting! Let me pass on to you the following lines:—

"A little less indulgence in the bed,
A little more contrivance in the head,
A little more of Jesus in the mind,
Would quite prevent you being so behind."

A further responsibility is—"Love the

Lord." In 1st Peter i., 8, we read—"Whom having not seen ye *love*." We are responsible to love the One in whom we believe. It is no egotism, pride, or conceit for a child to look into a parent's face and say "I do love you"; nor is it for us to look up to our God and say "We love Him, because He first loved us." What a wonder Isaac was to Rebekah! She heard, she believed, she loved. Her heart was won by the man she had never seen. "Whom having not seen ye love."

Again, we are responsible to "Trust in the Lord" (Eph. i., 12). The one who knows the Lord best, is the one who is able to *trust* Him the most. "They that know Thy Name will put their trust in Thee (Psalm ix., 10). The unsaved are sometimes told to trust when they should be asked to believe; it is the one who knows Christ and who *has* salvation that can trust (see Isa. xii., 2, and xxvi., 3). In Jer. xvii. we have the contrast between trusting in man and trusting in the Lord. To trust in man brings a curse, and to trust to your own heart—desperately wicked—is folly. A business man would not trust another known to be dishonest. God tells us our hearts and feelings are deceitful above all things, and we must not therefore trust them. But trusting in the Lord we are "blessed."

We are also responsible to "Rejoice in the Lord" (Philip. iii., 1, and iv., 4). The word "rejoicing" is repeated in the last verse to draw our particular attention to the importance of our drawing continually from our exhaustless store of infinite joy; rejoicing not in ourselves but in the Lord. This joy will enable us to be hungry without complaining, full without being puffed up, humble without being cast down. I have heard of a dear rejoicing sister who was

named "Thanksgiving Ann." She had learned the secret of true happiness. A great test, however, came. Her son was murdered; and the breaker of the terrible news was sure she would collapse in anguish and dismay; but on hearing it she calmly looked up and said: "Praise God, that my boy was not the murderer!"

Lastly, we are responsible to "Obey the Lord" (see Heb. v., 9). A perfect servant is one who does what the Master bids, in the way and at the time requested, and without asking any questions. In Psalm v., 3, the writer says he will pray and *look up*. For what? The answer. May our continual prayer be—"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" and on getting the answer let us be off at once to do it. Thus having received Him, if walking in Him, honouring Him, loving Him, trusting Him, and rejoicing in Him, there will be no hesitation in obeying Him.

THE WALK OF FAITH.

"TRUST in the Lord with all thine heart; and *lean not* unto thine own understanding (Prov. iii. 5).

"Let him TRUST in the Name of the Lord, and *stay* upon his God" (Isa. l. 10).

I CANNOT see with my small human sight,
Why God should lead this way or that to be;
I only know that He hath said "Child follow Me,"
And I can trust.

I know not why my path should sometimes be
So straightly hedged, so strongly compassed round;
I only know with God some cause is found,
And I can trust.

I do not know why suddenly the storm
Should rage so fiercely round me in its wrath,
But this I know, God watches all my path,
And I can trust.

I may not draw aside the mystic veil
That hides the unknown future from my sight,
I know the goal, "with Christ" in glory bright,
So still I trust.

MARANATHA

("THE LORD IS COMING").

PART III.—BY ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

AMONG the arguments brought forward to prove that we are not intended to be waiting in daily expectation of the Lord's appearing, one of the most common is as follows:—"The Lord told Peter that he should live to be an old man, and then should be put to death. It is plain, therefore, that Peter could never have expected the Lord to come in his lifetime; nor could other believers, who knew of what the Lord had said, expect His coming while Peter was still alive." Up to this point we have not a word of objection to raise. But now we are asked to go a step further, and it is urged, that if those disciples knew of something which prevented their daily looking for the Lord's coming, we cannot suppose that it is intended that we should be in a different position. Here we believe an inference is being drawn, which the Scriptures do not, in any way, warrant. We readily admit that the above quoted statement of the Lord's and one or two other matters (such as the later revelation to Paul that he was shortly to die, 2 Tim. iv. 6), would have to be fulfilled before Christ's coming for His saints. But these things were strictly limited to the lifetime of the apostles, and might receive their fulfilment at any moment. They are wholly different from prophecies about the gathering back of the Jews to Canaan, the development and rise to power of the Anti-Christ, his seven years treaty with the Jews, and other connected events, all of which it is sought to put between us and the Lord's appearing.

Before the apostle Paul had been shown that the time of his departure was at hand, he had been wont to join himself with other

living saints, and to say "We which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord" (1 Thes. iv. 15). These words were not used as implying that either he, or any of those to whom he wrote, would certainly remain to the Lord's coming; but they clearly show that he considered it to be the fitting expectation of the believer, unless some special personal revelation were given him to the contrary. It is urged that faith can over-leap all the intervening events, and so enter into fellowship with that which Christ is looking forward to, that it may truly look for His coming, though death and many other things, must, of necessity, happen first; but in this passage there is no question of what faith can wait for. It is, "We which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord," and refers to our being still in the body on earth when He comes. This passage is of immense weight in seeking to know the mind of God as to this matter. There are many Scriptures about which we may not be sure where they come in, or to whom they apply; but there can be no question of the kind here. The apostle speaks as one with the Thessalonian converts, and says, "We which are alive, and remain," and it is impossible to interpret his words in any but their natural and obvious sense.

Moreover, the very statement of our Lord to Peter was accompanied by an important word about John, which must not be overlooked (see John xxi. 21-23). The incidents of John xx. and xxi. are illustrations of all that concerns Himself and His disciples in this dispensation. Accordingly, He makes Peter and John to serve as examples of those who sleep and those who are alive at His coming. He does not say that John *shall* remain, though the saying went

abroad that John should not die ; but he does say that John *might* remain. There were no prophecies in the way ; and, while the Spirit calls our attention to the fact that the Lord did not say, "He shall not die," this only makes more marked the words that showed that he might remain. As a matter of fact, John outlived all the other apostles. As long as the apostles were on the earth the book of the Scriptures was not completed. God was still speaking directly through them, and, if the presence of Peter on the earth stood, in any sense, between the saints and the coming of Christ, that was largely made up to them by the communications from God Himself, of which the apostles were the messengers. But Peter dies, and Paul dies, and there is nothing now waiting to be fulfilled. John remains, the man who was the representative of those who should be alive at the Lord's coming ; and, for the last time, the Lord reveals Himself to His aged servant, and gives him the wonderful Book that stands at the end of our Bibles. And His own last word at the end of that book is, "Surely I come quickly. Amen." John may pass away now. That last word shall be a better token to the Church than even the presence the man of whom the Lord had said, "If I will that he tarry till I come." There is nothing left *now* to postpone His coming by a single hour ; so, whether the time be long or short, as man reckons it, that precious word remains with us, and claims from us the never-ceasing answer, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." How unspeakably sweet to be assured that God has put nothing between that last word of our blessed Lord, and the shout that shall call us all up into His presence to be with Him for ever.

THE TESTIMONY OF CHRIST TO THE SCRIPTURES.

PART VIII.—BY C. F. HOGG.

WE come now to consider the use the Lord Jesus made of the Scriptures, an inquiry for which abundant material is furnished by the four Evangelists. It will be convenient first to gather what in way of His own personal use of them, and afterwards to learn what place they had in His teaching among His disciples, and again in the wider circle of His more public ministry.

When the Lord Jesus came up out of the waters of baptism, a voice was borne out of the Heavens, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mark iii. 17), words which echo if they do not actually repeat those of Psa. iii. 7, "Thou art My Son," and of Isa. xlii. 1, "In whom My soul delighteth."* It is with this public and explicit recognition of His person and character in His ear and heart, that the Lord Jesus went into the wilderness to meet the assaults of Satan ; and even as the Father took up the words of the Old Testament in which to proclaim His testimony, so the Son in His conflict finds therein His weapons of defence and attack (Matt. iv. 4, 7, 10 ; Deut. viii. 3 ; vi. 16, 13). He does not treat the Scriptures as an ancient armoury from which weapons antiquated but efficient may be drawn. They are to Him, not sayings of

* The Heavenly testimony on the Mount of Transfiguration, the full wording of which is to be learned by combining the three narratives (Matt. xvii. 5 ; Mark ix. 7 ; Luke ix. 35). "This is My beloved Son" (Thess. ii. 7). "My chosen, in Whom My soul delighteth" (Isa. xlii. 1). "Hear ye Him." (Deut. xviii. 15), identifies Him with the Messianic prophecies of the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms.

them of old time, but words living and active proceeding fresh for the occasion from the mouth of the Living God (Matt. iv. 4). He found no room for argument, or for the display of any lower form of knowledge or wisdom; indignation is not permitted to express itself in denunciation or declamation; there must be no railing even in a good cause against a vile, for the Word of God is sufficient for the acutest need; to that, and to that alone He has recourse in the encounter. Neither does He turn to any other source of help from that hour till He expires with the words from the same Scriptures upon His lips (John xix. 30; Psa. xxii. 31).

As His unflinching faithfulness to God marks Him out for human hatred, He interprets His troubles by the Scriptures. If His love and His service are despised, and Himself hated, it is "that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, they hated Me without a cause" (John xv. 25; Psa. xxxv. 19; lxix. 4). If Judas betrays Him, and He has known all along that he will (John vi. 64), it is that Scripture might be fulfilled which said, "He that eateth of My bread lifted up his heel against Me" (John xiii. 18; Psa. xli. 9). If His disciples forsake Him, as He foresees they will, it is that the word of the Prophet might be fulfilled. "I will smite the Shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered abroad" (Mark xiv. 22; Zech. xiii. 7). In prospect of His arrest on a trumped up charge (Mark xiv. 57-59), He recalled the words, "and He was numbered with the transgressors" (Luke xxii. 37; Isa. liii. 12). In Gethsemane the words of the Psalmist most fitly described His experience. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death" (Matth. xxvi. 38;

Psa. xlii. 5-6). And when betrayed and deserted the officers accomplished His arrest and He submitted, for it was done that the Scriptures might be fulfilled (Mark xiv. 49). When the High Priest adjured Him in the name of God to declare Himself, He found His answer in the words of the Prophet and Psalmist, "Ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of Heaven" (Matt. xxvi. 64; Dan. vii. 13; Psa. cx. 1). And when at last the malignity of His enemies had nailed Him to the Cross, He expressed His awful sense of isolation in the language of a Psalm. "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me" (Matt. xxvii. 46; Psa. xxii. 1). The agony of thirst soon took hold of Him, and only reminded Him that this, too, was among the things written of Him, so He cried, "I thirst" (John xix. 28; Psa. xxii. 15; lxix. 21). And as the last moments of the awful scene draw near, His cry of satisfaction in the completed work of redemption, is uttered in the words of the same Psalm, which so marvellously described before-hand the manifold experiences of the Cross, "It is finished" (John xix. 30; Psa. xxii. 31). And with the words of yet another Psalm upon His lips. "Into Thy hands I commend my Spirit" (Luke xxiii. 43; Psa. xxxi. 5). He accomplished the Exodus concerning which He had talked with Moses and Elijah on the Monut (Luke ix. 31).

He had found His path marked out, His experiences foretold, in the Scriptures. There, too, He had found His counsel, His comfort, His strength. To them He turns in His hours of sorest mental and physical trial, and in such hours men do not calculate or assume a part, they act accord-

ing to the habit of the life, the true character of the heart. The unhesitating conviction of His life is expressed in His words, spoken with reference to Isa. liii. 12. "I say unto you, that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me—for that which concerneth Me hath fulfilment" (Luke xxii. 37).

Beside all this explicit personal testimony there remains the very striking implicit testimony of His character and His history to such passages as Isa. xliv. 1-7; lii. 13; liii. 12. The Messianic ideals of the Jews were very different from that set forth in this passage. Isaiah's sketch of the Messiah was made up of elements universally held in low esteem, and indeed in the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms alike, there is forshadowed a character of the expected Deliverer, differing essentially from all human ideals of perfection. But the character of the Lord Jesus as presented to us in the Gospel's, fulfills these conditions in a way evidently and unexpected and beyond the acutest literary power to invent. Yet we are asked to believe that this surprising prophetic portraiture which found its unmistakable fulfilment in the Lord Jesus, is part and parcel of a pious fraud. Great indeed are the difficulties that beset unbelief.

SYMBOLS OF THE CHURCH.

BY DR. J. NORMAN CASE, OF CHINA.

IV.—A TEMPLE.

THE Uses of the Temple. The very name at once suggests the thought of *Divine manifestation*. It is the place where, in sovereign grace, God chooses to reveal Himself to those who have the right to approach unto Him. There, of old, Jehovah met and communed with His

servant (Exodus xxv. 22). And now the church, as the temple, is the sphere in which God chiefly manifests His grace and glory. Toward the world, speaking broadly, He keeps silence and hides Himself (John xiv. 21-23). From blessed experience, children of God can say: "And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." Truly, the temple is the place of unspeakably sacred and precious manifestations and communications. May our hearts be prepared to receive more and more of them! It is also the *place of worship*. The blessed God there reveals His heart of grace and tells us what He has done and is doing for us: and we, moved by such grace and mercy, bring Him the worship, praise, adoration and thanksgiving of our hearts. It is a wonderful thing to be living stones of this living temple: but the elect of this age are even more than that. All true believers in Christ become part of a holy priesthood, whose privilege and duty it is to continually offer up the spiritual sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving acceptable to God by Christ Jesus.

In the New Testament there are two words used for "temple." The first (*hieron*) takes in the whole of the sacred enclosure; the second (*naos*) points to the shrine itself—the place where God's glory is revealed. The latter is the word used of the church and of believers (1 Cor. iii. 16, 17; vi. 19; 2 Cor. vi. 16; i. 17). What love, purity, peace and holiness should characterise those who form a habitation for God by the Spirit! "*Holiness becometh Thine house, O Lord, for ever!*" May the church of the living God increasingly answer the end of its being! To worship and glorify God, and to be for Him a holy abode.

The Bible Annotator.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE STUDY.

THREE CHRIST-FILLED PSALMS.

- Psalm xxii., The Cross—A Suffering Christ.
 Psalm xxiii., The Crook—A Risen Christ.
 Psalm xxiv., The Crown—A Reigning Christ.

THREE LOOKS.

- Backward Look (Isa. xlv. 22)—To The Dying One.
 Upward Look (Heb. xii. 2)—To The Living One.
 Onward Look (Titus ii. 13)—To The Coming One.

DEGREES OF FAITH.

- No Faith (Matt. xvi. 8)—The Unbeliever.
 Little Faith (Matt. xv. 28)—The Doubter.
 Growing Faith (2 Thess. i. 3)—The Healthy Saint.
 Strong Faith (Rom. iv. 20)—The Aged Pilgrim.
 Full of Faith (Acts vi. 8)—The Fearless Witness.

THE BELIEVER IS

- Saved by Christ (2 Tim. i. 9)—His Place.
 Sanctified in Christ (1 Cor. i. 2)—His Position.
 Separated to Christ (Psa. iv. 3)—His Path.
 Satisfied with Christ (Psa. lxxiii. 5)—His Portion.
 Swift for Christ (Psa. cxlvii. 15)—His Practice.

GEMS FROM THE REVISED VERSION.

THE EPISTLES.

ROMANS iv. 19.—“He considered his own body now dead.” The word “not” is rightly omitted, the point being, that while Abraham took into account his own state, he did not stumble at the promise of God.

ROMANS vii. 6.—“Having died to that wherein we were holden”—which shews that the believer has died to the law, not that the law is dead, as the A.V. makes it read.

I CORINTHIANS xi. 24.—The words “Take, eat,” and “broken” are omitted, and in verse 29, “unworthily”; all evidently being without authority. The latter word properly occurs in verse 27.

GALATIANS iv. 14.—“That which was a temptation to you in my flesh,” rather than “my temptation” as in A.V. The change of pronoun greatly alters the sense of the passage.

COLOSSIANS ii. 18.—“Which he hath seen.” The word “not” given in A.V. left out, gives force to the Apostle's words of rebuke, to those who were advocating a religion of sense rather than of faith.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Am I right in using the expression—“Your immortal soul.” It was challenged by a Christadelphian this week? It is not the language of Scripture. You mean, of course, that the soul does not die like the body, but the words “immortal” and “immortality” are only used in connection with the change wrought in the bodies of the living saints (1 Cor. xv. 53) at the coming of the Lord. “Immortality” will be given to the living; “incorruptibility” to the dead in Christ. Neither existence, which the unconverted have now and will have for ever, nor eternal life which they have not (1 John v. 9), but all believers have (John iii. 36), are synonyms of “immortality.” It is well to be clear on this, and to use only the “form of sound words,” so that the propagators of error may not get a “catch” which they are always on the outlook for, and are ever ready to turn to their own account against the truth.

Answers to Correspondents.

A. M.—The book you inquire for, is long out of print. Its author was Leonard Strong, formerly a Church of England minister, who came out from all sects and laboured for the Lord in Demerara for many years. He afterwards came to Torquay, where his service in the Lord's Name was much blessed.

OLD GOSPELLER.—Whit Monday 1742, was the date of George Whitefield's famous open-air preaching on Moorfields, London, when to over twenty thousand people he preached from John iii. 14, beginning at six o'clock in the morning amid “drums, mountebanks, puppet-shows, and exhibitions of wild beasts,” preaching for three hours. Then again at six in the evening, amid opposition, insult, and abuse. God was with him, and it was estimated that over three hundred and fifty were converted, while over a thousand letters were sent by persons awakened and under conviction. Whitefield was a prince of field preachers, and delighted to hold forth the Word of Life from what he called his “field pulpit, with the blue heavens as his sounding board.” We could do with a few like him still.

S. M. R., LIVERPOOL.—The passage in 1 Cor. vii. 39, most certainly forbids marriage with the

unconverted, but it goes further. Two who are God's children may be united, yet not "in the Lord" The expression qualifies the action, and implies that the whole matter is done subject to the will of the Lord, and in a way worthy of Him.

W. D., KILBURN.—There are seasons of discipline and trial in the lives of all true believers, sometimes occasioned by one thing, sometimes by another. It is while passing through such seasons, that the true character of the subject of them comes out. Do not *fret* under the trial, or unduly wish for deliverance from it. Your chief concern is to learn the lessons designed by God for you in the trial. Whatever blame may attach to those who are the apparent causers of your suffering, God will deal with; that is not your concern at all. "Vengeance belongeth unto ME, I will recompense," saith the Lord (Heb. x. 30).

J. B., BELFAST.—There is no need for going beyond the language of Scripture, in speaking of the solemn subject of the punishment of the lost. The words of inspired Scripture are awful enough, without being added to by any fanciful descriptions of man, which usually detract from, rather than intensify the solemnity of the subject. In times like ours, when on all hands this subject is being assailed, there is certainly need for a clear and full testimony being given regarding it, but the spirit, the manner and the words in which it is given, should be matters for godly and prayerful consideration by all who speak to men from God. When opposers "answer again" it is surely better to simply give them the Word of God than to argue, and to desist speaking for a time, rather than have a tumult.

W. M., EDINBURGH.—We have seen 1st Cor. ix. 20-23, pressed into service to justify many a strange proceeding, but never before heard of it doing duty as "authority" for musical entertainments, at which it is said the Gospel is preached. When people want to follow their own devices, it is amazing what they bring out of the Scriptures to justify their ways. But it has to be "read in" before it can be got out. The passage referred to, gives no sanction to religious entertainments, got up ostensibly in order to "gain" those who will not go to hear the Gospel, but we fear more generally to exhibit the abilities of those who are their promoters. The only solid and abiding fruit we have ever seen, has been from God's blessed Gospel

proclaimed in simplicity and freshness, apart from any embellishments, attractions or accompaniments. Where God does not use this to reach sinners, there is something wrong somewhere, and it will be more profitable to find out what and where that hidden cause of barrenness is lurking and have it remedied, than to get up artificial attractions which are incapable of doing anything for God, to either save or "gain" sinners.

C. F., LEEDS.—Young Men's Meetings for united, prayerful study of the Word are found most helpful, and are continuously held in many places. We have no experience of what you call a "Mutual Improvement Association" with a chairman, nor do we recommend such a form of gathering. What generally goes by that name is a wrangle on scientific, political and secular subjects, which no healthy believer would want to share. *If you can have the guidance and help of one or more experienced godly brethren, to lead you on in the truth, by all means welcome such help; but if not, then gather together with open Bibles, seeking and counting on the teaching of the Spirit of God to open up the Word, and make it strength and blessing to your spiritual life. Private searching of the subjects tends to make such gatherings more profitable.*

Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION II.—Is there anything in the Word to show how an assembly of believers ought to regard one of their number who has become a bankrupt?

ANSWER A.—To become bankrupt from any cause whatever, is a serious matter for a Christian, and ought not to be looked upon with indifference, as it too often is. The principle of the Word is, that God's people should live "righteously" (Titus ii., 12) in the world, and "walk honestly toward them that are without" (1 Thess., iv., 12); and any failure in this respect stumbles the unconverted and brings dishonour on the Lord's Name. But there are many contributive causes to bankruptcy, and only by a knowledge of these can the measure of blame attaching to the bankrupt be fully determined. If his creditors are satisfied that there has been no carelessness or extravagance, but that the failure is due to causes over which he had little control, and

accept a compensation, then there would be more need for sympathy being shown than cause for blame. Even then, a wise man, having a sense of what a Christian's testimony should be, will not, until he has proved himself worthy of full confidence, push himself to the front in public testimony. A prudent man will readily fall in with this, and no Church action will be required.

W. M.

ANSWER B.—Bankruptcy most frequently happens where business has been begun without capital, or with borrowed money, where the trader has nothing personally to lose. If he happens to succeed—which is the exception—he is the gainer; if not, others are the losers. This, as a system, is little better than gambling; it certainly is not honest business; and no man acquainted with the principles of righteousness as taught in the Word of God, and desirous of honouring them, will either practice or countenance such a course. If these matters were given the consideration they deserve, many of the blighted testimonies and wrecked reputations we are accustomed to hear of, would be saved. The counsel, and if need be, warning, of those who “watch for souls” and guide the flock, should come in here, before such a pass is reached that help is impossible. If the beginning is wrong, the end must be. Such matters should form the subjects of public ministry, and young men especially be warned, who are in danger of being led astray by an inordinate desire to become “masters,” before they have qualified in the humbler but happier sphere of “servants.”

H. W. F.

ANSWER C.—An assembly would assuredly be called upon to deal with one of their number who has become bankrupt fraudulently, and has so acted as to make him chargeable with being “covetous” (1 Cor., v., 2), a form of sin which can only be manifest in such actions as appropriating other people's goods or property by dishonest or improper means. God's assembly must have no complicity with such sin, any more than with fornication and drunkenness, which appear in the same verse. The measure of criminality must in all cases be determined before any action is taken. Bankruptcy may overtake a perfectly honest and upright man, either by losses, bad trade, or the dishonesty or insolvency of others. In such cases

we have known worldly creditors to sympathise and show every leniency and consideration to the debtor, and surely his fellow-believers should do no less. But where it has been caused through incapacity, recklessness, and speculation with other people's money, the case is altogether different, and demands different treatment.

W. H. S.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—For further help on this subject, we would refer our readers to Vol. III., pages 11 and 12, of *The Believers' Magazine*, where a question on “Bankruptcy and Debt,” in relation to one taking a prominent place in the Christian assembly, is fully dealt with, and which has been helpful, we understand to many, who were in perplexity regarding the Scriptural course to pursue in regard to such a case. Alas! that it should be necessary; but the speculative modes of business, together with the insatiable desire to become speedily rich so rampant in the world, have become to many of God's dear people such “a temptation and a snare” that, as Scripture fully warns, they, while coveting after, what few of them ever reach, err from the faith, and “pierce themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Timothy vi., 10), bringing about a condition of spiritual disaster from which few are ever fully recovered.

— o —

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.

QUESTION III.—Does having a share in a Co-operative Society, or other Joint Stock Company, involve an unequal yoke with unbelievers, and is such a form of trading in keeping with the letter, spirit and principles of the New Testament Scriptures?

QUESTION IV.—If an evangelist consents to preach in a place where a collection is taken from the ungodly, can it be said that he is “taking nothing of the Gentiles?” (3 John 7).

QUESTION V.—If one positively refuses to be baptized as a believer, and is not even willing to listen to what the Word says on this subject, is such a fit person to be received into an Assembly?

DIVINE ELEMENTS OF CHRISTIANITY.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY MAX ISAAC REICH
AT ABERDEEN.

(Read *Matthew xi. 25-30.*)

THIS Scripture marks a turning point in the testimony of the Lord Jesus. The cities which had seen His mightiest works, turn a deaf ear to His message, and the rejection which was to culminate in the Cross is now apparent. And so we have introduced the characteristics of the new era about to dawn, a brighter and better period. For rejected in one glory, it is the Lord's way to display Himself in a brighter. There is no such thing as defeat with God. Through His rejection and death, Christ overcame him that had the power of death. He entered the Devil's domain and vanquished him, bruising the serpent's head beneath His pierced feet. The kingdom of God may pass through various phases: things may look very dark just now, and the cause of God upon the earth may seem at times to be almost wiped out. But there is no such thing, beloved. The wave may retreat, but only to gather fresh strength to pour into the shore with greater force and majesty than ever. So it is in the things of God and Christ.

In looking then to the divine elements of Christianity, two questions at once arise; questions which in some way or other have exercised the human heart since the fall. They are—How can God be known? How can true happiness be found?

To the first we reply (and it is a most important point), God is known by divine revelation, for "No man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." The Bible is a revelation *from* God, but do I

want a revelation *of* God? I indeed require the former, but for a revelation *of* God I must have God the Son, and the revelation of God is the direct work of the Lord Jesus upon the human soul. That is the real starting point of Christianity; the inward divine illumination that lies at the back of every other experience. This deserves our most solemn consideration in these days, when conversion is regarded as a "trick", played by the evangelist upon the hearer, or as it often is, the result of believing a verse of Scripture, etc.

The answer to the second inquiry is twofold: First, "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." No real happiness is found before coming to Christ: Second, "Take My yoke upon you," i.e., wear the yoke which Christ as a dependent Man upon the earth wore, and "Learn of Me"; i.e., take the Lord as your pattern and Teacher. Thus shall we find what the Lord found in all His experiences in this scene of suffering and sorrow—"Rest unto your souls." The yoke is counted a kindness: it goes under the burden to make the burden light. I have seen oxen on the Continent pulling up steep mountains heavy burdens, which they could not have done without a yoke. The yoke was meant to make the burden easy. If we learn from Christ to submit to the will of the Father, we shall find, as the yoke fits well, that the burden, however terrible it may appear, will be a light one; and in the midst of all the contrarieties, the sorrows and griefs of earth, we shall have true rest of soul.

I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary, and worn, and sad;
I found in Him a resting place,
And He has made me glad.

THE BOOK OF ESTHER.

PART II.

I HAVE before hinted at the occasion of these burdens of Israel, and it is well known. The haughtiness of the great Agagite, who at this time had the Persian monarch at command, had not brooked the holy refusal of Mordecai, the Jew, to bow down to him; and he prevailed so far, as to get the whole nation of Israel (then scattered captives through the Persian provinces), under sentence of death, which was to be executed upon them on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month of that current year. Every Jew, therefore, it may be said, carried the sentence of death in himself—a sentence, too, pronounced by a power which thought it scorn ever to change its decrees (chap. i. 19).

We might say that this same nation has been, after this manner, wonderful from the beginning and hitherto. The burning unconsumed bush was their symbol of old, and is their symbol still. They were a people under sentence of death in Egypt, as much as afterwards in Persia, and have been of late centuries in Christendom, or all the world over. Did not Pharaoh utter another edict for their destruction? And was not God, who raiseth the dead, or who can dwell unharmed in a burning bush, or walk in a fiery furnace, their only helper? And have they not, in the times of modern Europe, been alike wonderful? This decree of the Persian was but the expression of the common history of this people, scattered, and peeled, and meted out, and trodden down; whose land all the rivers in their turn, in the pride of their overflowings, have spoiled.

And as to Mordecai, the distinguished and godly Israelite of his day, the present faithful and lovely branch of the tree of God's planting, he seems to have been a genuine son of Abraham. He believed in Him who could raise the dead. "Abide ye here with the ass," said the patriarch (Gen. xxii) to his servants, "and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you," though that lad was at that moment under sentence of death. And so Mordecai can surely count on deliverance coming, though the decree for destruction was speeding its way (chap. iv. 14).

The present, therefore, was a moment of Israel's deepest depression. But the Lord, as we have been seeing, had an arrow hidden in his quiver, or the appointed, though as yet unnoticed, stone of help, amid the smoothing polishing waters of brook, soon to be ready for the sling (1 Sam. xvii. 40).

We have seen Esther beginning well, and going on well. She was in the "School of God." Communion was light and strength from the Lord himself to her. She had a strange and very blessed intimacy with Him. Not that I speak of visions, or audiences, or trances, or anything of that nature; no, nothing of the kind. "In these days," I may say, "there was no open vision." But there was within her reach what is within the reach of faith in every age, *communion with God*.

She could trust God, like another Shadrach (Dan. iii.) If He pleased, she doubted not that He could deliver her; but whether He pleased it or not, she had but to do her duty. She could, and would, venture all in the cause of service to God. Her soul, like Shadrach and his dear companions, was prepared for any consequences. "If I

perish, I perish," says she. Precious, beautiful workmanship of the hand of God! fashioned and graven indeed as both a lovely and serviceable vessel of His house!

But more than this. Esther may be observed to stand in very near fellowship with the mind of God. She seems as though she had observed the divine method with these proud adversaries. For she takes God's own way exactly with wicked Haman. She is not in haste. She lays her plans to let the heart of the Amalekite fill itself to the brim with pride, that he might fall, according to the divine way, in the moment of its most towering presumption.

She has "the golden sceptre" on her side, and with it the king's promise to give her whatever she might ask, even to the half of his kingdom. But she is patient. She bids the king and Haman to her banquet of wine. They come—and again the half of the kingdom is put within her grasp. But she is still patient, and bids them a second time. Is this, I ask, mere patience? Is this mere calmness and self-possession, or nothing more (however excellent that would be) than the contradiction of the heat and impatience of the wicked? Is it merely virtue and a well-regulated heart, as opposed to the passionate way of a Herodias, when in possession of the same offer? (Mark vi. 23). It may have been all this, but it was more. It was the way of one who *knew and imitated God's way in like cases*. The Lord, in possession as He is of all power, is patient, and even for four hundred years can bear with an Amorite, till the measure of his sin be filled up (Gen. xv. 13-16). So here, the one who had learned from Him, the one who had been in the school of communion,

can, though in possession of the resources of a kingdom, be patient also, and let the "man of the earth" go on to the full measure of his sin. She bids Haman and the king *a second time* to her banquet. And Haman that day went forth joyful, and with a glad heart. He called his wife and his friends, and rehearsed all his greatness and prosperity to them; telling them, moreover, as the very climax of haughty thoughts and self-complacency, how queen Esther had again invited him and the king alone to her banquet of wine on the morrow. This is much to be observed. I need not say how all this loftiness of man was brought down in one moment. The story is known well among us. The day of the Lord was signally upon it all.

History has been said to be "the narrative of the prevalence, by turns, of the several counteractive powers that sway the world; and ordinarily it happens, that at the very moment when a certain power, as with a flourish of trumpets, is proclaiming its triumph, it does, in that blast of pride, announce the appearance of its rival. Despotisms have, on many signal occasions, thus boasted, and thus fallen, in one and the same day." How true is this in *God's* histories, which a thoughtful, reflective mind thus discovers in the general course of the world's affairs! And how we find it so in this history of Haman!

Nor need I say how Esther or Esther's people were delivered in the moment of deepest depression; and how the controversy between hope and fear ended in the most glorious and wonderful triumph of hope. The Jews had the sentence of death in themselves; but there is One who raiseth the dead, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning. "The Jews

had light, and gladness, and joy, and honour—and in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast, and a good day" (chap. viii. 17-17). The month was turned to them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a good day. Esther was queen; and Mordecai, he was "next unto king Ahasuerus, great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed" (chap. x. 3).

This I need not more exactly notice. But how profitable it is to watch the spirit and the path of this dear and honoured woman! Her care to preserve herself pure—her deep sympathies with her brethren—her trust in the Lord, with decision of soul to do His will at all hazard! How full and instructive an example does all this set before us! And yet *circumstances*, as we speak, were much opposed to her. She was, I may say, "of Cæsar's household." A condition in life which must have cost a true Israelite, a real decided Nazarite, much watchfulness of spirit and self-mortifying. But her walk with the Lord was so close and so genuine, that she appears to have reached some of the deepest secrets of His mind, acting on the great adversary, as I was noticing, precisely in God's own way—nay, in very near fellowship with Him; for we see that as soon as her plan had ripened the pride of the heart of Haman, that moment the Lord began to act upon him, and prepare the instruments of his destruction. For it was on the very night which intervened between the two days of queen Esther's feasts, that the Lord sent that dream into the heart of Ahasuerus,

which leads to the humbling of the haughty Amalekite (chap. vi.)

Let none say, then, that their *circumstances* are against them. Her's were eminently so. But decision of heart and singleness of eye kept her soul in communion with that strength which is a match for all circumstances.

This was a time of crisis. There have been others like it in the progress of the government of the world—a time when the master of the house rose up to shut to the door, or to discern between the righteous and the wicked. And in this crisis, in the days of Haman and Esther, as I observed, the great principles of God were expressed with peculiar decision—the *exultation of the righteous in the moment of deepest depression, and the humbling of the mighty in the hour of their proudest thoughts*—characteristics, as I have also said, which are given with striking and seasonable fitness to this little book, which closes the historical volume in the Old Testament.

J. G. B.

(To be continued).

—o—

Ever since the very earliest times, almost even from the days of the apostles themselves, so soon did the current of evil begin to set strongly in, that true children of God have had opprobrious names heaped upon them, these epithets being with reference to the tenets they dared to hold, or to their devotedness to their God in the face of the mass of the so-called religious world. The continuance unto this day of the same practice of misrepresentation of the confessors of the Lord, shew how the present generation are at the same work, and filling up the measure of their fathers' sins.—*W. Lincoln.*

MARANATHA

("THE LORD WILL COME").

PART IV.—BY ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

ANOTHER argument used to prove that the Lord Jesus cannot come back yet, is as follows:—It says in 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52, "Behold I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." Now if we are only to be caught up at the *last* trump, it follows that all other trumpet calls must be past before that time comes. But in chapters viii. to xi. of the Revelation, we get seven trumpets, sounded by seven angels, and it is certain that the events of these chapters have not yet taken place. Is it not plain, then, that the *last* trump must be either the seventh there spoken of, or one that comes after, and that all that is contained in those chapters must take place before the Lord can come?

It strikes us that a very little reflection will show that this argument, which sounds very plausible, perhaps, at first, has really no weight at all in it. The Apostle Paul wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians more than thirty years before the visions of the Book of the Revelation were given to John. No one at that time had heard anything about the seals and trumpets and vials of that Book. Now, consider what it is that we are asked to believe. The Corinthian saints were being grievously led astray on the important foundation truth of the resurrection, and in this fifteenth chapter the apostle is setting them right. Is it to be supposed, for a moment, that he could refer to the symbols of a Book that would not be heard of till most of the people he was writing to had left the earth? How could they possibly understand such

a reference? In the previous chapter he had written, "For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" (verse 8). It might as well be argued that that meant one of the other seven trumpets of the Revelation. All such references must be to things that the Corinthian Church would be able to understand. Otherwise there would be no "distinction in the sounds," and how should they know what was meant? (see 1 Cor. xiv. 7). These verses of chapter xiv. will help us to catch the thought. In warfare the orders of the commanding officer are conveyed by means of trumpet sounds, or bugle call, as it is commonly named, and all through the din of the conflict they are heard and obeyed. When the day's arduous work is ended, the last trump is that which calls the weary soldiers to their repose. If, afterwards, the General desires to speak some words of encouragement and praise to his men for the part they had taken in the fight, it is not by trumpet notes, but face to face, and with his own voice that he addresses them. Just so with the Lord. The precious Scriptures and the Spirit-taught ministry of His Word are the trumpet sounds by which He directs and encourages us all through the time of conflict down here. But presently the blessed moment—blessed to Him as well as to us—shall come, when He will summon us up to His presence. It will be the last time that He will need to speak by trumpet call, for after that we shall be for ever with Him. We shall see His face, we shall hear His voice; so the trumpet sound shall be exchanged for face to face.

It reminds us of the silver trumpets of Numbers x. If the children of Israel were to be called together in solemn assembly,

if they were to prepare for the march, if they were to be warned of impending danger, the well-defined notes of the silver trumpets were heard all through the camp, making known to every man the will of Jehovah. Silver was the well known type of redemption or atonement; and the use of the silver trumpets for conveying all the instructions of the Lord to His people, reminds us, that God always deals with us on the ground of redeeming grace, making that the foundation of every exhortation and commandment. And what a mighty witness to the power of redeeming grace that last trumpet call will be! The sleeping ones shall be raised and the living ones changed in one moment, when "the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God" (1 Thes. iv. 16). Whatever faltering there may have been in our obedience to many an earlier command, there will be none then. Whoever may have been absent from the assembly of His saints before, not one will be missing that day. "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed."

How simply and beautifully everything fits into its place! The angel trumpets that announce the coming woes on the world have no part in all this, and do not in any way make that blessed summons for which we wait, anything else than the LAST TRUMP to the Lord's waiting ones. May the thought of that last trump, and all the untold joy it shall bring to us, make us daily more watchful for every note that comes from the same blessed source. The ear and heart that are truly waiting and longing for the last trump, will surely not fail to catch each previous word of command, of warning and of encouragement.

NOTES ON ROMANS.

PART II.—CHAPTER VI.

BY GEORGE ADAM.

THIS chapter opens up a new section of this letter. Let the enquiring reader observe the change of the word "FOR" in chapter v., regarding the death of Christ in verses 6-8, into the word "WITH," in chap. vi., verses 6-8. The expressions "Christ died *for* the ungodly," and "for us" tell of *substitution*, that is, "He was made sin" by God, for us. He voluntarily took the place of the sinner, and bore the judgment due to sin. Faith in that divine settlement of the question of sin's *guilt*, for ever frees the believer from sin's *punishment*. This doctrine, as we have already seen, was finally disposed of in chapter v. But it is not substitution that is taught in chapter vi.; it is identification WITH CHRIST in His death "unto sin." Some object to such an expression; I only use it here to show that it is not Christ's death for the sinner, it is the identification with Christ of the sinner who believes the gospel, which is a very different thing. As God reckons, when Christ died the believer died "with Him." It is also instructive to observe how, and where, the ordinance of baptism is introduced in this epistle. We have seen how the doctrine of justification from the guilt and condemnation of sin has been settled before there is any allusion to baptism; so it is quite clear that this ordinance has nothing to do with a sinner's deliverance from sin's guilt. Baptism is brought in to illustrate how a believer is freed from the *dominion* of sin, not from its *penalty*. In the Old Testament there are two figures which are helpful in this connection. One is referred

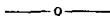
to in 1 Pet. iii. 21-22. Here the Spirit is speaking of the ark that Noah builded. And he says it was a "figure." He also says of baptism that it is a "like figure." That is, the ark which saved Noah and his house from destruction by the flood, and the believer's immersion under the waters of baptism, both derive their import from the same New Testament truth. That evidently is, the passage of the Lord Jesus under the billows of death into resurrection life. In this passage we read "that baptism doth also save us,"... "by the resurrection of Christ." It is quite true that if one sees his, or her, responsibility to be immersed, and does not obey the light they have got, their disobedience will give them a *bad conscience*. But in this passage there is a much deeper truth than this, and that is, unless a believer has apprehended, and accepted the truth of which baptism is a figure, he never can possess a really good conscience. He may have some *tastes* of it, but unless he has seen not only all his sins borne away on the cross, but also himself as a sinner condemned and executed, the evil nature which is still in the believer will assert itself, and defile the conscience by its very presence, unless the believer can intelligently and believingly, read its judgment at the cross. So many are being hurried into a profession of faith whose eyes have never been opened by the Spirit of God to see their guilt and danger, and so many who may be regenerated are *rushed* through the waters of baptism without any attempt to teach the Scriptural import of this ordinance; and by this hurry to swell the number of converts, the spiritual tone of Christianity has become so low, and powerless, that there is no *pith* in much testimony that is going on to reach the

human conscience, or to assail the kingdom of the devil. And this weakness is specially due to the fact that so many "religious workers" are entirely ignorant of those deeper truths, such as are shewn forth in the ordinance of Scriptural baptism.

The second Old Testament Scripture I have alluded to, is 1 Cor. x. 1-2, where the Spirit is speaking of the passage of Israel through the Red Sea. And He calls it a "baptism" "Israel were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptised unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea!" It has long appeared to me that this aspect, or stage of Israel's redemption, corresponds in its spiritual meaning with the truth taught in Rom. vi. Israel had been sheltered from the sword of Divine judgment against the land of Egypt by the blood of the passover lamb; but if the Lord had done nothing more than that, Pharaoh could easily have set them all to make bricks again. If they were to serve Jehovah they had to be brought out of Egypt through the Red Sea (a figure of death), and being thus delivered out of Egyptian bondage, they were free to serve Jehovah. Again, we get the same truth in Col. i. 13. "Who hath delivered us from the power (lit out of the authority) of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son." So as Israel needed to be redeemed by power, as well as by blood, if they were to serve the Lord, so the believer needs to know, and needs to *experience* the same two-fold redemption if he is to be of any use for God. He may get to Heaven without enjoying the second aspect of redemption, and he may make a good deal of religious noise without this, but unless he is enjoying this Divinely-given liberty

in Christ, his success in service will be shallow and short-lived.

I notice in closing this paper that the expression "freed," or "free from sin," in Rom. vi. 7-18-22, does not mean freed from its *presence* as a nugget of gold might be said to be from dross; but freed from sin's *dominion*, as a captive might be freed from bondage. In fact, this is the kernel of the teaching of this whole chapter.



THE TESTIMONY OF CHRIST TO THE SCRIPTURES.

PART IX.—BY C. F. HOGG.

WE proceed to consider the use made of the Old Testament by the Lord in His teaching, and brief as are the records, the material at our disposal is abundant, for though the Gospels do not record all that He taught and did, yet what they do relate we must conclude to be representative of the whole. These narratives are not only true to the facts, they are true in the further sense that they present, not a practical view of the Life and Character of the Lord Jesus, but a proportioned whole; nothing essential or distinctive has been omitted, no feature has been allowed to pass unnoticed, nothing has been exaggerated, nothing hidden. The four combine to present a perfect, if limited, account of the Perfect Man.

We have already noticed that at the outset of His public career the Lord Jesus proclaimed that to Himself, personally, the Old Testament was paramount, in the words, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. iv. 4; Deut. viii. 3). And it could not

have been otherwise. Moses had written at the close of the Law "it is no vain thing for you; because it is your life" (Deut. xxxii. 47). This and no less it must be to Him who was "born under the Law" (Gal. iv. 4). "A minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, that He might confirm the promises (*i.e.*, those contained in the Old Testament Scriptures), given unto the fathers" (Rom. xv. 8). So also in His capacity as a teacher, He affirmed a definite relationship between Himself and the Scriptures. In the Synagogue at Nazareth, He opened the roll of the Prophecies of Isaiah, and having read from chapter lxi. 1-2, He sat down and announced that in Himself these words had at last found their fulfilment (Luke iv. 16-21). Later, on the hillside, He proclaimed His mission in the hearing of the multitude "Think not that I came to destroy the words of the Prophets, I came not to destroy but to fulfill" (Matt. v. 7). In the opening declaration of His ministry "the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Matt. iv. 17), He took up the words of Daniel (ii. 44, *al.*) and announced their imminent fulfilment. The incapacity of fallen man for rule, due to his innate selfishness, had now been fully demonstrated, and the new Ruler had come to make manifest His qualification for exercising authority over men, as it was written later concerning him "Christ also pleased not Himself" (Rom. xv. 3.)

For the sake of conciseness we shall look first at the Lord's use of the Old Testament in His more private teaching of His disciples, then in His wider teaching of the crowds that thronged to hear Him. Then we shall know the histories recorded in the Old Testament, which now meet with such a doubtful reception, bear His imprimatur.

We shall see, too, how He turned to the same source for his illustrations and for His arguments, and how He appealed to the authority of the Scriptures when His words or His actions were questioned; a programme which if carried out in detail would occupy more space than most Christians would expect. Our aim here, however, is rather to be suggestive than exhaustive, we shall leave plenty of room for individual research.

First, then, the Lord's use of the Old Testament among His disciples, for not all His teaching was addressed to the promiscuous companies of people who flocked daily to hear His words. The Sermon on the unnamed Mount in Galilee (Matt. v. vii.), addressed to the disciples in the presence of a great concourse of people, and devoted to imparting "instruction which is in righteousness" (2 Tim., iii. 16), includes fifteen quotations from eight books, viz., Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, 2 Kings, Psalms, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. The Sermon on the Mount of Olives in Judea (Matt. xxiv. 3—xxv. 46; Mark xiii. 3-37; Luke xxi. 7-36), addressed to the disciples privately, in which He answered their triple question about the last things, foretelling the doom that awaited the Sacred City and that final catastrophe of which the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 was but a foreshadowing, includes twenty-one quotations from eight books, viz., Genesis, Deuteronomy, Psalms, Isaiah, Daniel, Hosea, Micah, and Zechariah.* Dealing with the same sub-

ject on an earlier occasion (Luke xvii. 22-37), He referred to the times of Noah and Abraham, concluding with an adaptation of the words of Job xxxix. 30.

Again, He spoke of the reward that awaited faithful service when the present season of trial is ended, expressing Himself in language taken from the Psalms or the Proverbs (Matt. xvi. 27, Psalm lxii. 12, Prov. xxiv. 12). The words of Daniel the Prophet answered the occasion when He described the bliss of the righteous (Matt. xiii. 43, Daniel xii. 3), as did those of Isaiah and Zephaniah when He described the misery of the wicked (Mark ix. 48, Isaiah lxvi. 24, Matt. xiii. 41, Zeph. i. 3). His own attitude toward the world in view of the consummation of the age He set forth under the figure of a husbandman, who, having sown his seed, waits patiently for the ripening of the harvest, and found the appropriate language in Joel iii. 13 (Mark iv. 29).

THE ALL-SUFFICIENT WORD.

WRITTEN inspiration was continued to the Church by the Holy Spirit, during a period amply sufficient to lay down rule or example for guidance throughout the present age. So that no contingency can arise in the history of an assembly which has not been foreseen and provided for.

The Lord Himself has delivered to us principles which should instruct under every emergency with divine earnestness, and He teaches the application of those principles to every case, through the living men who are given by Him to His Church in every generation.

R. H. M.

* Following the list appended to Westcott and Hort's edition of the New Testament in Greek. The word quotation is used here in its stricter sense, and does not include mere references or allusions.

The Bible Annotator.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE STUDY.

THREE SOLEMN FACTS IN JOB XXXVI., 18.

Coming Wrath, with Rom. ii. 5 ; Rev. vi. 17.
Sudden Death, with Prov. xxix. i. ; Job. xxi. 13.
Eternal Punishment, with 2 Thess. i. 9 ; Matt.
xxv. 46.

HOW GOD FORGIVES SINNERS.

Frankly (Luke vii. 42, with Eph. i. 7).
Freely (Eph. iv. 32, with Acts xiii. 38-39).
Fully (Col. ii. 13, with Heb. x. 17).

THREEFOLD GLORY OF CHRIST.

A WORM (Psalm xxii. 6)—Suffering in Weakness.
A SHEPHERD (Psalm xxiii. 1)—Guiding in Faithful-
ness.
A KING (Psalm xxiv. 7)—Reigning in Righteous-
ness.

THREE GRACIOUS WORDS.

"Fear not" (Isa. xli. 1)—The Word of Pardon.
"Fret not" (Psa. xxxvii. 1)—The Word of Peace.
"Faint not" (2 Cor. iv. 16)—The Word of Power.

Answers to Correspondents.

"YOUNG BELIEVER."—Our departed brother James Campbell was, we believe, preaching in a tent in Belfast at the time you name, and very likely he, or his co-worker the late James W. Smith, was the messenger of God's grace to your soul. They were both honoured servants of Christ, and the day will declare the full results of their work.

W. J. M., CO. DOWN.—The beginning of the wonderful Revival in the North of Ireland in 1859, so far as human instrumentality is concerned, is traced to a Mrs. Colville of Gateshead, who visited for over six months in the houses of the people, speaking to them personally about eternal things. She saw but little fruit. At last a young man, named James M'Quilkin, was converted ; soon another, named Jeremiah Meneely. They began to pray together, then others joined them. God began to move, and the work spread over the whole of Ulster and far beyond it. Surely lonely workers may thus well be concerned to go on, not despising the day of small things. God's work in grace always begins small ; never with a blast of trumpets or with gigantic organisations.

STUDENT.—Robert Young's "Concise Commentary" on the Old and New Testaments, we think will be helpful in giving you the assistance you seek. Unlike ordinary theological commentaries, it leads to the Word of God, and is actually a series of references and marginal readings on the Sacred Text. It is a portable Book, and can be supplied at 5s.

VILLAGE WORKERS.—Certainly, get a room or small hall if you can, in which to gather up the fruits of your open-air preaching. Failing this a kitchen may be had. Many a gracious work of God has begun and continued in a labourer's cottage.

J. B., BRISTOL.—We do not think that any Assembly of believers owning the authority of the Lord Jesus, would ever think of "closing their hall" or suspending their regular meetings to make way for an "interdenominational mission," in which all the elements of sectarianism, which they professedly have been separated from by the truth of God, will be represented and approved of. We surely can rejoice if sinners are converted whatever the instrumentality used, and so far as in us lies seek to help them on in their spiritual life, without openly surrendering the position of separation from the world's religion, by closing our doors, in order that we and others whom we seek to reach, may go there. This may be regarded by those who do such things as a bit of fashionable "charity," and a token of large-heartedness, but the average parson and churchgoer will look upon it with suspicion, regarding it as a means for making proselytes, and use the incident to assure any of their members who become troubled about separation, that there is really nothing in it, seeing it can be so easily abandoned when occasion requires.

"INQUIRER," EDINBURGH.—The "Millennial Dawn" and "Watchtower" books and pamphlets to which you refer, and which are being sold from door to door in many places by talkative ladies, as well as posted gratuitously to Christians whose addresses they manage to pick up, are brimful of error on the *Fundamental Truths* of God's Word, cleverly associated with sufficient truth to deceive the simple and trap the unwary. The Divinity of Christ on earth, His bodily Resurrection, His Manhood in heaven, His personal Advent, and the Eternal Punishment of the wicked are all denied,

as taught in Scripture, and a travesty of error set forth instead. Let young and simple believers be warned of these productions, which, became of their astonishing cheapness and the blandishments of their vendors, are liable to find their way and do their deadly work among the children of God.

Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION III.—Does having a share in a Co-operative Society, or other Joint Stock Company, involve an unequal yoke with unbelievers, and is such a form of trading in keeping with the letter, spirit and principles of the New Testament Scriptures?

ANSWER A.—There seems to be need for distinguishing between things that differ in attempting to answer this question. Buying from, selling to, receiving a loan from a public company at a certain fixed rate of interest, does not involve co-partnery, or the principle of a "yoke;" no more does the depositing of money in a bank, or lending it on proper security for a consideration. All these, if entered upon and conducted according to righteousness, are open to Christian traders. But to enter upon a co-partnery, or join one already existing in which unbelievers predominate, is clearly against the teaching of 2 Cor. vi. 14-16. This is what many seem to miss seeing.

W. T. M.

ANSWER B.—The chief reasons given by Christians for being sharers in Co-operative Societies are (1) That they buy more economically; (2) that they are thus enabled to keep out of debt and have something to give to him that needeth; (3) that there is nothing unrighteous in such a mode of dealing, so long as honest and capable men are entrusted with its affairs, and if they find anything inconsistent with righteousness they may withdraw at pleasure. If being in a Co-operative Store involves an unequal yoke with unbelievers, there are surely few things that do not.

E. M.

ANSWER C.—There are quite a number of leading Christian brethren, some of them preachers and teachers, who are sharers in Joint Stock and

Limited Liability Companies, who pocket the profits derived from their investments without concerning themselves how these profits are obtained. They maintain it is no part of their responsibility to inquire into this. They affirm that so long as no fraudulent transactions come to light, they must assume that the business is transacted honestly, and that there is no "yoke" or "fellowship" with the unconverted in this. It is by such reasonings that counsel is darkened, and the Word of God rendered of none effect. The point of the prohibition is, in the "yoking" of the saved and unsaved, the children of God and the children of the devil together in a common cause, not alone the object for which it exists. The company exists for the purpose of making profit, in which each shareholder expects to share. Can any Christian man say he has no responsibility as to *how* what he gains is made, in the light of 1 Cor. x. 31? He would not if trading as an individual. Does his association with others—of whom he for the most part knows nothing—remove that responsibility? We think not; and it betokens a lax condition of conscience to seek shelter under such a subterfuge. It need not be greatly wondered if others are emboldened to laxity of conduct, if teachers and leaders of the saints are involved in such concerns, and defend their position by such arguments.

W. H. S.

ANSWER D.—If the principles of the Sermon on the Mount are applicable (and it will be hard to get rid of them by any system of reasoning), then the words—"Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" (Matth. vii. 12), should surely be a rule to God's people in trading as well as in other things. Co-operation, as is well known, is a combination against private traders, and by its shareholders refusing to buy outside their own Stores, they have virtually cut off the means of livelihood of many Christian tradesmen whom they call and claim as their brethren. This is scarcely a manifestation of that "brotherly love" (Heb. xiii. 1), or consideration of one another "to provoke unto love and good works" (Heb. x. 24) enjoined in the Word. Moreover, if others acted on the same principle, only employing or trading with those in co-operation with themselves, then they would have no work and no money

to spend. One protective association begets another, to counteract its effects, and the stronger gains the mastery over the weaker, combining and joining until a federation is attained, outside of which there is nothing allowed. This is what things are leading up to, and "the mark of the beast" will be its climax (Rev. xiii. 16-18), to refuse which is death. It must be displeasing to the Lord, and hurtful to the believer's spiritual life to be associated with such principles.

J. M. D.

ANSWER D.—"Combines" of all sorts are the characteristic of the times—commercial, social, and ecclesiastical. Some are in them through ignorance of the Scriptural teachings that govern such matters, for it has to be remembered in dealing with such subjects that the greater number of God's dear people never hear a word from pulpit or platform to exercise them in such things, nor have they learned to search the Word for guidance concerning them. Plain and patient ministry of the Word, bringing its principles to bear on existing things, is the only means of educating and exercising God's people regarding their relation to such associations. Arguments *pro* and *con* are of little value, and yield little fruit. The Word carries conviction, and preserves from the bypaths of error and worldliness. The Book of Proverbs—so little known—is a guide to life in the world, and among its weighty words are these, "When sinners entice thee, consent thou not. When they say . . . Cast in thy lot among us : let us all have one purse : My son *walk thou not* in the way with them : REFRAIN thy foot from their path" (Prov. i. 15). It may bring a large income with less labour (which is a chief object of this pleasure-loving age), and do away with the exercise of individual responsibility in business, but it also shuts out the inestimable privilege of carrying business matters to God, and of proving His faithful guidance and care in matters of daily business life. For it can scarcely be expected, that one who has committed his interests to a Board of ungodly Directors or a Committee of management, will have much liberty in taking them to the Lord in prayer.

J. M.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—The principal arguments for and against being shareholders in Joint Stock and

Co-operative companies, are embodied in the foregoing replies. In our judgment the simple question to be answered is—"Does being such a sharer involve an unequal yoke?" If it does, then it is clearly forbidden in 2 Cor. vi. 14-18, which passage is a distinct allusion to the prohibition in Deut. xxii. 10, where the ox and the ass, the clean and the unclean, were not to be put under a common yoke in the plough. The principle of a "yoke" is, that two or more are united in a common interest or course of action, by that which they each accept, and are responsible for as their bond of union. Whether it be a yoke with a single unconverted partner, having his name engrossed along with another who is a Christian in their deed of copartnership to legalise it, and painted on their signboard to openly declare it, or whether the Christian be one of a thousand, having a common interest and trading under a general or assumed name, the cardinal principle of association is exactly the same. The Christian is committed to, and responsible for the principles and actions of the company of which he forms a part, and it must surely be his business as a Christian to ascertain if the means adopted to secure the "dividends" or "profits" he derives from his investments, are according to righteousness, not as recognised in the world, but as set forth in the Scriptures, which are to be the Christian's guide in business as surely as in all else. It is to be feared that some who would not dare to openly acknowledge a single ungodly partner, or have their name associated with his before the world, find it easier to do the same thing in principle by "investing" in public companies, whose management or modes of doing business they do not concern themselves to inquire into, so long as they are yielding them a remunerative return. But their responsibility is none the less before God, as all who make the Word their counsellor must be aware. Frequently a disaster is allowed to overtake the concern, in order that such may learn what they were unwilling to acknowledge, or allow the truth of God to separate them from. As to the apparent successes of such companies we can only say, results, however, apparently good, do not justify disregard for God's commandments, and the end is not yet. Do not count anything a "success," until you see the ultimate result viewed in the full light of eternity.

THE TWO TREES OF EDEN.

Genesis iii.

AN ADDRESS BY THE LATE HENRY DYER.

GEN. iii. is a most wonderful chapter in God's wonderful Book. I only desire for myself and everyone of us that we may in spirit be at the very edge of Eden's Garden this evening, looking in and learning the lessons of it.

Adam lived 950 years, but we may be sure he never forgot the Garden of Eden: not even when God gave him by the promise of the woman's Seed, the beaming light in his Eastern sky of a Paradise above.

O'er Eden lost we sorrow not,
That garden marred by sin;
God's given to us a happier lot,
A Paradise divine.—R. C. C.

This chapter may be divided into three parts.

(1) *The sin of the sinners.*

(2) *The mighty Gospel spoken to them, or rather spoken for them, to the serpent in their presence* (ver. viii 19). The very essence of the Gospel is, to destroy the works of the devil. "For this purpose the Son of God is manifested," not only that He might redeem lost sinners, but "that He might destroy the works of the devil."

This long passage from verses 8-19 is (all of it,) God's holy and blessed good tidings. For all of it was good, even the toil and the sorrow. Rom. viii. tells us, that besides delivering up for us His Own Son, God also with Him *freely gives* us all things: and this includes every bitter thing as well as every sweet thing.

(3) The rich blessing of the *Believing Ones* (verses 20-24). For no sooner had Adam and his wife believed the good news, than their redemption blessings are shown in the rest of the chapter.

Having given thus an outline of the whole chapter, let us now consider the teaching of the Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life. But note first, God's gentle way with his precious creature man, that whereas He had said, in Gen. i. 2, "Let us make man in our image and let him have dominion over *all the Earth*," God at first placed him in only a garden; as it were only a single spot of the earth, and that, too, so well furnished for all his wants,—as the woman said to the serpent, "of every tree of the garden we may freely eat." Yet in this first and smaller sphere man fell! What a lesson we have here! God teaches us our sinfulness in the small sphere of our daily life, in the closet and in the family circle. One may say, "What! can't I command even that little garden and keep it for God?" *No you cannot.* For when God formed a creature to have dominion over the whole of His creation, that spotless unstained creature could not even keep a garden without sinning against his Maker. Well does Augustine say—"Lord, take my heart, for I cannot give it thee; Lord, keep my heart, for I cannot keep it for thee." These two trees may be regarded in the first instance as God's claim of a *footing for Himself* in the garden.

They were what is called a "peppercorn rent," a small and easy acknowledgment that it was God's garden and that they were only His tenants—a voice from God that seemed to say—"Own Me in the garden." Hence the serpent aimed directly at that very thing, and in substance said "Don't let your God have a single tree in the garden, claim it all as yours." What flagrant and inexcusable rebellion! Take an illustration. What would be said among men if some wealthy one should

say to a pauper dependent upon him, "I will give you my mansion with its furniture, its horses and carriages and servants, for your own use, only pay me ten shillings a year to acknowledge that it is mine and not yours:" and he were to pay it for a few years and then say to himself, "I don't see why I should pay ten shillings any longer," and should refuse to do so? Would not all people say his grasping that ten shillings a year in addition to all the rest, was the height of ingratitude and injustice, and deserved his instant expulsion?

I the more say this, because in our public preaching we are sometimes reproached by those who say, perhaps, in a coarse and wicked fashion, that God sends men to hell for eating an apple. Our answer must be—the eating of that fruit was equivalent to Psa. xiv and Psa. liii. "The fool hath said in his heart there is *no God*." By that act of disobedience our first parents shut out God from His own garden, and therefore also from His entire creation! What can God do but put out the sinner from his fair creation, the aim of whose sin is to put out God from it!

The awful characteristics of all sin are : (1.) That it won't acknowledge God at all ; (2) that it teaches the sinner to make himself as God ; (3) it subjects man to that Old Serpent the Devil.

Sin banishes God from His own works, as did the prodigal in Luke xv., who gathered together all that he could of his father's substance, but put himself into a "far country" distance from his father.

Remarkable names were also given to these two trees, whilst man was still innocent and unfallen ; and those names had teachings. Man was to be trained and taught, for God had never before fashioned

a creature so precious to Him—nor ever would again—a creature in His own image ! By the names given to these two trees, God seemed to say to man, "There are two things which remain with Me to give you. Neither creation around, nor your own creature faculties can give them to you, I must give the "Knowledge of good and evil," and I must give you "life." And God emblemized these two things by the names He gave to the trees. Thus they were *teaching* trees, as well as *obedience* trees. Both these things were needed by man, as a creature—life to sustain him, and knowledge to make that life enjoyable and to dignify it. Neither of them could come by the mere act of eating, but the prohibition to touch the two trees bade them learn that God was the source of these two divine and moral blessings and was ready to bestow them. Adam had a marvellous knowledge before—He knew how to name the animals, and as God's unerring creature, whatever names Adam gave them those names remained. Such was the light of human intellect about natural things (see Gen. ii. 20). Oh! that men would keep to those natural things in their sciences now-a-days ; Adam did not err in human knowledge, but when it came to *divine knowledge* to knowledge of good and evil, "Hold back" said his Maker—"I must give you that, as *I also alone can give you life*."

These two trees then are *object lessons* by which God would teach, just as afterwards He taught of Jesus as a Saviour by an *ark*, and of Himself as a Spirit, by a visible *tabernacle* and by a *temple*. A warning sounded from those trees that, "all divine knowledge must come from ME. If you snatch at it, you will only be guilty and die." It is commonly thought that our

first parents got the knowledge of evil by their eating, but not of good. The Scripture does not say so. The truth is, it is one knowledge in two branches, and no one gets the knowledge of evil, except as he also gets the knowledge of good. We cannot know dark, save as we know light, nor bitter, except we have tasted sweet. It is one knowledge in two branches.

Men never got the knowledge of good and evil by sinning. He who commits a crime against the laws of a good government, does not learn the moral blackness of his crime. The man who has committed a murder does not thereby know what the baseness of murder is, but simply knows he is a murderer, and that he is afraid of the policeman. Moral and spiritual knowledge comes from God. The *form* in which good and evil were then to be known was, first in *God*, and then in the *Devil*. There was good and evil in that very garden, for God was good, and the Serpent was evil, and the man and the woman were cautioned against thinking that any power of theirs, could truly teach them about one or the other. The fact is, no one learns good and evil except as he loves the good and shuns the evil. Besides, no knowledge comes in through a man's mouth. It comes in through his *mind*. Daily food does not give us knowledge. The truth is, they learned nothing by eating the fruit, but the bare and damning fact that they had disobeyed. Instead of knowing the serpent and his evil, they were utterly ignorant of his devices, for he had a flattering tongue and a religious and a friendly form, and had deceived them, just as now "that old serpent the Devil" is deceiving all the nations.

(To be continued).

MARANATHA

("THE LORD WILL COME").

PART V.—BY ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

LAST month we were considering the last trump of 1 Cor. xv. 52; but that is not the only difficulty which some have found in this passage in connection with our subject. It is urged that the teaching of verses 51 and 52 seem to show plainly, that the first resurrection will be the act of a single moment, when all the saints shall be raised. On the other hand, Rev. xx. 4-6, speaks of those who had been beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and who had not worshipped the Beast, as having part in that resurrection. These latter, beyond a doubt, were on earth during some portion of the great tribulation; how, then, can they share in the same resurrection with the saints of to-day, if these are to be caught up before the tribulation begins?

To answer this question, like many another, we need to rightly divide the Word of Truth. In 1 Cor. xv., the apostle is not giving a prophetic account of events about to happen. He is establishing the doctrine of the resurrection; and he does so by showing that the resurrection of Jesus and that of the saints must stand or fall together. "If the dead rise not, Christ is not raised" (verse 16). But, Christ is risen, then His people shall rise too. This is, briefly, the apostle's argument; and then, in conclusion, he sums up the whole matter as follows: "Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be

changed." Who are the "we" of verse 51? "We shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed." Plainly, they are saints of the present dispensation, as in any other part of the epistle. "We, being many, are one bread, one body, for we are all partakers of that one body" (chap. x. 17). "By one Spirit are we all baptised into one body" (chap. x. 17), and so on. The passage certainly settles one point. All the saints of this dispensation will be raised at one moment. There is no room for the various theories which would teach that only specially faithful ones will be taken at the Lord's appearing. That question is set at rest for all who bow to the Scriptures; but there is nothing in this chapter to contradict the thought that saved ones of a later day, those who confess Christ during the Antichrist persecution, and suffer for their testimony, shall not afterwards be raised up as well.

Now let us turn to Rev. xx. 4. Here, after the Beast, or Antichrist, has been cast into the lake of fire, and the Devil has been bound, those who were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and who had refused to worship the Beast, are raised up. But in the very same verse we read of thrones, and to whom judgment was given. Who are these persons? We need to go back to chap. xix. 14, where we find them spoken of as "the armies of heaven," who follow the Lamb, and share with Him in the destruction of His foes. A careful reading, straight on from this point, will show that those who come with Christ, to execute judgment upon His enemies, are the same who afterward sit upon these thrones of judgment. This agrees with Jude 14, 15, and I Cor. vi. 2, where we learn that the saints of this dispensation

shall come with the Lord when He is manifested in power, and shall also judge both the world and angels. Here, then, we have saints who had been raised and glorified previous to the raising up of the martyrs of the Antichrist time, though these latter shall share with them in the blessings of the first resurrection.

The expression, "the first resurrection," is not limited to a particular moment of time. It distinguishes those who are raised before the thousand years, from those who are only brought up for judgment after the thousand years are past. It is a resurrection of just ones, who are "blessed and holy," in contrast to the resurrection of the unjust. Those who are raised in Rev. xx. 4, are the last who partake in it, and the declaration, "This is the first resurrection," comes in with perfect fitness at this point.

Many have argued from Dan. xii. 2, and John v. 28, 29, that the saved and unsaved will all be raised at the same moment; and if those passages are taken by themselves, they would seem to countenance such an idea. But just as we learn that the Lord can speak of the whole of the period that covers His resurrection work, both before and after the millennium, as "the hour that is coming," so we find that several distinct acts in the resurrection of saints are all classed together as the "first resurrection."

—:—

A DIVINE PRINCIPLE.

To maintain anything of purity in the progress of a dispensation, reviving power has to be put forth again and again, and a fresh separation to God and His truth has to take place under the power of that reviving virtue.—*J. G. Bellett.*

NOTES ON ROMANS.

PART III.—BY GEORGE ADAM.

BEFORE leaving chapter vi., I would seek to make some points in it as clear as I can, so that young believers may be able to get hold of the truth contained in this important, but little understood, portion of the Word. The expression "died to sin," used in verse 10, regarding Christ, requires consideration to apprehend its true import. It appears to me to imply, that we have nothing more to do with it. Christ was "made sin" once for all (see 2 Cor. v. 21). He for ever "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. ix. 26); and He will never touch it again. He not only died *for* sin, but He died *to* sin; so the sinner, in accepting the death of Christ *for* sin, has also accepted His death *to* sin, and from the day of conversion the believer should have nothing more to do with sin in the sense of yielding his members to its mastery "as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin" (verse 13). But the power so to live, will never be found in a saved sinner *trying to do so*. We will see this more clearly when we come to the consideration of the latter part of chap. vii.

As already noticed, the special doctrine taught in Rom. vi. is, the believer's crucifixion *with* Christ. And as the death of Christ for sinners had to be received and enjoyed simply by faith, so the believer's death *with* Christ can be enjoyed in no other way. We cannot enjoy that truth because we *feel* it, but because God has written it plainly in His Word. In God's reckoning I, as a child of Adam, was killed in the killing of Christ on the cross. I was buried in His burial, and when I believed the

Gospel I was "quickened together with Him, raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Thus the old man has been judged, condemned, and ended at the Cross. A new nature is implanted when Christ is received by faith; and the whole of the believer's life and conduct ought to be the outcome of this new creation, which God has begotten in His people; *according to* the "new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him" (Col. iii. 10).

When a sinner is delivered from the guilt and consequences of sin by faith in the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, so many settle down and have little or no desire to be delivered from the power of sin, so long as it does not endanger their eternal safety. Or, we may get the doctrine of Rom. vi. into our heads, without being exercised as to our responsibility of "yielding ourselves to God as those that are alive from the dead." Then comes the remarkable statement, "For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law but under grace." The law shews man what he ought to be, and what he ought to do. Grace brings in a "new creation," and gives power to live out that new creation in life. But few believers are prepared for the whole-hearted consecration to God, which living in the power of the resurrection life involves. When the angel of the Lord announced the birth of Christ unto Joseph, he said, "Thou shalt call His Name JESUS, for He shall save His people *from* their sins" (Matt. i. 21). This may have a primary reference to Israel, but it has a moral application to all believers. Christ did not come to save His people *in* their sins, nor only from their sin's punishment,

He came to save His people *from their sins*. "Jesus Christ gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity (lawlessness), and purify unto Himself a peculiar people" (Titus ii. 14)—peculiar by being governed by His will in a lawless world. "He gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil world (age), according to the will of God, and our Father" (Gal. i. 4). Christ died that He might deliver His people from the power of sin *within* and deliver them also from the power of an evil world *without*. "He died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again" (2 Cor. v. 15). One chief reason why so many have such difficulty in entering into the liberty of Rom. vi. is, because we are so little prepared to "yield" all our members as "instruments of righteousness unto God," "If any man will (*willeth*) to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God" (John vii. 17). Let us only be prepared to allow God to have full control over us, then the delivering truth we have been looking at will be experienced just in the measure in which we are prepared to *live it*. When Moses was sent to Pharaoh, it was with this message, "Let My people go that they may serve Me" (Exod. viii. 1). Israel was delivered out of Egyptian bondage to be placed under the authority of Jehovah, as ministered to them through Moses. So all believers have been in the reckoning of God, brought through death unto resurrection life, and standing, that their whole being, spirit, soul, and body may be wholly yielded up unto God. If we are prepared for this, the Spirit will lead us into the enjoyment of the truth taught in Rom. vi.

THE BOOK OF ESTHER.

PART III.

THIS subject addresses itself to *us*. There is to be another crisis in the earth's history, fearful and far extended beyond all. Every previous crisis will have been but a rehearsal and a shadow of it. Deep and deadly *security*, like that in which the generation of Noah was folded, who "knew not," in the midst of their marriage feasts, and buying and selling speculations, till the flood came, will be one feature of that day. *Prosperity*, and its companion *pride*, will give form to that day also. And, I ask, is not the mystery of such a day now working? Are not things taking a strong direction that way? If one may speak for another, the heart is conscious that the world is *prospering*. Are not the accommodations and embellishments of human life increasing to a wonder? Is not this generation very loudly congratulating itself on what it has attained, silently pitying those who spent their days before present advantages were known, and boasting in expectation of refining and multiplying the resources of every future hour?

I believe these things are so, and that the heart is conscious of it. *The world is prospering*—and we know not how soon it may be, that if any one refuse to help forward the common self-satisfaction, he must be treated as a common enemy. And what a mistake, we may judge it to be (as another has expressed it), to think "that the suavity, the tolerance, the blind indifference, and the enlightened liberality which now are the garb of the infidel spirit, belonging to it by nature, or would be retained a day after it had nothing to fear."

This is all solemn. The sentence of death has not gone out yet from the wounded pride of the Amalekite against the whole nation of the godly. No—it has not worked to that. The day will not come yet, but the mystery of it is abroad. The pride itself has begun to labour in the heart—the throes and energies of that passion which is to be the parent of such a decree, may even now be moving secretly, and be felt, and welcomed, and nourished.

Where is strength to be gathered? If pride and intolerance be nourished in some hearts, is *faith* in ours? Esther may read us a lesson upon *victory in an evil day*. She stood in such a day, and stood more than conqueror. Before it came, she had kept herself, and refused to defile her garments. She had been in “the school of God,” and learnt the way of strength and victory there, in communion with Himself, when circumstances were all against her.

And let me add, that this communion is to be *simple and affectionate*—not such as will feed itself with high thoughts and strange thoughts, but such as will find Christ in the sureness and perfectness of His work for sinners the great thought, the precious thought, the animating, invigorating, though simple truth, that tells upon the heart with divine and wondrous virtue. There is danger (as another has warned us) of this ceasing to give character to an age like the present, where there is a vast and varied quantity of qualifications and arguments, rather than fervour and simplicity of spirit—where, as the natural result of intellectual and religious progress, “the glory of Christ, as *Saviour of man*, which should be always as the sun in the heavens, shines with an *astral* lustre.” But—times of difficulty demand simple,

nutritious, strengthening truth—“a different order of things around us would presently bring into play the more powerful elements of the moral life. Events may be imagined which would mar our levity, and break up the polished surface that reflects our case, and lead us home to the first principles of the gospel, and quite sicken our taste for everything but those principles; and it is under such an impression that the *gospel* (simple, plain truth of God’s grace and salvation) will assume its just dimensions in our sight—and the glad tidings of mercy be listened to with a new and genuine joy.”

True, and also seasonable in this day of many a busy speculation, are these meditations. And most seasonable are the words of the blessed Lord Himself to His disciples, in the day that He began to talk to them of their coming troubles. “What is a man profited (said He to them) if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul” (Matt. xvi. 26). Here is truth for the strengthening of the heart against the day of evil. For those words speak the excellency and the value of the glories which are to follow the day of evil. Our Lord uses the language of the merchant. He speaks of profit, and loss, and exchange. He contemplates a bargain—and, for the comfort of the believer, He decides *that* a bad bargain that man would make, who would take the whole world (supposing that he could get it) in exchange for a share in the glory that is to be revealed. He is not (though this is the general apprehension) in this passage so much settling the question of *personal safety*, as of *profit and loss*.

And we all know the power of bright and sure expectation, though they may be

still distant. Man will toil through dangers, weariness, and mortification, to reach such. And the Lord here witnesses to us the sureness and the brightness of our expectations—affirming His word shortly after by unveiling for a moment on the holy hill the very region of these promised glories. And if we believe His competency to handle these weights and measures, and to try comparative value—and then, if we believe His truth in giving the result of such trial, or the judgment, our hearts will be further fortified for “every trying hour.”

Peter, as it were, unconsciously vindicated the Lord's verdict on the value of the glory when he said, “Lord, it is good for us to be here.” Oh, can we look to Him, and say, “Thou shalt choose our inheritance for us :”

“Thrice blessed, joy-inspiring hope,
It lifts the fainting spirit up,
It brings to life the dead ;
Our conflicts here shall soon be past,
And we shall all ascend at last,
Triumphant with our Head.”

J. G. B

THE TESTIMONY OF CHRIST TO THE SCRIPTURES.

PART IX.—BY C. F. HOGG.

HE foresaw that the self-sufficiency of the disciples would result in denial of their Lord in the hour of His betrayal, and this He told them in the language and on the authority of Scripture (Mark xiv. 27, Zech. xiii. 7). And when He has occasion to upbraid them for slowness of comprehension He finds suitable words in Jer. v. 21—Mark viii. 18. In prospect of His departure, their hearts were sorely troubled ; and notwithstanding

their many failures, He knew they loved Him, and in the words of the Prophet He comforted them (John xvi. 22, Isaiah lxvi. 14). To refresh their uncertain memories in the interval that must elapse before His return, to maintain in them the spirit of worship, to keep before them in symbol the nature of the salvation He had secured for them, He instituted a Memorial Feast, connecting the New Covenant with the Old by the very words He used (Luke xxii. 20, Exodus xxxiv. 8, cf. Zech. ix. 11). He reminded them, in the words of Scripture, that they served an omnipotent God (Mark x. 27, Gen. xviii. 4, cf. Job xlii. 2). He prayed for them in their hearing, and words from the same Scriptures were incorporated in His prayer (John xvii. 17, 2 Sam. vii. 28 ; see also John xvii. 12). When, the work of redemption accomplished, He was raised from among the dead, He interpreted and fulfilled the words of the Psalmist by calling His disciples “brethren” for the first time (Matt. xxviii. 10, John xx. 17, Psalm xxii. 22). When He commissioned a number of His disciples to precede Him into such places as He purposed to visit, they were assured of His protection in the words of a familiar psalm (Luke x. 19, Psalm xci. 13). Neither were they to be stumbled by the effects of their preaching ; variance and divisions, He assured them in words drawn from the prophecies of Micah, would attend the delivery of their message (Matt. x. 21, 35, 36 ; Micah vii. 6). The reason lay in the alienation of the heart from God, in its consequent grossness and distaste for what is holy and good. Therefore He Himself spoke to the people in parables that a terrible prophecy might be fulfilled in them (Matt. xiii. 10-15 ; Isaiah vi. 9-10).

During the period of His absence from them harmony and peace were to be secured, by the righteous refusal of an inadequately supported accusation as had been before ordained in the law (Matt. xviii. 16; Deut. xix. 15), and by dealing with a brother, however justly accused, in a gracious and forgiving spirit (v. 22). Responding to the words of the Lord, Peter aimed at rivalling in his forgiveness the sevenfold vengeance promised to Cain; but the Lord Jesus raised the standard to exceed the measure of that which Lamech promised himself—"until seventy times seven" (Gen. iv. 15-24).

Thus were the disciples taught how to use and to quote the Old Testament Scriptures. We have but to turn to the narrative portions of the Gospels—to the Acts, the Catholic Epistles, and the Apocalypse—to discover how well they learnt the lesson; but to pursue the subject in a series of papers devoted to the Lord's own testimony, direct and personal, to the Old Testament, however interesting, would be manifestly out of place.

Before proceeding to consider the use made of the Scriptures by the Lord Jesus in His more public ministry, we may notice a like prominence given them in His dealings with individuals not properly included in the circle of His disciples in the stricter sense. Thus in the interview with Nicodemus (John iii.) He appealed to them three times, viz., to Ezek. xxxiv. 25-27; to Prov. xxx. 4; and to Num. xxi. 9; and commended the rich young ruler, who sought the secret of Eternal Life, to the second table of the Decalogue (Matt. xix. 16-19; Exod. xx. 12-16; Deut. v. 16-20).

(To be continued).

HIDDEN WORKERS.

"My fellow-labourers, whose names are in the Book of Life" (Phil. iv. 3).

"Unknown and yet well known" (2 Cor. vi. 9).

THEY lived, they served the Master, this we know,

And nought besides;

No record of their names is left to show

How soon they died:

They did their work and then they passed away

An unknown band,

And took their place among the greater host

In their home land.

No glory clusters round their names on earth,

But in God's heaven

Is kept a Book of Names of greatest worth,

And there is given

A record of their labour and their fight,

Though here unknown,

And there the workers' names shine forth in light

Before the throne.

Then take who will the boon of fading fame,

But give to me

A place among God's workmen, though my name

Forgotten be:

And if in that bright roll at last is found

For me a place,

A song of loudest praise to God shall sound

For all His grace.

By getting further from the prolific source of disunion, and closer to Christ and His Word, we get closer to each as believers.—Wm. Lincoln.

The Bible Annotator.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE STUDY.

SALVATION IN FOUR ASPECTS.

The Salvation of God (Acts xxviii. 28).

A Great Salvation (Heb. ii. 3).

A Common Salvation (Jude 3).

An Eternal Salvation (Heb. v. 9).

It is of God, for man, from sin and hell, unto eternal glory (2 Tim. ii. 10).

GRACE.

Its Source—God (1 Pet. v. 10; Rom. v. 15).

Its Manifestation—In Christ (John i. 14-17).

Its Character—Rich (Eph. i. 7; 1 Tim. i. 4).

Its Subjects—Sinners (1 Tim. i. 14-17; 1 Cor. xv. 10).

Its Operations—It Saves (Eph. ii. 5), &c.

NOTES ON SCRIPTURE.

PSALM XXIII.

Ver. 1.—“Jehovah is my Shepherd,” as in Psalm lxxx. 1, Gen. iv. 2.

Ver. 2.—“Green pastures” — pastures of tender grass (Psa. xxxvii. 2). “Lie down,” “crouch,” as in Song i. 7, Ezk. xxxix. 15. “Waters of Rest.”

Ver. 3.—“Restoreth my soul”—reneweth, refresheth, reinvigorateth, as in 2 Cor. iv. 16. “Leadeth me,” guideth, gently leadeth, as in Gen. xxxiii. 14.

Ver. 4.—“Though I walk”—“go in the midst of the valley of death shade” (Gal. vi. 14). “Thy rod,” sceptre, as Psa. xlv. 6, to rule. “Staff,” as in Zech. viii. 4, to lean upon.

Ver. 5.—“Thou preparest”—arrangest, as in Psa. xl. 5. “Over against my adversaries” distrestors, as in Psa. vi. 7. “Anointest my head”—made fat, as in Prov. xv. 30. “Runneth over” is full, as in Psa. lxvi. 12.

Ver. 6.—“Surely”—only. “Goodness and mercy”—loving kindness—pursue me. “My dwelling unto length of days;” not eternity but time, as in Psa. xxi. 4.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

In what way do the words “Supposing that gain is godliness” (1 Tim. vi. 5) apply? The Revised Version, gives “Supposing that godliness is a way of gain” and is correct. It applies to all who

adopt a profession of Christianity to aggrandise themselves, either in giving them a “position” or a “living,” and there are plenty such now as in Timothy's time.

In the town where I live, there are three meetings of believers, all claiming to meet in the Lord's Name, yet in separate halls, with no fellowship between them. As a young believer I am unable to decide which is right. What do you advise me to do?

In the absence of full knowledge of all the circumstances, it is impossible to answer such a question, but the following general principles may help you to discern where the Lord is, and where His will is done. An assembly of God, whether large or small in numbers, has the following characteristics. 1. It is composed of believers. 2. They are gathered unto the Name of the Lord Jesus. 3. They own His absolute authority in all things relating to the constitution and government of the Church. 4. The pattern to which they seek to conform is that found in the Word of God, and that Word is the final appeal, apart from creeds, human rules and supplementary laws and enactments. 5. There is liberty for the Spirit to use whomsoever He will, in leading the worship of the gathered saints, and room for the varied gifts and ministries that are bestowed by the risen Lord for the edification of His church. 6. That neither persons, principles nor practices are permitted or retained to render these inoperative, or withdraw the saints from the way of the Lord. 7. That godly rule and holy discipline are maintained through grace as set forth in the Word and fellowship with all others so gathered, cultivated and cherished. Meetings begun in division, or gathered on either a wider or narrower basis than that of Matt. xviii. 20, or who have departed from the faith, or who receive and retain evil doers—and there are plenty of them now-a-days—should be avoided. Last, but not least, let the words of Prov. iii. 5, 6. be owned and God consulted, who will never fail to guide the steps of those aright who make Him their Counsellor, and their first concern to please Him.

Answers to Correspondents.

AN OLD DISCIPLE.—The lack of deep conviction and the consequent flimsy professions which you mourn over, and contrast with the work of God in the years 1859-1871, is no doubt due to the lack of

that kind of preaching which produces such conviction and the artificial means used to get people to "profess" conversion, to be counted as "converts," and thus serve to advertise the preacher for further engagements.

ZIONIST.—The "Dowie" movement, with his claims to be Elijah the Restorer, and his Zion City outside Chicago, we regard as a pious fraud, which, like others of the same kind which have preceded it, will come to an inglorious end. The devil finds it to his advantage to surround such movements with what appears to be "success," and to raise or allow opposition to come from certain, to give the semblance of "persecution," which attracts others to the standard, while, no doubt, the greater number are caught by the promise and hope of "gain." There is no earthly Zion, no earthly city or people in this dispensation. "The people of God" are not land-owners but "strangers" here; not citizens of an earthly regenerated city, a system with a church having a "General Overseer," who is chief director of its Bank as well, but "pilgrims" passing unto the "the city" which hath foundations, not in America but in heaven. The American "Zion" is no doubt more to the taste of its citizens than the "Holy City," where nothing entereth that defileth, and where no overseer, no ruler is recognised or acclaimed but "The Lamb."

M. E., WILTS.—If three or four believers see it to be their privilege to gather in the Name of the Lord Jesus, Matthew xviii. 20, is their authority for doing so? "But seeing that as a matter of fact, they will presently be brought into immediate association with other companies of believers similiarly gathered, receiving from and commending to them, it would be comely and surely is desirable, to seek and obtain their confidence and fellowship before beginning to so gather. Usually, a new assembly is an off-shoot of another, formed by those who have proved themselves to be godly and capable, in which case it grows up naturally, fostered by the loving fellowship of the older assembly. But in a case where it is a few who have been led out from denominationalism by the Word and have had no experience in assembly life, it is all the more desirable that they have all the help and fellowship possible, hence the wisdom of not acting as if such were not valued. Much has been said and written against having a "central authority" or "forming

an organisation," but surely there is a path different alike from this, if such exists, and from the high-handed independence which summarily carries out its will irrespective of all others, and then demands recognition of its actions, whether the consciences of saints approve them or otherwise. To be "like minded, having the same love, of one accord, of one mind" (Phil. ii. 1), can only be reached by consideration one of another in all such matters, and even if it should not be considered as a necessity, it undoubtedly is a privilege, to seek and have the hearty fellowship of surrounding assemblies in beginning to gather unto the One Name.

A. M., SOMERSET.—1 Cor. v. 9-12 gives distinct instructions as to the assembly's responsibility to exclude from its fellowship one guilty of evil practices, and Gal. v. 9-12, 2 Tim. ii. 16-19, are equally explicit as to the exclusion of those holding and teaching fundamental errors in doctrine. In both cases, the evidence of guilt must be conclusive before action, and the minds and consciences of the saints instructed, so that they may act intelligently, and under a sense of solemn responsibility to the Lord. The personality of the one to be dealt with must not be allowed to weigh. It is not a matter in which there ought to be any personal considerations at all: it is the execution of Divine judgment, and to trifle with it is to incur the Divine displeasure and retain sin which will work as leaven, defiling others. The indifference and levity with which such sins are viewed in our day, and the utter disregard paid to God's Word regarding His way of dealing with them, is stealthily making its influence felt among God's people, so that many who bear the Christian Name may be found in personal friendship with men who are undermining the foundations of God's Christianity and openly scoffers at His ways, while others, whose sense of God's requirements is not yet so far blunted as to join openly with these enemies of the Truth, are for ever exhorting to "charity" towards them, as if men were wiser than God, when He demands their excision from the Christian community, and the absolute separation of His people from them.

Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION IV.—If an evangelist consents to preach in a place where a collection is taken from

the ungodly, can it be said that he is "taking nothing off the Gentiles?" (3 John 7).

ANSWER A.—He may not personally be receiving the money gathered from the unconverted, but unless he publicly says so—as some have been known to do—he leaves it open to the general public to suppose he is in full sympathy with the principal of taking all that can be got from the Gentiles.—A.M.

ANSWER B.—The general belief among those who give to the "collection" is, that it goes to support the preacher and the "cause." It is gathered promiscuously from the entire congregation, composed of saved and unsaved, even if it go to the general funds of the church, the preacher is associated before men with the system that has so departed from the principles of Scripture as to invite if not compel the ungodly to pay for their religion, and support its minister or the one doing duty for him. The common defence of those who countenance such things, which they profess to regard as evil is, that they "get the people" to preach to by winking at them. But this is unworthy of any man who owns God's Word to be his standard and rule; besides, being a tacit acknowledgment that he cannot get them by means of his own ability or energies. We have never yet known any who began to look upon such departures from the plain teaching of Scripture lightly, and to treat them with indifference, and there; they become tolerant of greater evils and finally defame all who dare to withstand them.—W.J.M.

ANSWER C.—It is a marked sign of the degenerate condition of the religious world, that "money" is extracted from all and sundry to support the church and its institutions, irrespective of whose it is or how it is made; brewers, publicans, gamblers, and others of equally disreputable profession, being in many cases the chief financiers. If one who has gone forth at the Lord's call to preach the Gospel, consents to preach in a place where such iniquity is practised, he cannot say he is clean or separate from it, nor will the people to whom he speaks be able to distinguish between the man and the system under whose patronage he labours.—J.M.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—For many years it was a distinguishing feature of the Gospel meetings held by those who had been separated from the world's religious systems, that there was "no collection."

People wondered at this and inquired the reason, which gave opportunity for setting the truth of God bearing on the matter before them. In the Lord's mercy this is continued, in most meetings convened by believers who gather in the Lord's Name. But there are ominous signs in some quarters that this is being yielded and the practices of the religious world introduced. Preachers who are found one day in a worldly church, the next in an all-sectarian mission, and the third preaching for or in association with a company professedly outside of all sects, are apt to carry with them, and teach to others by example if not by precept, the devious ways they have themselves adopted, with the dire result that others follow their lead. We know preachers who once professed to have abandoned all such unscriptural practices, but who in order to "get the people," as they say, go to places where the children of the devil are invited to contribute their money toward the Lord's work, who have to sit dumb on the platform while the "bag" or the "plate" is being passed round at the close of their address in which they had proclaimed Salvation "freely"—without money and without price. What an anomaly! Need it be wondered that the unconverted are unmoved, and in many cases driven to the opinion that all religions are for the purpose of raising money. Let all who preach God's Gospel see to it that it suffer not at their hands, neither by extravagances in the way it is spoken, nor by connecting with it practices that render it ineffective or offensive in the eyes of men.

Questions Requiring Answers.

QUESTION V.—If one positively refuses to be baptised as a believer, and is not even willing to listen to what the Word says on this subject, is such a fit person to be received into an Assembly?

QUESTION VI.—Is it according to the principles of Scripture, that one ministering the Word of God, say at a Conference, should be put under a time limit, and would it be right for a servant of the Lord to come under such a restriction in his ministry?

QUESTION VII.—Where the Gospel work of an Assembly has fallen into such decay, that it needs the continuous advertising of eccentric subjects, or a constant supply of preachers from all parts to keep it in existence, what is the remedy?

A WORD TO YOUNG PREACHERS.

BY THE EDITOR.

A MARKED feature of the days of Gospel grace in which we live is, the large and ever-increasing number of earnest young preachers and soul-winners who are being raised up and sent forth to make known the glad tidings of salvation to sinners, in home and distant lands. The Lord increase their number and keep them right with Himself, so that they may be used of Him in the blessed and honourable work of gathering in the lost. No happier, no nobler work exists on earth, in which the energies of youth and the best and brightest years of life may be occupied for God, than in going forth with the Gospel message, heaven's last and costliest gift to men, seeking to win them to the Saviour, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. It is with the earnest desire to help along dear young fellow-labourers and soul-winners in this heavenly and holy service, and to encourage and cheer them in it, that we offer the following friendly words, not by commandment or with authority, but gathered from the Word and from daily experience and observation throughout a fairly wide field, extending along a course of over thirty years of Gospel service and continuous contact with others thus engaged. First of all, we assume that all who go forth in the service of the Lord, making known His Gospel to others, have believed that Gospel themselves and been definitely and Divinely converted: that they give unmistakeable evidence that they are born of God, separated from the world, and so living and walking as to commend the message they declare. An

unconverted Gospeller, or a worldly-minded flippant-living soul-winner, would be an anomaly indeed!

As a rule, true service for the Lord begins in a simple and unpretentious manner at home. "Go home to thy friends and TELL THEM how great things the Lord hath done for thee" (Mark v. 19), was the word to the newly-saved Gadarene, and this is the way of the Lord always. If you have not testified to those in your own home, your workshop, your street, your village, you need not expect to be led further afield. You must "qualify" in the lower class, the less public sphere, and 'prove' yourself where you are best known, before the Lord will entrust you with higher places, or fellow-believers have confidence in your ability to fill them. "The School of God" is the best and safest place for the young disciple, learning at the feet of Jesus, becoming acquainted with the Word of God, gathering the materials, and gaining the experiences he will require in days of public service. All God's honoured servants have had their period of secret training alone with Himself before going forth to serve: Moses in Horeb, David in the sheepfolds of Bethlehem, John in the deserts of Judea, and the great Soul-Gatherer Himself, Jesus the Son of God, in the solitudes of Nazareth. Yours may be the quiet home, the busy mart, the crowded city, the irksome post of duty, in which your pride is humbled, your energies cribbed, your nature subdued, and your faith and patience tried—needed discipline for all who are to be set in places of temptation, responsibility, and danger in the service of God.

A RIGHT CONDITION of soul is of the first importance in all who go forth with the

Gospel, whatever their sphere may be, or whether their congregation consist of hundreds of intelligent well-to-do hearers or of half-a-dozen of the lapsed masses down an alley. The preacher must be right with God before he can have power with men. The vessel must be clean and empty—clean from sin and empty of self—in order to be filled with the power of God. The fisherman's eye is first turned to the sky, before he sets his hand to his boat or nets. See always that all is clear above, no cloud between your soul and God, nothing to hinder the Spirit of God from operating in and through you, before going forth to preach. It is well to always see God's face before you see the people: to to have a season alone with God in heart-searching, self-judgment, prayer and intercession, before going out in service. And if the service is long continued, this should be repeated again and again. No tool can constantly be used and still retain its edge: it must be taken again and again to the anvil or the grindstone, else cast aside as out of condition. Be much with God about your service: get your orders direct from Him. Make it your aim to please Him first, and take little notice of either the flatteries or the frowns of men. In regard to THE MESSAGE you deliver, seek it, get it from God. All God's Word is your armoury, the Gospel is the same for one and all, yet the right word for that place, that people, and that time, must be given you by the Spirit of God if it is to be effectual. The whole Word of God is your Text Book: the Gospel as set forth in type, history, parable, doctrine, text, and grouping, is all within your reach, and should be searched, studied, meditated on daily, not to be preached to others, but to feed, renew,

edify, instruct, and refresh your own soul, and furnish you with all that you may require in the hour you are called upon to bear witness to or proclaim the Gospel. You need to take in fresh supplies daily, if you are to give out fresh streams to others. The outflow can never exceed the inflow. Only as you make the Word of God your daily companion, and gather the manna fresh from its pages for your own soul's edification and strength, will you be able to bring out from your treasure "thing new and old" (Matt. xiii. 52) for the blessing of others. Whatever books you read, whatever teaching you hear, whatever "helps" you use, or "subjects" you have suggested to you, let them guide you to the Word of God, never from it. Do not traffic in unfelt truths or deal in other people's diggings: make the truth your own by study, meditation and mastication. Steep the seed you are to sow in prayer, harrow it in by supplication, when sown. Do not walk in borrowed plumes, adopting the phrases, imitating the styles or trying to preach like somebody else. Be yourself: speak as before God in Christ; remember you have God and the devil always in your audience, and all heaven looking on and listening every time you speak. Never prepare a cast-iron address, or commit to memory or manuscript a "speech" for delivery. Have the truth richly dwelling in you, its various aspects or divisions before you, and cast yourself upon the Spirit of God for guidance what of it to give out then and there. He knows the people's need, what will meet it, how and when to give it, and if you honour the Spirit of God He will own you as His instrument, and use you as a channel through which the living stream will flow.

THE TWO TREES OF EDEN.

PART II.—BY THE LATE HENRY DYER.

AGAIN, the tree of knowledge was linked with the "the tree of life," the one, as it were, leading on to the other. How like to the word of the Lord (John xvii. 2). "And this is *Life Eternal*, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast *sent*." Ever remembering that Jesus—title of the sent One—points on to His death (see 1 John iv. 9), through Whose death, and through it only, can we have either the knowledge of God, or eternal life. The grasping at head-knowledge in divine things can never give either the one or the other. Divine things may be made a science of, and "theology" (that sad and most delusive word) may be classed with geology, or any other intellectual pursuit, but how can God and the knowledge of Him be put amongst the sciences? As Paul says of intellectual Athens, and civilized Rome (Romans i), "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools," a word which only too well applies to our first parents in the garden. The fact of eating of the tree at all, shows the *rebelliousness* of sin. The fact of thinking they would gain anything by it, shows the blindness and foolishness of sin.

Observe next, how fatal any trespass against this command was to be. "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Not merely "thou shalt morally die," or "spiritually die." Moral and spiritual death, of course, would follow and *did* follow instantly as a necessity, because sin, as a state or condition, is the being cut off from HIM Who is all that is good, and all that is holy. But this word of God was something that was to be *inflicted*

upon a transgressor, viz., he was that day to die. The man or the woman that did it was that day to be a corpse! The foot that walked to the tree,—the hand that took the fruit,—the mouth that ate it, were all of them not to outlive the day in which they did eat it. The morrow was to find the eater as truly lifeless as were Pharaoh when drowned, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, or Sennacherib and his host, on the day they blasphemed God. So prompt, as well as terrible, was to be the punishment, for the sin deserved it, and God is not a judge who needs any slow processes of conviction before He executes the sentence. The same is true now; no sinner deserves a single night's rest. In point of desert he should die the very day in which he sins. Then why did not Adam die that day? Because before the day was out death did come into the garden, by *the promise of the woman's Seed*, Whose heel should be bruised (Isa. liii. 5). Thus, before the day closed, God had provided a Substitute; and in the person and promised death of that Substitute, God could rest, for His word of punishment for sin was made good, and His character and moral government were upheld.

Other Scriptures sustain this teaching. When God dried this earth after the awful flood, and gave it back to man to live upon, and Noah, in acknowledgment of the mercy, built to God an altar of sacrifice for sin (see Gen. viii. 20), God declared His power to "rest" in it, and that however guilty man might be with heaped-up sins, He still could give, not only seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, but also *day* and *night*: i. e., He could forbear exacting His own original sentence on the sinner and could allow him

to lie down and sleep! Hence also, when the glorious woman's Seed Himself was dying, He could shield His very murderers from the instant punishment they deserved by His interceding word, "Father, forgive them" (not, "for they repent," but) "for they know not what they do." A forgiveness not such as saves the sinner for ever—for that is a forgiveness which the sinner himself must seek—but which only respites from instant death. Hence also Paul says (1 Tim. iv. 10) of Christ Jesus, "Who is the Saviour of all men" *i.e.*, from present bodily death by daily food supply—food being the subject of the context. The Apostle John also (1 John ii. 2) speaks of Jesus Christ as the "propitiation" (or mercyseat) for our (*i.e.*, believers') sins, and "not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world; *i.e.*, by His propitiatory death He keeps back God's originally pronounced doom from coming down upon all our guilty human race! The truth is, heathendom with all its sinning millions, and Christendom with its far guiltier millions owe each succeeding day's *life* to Jesus' *death*.

As our aged brother Mr. Chapman sometimes reminds us, "All that makes this world of ours more tolerable to sinners in it, than the hell to which they are going, they owe it to the blood of Christ, though they never dream it so." Like Joseph in Egypt, to whose granaries of corn all the Egyptians owed their daily bread, as truly as his own repentant brothers did: all which granaries were the outcome of Joseph's having been sunk into the pit of death—the pit in which there was "no water." But turn again to Gen. iii. 8, it was in the "cool of the day," "cool" here is the same as "breeze" or "wind"; and the same also as "Spirit"

of God, Gen. i. 2. This is very suggestive. It implies that God's gracious and Holy Spirit had come into the garden along with the *footfall* of God's *steps*, and the words God had come to speak. Indeed all the Holy three are before us in the passage, for was not the woman's Seed the subject to be spoken of, who is the Eternal Son of God?

And here let me digress a little to mention the three passages on "the Spirit" in the antediluvian records: they are Gen. i. 2. "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and God said, "Let there be light" Gen. iii. 8)—the passage already noted; and Gen. iv. 4—"My Spirit shall not always strive with man." *The first* is linked with this fair creation when all was "good," showing it to have been as much the Spirit's work as it was that of the Father or the Son: as it says, "Let US make." The 2nd shows the Spirit's part in the Gospel message as in Jno. iii., "born of the Spirit." The 3rd shows the solemn ending of the sinner's Gospel mercy: when God gives them up to believe a lie. Well may such Scriptures instruct us as to the "Spirit of God!" And do we not need the Holy Spirit's moving along with us as a gentle, yet mighty power—always in our hearts in private—always also in our fellowship as believers: and always in our Gospel message to the unsaved? Surely it is not without intent that this Holy Spirit term is used in Gen. iii. 8. The word "Evening" would have been enough to express the time of day: but the absolute necessity of the Spirit for the blessing of the sinner is taught us here: for is not every believer a person as truly born of the Spirit as he is one saved by the blood of the bruised woman's Seed? Also for Church work, for

is not the precious Church a Divine "unity" of the Spirit's forming, and, therefore, of the Spirit's nurturing? Yet, another word in verse 8, must be noted. "The voice of the Lord God *walking* in the garden." The word "walking" here, means a walking to and fro in the garden—*i.e.*, as the true owner of the garden in opposition to guilty man's refusing God any place in it. A walking to and fro in the garden, as a rule, implies ownership. As only a caller on your neighbour, you may walk up his garden path to his door and return again, but to see one walking to and fro in the same garden implies something more. So with our first parents—they had instantly to feel that God was come as the One to Whom it all belonged. No wonder they tried to hide away anywhere amongst its trees: just as men now-a-days shun the sight or sound of Bible or Gospel preaching that reproves them.

But now for the second point of the chapter. In our outline of the chapter at the commencement, verses 8 to 19, were spoken of as God's mighty Gospel to our guilty first parents. They are equally so to this world of sinners to this day. The Gospel of God's grace is not detailed there as it is in New Testament Scriptures. "Forgiveness of sins," "Everlasting Life," "Justified from all things," and a righteousness "unto all, and upon all them that believe," are words and terms not used here; indeed, the actual way of mercy and of deliverance from their doom by the bruising of the woman's Seed is not spoken to them at all, it is spoken to the serpent *in their hearing*, and it was left for them by the Spirit's power moving in their sin-darkened hearts, then and there to listen to it, and to understand it, and to believe it,

—and this by grace they did. Yet so simple in outline, it was the Gospel in all its fulness, for it was deliverance from the Serpent's present *power* as much as it was from the Serpent's future doom. "I will put enmity between thee (O serpent) and the woman, and between thy seed (singular) (O serpent) and her seed," were glorious promises of sanctification as well as of Redemption. Like as in Toplady's hymn, "Rock of Ages," they were

"Of sin the double cure,
Cleansing from its guilt and power!"

The "three great R's of the Gospel," as some call them, Man's Ruin, God's Redemption by Christ, and God's Regeneration by the Spirit were all there, and all three were summed up in this—the bruising of the Serpent's *head*—*i.e.*, a deadly blow to him whilst all he could do was the passing suffering of but the *heel* of the woman's Seed. Nor was the sin-stained *body* of the sinner forgotten, the good news of the *resurrection* of the believer was also implied in the words—"to dust shalt thou return," a gloomy word if taken alone, but gloomy no longer when read along side of the provision of the woman's Seed. Just as Paul in I Cor. xv. brings in, "This I say, brethren, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." Melancholy words, if read alone, but as part of a resurrection chapter that begins with "Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again," it declares the sinner's physical and bodily unfitness for the kingdom of God, simply to shew that God means to make him fit for it in body also, by resurrection.

There is an increased responsibility through increase of light, and nothing so condemns as does light that is not heartily embraced.—*Wm. Lincoln.*

MARANATHA

("THE LORD WILL COME").

PART VI.—BY ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

ANOTHER reason given for supposing that the Lord cannot come at any moment to receive His people, is found in the words of Ps. cx. i, "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." The thought is this, that it is only at the close of the great tribulation, when the nations are gathered against Jerusalem under the leadership of the Antichrist, that the enemies of the Lord Jesus will be made His footstool, so that He can come and execute sudden and complete judgment upon them. But if He is to sit at the right hand of God until that moment, how can He come before the great tribulation begins, to receive His people to Himself?

Surely this argument shows great confusion of mind as to what is meant by *sitting* at the right hand of God. Is it possible that any one supposes that the Lord Jesus remains constantly in a sitting posture, since He ascended to heaven, and right on till He comes as Son of Man to take to Himself His great power and reign? The use of such an argument seems to show that they do. Yet the mere statement of the idea seems to be sufficient to prove how mistaken it is. Besides, we have the Lord Jesus presented to us in other attitudes during this dispensation. In Acts vii. 55 we read that Stephen, "being full of the Holy Ghost, looked steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus *standing* on the right hand of God." Then again, in the opening of the Revelation we have the Lord Jesus

walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. There is no contradiction, however, in these different statements. No one of these various expressions, sitting, standing, walking, can be treated literally, as expressing a bodily attitude, when applied to the Lord Jesus. Who would think of so treating them when they occur altogether as in Ps. i. 1, "Blessed is the man that *walketh* not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor *standeth* in the way of sinners, nor *sitteth* in the seat of the scornful." In this case we understand them as expressing moral and spiritual position, and the same is surely just as true when they are applied to the Lord. When He describes Himself as *walking* in the midst of the candlesticks, He speaks of the activity and ceaseless watchfulness of His High-priestly oversight of the assemblies of His saints. When He was seen by Stephen *standing* on the right hand of God, His attitude plainly tells how He had risen up to receive and welcome His faithful servant.

What, then, is the meaning intended to be conveyed by His *sitting*? We believe that many different thoughts are contained in this last expression, according to the circumstances under which it is used. In Mark xvi. 19, we are told that Jesus was "received up into heaven, and *sat* on the right hand of God." Mark's Gospel presents the Lord Jesus to us as the faithful, unwearying, servant of God. It commences with His baptism, when He began His ministry, and it goes on till this closing word expressively declares that His service was finished.

In Eph. i. 20, 21, we read that God "raised Him from the dead, and *set* Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power."

The subject here is the exceeding greatness of the power of God ; and the triumph of that power is shown in raising up the one whom Satan had sought to destroy, and setting Him in the place of majesty and authority. In the case of Psa. cx. we have the patient waiting of Christ. In Psa. ii. 7-9, we have Jehovah, in the very moment of raising His Son from the dead, saying to Him—" Ask of Me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron ; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." But between the giving of this promise and its fulfilment, there was to be a long waiting time, which the patient obedience of the blessed Son of God accepts, as willingly as He did all the sufferings of Calvary. That waiting-time is expressed in the words—" Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." It is no more interfered with by His coming, not to earth, but in the clouds (see 1 Thes. iv. 17), to catch up His own to Himself, than by His standing up to receive Stephen. He does not claim the promise of earthly rule until the Father's time has come. He once waited patiently till God should deliver Him out of the horrible pit ; and He now waits patiently till God makes His enemies His footstool, and this is expressed by the figure of sitting at God's right hand till then.

Preachers living in the presence of God and preaching in the power of the Holy Ghost need no other influence. They can face the devil and cope with his power without the patronage of the religious world, and even without the help of cold and carnal Christians.—DONALD ROSS.

NOTES ON ROMANS.

PART IV.—CHAPTER VII.

BY GEORGE ADAM.

CHAPTER VI., as we have seen, teaches the believer's deliverance from the reigning power of sin by the death and resurrection of Christ, and the believer's death, burial, and resurrection *with* Christ. Chapter vii. teaches the believer's deliverance from the bondage of law on the same principle. In the first part of this chapter the figure of marriage is used to illustrate the subject which the Holy Spirit is making plain to the believer. This seems to point back to the Sinaitic Covenant which God made with Israel at Mount Sinai. There might have been many amongst the saints in Rome who had been Gentiles before their conversion, and yet all are addressed as having been once under the law which the Gentiles really never owned. It appears to me that Israel was a sample of humanity—a specially selected sample. Their forefather, Abraham, was a pattern of faith and obedience. His descendants, through Isaac and Jacob—both men of faith—were placed in the most favourable circumstances, and had bestowed on them the best possible culture (see Isa. v. 1-4), so that if Israel failed, it was a conclusive proof of the utter ruin of the whole race of Adam. It is very striking to observe how often—when the words of the Lord were laid before Israel—they maintained they would keep them (Exo. xix. 7, 8 ; chap. xxiv. 3), and again, as if to prove them thoroughly (verse 7), Moses took the book of the Covenant and read in the audience of the people, and a third time they maintained, " All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient." Here

we see an example of the *deceptive power* of sin. Paul says in Rom. vii. 11—"For sin taking occasion by the commandments, *deceived* me, and by it slew me." This is always the effect of the presentation of Divine law to the natural heart. Sin at first deceives, and then it slays. It makes a sinner believe that he can keep the law, which is "holy, just, and good," arousing the enmity and rebellion of the natural heart against Divine authority. We read—"Without the law sin was dead" (verse 8). It was there, but there was nothing to arouse it into rebellion against the *will of God*. Like a lion asleep in the forest—he looks a harmless animal, but if a net is cast over him, and an attempt made to bind him, all the savage wildness of his nature comes out. So it is with man, as a sinner, against God. Such is the awful nature of sin that a child of nature not only *will* not be subject to the law of God, but he *cannot* be so (Rom. viii. 7). But I have been anticipating. We will come to this again, when we look at the painful experience which is produced when a believer leaves the ground of grace, and goes back to law.

Let us go back to the figure of marriage. We have noticed how Israel was brought into covenant relationship with Jehovah on the ground of law. All their history tells how completely they failed to fulfil their part in that covenant. Had it not been that Jehovah again and again remembered *His* covenant with Abraham, and in His mercy dealt with His people according to what He is in Himself, and not on the ground of what they were, or could do, very few if any of them, would ever have entered the land of promise. Law cannot show mercy, it can only curse the law breaker. But when man so utterly failed under law,

and was lying under its curse, we see the Redeemer in His infinite love, coming to the rescue. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us," (Gal. iii. 13). In this mighty work, there was no setting aside of the claims of law. This blessed Redeemer came down to where ruined humanity was: and by meeting and satisfying all the claims of law—which in this figure appears as the *first* husband,—and in Himself, by death and resurrection, He brought the believer to a new standing, where law could not reach him, and then He claimed His prize as married unto Himself. The union formed at Mount Sinai having been ratified by blood, nothing could dissolve that union but death. The law could not waive its claims, they must be met, otherwise law could not let go its hold on the law breaker. And grace did not come to abrogate, or set aside the law as some have taught. Grace came in to fulfil the law; and in Christ it has been fulfilled; now law can have no more claim on the believer in Christ. "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become *dead to the law* by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to Another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." (verse 4). In the *figure*, it is the death of the *husband* that dissolves the union; but in the reality it is the *wife* in the person of the believer that dies. And this has taken place in the reckoning of God "by the body of Christ." A glorious liberty which is little known. I might notice how that the death of Christ sets believers free from the curse of the law, because in His death all its claims were satisfied; but the curse of the law will follow the unregenerate beyond physical

dissolution, and will rest on them to all eternity, because its righteous claims will never be met.

In closing this paper let us notice, the ultimate *design* of the believer's death by the body of Christ. It delivers from the curse of the law, that is blessedly true ; but Christ bore away that curse on our account that *we might be His*. He discharged all our obligations to the first husband, that He might bring us into the sweetest and closest relationships to *Himself*, a nearness and a oneness, which man never had in innocence ; which angels never had, or will have ; and all this that "we might bring forth unto God." Fruit is the result of *communion*. Out of communion with Christ, there may be much that passes for fruit-bearing, but there is nothing in it to God. "He that abideth in Me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit : for without Me ye can do nothing." (John xv. 5).

MY GOAL IS CHRIST.

Translated from the German, 1677.

AH, tell me not of gold and treasure,
Of pomp and beauty here on earth !
There's not a thing that gives me pleasure
Of all the world displays for worth.
Each heart will love and seek its own :
My goal is Christ, and Christ alone !

In Him I find my exaltation,
My fairest visions of delight :
I feed mine eyes, mine expectation,
On Him alone, my Rest, my Light !
Each heart will seek and love its own :
My goal is Christ, and Christ alone !

The world and her pursuits will perish ;
Her beauty's fading like a flower ;
The brightest schemes the flesh can cherish
Are but the pastime of an hour.
Each heart will seek and love its own :
My goal is Christ, and Christ alone !

NO SUNDAY SPIRITUALITY.

IF you expect to appear at the table of the Lord on the first day of the week in a spiritual condition, able to enter into the enjoyments of the occasion, and to fulfil your part as a worshipper, you can only realise such an expectation by living and walking with God all through the week. There is no such thing as "Sunday spirituality," apart from vital godliness and a right spiritual condition during the other days. If you live carnally, going in for and with the world, speaking its language, keeping company with its people, following its ways, you need not wonder if you find your soul's condition flat and sapless when you try to take part in the worship and service of God. It would be more than a "miracle" if it were otherwise. You will be on the Lord's Day, amidst God's assembled worshippers, just what you make yourself during the other days, in your life and walk in the world. This is apt to be forgotten, or little taken into account in reckoning up the causes of "lack of power" in the things of God. Yet it is without doubt *the* chief factor in the whole matter. Brother A—'s prayers are felt to be mere effusions of words, texts of Scripture, and citations of theology, never seeming to get into "touch" with God, or lift anybody else into the Divine presence. Need it be wondered, when it is known that he is unequally yoked with an unconverted partner in his business, has shares in mines and breweries, and dabbles in "stocks" with the ungodly. Brother B—'s teaching and exhortations are terribly pithless and pointless. He reads novels, plays "bowls," and a Free Mason. These are as the "dry rot," eating the vitals out of Assemblies.

The Bible Annotator.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE STUDY.

JEHOVAH'S SEVEN "I WILL'S." (Exodus vi. 6-8.)

- These embrace the whole work of Redemption.
- "I will bring you out" (with Gal. i. 4).
 - "I will rid you out of bondage" (John viii. 32-36).
 - "I will redeem you" (Titus ii. 14).
 - "I will be to you a God" (2 Cor. vi. 16).
 - "I will bring you unto the land" (John xvii. 24).
 - "I will give it you for an heritage" (1 Pet. i. 3-5).

THE RED SEA.

(Exodus xiv. 1-3, 13-31).

- The Death of Christ delivering from the World.
Trembling Host; sinner undelivered (Gal. i. 4)
Strong Enemy; Satan (John xii. 21; Acts xxvi. 18).
Open Sea; Death abolished (2 Tim. i. 10; Heb. ii. 14).
The Walk of Faith (Heb. xi. 29; 1 Thess. v. 9-10).
"I will take you to Me for a people" (1 Pet. ii. 9, 10).

NAMES OF THE CITIES OF REFUGE.

Expressing the Believer's Place and Portion in Christ.

- KADESH, "Holy"—Christ's Person (Acts iv. 27).
- SHECHEM, "Shoulder"—Christ's Power (Luke xv. 5).
- HEBRON, "Fellowship"—Believer's Position (1 John i. 3).
- BEZER, "Stronghold"—Believer's Portion (1 Pet. i. 4).
- RAMOTH, "Exalted"—Believer's Place (Bph. ii. 6).
- GOLAN, "Happy"—Believer's Condition (Phil. iv. 1).

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Who are "the angels that sinned" mentioned in 2 Peter ii. 4.—Are they elsewhere referred to? They are probably referred to in Jude 6, where the angels which "kept not their first estate" are said to be "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day." Satan also has his angels (Rev. xii. 7)—evidently distinct from these, not yet under arrest, but who will share his doom (Matt. xxv. 41). Beyond this we may not pry.

What is meant by the expression "an epistle as from us" (2 Thess. ii. 2)? Was it a forged epistle? Some think so. More likely it was the First Epistle, in which they had either misunderstood or had misinterpreted to them by teachers of error, the apostle's teaching on "times and seasons" and "the day of the Lord" in chap. v. 1-3. In the

persecutions they were enduring, they imagined "the day of Jehovah" with its unmitigated judgment was upon them, and this the apostle corrects in his second epistle, see 2 Thess. ii. 1-4. The proper rendering of the close of verse 2 is, "as that the day of the Lord is *now* present" (R.V.).

Answers to Correspondents.

"YOUNG PREACHER."—The "Newberry" Bible gives, we believe, the most reliable interpretation of Scripture Proper Names. They appear in most cases on the margin, opposite to where they occur in the text.

J.M., SOUTH WALES.—The Word of God makes a clear distinction between the two aspects of the Church to which you refer, which many teachers—especially those who are the leading advocates of intercourse with sects—entirely ignore. Yet, nothing is more plain in the Word. The one being entirely Divine, the work of God, secured in Christ beyond the possibility of decay or ruin; the other, like all else committed to man's responsibility, liable to fail and to be marred by his disobedience to the Divine command, and departure from the Divine pattern. Whoever seeks to teach or guide the flock of God, unable or unwilling to discern between these, will lead them into a fog, where they will soon lose whatever light on other things they once possessed. To distinguish "things that differ" (Phil. i. 10, R.V.), and "rightly divide" the Word of Truth (2 Tim. ii. 15) accordingly, is a necessity for godly edifying, and the many minds and resulting factions and divisions of the present day are due to the lack of this, more than to aught else. A serious responsibility surely, which all who are given to preaching and teaching should increasingly feel.

GEORGE B., GLASGOW.—The appointment of preachers and teachers to minister in the hall used by an assembly, by those outside it, is by no means an orderly or a desirable practice. Meetings for ministry of the Word, and for the preaching of the Gospel in the Assembly's meeting place, are undoubtedly part of its testimony, and ought to be felt by all in its fellowship as their first responsibility. If there are those recognised as having the qualifications and grace to guide and oversee the saints and the work, surely they are the proper persons to take the responsibility of seeing that the various

needs of all such meetings are supplied, or to depute such work to some of their number. If a continual supply of preachers from outside is kept up, there is no chance of any gift being developed within, and if these are men of all "persuasions" brought from sects, and missions, and meetings in division, it can hardly be expected that much interest or fellowship will be shown by those who have been otherwise taught by the Word of God. The healthiest, happiest, and most productive assembly, is that which has its power of multiplication *within* itself (see Acts ix. 31), thankful for all God-sent helpers, and always ready to welcome them, but not dependent on any and certainly not at the mercy of some outside themselves, in whose ability to discern they may not wholly confide, appointing them preachers of whose abilities they know nothing. Where such a system obtains, it is little wonder there are few being raised up to preach and teach Jesus Christ.

J. L.—The teaching of Scripture (1 Cor. vi. 1-8), in regard to the course to be pursued for the adjustment of differences and the settlement of contested claims between Christians, is clear. To go with such before an unbelieving judge or to the world's law courts, the apostle characterises as "a shame." There are surely wise and experienced Christian men of prudence and understanding, who will, for the truth's sake, hear and help in such matters, and whose impartial decision ought to carry more weight than that of any law court. If this is refused and the unrighteousness persisted in by the offender, the church has its instructions how to deal with a covetous (1 Cor. v. 11) and a wilful man (Matt. xviii. 17). Paul's appeal to Cæsar was not against his brother-Christian, but to call attention to the injustice being enacted towards him, contrary to their own laws, by minor officials who were bribed or biased against him. He simply claimed the protection of the highest authority, as any loyal subject may do of the ruler or government of the country in which he resides. *If one, suffering wrongfully, either at the hands of the world, or from the false accusations or ungodly conduct of his brethren, has faith and patience to commit his cause to God "who judgeth righteously" (1 Peter ii. 33), He will assuredly prove that the Eternal God will vindicate his rights and defend his cause in His own good time and way.*

Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION V.—If one positively refuses to be baptised as a believer, and is not even willing to listen to what the Word says on this subject, is such a fit person to be received into an Assembly?

ANSWER A.—There is spiritual discernment needed in dealing with such cases. While Baptism is not essential to salvation, or the door of admission to the assembly, it is clearly part of the Lord's will for His people, and its neglect ought not to be lightly disregarded. Refusal to obey, or even listen to the teaching of the Word regarding it, indicates a degree of self-will, which ill befits one desiring to be associated with those owning the supreme Lordship of Christ, and the absolute authority of His Word in everything pertaining to His Church, and which will assuredly be manifested in other ways, if one be received in such a condition.—J.E.W.

ANSWER B.—Baptism is not to be made *the* condition of admission to the assembly. There are many who have been baptised, who are otherwise disqualified doctrinally, and by their ways, from being there. That it should always precede reception to the assembly is clear, and in case of those newly converted and free from traditional teaching there is usually no difficulty. But it is sometimes otherwise with one who has been long converted, and brought up in the belief that infant sprinkling is Baptism. Scriptural instruction and oftentimes long patience to break down prejudice and overcome traditional teaching are needed, and where given, have invariably yielded the best results, the one thus slowly but surely learning the Lord's ways, generally having a fuller and firmer grasp of the truth than others, who pick it up more readily. But a slow and honest learner is to be distinguished from a self-willed person, who thinks he knows everything, and refuses to learn anything; or a proud and prejudiced sectarian, who desires to be admitted to the assembly on his own conditions, that he may be free to carry out his own will in this and all else. We believe the word "refuse," (R.V.) regarding the "factious" or "self-choosing" man in Titus iii. 10, applies in such a case.—J.S.

ANSWER C.—That there is need for a clear and spiritual testimony being given regarding the place and importance of Believer's Baptism to all who seek to be associated with assemblies of believers

gathered in the Lord's Name, is manifest by recent events and statements regarding it, both in Great Britain and America. Since the break up of the various sections of the so-called "Exclusives," in which for many years Baptism was regarded as a thing of expediency, which one was free to hold and practice as he sought fit, either by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion as to *mode*, and infants, households, or believers as to *subjects*, a number who have become associated with assemblies which they formerly stigmatised as holding "Baptist" opinions, because they gave Scriptural Baptism its place, have been seeking as much as in them is, to minimise its importance, and reduce it to a "personal" matter concerning which each may hold and practice what he thinks best. Some of those who take prominent places as teachers have not been baptised as believers at all. One recent writer in a contemporary Magazine thinks it a grave offence to speak of such as the "unbaptised," and charitably attributes the use of such terms to "exclusivism" and "spiritual pride" on the part of those who use them, pleading virtually for the recognition of Baptism in *any* form, as it is only a "difference of opinion" as to "the proper subjects and mode of administration" that exists. True, but it is rather a serious "difference," inasmuch as if believer's Baptism is what the Scriptures teach, the others, even if practised by "some of the most intelligent Christians" the pleader has ever known, *is not Baptism according to God at all*, but a counterfeit of it, and ought to be so regarded. These are the "inductive theories," which are reducing many assemblies to feeble voluntary associations, where everybody may "hold" what he likes best, and leave his neighbour free to do the same, in which the only thing "excluded"—and that as rigidly as in any sect—is "the whole counsel of God," and liberty to give it effect in obedience to all His commandments.—D.M.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—Baptism, as taught in Scripture, is set at the threshold of the Christian life by Divine wisdom. Rightly understood, it implies—Separation from the world, crucifixion to the flesh, the acceptance of God's judgment on self and self-will, and the joyful confession of Christ as Lord by one so baptised. Where the "likeness" is persistently refused, the reality can be but little apprehended. If after full and patient

instruction baptism is rejected, and from such trivial and unworthy causes as some of our correspondents name, it would be contrary to the letter and principles of Scripture to receive such a person to the assembly of God, where, if anywhere on earth, the Word of the Lord should be honoured and His commandments obeyed. Where "life" is regarded as the *only* requirement to Christian fellowship, obedience in Baptism cannot with any consistency be required. This, many who contend for the former theory see, and while they are not as yet prepared to ignore the truth of Baptism, or to relegate it to the place of a "non-essential," in order to "square" their practice with their theory, they admit the unbaptised, in the hope that "light" will be given afterwards in much the same spirit as pious Presbyterians expect "grace" to follow infant sprinkling and "conversion" the admission of the unregenerate to the "visible Church." But God's order is, the fruit of His unerring wisdom, and the path of safety and of blessing is, to take it as it stands, and not attempt to add to, take from, or invert it.

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.

QUESTION VI.—Is it according to the principles of Scripture, that one ministering the Word of God, say at a Conference, should be put under a time limit, and would it be right for a servant of the Lord to come under such a restriction in ministry?

QUESTION VII.—Where the Gospel work of an Assembly has fallen into such decay, that it needs the continuous advertising of eccentric subjects, or a constant supply of preachers from all parts to keep it in existence, what is the remedy?

QUESTION VIII.—Is there any Scripture principle or precedent for a number of men—old and young, irrespective of qualification or recognition in the assemblies where they are—coming together stately to make arrangements for and virtually rule the assemblies from which they come, but which they in no way represent, committing them to ways and responsibilities which they may not, in many cases, do not approve?

ALL THINGS WORKING FOR GOOD.

AN ADDRESS AT BRADFORD CONFERENCE.

BY ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

(Revised by the Speaker).

"WE know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. viii. 28).

How sweetly definite and comprehensive are Paul's opening words here. "We know!" It is not only "I know," but the word "we" joins every believing one in the knowledge, for it is a matter of knowledge. It is not a question of experience or feeling, although we may have all these. The statement is definite and unqualified. "*We know* that all things work together for good." Even if there be those who might be inclined to shrink from some of the things, they believe it after all. They know it. We all know it. Thank God for that. Then see from the next verse, how firm is the foundation which God has laid for this absolute knowledge, in the revelation of His blessed purpose with us and for us. "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son." When His dealings with us are difficult to understand, we are tempted to think, if we do not actually say, "How is this to be for my good?" And in thinking thus, do we not lose sight of what really is our "*good*?" It is not what *we* would like to have, but what He who loves us with an infinite love, and gave His Son to die for us, purposes for us, that is our real good. It is for this reason that in the marvellous words of this verse, we are confronted with God's eternal purpose from the beginning to the end, in order to lift us out of our limited thoughts, and to bring us into His thoughts concerning us.

The words "Whom He did foreknow" carry us back to eternity. God foreknew you and me and every one to whom His Word has come in saving power. God never refers to His foreknowledge or electing grace, without bringing into view His great purpose in making us like Christ. And so we read further that those whom He foreknew, "He also did predestinate" to be conformed to the image of His Son. It was not merely that we might escape wrath, but that we might be made like His Son. The marvellous thought in this is, that it is more in respect of what it is *for*, than what it is *from*. So the word goes on to reveal the great object of it all, namely, "that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."

God delighted in His Son from all eternity, and His purpose was to multiply that joy "in bringing many sons to glory." Let us think of that when things are dark and difficult and perplexing. When we are occupied with His dealings, let us keep in full view His purpose. It makes no difference whether or not I can see how that purpose is to be accomplished. The "all things" are His instruments, and He is never a workman that needs to be ashamed, like us. As for God, His way is perfect. Let us remember, too, that every one of the "all things" is included, and not some of them only. The word is "all things work together," because, "whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate" for conformity to Christ. What a difference it will make in our lives, when we acknowledge this at all times, and not merely now and then, or in special circumstances.

We must also remember that all things are the instruments of His purpose, and are controlled by Him, then it is not only things

in themselves good, but also the wrath of man and even the malice of Satan that are working together for our good. This is shown by God's dealings with Job, where we see the "servant of God" in the power of Satan, and yet all things working together for his good, although he did not understand it. Do you say, "But Satan did it?" True, he was the instrument, but God permitted him to go just as far as was necessary, and no further. Satan was only God's instrument for God's end. Consequently, when we read in James v. 11, "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord," Satan is left out altogether. He had been used as the instrument and now he is done with, and we contemplate the accomplishment of the end or purpose of the Lord.

Then again, in Paul's case—2 Cor. xii. 7—we find Him saying, "There was *given to me* a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure." It was Satan's messenger, but it was God's gift, given to him for God's purpose. Satan did not want to prevent Paul from being lifted up, but God wanted him to be conformed to His Son, so having given him one precious gift, the priceless revelation in the third heaven, He adds another gift—the thorn.

And so, "we know that all things work together for good." To whom? "TO THEM THAT LOVE GOD." What a blessed name to be known by! We did not always love Him. Not until we had learned the depths of His love at the Cross of Christ, where He also opened up to us the depths of iniquity in our own hearts. Thus we were enabled to say with Peter, "Lord, Thou knowest all things," and, like him, to add the further precious confession, "Thou

knowest that I love Thee." It is at once humbling and blessed to realize that He knows all that is in our hearts, and notwithstanding, nay, because of that, to be able to say, "Thou knowest that I love Thee." We may be afraid to open our hearts to our fellows. They may often praise us because they don't know all, and they may often blame us, because they don't know all. But when Peter said, "Thou knowest that I love Thee," it was because he was sure that the Lord knew all things, the reality of his repentance as well as his grievous fall.

"To them that love God." Apart from His grace there was not one who ever loved Him. When God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, there was not one who sought after Him. But God had ever His own eternal purpose in view, that His beloved Son should be the First-born among many brethren, and now He can speak of those who love Him.

But we have another precious title by which we are described, "TO THEM WHO ARE THE CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE." Who are they? "Whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified." In all this, God speaks in the past tense, stating it as a completed and accomplished fact, because in His divine purpose it is so. We have not seen the glory yet, though we know not how near hand it may be. It is ours to await the accomplishment of His purpose, whether the time be long or short. Meanwhile, we have the blessedly comforting and strengthening knowledge of what that purpose is. God could wait till time began, and still wait for 4000 years, till the fulness of time when He should

send forth His Son to die, and all that we might "receive the adoption of sons." And He is yet waiting on the appointed moment when His purpose will be complete. With God, there is no past, no future, no was or will be. That which will be with us, is now with Him: and all that He has purposed He can speak of as already accomplished, for He looks upon the face of His beloved Son, and see us all *in Him*. Our present position in the purpose of God is told out in Eph. i. 19-24. and ii. 1. (for the subject is continued in Chap. ii.) that ye may know . . . "the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ when He raised *Him* from the dead *And you*" (ii. 1). It was one act in God's sight, the completion of what He had purposed.

"What shall we then say to those things?" What would you say? "If God be for us, who can be against us?" And yet how often we are tripped up by the simple things, the little things of our everyday life, which tempt us to worry and fret, because we forget that God is making them to "work together" for our good. But even then, God uses our failure to humble us, and to bring us back to Himself, to learn more of Him than we ever knew before. We must not and do not excuse the fall: but God does make even the fall to work a blessing for us. May He help us to see Him in everything carrying out His own purpose.

If ever Satan thought he had succeeded in frustrating God's purpose, it was when the body of the Lord Jesus was laid in the tomb and that tomb was sealed, while all the Roman Empire lay behind the seal. But he was utterly helpless before the finger of God. The seal was broken, and the

guards were scattered in terror. God triumphed over all, and made all Satan's power subservient to His glorious purpose. That is why, when Peter and John came back "to their own company," after what had occurred in Acts iii. and iv., we read that "they lifted up their voice to God with one accord," as the God who made heaven and earth, and sea, and all that in them is and quoting the words of David in Psa. ii: 1-2, they applied them to all that had taken place at Calvary. "For, of a truth, against Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do?"—What? Whose will? Their own will? Oh no! "Whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done." Behind it all were the hand and the will of God, working out His own blessed purpose for us.

But do not let us shut up the counsels and the dealings of God to the great things. Let us bring them down to the smallest things. If we see God in the small things, there will be no difficulty in seeing Him in the greater things, and learning the lesson of His will in them all. "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" Settle it therefore in your hearts. You know God is for you.

It is six months since I spoke to an audience like this, as, during that time, I have only had strength to address occasionally the assembly with which I am especially associated, and I thank God for one more such opportunity. All that I have gone through has but more fully confirmed to my own soul every word that God says about all things working together for our good. So I would commend it all to you

afresh. Don't lose any portion of your inheritance, or of the things God has given to you. Seek to be more wholly His. I look back over forty-seven years since He saved me, and my only regret is, that I have not been more wholly His. As I look round, I see so many young believers content to do a little for Christ; content, in great measure, to follow the world's habits and ways, and to seek the world's pleasures. Dear young brethren and sisters, there is a time coming when you will look back, and when you will regret these things. Seek to begin now, to anticipate the judgment-seat of Christ, by confessing all that is contrary to His will. Give yourselves more diligently to prayer and to seeking His face day by day; to reading of His Word and meditation thereon, and to seeking more earnestly to do His will, assured that He will accomplish His purpose concerning you.

Where are the men and woman to come from, who are to be used of God, unless there be more whole-hearted giving up of ourselves to God and the Word of His grace?

May we rest fully on His own precious Word, until our hearts are filled with this triumphant assurance, "We know;" and may this ever stimulate us to make it our one object to be pleasing to Him in everything we do.

At Mr. Holiday's desire, the above address is issued in a neat Booklet for distribution among the children of God. 4d. per doz. : 2/6 per 100, from the Publisher.

THE APPOINTED SERVICE.

IN a service which Thy love appoints,
 There are no bonds for me,
 My inmost soul is taught the truth
 That makes Thy children free;
 And a life of self-renouncing love,
 Is a life of liberty.

SYMBOLS OF THE CHURCH.

VII.—A FLOCK.

BY DR. J. NORMAN CASE, OF CHINA.

"SHEPHERD," "Sheep," and "Flock" are figures frequently used in the Scriptures, being employed by psalmist, prophet, apostle, and by our Lord Himself. The godly in all dispensations have certain characteristics and experiences in common; some of these are well set forth by the above-mentioned emblems.

But first of all, be it observed, *the lost sheep* is a striking and common symbol of man in his unregenerate state. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way" (Isaiah liii., 6). There is nothing peculiarly Jewish about this confession; it fits the lips of all men, because it describes the case and condition of all men (see also Psalm cxix. 176; Jer. l. 6; Luke xv. 4; 1 Peter, ii. 25).

A wandering sheep emphasises two special points in the sinner's state: (1) The fact that he has strayed from his Owner, thereby leaving the path of holiness, righteousness, and peace; (2) That he is beyond self-recovery, and unless Divine mercy and power interpose, he will never come back. These, as we all know, are truisms of the gospel of God; yet it is well that we should often be reminded of them, for then we shall, again and again, humbly, gladly, gratefully exclaim—"Ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls!"

1. The Church is compared to a *Flock*, not a *Fold*. In His marvellous discourse on this subject, by the change of a single word, the Lord calls attention to this important distinction (John x. 1-18). The

earlier verses have in view the Jewish "fold." Some of His sheep were to be found within it, but they were not all there, "Other sheep I have," He went on to say. "which are not of this fold ; them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice ; and there shall be one *Flock* and one Shepherd" (verse 14, R.V.) Judaism was a "fold,"—earthly, visible, national, and temporal. The Church is a "flock,"—heavenly, spiritual, world-wide, and eternal. Doors and walls are essential points to a fold ; the Shepherd Himself is the centre of a flock. Christ, as the Shepherd, came to the fold of Judaism, and calling His own sheep by name, led them out therefrom (v. 3). Of "the other sheep" He said—"Them also I must *bring*." Bring where ? Not to the fold of Judaism ; not, indeed, to any fold, but unto HIMSELF. Now, with all barriers broken down, those from the Jewish fold, with these who as individual sheep among the Gentiles wandered in the paths of sin and folly, are brought to Him and brought together, and form one flock, having "one Shepherd." Doubtless Christ's true sheep are to be found in all the various "folds" of Christendom, while some are found outside them all ; but however much they may appear to be separated and divided, they in reality form "one flock." And as they draw near experimentally to the side of the one Shepherd—the Lord Jesus, they will be found also to be near to each other.

2. A flock denotes that which in itself is *weak and defenceless*. A thousand sheep are easily frightened by one dog ; ten thousand cannot defend themselves against one wolf. How strikingly this sets forth the condition of Christ's people ! "Behold, I send you forth," said the Lord to His

disciples, "as sheep in the midst of wolves." With all the powers of darkness against them, with ungodly men fighting or flattering, with this present evil world scorning or seducing ; verily they are as sheep in the midst of wolves. And again, and moreover, these very wolves, clad in sheep's clothing, often enter in among them and do not spare the flock (Acts xx. 29). When we consider all that Christians have against them, the foes without and within, we may marvel that any stand rather than that some fall ; but when we think of the resources of grace, wisdom, sympathy, and power that are their's in Christ, we ought to wonder that any stumble in the path, much less wander therefrom. The one and only place of safety is for the sheep to keep near the Shepherd. He can and will protect them from all their adversaries. So that each may pursue the path alone which He leads singing—"The Lord is my Shepherd I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me !"

3. A flock is often its owner's chief possession. In early times the work of the shepherd was among the most common yet honourable of employments. In those days flocks and herds usually constituted the chief wealth of a man. As late as the days of Saul, the office of "chief herdsman" was an important one ; and later still, we read that the King of Moab was himself a "sheep-master" (2 Kings, iii. 4). Israel is frequently spoken of as the people whom God had chosen, brought out of Egypt, and led unto Canaan to be His portion and inheritance (Deut. iv. 20 ; ix. 29 ; xxxii. 9, etc.) That, however, was but an earthly and temporal foreshowing of what the Church would become to God. Of believers now it is said : "In whom also we were

made an inheritance" (Eph. i. 11-18, R.V.) This inheritance has been purchased at infinite cost—even by the blood of Christ (Acts xx. 28). Of all His possessions it is the choicest and most loved. In acquiring and fitting it for Himself, as He could not elsewhere, God has displayed His manifold wisdom, measureless grace, and almighty power (Eph. i. 19; ii. 7; iii. 10).

4. A flock is kept for the advantage of the owner. "Who feedeth a flock," the apostle enquires, "and eateth not of the milk thereof?" (1 Cor. ix. 7). In flocks of the natural world, this is a self-evident principle; and in the spiritual realm it also applies. God's purposes do not terminate in man even in his salvation and happiness; they reach upward to His own holy satisfaction and eternal glory. Every thought, purpose, and act in the great scheme of redemption is "to the end that we should be to the praise of His glory" (Eph. i. 6-12, R.V.) And well for us that it is so; for the Creator's glory is a much surer basis for it all to rest upon than would be the creature's good. The more certainly He is glorified, the more certainly shall we be blessed. Let us, then, remember that we have been created and redeemed "to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever." Christ is not of the Church, but the Church is of Christ; He does not exist for the Church, but the Church for Him. All things were created *for* Him, as well as by Him (Col. i. 16). Hence, now and here, it should be our chief aim to bring Him joy and glory. By His work of making us His possession at such infinite cost, God has, it might seem, laid Himself open to the reproach of lacking wisdom. And every wicked way, unbecoming word, and foolish or selfish act, on the part of a child of God, gives occasion to the enemy

to reproach. To us a greater than Solomon says: "My son, be wise, and make My heart glad, that I may answer him that reproacheth Me" (Prov. xxvii. 11).

5. Sheep are the most gregarious of creatures; they love the company of their fellows. And so with Christ's people. A true love for Christians, and a desire for their company and fellowship, are among the earliest and surest signs of the new birth. "We know that we have passed from death unto life," said the apostle, "because we love the brethren" (1 John, iii. 14). The teachings, exhortations, and meanings of Scripture nearly always view the believer as one of many; one community, sheep of one flock, children of one family, members of one body. It is no small privilege to be able to frequently meet with fellow-members of Christ's flock, to be fed, led, and tended by the Great Shepherd Himself. And as we "see the day approaching," the responsibility to do this becomes greater (Heb. x. 22-25). If we should neglect "the assembling of ourselves together," and so get away from the side of the Good Shepherd, we may freely return to Him and say: "Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest Thy flock, where Thou makest it to rest at noon; for why should I be as one that wandereth beside the *flocks of Thy COMPANIONS?*" (Cant. i. 7, R.V.); and the gracious, all-sufficient Word will still be: "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them." There and then, as nowhere else, it is that His people prove the truth of the saying—"The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the master of assemblies, *which are given from one Shepherd*" (Eccl. xii. 11).

A WORD TO YOUNG PREACHERS.

PART II.—BY THE EDITOR.

HAVE CONFIDENCE IN THE GOSPEL. It is the power of God unto salvation, the Divinely-chosen instrument He is using in the conversion of sinners. It needs no embellishment, it requires no garnishing. It is "the Gospel of God," it never fails in its object. The Holy Ghost has come to make it effectual, Count on His operations, leave room for His workings, have faith in His ability, lay yourself out to be His instrument. He is the Director of the work, the Controllor of the servants (Acts xvi. 6, 7), and the power by which the salvation of men is accomplished. All human arrangements must yield to Him, and in order to be free to go as and where He may lead (Acts viii. 29), the servant of the Lord must be free from human fetters, under no church or committee control, free from the dominion of self-will and men-pleasing, in order to humbly, yet promptly obey the Master's calls and the Spirit's guidance.

THE FOUR R'S of man's Ruin, Christ's Redemption, the Spirit's Regeneration, and the hearer's Responsibility should be clearly, fully, and constantly kept to the front, always making a plentiful use of the words of Holy Scripture. God's own Word has more effect than the clearest arguments, the most lucid reasonings, the simplest illustrations, and it is the Word by which conviction is produced, the seed through which life is generated in the soul. Great care should be used to quote it correctly and speak of it reverently. Illustrations should be used carefully and sparingly: their use being only as the feather to the arrow. Incidents, stories,

use only to elucidate, point, and press home the truth, never to amuse or raise a laugh. Avoid theological phrases, never use "slang," do not make personal references to persons, places, systems. Preach Christ: exalt the Lamb of God; sound forth the fulness and freeness of God's salvation, the certainty of it to all that believe; the blood of Christ to cleanse, the power of Christ to deliver and to keep, with the eternal doom of all who despise and neglect it. Break up the fallow ground; plough deep, assail the conscience, bring your hearers face to face with God. Sin must be exposed, the sinner brought to see himself, own his guilt, justify God, and condemn himself, before he will either heed hear, or believe the Gospel. False profession, light work, Christless Christianity, are chiefly due to the lack of the preaching that produces conviction, arouses the devil, and delivers sinners from his grasp. Depend upon it, if Satan's kingdom is in danger he will roar, raise opposition, and vent his rage on the preachers and the converts. He did so to Christ, to His Apostles, and has continued the same in one form or another all along the line of battle. He is the same devil still; he may change his plans, alter his tactics, but he never ceases this work. If you are personally assailed, leave your defence in the hands of God, and go on. He will look after your character.

GIFT, GRACE, and GUMPTION are all needed for public ministry, which all do not possess, and apart from which no one will long continue either to hold or have a people to hear him. Gift is a thing of measure: some have five talents, others ten. Care should be taken not to exceed the measure of gift or grace possessed. Some who can speak to a score in a cottage, are

unfit to address a thousand in a hall : it would be wrong to try it. A man's gift maketh room for him, and where the gift is, and grace to use it, it will sooner or later be recognised. Experience is gained by using what we have. A gift well and wisely used develops and grows, according to the Word, "To him that hath shall be given," while one neglected and unused rusts away. Mistakes and failures ought to humble, but not to discourage : whatever helps to lead to lowly thoughts of self and to more dependence upon God is good. It is Godlike to encourage and pray for a young preacher, but devil-like to lavish fulsome flattery upon him, to puff him up with pride and self-importance. Many have been ruined by well-meaning but unwise adulation. "Hardness" is safer, and not likely to be awanting, if God's glory is the supreme object, and faithfulness to Christ the preacher's aim. If God uses your efforts, keep humble ; if He uses others, rejoice : the Master uses the tool nearest to His hand and best fitted for His purpose. Study to present yourself as and where He may find you, if He sees fit to use you ; if He does not, then search your ways ; there will be a cause.

OPEN-AIR PREACHING reaches thousands who cannot be reached by any other means. The Master preached oftenest in the open-air : by the sea, on the hill, in the places of concourse. Paul evangelised by a riverside, in the market-place, on Mars' Hill. If the people do not come to the Gospel, we must take the Gospel to them. Those who have the most ability to preach the Word should exercise their gift in the open-air. There the crowd has to be gathered and its attention has to be secured and held all the time : it is apt to be regarded

as a practising ground for probationers and novices. Preach solidly,searchingly,solemnly there ; not random shot interspersed with song and story, but the Word in all its scope and fulness. Some will never hear the truth unless they hear it there. Speak to be heard, not in a whisper, not in a roar. If possible, get the people inside after, to gather up results, deal with inquirers, lead anxious ones to Christ.

PERSONAL DEALING should follow public preaching, and an opportunity be given for seeking souls and those in difficulty to express their thoughts. Here is the true soul-winner's opportunity and here the sphere for many who never speak in public, true fellow-labourers, and fellow-helpers in the Gospel all the same, whose praises are in all the churches. Never unduly press any to *say* they believe ; never extort a confession of their faith. Seek from God the right text, the fitting word, the special presentation of Christ and the Gospel, to meet their special need. Lead them gently, and, as you bring Christ before them in the Gospel, bring them to God and Christ in prayer. Lay hold on God for the sinner in faith, as you lay hold on the sinner for God in earnest, loving effort. What a joy to see the mighty deliverance wrought, to witness the passage of a soul out of darkness into light, to feel the first warm pulses of the new life, to be a sharer of the joy of Heaven over a new-born child of God, a fresh trophy of redeeming grace !

God bless all preachers of the Gospel of His grace, multiply their number, and give them abiding fruit in conversions. This is what the Gospel is preached for, and what its preachers should expect. According to their faith so it shall be.

WHAT HINDERS SPIRITUAL WORSHIP.

WHEREVER a humanly-appointed ministry exists, two things, which are the birthright of all true believers, are absolutely shut out. The first of these is, the privilege of all saints, as an holy priesthood (1 Pet. ii. 5), to take their proper part in the worship of God. The second is, the responsibility of all true believers in yielding obedience to the Holy Spirit, when He prompts them to take part in worship or ministry in the assembly of saints.

These are serious matters, and come perilously near to a rejection of the Spirit of God, in one of His chief offices throughout this dispensation. Wherever clerisy exists, and in whatever form, there is no place found for the common priesthood of believers, and no room allowed for the leading of the Spirit of God.

This is just as true in the humble chapel with its chosen "pastor" or "presiding elder," as in the large church or cathedral, with its priest or parson in his canonical vestments. Clerisy claims a place *above* the general body of believers, and seeks to fill a sphere between them and God. The full-fledged priest of Rome makes no denial of this: it is his glory and his boast. But while many of those who fill the place of "ministers" are at one with us as to the daring assumption of such a claim, they themselves take a place of superiority over their brethren for which they have no warrant in the Word of God. It is not a question of gift, but of ability to worship God. If all the true children of God are priests, then why should one man claim the right to always lead in prayer and praise? The whole answer lies in this, he is the "clergyman," the "ordained" or

"recognised" man, who prays for, and preaches to a mute and waiting people. This is clerisy: a denial of the priesthood of all believers and the assumption of a place which Scripture denies to any in the assembly of the saints. No matter in whose heart the Spirit of God may raise a song of praise, or beget a note of thanksgiving, which would, if uttered, fitly express the praise of the gathered saints, he dare not exercise the functions of his spiritual priesthood, or obey the leading of the Spirit of God. Surely it must be a solemn and a serious thing for those saints of God, who know and feel this bondage, to continue in systems where it is, and must be practised, seeing it is part of their constitution.

The tendency in human nature is on the one hand, to usurp a place of superiority and dominion over fellow-saints, and on the other hand, for the rank and file of God's people to settle down and suffer such a condition of things, simply because it gives them less exercise of soul than the Divine way, the appointment of God. To share the privileges and fulfill the responsibilities of the common priesthood of believers requires a degree of spiritual condition which all do not possess, owing to worldliness of mind, neglect of God's Word and prayerlessness. Thus the two meet each other and both are pleased, while God's truth is set aside and His Spirit dishonoured. The germs of these conditions are not to be found in many meetings of believers, which are quietly driftly along the course described, into small voluntary denominations, where anybody who has more force, or ambition to rule than his fellows may find a sphere in which to exercise domination without saying so, and a place to practice clerisy without the title.

The Bible Annotator.

OUTLINES OF GOSPEL SUBJECTS.

THE GOSPEL CALL.

Called by God's Grace (Gal. i. 15)—The Source.

Called by the Gospel (2 Thess. ii. 14)—The Instrument.

Called out of Darkness (1 Pet. ii. 9)—The Place.

Called to Eternal Glory (1 Pet. v. 10)—The Prospect.

SALVATION.

Salvation *belongeth* to the Lord (Psa. iii. 8)—Its Origin.

Salvation is *of* the Lord (Jonah ii. 9)—Its Worker.

Salvation is *by* the Lord (1 Thess. v. 9)—Its Giver.

Salvation is *in* the Lord (2 Tim. ii. 10)—Its Security.

FOUR GREAT TRANSITIONS.

From Death to Life (John v. 24).

From Darkness to Light (1 Pet. ii. 9).

From Bondage to Liberty (Gal. v. 13).

From Satan to God (Acts xxvi. 18).

The Young Believer's Question Box.

What is the Scriptural and legal form of marriage? Is it necessary to have it performed by a clergyman. Not at all. The "clergy" took possession of this as they did of everything else that there was any "pay" for, at a time when they, owing to the general ignorance of the people, had it all their own way, as indeed they have still in many parts of the country. In England, the law requires that marriage be celebrated in a duly registered building, which the halls of most Assemblies are for this purpose. Otherwise, it is done at the Registrar's office, and a simple gathering for thanksgiving, prayer and fellowship held in hall or home after. In Scotland, the law is more simple. The marriage—after being legally made known and the Registrar's papers to that effect obtained—may be celebrated either at home or in any hall or private house. Usually, marriages are celebrated in the Room or Hall in which believers gather, part, or all being invited. Any well known Christian man, recognised as ministering the Word in the community, is qualified to sign the Marriage Form, and he usually takes the opportunity of commending the couple to the Lord and speaking some words of counsel to them. There is generally other brief words of Scriptural help and fellowship, followed

by a simple tea or other repast, and a time of happy Christian intercourse. The tendency in some cases is, to drift from this simple, godly, and as we think becoming way of two heaven-bound pilgrims being united "in the Lord," toward the world's way of things in a full dress parade, with all the rest of its frivolity creeping in behind, which all who watch the flock and seek its spiritual profit should guard against and gently put their foot on, for we neither want the world's religion nor its fashions and frivolities to be brought in, to spoil the simple and godly marriage hour of the Lord's redeemed.

Answers to Correspondents.

"INQUIRE."—Thomas à Kempis, who lived five hundred years ago, was a Dutch monk of the Augustinian order, and spent most of his life in the seclusion of a cloister. His "Imitation of Christ" is a curious mixture of Romanism, legality and mysticism. It shews the exercises of a devout and truly regenerated soul, seeking after something better and higher than he had attained, but it is not a book we would either commend to, or put into the hands of a young believer.

D.M., CHESHIRE.—The principle of progressive legislation is apparent in the Word of God. What was "hid" from saints in one age, was revealed to those in another. The Second Epistles give special instructions concerning a condition of things belonging to "the last days," which could have no meaning to the Pentecostal period or Church of early times. To quote Acts ii. 41-50, as a perfect model of Church constitution and government for all time, apart from the legislation contained in the Epistles, and especially the commandments and principles given by the Spirit in view of departure and apostacy, is misleading, and we believe the chief cause of the present confusion alike in doctrine and practice that exists. We need and should welcome *all* God's truth, and seek Divine wisdom in the application of its sacred principles to the perplexities and complications of evil, through which we have to thread our way, in these closing days of a dispensation in which man's failure has marked the whole path.

A. B., GLASGOW.—You do not accredit as a Christian, a person whose ways bear no resemblance to the pattern of what a Christian ought to be as set forth in the Word, even if he say he believes in

the Lord Jesus. You say with James, "*Shew me thy faith by thy works?*" which are the only true evidence that it is there. Surely no one can object to the same principle being applied to a company of believers who *say* they are a "Church" gathered in the Name of the Lord Jesus according to Matthew xviii. 20. The pattern of such a church is given in the Word, in its constitution, worship, ministry, rule and discipline. If in these, there is no resemblance to the Scriptural pattern, and no room for the setting right of what is wrong, or for the teaching of the truth that would make crooked things straight, because of human authority under which that company of God's people have fallen, or possibly grown up, to the extent that the word of man supersedes the Word of God, and human tradition or long-continued habit over-rides God's commandment, then you are under no obligation whatever to accredit such a community as God's assembly. It is a denomination—with or without a name. Even if it takes the Name of the Lord as its rallying point, it is not, and cannot be subject to His authority, but only in so far as its leaders are pleased to allow His Word to be heard and acted upon. That there *are* such communities is beyond doubt, although some of them may go on for years accredited as Scriptural Assemblies, until some testing case brings out their true condition.

—o—

Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION VI.—Is it according to the principles of Scripture, that one ministering the Word of God, say at a Conference, should be put under a time limit, and would it be right for a servant of the Lord to come under such a restriction in ministry?

ANSWER A.—It is of the first importance that all who occupy time at conferences and meetings for ministry, should have something to say, and that they should say it in the least possible time, so that others whose message may be equally needed may have time to give it. But surely this could be arranged by a mutual understanding among those ministering, in which case there would be no need for a hard and fast time limit being made, which, while it may hinder any from exceeding their measure, would be likely to shut out what the Lord may see His people most need. If the restriction made, is not in keeping with the Divine principle

of ministry set forth in the Word, it would be clearly bringing the Lord's servant under bondage to submit to it.

A. J. B.

ANSWER B.—The complaint that certain ministering brethren absorb too much time in giving out what they have to say, has led to the fixing of a time limit, which at first was only in the form of a suggestion that addresses should not exceed twenty or thirty minutes, but in some cases it has of late been pressed to such an extreme, that at a recent large conference at which the writer was present, a servant of the Lord, who had been put on a "time limit" of fifteen minutes, had to sit down in the middle of a sentence, and while his message was manifestly undelivered. This is man's way of remedying a weakness, but is it not likely to become a greater evil of itself, and to be used in shutting out such ministry as God would send to His people? There are—as is perfectly well known to those who frame and administer such laws—many servants of Christ who for long years have ministered the Word in season, and with acceptance and profit to God's people, who, rather than put themselves under restrictions which might cause them to quench their message and throw them out of fellowship with their Master, stay away from such gatherings altogether. I know that such is the case, and that the absence of well known ministering brethren is due to this intrusion of a human expedient, and not to other causes by which their absence is generally accounted for.—J. L. S.

ANSWER C.—The introduction of a time limit may give variety—and this is a great thing to some, especially to those who go to conferences and meetings to hear what pleases them, rather than to be searched by the Word of God and sent home humbled—but it does not ensure edifying ministry any more than an "open platform." The principle of Scripture is, that one who ministers the Word should be (1) responsible to God (1 Pet. iv. 10-11), and minister according to his ability; and (2) that he should be subject to and considerate of his brethren (1 Cor. xiv. 31-32). This principle is applicable where there are many present who can speak to edification, and has been practised for many years with very little to complain of and much to be thankful for. If those who call together the saints feel disposed to mention the necessity for brevity, in order that all may have an oppor-

tunity to share in ministry, well and good, no one would object or be aggrieved, but to either appoint certain to speak or fix the limits of their ministry seems to be like raising human hands to steady the Ark of God on a new cart (1 Chron. xiii. 9) where it ought not to be.—W. J. A.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—Gatherings for ministry of the Word may be of various kinds, and conducted according to different principles. A brief consideration of these may assist us in arriving at a solution of the difficulty expressed in this question. 1st. A servant of Christ gifted to teach or exhort, may invite believers to come together for ministry, or an assembly may arrange such a meeting for him—which amounts to the same thing in principle—and for such a meeting *he* would be entirely responsible. This is done constantly, and so far as we know it is unquestioned. 2nd. A meeting or meetings for ministry may be arranged by an assembly or group of assemblies and several ministering brethren invited to come, their names being announced to occupy the time in ministry as they may arrange among themselves. This also seems to be regarded as according to the principles of the Word. 3rd. At certain seasons, notably at New Year, Easter and Whitsuntide, holiday times are taken advantage of to bring numbers of the children of God together (“Conferences” is a meaningless term to give such gatherings) for Fellowship, Ministry of the Word and generally for Reports of the Lord's Work at home and abroad, and continue for the whole day or for several days. It is at such gatherings that the difficulty as stated in the question arises. There are usually more speakers at such gatherings, who *think* they can speak to profit, than the time will permit of taking part. The question then comes to be on what principle is the ministry to be regulated? Some would answer—(1) On the same as the assembly gathered for worship on the Lord's Day. But this is not admissible. There is a manifest difference between “the Assembly,” all known to and in fellowship with one another, “come together into one place” (1 Cor. xi. 20), and a promiscuous congregation of all sorts and conditions, some it may be under discipline, others defiled with erroneous doctrine, and many not the children of God at all. An “open platform” and a free invitation to all and sundry to take part, unrestricted, under such conditions, would be disastrous, and few we think will

be found to contend for such a form of meeting. (2) The opposite extreme now generally adopted is, to select, appoint and announce three or four to take up all the time for ministry, leaving no room and no opportunity for others who may truly be burdened with a message from God, which He wishes His people to hear. This, while better than the former, and at other seasons (Acts xiv. 27, where two servants of Christ gathered together the Church according to this principle), would be acceptable and generally profitable to the saints, has this disadvantage, that it may exclude the word to meet the need of some distressed or needy soul to whom God would through another messenger send it on such an occasion as here described. (3) Acts xv. 12, 13, (while admittedly a gathering of a special kind for a special purpose) gives some valuable hints as to how a number of ministering brethren when together, should give place and consideration to each other, while Eph. iv. 11-14 tells that ALL the gifts of the Risen Lord are needed for “perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministering” (R.V.) and 1 Cor. xiv. 31, that the object of ministry is, that “ALL may learn and ALL may be comforted.” While the principle of speakers invited and their names announced, if they feel free to do so beforehand, or the alternate principle of those knowing the special need of the saints in that place at that time, suggesting or choosing a subject or which ministry for part of the time may profitable be given, cannot be disowned as *wrong*, it may be questioned whether there is not a “more excellent way,” which brings the whole company into exercise before God, alike as to their need and the fitting word to meet it. There is no thought of liberty for *any one* to speak, that is the *abuse* of the principle, not its exercise—but of God-given God-sent men, who have the confidence of those present to hear. We think there is a *special* blessing connected with the whole meeting being cast upon God, and all given to understand that we are there to wait upon Him, to guide His own approved servants whom He has brought there to minister, as to when and in what order they shall give out the Word which He has entrusted to them. This is still done with much blessing, and those who have proved the faithfulness of God in it, will not be prepared to abandon it for a more popular way, which tends to keep God's people from counting on Himself.

THE CHILDREN OF GOD.

THEIR PLACE, PRIVILEGES AND PROGRESS.

BY THE EDITOR.

AMONG the many titles given to believers in the Lord Jesus, that of "Children of God" holds a high and honoured place. It is usually the first spiritual relationship to God apprehended by the new-born soul, and no other approximates to it in nearness. To be able to say "Abba, Father," and to enter into the place and privileges of a "child," is to be in the innermost circle of Divine favour. Other relationships to the Father and the Son are formed at conversion, such as servants, disciples, witnesses, stewards, but these are apprehended later, and more or less enjoyed, as fuller knowledge of the truth is gained by diligent study of the Word and a right spiritual condition maintained by walking with God in the path of obedience to His will. Alas! that some who are the subjects of God's saving grace, scarce know anything of these wondrous relationships, with their privileges and corresponding responsibilities, owing to obscure and defective teaching. They are content to know that they may reach heaven at the end, knowing little of the joy of having a place in the family of God. With an earnest desire to help those who have lately been "born of God" to apprehend that which is their birthright, and to "possess their possessions" (Obad. i. 17), I would ask you to open the Sacred Word and trace there a little together what God has said concerning this blessed relationship, with some of the privileges, and responsibilities that belong to it. In order to enable us to pursue our study simply we will take it up as follows :

1. The Children's Place.
2. The Children's Privileges.
3. The Children's Possessions.
4. The Children's Progress.
5. The Children's Path.
6. The Children's Pattern.
7. The Children's Prospects.

The Word of God divides the whole human race into two families, and calls them "The children of God" and "the children of the devil" (1 John iii. 10). It recognises nothing intermediate, no third family. There are those to whom the Apostle says—"Beloved *now* are we the sons (children) of God" (1 John iii. 2), and those of whom the Lord declares, "Ye are of your father the devil" (John viii. 44). Like the modern theologians of our time who speak of "The universal Fatherhood of God," the religious leaders in the days of Christ vaunted "We have one Father, even God," but both then and now, only those who have been "born again" have any right or title to address God as their Father, and take the place of being His children. All others are in and of the world, and "the whole world lieth in the Wicked (or evil) One" (1 John v. 19, R.V.). This is fundamental; its denial is fatal to the Gospel. No man who ignores the fall, or minimises its consequences, can either value the Gospel, or appreciate the necessity and importance of the new birth. Man's ruin and all its consequences must be known and believed, before sinners learn their need of regeneration. By nature, "children of wrath" (Eph. ii. 3); by practice, "children of disobedience" (Eph. v. 6); and by unbelief and wicked works, "children of the Wicked One" (Matth. xiii. 38), are the terms in which

the Word of God describes the origin, character, and end of all Adam's race. Neither civilisation, education, reformation, or religion can bring men to God; neither baptism, confirmation, or any ordinance can create anew. Regeneration is the work of the Spirit of God; it is effected *through* the Word, *in* the believing soul. Born of the Spirit (John iii. 4); "Born again by the Word of God" (1 Pet. i. 23); "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 23), is the plain testimony of Scripture, as to the Agent, the instrument, and the way of regeneration.

THE CHILDREN'S PLACE.

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God, *and we are*" (1 John iii. 1, R.V.). The last three words, "and we are," omitted in the A.V., but rightly found in the R.V., are important. They tell that believers are God's actual children, His begotten ones, and not merely His adopted children. You may go to an orphanage and from among the children there take a lad, and bring him into your house as your adopted son. You may treat him as your child, and make him heir to your property, and he may call you "father," but you cannot bring him into the natural relationship of a child. The family likeness, nature, character and ways that belong to the born child are all wanting. The word translated, "children," is *tekna*, which means "begotten ones," "descendants," and signifies similarity of nature and likeness. It is written of all the children of God, "Of His own will begat He us" (Jas. i. 18). They are "begotten of Him" (1 John v.), "born of ('out of') God" (John i. 13). Once "alienated from the life of God through

ignorance (Eph. iv. 18), they now know God, and are possessors of Divine life (2 Pet. i. 4). God dwells in them and they in God (1 John iv. 16). Wondrous place of eternal relationship! nearer than angels, all of grace, never to be forfeited or lost, for although "the servant abideth not in the house for ever," but may be dismissed for disobedience, or when the period of his engagement has expired, yet "the Son abideth ever" (John viii. 35). If a child disobey he may be chastised, but he cannot be dismissed; if a servant be disobedient, he may be dismissed, but cannot be chastised. Herein lies the difference between a servant under law—as those of former dispensations were—and a child in grace, born into God's family with a right to all the privileges, and subject to all the discipline and parental care of the children of God. But while nothing can disturb the relationship thus formed in grace, much may hinder the enjoyment of it. Absalom dwelt two years in Jerusalem, the royal city, in which his father reigned, and yet it is said he "saw not the king's face" (2 Sam. xiv. 28). He was his father's son all the time, but there was no intercourse, no communion between them, because of unconfessed and unforgiven sin. Thus it is with many of God's children. They disobey His Word, disregard or neglect His commandments, wander from His ways, become friends with His enemies, and failing to confess and renounce their evil ways, they become prodigals, in the field or the far country—like the two sons of Luke xv., both out of communion with their father—until some stroke of the parental rod, or result of their own backsliding, brings them to contrition, confession, and restoration. "God dealeth with you as with sons" (Heb.

xiii. 7), is a word which describes all God's Fatherly care and discipline toward His children, from the day of their birth onward, for while the worldling is allowed to run his course unchecked until death ends it, and after death "the judgment," the children of God are *now* the subjects of Divine discipline. This fact is the key to many a strange chapter in the life-history of God's people. Some of God's dealings may be *preventative* to keep His own from sin (2 Cor. xii. 7), others *punitive* because of it (1 Cor. xi. 30), and all are *educative*, to exercise the soul, and make them partakers of His holiness (Heb. xiii. 10), bringing out the Divine likeness which all the children of God have been predestinated to bear (Rom. viii. 29).

THE CHILDREN'S PRIVILEGES.

Nearness to God, access to the Father, a common share in the Divine love, are the children's privileges and portion. They are linked with Christ, associated with Him and acknowledged by Him as His brethren. His words in resurrection were "I ascend unto My Father and your Father, to My God and your God" (John xx. 17). In incarnation He was the "only begotten Son," the Corn of wheat abiding "alone" (John xii. 24), but having died, in resurrection He is "the First-born" of *many* brethren, all of whom are of one Father, having the same Divine life, the same nature, "for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Heb. ii. 11). They have all the place and privileges of sonship. The word *whyos*, "sons," implies position and character. Although the words "children" and "sons" are used indiscriminately in the A.V., they are of different meaning. "Children" is a title of relationship and endearment, it occurs in 1 John i. 12; 1 John iii. 1, 2, 10;

Rom. viii. 16, 17, where God is speaking of His children, whereas when He is speaking to them, He addresses them as "Little," more correctly "Dear children" (1 John ii. 1, 12, 28; iv. 4; v. 21). When the diminutive form of the word, *teknia*, is used it is always a title of endearment, and is applied to *all* the family of faith. Truly we may exclaim with the apostle, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us." As we sing:

"So dear, so very dear to God,
More dear I cannot be;
The love wherewith He loves the Son,
Such is His love to me."

All God's people in all ages were born again, and therefore His children, but in ages before the Cross, they were minors, and lived more in the spirit of servants than of sons. "The heir, as long as he is a child (an infant), differeth nothing from a servant" (Gal. iv. i. 3). The spirit of sonship was not imparted to them, nor could be, until the Son had come forth from the Father's bosom to accomplish redemption. Then the period of infancy and legal restraint was past, and the full favour of adoption or sonship was bestowed upon all the children of God then and since. "Thou are no more a servant but a son" (Gal. iv. 7), so that all believers now, are both "children" and "sons" of God.

(To be Continued.)

—o—

THE CROSS AND THE PILGRIMAGE.

ONE lonely path across the waste,
Thy lowly path of shame;
I would adore Thy wondrous grace,
That I should tread the same.
The Stranger and the Alien, Thou,
And I the stranger—alien, now.

MARANATHA.

("THE LORD WILL COME").

PART VII.—BY ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

PERHAPS there is no objection more strongly pressed against the precious hope that the Lord Jesus may come for His people at any moment, than one drawn from the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew's Gospel. "Here," says the objectors, "we have instructions given by the Lord Jesus to His disciples in regard to all the circumstances connected with the great tribulation and the persecution by Antichrist. If the Lord is coming again before that time, to take all His people to Himself, to what purpose are these instructions? Who will there be to profit by them?"

Those who ask this question evidently take it for granted that the Lord was speaking to His disciples in the character of Christians as belonging to the present dispensation of God's grace. Though at that time this dispensation had not commenced, and the disciples were still Jews, there is no doubt that the Lord frequently spoke to them, by anticipation, of that which would belong to them after His death and resurrection. But it is equally true that He also spoke to them in the character they then bore, of a believing remnant of Israel, who clave to Him, though He was rejected by the nation as a whole. It needs godly care, then, and the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, to discern in which character the Lord is regarding His disciples. In Matt. xxiv. there can be no difficulty whatever in deciding the point. The instructions given are for the use of Jews dwelling in and about Jerusalem (see verses 15 and 16), and in a time when the

law, as given by Moses, is being enforced (see the reference to the Sabbath-day, ver. 20). Further, the people to whom these words are spoken, will be expecting and anxiously awaiting the coming of Christ, and they need to be warned against the delusions of false Christs that will present themselves (ver. 24). But they will be expecting Him to come to them on the earth, and not that they shall be caught up to Him in the clouds. How meaningless to us, to say: "Wherefore, if they shall say to you, Behold He is in the desert; go not forth: Behold, He is in the secret chambers; believe it not" (ver. 26). That which would make it impossible for believers of this dispensation to be moved by any such delusions, is the fact that, before ever Christ comes to earth, the dead saints are to be raised, and the living ones are to be changed and caught up with them, in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. That, and not the assurance that His coming will be like the lightning flash, would be the argument, if argument were needed, to satisfy the believer of to-day that he need not go either to the desert or to the secret chamber to look for the Lord. Another important point, in this connection is, that the Lord speaks of His coming as the "coming of the *Son of Man*." Now that is a title that is never used of Him in connection with the Church, but only in relation to His earthly judgments and reign.

It is quite plain that this chapter is given for the use of a people who will own Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ, and who will give heed to His words. But it is just as plain that they will not be belonging to the Church, which is His body, but will be Jews, dwelling in Judea, and looking for

Christ to come and save them in the flesh (ver. 22), and not to catch them up into the air. That there will be such a people is borne witness to by many other Scriptures. The prophet Zephaniah tells of an "afflicted and poor people," who trust in the Name of the Lord, at a time when Jerusalem is filthy and polluted (compare verses 1 and 12 of chap. iii.). And this will be shortly before the gathering of the nations about Jerusalem, that the Lord may pour out His fierce anger upon them (ver. 8). Malachi tells of a waiting people, whose delight is in the Lord, and on whose account He owns the temple of their day as His temple (chap. iii. 1). It is of them that He says, in verse 17: "And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in the day that I do make even a peculiar treasure" (R.V.).

In Matt. xxiv. the Lord speaks of the temple as "the *holy* place" (ver. 15); while the reference to "the abomination of desolation," which will be set up there, tells us that the time is that of the Antichrist and the great tribulation. In 2 Thess. ii. 4, this temple is again owned as "the temple of God," and this acknowledgement of it leaves no room for doubt that there will be a believing remnant of Abraham's seed who will worship and offer sacrifice there, and for whose sake God counts the temple as His house. In Dan. xi., too, we read of a people who do "know their God," who are joined to Him in a holy covenant, and who have understanding (verses 28 to 33). Here, as in other passages referred to, the people in question are Jews in Jerusalem, and the time is the time of the Antichrist who presently takes away the daily sacrifice and sets up the "abomination that maketh desolate" (verse 31).

These are the people, then, for whom the

instructions of Matt. xxiv. are given, and to whom they will be perfectly applicable. It is these very instructions that will give them understanding, and enable them to escape in time; while the many, who have trusted to the Antichrist, and made a league with him, will fall by fire and sword, when he breaks that league and begins to persecute them.

But perhaps it will be asked, if the directions of Matt. xxiv. are intended for believing Jews, who will be in their own land after the church has been taken away, why did the Lord address them to His disciples as though they belonged to them? And this brings us back to the question that we started with. In which of these two distinct characters was the Lord speaking to His disciples on this occasion? Was He addressing them as a little company of believing Jews, who owned Him as the Christ, while the bulk of the nation were rejecting Him? Or, was He speaking to them, by anticipation, as representatives of the saved ones of this present dispensation? The chapter itself, as we have seen, furnishes abundant evidence that it was in the former character that the Lord was addressing them. The closing words of chapter xxiii. had told how the day was coming, though it might be far off, when those who now rejected Him would hail His coming again to save them from their hour of anguish. Upon this, the disciples had asked about His coming again and the overthrow of the temple, of which He had also spoken, and chap. xxiv. is His reply to their questions. These questions were asked by them as Jews, personally concerned in all that concerned their nation, their land, and their city. The Lord did not hesitate to answer

them fully; and His answer, thus given, remains on record for those who shall occupy a precisely similar position in the days after this dispensation has closed. But let us compare the Lord's answer on this occasion, with one given by Him to a question of very similar character, put by the same disciples a little later. In Acts i. 6, they asked Him, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" They still spoke as having part in all that belonged to Israel; for they had no knowledge yet of the mighty change that was about to take place in their position and character. But the Lord will no longer reply to them on that ground. Instead of a full answer to their inquiry, such as He had given on the previous occasion, He tells them that they have nothing to do with times and seasons, but that they are shortly to receive power to be His witnesses throughout the world. So much valuable instruction may be drawn from this part of our subject, however, that it may be well to renew the consideration of it next month.

THE TWO TREES OF EDEN.

PART III.—BY THE LATE HENRY DYER.

IN verses 20-24, we see the precious results in our first parents of their believing God's words of mercy. All the preciousness of Christ became instantly theirs (see 1 Pet. ii. 7), "Unto *you* therefore which believe, is the preciousness." The tokens of their faith were seen in both their *words* and their *ways*—with their mouth "they confessed to salvation," for Adam called his wife's name "Eve" and she, on her part, accepted it. "Eve" is a joyous, triumphant word, "the living one"—for though till

then she had brought only *death* to Adam and to herself, and to all their posterity (see Romans v.), no sooner was God's Gospel believed, than—sin-stained and shame-struck though she was—Adam saw her in a new light, and he it was and not God, who gave her that bright and joyous name, and she accepted it. Well may Peter say, "precious faith" as well as a "precious Christ"; that which God *gives*, faith *takes*.

How it points us on to Eve's favoured daughter, Mary of Bethlehem, the sin-stained mother of God's Holy One—for Whom the woman's Seed must die or never could she be in heaven—whatever the Church of Rome may teach to the contrary. Let all saints hold fast this "great mystery of godliness" that God Himself hath brought "a clean thing out of an unclean?" Sweet indeed was the word "Woman" when Adam gave it her in innocence, but how far richer and brighter is the new creation name of "Eve," which was faith's utterance by them, when they were sinners saved! And then came the "coats of skins"—made for them, and put on them by God Himself, the skins telling of animal death endured, and pointing them back to that bruising of the woman's Seed, the word of which they had believed, whilst God's own *making* of the coats points upward to where the slain Lamb is seen accepted in heaven on the sinner's behalf. Surely as the believing ones wore them, they were as the outward and visible *sign* to them of the inward and spiritual grace of *believing*, which God had granted them. Wonderful coats! What constant helps to faith—just as baptism and the Lord's Supper should be now. Who shall say that the same God who did not suffer Israelites' shoes or garments to wear

out in the desert, did not also make those true and real "holy coats" last them all the 960 years of Adam's life? Nor need we think that Eve wished to change with the fashions of any of their wayward children. Would that this were truer now, of the dress we sometimes see amongst us!

But the voice of the Lord God is again heard: not now to condemn the Serpent, and to tell of mercy to the self-condemned sinners—but to tell of God's own delight and joy over those who were to Him as the prey just taken from the mighty, and as lawful captives newly "*delivered*" (see Isa. xlix. 24). "Behold, the man is become *as one of Us*, to know good and evil." That which their sinful snatching at the tree of knowledge could not do for them, was done. They did know good and evil, for they now knew that God was indeed "Good" and that the serpent and their listening to him was "Evil"; and more than this—they were taught of how near and how dear to God they now were—viz. "as one of Us"; words that remind us of 1 John i. 3, "fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ," for surely nothing less than this is in the words, "Behold the man is become *as one of Us*." A fellowship which even in creature-innocence they could not know, for only by redemption can the creature be raised to a Divine fellowship.

"None but the sinner train,
That precious blood have known;
Redemption is our only claim
To come so near the throne."

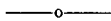
They had been in the fellowship of the serpent—a guilty, a wretched, and a hell-bound connection, but now they were in fellowship with God and the Lamb by the Spirit. In 1 Cor. x, when Paul would

awaken the saints to their high-calling, he teaches them of only two tables. "The table of the Lord," which should aim at having all the redeemed at it, and "the table of the demons," to which they did belong when they were unregenerate.

There next follows the holy care to be bestowed on them, as those so richly blessed. They were to be still more guarded from sin than ever before. Before they were *in* the garden, but cautioned not to eat; now, however, lest they should again sin and eat also of the tree of life, they are kindly put out of the garden altogether. Not that eating of any tree could really make them to "live for ever." The words are to be taken as expressing what *their mind and aim* would have been had they acted thus. For alas! how much do we, even as believers, yet cling to this life as if we would fain lengthen it indefinitely, and too many of God's own children (partakers of the *heavenly* calling) only leave it when death no longer suffers them to hold it. As the Psalmist says, "My soul cleaveth to the dust"—a strange cleaving for God's children, and yet too true. What a kindness then it was when these precious ones, now so "beloved of God," were sent forth from the garden; yea, were driven from it.

How like to that prayer taught us as children of the Kingdom of the Heavens (Matt. vi. 23)—"Lead us not into temptation"; and again (John xvii. 15), "I pray . . . that Thou shouldest keep them *from the Evil*." But not their footsteps only, must be kept from the tree of life, their eyes (i.e., their thoughts) must be also. Hence the further loving ordinance of both "cherubim and a flaming sword, which *turned* every way to keep or guard

the way of the tree of life," and that, too, at the *East* of the garden, as if to help them, that at every morning's light (i.e., the East) their first thoughts should be, not life here below in a sin-stained earthly Eden, but the "cherubim" of heavenly things, and the "flaming sword" of being hated here below. Abel knew that sword, so did Job in his afflictions, so did Prophets and Apostles (see James v. 10, and I Cor. iv. 11-13), so also did the martyrs of Queen Mary's reign, and so have all more or less who have lived "godly in Christ Jesus." But it has ever been to them, as it were, a living and moving sword of God's holy and purging flame, and a sword that turned every way at God's bidding, and not merely at man's, to keep them from ever aiming at an Eden in this doomed creation. Many preachers use this sword as expressing God's wrath against the unregenerate, and not amiss either; but we have no *proof* that it was ever even seen by any but Adam and Eve as God's redeemed ones. How good to be thus banished from the trees of Eden in order to draw our daily footsteps, and also our eyes and minds, the nearer to the "Tree of Life," which is in "the Paradise of God" above, with its city, which is The Bride, the Lamb's wife, in which is the throne of God and the Lamb, and the fellowship of all the redeemed.



Separation from evil is, in a great sense, the principle of communion with God. The truth, the knowledge of God, life in Christ, is the positive principle or secret of communion, surely; but separation from evil must accompany that. For if we meet the Blessed One Himself, we must surely meet Him in conditions suited to His presence.—*J. G. B.*

HOLINESS, PURITY AND PEACE.

THERE is a tendency in our time to sacrifice everything for the sake of peace and unity among those who profess the Christian name. There can be no diversity of thought as to the desirability of peace among the Lord's true people. An assembly of saints living in peace and unity, is a pleasant sight. But this, in order to be well pleasing to God, and of real blessing to the saints themselves, must be attained in God's way. There is a peace which is not of God: it is gained and maintained at the expense of righteousness. It may please men, but it dishonours God, inasmuch as it compromises His Word, and studies to suppress every truth and act that would bring unpleasantness into the circle, or offend those who need to be offended because of their worldly and disorderly ways. This is not the peace of God. "First *pure* then *peaceable*" (James iii. 17) is the Divine order. First "Righteousness" then "Peace" (Heb. vii. 2), is the divine way. The Lord's claim must be owned and obeyed, and if this is done, He will bless His people with peace; such peace as those who make fleshly compacts, know nothing of. "Great peace have they which love Thy law, and they shall have no stumbling block" (Psa. cxix. 135. R.V.). The maxim of carnal men, who love ease, and whose highest ambition is to pass their days pleasantly, pleased with themselves, and with each other is—"Peace at any price." But these are not the thoughts of our God.

The divine claims must first be met: God's Word must be honoured, God's order observed. When saints wink at sin, or close their eyes to it and allow it to remain unjudged in their midst, afraid lest the mention of it mar their unity, or disturb their

peace, then manifestly such peace in an unholy compact, which sooner or later will break up and its hollowness and hypocrisy be made manifest to all. A unity—or rather a confederacy of evil, for there is no unity in it—held together by unrighteousness, in which each is afraid to speak or act in dealing with known and cherished sin, no matter how loudly conscience speaks, lest unholy peace and fleshly friendships should thereby be endangered, will one day fall to pieces, as surely as it exists. The principles of ungodliness which are there nursed, will operate in other ways, and the fretting leprosy which is unjudged within will appear in other parts, to the confusion of those who have been guilty of masking and retaining it. Such is the nature of sin, and such its consequences, wherever wilfully trifled with, or knowingly allowed to pass unjudged, under the specious garb of maintaining unity. God's unity is based on holiness: His peace is the fruit of righteousness. This Divine principle is true in the individual and in the church. When sin is cherished in the heart, or allowed to pass unjudged in the life, fellowship with God is impossible. If self judgment is neglected, Divine judgment will follow. If an outbreak of sin in a believer, of such a nature as to bring him under assembly discipline, either in its milder or severer forms is allowed to pass unjudged, then the Lord will have a controversy with that assembly, and sooner or later will bring the sinning saint and the defiled assembly under His own judgment.

When the Divine claims are honoured, and the Divine Word obeyed, then God will make His saints a peaceable people, for He is the author of "peace in all the churches of the saints" (1 Cor xiv. 33). Thus only,

shall the Lord's people be preserved from the latitudinarian indifference of these last days, which with its false charity and love of peace, at the expense of holiness and righteousness, seeks its own pleasure, rather than God's honour and glory.

" HE IS NOT HERE."

"HE is not here!" Ah, no! I seek in vain,
 'Mid fairest scenes of earth, my heart's delight;
 "He is not here," else would those scenes remain
 Unscathed by aught that speaks decay or blight,
 Death like a shadow rests on all below,
 Even brightest landscapes wear a tint of woe.

"He is not here," the One my heart loves best,
 Then can I join the giddy thoughtless throng,
 Who heedless of His absence, careless rest,
 Or fête that absence with gay mirth and song?
 No! He is gone: and not the brightest ray
 Can gild the scene to me while He's away.

"He is not here!" oppression, anguish, strife
 On every side, with solemn voice declare
 Him here no more; the Lord of grace and life.
 How can I then but garb of mourning wear?
 They call me "absent-minded";—well, they may;
 I'm listening for His voice, while He's away.

"He is not here!" I want Him every hour,
 My soul would weary for His long delay,
 Save that, like perfume from a hidden flower,
 The fragrance of His spices cheers the way.
 Yet fills my heart with more desire to prove
 The fulness of Thy presence, Lord above.

"He is not here!" but where His steps have been
 We tread. Our home's with Him, our living Head
 In yon bright realms, whose floods of glorious sheen
 On lowliest path of faith their lustre shed,
 Tracing with golden threads our way below:
 Till in full blaze of light, as known we know.

"He is not here!" He's risen, and soon shall call
 His Bride, His undefiled one, to the skies:
 Then in full splendour, reign as Lord of all.
 Where now, alas! He's hated, and despised:
 Swell, swell the strain, bow down the head, adore,
 THE CRUCIFIED SHALL REIGN FOR EVERMORE.

The Bible Annotator.

BRIEF OUTLINES OF BIBLE SUBJECTS.

DIVINE DISCIPLINE.

- Its Subjects, Believers (Heb. xii. 5-7 ; 2 Sam. vii. 14 ; Amos iii. 3).
 Its Nature, parental, not judicial (1 Peter i. 14-17 ; 1 Cor. xi. 32).
 Its Instruments, The Word (Titus ii. 12 ; The Knife (John xv. 4, &c).
 Its Objects, Profit, Fruit, Holiness (Heb. xii. 10-11).

THE CHRISTIAN CONFLICT.

- INTERNAL, with the flesh (Gal. v. 17) ; not after the flesh (2 Cor. x. 3) ; with the Armour of light (Rom. xiii. 12).
 EXTERNAL, with the World (John xvi. 33) ; not by resistance but submission ; with the Armour of righteousness (2 Cor. vi. 7).
 INFERNAL, with the Devil (Eph. vi. 12) ; not by submission but resistance (Jas. iv. 7) ; with the whole Armour of God (Eph. vi. 13).

BRIEF NOTES ON BIBLE TEXTS.

- STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS (1 Peter ii. 2). Strangers because away from home, pilgrims because going home.
 FAITH, HOPE, LOVE (1 Cor. xiii. 13). Faith looks at the Cross, Hope waits for the Glory, and Love fills up the "little while" between.
 FAITH AND WORKS (Eph. ii. 10 ; James ii. 20 ; Gal. v. vi). Faithless works, God does not receive ; workless faith, men will not believe. Faith working by Love can never deceive.
 LOOK UP (Psa. v. 3). To be wretched, look *within*: occupation with *self*. To be distracted look *around*: occupation with others. To be happy, look *up*: occupation with *Christ*.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Is there any Scripture for fixing or counting dates regarding the coming of the Lord? Not His coming to the air for His saints, which is the believer's proximate hope, the event for which he is to be "looking" (Titus ii. 13), and "waiting" (1 Cor. i. 7). "A little while" (Heb. x. 37) ; "I come quickly" (Rev. xxii. 20) are the words of Scripture regarding

this event, and all who fix dates and count years only betray their ignorance of the whole subject. Regarding the Lord's return to earth *with* His people, there are dates and signs, which those who are in the tribulation and distress of that unparalleled season are told to watch and reckon (Matt. xxiv. 15-20 ; Luke xx. 20-28). It is through failing to distinguish the times and the special character of the present dispensation, that such glaring errors are made by those who reckon dates to find the time of the Lord's coming to receive His own.

Answers to Correspondents.

J. B., SURREY.—The fullest account of the work of grace and the way in which assemblies were gathered during the years 1859-1880, known to us, is found in "Reminiscences of Thirty Years' Gospel Work and Revival Times," by the late Samuel Blow, Evangelist (1s 6d), and in the recently published "Memoir of the Life and Labours of Donald Ross," pioneer Evangelist of Scotland and the United States of America (2s 6d). You will find some stirring "battle scenes" in these records, which young preachers of these times would be all the better to have some knowledge of.

"TENT PREACHER."—The opposition of Ritualistic and other preachers to your invasion of their parishes with the Gospel, is nothing new, it has been experienced by evangelists and gossellers who carry God's message into such places everywhere. Read the life of George Whitefield, and you will see that what you are experiencing is but a "scratch" compared with what he endured, most of it from men in high places, some of them children of God steeped in prejudice and blinded by sectarian jealousy. Do not be discouraged, but trust in God and go on. It is infinitely safer for you and better for the work, to have their opposition than their utterly worthless patronage. The former casts you on God, and helps you to speak wisely, the latter often corrupts and ruins the work. We have long concluded that wherever there is any real work being done for God and eternity, the devil will keep up a "running fire" against the work and the worker all along the line. When the enemy can afford to be quiet, or patronising, you

may safely reckon, it is because he is not losing much.

BESSIE B.—The best authorities are agreed that the words of Acts viii. 37, are not found in the oldest manuscripts of the New Testament Scriptures. This is why the verse is omitted in the Revised Version. Its omission has nothing to do with the truth of baptism. Your friend who says so is entirely mistaken.

J. M., AYRSHIRE.—In dealing with fellow-believers who have little exercise regarding many truths which you have learned and esteem important, it is well to first of all, speak of things in which you have a mutual interest, those great and precious truths of the Word, relating to the person and work of Christ, in which all true believers rejoice, and to which every heart in which grace has wrought, will yield a ready response. Then, having shared in common that on which you are agreed, it is your privilege and responsibility to impart to your brother, as he may be able to receive it, truth which he has not before learned, and which if graciously and wisely brought forth, will be generally accorded a hearing, if not at first a welcome. Some take longer time than others to learn, but while they learn slowly they learn surely, and generally get a fuller and firmer hold of the truth than others who pick it up quicker. Surely it is Godlike to extend patience to such slow learners, and even if they should be prejudiced, to seek to disarm it by manifesting a Christlike spirit toward them. A more frequent way, however, is, to hurl truths most likely to arouse their opposition at such, in an off-hand manner from a high elevation, which they naturally resent and are frequently by this means prejudiced against. A faithful and *wise* steward is characterised as one able to give each his portion "in due season" (Luke xii. 42). Such ministry is greatly needed at the present time among distressed and unsatisfied children of God, who are not getting what their spiritual nature craves for in their denominations, and who are groping their way toward something better.

Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION VII.—Where the Gospel work of an Assembly has fallen into such decay, that it needs the continuous advertising of eccentric subjects, or a constant supply of preachers from all parts to keep it in existence, what is the remedy?

ANSWER A.—The old time way, when power seemed to be waning in Gospel testimony and there was a lack of conversions in our meetings, was for the whole assembly to come together for humiliation, confession and prayer, so that the causes of dearth might be found out and dealt with before God. I have known such meetings to go on for one and two weeks, night after night, nearly the whole company coming together to be searched and humbled before God, and I never knew this to fail in bringing about a reviving among ourselves, with fresh power and Gospel testimony among the unsaved.—G. F.

ANSWER B.—The Gospel work of an Assembly is generally very much what the Christians and especially the preachers among them make it. When it declines, it is usually owing to the low spiritual condition or want of ability of those who carry it on. Neither "eccentric subjects," preachers from other places, nor "Special Services" will reach the source of weakness (although all of these are frequently resorted to), but a return to God. Apart from this, all other remedies are artificial and can only make things worse, no matter what appearances may say to the contrary. God's work must be done in God's way, by His chosen and fitted instruments, with whom He is working. All else is an imitation of the work of God. G. M.

ANSWER C.—It is to be feared that in many Assemblies little responsibility is felt regarding the carrying on of Gospel work by the Lord's people as a whole. One or two are either appointed, or appoint themselves to carry on the Gospel testimony, which they do in the same way as the Methodists, by appointing local preachers to fill the platform months ahead, irrespective of spiritual condition or fitness. Need we wonder if those who fear God, and seek to own a Gospel ministry which is of the Spirit of God, do not share in such a line of things, indeed, are not asked or wanted to share in it. Preachers of their own stamp and way of thinking are brought: light and flashy subjects are announced, to catch the giddy crowd: singing and music make up what is deficient in preaching: a big show is kept up, and after all has been done, the results are sadly disappointing. There is a decided lack of abiding fruit, and no wonder, for if things are not done according to God's will, it is

impossible that they can have His approval and His blessing. There is need for a return to the "first works," and then no doubt the old times of blessing will return to us, as some remember in days gone by when all believers took a hearty interest in the work of the Gospel and turned out to a man, not to occupy the platform or sit unexercised on the benches, but there to watch for souls and support the preacher by prayer. The remedy for decay and lack of power is to get back to God and to the simplicity of His way, not to copy the religious world and introduce its fashions, which always hinder and never help the work of God. J. S.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—"The fellowship of saints" as set forth in the Word and exemplified in the early Churches, is not limited to a common share in worship and remembrance of the Lord's death, but includes—"fellowship in the Gospel" (Phil. i. 5)—"striving together"—"co-operating vigorously" (Phil. i. 27) in making it known to those in their immediate vicinity—"echoing forth" (1 Thess. i. 8) its joyful sound to those in "regions beyond" them (2 Cor. x.), and supporting by their prayers and substance approved servants of Christ, sent of God to make it known to the world, especially where Christ is not named and in places where there is no distinct Gospel testimony. The efforts of individuals, however earnest, can never fulfil the responsibilities of the Christian assembly in bearing a vigorous and united testimony in the Gospel, especially in the immediate neighbourhood where God has set it as His light-bearer, "holding forth the Word of Life" (Phil. ii. 12) to the lost and needy souls around. Continuous ministry of the Word of God bearing on such matters, in the grace and wisdom of the Spirit of God, is the appointed means for keeping this as well as other functions of the assembly in health and activity, for preventing them from falling into decay, and for their restoration and recuperation when they fail. A primary responsibility rests with those to whom God has given gifts of ministry, to continuously stir up the consciences and activities of the saints, so that all may be kept alive to their active participation in this service. Too often, the whole burden is left with one or two, or allowed to fall into the hands of those who carry it on, according to what they call "individual responsibility," claiming the right to bring such preachers and adopt such means as

they think fit. This system, however apparently successful, is away from the lines of Scripture, and will sooner or later alienate godly fellowship and bring trouble, if not division, as it has done already in too many well-known instances. We cannot depute to individuals what God has laid upon the whole, without incurring loss of power and consequent decay and weakness. Let those who are gifted to preach and have the Divine seal upon their ministry, have free scope in arranging for the carrying on of the Gospel work and the generous support and fellowship of the whole, with room for the development and recognition of lesser gifts, coming on as helpers and co-labourers, which is quite a different thing from handing over the entire Gospel testimony to the "individual responsibility" of those who are either incapable, or lack the confidence of the saints, or bring such men and use such methods as the Word forbids us to recognise.

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.

QUESTION VIII.—Is there any Scripture principle or precedent for a number of men—old and young irrespective of qualification or recognition in the assemblies where they are—coming together stately to make arrangements for and virtually rule the assemblies from which they come, but which they in no way represent, committing them to ways and responsibilities which they may not, in many cases do not approve of?

QUESTION IX.—If an Assembly becomes divided as to the course to be pursued in a difficulty, is it according to God that the majority act without the fellowship of the others, and in defiance of their convictions; and if they do, what is the responsibility of those who have been so dealt with?

QUESTION X.—In the event of an Assembly become divided, one party going out and forming themselves into a new meeting, then seeking to be recognised by surrounding assemblies, what is the Scriptural course to be pursued in such a case? Are both to be regarded as assemblies and inter-communed with as such, or what?

THE RECOGNITION OF OVERSEERS.

BY W. R. LEWIS.

“GOD is not the author of confusion.” There is no democratic liberty in the Church of God, for its members to do that which is right in their own eyes, to be all on a common level, and to occupy places of equal prominence (1 Cor. xii. 14-18). Government is indispensable to united and continuous action in any body—social, political, or religious. Its absence is anarchy. Disorder, though it must be expected in the world, is bad enough wherever it reigns, but nowhere is it so bad as in the Church which is the habitation of God through the Spirit—in the assembly, where “Jesus is in the midst.”

“Pastors and teachers” are among the gifts which the ascended Lord has given for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ; till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ (Eph. iv. 11, 13; R.V.). Their appointment is the prerogative of Christ alone, for the sheep are His (John xxi. 17). It is for the Owner of the flock to appoint His shepherds, and He will only appoint those whom the Holy Spirit has qualified to be overseers—to feed (or shepherd) the assembly of God (Acts xx. 28; 1 Cor. xxi. 11). Scripture does not authorize the flock to choose its shepherds, nor the shepherds to appoint themselves or one another. While “elders” were appointed by the apostles or their delegates (Acts xiv. 23; Titus i. 5)—(and it would appear that “elders” and “overseers” are synonymous terms—see Acts xx. 28; 1

Tim. v. 17; Titus i. 5; 1 Peter v. 2), yet there is no evidence that the authority given to the apostles to appoint “elders,” is still vested in man. In those days, spiritual gifts could be imparted through apostolic instrumentality (1 Tim. v. 15; 2 Tim. i. 6), but since the Apostles’ day, and the completion of the canon of Scripture, we are dependent directly upon our glorified Lord, and His sole Vicar on earth—the Holy Spirit—for the supply and effectual exercise of all gifts. Ministry in spiritual things should be distinguished from ministry in temporal things. In the case of the former, the choice and the qualification are both from above, while in the case of the latter, the Church may choose its own servants (Acts vi. 3; 1 Cor. xvi. 3; 2 Cor. viii. 19).

The responsibility of the sheep is to “know” (or recognise) the shepherds which their Owner has set over them, and to “esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake (1 Thess. v. 12). They are to obey and submit to them (Heb. xiii. 17; 1 Cor. xvi. 15), for in so doing, they honour Him who has given them to be overseers. The sheep are not to think of them as masters, but as faithful guides, for they watch for their souls, and are accountable to the Chief Shepherd for their charge (1 Peter v. 2). They are even to “submit themselves” as a matter of dutiful yielding, when their judgment and natural will incline them in the opposite direction, unless the path they are asked to follow is contrary to the Word of God.

We have not been left in ignorance regarding the qualifications with which the Holy Spirit endows those whom Christ would have tend His flock. By these being pointed out in the Word, the sheep are

enabled to recognise their shepherds, and to distinguish between the true and the false, for in this as in everything else, men and the devil have their counterfeits. In every company of God-gathered saints, there will surely be those whom God has inclined and fitted to undertake the trying, exhausting, self-denying and humbling work of a shepherd, who have devoted themselves to minister unto the saints (1 Cor. xvi. 15). We are told that those who aspire to "exercise oversight, desire a good work," (1 Tim. iii. 1). Those who so aspire are then described. Their doctrine must be sound (1 Titus i. 9). and their character must be irreproachable (1 Tim. iii. 2). And not only must they have these and the other qualities mentioned in those Scriptures and be themselves models for the flock (1 Pet. v. 3), but their families ought to be such as will be examples of godliness to the saints, for if a man cannot rule his own house, he is quite unfit to guide and rule the church of God. If these qualifications are wanting in one who aspires to exercise oversight there, no matter what other commendations or apparent abilities he may possess, he and those whom he desires to shepherd must conclude that this important work is not one for which he is Divinely fitted. It is said concerning all Christ's true sheep that they hear His voice, they know not the stranger's, and a stranger will they not follow. They have an anointing which enables them to distinguish the true shepherd from the false. They know instinctively whom Christ has given, whom the Holy Spirit has qualified for the work, and who they are that do it.

Let us see to it that we recognise those in our assemblies who have these qualifications and *esteem* them very highly in love,

obey them and *submit* to them—these are God's commandments—"for they watch for our souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief, for that is *unprofitable* for us." God forbid that any of the Lord's flock should suffer loss by failing to carry out these commandments of the Lord relating to our duty towards His shepherds, or by imitating in any measure that spirit of rebellion which was shown toward His servants of old (Numbers xvi), but may we experience the reward that He will give to those who seek to keep His commandments, for in the keeping thereof, He assures us there is "*great reward*" (Psa. xix. 2).

It must not however be concluded that the sheep are called upon to *blindly* follow all who would exercise rule over them. The same Holy Spirit who qualifies those who lead, indwells the led, and the anointing which they have received from the Holy One, enables them to know and ascertain His mind on all things which pertain unto life and godliness (John xiv. 25 ; 1 John ii. 20; 2 Peter i. 3). If the sheep having thus, by the help of the Holy Spirit, the power of discrimination, see their guides walking in the truth, it is their duty to follow them, but if on the other hand some leaders should arise "speaking perverse things," the sheep must not allow themselves to be drawn away after them (Acts xx. 30). This power to spiritually discern, will vary according to the measure of spiritual intelligence each has received, and as our God and Father gives not the Spirit by measure (John iii. 34), but would have each and all filled with the Spirit (Eph. v. 18), so in proportion as we are walking in the Spirit, and not fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, will our judgment be sound.

The Word of God taught by the Holy Spirit is the all-sufficient Guide, revealing to the shepherds their path, and to the sheep, those whom God would have them follow. If there be humble submission to that Word, and waiting upon God by both shepherds and sheep, there will be no "lording it" or exercising rights of ownership over the sheep (for they are not their property) on the part of the shepherds, nor any self-will on the part of the sheep, but both will in one mind and according to the Lord's order, walk in the path that the Chief of the shepherds and the Lord of the sheep would have them tread. Yea, all "will be girt with humility to serve one another (1 Pet. v. 5, R.V.), and "each will esteem others better than themselves" (Phil. ii. 3).

Those who lack this meek and quiet spirit will be untrustworthy guides, or stubborn sheep, and a cause of trouble and contention. Of this we may be sure—that "diversity of judgment," whether amongst shepherds or the sheep, is not according to the mind of Christ, and that "oneness of mind" is obtainable, if there be prayerful submission to the Word of God without reserve, and no *personal end to gain* or ambition to reach on the part of those concerned.

May those who are "leaders," and we who are "led," cultivate more and more that brokenness and contrition of heart which God does not despise (Psa. li. 17), and be found sitting at the feet of the Chief Shepherd and Overseer of our souls learning of Him, and thus be in a position to realize that manifest guidance in the right way, resulting from the special nearness of Jehovah, to all those who are humble in spirit, and—like their Master and Lord,—

meek and lowly in heart (Psa. xxv. 9 ; xxiv. 17 ; Matt. xi. 29).

In conclusion, the following further Scriptures well merit the prayerful consideration of those who are serving and looking for the Chief Shepherd to appear.

"He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be as the light of the morning when the sun ariseth, even a morning without clouds (2 Sam. xxiii. 3).

"The path of the just is as the shining light (the light of dawn), that shineth more and more unto the perfect day (Prov. iv. 18).

"The Holy and Just One said, "I am THE WAY" (Acts iii. 14 ; John xiv. 9).

"Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet and all thy ways shall be established (Prov. iv. 12, 18, 25 ; John i. 29 ; Heb. ii. 9 ; xii. 2-3 ; 2 Cor. iii. 18 ; Titus ii. 13).

—o—

THE WILL OF GOD.

THERE is but one will in heaven. Angels never consult their own will, or plan their own pathway. "They do His commandments hearkening to the voice of His Word." One will regulates all, with neither jar or discord, I suspect the first discord caused in heaven was by Satan. Why are all in heaven so eternally serene, happy, and blessed? Because there is a *throne* set in heaven and One sitting upon it. No wonder the Lord Jesus put that marvellous prayer into the mouth of his disciples, "Thy *will* be done on earth, as it is in heaven." When this prayer is answered, it will be "heaven begun below."

THOMAS NEWBERRY.

THE CHILDREN OF GOD.

THE PROGRESS AND PATH.
PART II.—BY THE EDITOR.

“**B**ECAUSE ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts crying—Abba, Father” (Gal. iv. 6, with Rom. viii. 15). This does not refer to the regenerative act of the Spirit, by which sinners are made sons, but to the gift of the Spirit *because* they “are sons,” making good to them the place and experience of sons, and enabling them to address God in the same endearing terms as the Lord Jesus did when here (see Mark xiv. 36), where the words were first used by Him in prayer. This, the first and greatest of all the believer's possessions is the power in which he discerns and apprehends all his spiritual inheritance, the things fully given him of God (1 Cor. ii. 10-12), of which the natural man, the carnal mind knows nothing. The Spirit when ungrieved, reveals to the heart (Eph. i. 18 R.V.), the wealth of that inheritance to which he has become an heir, and strengthens him in the inner man to enable him to apprehend and enjoy the untold wealth, the immeasurable love and the unsearchable riches of Christ (Eph. i. 8, 19, 19), which belong to him in virtue of his relationship to God and Christ. “If children then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.” Blessed inheritance!

THE CHILDREN'S PROGRESS.

The Divine life imparted at regeneration is the same essentially in all. It is Christ-life. The “new man” formed within is after the image of Him that created him (Col. iii. 10), the embryo of all that the believer will ever be in time and eternity. Like the new-born babe, perfect in all its members, yet capable of growth and development, which under right conditions

proceeds in perfect order and symmetry. In grace, as in nature, there is first the babe, then the child, then the youth and after that the man of full stature and age. The varied stages of spiritual development and progress of the children of God are clearly defined in the Word with the characteristics of each, the means whereby such progress is attained and the causes of its hindrance pointed out.

“As new-born *babes*, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby” (1 Pet. ii. 2). Pure milk, the unadulterated truths of the Word, daily read, *received into the heart, fed on, and allowed* to work effectually in the life (see Psa. i. 3; cxix. 99; Jer. xv. 16), is the source and secret of spiritual growth, while neglect of the Word, of prayer and walking with God, or companionships and unequal yokes with the world, hinder growth and cause backsliding. The Hebrews were “babes” in an unhealthy and retrograde condition, at a time when they ought to have been “full grown;” kept so, by a legal and ceremonial religion to which they clung, while the Corinthian believers were “babes” because of their carnal and sectarian tendencies in choosing and following pet teachers, and walking as “men” in the flesh. Nothing more stunts spiritual growth and hinders progress in Divine life, than worldly and sectarian religion. If you wish to go on “going and growing” (2 Sam. v. 10 margin), going from strength to strength (Psa. lxxxiv. 7), growing in grace and the knowledge of the Lord (2 Pet. iii. 18), you must make a clean cut from the world, a complete separation from worldly and sectarian religion in all its forms, and go straight on with God and the Word of His grace (Acts xx. 32) day by day and all the way.

The second stage, that of "young men," is characterised by being "strong and the Word of God abiding" in them (1 John ii. 14), which shows they had been using it well. To such, the world is a special snare, and the word of warning to them is, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world," with the solemn reminder, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father"—that which is peculiarly the children's portion—"is not in him." He has not lost the place, but he has for the time being lost that love of communion and confidence which is the birthright of the child of God.

"Fathers," full grown and mature in the heavenly life, who have known Christ and gone on with God from the beginning, keeping a steady course, and found, like Caleb and Joshua, fresh for the fight, and like Moses, with the undimmed eye and the dew of their youth still upon them, are a lovely sight, still bringing forth fruit in old age and speaking only good of the God who has sustained them. O to end the course like that, to leave the wilderness with a song, and go home to the Fatherland "more than conquerors."

THE CHILDREN'S PATH.

"The world knoweth us not because it knew Him not" (1 John iii. 1). "In the world ye shall have tribulation" (John xvi. 33). "The sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Phil. ii. 15). The children of God are in but not of the world; they are one with Christ, who was rejected by it, and whose claims it still disowns. Earth is the place of their pilgrimage, *not* of their inheritance; they will not reign where He was rejected. But they have a testimony to bear and a message to deliver. While they

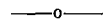
remain on earth, their "life," like that of their rejected Lord, is to be "the light of men" (John i. 4), and here for a season they are left to be God's light-bearers amid the world's darkness. This they can *only* be, while they *maintain* the place of separation from it, and tread the path of obedience to God through it, as that path is set forth in the Word of God. The danger here is to turn aside, to join affinity with the "children of the devil," and make friends with those who know not God. Thus their light is quenched and their testimony ceases, while they themselves become false witnesses for God, and belie their high and holy calling. "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God; whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world, MAKETH HIMSELF an enemy of God" (James iv. 4, R.V.). Solemn words! May our hearts heed them and our feet walk in the safe and the happy path.

"The path where my Saviour has gone

Has led up to His Father and God;

To the place where He's now on the throne,

And His strength shall be mine on the road."



MUTUAL RECOGNITION IN HEAVEN.

IN our happy home above, not only shall we be known *personally* to the blessed Lord, but to each other. Peter seems to have no difficulty in recognising, on the Mount of Transfiguration, which was Moses, and which was Elias. So must it be in the resurrection state, where all is perfection. A thorough distinction of persons will be manifest there. Paul will never be taken for Peter, nor Peter for Paul; and each will have his own crown and glory. Blessed, yet solemn thought! each saint will have his own crown.

MARANATHA.

(“THE LORD WILL COME”).

PART VIII.—BY ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

WHEN we left this subject last month, we were noticing how different was the way in which the Lord spoke to His disciples, before and after His resurrection, in answer to questions very similar in character. In Matt. xxiv. He addresses them in their character of believing Jews, sharing in the national promises and expectations, though for the time suffering persecution at the hands of the unbelieving portion of the nation. But in Acts i. it is quite different. The disciples, it is true, were in no way aware of the true character of the church, or that any such distinct body, of which they were to form a part, was about to be formed. The thought of the two brethren in Luke xxiv. 21, “We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel” was no doubt common to them all. But the Lord had quite other thoughts concerning them now. Through them on the previous occasion, He had addressed important words of encouragement and instruction to the believing remnant of Israel who shall presently be called upon to suffer for His name during the reign of the Antichrist. But now He speaks to them as bearing quite a different character. As Jews, they had everything to do with times and seasons. The prophetic Scriptures had measured out, with unerring accuracy, the days that were to elapse between the “going forth and the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem” and the final reconciliation of Israel, with the end of their transgression and the anointing of the Holy of Holies (see Dan. ix. 24-25). All this belonged to

Daniel's people and city, the Jews and Jerusalem; and when the Lord, long after, is addressing the disciples as belonging to the same people, He treats fully of times and seasons, of the signs that shall go before His manifestation in glory upon the earth.

Now every one who has ever considered that wonderful prophecy in Dan. ix. knows that a remarkable break has come in, so that the continuance of its fulfilment has been arrested. Seventy sevens, or 490 years, the angel told Daniel, were to be accomplished in bringing about the final blessing and restoration of His people. The 490 years were to date from a certain decree to rebuild Jerusalem, which was afterwards made by Artaxerxes in the twentieth year of his reign (Neh. ii. 1-8). Seven sevens and sixty-two sevens, or 49 years and 434 years, were to see the building of the wall and the cutting off of the Messiah accomplished; and that has been literally fulfilled. But what about the remaining seven years, and all that they were to bring to pass? Nothing of all this has been fulfilled. The nation still remains unreconciled, and their transgression unpardoned. What has become of that last seven years, that remainder of the times and seasons? The answer is very plain. In judgment upon the guilty nation, for their rejection of His Son, God has set them aside altogether for a time, and has taken the opportunity, if we may so express it, to call out the heavenly people, the Church of the present dispensation. He has told us nothing whatever as to how long this period shall last. We look back to Calvary and we look forward to the coming again of our blessed Lord. Our attitude is that of waiting for the One whom God raised from the dead, and not

of counting up dates. But the nation are intensely interested in times and seasons. The day is coming when they will enter into a seven years' covenant with the Anti-christ king; and, while the bulk of the nation will no more understand that they are fulfilling prophecy than their fathers did when they shouted, "Crucify Him, crucify Him," there will be a believing remnant among them, made wise by reading Dan. ix. and Matt. xxiv., who will be counting the days till those seven years shall have run, knowing that then the coming one will come.

But in Acts i., the disciples are looked upon by the Lord as belonging to the heavenly people of this age, who will be called away before the times and seasons, broken off after sixty-nine of the sevens, can be taken up again and completed during the seven years' covenant we have referred to. It is on this account that when they ask, "Wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel?" the Lord answers, "It is not for you to know times and seasons, which the Father hath set within His own authority. But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth (Acts i. 7, 8, R.V.)."

This contrast between the Lord's action in Matt. xxiv. and that in Acts i., helps to make it very plain, that while He was speaking to the same disciples in each case, He spoke to them as representatives of two distinct bodies. If we confound His instructions to them in the one character with the words addressed to them in the other, we are landed in utter confusion. Not only so. The precious words of guid-

ance and encouragement, given for the help of the faithful, suffering remnant in the hour of Jacob's trouble, are actually wrested to put a lengthened period between our souls and the blessed hope for which we should be looking in daily expectation.

NOTES ON ROMANS.

PART V.—CHAPTER VII. *Continued.*
BY GEORGE ADAM.

WHEN closing my last paper I was noticing the relationship to Christ, into which all believers are brought by redemption. One with Him in resurrection standing, beyond the domain of law; one with Him in His acceptance now before God; one with Him in sharing the Father's love; one with Him in His rejection by the world; and one with Him in all the glory that will yet be bestowed on Him as the First-begotten from amongst the dead. All believers are brought into this oneness, and expected to live in the power and joy of it, that they "may bring forth fruit unto God."

At verse 7, we reach another section of the chapter, a passage concerning which there have been, and still are, many opinions. To what period of Paul's experience does he refer when he says: "I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died?" Was that before Paul was regenerated? Was it after he was a "quickened" soul, but not "sealed," by the indwelling Holy Spirit! Or is Paul here giving the experience of a believer who, for a time after regeneration, has known and felt the joy and liberty of the believer's standing in grace before God, and has been seduced out of this liberty, and in his

experience has gone back into legal bondage? As this subject has been so much controverted, I wish to write more in a suggestive than dogmatic way about it.

I may first dispose of the question about being quickened and not sealed. What may have been the experience of "disciples" in a state of transition, from the preaching of John to the clearer light of a full Gospel, we are not in a position to judge, and, at all events, there are no such disciples to be found now. There are those to be found, who seem to have *life* but not *liberty*, but we must not attempt to found a doctrine on human experience, and conclude that they have not the Spirit. We must test all experience by what is written, and never interpret what God has said in His Word, by human experience. Rom. viii. 9, says, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." This ought to be an end of all doubt on the matter to every humble learner.

Again we may here notice. Unregenerate sinners may have a kind of religious life and liberty, before the law, or the claims of God are brought to bear on the conscience in their searching spirituality, and when divine light shines into the soul, their good thoughts of themselves are seen to be utterly worthless, and they are in a sense "killed." All their righteousness, in which they had been trusting, is seen to be but "filthy rags." But I scarcely think this is the truth taught in this passage. The expressions, "sin revived" (verse 9), "I am carnal" (verse 14), and "I delight in the law of God after the inward man" (verse 22), do not fit into the theory that

the Spirit of God is here describing the experience of an awakened but unregenerate man.

The statement, "sin revived," implies that there was a time when the writer enjoyed spiritual liberty, and had lost it. In writing to the saints at Corinth, in the end of Chapter ii., and beginning of Chapter iii., the Spirit speaks of three conditions a soul may be in. "The natural man," or the unregenerate; "the carnal man"; and "the spiritual man." He charges the saints at Corinth with being "carnal," because they were manifesting the works of the flesh in having divisions amongst them. Strictly speaking, a *carnal* man is a regenerated man under the power of the flesh; and a *spiritual* man is one living under the power of the Spirit. Again, this experience cannot be that of a natural man, for such have no *inward man* who "delights" in the law of God. When Paul says, "I am carnal sold under sin," it cannot mean that he was manifesting the works of the flesh in his life. It appears to me that he had apprehended clearly his deliverance from the power of sin, and from the bondage and curse of the law by death and resurrection. He had also got a right ideal of the holiness of life which such ought to manifest; and that for a time he enjoyed a power through his standing in grace, and by living in communion with Christ, which kept him above the power of undwelling sin. His new-found joy in Christ had for a time *submerged* the flesh, so that he was for a time not conscious of its incurable wickedness, and its dreadful power; but when he lost his new-found joy as many do, he lost his power, and in his endeavours to regain it by lawkeeping, he found that

the law which is "holy, just, and good," instead of helping him, only aroused the passions of sin that still dwelt in him, and showed him how helpless he was in himself as under law, to gain the victory over them.

A WORD TO MOTHERS.

BY ONE OF THEMSELVES.

MOTHERS! it may be that some of you are in need of a word of comfort and encouragement concerning the daily reading of God's Word in your family circle. Your husband may not always be at home to conduct it, and you find little sympathy or help from others, who might be expected to give it. Yet you feel it deeply inwrought, that this way of *acknowledging God* in the home circle must be maintained at all cost. You may have endeavoured to carry this out as God would have it, for a considerable time, but you find it most difficult to get the family to come together; in fact there seems to be time for everything but for collectively reading the Word of God and acknowledging Him as the Guardian and Guide of the home. Now your hands are ready to fall down. But take heart again; you must not yield in this matter; the honour of God and the eternal interests of your household are involved. Think of the triumph that the enemy of God and His Word will have if you relax or surrender to him. Your hold on your children, and your power to bring them up in a godly way will be in a manner lost, if you surrender this sacred trust. As one has said, "a family without the daily acknowledgment of God and the reading of His Word, is like walls without a roof."

We have the Divine promise, "Them that honour Me, *I will honour.*" Take hold of this promise, make it afresh your own, and you will soon have to put "P" for "proved" over against the text.

Our young folks may soon be called away from under the parental roof, to meet the cold world and all its temptations; let the Divine Word be instilled into them before they go. Then, if called to a home of their own, they will carry the force of your example with them.

I heard a son telling the other day, of his godly mother's practice. He said, she used to have the reading with her children as the father was unsaved. The Lord called her to Himself, and the first Lord's day after she was with Christ, breakfast over, the father in a sadly, solemn manner said, "Bring the Book." In memory of his faithful wife's example, he continued the reading with them, and not long after, he was brought to the knowledge of the Lord.

God will be no man's debtor. If we make it our highest aim to honour Him and magnify His Word, giving it the place He claims for it in the *heart* and the *home* (Deut. vi. 6-81), He will not fail to bless us, and make us a blessing.

J. L. R.

"HE IS FAITHFUL."

"My kindness shall not depart from thee" (Isa. liv. 10).

"I will in no wise fail thee" (Heb. xiii. 6. R. V).

Forget thee I will not, I cannot; thy name
Engraved on My heart, doth for ever remain;
The palms of My hands, whilst I look on, I see
The wounds I received, when I suffered for thee.

Then trust Me, and fear not: thy life is secure,
My wisdom is perfect, supreme is My power,
In love I correct thee, thy gold to refine,
And make thee at length in My likeness to shine.

The Bible Annotator.

BRIEF OUTLINES OF BIBLE SUBJECTS.

PERSUADING.

- "We persuade men" (2 Cor. v. 11)—The Preacher's Work.
 "Almost persuaded" (Acts xxvi. 28)—The Procrastinator's Decision.
 "Never persuaded" (Luke xvi. 31)—The Rejector.
 "I am persuaded" (Rom. viii. 38-39)—The Believer.

FOURFOLD JUSTIFICATION.

- Justified by GRACE (Rom. iii. 24)—Intrinsically.
 Justified by BLOOD (Rom. v. 9)—Meritoriously.
 Justified by FAITH (Rom. v. 1)—Instrumentally.
 Justified by WORKS (James ii. 24)—Evidentially.

SALVATION IN THREE ASPECTS.

- A Great Salvation (Heb. ii. 3).
 A Common Salvation (Jude 3).
 An Eternal Salvation (Heb. v. 9).

NOTES FROM BIBLE MARGINS.

THREEFOLD GLORY OF CHRIST.

- A Worm (Psa. xxii. 6)—Suffering in Weakness.
 A Shepherd (Psa. xxiii. 1)—Guiding in Faithfulness.
 A King (Psa. xxiv. 7)—Reigning in Glory.

THREE DIVINE WORDS.

- "Fear not" (Isa. xli. 1)—The Word of Pardon.
 "Fret not" (Psa. xxxvii. 1)—The Word of Peace.
 "Faint not" (2 Cor. iv. 16)—The Word of Power.

ACCEPTANCE.

- Accepted *by* Him (Lev. i. 4)—Substitution.
 Accepted *in* the Beloved (Eph. i. 6)—Standing.
 Accepted *of* Him (2 Cor. v. 9)—Service.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Do the words, "the day of judgment" (2 Pet. ii. 10), refer to one literal day? If so, what? The entire period after the coming of the Lord for His people on to the great white throne, is one of judgment, the judgment of Gospel rejecters at the Lord's appearing (2 Thess. i. 9, 10), of the living nations before His throne (Matt. xxv. 31), and of the dead at the great white throne (Rev. xx. 11). The passage you quote has special reference to the latter of these judgments, when the wicked dead

who are now "reserved" will be brought forth for judgment. There is no literal "day of judgment," as we speak of days. The "day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2) has already lasted nearly two thousand years.

What is meant by the words, "believing a lie," in 2 Thess. ii 11? Is it a false gospel? It is literally "The Lie," not a mere negation, but a system of Satanic error, which will be built up by the enemy on the ruins of "the truth" (verse 10), which men had "received not" that they might be saved. It will be the full development of what is now struggling against God and His Word as seen in the thinly-veiled Socinianism, scepticism, and "Higher Criticism" with which the professing church is honeycombed, and which it proudly retains beneath its sheltering wing.

Answers to Correspondents.

STUDENT.—"The Englishman's Greek Concordance," by the late G. V. Wigram, is the best book for your purpose. It has been used by Bible Students and lovers of the Sacred Word for many years, and has no equal. Any English reader can use it.

"YOUNG PREACHER."—Cottage Meetings would be a fine sphere of service for you, and will give you excellent opportunity for proving whether you have the ability you think you have for preaching the Gospel. It is well to begin in a small way, and, like David, go on "going and growing" (2 Sam. v. 10, margin). Gift and grace increase by use, and as you walk humbly with God. Never exceed the measure of either, or a fall will follow. The trouble with most young preachers is, they fly too high, attempting to fill places they have no spiritual training for, are often flattered and spoiled by well meaning but unwise fellow-believers, and become so self-important as to become unmanageable. Thank God, if you are "coolly treated" by some, and "roughly handled" by others. This is the best training for "the ministry," and gives grit and backbone, which those who step into the shoes of some one else, and preach to congregations gathered through the energies of others, never acquire. Nothing is more calculated to cast one on God, than plenty of "hardness" from the world and an equivalent of "coldness" from the church.

If you are where God would have you, and right with Him, you will survive both, and "triumph gloriously."

A.S., DURHAM.—The truth of God can never be altered, and it must not be surrendered, even if Christians fail in carrying it out. That there has been much failure in seeking to give effect to many truths regarding the united worship and testimony of God's people is true, but they are not to be ignored or set aside surely on that account. Ask your censorious friend to advance his theory on other lines, and see how it will work out. As a believer in the Lord Jesus, he seeks in common with all true disciples to follow Him fully. Will he say that he never fails? Then does he give it up, or lower his standard? I am sure he does not, but through grace seeks to learn by his shortcomings, and presses on toward the mark. The same applies in our church responsibility. The pattern and the standards are in the Book, while the measure in which believers are able to give them effect in practice, will always be governed by their spiritual condition and subjection to the Lord and His Word.

GOSPEL WORK.—We fully agree with all that you say regarding Gospel work as carried on by individual servants of the Lord, and wish there were more of such efforts. The answers given in last month's *Magazine* were limited to that aspect of Gospel work referred to in the question, namely:—The Gospel work of an assembly of believers carried on by them in their united capacity, usually in the hall where they assemble for worship, prayer and ministry. The Scriptural principles of fellowship forbid that this or any other part of an Assembly's testimony should be deputed to an elect circle, to perform it *on behalf* of the whole. The Word enjoins oneness of mind, unity of purpose, and fellowship in action, and the object of all ministry, rule and guidance is, not to hinder, but to draw forth, sustain, and cherish a "striving together" in service as in all else. But this need in no way hinder any godly and qualified individual from taking up such work on his individual responsibility to the Lord, as he may have heart and energy to fulfil. There are many unreached and needy fields, which can only be evangelised by such efforts which, if carried on according to God, with His seal of blessing upon them, will not lack the sympathy or fellowship of any who have a heart for the spread of the Gospel. But the two lines are

distinct, and the principles that apply to one must not be made to govern the other, else there will be confusion.

Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION VIII.—Is there any Scripture principle or precedent for a number of men—old and young, irrespective of qualification or recognition in the assemblies where they are—coming together stately to make arrangements for and virtually rule the assemblies from which they come, but which they in no way represent, committing them to ways and responsibilities which they may not, in many cases do not approve of?

ANSWER A.—Those aspiring to become overseers amongst the Lord's people, must have their full confidence and esteem before their service toward them can be either acceptable or the means of blessing. No greater evil or cause of weakness and disorder exists, than for those who are disqualified or do no shepherd work among the saints, being permitted or invited to come together as those who are "over them in the Lord." What are called "oversight meetings," if they include and encourage such, had better be abolished: they can have no power, save for evil, if improper persons are encouraged thereby to assume a place that they are manifestly unable to fill.—W.J.M.

ANSWER B.—Shepherd or oversight work is the most self-sacrificing, most responsible, and most honoured path in the church. The Lord who loves His flock, and would only have such as are well-pleasing to Him to stand before and guide it, has given most minutely and definitely the qualifications of those who are to fill such a place. These are fully set forth in 1 Tim. iii. 3-7: Titus i. 7-9; 1 Peter v. 3-9; while the work of such is described in 1 Thess. v. 14; Heb. xiii. 7; and the responsibility of saints to acknowledge, esteem, honour, and obey such in 1 Thess. v. 12-13; 1 Tim. v. 18; Heb. xiii. 7, 17, 24. Notwithstanding this, it has to be sorrowfully admitted, that no sphere of service has been so flooded with men lacking the Divine qualifications, and forcing themselves and their rule upon God's people, often more in the form of a self-appointed committee than anything else, neither doing the work of feeding and tending the flock, nor allowing those who would. "Oversight Meetings"—especially when convened to

conduct the business of a number of assemblies—are a great attraction to such, and when one sees the number of beardless youths who attend such gatherings in certain quarters, they are forced to the conclusion that they have either never had these Scriptures pointed out to them, or lost all conscience regarding them. At one of these “United Oversight Meetings,” a well-known aged brother remarked that “if 1 Timothy iii., which is God’s riddle for an Oversight Meeting, had been placed at the door, he was afraid a great many of those present would have fallen through.” As there is no Divine Authority for disqualified persons being regarded as Overseers, they ought not to be permitted to attend such gatherings; but if they do, acting in self-will, without confidence or recognition of the assemblies from which they go, none need feel bound by their decisions.—J. M’L.

ANSWER C.—While it is recorded in the Word that those guiding the saints in early times came together when necessity so required, not even “the twelve” made arrangements which committed the church to any course apart from their full knowledge of it. They “called the multitude of disciples” (Acts vi. 2) together, and set the whole matter before them for their decision. If it be necessary for brethren doing oversight work in a number of assemblies to come together, either to confer regarding the work of the Lord, or to consider any matter of difficulty common to them all, surely it is of the utmost importance that they be those who are recognised in the local assemblies, where they are, as qualified for oversight, and that they thus represent the assemblies from which they come. To bring together, or permit those who would, to come to such meetings, who have given no evidence of Divine qualification, is to do them untold injury, and help to install them in a false position, in which sooner or later they will utterly fail.—J.S.

EDITOR’S NOTE.—Little need be added to the above, which together with the article on “The Recognition of Overseers” (page 97), give a very concise and Scriptural outline of the character, qualifications and service, of those who do, or aspire to shepherd work in the assemblies of God’s people. If the nature of the work were better known, and its arduous, ceaseless, day and night watching over, feeding and tending character kept constantly before the saints, with the solemn

responsibilities attaching thereto, there would be fewer found running hither and thither to what are called “oversight meetings,” as if *that* were the chief or only part of a shepherd’s work. The word of the great Shepherd, to Peter, was first, “Feed my lambs”—next, “Tend my sheep” (John xxi. 16, 17 R.V.), and that apostle in his epistle writes to those following on in the same service—“Tend the flock, exercising the oversight” (1 Pet. v. 2), showing how fully he had apprehended that shepherd rule, not domination, but lowly service, girt with humility to serve one another (verse 5), is the character and spirit of that rule to which all who “take care of the church of God” (1 Tim. iii. 5) are called. Godly rule arises from within, and is characterised by its desire to keep the *souls* of saints right with God, their hearts occupied with Christ, their feet walking in the truth, and their energies all fully occupied in His service, whereas that which is of man, is more concerned in framing rules and formulating arrangements which hinder spiritual exercise, and bring godly souls into bondage.

NOTE.—As we go to press, a paper on the above subject has come to hand from our esteemed brother, Mr. Alfred J. Holiday, dealing with the whole subject of oversight comprehensively, which will (God willing) appear in next month’s *Magazine*.

Questions Requiring Answers. *

QUESTION IX.—If an Assembly becomes divided as to the course to be pursued in a difficulty, is it according to God that the majority act without the fellowship of the others, and in defiance of their convictions; and if they do, what is the responsibility of those who have been so dealt with?

QUESTION X.—In the event of an Assembly become divided, one party going out and forming themselves into a new meeting, then seeking to be recognised by surrounding assemblies, what is the Scriptural course to be pursued in such a case? Are both to be regarded as assemblies and inter-communed with as such, or what?

QUESTION XI.—When the greater part of the time on Lord’s Day morning is habitually used by one brother for ministry, not always in keeping with the object of our coming together to “show forth the Lord’s death,” frequently leaving little time for the Lord’s Supper, and always causing it to be at the end of the meeting, what is the remedy?

“FEED MY LAMBS.”

IN days of grace and ingathering like the present, there is a continuous inflow of young believers to the family and flock of God. There are spiritual babes to be nursed and taught in the ways of the Lord: there are lambs to be fed and tended, so that they may grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet. iii. 18, R.V.). It is an evil condition, when any have to say concerning such—“The tongue of the sucking child cleaveth to the roof of his mouth for thirst, the young children ask for bread and no man breaketh it unto them” (Lam. iv. 4.).

Much depends on the first few weeks of spiritual life. The kind of teaching young saints receive, and the force of example set before them, generally leave an indelible impression on the whole of their after course.

Simon Peter was twice commissioned by the Lord. First, on the Lake shore, after that deeper lesson of his own unworthiness and of Christ's Lordship, which he did not learn when first brought to Jesus (John i. 42), but which all who would serve must know. Then it was that he heard from the Master's lips, “From henceforth thou shalt *catch men*” (Luke v. 11, R.V.), take them “alive” as the word implies, for unlike the fish which are caught for death, men are caught for life, to live in Christ and for Christ here. This was Peter's commission to do “the work of an evangelist,” and we know how fully and faithfully he fulfilled this ministry, sometimes casting his net and enclosing a great draught as at Pentecost (Acts ii. 41), at other times pursuing his vocation in winning a family (Acts x. 33-34) or dealing with an individual (Acts ix. 34). But another ministry was committed to

this same Peter. A second time on the Lake shore, after he had met the Lord as His Restorer and had experienced His grace in a fuller measure than he had known at his conversion or call to Gospel service. This time the word was—“Feed My lambs”—“Tend My sheep” (John xxi. 16, R.V.)—a ministry toward the saints, as the former was toward the world. To this he also fully gave himself, passing “throughout all parts” among the saints (Acts x. 32, R.V.), in the exercise of his ministry, then passing on the word to all elder and experienced brethren, who would follow after—“Feed, (or tend) the flock of God which is among you” (1 Pet. v. 2). This is the true badge of apostolic succession, and not a false and empty boast of sacerdotal office. This work devolves upon all believers; on some more than others. Gift and grace are both needed for the more public instruction of the saints. This falls to such as are gifted to be pastors and teachers to the flock of God (Eph. iv. 11-13), and woe betide them if they fail to fulfil their ministry. But there is a general sense in which the feeding of the flock, and especially of the lambs thereof, is a labour of love to every believer who has known the care of the Great Shepherd who bled for the sheep, and who seeks to live in communion with Him respecting His people and interests here on earth. Here, there is room for a multiform ministry, such as is indicated in Zech. xi. 16. And the lambs are to be sought for and fed, “because they belong to Christ” (Mark ix. 41), not because they are of this or that denomination. Love is catholic; it regards God's saints and Christ's sheep from the divine standpoint, not as viewed in their entanglements of the world and its religion, although it will seek their deliver-

ance from both. But it goes to work with the inwrought conviction that these lambs are Christ's, the purchase of His blood, destined to bear His likeness and already possessed of His life. The supreme object it has in view is, that the Lord may possess His own possession (Titus ii. 14, R.V.), and have His flock delivered from all alien control, reposing in green pastures under His Shepherd rule and care (Psa. xxiii. 2-3.

The Divinely appointed means whereby this is to be accomplished is the Word, the truth ministered in grace and wisdom, all of it in due proportion and according to the *needs and capacities of those who hear*; milk for babes, the bread of life broken small for those who can only profit by things easy to be understood. It is the truth that *liberates*, as we read. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John viii. 32). It is the truth that *sanctifies*, as the Lord Jesus prayed—"Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy Word is truth" (John xvii. 17). It is the truth that *nourishes*, as we read, "Nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine" (1 Tim. iv. 6), not sapless sentiment, or pithless platitudes creating an unhealthy, sickly Christianity, but sound doctrine, the Word in season, ministered in grace and the power of the Spirit, bearing on all the believer's relationships to God, his brethren and the world; nothing left out, nothing kept back, nothing overstated. Such a ministry is the great need of the present hour, and despite all the difficulties and departures of the times, there are souls hungering and thirsting everywhere to get it. Let the man with whom the secret of the Lord is, in whom His Word dwells, and who can give it out in freshness and simplicity, open his Bible, be it in ever so small

a sphere, he will draw hungry souls around him and find a congregation without difficulty, drawn and held "by their teeth" as men say, for they know the crib in which the corn is found, they find their way to the pastures that are fresh and green. There is no need to go into forbidden or even doubtful associations: the sheep will come where the pastures are; the flock will assemble around the well from whence comes the refreshing draught (Gen. xxix. 3). Let it be the study of all who speak the Word, to have something to say, when they speak, something fresh, which has *come to their own souls with power from God* and become His message to themselves first, truth which has gripped their own consciences, reached their own hearts, and brought them to God's sanctuary as His worshippers (Psa. xliii. 3-4), which yields them daily strength and joy and is abiding in them, as a living spring (Psa. xlv. 1 margin), which they cannot but speak to others; then there will be no lack of hearers, or of blessing. The common fare upon which most of the lambs of the Lord's flock are fed, scarcely goes to produce healthy or well-developed saints. Many, immediately they are converted, are set down under a ministry of death and darkness, proceeding from an unconverted man. It goes ill with the new life in such circumstances, unless deliverance comes from without, which it often does, giving them a taste of better things, and when once the living stream is tasted, the stagnant pool becomes intolerable. Life is the most powerful separator. The living will not long remain among the dead, if only there be life enough in him to leave them.

Spiritual warmth and an edifying ministry is a powerful attraction, which even

prejudiced believers who have little sympathy with doctrinal teaching cannot long resist. How many have we heard confess, that it was the spiritual atmosphere that first attracted them and brought them into a condition in which they were able to hear and yield obedience to truths, which, while in a carnal and unhappy condition, they could neither understand nor receive. Hence the need of all who speak, considering the capacities and condition of those who hear, and making sure they have not only God's truth, but His message for that people at that time. Many have been ruthlessly driven from the truth, more by the inopportune character of the teaching and the spirit and manner in which it was given, than by the truth itself. The Word "filthy spoken," in due season, is like unto "apples of gold in baskets of silver" (Prov. xxv. 11, R.V.), attractive and befitting, and has a power over all in whom the life of God is, equalled by nothing else on earth. This is the secret of its triumph; the Word is God's and has God in it. It is His chosen channel through which He gives life; through the Word also that life is nourished and sustained.

J. R.

GOSPEL WORK.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS AT DUBLIN MEETINGS.
BY ALEXANDER STEWART.

THE Gospel is a *trust* committed to the servants of God; they are trustees. A trustee is a man to whom a fund is committed which does not belong to him, and he must on the one hand defend it, and on the other take care that the persons for whom it is designed shall not fail to have the benefit of it.

The Gospel is delivered to all the saints without exception, but there are some who are specially fitted by God for the work of making it known. It is not always the most godly man who is most used in this service; some are signally used who have grave defects of character, but the rule is, that God uses the clean vessel, and the evangelist in his communion with God differs nothing from other Christians. If he is to be much used, he will need to be a man of the *Word and of Prayer*. This is the order when our individual relations with God are concerned. Let God speak to us first by His Word, then let us speak to Him in prayer.

In Acts vi. where the Apostles are dealing with *public* ministry the order is different. They say, "we will give ourselves continually to *prayer* and to the *ministry of the Word*."

We read three times of the Lord raising the dead. That is an act so stupendous that we might have supposed that it would stand alone, but in each case something is added. (1), In that of Lazarus it is said "Loose him and let him go." (2), Of the son of the widow of Nain, "He delivered him to his mother," telling him in effect that his sphere was to be *at home*; and (3), In the case of the daughter of Jairus, "He commanded to give her meat." *Life* is what is needed for the dead, but *food* for the living.

If we are to preach Christ, we must feed upon Christ, otherwise our preaching of Christ will not be of much avail, and it is only as He opens to us the Scriptures that we can give them out. In Luke xxiv. we read that he opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures, and it was after that was done, that He

said to them, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached.

Isaiah liii. and liv. are the Old Testament counterparts of Luke xxiii. and xxiv. In Isaiah liii. we have the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ and in Isaiah liv.—“Sing O barren thou that didst not bear . . . for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife saith the Lord.” So in Luke xxiii. we have the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and hope apparently cut off, but the xxivth of Luke is full of the largeness and liberty of resurrection. He is “straitened” no longer. He opens their eyes, their understanding, and the Scriptures.

Just as we feed upon the Word we will prosper. In Egypt, all depends upon the river, and the eyes of men looked to where it flowed at their feet; but when God called His people out of Egypt, He brought them to a place where their eyes would not be down but *up*. He gave them manna from *heaven*, and it came to the people who needed it, and just where they were, to the lowest point. It came with the dew of the morning, and that is the way Christ comes to the soul as He came to Bethlehem, in connection with the Holy Ghost. It was *small*, and *round*, and *white*, and *sweet*—it was Christ. It was rained, not on the top of some high mountain where the strongest man could get it first, but on the face of the wilderness where the feeblest might gather it. There was no advantage in being tall, the taller a man was, the farther he was from it; the child was the nearest.

The *first* essential thing to fit a man for life and work is not even prayer, but *to be fed*. You will see from Mr Müller's narrative, that there came a time when he found out that the first thing, was to let God

speak to him. Then the *second* thing is *prayer*. Just in proportion to the prayerfulness of believers so will be the blessing, Eph. ii. 18, “Through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father!” We have the Trinity concerned in that act. We reach God through the Son, and by the power of the Holy Spirit. Much of the prayer that is offered is hardly prayer at all. It is the *quality* of the prayer, the *strenuousness* of it, that is important. How did the Lord pray? “*With strong crying and tears.*” The whole work of God is wrought in prayer. And prayer should be continual, Eph. vi. 18, 19, “Praying *always* with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with *all perseverance* and supplication for all saints, and for me.” This is the scope of intercessory prayer—for all the saints, and for the individual worker. And for what did Paul ask the prayer of the Ephesian believers? “That utterance may be given me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the Gospel!” He had the Gospel, but what he wanted was the *power* to utter it, and by God's grace to *convince* men and lead *them to Christ*.

Referring again to Acts vi. observe the words “we will give *ourselves* continually to pray and to the ministry of the word.” What will we give? Ourselves—the whole man. Some occupations require the whole attention, others do not. A woman may quite well rock a cradle with her foot, and at the same time knit a stocking and read a book, but it is different with sowing and with ploughing. These are done with both hands, and they demand exclusive attention. If we want to be much used in the Gospel, we must give ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word.

MARANATHA.

("THE LORD WILL COME").

PART IX.—BY ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

ANOTHER objection commonly raised to the distinction between the Lord's coming to receive His people to Himself, and His manifestation in glory to overthrow the Antichrist and to set up His own kingdom, is as follows:—"If you put an interval of time between these two," it is argued, "you make a third coming of Christ. Now we read in Hebrews ix. 28, that He shall come a second time; but where does it tell us that He will come a third time?"

A very simple, but a very complete answer to this objection, will be found by turning back to the Old Testament, and carefully noting what is said there about the coming of the Messiah. Where does it state in word that He will come twice? Passages that contain the most distinct reference to both comings, speak as if there was only one. Look, for instance, at Isaiah lxi. 1, 2. When the Lord Jesus commenced to read this Scripture in the synagogue at Nazareth, He stopped in the middle of the second verse, and said, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears (Luke iv. 21). Up to the point He had just read, that was strictly true. The Gospel was preached, and all its blessed consequences were declared; but what followed "the day of vengeance of our God," had not come then, nor has it even now, for it belongs to the second coming of the Lord. Yet there was nothing in the passage to mark the distinction; and it was not till Jesus, after His resurrection, expounded to His disciples all the things concerning Himself, out of the Scriptures, that they were at all able to realize that there was to be an interval

between His coming to accomplish our redemption and His coming again in glory.

In the Old Testament, then, the coming of Christ is regarded as one. But after His death and resurrection, He commissioned His disciples to be His witnesses in the earth, and, having assured them that He would come again to receive them to Himself, He was taken up into heaven. This leads us to await His second coming, that He may accomplish all that is yet unfulfilled of the prophetic Scriptures. But that second coming may—nay, must—include many separate stages, many separate acts of the great drama. The taking up of the Church, the judgment-seat of Christ for His saints, the destruction of the Antichrist, the Millennial reign, the Great White Throne; all these belong to His second coming, but they are spread over a long period. The first coming, as opened up to us by the New Testament, was in weakness, as the self-emptying and dependent One, to die. The second coming, with all its various stages, is in power to put down His enemies, to execute judgment and to reign. Every incident of His lowly life and ignominious death, belongs to His first coming, not the mere moment of His birth. In like manner all the acts of His power and triumph, belong to His second coming.

—o—

WITH GOD.

MAN'S weakness waiting upon God
 It's end can never miss;
 For men on earth no work can do
 More angel-like than this.
 He *always wins* who sides with God,
 To him no chance is lost;
 God's *will* is sweeter to him when
 It triumphs at his cost.

THE CHILDREN OF GOD.

THEIR PATTERN AND PROSPECTS.

PART III.—BY THE EDITOR.

THEIR citizenship—their city home—is in heaven (Phil. iii. 21), and as they walk as pilgrims through the world toward it, they are to show forth their heavenly character among the sons of men, in all their relations and dealings with them. Although, concerning their true dignity as the children of God, it is said the world “knoweth” them not, yet in another and very practical sense, the world is to feel the influence of their presence in it. They are to be “the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world,” causing men to say, as was said of the prophet—“I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth us continually” (2 Kings iv. 9), and like the Baptist, to give such a testimony as will speak to men’s consciences, and trouble them, after they have gone (Mark vi. 20; Luke ix. 7).

THE CHILDREN’S PATTERN.

“Be ye therefore imitators of God as beloved children” (Eph. v. 1, R.V.). “Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you, that ye may be the sons of your Father which is in heaven” (Matth. vi. 44-45, R.V.). To be God-like, to “show forth the excellencies of Him who hath called” him (1 Pet. ii. 9), is the child of God’s business here on earth. He has the Divine nature in him with the Spirit of God, and he is called upon to be an “imitator” of God his Father, to act in grace, to walk in holiness, to be God-like in all his ways among the sons of men. He has been predestinated to be conformed to the image of the Son of God, now in soul and spirit, and presently in body (Phil.

iii. 21) at the Lord’s coming. God is his pattern in his dealings with the world. Christ is his example in his ways down here (Phil. ii. 5-8; 1 Pet. ii. 21). He is to walk and act according to his high dignity as a “son” of his Father. It was said of Gideon’s brethren, by those who slew them—“As thou art, so were they; each one resembled the children of a king” (Judges viii. 18). They bore the family likeness; they wore the kingly dignity. So ought it to be with all the children of God, the children of the kingdom, the seed-royal of heaven while on earth.

THE CHILDREN’S PROSPECTS.

“We know that when He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him” (1 John iii. 2 R.V.). “The earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God” (Rom. viii. 19, R.V.). Already sharers of the grace, they await the liberty of the glory of their Father—God. Already made meet in spirit to share the inheritance, the children of God await the hour when they shall have bodies fashioned like unto the body of Christ’s glory (Phil. iii. 21). This will be at His coming again, His personal advent, the fulfilment of His promise—“I will come again and receive you unto Myself” (John xiv. 3). Thus welcomed to the presence of the First-born, perfectly conformed to His image, every purpose of Divine love fulfilled, every trace of the old creation passed away, He will lead them in triumph to “the Father’s House”—the home of love, the gathering place of the long-sundered family, there to be welcomed by the Father, and “presented faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 24) never more to be sundered.

THE TESTIMONY OF CHRIST TO THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

PART X.—BY C. F. HOGG.

THE Lord Jesus during the years of His public ministry devoted much of His time to open-air preaching, by the lake (Luke v. i.), on the hill-side (Matt. v. 1), and, generally, in any public place (Matt viii. 16, 17), as well as in the synagogues and in the Temple to which the people had access more or less free (John xviii. 20). On occasion, in order to command attention and to emphasise the truths He uttered, He would cry with a loud voice in words vividly reminiscent of Scripture (Luke viii. 8; Ezekiel iii. 27; John vii. 37; Isa. lv. 1, and other instances recorded in the Gospels.)

Announcement of His mission to Israel He made in a beautiful figure, drawn from the prophecies of Ezekiel—that of the shepherd seeking His strayed sheep (Ezek. xxxiv. 11-16; Luke xix. 19), or, again, of the shepherd caring for the flock (Ezek. xxxvii. 24; John x. 16). Moreover, the use of the figure is deeply suggestive inasmuch as in its earlier setting Jehovah Himself was the Shepherd of His people (Psalm xxiii. 1), yet did the Lord Jesus in full view of this fact appropriate it to describe His own relationship to the people of God. The complementary figure, namely, that the people of God were the sheep of His pasture (Psa. c. 3) is reproduced in the two parables of John x., while the likening of the lapsed among them to lost sheep is taken from Psa. cxix. 176.

After His baptism and the subsequent death of the Baptist, the Lord Jesus returned to the northern province, and to the town in which His earlier life had been

spent, where, in the synagogue, on the Sabbath day, He stood up and read a passage from the writings of Isaiah (lxi. 1, 2) saying to His wondering auditors as He sat down, "This day hath this Scripture been fulfilled in your ears" (Luke iv. 16-21).

Beginning from that time He proclaimed the "Kingdom of God" or "of the Heavens," an expression which He found in the prophecy of Daniel concerning the course of the World Empires of the Gentile Powers and their ultimate destruction, found them, to, in a context which He certainly did not intend should be overlooked by any who desire to learn what He meant by the words (Dan. ii. 44, cp. vii. 27; Micah iv. 7).

The title under which the Lord Jesus spoke of Himself most frequently in His teaching and preaching, and which was a puzzle to His hearers (John xii. 34), He drew from the contemporary prophets Ezekiel, who applied it to Himself as the spokesman of God to His people, and Daniel who used it to describe a mysterious figure, seen in the apocalyptic visions of the night (vii. 13), circumstances which also demand the careful consideration of the student of the life and teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ. The fact that He made His own person the centre of the new life, His followers were to live, makes Him unique as a teacher. He claimed pre-existence indeed, but He claimed more than that, for the terms in which He expressed this claim were drawn from Exod. iii. 14, the language in which God set forth His own Eternal Being (John viii. 58). He called Himself the Light (viii. 12), and taught His disciples so to describe Him (i. 9), though Psalmist and Prophet had already appropriated the word as a

descriptive title of Jehovah Himself (Psa. xxvii. 1; Isa. lx. 20). And in harmony with this description of Himself He asserted that if any man were to follow Him he should have that "light of life" in which the Psalmist had to walk before God (Ps. lvi. 13; John viii. 12).

Fierce opposition met the personal claims and the heavenly teaching of the Lord Jesus. But His confidence was in God, in whom He had an invisible helper, Who worked in the hearts of men as He Himself appealed to their natural senses, according to the words of the Psalmist—"They shall all be taught of God" (John vi. 45; Isa. liv. 13).

When He was challenged about the credentials of His mission, the Lord Jesus made appeal to a threefold witness. There was the testimony of the Baptist (John v. 31-35), the testimony of His works (v. 36), which, as one of their own teachers had asserted, no man could do except God be with him (iii. 2), and which were in character such as the prophet had foretold (Isa. xxxv. 5-6), and lastly there was the witness of Moses himself in his writings, which Moses He would, promised, accuse them to the Father for their rejection of His well authenticated claims (v. 45-47).

But if He makes appeal to the testimony of John, He Himself has something to say in testimony to John, declaring that the man and the character of his mission had long before been foretold, explicitly and unmistakeably by Malachi in the words—"Behold I send My messenger before Thy face, who shall prepare Thy way before thee" (Matth. xi. 10; Mal. iii. 1), and in this connection He took occasion to further ratify the prophecies of Malachi in the statement concerning John, "and if you

are willing to receive it, this is Elijah which is to come" (Matth. xi. 14; Mal. iv. 5).

That He would be rejected in spite of this threefold attestation was not a secret to Himself. He knew it from the first, and when His time was ripe began to show it to His disciples (Matth. xvi. 21), and later to His opponents, first in a parable, the main figure in which belongs to the Old Testament, as we shall presently see, and immediately after, in the plain language in which the Psalmist had foretold it, and had foretold, too, how their truculence would be over-ruled by the Hand of God Himself. The Stone which the builders rejected, the same was made the Head of the Corner (Luke xx. 17; Psa. cxviii. 22).

DRY PREACHING AND ITS EFFECTS.

COLD, formal essays, concocted in the world of books and repeated from memory, are no blessing to anybody. Neither are second-hand truths heard from other preachers and treasured up until a suitable occasion is given to fire them off.

Persons familiar with this kind of cold, theoretic preaching, are usually the most difficult of all to reach in their consciences. The ungodly who constantly listen to such preaching, are usually the very last to be reached in a work of grace, and many of them are never reached at all. They know the thing in theory, and seem quite content with themselves, while all the time they are unregenerate. They have never been born again.

Believers fed on dry doctrine taught them by equally dry preachers, have the tendency to become Antinomians—reveling in doctrine and at the same time living in sin.—*Donald Ross.*

GODLY MEN IN WORLDLY ASSOCIATIONS.

IT has been asserted, that it does not matter what associations, socially, commercially, politically, or ecclesiastically, a believer may be in, providing he is *personally* a godly man, he is to be welcomed and accounted a fit companion in the Lord, and no questions raised as to his associations. The assumption is, that if the man is personally godly, according to men's definition and acceptance of that term, we have no right to enquire as to his associations. This is a novel, as it is a false way of reasoning. Wherever the theory comes from, it certainly is *not* found in the Holy Scriptures. Under the law, a man who had been in contact with the dead, or in an unclean house, was rendered unclean by *his associations*, and for the time disqualified for Jehovah's worship and service, and forbidden to mingle with the congregation of the Lord. An unclean person cannot become clean, or a bad man godly by accompanying with the holy, but a clean person may become defiled and a godly man corrupted by mingling with the unclean. The Old Testament principle, is as follows, "If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, shall it be holy? And the priests answered No. If one who is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered: it shall be unclean" (Hag. ii. 12-13). And the New Testament is equally emphatic in its teaching "Evil communications corrupt good manners" (1 Cor. xv. 33), else what meaning would the words of 2 Cor. vi. 14-16 have, as to fellowship with unrighteousness, or the solemn demand for separation from it and from those who are contaminated by

it. In New Testament times, he who accompanied with, or bade "God speed" to one doctrinally disqualified from fellowship with God and His people, was accounted a "partaker of his evil deeds." We are not left to set up a standard of our own as to who are godly, and to act accordingly, God has settled that for us, and made it plain in His holy Word. Man's standard of "godliness" is different from God's. A godly man, according to Scripture, will not be found in unholy alliances. He will not wink at unrighteousness. His associations, as well as his personal character, and ways will be governed by God's will. It is ours to walk by God's rule, according to His commandment and to have God's Word and not men's opinions as the standard of godliness. This is all the more necessary in our time, which is characterised by an easy-going charity, which attributes godliness to those who are of a liberal mind and a large heart, whose humanitarian actions commend them to the world, but who have little sense of what is due to God, and to Him who has been made "Lord and Christ." Are not many such to be found in churches where *Ritualism* has obscured if not denied the one perfect sacrifice of the Lamb of God, and perverted the priesthood of the exalted Christ, and where *Rationalism* has dismembered the Book of God into cursory fragments, denying every vital and fundamental doctrine that it contains. Is association with such systems nothing, and to be regarded as nothing? Do such associations form no part of the Christian's testimony, or can his walk be righteously estimated by leaving such associations out of the reckoning? We believe not. Man's reasoning may so reckon, but not God's Word.

The Bible Annotator.

OUTLINES OF GOSPEL SUBJECTS.

THREE APPOINTMENTS.

Death (Heb. ix. 27)—The Result of Sin.
 Judgment (Acts xvii 31)—The Punishment of Sin.
 Salvation (1 Thess. v. 9)—Deliverance from Sin.

LOOK, LEARN, LIVE.

Look unto Me (Isa. xiv. 22)—Salvation.
 Learn of Me (Matt. xi. 29)—Discipleship.
 Live by Me (John iv. 57)—Life of Faith.

THREE CALLS FROM CHRIST.

The SAVIOUR'S Call—"Come to Me" (Matt. xi. 28).
 The MASTER'S Call—"Learn of Me" (Matt. xi. 29).
 The SHEPHERD'S Call—"Follow Me" (John xxi. 19).

The religious man tries to learn and follow before he really comes to Christ. Conversion must ever precede discipleship.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Is the doctrine of Election consistent with a proclamation of salvation to all men?—Both are in the Word of God, and however difficult it may be for finite, puny men, who only knows in part, to harmonise the purposes and the ways of the Infinite and Eternal God, the Christian believes and accepts both. If God says that He "will have all men to be saved" (1 Tim. ii. 4), and bids His servants "preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark xv. 15), it is absolutely certain that He has a salvation for them, that they may and can be saved by believing the Gospel, and will be responsible for the rejection of it. Equally true it is that God has chosen His saints "in Christ before the foundation of the world" (Eph. i. 3), that they are foreknown and predestinated "to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. vii. 29). The Gospel of God's grace and Election, as taught in the Word, are perfectly consistent; but when men place their own constructions on these, and embody them in creeds and confessions, this is another matter. No man, who is taught of God, will ever be cramped in the presentation of a full and free Gospel to every sinner under heaven, by the truth of Election as set forth in the Word, nor will he cavil with or reject it. But creeds and confessions being the work of men, are no rule of

faith, nor can they bind the conscience as having Divine authority. If men accept and pledge themselves to them, that is their responsibility.

Answers to Correspondents.

"YOUNG BELIEVER."—A missionary map, issued by Mr. C. Brewer, Holly Mount, Leominster, will give you the information you seek, and may prove a help in cultivating "the missionary spirit," which you so ardently desire.

A. B., BELFAST.—We could not—either by precept or example—advise young believers to go to "Services" conducted by, or under the auspices of worldly religious systems, from which we have been separated by the Word of God. While thankful for whatever may be preached of the Gospel and the Word by earnest men in them, we regard the systems themselves, as the greatest hindrance to spiritual life that exists on earth, by means of which thousands of God's people are held in bondage, hindered from exercising the functions of their common priesthood, and from using the gifts the "Head" of the Church has committed to them, for the edification of others. Clerisy—which is common to them all—has during recent years seen it to be politic to recognise, or at any rate suffer "lay preaching" which once it banned, and this in most cases because the more spiritual of the congregation would have it, and go where they could get it, whether "the minister" was pleased or otherwise. But this is not a repeal of the clerical order, nor a re-cast of a system which is fundamentally opposed to the pattern set forth in the Word of God. If you desire to see these spiritual babes grow up in health and go on with God, feed them on the Word, and lead them on in the truth, keeping yourself and them as far from the world's religion and all its fetters as ever you can.

A. D., AYRSHIRE.—"Liberty of ministry" does not imply that any or every person who thinks himself fit may speak, wherever, whenever, and as often as he likes, but that no human arrangement is adopted or allowed, that would hinder the Spirit of God from using those whom the Lord has gifted to minister to His saints. To claim the "right" for every man to minister is lawlessness; to systematically prevent those whom the Lord has gifted is clerisy.

Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION IX.—If an Assembly becomes divided as to the course to be pursued in a difficulty, is it according to God that the majority act without the fellowship of the others, and in defiance of their convictions; and if they do, what is the responsibility of those who have been so dealt with?

ANSWER A.—The Scriptures most fully enunciate oneness of mind among God's people (see Rom. xv. 5-6; 2 Cor. 13-2; Phil. i. 2), especially in regard to things in which the church is called to action. There is no "majority rule" in the Church of God. Wherever such a line of things is introduced, or any attempt made to *force* the assembly to act because a certain number see a certain course to be right, division must result. God's way is "one mind, one mouth," and this likemindedness is to be "according to Christ Jesus," sought and found by hearing His voice together. A. G.

ANSWER B.—Majorities rule in worldly associations, and votes are taken in religious and church affairs, ministers, office-bearers, etc., being elected on the principal of majorities, but there is nothing more opposed to the letter and spirit of God's Word. Oneness of mind and unity of action, are again and again commanded and set forth in Scripture as something to be sought after and expected in a company of God's people. "Agreeing to differ," or one party over-riding the consciences of the rest is never named, save in disapprobation, in the Word of God (3 John 9). If one part of an assembly act apart from the rest or against their convictions, it can scarcely be regarded as something to be borne with, or as a personal offence to be taken meekly without remonstrance (see 3 John 10). The very foundations of fellowship are thereby imperilled, and the Word of the Lord set ruthlessly aside. An appeal to Scriptural made in a wise and godly manner, would generally prevent such a crisis, but this failing, the next step would surely be to seek the help of those known and accepted as guides among assemblies, to give their counsel, which in some cases would prevail, or bring out a condition of self-will which no spiritual man can fail to see and know how to act toward.

J. S.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—The first responsibility lies with those who guide and oversee the flock. They

should never appear before the assembly with any proposal, while they are not of one mind regarding it. Better meet night after night for conference and prayer, until they are able to make a united statement concerning which all are agreed, and which one or more on behalf of the whole will bring before the assembly with the Scriptures bearing upon it, so that all may be duly exercised before God regarding it, and intelligently take their part in giving it effect. If this were done, there would be little possibility of a part of the assembly acting without the rest, or of any clique or faction being able to cause dissension or division. In the event of the assembly not being at once all of one mind regarding any course, there must be time given and if need be help in ministry bearing on the matter, so that those who do not see things so quickly as others, or move more cautiously, may not be thrown out of rank or ignored. There is always real blessing in waiting upon God, who alone can give that oneness of mind which is the safeguard of unity and leaves no field of operations to "them that cause divisions."

Overseers and their Work.

SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER TO QUESTION VIII.

I SUPPOSE that no one would attempt to answer this question, in the way it is put, with anything but an emphatic negative. Yet, strange and sad to say, the practice referred to is one that prevails in connection with not a few assemblies. The Scripture principle, which underlies the whole matter of the rule and guidance of the assemblies of the saints is, that such rule must be the outcome of lowly shepherd toil, owned by God, and therefore duly recognised by His people. In 1 Peter v. 1, older ones (there is no article, for the apostle is not addressing a separate class known as "the elders") are exhorted to shepherd the flock, while the over-seeing is the natural consequence of the shepherding. In the same way, in 1 Thes. v. 12, the saints are besought to "know them which labour" among them; while by that very labour they perceive that the labourers have been set over them in the Lord. This is the exact opposite of what prevails in all the religious systems. A man who has never laboured among the saints or shepherded the flock, is ordained to an official position, and then he is

set over a congregation, either by the votes of those who compose it, or by some external authority. The place accorded to him, without any Scriptural ground, makes obedience to the above exhortations in 1 Thess. and 1 Peter quite impossible. Whence arises this almost universal setting aside of the teaching of God's Word? Surely, from the solemn fact that believers generally have let go their confidence that the ascended Son of God, who is still the Lord in the midst, is able to give all that His people need, according to Eph. iv. 7-13. In the religious denominations, this departure from the divinely-appointed path has been formed into a system, which is duly approved and justified by human reasoning. But just because it had its source in the unbelief of the natural heart, it is sure to appear again amongst those who have forsaken, it may be, the unscriptural systems, but have brought with them the heart from which every evil in those systems has sprung. On all hands we hear the acknowledgment that the want of shepherds is the great lack of the companies of believers that have been gathered together in these times, with a desire to be conformed to the New Testament pattern. But, accompanying this confession, we commonly hear such words as these—"We have no one in our assembly with any leisure for shepherd work. If only we had some one who could give all his time to it, what a blessing it would be." But it is just here where the unbelief and the consequent disobedience show themselves. The Lord Jesus is still at the right hand of God, and the commandment abides—"Older ones, shepherd the flock." It is not one or two men with a great deal of time at their disposal that are needed, but many men with each a little time. There are assemblies where shepherd work has been carried on for many years, with the most blessed results, where yet there was not a single person of leisure, and where the few hours devoted weekly to visiting, were given at the cost of no small sacrifice. Let the saints be stirred up to unceasing prayer, that the Lord will raise up and sustain true shepherds, and the question of oversight will be solved. But once the name of overseer is suffered to be assumed, where there has been none of the God-owned labour, which alone can give warrant for such a name, and nothing but mischief can result. Besides the two exhortations already referred to, we have in 1 Timothy iii., directions for

those who desire to serve God and His people in the work of oversight. Verse 1, literally translated, says—"If any one stretches out towards oversight, he desires a beautiful work." The stretching out is seen in the diligent labour already referred to. But it is not enough to stretch out and to desire. In the very attempt to labour, there may have been manifested a lack of fitness. The words that follow are searching and humbling, but woe unto us if we do not give them heed. When any would come together, week by week or at longer intervals, for prayer and conference as to the care of the flock, each one should first search himself as to whether he bears the marks that are here called for. Moreover, if through lack of such searching, any one who is manifestly disqualified by this portion of the Scripture wishes to share in the *deliberations*, it behoves his brethren, in loving faithfulness, to point out what the Word of God requires. Oh, the difficulties attending these matters. But the Lord is on the throne, and He is all our resource. Without Him, we shall come to utter confusion, and the saints will be ready to go where the human system has provided the semblance of order. But with Him, we shall prove that nothing that He commands is impossible.

ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

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.

QUESTION X.—In the event of an Assembly become divided, one party going out and forming themselves into a new meeting, then seeking to be recognised by surrounding assemblies, what is the Scriptural course to be pursued in such a case? Are both to be regarded as assemblies and inter-communed with as such, or what?

QUESTION XI.—When the greater part of the time on Lord's Day morning is habitually used by one brother for ministry, not always in keeping with the object of our coming together to "show forth the Lord's death," frequently leaving little time for the Lord's Supper, and always causing it to be at the end of the meeting, what is the remedy?

FAITHFUL SERVICE AND ITS REWARD.

AN ADDRESS TO YOUNG BELIEVERS.

BY THE EDITOR.

IN the annals of the Kingdom of God, recorded in the Word for our instruction and encouragement, it is cheering to observe, that not only the great and public acts of those who in their day and generation served the Lord, find place, but that those which according to man's reckoning would be regarded as trivial and commonplace, have likewise honourable mention and praise. Phebe, who had "been a succourer of many," Mary who "bestowed much labour" on the Lord's servants, and "the beloved Persis who laboured much in the Lord," all find a place in the roll of honour written by the Spirit, as surely as Paul and Peter, chief apostles and pillars though they were. This is the way of the Lord, and as it has been it will be in the day of His judgment seat, of which these records of the Spirit are the forecast and earnest. No real service, no faithful act done according to the will of God can escape His notice, nor will it fail to receive His "well done" and reward, however little regarded or heard of among men. A brief record of Old Testament time, may help us in the remembrance and anticipations of this Divine principle of service, in a day when God's rule and reckoning is much forgotten. Among the records of might, for which honours were given by David in the day of his kingly glory, to those who had companied with him, and been his faithful servants during the days of war, there stands the name and deed of Shammah the Hararite

(2 Sam. xxiii, 11). What was the act of heroism for which his royal lord and master raised him to a place of honour in the kingdom? Only this: in a day of battle with the Philistines, the insurgents gathered in a troop, and the people of Israel fled before them. This at least tells of a low condition of valour in what was the host of the Lord, the custodians of His ark and testimony. There seems to have been nothing very special in the place—no mighty stronghold or honoured royal city to defend. Only a field with a crop of lentiles, probably of very little actual value. But Shammah drew his sword, and planting his foot firmly on that field, he made up his mind to defend it. It was David's field—part of the Lord's inheritance and of David's kingdom—it belonged to his royal master, and for his sake he would defend it. The crop of lentiles, whatever its value, belonged to David, and he would not stand aside, or flee like his brethren, allowing it to fall into the enemy's hands, without making an effort to save it. And what was the result? "The Lord wrought a great victory." The ranks of proud Philistia thinned before the sword of Shammah, and there the Lord of Hosts wrought a glorious victory, by the sword of a faithful man, single-handed, whose heart was so set on his royal master, that he would not allow even a crop of lentiles of his, to fall into the enemy's hand.

There are lessons here, and encouragements too, for the warriors of the Lord. There are patches of His domain, parts of His holy Word, pieces of the heavenly inheritance belonging to our

heavenly David, of little account in the eyes of men, yea, even of so little value in the estimation of true Israelites, that they leave them to fall into the hands of the enemies of the Cross. But to those who have a heart for Christ, and an exercised mind concerning all that belongs to Him, there is nothing "non-essential" or of so little value that they can afford to see it ruthlessly taken by the enemy. They will unsheath the "Sword of the Spirit" and join battle with the foe, even if they stand single-handed. Let such remember Shammah's victory, wrought by the Lord, that day. Clearly he was in the mind of heaven about that "field of lentiles," else "the Lord" would not have so wrought with him. And whatever men thought or said about his act in making so great a battle about so small and worthless a crop, David estimated it aright, and rewarded him accordingly. It was not given to him to slay Goliath, the Philistine chief, or to defend the ark of the covenant, but he had it within his reach to guard that sacred spot and prevent it from falling to the enemies of the Lord, on that day of defeat, when his brethren fled in fear before those whom they ought to have been able to meet in battle, and would, had they themselves been right with God. But the honour lost to the faithless people fell to the faithful individual, and the Lord is not slow to mark and rehearse it. For this, Shammah had to patiently wait. The honours were not published on the eve of battle. David had to reach the throne; the kingdom had to be settled under His hand; and

many days had to pass ere Shammah heard his master's estimate of that day's work. His patience as well as his faith had to be tested, and it was well with him if he did not think hard things against David for the long delayed recognition, which came at the appointed season. And so with us, beloved in the Lord. This is the day of "the tribulation and kingdom and patience" (Rev. i. 9 R.V.), wherein faithfulness to Christ brings no present reward, (save the testimony that it pleases God see Heb. xi. 5) —but rather the sneer of the scorner, and not infrequently arouses the jealousy and excites the envy of those who are at ease in Zion. But this is nothing unheard of, nothing strange, nor should it discourage or hinder the servants of the Lord from fulfilling their ministry or running their appointed course. The end will amply compensate for all they suffer here, and the discipline through which they pass, in bearing reproach and shame, is the appointed means for keeping them humble and fit for the Master's use on earth, while it prepares them for their appointed places in the kingdom and glory hereafter.

ONWARD children of the day,
Dauntless in the deadly fray,
Charge the hostile foe's array,
Bid the rebels flee.

Girded by Almighty power,
Faith beholds the tempest lower,
Faith awaits the conflict hour,
Sure of victory.

Clad in armour of the light,
Strengthen'd by the Spirit's might,
Ye shall put the foe to flight,
Firm your ranks shall be.

THE TRIUMPH OF CHRIST ;

HIS PATH, FROM THE CROSS TO THE KINGDOM.

THE blessed Lord Jesus is now ascended up far above all heavens and is seated on the Father's throne, the place of incommunicable glory and majesty. He has gone up on high as a mighty Conqueror, and has all power given Him in heaven and on earth. He has gone up on high as a mighty High Priest, to the service of the heavenly temple for us, waiting in sympathy on our infirmities, and as our Advocate with the Father. In these His ascension glories, He is exercising Himself for the completing the full measure and stature of His body the church, until it come to the "perfect man" in Christ. His long delayed return is "salvation, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." And thus His ascension state is not to be the last stage in His wondrous history. The heavens only retain Him until the times of the decreed restitution of all things be come. He then is to come again in like manner as He once went into heaven ; as the high priest who once a year went into the holiest, came forth again to meet the people.

The order and progress of the Saviour's journey of old, back to the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, and also of His return and entrance into that glory which is still reserved for Him, may be somewhat traced in Scripture. And what paths are these to trace!

In passing from the grave to His glory, having broken the bands of death because it was not possible that He should be holden in it, He stayed for a while on this

earth, which of old He had given to the children of men. Here He spake with those who were His for forty days, concerning the kingdom of God, giving pledges to them of His constant faithful love, and shewing not only that He Who was dead was alive again, but that He was going to glory—the same gracious Master Whose love in the days of His sojourn with them, had been ever so present to comfort and keep them.

In passing upward from them to His seat higher than all heavens, we may trace Him spoiling principalities and powers, the spiritual wickedness in the heavenly places, leading captivity captive, making show of them openly, triumphing over them (it may be in the sight of the elect angels), as the serpent's mighty Bruiser, Who had come down to the earth, the house of the strong man, and, as the stronger than he, had bound him and spoiled his goods. Then, having accomplished His way back to the highest heavens, He was received of the Father and seated at His own right hand in token of the Father's infinite complacency in Him, and, for His sake in the saints, for whom He had thus humbled Himself and fought and conquered. "Sit Thou on My right hand until I make thine enemies Thy footstool," was the welcome with which He was then received. Sweet consolation for Him Who had heard the cry from earth, "We will not have this Man to reign over us!" The fulness of joy awaited Him there, though here He was crucified. "In Thy presence is fulness of joy," said the Lord, anticipating His ascension to the Father.

The season of His return, from this His seat on high, awaits the Father's pleasure, Who has put this in His own power, for the Son has subjected Himself according to the counsels of grace for us. He receives a kingdom and then returns. The present prince of the air, the spiritual wickedness that is now in the heavenly places, ruling the darkness of this world, is to be displaced. Michael and his angels are to fight against the dragon and his angels. Jesus is to descend from "on high" into these lower heavens, and by Michael to prevail, till the great dragon, that old serpent called the Devil and Satan, is cast out into the earth, and his angels with him, and no place be found for them any more in heaven (Rev. xii. 7-9).

The dragon, thus cast out of heaven, comes down with great wrath to the inhabitants of the earth and sea, his persecution being directed especially against Israel, who will then be brought into expectation of their Messiah as heir of David's throne; and thus consequently be witness to Him as heir of the world against the dragon the usurper of it, and the kings of the earth his champions. The dragon's title to the earth is already disproved, as indeed the Lord's right to every thing from the grave of death to the throne of the Highest in heaven, has been blessedly manifested by His passing through all these, rising in the execution of His mighty work as the descended and ascended One. But He the rightful heir has not actually assumed His right; and thus the usurper has still power, and throne, and great authority to confer,

which He will do until He comes Whose all power is.

And come He will, with "ten thousands of His saints," to smite the kings of the earth, to shew Himself as the mighty God, the Kinsman-Redeemer, Who shall deliver the inheritance of the family of God, and fix it in their possession for ever.

His action, as the "Goel" or Redeemer, as appears, will be conducted in the wrath of the Lamb, against the Antichrist and his company, who have despised His grace as the Lamb of God presented to them for the taking away of sin; and in wrath of the Son (who as being Son should have been acknowledged to be Heir also) against the kings and judges of the earth who refused to do righteously as for Him, King of kings and Lord of lords, but held themselves as the ministers of iniquity and champions of the usurper (Rev. vi. 16; Ps. xi. xii.). The citizens of this world sent after the departing Lord the cry, "We will not have this man to reign over us;" that cry has been echoed through their ranks ever since, and will be kept up until it is answered in righteous wrath. "These mine enemies that would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me" (Luke xix. 27). "O my God, make them like a wheel, as the suble before the wind; as the fire burneth a wood, and as the flame setteth the mountains on fire, so persecute them with Thy tempest, and make them afraid with Thy storm; fill their faces with shame, that they may seek Thy name, O Lord; let them be confounded and troubled for ever; yea let them be put to shame and perish;

that men may know that Thou, Whose name alone is Jehovah, art most High over all the earth" (Psalm lxxxiii. 13-18). How terrible that such language as this should be righteously taken up on the lips of those who are now beseeching the powers of the earth to be reconciled to this blessed Son! "Be wise now therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling; kiss the Son lest He be angry and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little, Blessed are they that put their trust in Him" (Ps. ii. 10-12). But if the counsel of the Lord be now set at nought, the coming calamity will be laughed at. Blessed, blessed Lord! write all Thy Word with Thine own living Spirit on the fleshy tables of our hearts, that we may not in our weakness only speak of these things, but in His power have our life in them, and according to them! It is then that the Lord will awake as out of sleep (Ps. x. 12, xlv. 23); then will He, to Whom vengeance belongeth, shew Himself (Ps. xciv. 1). He Whose right hand (the emblem of his power) is now folded in His bosom, will then pluck it thence to use it (Ps. lxxiv. 10, 11); to use it as the true David for the clearing of the promised inheritance of all the enemies of God and His people. And then for the sitting down as the true Solomon, in the fulness and peace of His kingly honours; His sun rising on the earth as a morning without clouds (2 Sam. xxiii. 4); His light enlightening the Gentiles, and being the glory of His people Israel; the first dominion, the kingdom brought

to the daughter of Jerusalem, but the people of the nations flowing into it—the Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, being then called the God of the whole earth (Isa. liv. 1-5; Ps. lxxii. 8-11; Mic. iv. 1-5).

This shall be the gathering of "every family on earth," the full display of the kingdom, when the will of God shall be done on earth as it is done in heaven, when the days of heaven shall be upon the earth (Deut. xi. 21); all bowing their knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and every tongue confessing that the once rejected Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. ii. 11).

J. G. B.

REVIVE US AGAIN.

YES, *again*. We cannot live upon the past; we need a present reviving from the presence of the Lord. First in our own souls, then in the work to which the Lord has called us. In many places where the work of the Lord was seen in years gone by, all is dry and barren. Sinners come and go as usual, but few of them are converted. Why is this? The workers need to be revived again. Spiritual life is low: the voice of prayer is seldom heard. The machinery goes on but there is a lack of power and blessing. From longing hearts then, let the cry go forth, "Revive us Again." To go on preaching and teaching when in a bad condition of soul is folly, and can only result in barrenness. We need not expect conversions while spiritual death reigns in an assembly—the first need is "revive *us*." Such is God's order, and such His way.

SYMBOLS OF THE CHURCH.

BY DR J. NORMAN CASE, CHINA.

No. VIII.—A NATION.

SOME tell us that we should not look for teaching concerning the Church outside the Pauline epistles. This is a mistake. True, the special teaching as to "the mystery," believers from Jew and Gentile being united together to form the one body of which Christ is the Head, is to be found there alone; but other lines of truth which belong to Christians, whether collectively or individually, are to be found in all parts of the New Testament. A little search should convince most minds, that the 1st Epistle of Peter has in view believers from among the Gentiles as well as those from the Jewish dispersions (see ch. i. 14; ii. 10; iv. 3).

It should not be forgotten that all the spiritual privileges then enjoyed by converts from Judaism, were equally shared by believers from among the Gentiles, and this still holds true. As a well known teacher has pithily said: "The Jew reached Christ in virtue of the covenant; the Gentile became a partaker of the covenant by virtue of union with Christ." But the point is, that all believers of this age are sharers together of new covenant, position, and privileges. Some put the emphasis on the wrong words. "Matthew's Gospel, Peter's epistles, and other portions," they say, "are for *Jewish* believers." I should rather put it, they are for *Jewish believers*: that is, for Christians. Not because they are the natural seed of Abraham are the blessings

of the new covenant theirs, but because they are of his spiritual seed, united to Christ by the Holy Spirit. Therefore without any hesitation, we take the declaration of 1 Peter ii. 9, as referring to the Church of Christ, all the truly regenerate of this dispensation.

"Ye are an elect race," it is said, "a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession" (1 Pet. ii. 9 r.v.). Here we have four symbols of the Church: generation, or race priesthood, nation, people. The second figure calls for separate treatment; the others we will briefly consider in this article.

1. *Generation*.—This points to the origin of the Church: it tells of the solidarity of the spiritual race. The word is elsewhere rendered *offspring* (Acts xvii. 29); *stock* (Phil. iii. 5); *kindred* (Acts iv. 6), &c. Of old, the Lord was most particular that, as a race, this people should be kept pure. Stringent laws and regulations were enacted to that end. Once and again God interfered to prevent Israel from losing its distinctive nationality. So with the new, spiritual generation. In a higher sense than the heathen poet ever dreamt of, believers may say: "We are also His offspring." All true members of the Church rejoice in this common origin. Of them, of them alone, it is written, "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26). Such humbly and adoringly say: "Of His own will begat He us with the Word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures" (Jas. i. 18). To speak of all men as children of God, in the New Testament sense of the word, as

so many preachers do, is to despise God's revealed truth and to stand in danger of contributing to the eternal ruin of souls.

A word is added to further define and describe this race : it is an *elect* race. We trace our spiritual origin alone to the sovereign will and grace of God. So was it of old in regard to the earthly people of God. "The Lord did not set His love upon you, nor choose you," they were told, "because ye were more in number than any people . . . but because the Lord loveth you, and because He would keep the oath which He hath sworn unto your fathers, &c." (Deut. vii. 7; Ch. x. 15). Our origin, position, and destiny, then, result from the eternal purpose and sovereign grace of God in Christ Jesus (Eph. i. 5).

2. *A Holy Nation.*—The word nation points to a mass of people living in one land, under a common ruler, and having laws and customs alike. When he speaks of a *holy* nation the Apostle has in mind Ex. xix. 6. There, conditionally, the Lord had announced concerning Israel : "Ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and a *holy nation*" (Deut. xiv. 2). But so far Israel has failed to reach this high and holy position. When on earth, to the representatives of the nation, the Lord declared, "The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a NATION bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Mal. ii. 43). I am aware that some refer these words to the Israel of the future ; but no good reason can be given for so doing. It is more natural to take the words as foreshadowing the setting aside, temporarily, of the Jews and the calling

of the Church. Peter, in writing this verse, probably also had this very announcement of Christ in mind. The Apostle Paul likewise had in view the Church as a nation or community when he uses the term *neighbour*, of a fellow-Christian (Rom. xv. 2 ; Eph. iv. 25).

Every believer, then, is a member of this holy nation. He is not a mere unit ; he shares privileges and responsibilities with a multitude of others. The laws, regulations, and characteristics of this Kingdom may be learnt from the Scriptures. Its one and only governing Head is Christ. Loyalty to Him, obedience to His laws, are the special marks of heavenly citizenship.

A kingdom has *supplies*, *resources*, and *enemies* in common. In these respects earthly nations vary. Some are much richer and more powerful than others. The supplies and resources of God's Kingdom are incalculably great. There is provided all that is necessary for the highest development and well-being of every member of the community. Infinite Wisdom, Power, and Love legislate for, defend, and cherish this Nation. And of her it is written, "*And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it !*"

We are called to be a *holy* nation ; a people separated from other people, united in the worship and service of God. Of old, the separation was that of space and observances ; in this spiritual age a separation from all that is of the world and from all that in the world is contrary to the Father. Alike to the earthly and heavenly nations the word came, "Be ye *holy* ; for *I am holy.*"

3. *A Peculiar People.*—"The people" is a well-known Biblical expression for Israel (Ex. xiv. 5; Deut. xxxii. 43; John xi. 50; Acts xxvi. 17, 23, &c.). It is also used of the Church, the new race, composed of Jew and Gentile, all of whom, through union with Christ, became Abraham's seed, the Israel of God (Gal. ii. 29). The Divine programme of the present age is summarised in the words: "God . . . did visit the Gentiles to take out of them *a people* for His Name" (Acts xv. 14). To this other Scriptures agree (see Acts xviii. 10; Heb. xiii. 12, &c.).

The next verse—1 Pet. ii. 10—enlarges on the thought of our being a people. "Which in time past were not a people," it is said, "but are now the people of God," &c. These statements are derived from the Book of Hosea (Ch. ii. 23). There, however, the words clearly apply to Israel, *i.e.*, to the ten tribes. But it is remarkable that the Apostle Paul quotes the same Scripture as a proof of the Divine purpose to call the Gentiles to salvation and glory (Rom. ix. 23-26). So this quite deprives the passage of an exclusively Jewish application. The fact is, the condition here depicted is that of man as man; of unregenerate Jews as well as unregenerate Gentiles. "But are now the people of God" describes all true Christians.

Moreover such are called a *peculiar* people. That is, according to Old Testament usage, they are God's special treasure. Both here and in Eph. i. 14, the Revisers render the word—"God's own possession" (Titus ii. 14). The word is

used in the same sense in the Sept.* of Isa. xliii. 21 and Mal. iii. 17. "If ye will obey My voice," God said to Israel, "ye shall be **A PECULIAR TREASURE UNTO ME** above all people" (Ex. xix. 5; Deut. vii. 5). The meaning of the word "peculiar" is thus made plain; the redeemed and called of this age are peculiarly the Lord's people—His special delight, treasure, and portion. The only "peculiarity" that marks them from their fellows is, that they understand, respond to, and seek to behave themselves as those who have become sharers of the marvellous mercy and grace of God in the Gospel. The end God had in view in so dealing with us was, that we should shew forth the praises—the virtues, the excellencies—of "Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light." May it be so! Amen.

A TRUE WITNESS.

"A true witness delivereth souls" (Prov. xiv. 25).

THOU must be true thyself,
If thou the truth would'st teach;
Thy soul must overflow, if thou
Another's soul would reach;
It needs the overflow of heart,
To give the lips full speech.
Think truly, and thy thoughts
Shall the world's famine feed;
Speak truly, and each word of thine
Shall be a fruitful seed;
Live truly, and thy life shall be
A great and noble creed.

* That is the Greek Version of the Old Testament which was in common use among Jews at the time Christ was on earth, and which is generally quoted by New Testament writers.

A CHURCH OF SOUL-WINNERS.

OVER seventy years ago, a little company of earnest Christian men met in a shoemaker's shop to pray, and search the Word of God together. They had each been deeply exercised before God, about the dead and worldly condition of the "churches" around them. They had long mourned over the lack of spiritual power, and sought to find out its cause. Gradually, the conviction had forced itself upon them, that these churches, church members, and ministers, were not the least like those of apostolic days, and that if they were ever to see a revival of Pentecostal power and blessing, there must be a return to Pentecostal doctrines and practices. In other words, they saw that God was hindered from working by the arrangements of man, and that whatever others did, it was their responsibility to get back to the old foundations, and gather together in God's way, looking to Him to fulfil His promise to bless His obedient people. They were only seven in number. They had no brilliant gifts among them; none of them had worldly honours or riches. They were among the lowly ones of earth. But they were of one heart and soul. Their one desire was, to do the will of God, and to be used of Him in making known His Gospel and His truth among men. They resolved that by the grace of God they would make their first and chiefest business to please God, and to spread His Gospel among men. Every saved man and woman who should seek association with them, they felt it to be a

sacred duty to instruct as they themselves had been taught, emphasising that the Lord had given to every man and every woman, a definite work to do for Him. That little company of seven, before many years, had multiplied into fifty assemblies of believers. Thousands were converted, and tens of thousands heard the Gospel. ALL the brethren among them, went out two and two every Lord's Day evening, making known the Gospel in regions beyond, often walking or driving long distances. *Each* of the sisters kept a bundle of Gospel tracts constantly by her, and made it her daily business to watch for opportunities of giving them, and speaking pointedly and personally to all who came within her reach. And thus the Word of life was spread, and the work of God was done.

In our day of increased light and boasted return to Apostolic doctrine and ways, what an utter lack there is of this *individual* effort in the service of God. And herein lies the *greatest* hindrance to a genuine and continuous revival, and ingathering of souls to Christ. By far the greater number of saints are as "babes" requiring nursing, and invalids requiring spiritual care, whereas the normal condition of a believer, is that of a witness for God, an ambassador of Christ, a fisher of men. Surely the aim of all true ministry ought to be,—not simply to feed and watch over the flock, but to develop spiritual energy and ability, and to constantly keep the responsibilities of saints before them, otherwise they will go to sleep, dreaming of their exalted position and grand attainments.

The Bible Annotator.

GOSPEL SUBJECTS.

THE RUIN AND THE REMEDY.

- The Sin of Man *brings* death on all (Rom. v. 12).
 The Sacrifice of Christ is for all (1 Tim. ii. 6).
 The Salvation of God is *unto* all (Titus ii. 11).

SIN.

- Sin put away by Sacrifice (Heb. ix. 26).
 Sin Forgiven in Grace (Eph. i. 7).
 Sin Blotted out in Righteousness (Isa. xlv. 22).
 Sin remembered no more in Judgment (Heb. x. 17).

LET ALONE.

- Let *them* alone (Matt. xv. 14)—False Teachers.
 Let *it* alone (Luke xiii. 8)—Fruitless Professors.
 Let *him* alone (Hosea iv. 17)—Hardened Sinners.

OUTLINES OF BIBLE STUDIES.

REST IN VARIOUS ASPECTS.

- Rest for the SINNER (Matt. xi. 28)—In Christ's Work.
 Rest for the SAINT (Matt. xi. 29)—Under Christ's Yoke.
 Rest for the SERVANT (Mark vi. 30)—In Christ's Presence.

THREEFOLD VIEW OF CHRIST.

- Christ on the Cross (John xix. 17-19)—Dying.
 Christ on the Throne (Heb. x. 12)—Living.
 Christ in the Heart (Eph. iii. 17)—Indwelling.

THREE PRESENT BLESSINGS.

- Justified by Christ (Gal. ii. 17)—Our Righteousness.
 Sanctified to Christ (Heb. xiii. 12)—Our Holiness.
 Accepted in Christ (Eph. i. 6)—Our Representative.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

In what sense are believers delivered from "this present evil world" (Gal. i. 4). There are several words translated "world" in the New Testament Scriptures which it is necessary to distinguish. *Kosmos* means the world as at present constituted, and the persons of whom the world is composed. This is the word used in John i. 10; iii. 16, and many other passages. There is another word, *Aion*, which means "an age." It is frequently rendered "world" also, and is the word here used. It has reference to a certain period, and here is preceded by the significant word "evil." "The present evil age," set in at the rejection of Christ, and characterises the entire period of His absence, during which Satan is said to be the "god of this age" (2 Cor. iv. 4), and

the ruler of the darkness of it (Eph. vi. 12), and sinners live according to it (see Eph. ii. 2, where the word 'course' is "the age of this world"). From this believers are *now* rescued by the cross, and are not to be conformed to it (Rom. xii. 2) in spirit or ways, but to live soberly, righteously, and godly in it. (Titus ii. 12). Demas loved "this present age" (2 Tim. iv. 10) and forsook the path of separation from it, which Paul, whose "fellow-labourer" (Phil. 24) he had been, trod, very likely taking credit to himself in becoming "large-hearted," and that Paul and others like him very narrow and bigoted, as others have done and do till the present hour.

Answers to Correspondents.

D.S.—The Hymn "Jehovah Tsidkenu," beginning "I once was a stranger to grace and to God," was written by Robert Murray M'Cheyne, of Dundee, in 1834, and appears in its original form, complete, in his "Memoir and Remains." It is generally badly mutilated in hymn books.

W.T., GLASGOW.—It is no doubt increasingly difficult to get the working classes under sound of the Word of God. The day when people went to church or meeting from a sense of duty is no longer with us. The old time Sabbatarianism of Scotland has largely given place to a godless indifference to the Lord's Day, especially among a section of the working classes, who spend the day in bed or in walking about, notoriously so young men, discussing football and such like. The "churches" try to get hold of them by Sunday concerts and lectures on popular and pleasing subjects, which entertain but cannot awaken or convert sinners. Some who profess to have turned their backs on all this and taken the Word of God as their guide, are now hankering after the same path, and fain would lead assemblies in which they have any influence after them in patronising "pleasant Sunday afternoons," &c. But this is not the way to either reach or benefit the world. The old Gospel, proclaimed in its fulness, by men in touch with God, is the only remedy, and when a living assembly of active helpers co-operate heartily, visiting the people in their homes, and so live as to commend the truth, the preacher declares, there will never fail to be a people brought to hear it, and be saved by it. The *quality* of the preaching, the *power* of God in the preacher, and *godly living* among those who are "helpers together," are the elements of success.

alike in bringing, retaining, and reaching the people with the Gospel. It is surely better to have a little real work done by the Holy Ghost, souls truly converted to live for God and adorn His doctrine, than to count any number of empty professions.

G.E.S., DEVON.—The practice of individual believers bringing friends to the assembly and introducing them on their "individual responsibility" as it is called, without even mentioning their names to those taking oversight, cannot be commended, inasmuch as it sets aside the discernment and service of those whom God has raised up in the assembly to care for and guide it, and excludes the possibility of exercising such godly care as Scripture enjoins on the assembly in regard to those whom it receives to its fellowship. It is no question of refusing, but of receiving in an orderly way worthy of the assembly of God, and the Lord who is in its midst.

A.D., GLASGOW.—To argue that the presence of a few worthy individuals in a corrupt denomination sanctions it as something to be respected if not accompanied with, is fallacious reasoning indeed. According to this mode of reckoning the Sanhedrim which condemned the Son of God to death, might have been regarded as the "excellent of the earth," because Joseph of Arimathea, "a good man and a just" (Luke xxiii. 50), was a member of it.

W.J., NEWCASTLE.—A pause in the worship of God, when the assembly is so gathered, is, if it be in the guidance of the Spirit a season of blessing and heart exercise to all who are spiritual, which no one in the mind of God will hastily bring to an end. There are in most assemblies, a few restless spirits, who either do not understand or cannot bear such seasons, and generally bring them unseasonably to an end by obtruding some "stop gap" effort which grates on the spiritual ear, and generally causes the flow of spiritual worship to cease. Sound instruction—the Word of God ministered on these and kindred subjects—is now so uncommon that it is scarcely to be wondered, if young believers continuously being added to assemblies, fail to understand the Divine principles of worship that guide and distinguish them from the denominations. What is needed is, that those who know the truth should continuously and wisely teach it, on this and on kindred subjects, otherwise a generation will arise, of whom (like the Ephesian mob) it may be said, "the more part knew not wherefore they were come together" (Acts xix. 32). Such teaching

need not be all in public; one of the most profitable modes of helping fellow-saints in such matters is that described in Acts xviii. 26, where a Christian couple took an earnest but untaught disciple "unto them"—very likely to their home, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly (Acts xviii. 25).

Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION X.—In the event of an Assembly becoming divided, one party going out and forming themselves into a new meeting, then seeking to be recognised by surrounding assemblies, what is the Scriptural course to be pursued in such a case? Are both to be regarded as assemblies and inter-communed with as such, or what?

ANSWER A.—Division, open and manifest in a company of God's people gathered as an assembly of saints, can never be regarded as anything less than a very serious, God dishonouring thing, whatever be its cause, or however brought about. Yet, alas! when such takes place, it is not infrequently the case that partisans or sympathisers with particular individuals or the line of things they adopt, rush with undue haste to recognise and support the party which they regard as being in the right, without, it may be, hearing more than a one-sided story, while others from the same assembly do likewise to the other party. To get out of the difficulty others "recognise both," without inquiry or concern whether those who caused the division are there or not. Clearly this is not the Lord's way.—A.R.

ANSWER B.—I have before me a paper which appeared twenty-four years ago, entitled *Thoughts on Fellowship*, which has been a help to me on this and kindred subjects, in which the following weighty words are found, which I think may be a partial answer to this question. "Were all the Christians in any given locality or town to separate from the unsaved, and meet together simply as Christians, each one still holding his unscriptural opinions, some contending for a salaried clergyman, others for infant baptism, others for the observance of the Lord's Supper once in six months, no acknowledgement of the supreme authority of the Word of God, no readiness to own Christ as Lord in the midst of His gathered saints, but instead thereof man's opinion and man's will—how could a true-hearted believer possibly carry out the will of the Lord in such an assembly? Might he not have to separate

from such, even if they were all Christians, in order to be where the will of the Lord could be carried out?" I would only add, that if he and others had to so separate, for such a cause, *THEY*—and not those left behind—would be worthy of the recognition and fellowship of other assemblies and ought to have it.—J.S.

ANSWER C.—When what appeared to be a division took place in the congregation of Israel, and the two and a half tribes raised an altar on the other side of Jordan on their own account, the others, and especially the rulers and leaders of the tribes (Josh. xxii. 30) did not look upon it lightly, but "sent" Eleazer, the priest, with chosen men to inquire into the matter, and when a *threatened* division was feared in the early churches on the question of circumcision, Paul and Barnabas "and certain other of them (Acst xv. 2) went up to confer with the apostles and elders on the matter. The pleasing result in both cases was, that division was prevented and confidence restored. It is often the case that when difficulties arise in an assembly, they are left to drift, fomenting and fostering a party spirit, until personal animosities creep in, and things reach a stage that help seems impossible and division ensues. If those who have grace and ability, especially such as have the confidence of both, would see their responsibility to give counsel and help in the early stages of such a trouble, many divisions might be prevented. We have little confidence in *official* attempts at arbitration or healing; they are usually only skin deep, the root of the evil not being dealt with before God, and only breaks forth again in a more aggravated form. Work of this kind, like all else of a spiritual nature, needs special discernment such as all do not possess, and can only be done with lasting effects by those who are fitted and called of God to do it.—J.M.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—A "subject" like this, with so many and so far-reaching effects, can scarcely be dealt with in even a cursory way in a few brief answers. It involves the fundamental principles of Church association and fellowship as taught in the Word, as some of our correspondents rightly point out. To those who desire fuller help on these subjects we would commend the reading of a recent and valuable book by our esteemed contributor, Mr Alfred J. Holiday, entitled "The Churches of the Saints," which has given timely help to many of the children of God on this and kindred subjects.

Some years ago, when the spirit of division was "in the air," and much evil was wrought by a

movement which has proved a signal failure, alike in its methods and results, there was a general outcry against separation from any cause whatever among children of God. This has in the intervening years developed into almost an entire silence on truths relating to the believer's separation from the world and the Divine principles according to which God gathers His people. Numbers have been added to assemblies who know and hear nothing of these truths which alone can preserve, when held and used in grace, from bypaths on either side, and keep God's people right in days of stress and strain. The result has been in not a few sad cases, that when some who had not learned or had little sympathy with the Lord's ways, could not get their own way in the places where they were, they walked away, taking as many as they could with them, and began a new meeting according to their own ideas, causing dishonour to God and laying a stumbling stone in the way of honest inquirers after the Lord's ways, refusing to hear any remonstrance or yield to any entreaty of older and wiser brethren. To recognise such as God's assembly would be sin, and to company with such or support them, would be to help them on and harden them in their God dishonouring path.

—o—

MR. ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

For the information of the many who make inquiries concerning the health of our beloved brother, we give the following received from him on October 26th:—"Though still subject to ups and downs, I certainly think that on the whole I am rather better, and in the case of a disease whose natural course is to steadily lower vitality, this means a good deal. My nights particularly are improved, and I often get three hours sleep without a break, and this is repeated after a short interval of wakefulness. I am truly conscious that this illness has drawn the bonds of fellowship closer between my beloved ones and myself on the one hand, and a multitude of God's dear children in every part on the other. It has taught me to say with greater depth of experience than ever before, "I have said unto the LORD, Thou art my Lord: I have no good beyond Thee. As for the saints that are in the earth, they are the excellent in whom is all my delight" (Psa. xvi. 2-3, R.V.). We are sure that the above will draw forth continued prayer and thanksgiving for our brother.—ED.

THE UNSELFISHNESS OF LOVE.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS GIVEN AT KENSINGTON HALL,
BRADFORD, 5TH NOVEMBER, 1904.

BY ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

I WANT to call your attention to two passages from the Scriptures, which have an intimate bearing upon each other. The first is 1 Cor. x. 24, "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's *wealth*." The translators have put in the word "wealth," which does not help us. The literal rendering is "Let no man seek after that which belongs to himself, but that which belongs to THE OTHER." A remarkable form of expression, which reminds us of Rom. xv. 2, "Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification."

The other passage is Phil. ii. 20-21. "For I have no man likeminded who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's."

Here we find a similar form of expression. "All men seek their own things, not the things of Jesus Christ." The Apostle Paul, as he looked round on those who had been his fellow-labourers, finds only one man of whom he can say, "That man will genuinely care for the state of your souls." The word "naturally" really means "genuinely." For an example of what the word is, look at 2 Corinthians viii. 8—"I speak, not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the *sincerity* of your love." We have the same word here that is translated "naturally" in the other passage, and "genuine"

expresses the meaning far better in both cases, and gives us a very much better idea of what the Holy Spirit wishes to convey to us. Paul is here trying to set before the brethren at Corinth the example of their poorer brethren at Macedonia. He says he is not speaking by commandment, but wishes to prove the genuineness of their love. Doubtless he felt that a hearty response would be the result of appealing to them in this way, and that their love would be called into exercise.

It is a good thing to have love, but it is a very important thing that we let love take its course; that we are not slow in giving effect to that which our hearts feel. So, the Apostle seeks to stir them up by appealing to their *genuine* love.

"I have no man likeminded who will genuinely care for the state of your souls, for all seek their own." This is where the difficulty comes in. The very thing the apostle exhorted the Corinthians not to do, in his first epistle to them, he now says, unhappily characterises the great majority of believers.

"Let no man seek his own, but every man another's."

What a strange commandment that sounds; how contrary to what is natural to every one of us. We may try to give a very large space in our thoughts and affections to the things of others; but what the Spirit of God says is: "Let no man seek his own things, but every man another's." It almost staggers us. If it were "Let no man be engrossed with his own things, but let him have a good measure of time, thought and affection

to bestow upon the things of others," we could understand that. But it is "Let no man seek his own." I say, it almost staggers us. But turn back with me to the pattern, and as soon as we contemplate that marvellous pattern, instead of being staggered by the claims of God upon us, we are more staggered to think how little we have recognised these claims; how little we have submitted to them and acted upon them.

When I speak of the pattern I am not referring to the apostle who penned these words, but to the triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who, in perfect equality of love and patience and power, have purposed and wrought out the great salvation of which we are partakers. Thank God, that in the heart of every believer there is a response, though but a very feeble one with many of us, to God's claim. Therefore it is that we were all able to sing a little while ago,

"Lord, it is my chief complaint,
That my love is weak and faint;
Yet I love Thee and adore,
Oh for grace to love Thee more."

In Ephesians i. we read of God, the Father, as author of the whole marvellous scheme, of the Son of God as carrying into execution the will of the Father, and then of the Holy Spirit as coming to dwell in us, the Seal claiming us for God, and the Earnest giving us a blessed foretaste of the things that are prepared for us. If the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, in all its fulness of detail, is much more plainly made known to our appreciation and intelligence than it is possible that the counsels of the Father or the workings of the unseen Holy Spirit should be, that

very work of the blessed Son of God is, in reality, the revelation to us of the love of God and the grace of the Spirit. Consequently, when we speak of the pattern given us by Him who bids us not seek our own things, but the things of others, we have before our minds and hearts all that the Scriptures declare to us concerning Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

How often have we read John iii. 16! But who amongst us has fathomed the depths to which the little word "so" reaches down? Think of what that gift cost the Father!

Since coming into the room, I was asked by a sister to give her a text that had been a comfort to me in my trial, she herself being also a sufferer. I gave her the words, "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things" (Romans viii. 32). We often hear this text misquoted, the word "freely" being put before "gavē Him up for us all." When we talk about giving freely, we mean not merely giving without stint and without measure, but that there is no restraint about the giving, no hindering force or affection that makes the gift, however full and complete, a costly sacrifice. So it is impossible to think of God as "freely" giving up His Son. Think of the Lord Jesus in the garden, sweating, as it were, great drops of blood! Listen to His words, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." God did not withdraw the cup. Every drop of it must be drunk. God, indeed, spared not His Son; but oh, the unutterable cost to the Father's heart of pressing that cup

into the hands of His blessed Son, of refusing to lighten in the smallest degree the load that He must bear. God was looking on the things of others, upon our desperate need, and cared for our state.

And so with the Lord Jesus, who "For the joy that was set before Him, endured the Cross, despising the shame." He too was looking, not at His own things, but at the things of others. But we must never make use of the word "freely" in this connection. It was a full and complete giving of Himself on the part of the Lord Jesus, yet His holy soul shrank from the awful cup He was about to drink. God, too, gave without reserve, when He spared not His own Son; but if the Scriptures never open to us, in Psalms or elsewhere, what it cost the Father's heart, we have at least in the deeply pathetic story of Abraham's offering up of Isaac, the character of the giving.

But now the great atoning work is done. The last drop of the awful cup has been drained; the last Scripture has been accomplished, and the time has come when, by raising His Son from the dead and receiving Him to be the sharer of His throne, God can abundantly ratify the declaration of the Lord Jesus, "I HAVE FINISHED THE WORK WHICH THOU GAVEST ME TO DO." Now, therefore, God can give "FREELY." Justice had withstood the purposes of love. But the righteousness of God no longer stands in the way of the freest giving, according to all the pent up desires of His heart of infinite grace. He can freely give "ALL things," and the first gift is the pledge of all the rest, and partakes of the character

of free, joyful giving which belongs to the giving of all things with Christ. The Lord had promised His disciples that the Father would send the Holy Spirit in His Name (John xiv. 26), and that He Himself would send the Comforter from the Father (John xv. 26). Oh! what blessedly free giving this is. There is no opposing claim pressing itself to make the gift one of unspeakable cost to the Giver, and so it is all the way through this dispensation, in which God is freely bestowing all things on His redeemed people.

Yet do not let us suppose for a moment, that the work of the blessed Holy Spirit is any less characterised by looking upon the things of others, than was that of the Father and of the Son. Every reference to His coming by the Lord Jesus, in John xiv., xv., and xvi., reminds us, that it was because of our deep need that He would come. The world would only be tenfold condemned because of the work of the Cross, if the Spirit had never come to convict of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. And, even after we had believed, how utterly unable we should have been to receive and understand all that has been given us in such rich abundance, if this mighty, patient Teacher had not come to dwell in each one of us and teach us all things. Who shall ever be able to tell the story of the patient, unwearied grace of the Holy Spirit with the succeeding generations of believers down these nineteen centuries?

And so we come back to this, that whatever God claims from us, His claim is based upon what He Himself has done for us. (To be Continued).

THE GOSPEL.

SUBSTANCE OF AN ADDRESS BY MR. ALEX. STEWART.

IN the first chapter of Romans Paul sets forth his relation to the Gospel. He says that he was "separated to" it, that he "served" in it with his spirit, that he was "ready to preach" it, and that he was "not ashamed" of it. He held himself bound to preach it. The Gospel was a trust committed to him, and he was under obligation to communicate what he had received. "I am debtor," he said. He was not going to Rome to benedict those whom he addressed, but to discharge a debt he owed them, in preaching to them the Gospel.

The "Gospel" is not just as much truth as will save a man if he believes it; it is the setting forth of the unsearchable riches of Christ.

In the fifth chapter of the Epistle we read—"Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. By Whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Peace, grace, and glory: thus the past, the present, and the future of a Christian are provided for. We look back to the Cross, and, believing in Him who died there for us, we have peace. As to the present, we stand in grace, and as to the future, we look forward to glory. When a man wishes to build a house, he makes sure that he has a good foundation, but he also considers the climate of the place, and he seeks to have a good prospect from the windows. Our foundation is the blood of the cross, our atmosphere is the

grace of God, and our outlook is the glory of God. You remember reading in the Pilgrim's Progress how, at the Palace Beautiful, Christian was laid in a large upper chamber, whose window opened towards the sun-rising, and the name of the chamber was, Peace.

It is by the blood we have peace, for that which takes sins from the memory of God, may well take them off the conscience of man.

Before we are consciously saved, the engrossing question is—How can I get rid of my sins? When that question is settled, another rises—How can I live through all that lies before me, now that my sins are forgiven? The answer is—By the grace of God.

What is grace? In the 13th chapter of Luke, we have a parable of a fig tree which did not bear fruit, and the owner said, "Cut it down." That is law. Immediately afterwards, we read of a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and who could in no wise lift up herself, and when Jesus saw her He called her to Him, and laid His hands upon her, and immediately she was "made straight." That is grace.

We have no more power to keep ourselves, than we have to save ourselves. It is the shepherd's business to keep the sheep. When David is mentioned for the first time (1 Sam. xvi.), it is said of him—"Behold he keepeth the sheep." He would not go down to the camp to his brethren (ch. xvii.), till he had left the sheep with a keeper. Paul, at Miletus, departing, left the sheep in the care of the elders of the Church at Ephesus (Acts xx.

28). The Lord Jesus, departing out of this world, put them into the hand of the Father. "Holy Father," He said, "keep through thine own Name those whom thou hast given Me." And He added, "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy Name."

Then we have restoring grace. And that is grace which, not only brings back those who stray out of the way, but revives those who have grown faint in the way.

And we have disciplinary grace. Grace may be abused. What is then the remedy? More grace, but grace that takes the form of discipline. The rod is a provision of grace. To hinder sin, like Paul's thorn, or for correction when sin has been committed.

The glory of God is the prospect. What is glory? It may be defined, if a definition be hazarded, as "the display of excellency." There is a difference between gold in the mine, and gold wrought into plate. The working and burnishing bring the glory out. We speak of "the moral glory of the Lord Jesus." Excellency dwelt in Him always, but at times it shone forth. At the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee "He manifested forth His glory." He performed there His first miracle, and as He began so He will end, though with a difference. He will come again glorious, and conferring glory.

—o—

READING THE WORD.—Every child of God is accountable for using aright the time God has given for the reading of the Word. We shall have to give an account to God of how we deal with it, and with the Spirit, who is its teacher.—R. C. Chapman.

"HE NEVER GIVES THANKS."

THE world is very quick to discern the weaknesses and irregularities of those who profess the Christian name, and to form their opinions of Christianity accordingly. A new assistant had entered upon his duties in a city warehouse, in which several hundreds are employed, and it was whispered around the department that he was a "Revivalist." There was a sharp look out kept on the man for the first week, to find out if he was as was reported, a follower of the Lord. There is a dining-room in connection with the establishment, in which the workers take their mid-day meal. At the close of the week, half a dozen of the workers were around the table, and some remarks were made regarding the new assistant's religious opinions. "He's not the right stamp of a 'Revival,' for I've watched him, and *he never gives thanks* before his meals," said one of the young men. The others corroborated this remark, and concluded that the assistant could not be a "true blue Christian" when he "never gave thanks" before partaking of his food. The world has a high ideal of what one who says he is "saved and on the way to heaven" ought to be, and when it finds that such a person comes short of its standard, it quickly comes to the conclusion that his profession is unreal. In such matters as "giving of thanks," the world expects that the "born again" man will not be negligent, and if it finds he is, it will estimate his Christianity accordingly, as not being the genuine article.

“THE WORD TRIED HIM.”

IT is written concerning Joseph, during the period of his suffering, first, at the hand of his own brethren and next at the hand of the world, that “Until the time that his word came, the Word of the Lord tried him” (Psa. cv. 19). When the period of that testing was completed, then—and not a day behind time, “the king sent and loosed him, even the ruler of the people, and made him go free. He made him ruler of his house and lord of all his substance” (ver. 20, 21). And thus it is with all who in the purpose of God are destined to rule. They must first be tried. “The Word of the Lord” must bring them into circumstances, and place them in conditions, in which they will prove what they really are. All God’s honoured servants and witnesses have so been tried, before they were fit for responsibility in His Kingdom. Joseph in Egypt, Moses in Midian, David in the wilderness, Daniel in the court of Babylon, and greater than all, Jesus in Nazareth, were all subjected to trial, to testing in regard to their subjection to the Word of the Lord, and obedience to that Word, in circumstances where such subjection cost them something, before they were exalted to the place of rule, to guide and govern others. Such is the royal road in the things of God, the opposite of everything among men. The law of God’s Kingdom is, that obedience precedes rule, suffering comes before glory, and the way to get up is to go down. The statute of the kingdom is, “He that exalteth himself shall be abased, but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

THE RACE, AND THE VICTOR’S CROWN.

“I press towards the mark, for the Prize” (Phil. 3 14).
 “Hold that fast which thou hast, that no one take thy
 Victor’s Crown” (Rev. iii. 11. Newberry).

SHALL I forsake the ways divine—
 And lose the victor’s crown,
 Because the eyes that shone on mine
 Are shadowed by a frown ?

Or, if those eyes are filled with tears,
 And I must see them plead,
 Shall this o’erfill my soul with fears,
 And shake me like a reed ?

Ah, no ! for Thy sufficient grace
 Lord Jesus, girds me now :
 Thou hast equipped me for the “race,”
 Thy “mark” is on my brow ;

Thyself alone have I to please,
 Thee *only* to obey ;
 How can I pause for present ease,
 Or how look back to-day.

It pleaseth thee, the love to test,
 Learn’d slowly at Thy side ;
 And Lord, to show I have the rest,
 In Thee will I abide :

By pressing forward at Thy Word,
 I speed the prize to win ;
 And where thou art my one reward,
 I soon shall enter in.

There “all the way” shall I recall,
 In haste I tread it now,—
 Lest nature’s art my faith appal,
 Her claims I disallow ;

Lord Jesus, Thou wilt hold me up
 Till this my task be done,
 Thou art the portion of my cup,
 My soul’s bright Star and Sun.

DECLINE AND RESTORATION.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

NOTHING is more touching than the Lord's way of acting towards those of His people who have turned aside out of His path.

Take, for example, the case of Naomi (Ruth i.). This woman was a true Israelite, who, under the pressure of circumstances, left the land of Canaan to sojourn in the country of Moab. She had, so to say, given up the Lord's land for that of the enemy. As to herself, personally, nothing is said to her discredit, save that she found herself in a false position. She had turned her back on the land and people of God, to dwell in the midst of idolatry; there she remained for ten long years. But how heavily the rod of discipline fell upon her! When this became necessary, love demanded it, and knew where to obtain effectual measures; for God will bring back His own to Himself, cost what it may. See how He acted towards Naomi. First, her husband, Elimelech fell ill, and died. Was this trial sufficient to make her retrace her steps? No. Death next put his cold hand upon her two sons, Mahlon and Chilion; but these terrible blows did not suffice to make the exile turn back again to Bethlehem.

Let us note, in passing, another thing in respect of the ways of God towards those who have gone out of the way. He generally uses on one side compulsion, on the other persuasion. This is what we find in Naomi's history. When the hand of God seemed to lie heaviest upon Naomi

in taking away the objects of her affection, then she learnt that "The Lord had visited His people in giving them bread." This news decided her to retrace her steps and direct them towards Canaan. Like a boat which requires force to thrust it into the water, or a loaded ship which cannot cross the bar into port without the action of the tide, the backslider needs the power of grace to bring him back to God. This is why it is said "WHEREFORE she went forth out of the place where she was . . . to return into the land of Judah" (Ruth i. 6 and 7).

Another thing worthy of note, in regard to decline is its pernicious influence on others. We have a very sorrowful example of this in the case of Naomi. She was a stone of stumbling to one of her daughters-in-law, and would have been equally so to Ruth, if the latter had not shewn an inflexible determination. It is sorrowful enough to see a true Israelite seeking to dissuade these young women from leaving a country plunged in idolatry! Such an act would be incomprehensible, did we not know that the child of God, who has turned aside out of the right path, is capable of dishonouring the name of the Lord to the last degree, excepting always that of apostacy. The decline and evil testimony of Christians does more against the truth, than all the combined opposition of the world. They do not perhaps say openly to their neighbour, "Stop where you are in the world"; but their actions speak louder than words. A pasture is not worth much, if the sheep upon it are always straying. So where the worlding

sees the children of God returning to the world's follies for pleasure, they are made to think that they have been deceived, and that Christ is not alone sufficient to satisfy. What a treacherous blow they are thus giving at the Lord whose they are. Is this true of you, Christian reader! Is this the way you return His ineffable love to you? Return to Him, I beseech you, before your conduct, so reprehensible hitherto, shall become a greater stumbling-block to those around you, and a fresh subject of dishonour to Him who never ceases to love (John xiii. 1) His own. Sooner or later, the backslider must retrace his steps. It is possible that He will make you feel the rod of discipline, to accomplish His thoughts of grace toward you; for, if you belong to Him, His purposes concerning you must be accomplished. He will perhaps have to strip you, as He did Naomi, of all that holds your heart down here, to the end that you may be brought to say, "The Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me," then to confess your sins and backslidings, and to recognise His restoring grace. "I went out full and the Lord hath brought me home again empty." Perhaps some one will say—"Retrace my steps! It is useless to think about it. After such conduct who will have pity upon me? They can never forget what I have done, and with perfect right will always rebuke me." You are only in a fit condition to retrace your steps when you feel that you deserve to be repulsed by the Lord and by His people. But you make a great mistake in this matter. Do not think that the people of God are so hardhearted.

Look again at Naomi. She, doubtless, did not expect, from those who had not wandered away from Bethlehem, anything but reproach and coldness. But, despite the fact of her long absence, though on first arrival they could hardly recognise her, the whole city was "moved" on her account. Notice, too, how God caused her to return in a time of abundance. It was—"In the beginning of barley harvest." This mode of welcoming the backslider was worthy of the God of all grace.

Recall also the tender solicitude of the Lord toward Peter when he sent this compassionate message, "Tell His disciples *and Peter*," and the grace He displayed in confiding to him who could no longer trust himself, the charge to feed His lambs and sheep (Mark xvi, 7; John xxi. 17).

But another asks, "How is it, when I have confessed my sin to God, that I rise without feeling that I have obtained the pardon I sought?" It is possible that you have not gone right to the bottom of the matter before God. If you examine diligently, you will perhaps find in your heart the secret desire to continue in the sin. On the other hand, you may have confessed all your sin at the same time partly excusing yourself, or you have confessed only partially. If a child confesses to his father that he has stolen two apples out of the orchard, when, in reality he has taken four, he cannot be happy; but if he confesses all, desirous to make a clean breast of it, and have his sin forgiven, he will find himself at ease in the presence of his father.

God wishes you to go back to the cause and commencement of your backsliding, so that, with a broken heart, ALL may be uncovered, confessed and renounced in His holy presence. If it is thus, He will shew Himself "faithful and just," as the One who is ready to forgive you your sins, and cleanse you from all unrighteousness" (1 John i. 9).

The writer, some years ago, met with a miller who informed him that the water which supplied his mill had nearly stopped. He knew the supply had not failed at its source, so he determined to make an examination of the channel, going up the stream until he reached the obstruction, which when he had discovered and removed, the fulness of the stream returned.

The love of God can never change; nevertheless it flows no longer in the soul in which sin is indulged or is tolerated. Before enjoying it again uninterruptedly, the believer must go up the course of his experience until he discover the obstruction, the sin that hinders the love of God from flowing into his heart. It may take him long time to discover and deal with that sin, but he may rest assured that until he does arrive at the cause of his backsliding and deal with it before God, his joy and peace will not be restored. In such circumstances it is not surprising that we are deprived of the consolations of God, for the Comforter Himself being grieved, His gracious action in the soul is marred.

Let us never forget that the *current* of this world is absolutely against us, and in order to make progress in our heavenward

course we must not for a single moment rest on our oars. From the time we cease to have the fixed determination to be "faithful to the Lord," whom the world has rejected and despised, decline begins. Imperceptible as decline may appear to us and to others, from that moment we go back instead of advancing.

"But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. iv. 18).

Mr Alfred J. Holiday.

The following letter received from our beloved brother, dated November 19th, will be read with sadness, yet we trust the spirit of confidence in God and subjection to His blessed will which it breathes, may encourage us all to continue in prayer on his behalf.

"Dear Brother in Christ,

Once more, under a sense of my indebtedness to your many readers, who have so greatly helped me and mine by their prayers, I would ask leave to use your pages to convey to them the latest information as to my condition. Just three weeks ago, the doctors discovered that I had a second growth of the same malignant character as the first, in the liver, and that it was already considerably advanced.

Humanly speaking, this makes all possibility of recovery absolutely out of the question, and would lead to the expectation that the pain must greatly increase, and the end be brought much nearer. But once again, I can fall back upon God, knowing that it cannot affect His power to heal, if that be His blessed will. He may be destroying the last prop that the natural man would lean upon, in order to make manifest more abundantly the greatness of His power.

If, however, it be not His will to raise me up again, His unfailing grace will certainly be continued to myself and the loved ones who share in all the trial.—Yours sincerely in Christ,"

ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

The Bible Annotator.

OUTLINES OF BIBLE STUDIES.

THE FALL AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

- Adam's Personal Fall (Gen. ii. 17, iii. 7-8).
 The Penal Consequences (Rom. v. 12-17; 1 Cor. xv. 22).
 The Inherited Nature (Eph. ii. 3; Psa. li. 5).
 The Total Depravity (Rom. iii. 9-18, v. 19-20).
 The Need of Regeneration (Job xiv. 4; John iii. 3).

THE ATONEMENT OF CHRIST.

- Its Necessity (Heb. ix. 22; Job xxxiii. 24).
 Its Nature (John i. 29; 1 Cor. xv. 3; 1 Pet. iii. 18).
 Its Sufficiency (Heb. ix. 12, 25-28, x.; Eph. v. 2).
 Its Results (Rom. iii. 25-26; Heb. i. 3, x. 17; Col. i. 20).

THE PERSONALITY OF THE SPIRIT.

- Described by the Lord Jesus (John xiv. 16-17, xv. 26).
 Not an Influence, but a Person (Acts v. 9; Matt. xii. 31-33).
 His Words and Works (Acts viii. 29, 39, xvi. 6).
 His Attributes and Character (1 Cor. ii. 10; 2 Pet. i. 21).
 Sent and Come (John xv. 26; Acts ii. 1-4, v. 32).
 Received and Rejected (Acts x. 44, vii. 51).

The Young Believer's Question Box.

"What is the reason that when mention is made of the Saviour in the Gospel, He is most frequently named 'Jesus,' but when spoken of by His disciples He is called 'Lord' or 'Master?'" In the Gospel narrative God is the narrator, and He uses the personal name by which His Son was called (see Matt. i. 21), but when His disciples spoke to (John vi. 68, xi. 12, 21) or of Him (Luke xix. 31, xxii. 11) they called Him "Master" and "Lord." This was mentioned with approval by Him (John xiii. 13), and thus the Holy Spirit teaches and enables the believer now to address and own Him by lip and life (1 Cor. xii. 3; 1 Pet. iii. 15 R.V.; Col. iii. 17). A sentimental Christianity speaks of "Jesus" and "Dear Jesus," and many popular hymns—some of them with a strong flavour of Romanism—tend to encourage this irreverence. In the "Acts" and the Epistles, He is spoken of as "The Lord Jesus," "Christ Jesus," "Jesus Christ the Lord," the titles varying according to the subject, and so ought He to be addressed by His people:

Answers to Correspondents.

"PHILOLOGUS."—The "Christian Witness," as originally issued, is, we fear, no longer to be had, but if any of our readers have or can find a set of its volumes, we shall be glad to inform you.

T.B., CUMBERLAND.—The degeneracy in character of the assembly of saints on the Lord's Day morning from a gathering of purged worshippers, to offer up-united worship and to "shew forth" the Lord's death, to a round of hymn, prayer, and rambling talk, or a cut and dry discourse, out of all connection with the object for which God has then gathered His people, is by no means uncommon. It is one of the results of the neglect of definite teaching on these and kindred subjects. If a generation has arisen to whom God's principles on these subjects are virtually unknown, because untaught, in some cases dreaded, what else can you expect, but that they will drift into "flux," or that which is practised around them.

AN ELDER.—If the greater part of those who "professed conversion" during what is called your "Gospel campaign," have "gone back to the world," and turned out to be unreal, while believers who were during the passing religious excitement brought into the assembly hurriedly "to break bread" have returned to their denominations, leaving you less in numbers and lower in spiritual condition than ever, we can only conclude that the stir was not the operation of the Spirit of God but the work of man! You are not the only assembly suffering in the same way from these wrought up "Revivals," which end in smoke. The "worker" gets off with flying colours, but those who remain in the place have to reap the results of the collapse of his work for years to come.

S.E.N., LIVERPOOL.—There can be no parley with men who reject the Word of God, and deny to the Lord Jesus His proper Deity. If you find yourself associated with those who are unsound (we do not say inquiring, for in days of increasing error, true children of God may for a time be "shaken in mind" (2 Thess. ii. 2), on truths clearly taught in Scripture) in regard to the fundamentals of the faith, your safety lies in separation from them. To trifle with error, or commune with those who hold it, is to be disloyal to Christ the Truth. Feeble protests, such as appear betimes in religious papers, against blasphemous statements made by men with whom the writers are bound up in ecclesiastical association, are puerile and useless. "From such turn away"

(2 Tim. iii. 7) are the Lord's words to His people regarding such, and they cannot be toned down to mean less than absolute separation from them and the systems they represent.

Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION XI.—When the greater part of the time on Lord's Day morning is habitually used by one brother for ministry, not always in keeping with the object of our coming together to "shew forth the Lord's death," frequently leaving little time for the Lord's Supper, and always causing it to be at the end of the meeting, what is the remedy?

ANSWER A.—The lack of Scriptural knowledge concerning the purpose of our coming together in assembly on the morning of the Lord's Day, is no doubt the cause of some giving unsuited and unseasonable addresses, while with others, an ungovernable desire to speak always and everywhere that there is an opening, must be regarded as the force that sets them on their feet. The only remedy known to us is for the ignorant, instruction, the wilful, godly rule and Scriptural discipline. Some in apostolic times had to get their mouths "stopped" (Titus i. 11).—J.S.

ANSWER B.—For any form of ministry, no matter how sound, or at other times acceptable, to obtrude itself upon the Christian assembly of worshippers, to the extent of occupying the greater part of the time, and so suppressing the flow of spiritual worship, is a serious matter which, if continued, presently perverts the character of that assembling from the purpose to which it has been appointed of God, to a meeting for ministry varied by hymns and prayers of a general kind, and followed, often very hurriedly by the celebration of the Lord's Supper. This in course degenerates into one man ministry, so that when the "ministering brother" is absent, another has to be obtained to fill his place for the day. All this and much more of its kind, is only kept in check by the continuous teaching of God's Word bearing on these subjects. Neglect this, and the consciences of saints soon become accustomed to anything.—W.J.M.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—The fitting word of ministry, exalting the Person and the work of the Lord Jesus, and leading the heart up to God, is always welcome and in most cases we would say is necessary. No doubt the Lord's people should always be in a

spiritual and worshipping condition when they come together in assembly to "keep the feast" and unite in the worship of God, but as a matter of experience, they are not always so. Our gracious God, who deals with us as He finds us, in order to meet the need of His wearied and oftentimes buffeted and downcast people, gives a word of ministry to raise the spirit, gladden the heart, and direct the eye of faith to "the Man at God's right hand," or it may be, to stir the affections and melt the heart by leading us to Gethsemane and Calvary, to afresh behold the "Man of Sorrows." But in either case the word would be in keeping with the object of our coming together to "remember Him," and its result would be a fuller and richer flow of spiritual worship Godward. Ministry of a general kind, occupying the minds of assembled worshippers, with the walk and warfare of a wilderness life, their own failures or those of others, or filling up time with dissertations on doctrinal or ethical subjects, is entirely out of character with the object of that meeting. Young Christians need to be instructed and older ones reminded of this, apart from which—as one of our correspondents points out—anything may creep in, and be tolerated or even approved. No assembly of God's people can long retain its spiritual condition or even its order and power of edification and attraction, if any part of "the faith" is neglected, or habitually omitted in the ministry of those who feed the flock. Continuous teaching regarding Church position, order, government, and the like, leads to barrenness of soul and makes the hearers, critical ecclesiastics, while the constant neglect of all that God has given in His Word regarding His people's corporate privileges, their fellowship and worship, with how they are to behave themselves "in the house of God" (1 Tim. iii. 14-15), leaves it open for the devil to introduce anything he sees best fitted to render void the distinctive testimony of that company, to the Lordship of Christ, the presence and ministry of the Spirit of God, and the all-sufficiency of the Divine pattern of the Church as given for all time in the Written Word. Spiritual condition, godly order, the proper use and development of all spiritual functions and gifts in the assembly of saints, are generally most visible where a wise and spiritual ministry of all God's truth in due proportion is preserved. This is God's own institution for keeping His people right, and for restoring and correcting them when they lag or fail (2 Tim. iii. 15-17).

TO OUR READERS.

WITH this Number we complete the Fourteenth Annual Volume of *The Believer's Magazine*. For all the help bestowed, the encouragement given, the words of cheer sent, and the kindly criticisms offered throughout the year, we are deeply grateful. For new helpers raised up, fresh lines of ministry opened, together with the valued and long-continued fellowship of old and reliable friends and fellow helpers, we are truly thankful. By words of cheer, testimonies of spiritual help received, records of recovery and restoration to the Lord and His ways, we have been much cheered throughout the year. "Assuredly gathering" from these and other tokens, that this *Magazine* has a place to fill and a work to do, we desire to continue it on the same plain and clear lines as before, during the coming year, ministering "ALL God's Truth to ALL God's people" in words easy to be understood, giving a clear and certain sound. Never was there greater need for a definite, decided and clear testimony to the Truth of God, than there is now. Fundamental errors, skillfully venerated and attractively set forth in pleasing style to trap the unwary, abound, in conjunction too with much that is æsthetic and estimable. This is their greatest danger, and the only antidote and preserva-

tive is the Truth of God, known, believed, held in faith and love, and allowed to operate in the mind, the heart, the ways. Thus the young will have their feet directed into the path of life, and the old their ways established therein. It is with a sincere desire to further this good work, and to keep aloft the banner of truth, that we continue to prepare and issue *The Believer's Magazine*, and ask the continued hearty fellowship of our readers, subscribers and helpers toward this object. There are thousands of the children of God needing, seeking, and ready to receive instruction in Divine things, who might be reached and helped through these pages, if they knew of them. We would suggest, as a means toward its wider circulation, that each of our readers hand this issue of the *Magazine* to a fellow-believer who does not get it, with a word of commendation, and a request to become a subscriber for 1905; that a brother in each Assembly will mention it publicly during December, and invite all who desire to have it monthly for the coming year to hand him their orders. A packet of Specimen Copies, 6, 12, or more, will be sent, post free, to any who desire in these and other ways to introduce the *Magazine* to Christians who have not yet seen it.

During 1905, Fresh and Practical Papers will (God willing) appear by

The Editor.

Alfred J. Holiday.

Dr. J. Norman Case.

Dr. W. J. Matthews.

C. F. Hogg.

George Adam.

The late J. G. Bellett.

Charles Morton.

E. H. Bennett.

Conference and Reported Addresses by

Alexander Stewart, Glasgow.

W. H. Hunter, Manchester.

Donald Munro, Canada.

T. D. W. Muir, United States.

F. Ferguson, New Zealand.

George Grove, Australia.

The following are among the Subjects we have on Hand:—

Expositional.

The Epistles of Peter.

Notes on Romans.

Readings in Ephesians.

Meditations on the Psalms.

Elementary.

A Young Believer's Snares.

The Path of Safety.

Early Service for Christ.

Led Back to Babylon.

Ecclesiastical.

A Good Church Testimony.

The Assembly gathered for Worship.

The Leading of the Spirit.

What Builds up a Church?

Fundamental.

The Triune God.

The Deity of the Son.

The Personality of the Spirit.

The Atonement and its Results.

Critical.

Misunderstood Texts.

"The Spirits in Prison."

"The Restitution of all Things."

"Without the Camp." What is it?

Historical.

Eli and His Sons.

Samuel, a Man of Prayer.

David and His Rule.

Malachi and His Times.

Present Truths.

Romanism, and its Wiles.

Ritualism, and its Growth.

Rationalism, and its Propagators.

The "Union" of Christendom.

Practical.

Worldliness among Saints.

Time to Deal with God.

The Fine Gold become Dim.

The Feeding of the Flock.

Current Topics.

The Scotch Church Crisis: Its Lessons.

Creeds and the Word of God.

A New Unitarianism.

Sceptical Professors and the Bible.