

THE
Believer's Magazine

A Monthly Journal

OF

SCRIPTURE EXPOSITION, BIBLE STUDY, AND
MINISTRY OF THE WORD,

WITH QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON BIBLICAL THEMES.

EDITED BY

JOHN RITCHIE.

NEW SERIES.—VOL. XI.

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The Believer's Magazine.

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR EXPOSITION OF THE WORD OF GOD.

Grace for All the Days.

A MESSAGE FOR THE OPENING YEAR.

AS we cross the threshold of another year, and enter on the work and warfare of life in another of its stages, we are cheered in the remembrance that "the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory" (1 Pet. v. 10), is our sufficiency for every form of need through all the days whatever they may bring. It was of this God that the sweet psalmist of Israel sang in ancient time, when he traced the pilgrim host passing through the valley of Baca, yet going "from strength to strength," or company to company, while on the way to the holy hill to appear before God in Zion—"For the Lord God is a sun and shield, the Lord will give grace and glory" (Psa. lxxxiv. 11)—grace for the present daily path, and glory when its end is reached. Blessed be His holy Name. So that in his conscious weakness, with dangers all around, the heaven-bound pilgrim, with his face set toward the Fatherland, footing the rough but right road that leads to glory and to God, can say to himself, and pass on as a word of cheer to others, "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having allsufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (2 Cor. ix. 8). To all who serve the Lord, and seek to guard with holy care the

truth committed to their trust, the message comes with living freshness to the soul, "Be strengthened in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. ii. 2, R.V.). Nature's strength will fail, but strengthened in the inner man by grace divide the servant of the Lord will take his share in service and his part in suffering, nobly and fearlessly holding fast "grace whereby he may offer service well pleasing to God" (Heb. xii. 28). Thus, whatever the coming days may bring of joy or sorrow, of service or suffering, of conflict or of cheer, the heart will daily rest on the promise, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. xii. 9). God's child thus living in the enjoyment of grace, that blessing of the Lord which maketh rich, his lips will give forth songs of sweetest praise, the overflow of the grace-filled hearts—"singing with grace in your hearts" (Col. iii. 16), while manward, when these lips are opened to speak God's message to fellow-saints, they will "minister grace to the hearers" (Eph. iv. 27), and to the world in all its guilt and need, the grace-filled heart, yearning with God's own compassion over sinners, will cause the lips to speak forth in clear and glowing words, "the Gospel of the grace of God" (Acts xx. 24), which is the only panacea for human sorrow, sin, and woe. May such grace, and full abundance of it, be our hearts' abiding portion, all the days.

Israel and the Church.

INTRODUCTORY PAPER.

WM. HOSTE, B.A., BRIGHTON.

THE twofold parable of Luke v. 36-38, though not directly referring to the present Church dispensation, contains important principles applicable to the subject before us.

If a piece of strong, new cloth, is sewn on to a used up threadbare garment, the condition of the latter is made worse, and the patch is evidently out of place. So with new wine put into old skin bottles, hard and stiff with age, the bottles are spoiled and the wine is spilt. Christianity is not a patched up Judaism. The old forms and ceremonies of the first covenant, legal and inelastic, which had merely "a shadow of good things to come and not the very image," cannot contain the new living principles of the dispensation of the Spirit. A monstrous hybrid is the result of uniting what God has put asunder—law and grace, the ritualistic and the spiritual, the earthly and the heavenly.

The great worldly religious systems—Roman, Greek, Anglican—or by whatever name they may be called—destined ere long to form in carnal unity, "Mystery, Babylon the Great," all testify of this. The inflexible forms of the old covenant, of which no detail could be displaced without injury to the spiritual reality they represented, have been tampered with; Scriptural terms have been applied to Pagan practises, and Christian principles ignored, travestied, and denied. Indeed, we shall see that what are known

as the Evangelical Churches of Christendom—though containing within their "fold" many true saints, dear to Christ—are constituted far more on the model of the Jewish assembly than of the churches of the Pauline epistles, and that earthly and worldly principles reign in them instead of the heavenly and the Divine. Indeed, it is far from common to-day to find even individual believers, and much less companies of such, who are standing fast on true Christian ground, worshipping in the holiest, and walking as a heavenly and separated people in the world.

Let us then seek to discern the vital differences between Israel and the Church. By Israel, is meant the earthly (not the ancient—for they are still His people) people of God. The expression "Israel of God" in Galatians vi. 16 refers, I judge, to believers on the Lord Jesus Christ especially from among the Jews. The word "Church" means "a called out company," and is occasionally used in the primary and non-technical sense in the New Testament. Thus in Acts vii. 27, for instance, the expression "the church in the wilderness" simply refers to God's earthly people Israel, as called out of Egypt. But it is very confusing to talk of "the Jewish Church;" such expressions being only calculated to obliterate the vital distinction between Israel and the Church we are now seeking to indicate. Again, in Acts xix. 32, the word is applied to a fortuitous concourse of persons gathered out of the streets of Ephesus, and in verses 32 and 41 to a legally constituted assemblage. This shows that the principle of always translating the same

Greek word into the same English term, is hardly practicable. The particular and technical sense in which the word "Church" is used in these papers is that of the whole company of believers of the present dispensation, from Pentecost to the coming of the Lord for His saints, the members of which, alive on the earth at any given moment, would, if the will of the Lord were carried out, be all separated from the religious world around, and gathered unto the Name of the Lord Jesus in local companies, all mutually related, though with individual responsibilities, each more or less a little microcosm of the whole, being "body of Christ" (1 Cor. xii. 27) and "temple of the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. iii. 16), and each directly dependent on Christ the Head, ministered to by Him through His Spirit and the Word. To-day, alas! Church testimony as a whole, is in ruins. The Church, like Israel, has failed to keep her garments white. What, then, is our resource? Is it to fall back into one of the systems of Christendom? There never was a day when such a course was more impossible for anyone seeking to carry out the will of the Lord, for never was the doctrine of so-called Christian systems so anti-Christian, nor their methods so worldly as they are now. Is it to take up what is called "the individual position," and give up in despair any hope of a corporate testimony? What saith the Scriptures? "Follow after righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Tim. ii. 22). The forty-two thousand Jews who returned from Babylon under Zerubbabel, were stirred

up as individuals by the Spirit of God to take this important step, and in that sense the individual decision, condition, and position are of first importance. But in Ezra ii. 1, we read, "When the seventh month was come, *they came together as one man*"—that was collective testimony. And instead of sitting down amid the ruins, and giving themselves over to hopelessness, they set the altar of Jehovah on its base (chap. iii. 3). Then they established the feasts, "as it was written," and relaid the foundations of the House of the Lord.

All-Sufficient Grace.

WHEREVER my place is assigned by my Lord,
 Whatever my portion may be;
 Through storm and through calm, still I rest on His
 Word,
 "My grace is sufficient for thee."

In time of my need, He His help giveth still
 And care from His presence doth flee;
 His promise is sure, He His Word will fulfil,
 "My grace is sufficient for thee."

So down at His feet every burden I lay,
 Though many and heavy they be,
 His peace fills my soul as the promise I hear,
 "My grace is sufficient for thee."

When trial and danger beset me around,
 And nothing but gloom I can see,
 How cheering and sweet doth the echo resound,
 "My grace is sufficient for thee."

"Alway—to the end," is the promise that's given,
 "Alway—to the end," will it be,
 He will bear me safe through, till I praise Him in
 Heaven,
 For grace all-sufficient for me.

Faith.

I.—ITS NATURE.

DR. J. NORMAN CASE, CHINA.

ACCORDING to the Scriptures, faith is an essential and leading element in the life of union and communion with Christ. Since "without faith it is impossible to please" God, it is important for us to understand what this common New Testament term signifies. Hebrews xi. 1, may be taken as a description of what faith does and brings, rather than a definition of what it is. This faith gives present substance to things future, and makes real to us things unseen. So that the future and unseen realities made known in the Scriptures have upon the man of faith the same influence that things visible and tangible have upon men of the world. May the anointing from the Holy One, as a present reality be with us, as we meditate together on this important theme! Be it remarked, moreover, that there are degrees of faith: little faith, faith, great faith, and full assurance of faith. The measure in which unseen and future things is made real to men, depends upon the degree of faith they possess and exercise.

The Nature of True Faith.—Scriptural faith contains three elements. There is (1) the *Intellectual* element. In order to the exercise of faith there must be something for the understanding to lay hold of. To believe a matter without adequate evidence is credulity, not faith. "He that cometh to God must believe that He is" (Heb. xi. 6). Before any man can properly

confess to faith in God, he must be intellectually convinced that such a Being exists. Demons have such knowledge, hence they believe that there is one God, and this belief, in their case, produces fear (Jas. ii. 19). Knowledge precedes faith. As it was written, "Faith cometh by hearing" (Rom. x. 17). Faith and reason are not antagonistic: both alike rest upon knowledge. The Christian is not called upon to believe anything that is contrary to reason, but much that is beyond it.

2. The *Emotional* element. This is the second constituent of the faith of God's elect. If a man's faith simply consists in an intellectual conviction that God is, then he may not have reached even the faith of demons; for, as we read, they believe that God is, and tremble. A sinner must not only mentally understand that God is, and that He has sent His Son to be the Saviour, but he must be so materially convinced of these facts that the heart and soul shall intensely desire a personal and saving interest in Christ and His work. A mere historical belief of the facts of the Gospel does not bring salvation. As well as the consent of the head, there must be the consent of the heart to Christ and His claims. Thousands of evangelical hearers are intellectually satisfied of the truths of the Gospel, yet they are still far from God. And why? Because as yet there is no real desire in them after Christ. But the man who has got this desire, is far beyond what James describes as the faith of demons. He not only with his head admits the truth of there being only one God and Saviour; but in his inmost soul he desires that this

God and Saviour shall be known by himself as his Father and Friend.

3. The *Voluntary* element. By this is meant the act by which the will takes Christ as Saviour. There is not only intellectual knowledge concerning Christ as the Saviour, not simply emotional conviction that it is a desirable thing to be saved by Him, but there is the definite act of believing on Him, of choosing Him as a personal Saviour. "This is the work of God," said our Lord to the questioning Jews, "that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent" (John vi. 28). And again we hear Him saying, "If any man *WILLETH* to do His will, he shall know of the teaching," &c. (John vii. 17, R.V.). This is a most important principle. It corresponds to the word of the prophet. "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land" (Isa. i. 19). In order to the obtaining of God's salvation, this act must be expressed. I must receive Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. It will be noticed that in certain places in the Scriptures, the words "*believe*" and "*obey*" are used interchangeably. Those who will be destroyed at the revelation of Christ will be men who have *not obeyed* the Gospel (2 Thess. i. 8). Just as, on the other hand, Christ becomes the Author of eternal salvation unto all that obey Him (Heb. v. 9). Through sanctification of the Spirit, Gospel hearers are called unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. That is, obeying the Gospel results in a personal and a saving interest in the death of Christ. And so in other Scriptures. Hence the importance of this last element in saving faith. The sinner,

through Him who, of His own good pleasure, works in us to will as well as to do, *wills* to believe on Christ for salvation. Hitherto he has joined with the many who say, "Our lips are our own; who is Lord over us?" But now the convicted soul wills to receive Christ as Saviour and Lord. Such, according to Scripture, is saving faith, the faith of God's elect.

These three features of faith, for the sake of younger believers, may thus be illustrated:—(1) A man may believe that the fine steamer lying at yonder wharf would in all probability take him in safety across the broad Atlantic to the shores of Canada. He has reasons for the faith that is in him: the ship's known buoyancy, her strength, the power of her engines, the experience of the crew, the knowledge and skill of the captain, and from the fact that in the past, tens of thousands have on her safely crossed the ocean. (2) But the man, we suppose, not only believes all this about the ship; he is himself willing, yea desirous, to make a voyage on her. (3) But he must go even further than this. From the passive state of being willing, he must take the active step of *willing*, or deciding, to go on board; must have the ship's deck beneath his feet, and on her start on the voyage. The knowledge that Christ alone can save, even the desire to be saved by Him is not enough; a sinner must definitely cast himself upon Christ for salvation. All this is included in the words again and again, in substance, found in the New Testament: "*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; but he that obeyeth not the Son [shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him]*"

Devotion to Christ,

AS EXEMPLIFIED IN ITTAI THE GITTITE.

W. J. M'CLURE, AUSTRALIA.

THERE are two men in the Old Testament to whom I would like to introduce you. The first of these is Ittai, one of David's mighty men. Will you please turn to 2 Sam. xv. 17-21. In order to appreciate such devotion, it will be necessary to remember this particular period in David's life. After many ups and downs, David had come to the throne. For a time he reigned over a part, but eventually over all Israel, all bowing to his sway. But this happy state of affairs had changed. One who ought to have been his most devoted subject, his own son, seeks to wrest the sceptre from his grasp, to get into the throne rightly occupied by his father, and having stolen the hearts of the men of Israel causes a widespread revolt, before which David flees. He is now a wanderer for the second time in his life. As he is leaving Jerusalem, probably to fall by the hand of some of the men who follow Absalom, Ittai hastens to his side. David says to him, "Wherefore goest thou also with us? Return to thy place and abide with the king." This only brought out that wondrous affection for, and devotion to, David which his words reveal. Ittai's sentiments might be expressed in the words "I am not sure that we shall be able to recover the throne, that you will be able to get your rights; but of one thing I have made up my mind, to stand by you in life or death."

How cheering this must have been to the heart of David, and how it would

encourage him to hope that there were others in Israel who felt toward him as Ittai did. Why, think you, does this man leave the comforts of home, where he enjoyed the rest earned by his earlier services to David? He might have said, "I am so sorry that my friend and patron is rejected; but the best thing I can do is to transfer my services to Absalom. If he is capable and the people want him. Why should I go against their wishes? I'll serve Absalom." No, Ittai cannot reason thus. If David gets back his own, Ittai will rejoice. If David falls in death, Ittai will die with him. Why this devoted attachment to David? This is the point we desire to bring before you, and we trust you all know in your hearts something of what it sets forth. Long ago David had gone down to Gath. It was failure on David's part to have gone there; but he went, and God in great mercy overruled his going, and the time spent in Gath was fruitful, for one of the six hundred men who left Gath with him was this dear man, Ittai, the Gittite. Let us take this as an illustration. Gath means the "winepress," and the winepress is a figure of the wrath of God. David failed in going to Gath; but as the Son of God looked down from heaven and beheld us guilty, lost sinners, under the curse of a broken law, there was but one way in which He could deliver us. In love He took that way. We read: "He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem"—Jerusalem, the place where He was to hang between heaven and earth, as if rejected by both. It was then our divine David was in "Gath," in the winepress of the wrath of God. The awful

pressure of the hand of God was upon Him. He bore the judgment due to our sin. But His stooping to that place of wrath has been fruitful, and amongst the many He has delivered from wrath, I am happy to know myself to be one.

Ittai at this time is an old man. The days when he was able to do a soldier's part, might well be regarded as behind him now—but the news that David is rejected stirs his heart, and, forgetting his age, he hastens to put his sword once more at David's disposal. David needs a friend, and never was there a more fitting time to tell out his indebtedness to David than now. David excuses him from further service in the words, "Return unto thy place and abide with the king." *The king!* For Ittai there is but one king—that is David. He might be disowned by Israel, but he is still king in Ittai's heart. His altered circumstances do not make him less dear, than when his heart was won by him in Gath. Absalom may carry the day; David's cause may be lost; it does not matter. He could say, "How much I owe to you, David. If you had not come to Gath, I would still have been a worshipper of idols. How dark would my life have been, and how dreadful my eternity. All that I am, I owe to you."

May we never forget that if the Lord Jesus had not stooped to the cross, we would have been condemned and lost for all eternity. May we know more of Ittai's devotion. A little of his spirit would have kept many who have turned aside from the path of separation, to the precious Name of our despised and rejected Lord Jesus. When the number of

those who seek to obey the truth of God, as to believer's baptism, gathering for the remembrance of the Lord in the breaking bread, etc., is getting fewer, and weakness and reproach mark the meetings, then the Ittais become known. While those who lack that spirit, desert the simple gatherings for what is more popular. Until Jesus comes, those who are true to Him must be content to stand by what seems to be a failing cause. The Scotch at Flodden, could not retrieve the day, but they could form their Scottish circle around their King and die for him, giving thus a bright picture of devotion, which relieves the gloom of a dark day in Scotland's history. May we through grace, in this day of indifference to the claims of Him whom God has made Lord and Christ, cleave to Him, with purpose of heart. It is in the days of stress and strain, when suffering and reproach are the lot of Christ's followers, that true devotion shines.

The Assembly Life of Believers.

ITS PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

INTRODUCTION. THE EDITOR.

THE beginning of spiritual life is in the individual soul. One by one sinners are convicted of sin, and led by the Spirit to confide in the Son of God, claiming Him as their personal Saviour, and confessing Him as Lord. "Who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20), and "Whose I am and whom I serve" (Acts. xxvii. 23) are words which aptly express the individual believer's relation to Christ and to God. Having thus consciously been made partakers of a new life, and

brought into new spiritual relationships, the believer soon finds there are others there also, who "were in Christ before him" (Rom. xvi. 7), who are his brethren, fellow-heirs of the same grace, fellow-members of the same body (Eph. iii. 6), with whom he may take sweet counsel, and mutually share in the things of God, to whom he finds it good to say—"O magnify the Lord *with me*, let us exalt His Name *together*" (Psa. xxxiv. 3). The possession of the same Spirit-born life, the same spiritual instincts, the community of interest they have in Christ, and the things that are freely given to them of God, draw the children of God together and sever them from "the world of the ungodly," so that it may be said of all who are truly made free from the bondservice of sin (John viii. 34-36) by the Son of God, and severed from the world by His Cross (Gal. i. 4), that "being let go," they find their way "to their own company" (Acts iv. 23), seeking to join themselves to those who are disciples of the same Lord (Acts ix. 26). Isolation, unless under special circumstances, is not good for the children of God. They need "the communion of saints," and all that God has set there for the mutual help of His people—"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the custom of some is" (Heb. x. 25 R.V.). To meet this need, to give opportunity for the exercise of that love which is the badge of true discipleship (John xiii. 35) and the bond of perfectness (Col. iii. 14), the living Lord has given commandment to His people on the earth in this the age of His absence from them, to assemble together unto His

Name (Matt. xviii. 20) in the localities where they are found, after such a manner as His Word has given commandment. Such companies were brought into existence first in Jerusalem, then in other places, by means of the preaching of the Word, and the operation of the Spirit through human instrumentality, and are described in the Scripture as "Churches of God" (2 Thess. ii. 14), and "churches of the saints" (1 Cor. xiv. 33). The Christian assembly, as constituted and ordered according to the pattern given us for all time in the Sacred Word (see 1 Cor. and 1 Tim.), is the only organisation in which the spiritual gifts and energies of the saints can be rightly developed, and the only sphere in which all that God has set for ministry, edification, and spiritual growth has free scope for its exercise under the control of the Divine Spirit whose dwelling is there (Eph. ii. 22), and under the administration of the Divine Lord, whose authority is to be owned, and whose Word is to be acknowledged and obeyed in all things (1 Cor. xiv. 36, 37).

In all human systems and associations there is either some of God's appointed ministries shut out or some of man's invention included. There are limitations and rules which exclude much that is for godly edifying, and which quench and hinder that flow of spiritual freshness which is of the Spirit of God, and so needful to the wellbeing of His people.

Our aim in these papers will be to examine the Word of God on these subjects, seeking to learn what belonged to God's assembly in early times, and what remains for saints of this day.

The Second Advent of Christ.

XII.—GLORIES OF CHRIST'S REIGN.

COL. BEERS, TORONTO.

THE earthly glories of the thousand years of Christ's reign are described in glowing words by prophets (Isa. xi., xxxii.; Jer. xxiii. 5-7; xxxi. 8-37) and psalmists (Psa. lxxii.; xcvi.-c.), as its heavenly glories are symbolized in Rev. xxi.

Among the many great acts of power which will be manifested at the beginning of this period, the following may be mentioned:—Wars will cease and nation will no longer fight with nation for supremacy in the earth (Isa. ii. 4). The devil—the great adversary of God, and deceiver of men, will be shut up in the abyss for a thousand years, that he “deceive the nations no more” (Rev. xx. 5). On the Cross he was stripped of his power (Heb. ii. 14), and when now he is banished from the scene of his usurped authority, where for ages he has “deceived the whole world” through his many “devices” (2 Cor. ii. 11) and by his many “ministers” (2 Cor. xi. 15). Who can estimate the change this will make on the earth? The enemies of the Lord will have become His footstool, and there will be no lurking foe to watch. Jerusalem, the earthly city, will be “without walls” (Zech. ii. 4). They are no more needed, because the Lord is there (Ezek. xlvi. 35).

“A King shall reign in Righteousness” (Isa. xxxii. 1), and in His days shall the righteous, who are now persecuted for righteousness' sake, “flourish” (Psa. lxxii 7). Power is now too often associated

with evil, and used for the exaltation of the wicked and the down-treading of the godly; but under the reign of the true Solomon the “poor and the needy” will have His protection and care (Psa. lxxii. 12, 13). The rulers of the earth will acknowledge His sceptre, and as the Queen of Sheba came from afar to hear the wisdom and see the glory of Solomon, so “all kings shall fall down before Him” and “offer gifts” (Psa. lxxii. 10-11). The throne of the Lord in Jerusalem will be the acknowledged source of all authority, and to the royal city all nations will go up to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, there (Zech. xiv. 16). The world will at last learn what at present it is willingly ignorant of, that true prosperity and peace are found alone in subjection to Christ.

But the millennium, although a period of unparalleled blessing on the earth, will not be a perfect state. Sin, in abeyance, will still lurk beneath. Man in his unregenerate state will still have a heart at enmity with God, only waiting the opportunity to manifest it. In Psalm xviii. 44, there are those spoken of who will yield “feigned obedience” (margin), submitting, because of the greatness of a power they are unable to resist (Psa. lxvi. 3 margin), which manifests itself in acts of summary judgment on sin (Isa. lxxv. 20), wherever it shews itself among men. In the millennium, righteousness “reigns,” suppressing sin, but in the eternal state, in the new heavens and earth which are the workmanship of God, and those who dwell in them all His people, righteousness will “dwell” (2 Pet. ii. 13), having there its abiding home.

The Bible Annotator.

OUTLINES OF GOSPEL SUBJECTS.

THE FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST.

IN PROPHECY: "He hath done it" (Psa. xxii. 31, R.V.).

IN ANTICIPATION: "I have finished" (John xvii. 4).

IN FULFILMENT: "It is finished" (John xix. 30).

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

The Seal of Justification (Rom. iv. 25 ; xv. 17).

The Power of Progression (Phil. iii. 10).

The Pledge of Glorification (1 Cor. xv. 20, 23).

BEACON LIGHTS.

Judas the Traitor (John xiii. 26, 27).

Simon the Sorcerer (Acts viii. 9, 21).

Demas the Deserter (2 Tim. iv. 10).

TOPICS FOR BIBLE STUDIES.

SIN.

Its Origin (Rom. v. 12 ; Matt. xv. 19).

Its Nature (1 John iii. 4, R.V. ; Rom. viii. 7).

Its Effects (Isa. ix. 2 ; Eph. ii. 12).

Its End (Jas. i. 15 ; Rom. vi. 21).

GRACE.

Its Source (1 Pet. v. 10 ; John i. 17).

Its Streams (Tit. ii. 11 ; Rom. iii. 24).

Its Subjects (Rom. v. 20 ; 1 Pet. v. 5).

Its Supply (2 Cor. ix. 8 ; 2 Cor. xii. 9).

GLORY.

Its Fount (Acts vii. 2 ; Tit. ii. 13 ; John i. 14).

Its Fulness (1 Pet. i. 8 ; Rom. viii. 18 ; Col. i. 27).

Its Fruition (Col. iii. 4 ; 2 Cor. iv. 17 ; 1 Pet. v. 10).

Notes on Controverted Texts.

2 Thess. i. 9.—" Punished with everlasting DESTRUCTION from the presence of the Lord." This is not annihilation but banishment, it is not extinction, but punishment. The word *olethros*, rendered "destruction," means "ruin," in the sense of deprivation of the blessedness derived from being in "the presence of the Lord." Not ceasing to be, for in 1 Tim. vi. 9, where the same word is used, it is followed by the significant words "and perdition," which would be meaningless if the "destruction" preceding it meant non-existence.

2 Thess. ii. 8.—" Whom the Lord shall DESTROY with the brightness of His coming." The word *katargeo*, translated "destroy," means "to make void," "to nullify." The word is used in Heb. ii. 14, to describe the "making powerless," of the devil by the death of Christ, his Victor. It does not mean extinction, for the lawless one, whose destruc-

tion is here described, is seen to be in existence at least a thousand years later, in the lake of fire (Rev. xix. 20 ; with xx. 10), into which he had been cast at the manifestation of Christ in glory.

The Preacher's Bureau.

EFFECTUAL PREACHING.—" My speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God " (1 Cor. ii. 4, 5). The apostle's private discourse with individual sinners, and his public proclamation to the crowd, was simply and only God's testimony to His Son, " Jesus Christ and Him crucified." There was no variation, no catch subjects, and no display of human wisdom or oratory. He counted on and left room for the Divine Spirit to do the work of conviction, regeneration, and conversion. Then when the preacher was gone, the faith of the converts stood. It was not the intellectual kind produced by persuasive words, of human wisdom, but " of God," reposing on His Word, originated and sustained by His power. Where there is this old-time sort of public preaching and individual dealing with souls, in full confidence of the message and the " power of God " behind it, there will be no attempt to produce " effect " by borrowed words, style, playing on the feelings, or the adoption of the world's means and methods of " drawing the crowd." The deep consciousness that the message is God's, and that the Spirit alone makes it effectual in salvation, will keep the preacher lowly free from self-importance, dependent, and fit for the Lord's use. The alarming increase of flippant profession, as the result of pointless, pithless preaching, in which man's wisdom predominates and Divine power is absent, calls for deep searching of heart among all who preach.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Is there anything in the Word to show, that those who have died in faith are in the conscious enjoyment of the Lord's presence? Yes, much. To have " gain " (Phil. i. 21), to be " very far better " (Phil. i. 23, R.V.), to be " with Christ "—" at home with the Lord " (2 Cor. v. 8, R.V.) are expressions used by the Spirit to describe the present condition of those who have put off the body and as unclothed spirits in the intermediate state are awaiting resurrection and reunion. The contrast between being

"burdened" as they were when in the body and "groaning" for deliverance is marked, so much so that the apostle prefers it to anything he had known here, and is "willing rather, to be absent from the body." The doctrine of "soul sleeping" would hardly beget such a wish.

Answers to Correspondents.

NEMO.—The question is not whether such foretold events, as you name, *may* precede the coming of the Lord to "the air" to "receive" His people unto Himself, but whether they *must*. This makes all the difference.

"YOUNG BELIEVER."—We have no difficulty in speaking of our English Bible as "the inspired Word of God," although only a translation from the originals. The Scriptures in common use in our Lord's day were only a transcription or translation, yet He called them "the Word of God" (Mark vii. 13), and surely we may do the same.

J. N., CROYDON.—Philippians ii. 10, does not teach the salvation of all men, but the universality of Christ's Lordship. When reconciliation is in view, as in Col. i. 20, "things under the earth" are not included.

R. G., NOTRHAMPTON.—There is no such thing as "Christian Socialism;" the name is misleading. Socialism is distinctly Christless and utterly Godless. Unbelief, rejection of Divine authority, and lawlessness inhere in the whole system, while every fundamental doctrine of "the Faith" is ignored and denied by its accepted leaders. Some who still claim the Christian name may not yet have followed the whole way along which their counsellors and guides are leading, but they must, if they continue in the foils of the system. There is absolutely nothing in common between Bible Christianity and modern Socialism. Your only path of safety is in complete separation from it, in all its aspects.

A. W., CANADA.—It is no part of the Christian's responsibility to sit down and estimate whether this or that commandment of the Lord is of primary or secondary importance. It is his to own and obey the least as well as the greatest of his Lord's commandments, and to teach others so to do (Matt. xxviii. 19). To encourage by word or deed, any to lightly esteem or set aside anything the Lord has spoken, will bring humiliation and loss "in that day" (Matt. v. 9).

J. B., WINNIPEG.—No apparent success in Gospel effort, or seeming gain in numbers or influence, can

ever justify wilful division or disregard of the Word of the Lord. God often tests His people's fidelity to His Word by bringing them into circumstances where they manifest what hold His truth has on them. He often uses strange means to shew who are and who are not "holding fast the faithful Word" as they have been taught (Tit. i. 9).

Answers to Special Questions.

I.—Are all who leave their daily work and go out to preach, to be received as evangelists or teachers, without credentials? There are some who have taken such a place, who seem to have neither gift, grace, nor energy for such work.

ANSWER A.—Special gift for evangelistic ministry comes direct from the Head in heaven (Eph. iv. 11). It requires no sanction from man or church for its exercise, and he who has it is responsible to the Lord alone for its use. It is both Scriptural (Acts xiii. 1-3) and comely that saints in whose midst such gifts have been exercised to profit, and are recognised, should commend and show their fellowship with one or more going forth from their midst on a special work to which the Lord has called them. But this is not spiritual control, nor are they sent forth as the servants of that or any company. They serve Christ the Lord and look to Him alone for their orders and their support. These simple and Scriptural lines to which some have sought to conform for many years, are being lost sight of, and a gradual, absorption of the ways and habits of the world's Missionary Societies take their place, causing the principles of the Word to become void. J. S.

ANSWER B.—One may be an evangelist and exercise all the gift he has, while continuing at his daily employment; indeed, it is not often you meet those who have either measure of gift or grace to spend all their time profitably in doing "the work of an evangelist" (2 Tim. iv. 5), which includes a great deal more than giving a short Gospel address in the evening. If the Lord has given a special measure of gift and grace to use it, and has set his seal on its exercise in conversions, so occupying His servant and opening doors for his entrance that he finds it impossible to continue his business or worldly calling and fulfil this special ministry he has "received in the Lord" (Col. iv. 17), then, if he has faith in God to commit himself fully to His care and can leave his family, business, and other responsibilities without dishonour to His Name, he may for an occasion, or so long as the Lord requires, go forth

wholly in His service, making known the Gosp l, especially where Christ is not named, and where God gives fruit of his ministry founding assemblies where none exist. Such seems to be the special call and work of the evangelist as he appears in the Word, and we believe wherever one approximating to this pattern and doing this work is found, he will receive recognition, welcome, and fellowship from all who have the spread of the Gospel at heart. W. L.

ANSWER C.—There is a tendency in our time to limit the term of "evangelist" to those who have left their daily employment to preach. This makes it a profession, in much the same way as a "minister" is regarded in the world's religious systems. What makes one a true "evangelist" according to the Scriptural pattern is, that he has a gift from Christ, and exercises it in preaching the Gospel, with special marks of spiritual power and blessing to souls with his ministry. Whether in the place where he lives or beyond it, he is an evangelist and will be so recognised by the godly. If he should have a special call from God to go further afield, at home, or into regions beyond, those who know him should give him their commendation (see Acts xviii. 27) so that Christians and assemblies to which he is a stranger may have confidence in receiving him. It is surely most disorderly and savours of a lawless spirit for any man to throw up his daily employment and "go out to preach" or "become an evangelist," as the phrase goes, without seeking and receiving the fellowship of the assembly in which he is. It is no great wonder if some have suffered by receiving such into their midst, who after making a "flare up" have departed leaving a heritage of trouble behind them. If ever there was care needed in receiving unknown preachers it is now. W. J. M.

ANSWER D.—When Paul recognised the gift and grace of God in Timothy, apostle though he was, he did not take him as a companion apart from the fellowship and testimony of the Christians in whose midst he had lived, by whom he was "well reported of" (Acts xvi. 2). It is surely a departure from this Scripture principle for any man, to lead out or put under training with a view of going out as a preacher at home or a missionary abroad, any whose spiritual history is little known, who may only be restless spirits seeking a change of life, or have no particular ability or love for the daily round and common task of daily toil. In times when one going forth in the Lord's service had to find all he required, or take his staff in his hand and look direct to God for the supply of all his need, there was less danger

of adventurers, but if they may count on being bountifully supplied with outfits and passages for abroad, and stated supplies from funds at home, there will always be those setting forth in paths that they have neither God's call to tread, nor spiritual fitness to fill. W. B.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—Judging from the many queries we receive on this subject, it is exercising the minds of not a few of the Lord's peopl at the present time. We give four out of many answers received, which give Scriptural principles and examples for our guidance, which we commend to the thoughtful consideration of our readers. That there is need for earnest godly Gospellers, who can tell "The old, old story" from a full heart, and give their time to dealing with individual souls as well as declaring the Gospel to crowds, in needy places in the homeland, as well as in regions beyond, none who know the world's need and have a heart for the Gospel will doubt. But God's work, in order to have His blessing, must be gone about in His own appointed way, which is always more trying to nature than some human device, copied from the world, which works automatically, or without any special need for faith in God and conformity to His Word at every step of the way.

Questions Requiring Answers.

Help in answering the following questions will be welcomed. All answers should be short and definite, giving the Word, and avoiding reference to persons. We have a large number of queries on matters of real interest sent us by those exercised about them, which will appear in the Magazine as space permits.

II.—Is there any light given in the Word, as to the consciousness, employments and experiences of those who have died in faith, after death and before resurrection?

III.—What is the teaching of the parable of the Mustard Seed (Matt. xiii. 31-32)?

IV.—Is the principle of ministry under the guidance of the Spirit, without prearrangement, applicable only to the assembly of believers on the Lord's Day for worship and shewing forth of the Lord's death? If at other times, what are they?

V.—Will you give some help on the two passages, Heb. vi. 18; x. 26-29, which are a cause of distress to many? Do they apply to unsaved professors, or backslidden believers?

VI.—Is it according to the Word to say that all believers gather in the Name of the Lord Jesus (Matt. xviii. 20); these in sects and those outside of them alike?

Acknowledging the Lord.

IT is a source of unflinching comfort to the people of God to know that during their earthly sojourn in this "vale of tears," the living Lord upon the throne in the heavens is deeply and personally interested in all that concerns them, not only in spiritual but also in temporal things. The fellowship into which they have been called with the Father and the Son, includes a loving partnership of interest in all that concerns the redeemed of the Lord as strangers and sojourners in "the present world," as surely as it embraces their joyful sharing of "things above" (Col. iii. 1). It was to this great truth that the Divine Lord made reference in the days of His flesh, when in setting before His little band of disciples the Father's care of them in temporal things, He uttered the ever-precious words, "Your Heavenly Father *knoweth* that ye have need of these things" (Matt. vi. 32). It was just because of this Fatherly knowledge and care of God that they were not to be burdened with over-anxiety or to bend all their energies to "seek"—like the Gentile world that knew not God—the daily necessities of life. They had a Father in heaven who was "anxious" (as the Word implies) about them, and they were simply to repose in the blessed assurance that He would not suffer them to lack any good thing. And Peter assures us that this same loving care and paternal anxiety over the children of God continues still, in the words, "Casting all your anxiety upon Him, *because* He careth for you" (1 Pet. v. 7 R.V.). It is to be

feared that few of the Lord's people in this day of "cankering care," which makes its young men prematurely old and absorbs their energies to such an extent that few have either any heart or strength for the service of God, that there is little practical enjoyment of the blessed and holy reality of a Father's care in daily life, and of the loving acknowledgment of His control in all their daily affairs, in the home, the business, and the world. Yet He puts Himself at their disposal, as it were, to be consulted and acknowledged in all the multitude of things that arise to perplex His people in the common round of daily life. His words, "In *all* thy ways acknowledge Him and He *shall* direct—make straight, or plain, R.V.—thy path" (Prov. iii. 6) are clear and plain. If He is acknowledged and trusted as a Father who cares for His child, if His Word is acknowledged and consulted for guidance in His people's lives, there is the sure promise which can never fail, that the path, however dark and tangled, will in His own time and way be "made plain." But the failure often is, that we trust in our own sagacity, and fail to acknowledge a loving, living God as our Confidant. Or it may be that we walk in such ways and dabble in matters of such a character that we dare not seek His counsel about them, because they are not according to His holy will. We are thus left to bear their burden and worry over them in our own wisdom and strength. But to all who seek to walk with God in daily life, acknowledging Him at every step, there is the sure and never-failing word on which faith relies—"He **SHALL** direct thy paths."

Israel and the Church.

PART II.—COMPARISONS AND CONTRASTS.

WM. HOSTE, B.A., BRIGHTON.

BEFORE examining the points of contrast between Israel and the Church, it is very important to notice that there are many points of contact between the saints of this dispensation and those of Israel, un blessings common to both; yea, to believers of all dispensations. The overlooking of these common blessings has led to some of the exaggerated dispensational teachings of to-day, which attempt to divide the Word of God up into squares like a chess board, and would fain rob the Christian not only of the Gospels, but also of all the Epistles, except what these teachers term “the prison epistles” of Paul, namely, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, as if the Christian now was justified on a different principle to Abraham, or forgiven on another ground than David. We might indeed illustrate this by a diagram, in which truths would be represented by lines, some of which would stretch from the beginning of time to its close; while others, such as the Law and Government in the hands of man, would be more limited in their extent. Thus all the saints in every economy have been taught of God to feel their need to bow in the presence of God. All have been and are saved only in virtue of the atoning death of Christ, whether as still future, or as an accomplished work. All have been saved on the principle of faith. All have been quickened by the Holy Spirit. All have been sustained by the grace of God. All

have prayed. All have praised. All the saints of God from Abel to the last to be gathered in, have been more or less “pilgrims and strangers in the world.” All have had to experience the power of evil within, and the enmity of Satan without. Every godly patriarch and Israelite knew these phases of experience to a greater or less degree, just as every Christian does. But the Christian has more. He is united to the risen Christ, and with every saint on earth He is “in Christ Jesus.” He is the Spirit, indwelling after being baptised into the one body. He has “a great High Priest who is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God” (Heb. iv. 14). He is “blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus” (Eph. i. 3). These are super-added blessings, which none of the Old Testament saints possessed. It is then a very serious error to rob us say of the Epistles to the Romans—that Epistle of great foundation truths—as some would seek to do, because, forsooth, the full teaching of “the mystery of Christ” is not revealed in it as in Ephesians. The teaching of the Epistles is cumulative, and in each prominence is given to the special line of truth which the Spirit of God willed the saints to be instructed in, but we need them all, if we are to learn all the truth God has given to us. Then, again, there are those who maintain that God never has had and never will have but one thing on the earth—His Church, and that all the saints of all time belong to it. Such teachers only shew their defective knowledge of the purposes of God, and “do err, not knowing the Scriptures.” The

Church was still a future thing in Matt. xvi. 18, when our Lord spake the well known words, "On this rock (*i.e.*, the transcendant truth embodied in Peter's testimony to Him as "the Christ, the Son of the Living God") I WILL build My Church." Had the church been in existence from the days of Abel and onward, how could the Lord have spoken of His building of the Church as a *future* thing. Then, again, in Ephesians ii. 20, we read with clear reference to the Church—"the mystery of Christ," "Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone." The order of the words "apostles and prophets," shows that the New Testament saints are referred to, and certainly there were no apostles in Old Testament times. How could the church then have existed before the those individuals came into being who are here said to be its very foundation. There is another very conclusive reason for rejecting this unscriptural idea now under review. There was a wall of separation built by God Himself in Old Testament times between Jew and Gentile. They might not intermarry. They were not to eat together. No uncircumcised person might enjoy the privileges of the earthly people of God. Whereas in Eph. ii. 14-18, we learn that this difference has been done away for the present. The "middle wall of partition has been broken down." Believing Jews and Gentiles are now united "in one body" on equal terms, and lose their distinctive differences. "The mystery" was not that the Gentiles should be saved; that was

clearly revealed in the Old Testament, in such passages as Isaiah xlix. 6, "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles," and Amos ix. 12, "All the heathen (Gentiles) which are called by My Name." The mystery was, "that the Gentiles should be *fellow-heirs* and of the *same body*, and *partakers* of His promise in Christ by the Gospel" (Eph. iii. 5, R.V.). Why should there be any mystery about it, if patriarchs, Jews and Gentiles, had already formed part of the same church in Old Testament days. We shall see later that the whole Jewish system—the model on which the great hybrid system of Christendom has been evolved—is in definite and lasting contrast with Christian principles, as revealed in the New Testament.

The Christian Warrior.

Clad in the panoply of God (Eph. vi. 10-18)

CHRISTIAN soldier! ne'er cast down,
 Fight the fight, and win the crown;
 Take the Sword, the Word of God,
 Let your feet with Peace be shod;
 Take the Helmet of Salvation,
 Watching with all Supplication;
 Fighting against foes unseen,
 Wily, serpent-like, and keen;
 Let your Loins with Truth be girt,
 Every faculty alert;
 Breastplate on, in front the Shield,
 Never for one moment yield;
 Standing thus in armour bright,
 You will conquer "in His might;"
 Then your armour all laid down,
 You shall wear the "Victor's Crown."

Faith.

II.—ITS CHARACTERISTICS.

DR. J. NORMAN CASE, CHINA.

WE will now examine some characteristics of the faith of God's elect.

1. We observe that it is a *living* faith. On one occasion the Lord told His disciples that if they have faith *as a grain of mustard seed* they should do wonders (Matt. xvii. 20). The grain of mustard seed here, stands for that which is very small (Mark iv. 31), but a grain of sand is even smaller. The Lord, I judge, here selected a seed rather than anything else, because it is a living thing. Preachers of the Gospel generally realise the necessity of warning their hearers against trusting in "dead works" for salvation; perhaps it is not as widely perceived that it is just as important to shew them the folly and futility of a "dead faith." Dead works are religious works done by men who only have a dead faith. And the root evil is that they are destitute of a living faith in the living Saviour. Now and always, the words remain true: "As the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead" (Jas. ii. 26). A Christian's faith may be as small as a grain of mustard seed, but it *is* a grain of seed, and has within it, given the proper conditions, the power of growth.

2. Scriptural faith is a sincere or *genuine* thing. In the epistles to Timothy, the apostle twice refers to an "unfeigned faith" (chap. i. 5). Faith must be "genuine," not counterfeit; real, not simulated. Much that passes for faith in the present day is counterfeit coin; it

may deceive men, but will not pass in heaven. Sincerity is one of the most essential and important things in the spiritual life. Without this a man has nothing. I know full well that a sincere faith in a false way of salvation, will avail nothing; and it is just as true that a "feigned faith" in a real Saviour will likewise be of no value to the saving of the soul. The faith must be as genuine as the Saviour, or no blessing will accrue. The real Christian not only makes a profession of trusting in Christ: he really does it. Many, it is to be feared, are in this self-deceived, their faith is not the "unfeigned faith" of God's elect.

3. True faith *purifies* the heart. Of the early Gentile converts Peter declared, that God makes "no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith" (Acts xv. 9). The Jews made much of outward, ceremonial cleansing. But the cleansing wrought by faith in Christ is inward and spiritual. Faith in Christ becomes the cause and occasion of the application of that blood of sprinkling which cleanses the conscience both from dead and evil works (Heb. ix. 14). God's method is to work from within to without. He first makes the tree good, knowing full well that the fruit will then be good also (Matt. xii. 33). Man works just on the opposite principle. It is only in the measure that an individual is "full of the Holy Spirit and of faith" that he can be spoken of as a *good man* (Acts xi. 24). For without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing unto God (Heb. xi. 6). Those who have a living faith will live a godly life; if not, they are destitute of it.

On Public Prayer.

AFFECTIONATELY ADDRESSED TO ALL WHO
TAKE PART IN PRAYER MEETINGS.

THAT it is a solemn thing to lead the children of God, in their united acts of prayer and praise, we all readily allow. That we need preparation of heart to discharge this service to edification, with reliance on the aid of the Holy Spirit, we also readily grant (Psa. lxxvi. 18 ; 1 Tim. ii. 8). Yet, while we all admit these things, how does it happen that some of the prayers in which we join, have carried our hearts and souls with them as by an irresistible power, while others have failed to move us at all, and have been in no sort to our profit ?

No doubt the practical condition of our own souls sufficiently accounts *at times* for our lack of comfort and blessing through the prayers of our brethren (and it is well at all times that we should examine whether the fault lies not in ourselves) ; yet, making all due allowance for this, the truth remains that many prayers hinder, rather than help true devotion. We need indeed to guard against the evil habit of sifting one another's prayers. But still, it has often struck me that there are some manifest errors into which those are apt to fall, who seek to lead others in prayer.

Bear with me then, my brethren, while I seek to point out some of these ; and to offer a few suggestions with reference to what is desirable in public prayer.

Definiteness in our Supplications should be sought. In presenting a petition on behalf of ourselves and others to any

earthly sovereign, should we not aim at clearness in the expression of our common wants and desires ? And if uncertainty and ambiguity would be avoided in such a case, should it be otherwise when we approach the King of kings ? For although God reads the heart, and regards its desires yet, if our prayers be confused and vague, how can others add their *needful* " Amen " to our supplications ?

In prayer meetings for special purposes, we not infrequently hear petitions not connected in the remotest way with the matter in hand. Yet surely we must feel how desirable it is to have the specific objects of these meetings steadily kept before our souls. In more general meetings, God may lay upon our hearts many subjects ; and then we may well extend our thoughts and desires to these.

Brevity should be aimed at, and needless repetition avoided. We sometimes hear the same petition again and again in slightly varied terms, or uttered at different times in the same prayer. Against the use of these " vain repetitions " the Lord Himself cautions us (Matt. vi. 7). Prayers lengthened out by needless repetitions sadly hinder edification and produce inattention and weariness ; while petitions flowing fresh from the heart seldom tire us, however long the time occupied in their utterance.

Let there be no set words and phrases. If we hold " forms of prayer " to be unscriptural, and regard them as tending to " quench the Spirit," let us not fall into similar error by using the same words and phrases in all our prayers. We almost know what some of our brethren are

going to say, so constant are they in the use of their favourite expressions. Surely the Spirit of God leads them not in this.

Prayer should be for the ear of God, not for the ear of men. The temptation to pray so as to be pleasing to our fellow-men is one we should earnestly strive against. Yet, we may fear it is not infrequently yielded to. The use of fine words and poetry, may sometimes indicate that we are far more conscious of the audience of men than of the living God. The Lord help us to pray as if we were pouring our requests into only one ear—the ear of God. The more we know of secret prayer, the more helped shall we be in this, for when praying in public we shall be as before our Father in secret. The remembrance of this will also guard us against “preaching” in prayer.

Irreverence in manner, or familiarity in language, is surely most unbecoming. We are indeed brought nigh to God; we have an access to the “holiest of all by” the blood of Jesus; we are made even now priests of the inner sanctuary; we have received the Spirit of sonship, whereby we cry, “Abba! Father!” Yet none of all these exalted privileges should induce irreverent language, or be the plea for an irreverent manner in our public drawing near to God. The crowned elders in their high glory, forget not the higher exaltation of the God before and with whom they sit enthroned: they, at the mention of His praise, fall down and cast their crowns before His face. If such be the worship of heaven, should ours, while yet we are in sinful bodies, be *willingly* less-reverent?

(To be Continued).

Devotion to Christ:

AS SEEN IN MEPHIBOSETH THE PRINCE.

W. J. M'CLURE, CALIFORNIA.

LET us turn to the typical story of Mephiboseth. Shall we read in the 19th chapter of the Second Book of Samuel, verses 24 to 30. What a picture of genuine affection we have here. To get the secret of it all, we must turn to chap. ix. 1: “And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?” He is told that Jonathan has a son which is “lame on both his feet” (ver. 3), and that he is in “Lo-debar.” David sends for him, brings him to Jerusalem, tells him that he is to “eat bread at his table continually as one of the king's sons.” When this grace is shown him, he says, “Why shouldest thou look upon such a dead dog as I am?” Before we go further, look at the picture this gives of the “house of Saul.” Saul was David's enemy. Mephiboseth we might say was an enemy by birth. The most religious and cultured person in the world is an enemy of God by nature (Eph. ii. 3). Mephiboseth was also “lame on both his feet.” In chap. iv., ver. 4, we find his nurse let him fall when he was a baby. Lamed by a *fall*. And all of us, without exception, have been lamed by the fall in Eden. Apart from a new birth, there is no ability to walk with God. Again, he was away in Lo-debar, which means “without pasture.” Put these things together, and you have a true picture of every one by nature and practice who has

not yet accepted Christ as his or her own Saviour. An enemy by birth, helpless, and like the prodigal of Luke xv., in want, in a place of "no pasture."

Poor Mephibosheth could not walk to Jerusalem, but David can send for him. One day in Lo-debar he hears the clatter of horses' hoofs; looking out he sees David's servants. He may have said to himself, "They are come to kill me; my grandfather was such an enemy of David; his sin is to be visited upon me." Did you ever know a poor unconverted soul think God was going to send him to hell, when He has been awakening him to a sense of his danger, so that he may escape it. David's men come in, but oh! how different from what Mephibosheth feared. "David has sent for you to come to Jerusalem." He might have said, "I cannot walk there." "But we want you just to accept David's message; we have brought a chariot to carry you." Mephibosheth accepts the message, and soon he is in the presence of David. Any of the fear which clung to him is soon banished, and he is set at ease by David's "Fear not; thou shalt eat bread at my table continually." Mephibosheth might have said, "Well, of course you know, David, I am a prince myself, and I am very glad to associate with my equals." But no; he said, "I am a dead dog." Grace brings us down in our own eyes, as it exalts us in the presence of God. In Mephibosheth now we see a picture of a saved sinner. The moment the sinner believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, that moment he gets the place of a son. Do you think Mephibosheth will love David

now? Yes, he does, he could not help it. He cannot show it in the same way as the old warrior Ittai did; but his love is just as true and real. The Absalom rebellion rises, and David has to flee from his place and his throne. All the time David is away from Jerusalem, Mephibosheth is a mourner: for we read in verse 24, "And Mephibosheth, the son of Saul, came down to meet the king, and had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes from the day the king departed until he came again in peace." If one had asked him what had happened, he would have replied, "David is away." No matter who is in Jerusalem, it is an empty place to Mephibosheth now. Had any one suggested that unless he improved his appearance he could not go into society, the people would not have him. Mephibosheth would have answered that he did not want the society that rejected David, or were indifferent to the fact that one was now usurping his place as Israel's ruler. Alas! how many Christians are trying to go into "society" (another name for the world) in this the day in which "Our Lord is now rejected." They quite enjoy it. What a sad thing! Mephibosheth did not care to be popular where his beloved David was disowned.

At last, David returns to Jerusalem. Mephibosheth hears of it, and hastens to meet him. What a glad moment, when once more he can feast his eyes on his beloved king! The head of a religious organisation with a military name was visiting a city in Queensland. Among those waiting to greet him was an old

lady. As soon as she saw him she cried out, "I see him, I see him, at last I see him." By and by in the glory we can use these words, but it won't be when we see even the great Apostle Paul: it will be when we see the Man who was nailed to the cross between two malefactors. To see Him will be as we sometimes sing:

"A well-spent journey,
Though seven deaths lay between."

David asks Mephibosheth, "Wherefore wentest thou not with me?" Now he explains how Ziba had deceived him, and also had maligned him to David, by representing Mephibosheth as anxious to get the throne (chap. xvi. 3-4). And David who, believing the servant Ziba's story, had given him all the land belonging to Mephibosheth, would now in some degree rectify his mistake, and says, "Thou and Ziba divide the land." This brings out just where Mephibosheth's heart is. "Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace to his own house." What did he care about the land or its increase? He is satisfied with David. He wants nothing more. What do you think of your Christianity? Compared with this dear man's devotion, is it not pale and colourless? I feel like hiding myself.

But we can say we do love His coming, and some of these days will gladly say to the world, "Take it all, our Lord has come." Meanwhile may the love which delivered us from wrath, as shadowed in Ittai, or from our helplessness and poverty, as seen in Mephibosheth, constrain us to seek no place in a scene where Christ is rejected, but to be willing to be unpopular

and out of line with the world; yet on the other hand, like Ittai, bold for Christ, to stand fast in a day of departure from the Lord Christ, and of giving up His truth.

In Paul, we have the Ittai of the New Testament (see Acts xx. 24, and Phil. i. 20). How his loyalty to his Lord comes out in the closing days of his ministry, as seen especially in 2nd Timothy! It seemed a failing cause, but his affection for Christ kept him true.

In John, we have the Mephibosheth character. So we find him, in Rev. i. 9, separated from the world because of its enmity to his blessed Master, a lonely sufferer on the Isle of Patmos, for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

The Second Advent of Christ.

XIII.—THE LAST GREAT APOSTASY.

IN the Scriptures, we read of three great apostasies, one past, two yet future.

I. THE APOSTASY OF THE EARTHLY PEOPLE.—Ten tribes, because of their idolatry, were carried into Assyria (2 Kings xvii. 23), and Judah and Benjamin were soon after made captives in Babylon (2 Chron. xxxvi.). Some fifty years after the return of a remnant and the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem in the days of Zerubbabel and Ezra, and the setting up of the walls of Jerusalem under Nehemiah and others, again they departed from God. In the Book of Malachi (397 B.C.), God is seen chiding with His rebellious people who had departed from Him, bringing to Him in sacrifice, offering to Him polluted bread, and putting on His altars maimed

and imperfect animals which He would not accept (chap. xvii. 37, 38). And when He set their sin before them, and remonstrated with them, their impudent replies to Him in the, "Wherein have we" repeated by them four times recorded in the pages of that book, tell how far both priests and people had departed out of the way (chap. ii. 8).

2. THE APOSTASY OF CHRISTENDOM.—Yet in the future (2 Thess. ii. 3), as to its final manifestation, yet its principles, as we have already seen, began to manifest themselves very soon after the commencement of the Church dispensation. The inspired apostle in Acts xx. 28, warns the elders of the Church in Ephesus of the coming dangers—dangers which are present with us now. It was in view of such an apostasy that the apostle commended the saints unto "God and the Word of His grace" (Acts xx. 32), which is our refuge and only safeguard in the midst of increasing seductions in these last days.

3. THE FINAL GREAT APOSTASY OF THE NATIONS.—Also future (Rev. xx. 7-9). During Christ's personal reign over the earth for a thousand years, there will be those who will "feign obedience" to Him (Psa. xviii. 44; lxvi. 4 mar.), who is "Head of the nations." Because of "the greatness of His power," and the stringency of His reign of righteousness, evil will be in abeyance and good in the ascendant, with the result that men will deem it to their advantage to go with the stream and to submit outwardly to Him. But their heart will still be in rebellion, and immediately that Satan is loosed from the bottomless pit, where he is held

prisoner during the millennial reign, those who are unregenerate, who have only been professors and at heart still the enemies of the Lord, will rally at this last call of the adversary, who once more is allowed to go forth, deceiving the nations to gather them all together to battle against the earthly saints and against Jerusalem, the beloved city. This last great apostasy will exceed in extent and daring all that have preceded it. Man's nature, unchanged by the reign of Christ's glory, as it is now by the proclamation of God's grace in the case of all who reject His Son, will prove by this last open revolt and taking sides with the devil against God, that apart from redemption by blood and regeneration by the Spirit, that he is utterly depraved and wholly at enmity against God. But there will be no mercy, no time for repentance given then. Swift and awful judgment comes upon the gathering mass, as they "compass the camp of the saints and the beloved city." Fire from God out of heaven devours them utterly (Rev. xx. 9). Then "the devil," the great deceiver, is seized at last, and hurled to the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet have already been for a thousand years in conscious torment (com. Rev. xix. 20, with xx. 10), and there, these three accomplices in sin and hostility to God, "shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever," for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it, let men scoff and sneer as they may.

SECURITY.—There is a place of refuge "under the shadow of His wings," in the darkest and most dangerous times, for all who nestle there.

The Bible Annotator.

OUTLINES OF BIBLE READINGS.

BELIEVERS' RELATIONS TO CHRIST.

- "Without Christ" (Eph. ii. 12)—By Nature.
 "In Christ" (Rom. viii. 1)—By Grace.
 "For Christ" (Acts i. 8)—In Testimony.
 "With Christ" (Col. iii. 4)—In Glory.

THE BELIEVER'S INALIENABLE POSSESSIONS.

- A Life which cannot be destroyed (John x. 28).
 A Relationship which cannot be broken (John i. 12).
 A Peace which cannot be taken (John xiv. 27).
 An Inheritance which cannot be defiled (1 Pet. i. 4).

THREE LINKS IN SALVATION'S CHAIN.

- Elect in Divine Foreknowledge (1 Pet. i. 2).
 Begotten through Divine Mercy (1 Pet. i. 3).
 Kept by Divine Power (1 Pet. i. 5).

SEPARATION OF GOD'S ANCIENT PEOPLE.

- BY ELECTION—"Chosen to be a special people"
 (Deut. vii. 6).
 BY PREDICTION—"The people shall dwell alone"
 (Numb. xxiii. 9).
 BY PROHIBITION—"Ye shall make no league"
 (Judges ii. 2).
 BY PRESENCE—"Thou goest with us, so shall we be
 separated" (Exod. xxxiii. 16).

BIBLE STUDENTS' CLASS SUBJECTS

For February. Used by over 3700 Lovers of the Word for Personal Study and in Weekly Bible Readings of Assemblies of Believers, Young Believers' Meetings, and Groups of God's People in home and social gatherings. Original Notes and Suggestive Outlines on all the subjects are given each month in "The Bible Student's Helper." Feb. 6—Sheep in the Flock (Acts xx. 28, R.V.). Feb. 13—Disciples at School (Matt. xxviii. 19, R.V.). Feb. 20—Followers in the Path (1 Pet. ii. 21). Feb. 27—Warriors in the Battle (1 Tim. iv. 12).

The Young Believer's Question Box.

It is taught by an eminent preacher in the town where I live, that "the blood of Christ" in such passages as Eph. ii. 13, Heb. ix. 14, 1 Pet. i. 19, does not refer to atonement made at the Cross, but to the "development of the Christ life in man." Is this according to truth? Very far from it. Yet it is the favourite doctrine of popular new theology, and of the whole race of modern preachers who ignore man's fall and deny the atoning death of

Christ as the cause and only way of man's salvation. "Blood" is not the symbol of life, but of death: life poured forth on the altar to make atonement (see Lev. xvii. 11). "Blood shed for the remission of sins" (Matt. xxvi. 28), is clearly a reference to the death of the great Sacrifice, who gave Himself to God a ransom (1 Tim. ii. 6). *Effusion* rather than *infusion* is the truth here taught. Atonement made Godward, satisfaction given, had to come first, before life as "the free gift of God in Christ Jesus" (Rom. vi. 23, R.V.) could reach sinners dead in sins. Reposing on that death as the atonement for his soul, the believing sinner receives life (John iii. 36), he is born of God (1 John vii. The theory of a mysterious absorption of "the Christ life," while denying His atoning death, and refusing to own the need of the new birth, is an import from German Mystics, Neologists, and Unitarians.

Answers to Correspondents.

NEMO.—The verse you quote is from a hymn of Dr. H. Bonar, entitled "Hora Novissima," which may be found entire in a little volume of his pieces named "Hymns of Faith and Hope."

STUDENT.—We think you will get the historic information you seek in a volume by Sir W. M. Ramsay, entitled "The Church in the Roman Empire," which, although open to question on some points, is a masterly work of its kind, by one who writes with the authority derived from personal investigation of the scenes in which the Apostles laboured.

G. R. S. SOUTHPORT.—The "oneness" of John xvii. 11, is not ecclesiastical, but vital and spiritual, as the closing words "even as we are," referring to the relation of the Father and the Son, clearly tell. An examination of the context will often prevent false interpretations such—as you truly say—are often "pressed into" this and kindred verses.

J. L., BIRMINGHAM.—If the treatise you send is a fair sample of the spiritual food supplied to the "members" of the congregation of which you form a part, it is no great wonder that the young men who listen to such Rationalism are throwing off all profession of faith in the Bible as the Word of God. The greater wonder is that you and others who revere and love that Word, remain in association with such God-dishonouring teaching.

W. A. G., ELDERSLIE.—Putting money in a Savings Bank is a matter which must be left entirely to

individual exercise and faith. There is no "unequal yoke" involved in being simply a depositor. A shareholder's position is different and in most cases would involve joint responsibility and a common yoke with all in a similar position.

W. M., CLYDEBANK.—We do not believe it to be according to God to bring preachers who are associated with sects and missions from which obedience to the Word has severed us, to preach in the halls of assemblies of believers, whose position is that of being outside of all sects to be gathered in the Name of the Lord alone, with His Word as their only rule. The man who goes to the platform should do so with the confidence and fellowship of all and not be brought in a high-handed manner by one or more who may be wholly "out of touch" with their brethren in their modes of action. Any assembly must be in a poor condition spiritually if it has to "go down to Egypt" for help, in getting either preachers or singers for its Gospel meetings.

J. M'D., GLASGOW.—The functions of those who guide and oversee in the assembly is not to act for the saints who compose it, less still to ignore or keep them in the dark regarding matters of a common interest which should exercise the hearts and have the sympathies of all. The work of a shepherd is to "go before" and guide, and this is preeminently the work of those who feed and oversee in "the church of God" (Acts xx. 28). To act apart from the assembly in matters that involve its testimony to the truth, or to settle such matters in an "inner circle," and then bring them as already settled for the nominal sanction of others, is neither Scriptural nor courteous. Such ways not only indicate a lack of consideration of others, but entirely set aside the many plain injunctions of the Word bearing on unity of mind and action in all such assembly responsibilities (Rom. xv. 5; 1 Cor. i. 10; Phil. ii. 2, 3), causing endless friction and divisions. A practical application of some of the many exhortations to love and large-heartedness, which one is so accustomed to hear, would prevent all such overbearing and clerical domination. True love will never so act, towards others, but ever seek to so exercise the hearts of fellow-saints in such matters, as will cause them to take a lively interest in all that goes to promote the assembly's welfare. To "consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works" (Heb. x. 23), is something wholly different from provoking fellow-saints to retaliation, by overbearing ways.

Answers to Special Questions.

II.—Is there any light given in the Word, as to the consciousness, employments and experiences of those who have died in faith, after death and before resurrection?

ANSWER A.—There is no great detail of information given in Scripture regarding the condition of disembodied spirits in the intermediate state; resurrection and the being "clothed upon" with "that body that shall be" (1 Cor. xv. 37) is the Christian's proper hope. What has been revealed makes it clear that there is "consciousness," and to be "present with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 8), and "with Christ which is very far better" (Phil. i. 23, R.V.) seem to sum up the "experiences" of those who are waiting with Him for the resurrection morning.

G. W.

ANSWER B.—The words of Luke xvi. 25, tell of *one in a past dispensation who "after death" was "comforted,"* which is surely not unconsciousness. To be "with Christ," "at home with the Lord," is all that Scripture says. Surely this is a state of higher bliss than any earthly experience can be, but when service and being the channels of blessing to others is in view, the Apostle adds "to abide in the flesh is more needful" (Phil. i. 24). J. L.

ANSWER C.—It is dangerous to speculate or guess concerning matters on which Scripture is silent. Irreverent desire to get information regarding the state and employments of the departed has led many into the awful snare of Spiritualism, which professes to put those on earth in touch with departed spirits in the world beyond. But this is a delusion of Satan, whose seducing spirits (1 Tim. iv. 1), the "spirits of demons" (Rev. xvi. 14) can impersonate and imitate some who have lived on earth to the extent of deceiving those who give heed to them. But they know nothing and can know nothing of the present experiences of unclothed spirits, either those "with Christ" in bliss or those in hades awaiting judgment. Religious novels and Romish traditions are just as destitute of any real knowledge of the present employments of the departed. It is ours to rest satisfied that God has told us all that He saw was good for us to know on these matters. To pry into His secrets is profane.

A. R. S.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—Scriptures that refer to the post-resurrection state and divine descriptions of the experiences of glorified saints in that state, or who have been changed in a moment at the return

of the Lord, are often used carelessly, and without reference to their contexts applied to the present condition of those who are "absent from the body" and "at home with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 8, R.V.). For example, one sometimes sees in prose, and perhaps more frequently in verse, that some departed saint is "wearing his crown" or "playing his harp" or that he has gone to a land where "saints immortal reign." Whatever truth there may be in such words, it can only be applicable to such as have already been "clothed upon with their house which is from heaven" (2 Cor. v. 2), in other words, to the saints after the Lord's coming and their resurrection, or transformation into His image. Paul has not yet received his crown, nor did he expect it till "that day" (2 Tim. iv. 8). The crowned elders on thrones in Rev. iv. 4, the palm bearers standing in white robes, in Rev. vii. 9, and the harpers before the throne as in Rev. xiv. 2, 3, are not disembodied spirits of the present time, "with Christ," but companies of the redeemed in resurrection glory. To confuse "things that differ," and apply descriptions and experiences which are only applicable to saints in the post-resurrection state in glorified bodies, to "un clothed spirits" now with Christ, is a dangerous habit, leading toward fundamental error and playing into the hands of opposers of the truth, who are not slow to take full advantage of the weapon thus put into their hands, as all who are familiar with the doctrines of Christadelphians, Annihilationists, and others who deny the conscious existence of the departed, know.

Notes and Observations.

The Parliamentary Election is proving a testing time—as such occasions always are—among many who speak of being "citizens of heaven" and sing of being "strangers and pilgrims" here. It is at such times that one gets to know what grasp the truth has upon those who profess to own it. Do you know any who embark on the troubled waters of politics who retain their spiritual warmth and freshness, or maintain the path of separation to God marked out in the pages of the Word?

Fruitful Gospel Effort.—We have long observed that it is not from spasmodic and what are called "special" Gospel efforts that the richest and most abiding fruit is gathered, or those added to the assembly of God's people who become real helps and channels of blessing in it, but more generally by means of the continuous, godly, earnest, and active

Gospel testimony of the assembly at ordinary times. There is less danger then of hurrying unexercised souls into a false profession of faith and more likelihood of God having room to do His own work in conviction and regeneration, in His own way. Special efforts conducted in a godly way by God-sent men are always welcome, but they must never be regarded as taking the place of a hearty, united, and continuous Gospel testimony by assemblies of God's people as such, all "striving together" for the progress of the Gospel.

Preaching by Turn.—There is perhaps nothing a greater hindrance to the progress and fruitfulness of the Gospel work of an assembly, than the too common notion that ALL who can "speak" should occupy the platform in rotation, irrespective of evangelistic gift or spiritual condition. It evidently has to be allowed in some places to keep the wheels "in motion," and give those who would never be able to get a congregation to hear them anywhere, an opportunity of "exercising their gift." But we do not believe it to be according to the Word of God. Those whose only forte is to "preach away" the congregation, and weary those who from a sense of duty come to the meetings, are allowed to "take the platform" for peace sake, or because they would become "unmanageable" if they were kept where they ought to be. Neither "one man ministry" nor "every man ministry" is according to God, but the recognition and acceptance of what gifts the Living Head has given, whether two or ten, with full opportunity and scope for their exercise. This is what the Word demands and what all who profess to own its authority should aim at giving.

Questions Requiring Answers.

Help in answering the following questions will be welcomed. All answers should be short and definite, giving the Word, and avoiding reference to persons. We have a large number of queries on matters of real interest sent us by those exercised about them, which will appear in the Magazine as space permits.

III.—What is the teaching of the parable of the Mustard Seed (Matt. xiii. 31-32)?

IV.—Is the principle of ministry under the guidance of the Spirit, without prearrangement, applicable only to the assembly of believers on the Lord's Day for worship and shewing forth of the Lord's death? If at other times, what are they?

V.—Will you give some help on the two passages, Heb. vi. 18; x. 26-29, which are a cause of distress to many? Do they apply to unsaved professors, or to backslidden believers?

Walking before the Lord.

TO make it our aim to walk before the Lord, and do the thing that pleaseth Him, imparts a tone and a sanctity to daily life, which only those who experience it can know. To arrange life's duties and pursuits, and daily avocations "in the sight of God and our Father" (1 Thess. i. 3), is an aspect of Christian life not much commented on or sought after in our busy day. Yet, therein is found the secret of true peace—the peace of God which passeth all understanding, guarding the heart and mind (Phil. iv. 7, R.V.), amid the turmoils of a world that seeks not to retain God in all its thoughts. To refer the whole of life's business to God, to enjoy that guidance which is so sweetly expressed in the words—"I will counsel thee with Mine eye upon thee" (Psa. xxxii. 8., R.V.) is a privilege of all the redeemed of the Lord. But the question for each of us to ask is—How much of it do I enjoy from day to day? To "walk before the Lord in the land of the living" (Psa. cxvi. 9) is to "walk in the light of His countenance" (Psa. lxxxix. 15), having nothing secret, nothing hid from His all-seeing eye. There are many things allowed and countenanced and very often defended by Christians, which would neither have place nor approval by them, if they were "set before the Lord" (Num. v. 16), and His light allowed to shine upon them. There are ways and means adopted in what is known as the service of the Lord, which would never have been conceived, much less practised, if the servants of Christ, like the Levites

of old, who "ministered in the Name of the Lord," had continued to exercise their ministry in the appointed place and way, and to "stand there before the Lord" (Deut. xviii. 7), subject to His will alone. There are words uttered and statements made which cause strife and contention, dishonouring to the Name of the Lord, and often derogatory to His saints, which, had the speaker sought, like one of ancient time, to "utter all his words before the Lord" (Judges xi. 11), would never have been heard nor their evil effects experienced. And when it becomes needful to bring the sins and failures of others before them with the view of leading them to humiliation, repentance, and confession, how much it adds to the weight of one's testimony when he is able, like Samuel, to say, "Stand still, that I may reason with you before the Lord" (1 Sam. xii. 7). To such a walk and life the children of God have been called. And however common the failure to perceive and to respond to His call may be, the word still is to the individual saint as to Abraham, "Walk before Me, and be thou perfect" (Gen. xvii. 1). There is no thought of sinlessness or freedom from fault in such a life, but the constant desire and aim to walk uprightly before God, in His light, according to His Word, apart from the world and the principles that govern it, seeking to be "filled with the knowledge of His will, in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, to walk worthily of the Lord, unto all pleasing" (Col. i. 9, 10, R.V.). Let it be our aim then to walk before the Lord; to live and act "in the sight of God and our Father" (1 Thess. i. 3).

No Collective Testimony.

DR. W. J. MATTHEWS.

IN his address to the Ephesian elders at Miletus, Paul briefly reviews his own manner of life, and the character of his ministry during the three years of his stay amongst them. And after he left, he had kept in close touch with them, as this interview shows. But now he says: All among whom he had gone preaching the Kingdom of God should see his face no more (ver. 25). Under such pathetic circumstances peculiar weight attaches to his counsel, and particularly so, seeing that wolves from without should enter in among them, not sparing the flock; and from within others would arise speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples. While he had been with them, he shrank not from giving all that was profitable (ver. 20), declaring "the whole counsel of God" to them (ver. 27). And now that he is leaving, never again to see them, he earnestly commends them to God and to the Word of His grace, and refers to the example of unselfishness and labour he had set them. The chief point in the record of this interview, and what seems most of all to engage the mind of the apostle is, the importance of "the whole counsel of God," and he therefore now commends them to God and to the "Word of His grace" (ver. 32) as their resource. Later on, in writing to Timothy while at Ephesus (1 Tim. i. 3), when some of the predicted evils of Acts xx. 29, 30, had already appeared (see chap. i. 7, 19, 20), Paul charges and instructs him with reference to them. Amongst other things

he tells how men should behave themselves in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth (chap. iii. 14, 15). Immediately after, in chap. iv. 1, he refers to a "falling away from the faith" in later times, under the influence of "seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons," and that too in the church, where Timothy was located. This was a further departure than that of Acts xx. 29. In anticipation of these developments, the apostle gives fuller instructions how to act, and says, "If thou put the brethren in mind of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine which thou hast followed." Then he exhorts him personally, "take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine, continue in them, for in so doing, thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee" (chap. iv. 16). From this it is clear the beginnings of the apostacy were already visible, hence the exhortations to Timothy how to behave till Paul would come (ver. 13). It is very noticeable the important place the "Word of God" has in these exhortations. When Paul would come, it is not said how he would deal with such matters, but we might profitably compare 2 Cor. xiii. 2 and 3 John 10, under similar circumstances.

If there is no collective testimony here, as some now affirm, under these painful circumstances, where Timothy was standing firmly maintaining the truth, notwithstanding the errors that then existed and were growing, it must be equally clear, on the same ground, there could

have been none at the first, because it was in the same assembly, and there is liberty and power still to maintain the truth, of which it is the "pillar and ground." But if there was a united testimony at the first, it still remains where liberty and power are yet present to maintain the truth of God in the assembly of saints. Yea, more, this testimony will continue until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, as it is written: "I charge thee in the sight of God who quickeneth (preserveth* alive) all things . . . that thou keep this commandment, without spot, without reproach, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ" (chap. vi. 13, 14). If He preserves alive all things, He will preserve the testimony as at the beginning. It must necessarily follow that an assembly of Christians scripturally gathered, even though defects exist, but where there is power still to maintain the truth, as in 1 Tim. iii., is a collective testimony for God in the world. It is not because all the Christians in any given place are thus gathered that they form an assembly of God. If it were so, then if from any cause whatever, there were any outside them, then it would cease to be so. On the same ground, if it contained more than the children of God, as happened even in New Testament churches (see 1 John ii. 19), "they went out from us, but they were not of us"—then for this reason it must also cease to be God's assembly. The fact is, what constitutes the Church of God is a people purchased by the blood of Christ (Acts xx. 28). And

*The word occurs only twice more in the New Testament, and is rendered "preserve" (Luke xvii. 33); "live" (Acts vii. 19). See R V. and margin.

these are viewed from different standpoints in the New Testament. That in 1 Tim. iii., is the assembly scripturally gathered, where godly order is to be kept and the truth maintained. And it is not dependent on whether all or a part only of the children of God are so gathered. Where this exists it is God's assembly, a collective testimony according to God exactly of the same character as that described in 1 Timothy.

Some are coming and going who say, "Everything is in ruins, and it is now only individual testimony." To those who never learned the truth, or if they ever knew it, who have from some cause given it up, it may be. Such view everything from circumstances, and to them there is nothing right. Accordingly they hold themselves free to go anywhere they find an entrance, to reap the benefit of other's labours. But when things are viewed from a Scriptural standpoint, there is yet the Scripturally constituted assembly of saints, with its privileges and responsibilities. Many such are going on in weakness, yet kept by the power of God, a united testimony which God continuously blesses in the salvation of souls, who are added to the assembly, thus imparting to it fresh life and energy.

Liberty to Obey the Truth.

"Stand fast therefore, and be not entangled" (Gal. v. 1).

The Free One makes you free : be slaves to none,
 Priest, prince, or self, in body or in soul ;
 Serve thou with all thy strength thy God alone,
 Yield but to His control.

The True One gives you truth : a heritage
 Richer than that which kings may buy or sell,
 For children's children to the farthest age ;
 Guard thou that treasure well.

Israel and the Church.

III.—ISRAEL'S RELATION TO GOD.

WM. HOSTE, B.A., BRIGHTON.

WE now come to the consideration of some of the principal differences between God's earthly people—Israel, and God's heavenly people—the Church. These differences we will consider under the following heads:—

1. The character of their Relationship : (a) to God, (b) to the world, (c) to one another.

2. The character of their Calling : as regards (a) the blessing attached to it, (b) the place of its enjoyment, (c) the conditions of that enjoyment.

3. The character of their Worship : (a) by whom offered, (b) where offered, (c) what is offered, (d) when offered.

4. The character of their Conduct : (a) as to the principles governing it, (b) in reference to their dealings with their enemies, (c) in matters of food, clothing, etc..

5. The character of their Relationship to Christ : (1) in His atoning work, (2) in His present offices, (3) as regards their future hope.

We will first see what held good with Israel, then what is true now of the Church, and what is the prevalent practice in the professing churches of Christendom. First then, Israel differs from the Church, in

(a) *The Character of their Relation to God.* An Israelite stood in a twofold relation to God. As a creature of God he was responsible to Him, in common with

every other man. for the measure of light possessed. His privileges were greater. To them, "pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises ; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever" (Rom. ix. 4, 5). They had also the chief advantage that "unto them were committed the oracles of God" (Rom. iii. 2). Thus, too, they had great responsibilities, for "unto whom much is given, of him shall much be required" (Luke xii. 48). I am not referring now to their natural responsibility to keep the law taken on their own shoulders at Sinai, when they announced thrice with one voice, "All that the Lord commandeth us we will do" (Exod. xix. 8 ; xxiv. 3, 7) ; but of their responsibility as individuals to humble themselves before God and know His mercy and forgiveness. In this sense we must understand the words of the apostle, "He is not a Jew which is one outwardly . . . but he is a Jew which is one inwardly . . . whose praise is not of men but of God" (Rom. ii. 28, 29). There was an inner circle among the people of Israel. Not all had been touched by the grace of God. Not all had made a covenant with Him by sacrifice (Psa. l. 5), nor received a new nature. Those who had, were the true Israelites, who knew God and were known of Him. Such were the men of faith, of whom we read that "they did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord." To all such, eternal blessing was secured, not by works but by grace, not by "the blood of beasts"

on Jewish altars slain, but by that richer blood which was to flow at Calvary from the Lamb of God "without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. i. 19). This, however, is not the sense in which the word "Israel" is used in these papers. Nor is the first relation that with which I deal here, but of a second and quite distinct relationship: that of men in the flesh, units in the earthly people of God. That this relationship did not depend on spiritual change or moral conformity to the will of God is clear, from the fact that entrance into this privileged circle, and to the enjoyment of the citizen rights of the people of Israel, was in virtue of natural birth, followed eight days later, in the case of male children, by the rite of circumcision as a sign of the covenant. Entrance into the Israelitish fold did not carry with it necessarily any promise of eternal blessing, but it did entail a right and obligation to share in the privileges and responsibilities of the chosen people, through whom the name and glory of Jehovah were to be manifested on the earth, if they obeyed His commandments. "All people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the Name of the Lord" (Deut. xxviii. 9, 10). All Israel, as a people, were sheltered by the blood, all passed through the Sea, all partook of the manna, all drank of the spiritual Rock that followed them (1 Cor. x. 1, 4). Every Israelite who was ceremonially clean could partake of the feasts of the Lord. A Moses or a Korah, a David or a Saul, a John or a Judas, if not defiled, could eat the passover; nay, he was to be "cut off from among his people" if he did

not partake (see Num. ix. 1-14). In the period between the Exodus and the giving of the law at Sinai, Jehovah dealt with His people in pure grace, and did not once punish their murmurings and iniquities (Exod. xv. 24; xvi. 2, 12; xx. 27), but after the law was given, flagrant transgression, such as the spiritual corruption of the golden calf (Exod. xxxiii. 35), the moral corruption of Baal-peor (Num. xxv. 9), and the refusal to enter the land (Num. xiv. 35), were all severely dealt with. The fact, however, in connection with this last named sin, that only two of the men of war who came out of Egypt entered the land, in no way necessarily affects the question of the eternal blessing of those who failed to do so, for these included Moses, Aaron, Miriam, and many others doubtless in the "inner circle" of faith, to whom future blessing was reserved by grace. Nor, of course, should the fact that "they perished in the wilderness" be taken as teaching that true Christians can be finally lost, though they too may fail to please God and come short through unbelief of much that God has prepared for them. To sum up, we see that relationship to God in the case of a member of the house of Israel, was by natural birth, and that circumcision was the outward sign of it.

The Discipline of the Lord.

FAR too well the Saviour loves thee,
 To allow thy life to be
 One long calm, unbroken summer,
 One unruffled, stormless sea.
 He would by His dealings draw thee
 Closer to His wounded side,
 Wean thee from the world to nestle
 On His bosom, satisfied.

Faith.

III.—ITS CHARACTERISTICS: CONTINUED.

DR. J. NORMAN CASE, CHINA.

Scriptural faith *works by love*. Even as the apostle writes: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith working through love" (Gal. v. 6). Love in action is the means by which a living faith manifests itself. "Shew me thy faith apart from works," James writes, "and I by my works will shew thee my faith" (Jas. ii. 18). But that cannot be. For faith can only prove its reality by works wrought through love. Faith is the root, love is the fruit. The genuine fruit is only found where there is the living root; and there, early or late, it will always be seen. The continued absence of the fruit, proves that the root is awanting. It is a loss of time to enquire whether faith is greater than love, or love more important than faith. Independent of saving faith, Christian love does not exist. Without love, that which passes for faith is a counterfeit. "What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he have faith, but have not works? Can THAT faith save him?" (Jas. ii. 14, R.V.). Nay, verily, it cannot. It should never be forgotten that it was the great apostle of faith who, guided by the Holy Spirit, wrote that splendid eulogy of love contained in 1 Cor. xiii. Yes, the faith of God's elect is a living and energetic principle; *inwardly* it purifies the heart, *outwardly* it works through love.

5. Christian faith leads to habitual *victory over the world*. For again it is written, "Whatsoever is born of God

overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John v. 4). Notice, that so essential a part does faith play in the Christian's victory over the world, that what he does, by the power of Christ and the Holy Spirit, faith is said to do. And, as the original shews, those begotten of God *habitually* overcome the world and its prince. Further, the final victory for all is so assured, that it is looked upon as already gained: "This is the victory that *hath* overcome the world" (R.V.). The world, in its evil sense, is that system of life which leads a man to ignore the claims of God and of his fellow-men. The gratification of self, the fulfilling of the desires of the flesh and of the mind; in these are found the fount and motive of all the actions of the unregenerate man. To God's searching question, "Where is Abel thy brother?" Cain, the first and typical worldling, insolently and selfishly replied, "I know not; am I my brother's keeper?" Such are all those who are animated by the spirit of the world. But the spirit of true Christianity is the very antithesis of this "spirit of the world." It is only happy as the man dies to self and lives for the glory of God and the good of others. Let us, then, seek grace that we may be enabled to shew in our lives, that we have a living and genuine faith; a faith that purifies the heart, works through love, and overcomes the world.

GOD ALL-SUFFICIENT.—There is no difficulty in our path over which the guidance of God is not sufficient to take us. Nor is there any service to which God has called us, for the good of others, in which we may not expect the all-sufficient power of the Holy Ghost.—Geo. Müller.

On Public Prayer.

AFFECTIONATELY ADDRESSED TO ALL
WHO TAKE PART IN PRAYER MEETINGS.

SECOND PAPER.

IN addressing the Father or the Son (there is no example given us of prayer to the Holy Spirit), the fewer adjectives we use the better. If any are used, let Scripture be our guide. We never find therein such expressions as "Loving Father," or "Dear Lord." In the New Testament, in addressing the Father, the most frequent title is simply "Our God and Father," and in addressing the Son—"Lord Jesus" (Acts vii. 59; Rev. xxii. 20) or simply "Lord" (Acts ix. 13; x. 14; xxii. 19). And in the great Model Prayer, the Person addressed is named but once (Matt. vi. 9).

Let us seek earnestness and fervency in our prayers. What fervour marks the prayers recorded in Scripture! What conscious dealing with God! What refusing to be denied! How Jacob prayed, and would not let the angel go, until he blessed him. These things characterised Elijah's wondrous prayers—a man, nevertheless, "subject to like passions" with ourselves. The prayers of David, of Hezekiah, of Daniel, and his fellows, and of many others, were such as would admit of no denial. Of our blessed Lord Himself, we read, that "He offered up strong crying and tears," and that, "being in agony, He prayed the more earnestly." Paul speaks of his "great conflict," and makes honourable mention of Epaphras, who "always laboured fervently in prayers."

Let thanksgiving never be absent from our prayers. The offering of praise specially glorifies God, and nothing so tends to strengthen our confidence in God for the bestowment of future blessings, as the thankful remembrance and acknowledgment of His past goodness towards us. The climax of human sinfulness seems reached in the solemn charge against mankind in Rom. i. 21, "neither were thankful." Thanksgiving for ourselves and others, is over and over again enjoined on us (see Col. i. 12; Phil. iv. 6; Eph. v. 20; 1 Tim. ii. 1; Heb. xiii. 15); yet, alas! how constant is our shortcoming in this respect.

In conclusion let me say: If you wish to edify your fellow-Christians in prayer, seek an intelligent, Scriptural view of the wants of saints generally. (See Eph. i. 17-20; iii. 16:19; vi. 16-20; Col. ii. 1, 2; etc.). Consider the special necessities of your times, both in the Church and in the world. Ponder the condition of human life, not only as you yourself have seen and heard, but as God has described it in his Word. Let your heart be filled with the persuasion of the value and importance of the blessings you would ask; with the assurance of God's readiness to "give liberally and upbraid not;" and of the glorious intercession of our Great High Priest before the throne, who has said to us, "If ye shall ask anything, *in My Name*, I will do it." Alas! how often do our words exceed the reality of our desires. We should be utterly astonished, if God were to take us at our word, and fulfil our petitions to the letter. And should we not ever bear in mind that it is

God alone who, by His Holy Spirit, can put the right desires into our hearts, and suitable words into our lips ?

Be not, my brethren, discouraged from prayer by any consciousness of your past failures ; nor, if your own heart bear witness to the truth of anything that has been advanced herein. Such a result of your reading this brief paper I would earnestly deprecate. Rather, I beseech you, seek more earnestly, constantly, and confidently than ever, the promised and all-sufficient aid of the Holy Spirit, who waits in condescending grace to teach us "how to pray, and what to pray for."

And may God our Father, who has endowed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, and whose desire concerning us is, that we might know the things which have been freely given us in Him, lead His people throughout the world to trust in Him at all times ; and to pour out their heart before Him. "God is a refuge for us" (Psa. lxii. 8).*

Diversity, Yet Harmony.

THERE is ample scope among the people of God for all the ministries which the living Lord has given for the edification of His church on earth, and all are needed for spiritual health and godly edifying. There ought, therefore, to be an open door in all assemblies of saints for accredited ministers of the Word, who are sound in the faith, and who own and teach the whole counsel of God, walking in the "ways that be in Christ" (I Cor.

*The above valuable paper in its complete form, has by request been issued as a Booklet for distribution among the Lord's people. It should have a wide circulation. 3d per doz., 2s per 100.

iv. 17). No company of God's people, continuously fed on one man's ministry, or taught only in one particular line of things, can be aught but one-sided, liable to overestimate the importance of certain truths to the neglect of others, weak in all of the Word that they do not hear, and that does not exercise their hearts and consciences. Hence the wisdom of welcoming all that the Lord has given, in true, wholesome and spiritual ministry. There will be diversity ; one man's line being different from another's, but there will be no discord. Like the parts in music there will be varied sounds, yet perfect harmony, if all are teaching under the one Spirit's guidance and from the one Book. The tendency in some minds is, to regard everything with suspicion, and give those who bring it the cold shoulder, that does not proceed exactly along the lines in which their ministry lies. But this is generally the result of being unable to see that God has set in the church diversity of ministries, all of which, when spiritual in tone and sound in doctrine, are needed for the edification of the saints, whose needs are as varied as their faces. There is therefore need, and there ought to be room for all efficient ministry that God has given for the edification of His people in these last days.

One with Christ.

I AM to Christ united, by life's almighty tie,
To share with His glory, His love, and home
on high.
So livingly united, in body, flesh, and bone,
That what to Him belongeth, by grace He makes
my own.

Discord causing Division.

DIVERSITY in gift without discord in doctrine: all God's truth taught and received in grace and in due proportion, leads to godly harmony, true unity of mind and of testimony. Very different is the result, when men bring in doctrines which are not found in the Word, or speak "perverse" or "distorted things to draw away disciples after them" (Acts xx. 30). It is by no means uncommon in these times of self-will and slackness in dealing with it, to find men who have never been conspicuous in their evangelization of unknown fields, or in founding assemblies as the result of their labours, who find the way into companies which have been gathered through the toil of others, with the object of introducing revolutionary doctrines to cause discord and raise contention, caring nothing for the spiritual welfare of the saints or their unbroken testimony before the world, if only they gain a footing, create a faction, and form a circle in their own particular line of things. That there are such men, and that they gain access to assemblies of God's people, doing the devil's work, and leaving a heritage of trouble behind them wherever they go, is well enough known. Hence the need of care, receiving only as preachers and teachers, such as are well known and commended by those who have ability to discern. And in days of departure from God and the surrender of truths once acknowledged and taught, it is no guarantee that one who was accepted as a teacher in years past, is either sound in

faith or spiritual in condition to-day. Some of the worst discord sowers and division makers are men who, in earlier and better times, were advocates and teachers of much that they now oppose and deny. Not past reputation, but present soundness in the faith with right moral and spiritual state, as manifested in the results of his ministry, are the true marks of "a good minister of Jesus Christ" (1 Tim. iv. 6).

The Whole Counsel of God.

THE whole revelation of God, all that He has given in the Word, is to be the breadth and scope of the Christian's creed. Nothing excluded that is found there, nothing included outside the Book. "Believing all things which are written" alone preserves from sectarian bigotry on the one hand, which occupies itself with a part, and popular latitudinarianism on the other—the People's Church, which includes everything, the creedless, faithless crowd leading on to infidelity. And having learned the will of the Lord, our business is to obey it, loyally and unhesitatingly. It matters not whether others do or not, the Lord Himself will deal with them: ours is to obey, "all things" too, the least as well as the greatest, that which is unpopular and reckoned of no importance, as well as the rest. Then we are cast upon God for strength and all else we need, and we may count on His faithfulness in doing and giving all that He has promised to those who seek in subjection to the will of the Lord to do "all things whatsoever" He has commanded (Matt. xxviii. 20).

The Bible Annotator.

OUTLINES OF BIBLE READINGS.

FOUR ASPECTS OF CHRIST'S WORK

In Romans viii. 34.

- "It is Christ that died"—Our Substitute.
- "That is Risen again"—Our Life.
- "At the Right Hand of God"—Our Representative.
- "Who maketh Intercession"—Our Preserver.

THREE OPERATIONS OF THE SPIRIT

In I Peter, chapter i.

- SANCTIFYING (setting apart) unto salvation (v. 2).
- TESTIFYING to (pointing unto, R.V.) the work of Christ (v. 11).

- REGENERATING through the Word of God (v. 22, 23).

THE THREEFOLD PARABLE IN LUKE XV.

- The Recovery of the Wanderer (ver. 5)—Work of the Son.

- The Restoration of the Lost (ver. 9)—Work of the Spirit.

- The Reception of the Unworthy (ver. 20)—Work of the Father.

THINGS WHICH CHRISTIANS ARE TO "LAY ASIDE."

- Lay aside every Weight (Heb. xii. 1).
- Lay aside all Filthiness (James i. 21).
- Lay aside all Malice (I Pet. ii. 1).

The word, *apothithemai*, is the same in each of the three Scriptures, and is elsewhere translated "cast off" (Rom. xiii. 12), "put away" (Eph. v. 24), "put off" (Col. iii. 8), which makes its meaning plain.

Notes on Controverted Texts

Isalah xxxviii. 12.—"From day even to night wilt Thou make an end of me." These are part of Hezekiah's words to God during his sickness, which he expected would end in death. They do not teach annihilation, or view the after death condition at all, but refer to the end of his life among men on earth. Old Testament saints had not the fuller glow of light given in the New Testament as to the intermediate state between death and resurrection, hence their apprehensions and fears. But they were infinitely better off than those who now hold "Soul sleep" and extinction of being.

Psa. civ. 35.—"Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more." These words apply to the extirpation of the wicked "out of the earth" when the Lord purifies it for millennial blessing. Man's final doom is not here in view. It is not annihilation, for the resurrection

of judgment will succeed this being "consumed." "Be no more" is limited to the life on earth. It is not extinction, as some assert. Of Enoch it is said that he "was not." Would they say this was his extinction? God says it was his "translation," and that he did not "see death," which is something quite different.

Revelation xx. 14.—"And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire." This is interpreted by some to mean their end and abolition. But the Scriptures teach the opposite. In ver. 13, "death and hades" are said to deliver up what they respectively hold, the soul from hades, the body from death, and thus reunited the man stands before the Judge (John v. 29) to receive the final sentence. Then it is that the words come in—"death and hades were cast into the lake of fire"—that is those who dwelt in them, body and soul, for not one of this awful throng of "the unjust" (Acts xxiv. 15), who have been brought to "the resurrection of judgment" (John v. 29, R.V.) will escape that awful doom. And the lake of fire is not extinction but separation, final and for ever, from God.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Are the last nine verses, 11 to 20, of Mark xvi., as given in the Authorised Version, to be received as the inspired Word of God, and as a part of the second Gospel? They are rejected by many, and I am anxious to know what authority there is for rejecting them? The margin of the R.V. tells us that "the oldest Greek manuscripts omit" them, and this is about all the information you can get for their rejection. Tregelles, Burgon, Kelly, Newberry, and many others, who have carefully examined the textual criticism on these verses, receive them fully as part of the inspired Word. Wm. Kelly says concerning them, "I am not aware that in all the second Gospel there is a section more characteristic of the evangelist than the very one that man's temerity has not feared to seize upon, endeavouring to root it from the soil where God planted it. They shall never be rooted up, let human learning, great or small, say what it will" (Introductory Lectures to the Gospels). "The positive external proofs and the internal prove not only that it is inspired Scripture, but from none other than Mark himself" (B.T. vol. xiii. p. 302). We suspect the enemy of the Inspired Word wanted to get rid of these momentous verses, and therefore raised a controversy regarding them.

Answers to Correspondents.

J. M., GREENOCK.—Your popular preacher, who finds in Heb. ii. 13, 14, the doctrine of "the Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Jesus," whereby the whole human race is said to be elevated, has evidently either not read the passage, or if so, he has read his own theory into it. It is not said that "the human race" was taken hold of, but "the seed of Abraham" (ver. 16, R.V.). And as Dean Alford well says, "We must not here understand MANKIND, as some have done" (see Gal. iii. 29).

E. C., LUDLOW.—The condition of the departed saints, as absent from the body and at home with the Lord, is not that of activity or service—although much of our popular hymnology puts such words into our lips—but of rest and expectancy. To speak of disembodied spirits as having entered upon "the activities of higher service above" is pleasing sentiment, not Scripture. And where God is silent we need not speculate. Moreover, such speculation is the most formidable weapon that can be put into the hands of Annihilationists and others wherewith to waylay the simple and deceive the unwary.

A. L., BAYSWATER.—Subjection to elder and experienced Christians, on the part of younger ones, is comely and according to the Word (1 Pet. v. 5), but when it involves insubjection to the Lord and disobedience to His Word, it is wrong. The young prophet from Judah was misled from the path of subjection to the Word of the Lord, by listening to the counsel of an old prophet who dwelt at Bethel (see Kings xiii.). If those who assume leadership in the church are right with God, their counsel is invaluable; but if they have departed from the Lord in heart, and let slip His Word they are a common source of danger to all who come under their influence.

Answers to Special Questions.

III.—What is the teaching of the parable of the Mustard Seed (Matt. xiii. 31-32)?

ANSWER A.—Like the growth from a tiny seed, into a great tree, the kingdom of heaven, in its outward aspect, is here set forth, affording support and protection to all classes, even the emissaries of Satan. There is nothing to be inferred here of its spiritual power, or the growth of that which is the work of God, such as in Acts xi. 21. It is Christendom in its present aspect as man sees it (see also Dan. iv. 12).

A. S.

ANSWER B.—The term, "kingdom of heaven," found only in Matthew's Gospel, points to the coming kingdom, when the heavens shall manifestly rule. The seed is the children of the kingdom, the remnant saved out of the great tribulation, the nucleus of that kingdom. Beginning small, it grows, filling the whole earth (Psa. lxxii.; Zech. ix. 10), bringing all creation under its shelter and blessing (Ezek. xvii. 20, 24), and all take part in the hallelujah chorus of Psa. cxlviii.

J. B.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—The answers as given above, express the two chief interpretations given of this parable, the former assuming a present, the latter a future application. That the "kingdom" in its future aspect, under the rule of its rightful King, will fill the whole earth (Dan. iii. 35), and that it will bring forth "boughs like a goodly cedar," and give a dwelling in its shadow to "fowls of every wing" (Ezek. xvii. 23), is clearly taught. But, alike from the place in the chain of seven that this third parable holds, and the teaching of those that precede and follow it, a present rather than a future growth is what is here set forth. That which claims to be ruled by the Lord, and bears His Name on earth, began small and insignificant. And those who composed it at first are likened to wheat, which, as it ripens for the garner, dies to earth. But when Christianity became incorporated with the Roman world, which in Constantine's day it was, then the symbol of a worldly kingdom (Ezek. xxxi. 3, 9), with its roots striking deeper into the earth as it extended, deriving its sap from "the multitude of waters," is used to describe the character and means of its growth. When nominal Christianity lost its heavenly character, and became a great world system, "the fowls of the air," which stole the seed, and are described by the Lord as the agents of the devil (Luke viii. 12), cease to oppose, and now find their shelter in its branches. That godless men are found, many of them in high places too, deriving huge revenues and honours from their connection with this worldly politic-religious system, the great tree of Church and State, is well enough known. And to these "roosts" they are appointed—not by the living Lord, the Head of His Church—but by the secular power.

IV.—Is the principle of ministry under the guidance of the Spirit, without prearrangement, applicable only to the assembly of believers on the Lord's Day for worship and shewing forth of the Lord's death? If at other times, what are they?

ANSWER A.—That section of the First Epistle

to the Corinthians, beginning with chap. xi. and ending with chap. xiv., is characterised by such words as "when ye come together" (chap. xi. 20, 34), "in the church" (chap. xiv. 19), "the whole church come together in one place" (ver. 23), which clearly indicate that the assembly of believers who are known to each other, and are in the habit of thus coming together for the observance of the Lord's Supper, worship, prayer, and mutual edification is in view. We know of no reason why, when believers come together to pray, study the Scriptures, and speak to one another for edification, the guidance of the Spirit should not be counted on and enjoyed as in the gathering for remembrance and showing forth of the Lord's death. There seems to be a gradual slipping away from this Divine principle on all occasions save one, and in some places even this is only in name, for the same persons preach and pray and keep the wheels going all the year round, with about as much room for the Spirit's guidance as where one man does all. There is need of Scriptural teaching on these matters in most assemblies.

W. J.

ANSWER B.—Thirty years ago, when I was being led out gradually from sects, to gather simply in the Lord's Name, I was greatly struck at the Conferences I attended, by the absence of a chairman, and on the manifest dependence on the Spirit to give the right word through such as were gifted and fitted to edify those assembled. There was no irregularity, but harmony in what was said, and many were attracted by the manner as well as helped by the matter of the ministry. I do not find the same power with the Word, or the adaptation of the message to our present spiritual need at many present day Conferences, where the speakers are appointed and a chairman more or less controls them. It seems to me a departure from the Scriptural pattern, and a return to the devices of the religious world.

G. S.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—There are various principles of ministry recognised and provided for in the Word, among which may be noted the following:—1. There is *Individual* ministry. The man who has received the gift uses it, in direct responsibility to the Lord (Eph. iv. 11); he who has received his ministry "in the Lord" fulfils it (Col. iv. 17). 2. There is a *Fellowship* in ministry. Two are yoke-fellows (Phil. iv. 3), as Paul and Barnabas, set apart and united by the Holy Spirit to be co-labourers (Acts xiii. 2, 3). When they preach (ver. 44), or teach (xiv. 22), or gather the church together to

hear what they have to say (xiv. 27), they must be responsible for the conduct of such gatherings, they are "their meetings," as we say. On the same principle individual servants of the Lord may invite believers to come and hear the Word, sometimes two or more taking part. In the latter case, the order of their ministry would be a matter of fellowship among themselves, under the Lord's guidance. 3. When an assembly, or a number of assemblies, mutually arrange a meeting or a series of meetings for ministry of the Word, they may either (a) invite certain whose ministry they consider would be likely to meet their present need, or (b) simply intimate their meetings, and give a general invitation to all God-sent men. Under the first principle, those coming to minister would primarily be responsible for the order of the meetings; under the second, those inviting would require to be, and also prepared to hinder or suppress any intrusive or unedifying attempts at ministry, for there can be no real liberty apart from godly rule to conserve it. It must be a matter for those immediately concerned to decide, which of these principles will best meet the need, but it will not do to convene a meeting under one, and then in practice work out another. This is where confusion often comes in. We have known prayer to be made for guidance in speaking the Word, as if it were a matter of mutual dependence upon God, who among the ministering brethren on the platform should speak, and in what order, when, as a matter of fact, it was all arranged beforehand. A chairman, calling on certain speakers in rotation to minister, may secure immunity from disorder, but as many know, it does not ensure either fresh, seasonable or edifying ministry, often the reverse. There are occasions, at least, when saints assemble to hear the Word, and when known and trusted ministering brethren are among them to do it, when they may safely look to the living Lord to give the right word at the proper time, for the present need of those assembled, and when this is done in a godly way, there will be no disappointment.

Questions Requiring Answers.

V.—Is it for the benefit of a Gospel meeting, say on a Lord's Day evening, in the hall where Christians assemble for worship, that they form the greater part of the audience. Should they be there listening to the Gospel night after night, or out in the world spreading it abroad or bringing in others?

To Every Man His Work.

IN the parable of the absent Householder, whose house and servants were left while he sojourned in the distant land, it is said that he gave to "Every man his work" (Mark xiii. 34). In the record of the early dispersion of "the Church which was in Jerusalem" (Acts viii. 2) it is said that "they that were scattered abroad went about preaching the Word" (verse 4, R.V.), and this was the whole company "except the apostles"—that is, the rank and file of the saints were the Gospellers, rather than those who received the original commission (Acts i. 8) to be witnesses for Christ unto "the uttermost parts of the earth."

In the great charter of Christian ministry in Eph. iv. 11, 12, the gifts given by the ascended Lord have, we are expressly told, as their object "the perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministering" (R.V.); in other words, they were not intended to monopolise the work of preaching and teaching in themselves, but rather to equip and furnish the whole company of the saints who share their ministry, for the work of service, in all the various spheres to which they are called, and for which they are fitted, all co-operating in the grand and glorious work of "the building up of the body of Christ" (verse 12). Some going out with the Gospel to sinners in near and distant lands, proclaiming the good news, seeking conversions, and bringing in new members, others by ministry of the Word strengthening, and cherishing the spiritual life in those who are already the Lord's.

Such is the purpose and pattern of service as set forth in the Word; but, alas! for its realization in the practice of the saints and servants of God. "The ministry," as it popularly exists, seeks rather to absorb in itself all functions, rather than to encourage others to use their talents and exercise their gifts in subjection to the Lord and under the guidance of the Spirit. But this is not the will of the Lord, as all who are guided by His Word must know. Then why should that which is opposing God and hindering His work have place in the recognition and practice of His people? The blessing of the Lord comes and abides upon those who, knowing the will of the Lord, seek grace to do it, and turn their backs upon every false way. It is no "charity," no "grace," to uphold or to practise man's traditions which hinder the exercise of God-given gifts and bring true workers in bondage. Let the will of the Lord be known and done. Let the truth be sounded forth and freshly apprehended by the people of God, that the Master has given "to every man his work," that each has his appointed service given by the Lord, and that without waiting for human authority, it is the business of each to be "always abounding in the work" for which the Lord has fitted them. Then there will be no lack of true labourers and workers. And let those who possess the greater gifts see that they do not crush out or hinder the exercise of those "feebler members," who are both necessary and profitable and who may through healthy exercise become valued servants of Christ, in the Church and in the world.

Baptism for the Remission of Sins.

THE BAPTISM OF JOHN: WHAT WAS IT?

W. J. M'CLURE, CALIFORNIA.

LET us read Matthew iii. 1, 2 "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judæa, and saying, Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Then in x. 5 and 6, "Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptised of him in Jordan confessing their sins." Turn next to Luke iii. 3—"And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance, unto the remission of sins" (R.V.). Here John's baptism is called "the baptism of *repentance*." (The word rendered "repentance" means a change of mind, or "to have another mind.") I desire to point out from God's Word how forgiveness of sins was connected with John's baptism, and how that baptism differs from the baptism of believers in this present dispensation, in which it always follows the forgiveness of sins.

In order to understand John's baptism aright, we must go back to Exodus, chap. xix. In that chapter God tells Israel what He had done for His people Israel: how He had brought them "unto Himself." Up till then, all had been done for them upon the ground of grace: nothing was contingent upon their obedience. It was well that it was so. But this chapter tells how willingly they put themselves on a different ground of blessing. In

verse 5, God says, "If ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me," etc. Had Israel known themselves, they would have prayed that God might continue to deal with them in grace, as He had up till then been dealing with them. But they answer: "All that the Lord hath spoken, we will do" (verse 8). Again, in chapter xxiv. 7: "All that the Lord hath said, we will do, and be obedient." How was this vow fulfilled? Before Moses returned from the Mount with the Law, they are found dancing around the Golden Calf. This, and all their aftercourse, only proves how impossible it was to maintain the ground they took up so quickly. After all the centuries of testing, which only serves to expose their failure, the forerunner, John, comes. His "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," tells of blessing on a surer basis than the creature's obedience. But they must give up their chosen ground. So his baptism was a confession that they were taking the place of the guilty, accepting the sentence of God against themselves, by those who submitted to it. How suited to such a baptism was Jordan, the "River of Judgment." As they went into the waters of that river, confessing their sins, the sin of breaking God's holy law, which they had undertaken to keep, it was as if they said, "O God, just as the waters of Jordan flow over us, so Thy wrath ought to overwhelm us, for we have sinned." Luke vii. 29, 30, fully confirms this: "And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being bap-

tized with the baptism of John"; that is, they justified God as the criminal does the Judge, when he owns that the sentence is just.

See who refused to do this. "But the *Pharisees* and *lawyers* rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptised of him." They perceived its meaning, but nothing was further from their hearts than to own that *they* were lawbreakers, and deserved only judgment. And like many now, who will not take the place where God can bless them, the place of the guilty and the lost, they rejected God's counsels of mercy. There was no "change of mind," no abandonment of the legal ground they had taken up at Sinai. So grace could not reach them.

Why, it may be asked, was the Lord baptised with the baptism of John?—He, the Sinless One, who was so soon to go under the waters of Judgment for the sins of others. His baptism pictures that. As in that baptism in Jordan we see the waters close over Him, we behold in type what we read in prophecy: "All Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over Me" (Psa. xlii. 7). And as He comes up out of that river, the heavens open, and the Father's voice testifies to His joy in His beloved Son. And the gift of the Spirit adds the glory of resurrection to that picture of death and judgment.

THE BAPTISM OF THE JEWS ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST.

In Acts ii. 38, Peter preaches to the Jewish people: "Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the Name of

Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Two things strike one in reading this passage—the resemblance it bears to John's baptism, and the contrast it presents to baptism as taught by Paul. It was the message of God for the Jew then, but its frequent use now by some, only serves to deceive souls. And this is Satan's object in using truth out of its proper dispensation. Israel was then publicly owned of God as still in covenant relationship with Himself. Although they had rejected their King, nailed Him to the tree as a blasphemer, God, in His governmental dealings with them, will make them own that rejected One in baptism ere they enter into the blessings His death has procured for them. Here all is in striking contrast to what we read of the first preaching of the Gospel to

THE GENTILES,

as we learn by comparing Acts ii. 38, 41, with Acts x. 44. Cornelius and his friends receive the Holy Ghost while Peter is still speaking, and in verse 47 this is given as their title to baptism, whereas in ii. 38, the Jew could not get the Holy Ghost until he was baptised. Again, in chap. xvi. 30, the Gentile jailor asks a question very similar to that of the Jews in chap. ii. 37, but the answer is entirely different. Nothing is said about baptism, but after he and his household had believed, they rejoiced to obey the Lord in being baptised. To connect the forgiveness of sins in any manner or measure with baptism now, is to obscure the Gospel of Christ and fail to enter into

the true meaning of Christian baptism as set forth in the Word.

PAUL WASHING AWAY HIS SINS IN BAPTISM.

In Acts xxii. 16, we read—"And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptised and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." This verse has been used to prove that forgiveness of sins is connected with baptism. The allusion is to Deut. xxi. 1, 9. The elders of the city next unto the slain man, washed their hands over the heifer that was killed in sacrifice, and said, "Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it," etc. The slain man here speaks of Christ, as cast out and slain by the people of Israel. Paul, by baptism in the Name of that rejected One, figuratively washes his hands of that awful sin. Pilate tried to do this, but for him it was a vain show (Matt. xxvii. 24), while at the same time the Jews accepted the dreadful responsibility of Christ's death, in the words, "His blood be on us and on our children." Paul here does what his fellow countrymen did on the day of Pentecost, when Peter said, "*save yourselves* from this untoward generation" (Acts ii. 40), and they were "baptised in the Name of Jesus Christ," thus in a very solemn way dissociating themselves from the nation's guilt, as if they repeated Pilate's act, but to real purpose.

The blood of Christ alone could put away sin from before God. It alone can purge the sinner's conscience, then or now, as the blood of the heifer met the claims of God in regard to the sin of murder. This

aspect of baptism was peculiar to the Jew.

SAVED BY BAPTISM

In 1 Pet. iii. 21—"The like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (R.V.). The point here is, that the Ark in the deluge, and baptism are corresponding figures. In verse 20, we read, "Wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water." It was exposed to the deluge, and it bore safely to the top of Mount Ararat all who were in it. In Luke xii. 50, the Lord, speaking of the cross, says: "I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished." When He went through the judgment of God for sin, all who believe passed through it with Him, and in His resurrection they are now beyond judgment. It is *His* baptism on the cross which saves; water baptism, in which the believer owns the Lordship of Christ, is but the shadow of what Christ passed through for him. And it is the "request" (not answer) of a "good conscience," which only a saved one has—a conscience purged through the blood of Christ. "See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptised?" was the question of a newly saved sinner whose conscience was purged by the blood of Christ (Acts viii. 38), and but for the unscriptural teaching absorbed before their conversion, we believe the question of the Eunuch would be asked by almost all on accepting Christ as their Saviour, and baptism would follow conversion immediately now, as it did in the early days.

Israel and the Church.

IV.—THE CHURCH'S SPIRITUAL RELATIONS
WM. HOSTE, B.A., BRIGHTON.

RELATIONSHIP to God as a member of the Church, the body of Christ, depends on spiritual birth. In the Church, the difference between the individual and collective position does not exist. They are distinct, of course, but rest on the same foundation, and involve the same relation to God. I am not now dealing with the responsibilities involved in reception into the local assembly, but with the fact that the individual is saved by faith in Christ, and that the Church is composed of just such individuals. So also is the true local church. Those who go out from the latter, do not cease to be of her. They were *never* of her. "They went out from us, *but they were not of us* ; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us" (1 John ii. 19).

No provision is made in the Word of God for mere profession. Baptism is not a symbol of false but of true profession. I believe the theory of "the great house of Christendom" is an idea imported into 2 Tim. ii. 20, which is misleading. "*The great house*" is not spoken of, but "*a great house*" is, and that simply as I judge, as an illustration. Thus, in any great house, various kinds of vessels are found, some for honourable uses and some for dishonourable. If a man would be a vessel unto honour, let him purge himself from the evil speakings (ver. 14), preachings (ver. 16), teachings (ver. 18) of the previous verses. Every man is either a vessel of mercy or a vessel of wrath

(Rom. ix. 22, 23). Every Christian is either a "vessel unto honour" or a "vessel unto dishonour" in the sense of 2 Tim. ii. 20. Faith in God is in every dispensation, as seen in creation, revelation, and Christ, the entrance into blessing. "To as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become the children of God" (John i. 12 R.V.). "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved" (Mark xvi. 16). "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son, hath not life" (1 John v. 12). Everything depends on personal relation to Christ. Mere professors in religious systems may be as numerous as the stones that pave their religious buildings. They may have been born in what we wrongly speak of as "Christian countries," all duly christened, confirmed, and made communicants, but if not "born again" they are still as dead as those same "sacred" paving stones, and not one such has entered the true Church. None can enter there, except by faith in Christ and the new birth. Forgiveness of sins, justification by faith, life in Christ are all absolutely essential for the possession and enjoyment of true Christian privileges. There is no inner and outer circle in the true Church. If relation to God depended primarily for an Israelite on natural and national position, for a Christian it depends on spiritual and personal condition. Is it not abundantly clear, that the religious systems of Christendom are in this particular framed rather on the Jewish than on the Christian model? Entrance into the "Churches," if not exactly by birth, is usually confessedly by

the baptism of infants, whether under the form of what is known as "christening" or of that rite known as "household baptism," which professes to admit babes into a circle of privilege, which those who practise it call "the kingdom," or "the house of God." I am not aware of any Scripture which teaches that even the regenerate are admitted into "the house of God" by baptism. The creation of circles of privileges, inside of which unregenerate babes are entitled to a kind of "preferential treatment" over their less fortunate fellows, is a setting on one side of the great distinctive truth of the present dispensation, namely, the unqualified grace of God on equal terms to every creature who hears the Gospel. It is a most dangerous and pernicious heresy to deduce from the fact that, because babes dying before years of responsibility are, as we firmly believe, saved on the ground of the atonement of Christ, that therefore children of Christian parents are in some undefined way regenerated before they arrive at years of responsibility, and do not eventually need "conversion" like other children. It is true that all do not need conversion from a life of open sin, for all have not lived such a life, but all who will be saved need to be born of God, and to have the personal faith in Christ which produces conversion in a true sense. The responsibility of the parent is not to regenerate his child, but to bring it up in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord," to bring the truth of God to bear upon the conscience and present Christ as the Saviour of God's providing.

What is the result of this admission of

the unregenerate by baptism into the "professing churches?" Exactly the same as in the case of Israel—an outer circle, a mass of dead professors inextricably mixed up with a certain number of living saints—all treated in the same liturgical service, as "prodigal sons," "dearly beloved brethren," and "miserable sinners;" all exhorted to "work out" their salvation and "run the heavenly race." The parable of the tares and the wheat is quoted to justify this state of things, but it is evidently forgotten that the field therein mentioned is "the world," and not the church (Matt. xiii. 38). The apostle's words in 1 Cor. v. 12, teach us that there is a "within" and a "without," in the former of which, discipline and judgment ought to be exercised by the saints, while in the latter it ought to be left to God alone. "What have I to do to judge them also that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore, put away from among yourselves that wicked person." Do not then the words of God by the same apostle come with urgent force to believers in fellowship with all such systematic mingling of truth and error, of faith and unbelief, of the living and the dead? "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Cor. vi. 18). "Come out from among them and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you and will be a Father unto you." (2 Cor. vi. 17). "Follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Tim. ii. 22).

Faith.

IV.—ITS FUNCTIONS.

DR. J. NORMAN CASE, CHINA.

IN recent years, attempts have been made to distinguish between "believing the Gospel" and "trusting Christ," the latter being, it is said, an advance on the former. But for practical purposes this supposed distinction may be ignored. Indeed, I question if it can be supported from the Word. In the fourth Gospel the verb "to believe" is found more than a hundred times. Generally, there is a preposition used with it, as "believe in" or "believe on the Son of God." To believe on Christ is just to trust Him for salvation. There is one instance in this Gospel where the word in question is translated *trust*. Referring to some who in a certain way, on seeing His miracles, believed in Christ's name, it is written—"But Jesus did not *trust* Himself to them" (chapter ii. 24, R.V.). The Lord had no confidence in them as genuine disciples of His. Hence, to believe on Christ, is to commit oneself to Him, to trust Him. I have found that in dealing with those who have been brought up in a Gospel atmosphere, no word so often leads them into light and liberty as the word "trust," making plain to them the necessity of committing themselves to Christ alone for salvation. But we must now come to our subject proper, namely the Functions of Faith.

(1) Faith *saves*. When we say that a man is saved by faith, we only mean that faith is the instrumental cause of his salvation. It must not be supposed that

faith is the last and supreme virtue which merits pardon for the believing sinner. Men are saved *through*, not *for*, faith. The meritorious ground of man's salvation is in the finished work of Christ on Calvary. As to this fact, we cannot be too emphatic. Yet, on the other hand, men are saved instrumentally by faith. Apart from faith in Christ, there is no way of salvation. We here use the word "salvation" in its widest meaning—deliverance from the guilt and power of sin, and being made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Faith is the God-appointed means of bringing souls into the enjoyment of these unspeakable blessings. "To him that worketh not," declares the apostle, "but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 5).

The apostle Peter writes, "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls" (1 Pet. i. 9). The present end of faith, its crown and consummation, is the salvation of the soul. This blessing we receive here and now. The moment a sinner believes on Christ, he is a saved man. The end of *hope* is different from this, and is yet future. The end of the Christian's hope is the redemption of the body at the second coming of Christ. Faith's first great function, then, is to save.

(2) We *live* by faith. "That life which I now live in the flesh," explains the apostle, "I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself up for me" (Gal. ii. 20, R.V.). By faith in Christ, spiritual life is first received; by faith it is afterwards

maintained. Moment by moment we rest in Christ, and thus we continually live by faith. Moreover, it is faith in Him who died for our sins. "Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood," announced the Lord, "hath eternal life. . . . He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me" (John vi. 53,57). These words point to the habitual appropriation by faith of the benefits of His Cross and passion. And only as men do this, do they "live" in the highest sense of the word. All others are dead while they live.

The word "live" includes *walking, standing, fighting, working*; which things, in the Christian, are all by faith (2 Cor. i. 24; v. 9; Eph. vi. 16; 1 Thess. i. 3). But on these separately, we may not now enlarge. The great Divine principle that we live and walk by faith, not by sight, is a very important truth to apprehend. We believe in and have a Saviour whom we have not yet seen. We wait for and confidently expect a home beyond our present vision; and in all this we are upheld, not by outward appearances nor by inward feelings, but by faith. We walk by faith, not by sight or sense. Faith gives substance to things hoped for; it enables us to put to the test things not yet seen.

(3) We are *kept* by faith. The apostle Peter speaks of the saints of God—"Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet. i. 5). Here again, while God is the efficient cause of believers being kept for the inheritance, which is also kept for them, faith is the

instrumental means. Only as we put our trust in our living and Almighty Saviour shall we overcome the world, defeat the devil, and gain the victory over the flesh. Moment by moment must we look to Him to keep, as surely as at the first we looked to Him to save us. Faith is, as it were, the "live wire" which connects feeble men with the reservoir of God's infinite wisdom, grace, and power, so that to the end of the chapter, faith will play a necessary and important part in Christian life and conflict. How sustaining to the soul, then, to know that "All things that are within the compass of God's promises, are within the compass of faith" (R. C. Chapman).

(4) Through faith we have *access* to our God and Father. "In whom (Christ) we have boldness and access in confidence through faith in Him" (Eph. iii. 12). So is it written. In the case of Aaron, on the one day of the year that he dared to enter into the holy of holies, a number of rites and ceremonies had to be punctiliously carried out. In the case of a Minister approaching an earthly sovereign certain forms have to be observed; but in an approach into the Divine presence, the true holy of holies, all that is required on our part is an unfeigned faith. Our High Priest is now there for us, so that by Him as the Mediator and through faith as the means, we have access into God's very presence. The whole ground of Christian prayer is summed up in the words—"In Christ, by the Spirit, through faith, we have access unto the Father" (Eph. ii. 16, iii. 12). Apart from faith it is not possible: "For he that cometh to

God must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that seek after Him" (Heb. xi. 6). Faith makes unseen things real to the soul, so that we are conscious of the presence of the One to whom we draw near. To the end of life, yea, and beyond it, faith will be an essential element in our spiritual well-being. For it is written—"But now *abideth* faith, hope, love, these three." In view of these things, let us individually and collectively ever pray—"Lord, increase our faith."

Neglect of the Word.

THERE is not among Christians generally the love for and daily occupation with the Word of God that characterised the Lord's people a quarter of a century ago. And this neglect is doubtless the cause of much of that indifference and lethargy in spiritual things which godly ones mourn over. Neglect of daily occupation with the Word, leads to decay of spiritual life and laxity in walk and ways. While fierce temptation causes the fall of some, departure of heart from God and neglect of His Word bring many more to spiritual impotency. A sterile mind which through neglect of the truth has nothing to exercise it, is easily led into error, and this is sadly manifest in the numbers who are turning aside by every wind of doctrine and after every new system of error that presents itself. Saints cannot grow in grace or advance in spiritual strength if they cut off their supplies by neglecting the Word of God which testifies of Him who is Life and Lord of His people.

The Finished Work of the Son of God.

"It is Finished" (John xix. 30).

"It is Done" (Rev. xxi. 6).

ON the Cross the Saviour finished
All that God, His Father, willed,
Not a tittle was diminished
Of that law by Him fulfilled :
In His life more than obeyed it,
In His death its sentence bore,
Not a claim but what He paid it—
Now He lives for evermore.

In His resurrection glory
Still a work He carries on,
While on earth we tell the story
Of the work already done ;
Out of every land He's taking
Adam's sons, defiled by sin,
Fit for heavenly glory making—
Pure and white they enter in.

For their sake He's interceding,
As the "Advocate" doth plead ;
By the Holy Spirit leading,
Meeting all their desert need.
Soon He'll come, His Church completed,
All shall then be gathered home,
(Every foe at last defeated)—
From Him nevermore to roam.

Then God's Israel, long forsaken,
To their land brought back again,
Every earthly kingdom shaken,
Christ as "King of kings" shall reign.
Nothing of that work diminished
Which was purposed through the Son,
He who once said "It is finished,"
Shall at length say, "It is done."

J. M.

Aberdeen.

The Bible Annotator.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE STUDY.

SPRINGTIME IN THE SOUL.

Song of Sol. ii. 11-13.

- "Winter Past"—Old things passed away (2 Cor. v. 17).
- "Flowers Appear on the Earth"—New Life breaks forth (2 Cor. v. 15).
- "Singing of Birds"—The Believer's New Song of Salvation (Psa. xl. 3).
- "Voice of the Turtle"—Testimony in the Spirit (Acts xi. 24).
- "Fig Tree Green"—Revival, renewing, and refreshing (Jer. xvii. 8).
- "Vines with Grapes"—Spiritual Fruitfulness (John xv. 4).

SPIRITUAL LIFE.

- Christ, its Source (1 John v. 12).
- The Spirit, its Strength (Eph. iii. 10).
- The Word, its Supply (Matt. iv. 4).

CHRIST EXALTED IN HEAVEN.

As seen in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

- As Sin-Purger, His Work Done (Heb. x. 1, 3).
- As Victor, His Crown Won (Heb. ii. 9).
- As High Priest, His Order Eternal (Heb. vii. 20).
- As Leader of Faith, His Course Ended (Heb. xii. 2).

FOUR POINTS IN ABRAHAM'S FAITH.

As Reviewed in Hebrews chap. xi. 8-17.

- Abraham's Obedience of Faith (verse 8).
- Abraham's Endurance by Faith (Verse 9).
- Abraham's Outlook in Faith (Verse 10).
- Abraham's Trial of Faith (Verse 17).

The Young Believer's Question Box.

I have lost my joy in the Lord, and my service for His Name seems to have lost its motive and its power, I cannot charge myself with the cherished indulgence of any known sin, but there seems to be something at fault. I wonder if mine is a common experience? We fear it is, although not always so fully owned. Neglect of personal communion with the Lord, lack of prayer, and the reading of the Word for spiritual food and strength, grieving of the Spirit by some frivolity or harmful habit, some form of worldliness or self-indulgence, will soon reduce the spiritual temperature, sap the strength

for godly service, and take away the desire for it. The only remedy is, to get alone with God, and in the spirit of the Psalmist in Psa. cxxxix. 23, 24, lay yourself open to His searching, willing to honestly deal with whatever His light may discover to you as the cause of your spiritual decline. Very often such causes are found in unexpected places, and where nothing short of the action of the all discerning Word brought home in power to the heart and conscience will discover them. And a gradual slipping away in heart from God, through "the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. iii. 12, 13), is often more difficult to deal with and be recovered from, than a slip and a fall in outward steps. In any case, you may be assured that if you go to God honestly, with a true desire for restoration and renewal of spiritual freshness for service, confessing your sin and failure as He has seen and known it, you will *be restored and get your heart's desire fulfilled.*

Answers to Correspondents.

STUDENT.—"The Bible and the British Museum," a recent book by Ada R. Habershon, will give you much help on the subject you inquire about.

YOUNG BELIEVER.—The book entitled "Talks about Jesus," is unsound in doctrine and unwholesome in tone. Books like this are especially pernicious in their effects, because of the many "nice things" in them.

E. W., RYDE.—The baptism of Eph. iv. 5, is undoubtedly Christian baptism in water, and is intimately connected here as elsewhere with "one Lord" and "one faith." The baptism of the Spirit which forms the "one body" (see 1 Cor. xii. 13) is referred to in the previous verse.

R. S., TAUNTON.—The judgment seat of Christ, before which believers are to be made manifest (2 Cor. v. 10, R.V.), is not to determine their fitness for heaven, or their places in the Father's house (John xiv. 2), which is all of grace, but to receive the Lord's approval and reward for all in their course and service which has been well pleasing unto Him. That there will be no "judgment" of their persons John v. 24, R.V., puts beyond doubt, and that their sins and failures will not be remembered or recapitulated there, Heb. x. 17, makes equally clear. Yet what each receives, will be "according to that which he hath done," whether in reward or loss (1 Cor. iii. 14, 15).

W. D., ONTARIO.—When "differences of judgment" arise among the Lord's people, on matters

concerning which there is no "commandment of the Lord," and on which "liberty of conscience" is therefore allowed (see Rom. xiv. 4), there need be no difficulty in saints walking and acting together, provided there is the exercise of that diligence and forbearance to which the Word, in Eph. iv. 2-3, calls us. But when some arise to dispute the very foundations upon which the fellowship of saints and the constitution of the local assembly rest, it is idle to describe such conditions as mere "differences of judgment," and to prescribe silent forbearance, while the evil develops and the teaching that produces it is allowed to go unchallenged. The same claim for "breadth of thought" is loudly made by teachers of Soul-sleep, Annihilation, and other doctrines which imperil the foundations of the Gospel, some contending that there is "no Scripture" for expelling from the Christian assembly or excluding from public ministry on account of *doctrine at all, only for immoral practice*. Now we have the claim put forth with all authority, as if it were beyond dispute, that only teachers of "fundamental error" are to be refused the platform. But "fundamental" to what, we would ask? And who is to be the "central authority" of appeal as to what is and what is not "fundamental?" One includes "believer's baptism by immersion" in his list of "fundamentals," another tells us it is not a "church matter" at all, while a third claims that one may hold, practice, and preach infant sprinkling, believer's immersion, or household baptism by either mode, and go on in "happy fellowship." When men turn aside from God's Word to their own opinions and other men's traditions, they get into a "fog." The authority of God's truth ceases to control, and the reverence due to it as the unchangeable Word of the eternal God ever the same, no matter what man's failures may be, being gone, truth becomes the creature of man's "judgment." Soon the most flagrant distortions of and departures from the truth, are only so many "differences of judgment," all of which are to be recognised and room made for them, but no quarter given to any who would bring them all to be tested in open court by "Thus saith the Lord."

Answers to Special Questions.

V.—Is it for the benefit of a Gospel meeting, say on a Lord's Day evening, in the hall where Christians assemble for worship, that they form the

greater part of the audience? Should they be there listening to the Gospel night after night, or out in the world spreading it abroad or bringing in others?

ANSWER A.—Christians in a Gospel meeting are only a help to the preacher if they are in a prayerful spirit and healthy spiritual condition, holding up the speaker's hands, and praying for the power of the Spirit to go forth with the Word spoken. Coming merely to listen or to criticise, they are a hindrance rather than a help. G. S.

ANSWER B.—It is a too common experience that the Gospel preacher, on a Sunday evening, finds the greater part of his congregation professed believers or "regular attenders" who have continued to sit unconverted under the message it may be for years. It is a matter for humiliation before God that it should continue to be so. Either the preaching of the man on the platform, or the practising of the people who are associated with that Gospel testimony must be at fault, before it could sink into such a condition of impotency. Possibly no effort is made to bring in "raw material," not even a decent invitation given to let the people know they will be made welcome if they come. Or it may be, a considerable number of those who were there as worshippers in the morning, have done all their "religion" for the week, and will not be seen again, except perchance some missionary from afar or special "gift" from the neighbouring town is to be present to give something more entertaining than the ordinary prayer meeting and Scripture reading. Possibly some of the leading brethren are away preaching in a chapel, or hearing some "talented" preacher in the church across the way, and the Gospel testimony in the "room" is left in the hands of a few unspiritual or illiterate persons who preach the place vacant on each occasion that they exercise their "talents." If an energetic and progressive Gospel testimony is to be continued in any place, it must have godly care, spiritual energy, and hearty co-operation given to it. W. M.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—There are many bright exceptions to the conditions named in this question and enlarged upon in the answers given—Assemblies of believers, who have been taught from the Word that the Gospel meeting on the Lord's Day evening is the assembly's united testimony to the world, and that all are "partners" in the sharing of it, as they are in the worship of God in the morning of that day. All do not share alike, or in the same manner, but each has his place and his work to do. Where

the preacher is called and fitted by God for the place he occupies; where the Gospel is preached in its simplicity and fullness; where there is room for the operation of the Divine Spirit, there is power with the Word and a people to hear it. Where all find their places and work harmoniously, some visiting, inviting, tract distributing, buttonholing to get the people under the sound of the Gospel; others bringing neighbours, relatives, fellow-workers with them, personally speaking to them, praying for them, and longing to see them saved; younger ones with vigour and energy going to the open air, and seeking out the needy for whose souls no man cares, all co-operating heartily for the one end, and working on lines that God can bless, there is continuous blessing and conversions.

Notes on Current Topics.

Spring and Seedtime.—Ploughed fields of soil, pulverised by frost, upturned to light and sunshine, await the sower whose business is to cast in the good seed and count on God to give the growth and the harvest. Thus may it be in fields where Gospel sowers cast in the good seed of the Word of God (Luke viii. 8). There can be no fruit where there is no tillage or sowing. All the seed will not grow, but some will, therefore sow broadcast with a liberal hand, and leave God to look after the results. We need not complain of poor harvests of conversions, if we give slothful Springtimes and sow sparingly and in oft-tilled ground. Virgin soil lies all around, awaiting the ploughshare and the seed.

Demonstrating their Doctrine.—We have often wondered why those preachers, who have discovered what they proclaim to be a more Scriptural way of gathering and fellowship among the children of God, do not go out into the great unevangelised and untaught towns and cities, and give a practical demonstration of their doctrine in the founding of new assemblies, composed of converts won by their Gospel labours and Christians rescued from the meshes of sectarianism and worldly religion, by that spiritual power of attraction which they claim for the new line of things which they advocate. Half a dozen new assemblies of believers brought into existence as the result of such labours and the fruit of such teaching, would do more to convince those who are blamed for being slow to receive the new doctrine, than all the pamphlets issued in its advocacy. But this line of things does not seem to

appeal to such men. They find a more congenial field of operation, by getting into companies of God's people gathered by the energies of others, and immediately they have gained a footing, commence to bring in, first stealthily, then boldly, their new doctrine, and have by this means time and again caused division, where formerly unity existed.

Leading Out Young Christians.—There is a general lament all over, that so few of our Christian young men take part in preaching the Gospel. There may be many reasons for this, but we suggest that they do not generally get the same encouragement or opportunity in this, as some of us did in earlier years. Where the system of having a stranger arranged to preach every Lord's Day is in vogue, there is no room for the development of any local gift, with the result that those who have a heart for the Gospel, and some ability in spreading it, strike out in lines of individual service, which is all right so far as they are concerned, but their help is virtually lost to the local assembly's Gospel testimony. Where the hall is large, young brethren rightly feel it is not for them to occupy the platform, and unless other less public spheres are opened for them, they either go off or sink down into the general congregation of hearers. Why should experienced preachers not take younger ones by the hand and lead them out along paths of service in which they have gift and grace to follow. Small halls, empty shops, vacant rooms, hired for a time, have in years past been used with excellent results in Gospel effort, in which sinners heard the message and many received it unto salvation. Young brethren, with a measure of gift, found a sphere in which they could serve acceptably, and in which they also qualified for other and larger spheres.

Questions Requiring Answers.

VI.—Is it according to the Word to say that all believers gather in the Name of the Lord Jesus (Matt. xviii. 20); these in sects and those outside of them alike?

VII.—Is it according to God's Word that ministering brethren go in and out among meetings begun in division, with an open door to all, including many under discipline. If they do, can it be for godly order and edification that they be welcomed to teach in assemblies where such companies and their founders, are regarded in the light of Rom. xvi. 17.

In Furtherance of the Gospel.

THE apostle gives thanks to God for the saints at Philippi, on account of their "fellowship in furtherance of the Gospel from the first day" (Phil. i. 5, R.V.), and he associates them with himself as co-partners in grace for "the defence and confirmation of the Gospel" (ver. 7). This is surely a good record. Of how many companies of the Lord's people can it be truly given to-day? There are three things here named by the apostle, each of which is intimately connected with the Gospel. There is first its "defence," a word possibly having reference to its doctrine, "the word of the truth of the Gospel" (Col. i. 5), to be zealously held fast and guarded against all the assaults of its enemies. Never was such service more needed than in our day. In the face of these assaults the saints are to stand firm and unmoved, presenting a solid front to the foe "in defence of the Gospel of Christ." Then there is its "confirmation." This has special reference to its manifestation in their life-testimony, the development of its fruits in those who confess with the mouth the Lord Jesus. Apart from this, its doctrinal defence will be void of power; with it, the truth will be adorned and commended. Then there is "the furtherance of the Gospel" (ver. 5)—its further advance into the regions beyond, and its proclamation among those who have not heard it. The latter point, although important, is often overlooked. The Church is not only to be *evangelical*, holding fast the truth, it is to be *evangelistic*, holding it forth. Each local com-

pany, like the Church of the Thessalonians, are to be "echoing forth the Word of the Lord" (1 Thess. i. 8), in the town or neighbourhood in which they are set, and all the saints, according to their opportunities and ability, are to be sharers in the furtherance of the Gospel. Some by personal effort preaching the Word (Acts viii. 4), others as helpers and labourers (1 Cor. xvi. 16), and all by prayer (Eph. vi. 19) and giving of their substance (Phil. iv. 16), thus becoming partners with such as have been called and sent forth by God on the arduous work of the evangelisation of regions beyond, where Christ is not named or no clear and unalloyed Gospel ever made known. A church that ceases to be evangelistic, soon becomes Laodicean — self pleased and stagnant. And when the work of spreading God's Gospel is neglected, and continued only as a form without power or fruit, the bulk taking no interest in it, the devil usually keeps them busy "word fighting" among themselves, or splitting hairs on trivial points, concerning which God's Word is silent. There is plenty of scope for young and zealous workers who have a heart for God and the Gospel, in the great world field lying around their own borders, where there is no danger of being hampered or limited by human arrangements in their work. There they may learn, as nowhere else, the holy habit of counting upon God and being directly guided by the Spirit, in the honourable work of bringing the glad tidings to souls waiting for its joyful sound. Let assemblies of the Lord's people, awake and be exercised in the "furtherance of the Gospel."

The Path of the Servant.

Read 2 Tim. ii. 14-16.

DR. W. J. MATTHEWS, BELFAST.

IN the latter days of the apostles' service, many evils had crept into the churches. It was to enable him to deal with some of these, that the apostle Paul gives instructions to his child Timothy in his Second Epistle. Errors of a serious doctrinal nature are first dealt with. Certain persons were teaching that the resurrection is already past (chap. ii. 18). Hymenæus, one who had already been delivered unto Satan, that he might learn not to blaspheme (1 Tim. i. 20), was busy at his mischievous work still, and had gained in Philetus a companion. They were overthrowing the faith of some (chap. ii. 18). There cannot be any doubt that one delivered unto Satan, involved his being put away from the assembly (see 1 Cor. v. 5, 13, where Paul had delivered one unto Satan, and the church was instructed to put him away). But although Hymenæus was delivered unto Satan and put away from the assembly, he evidently fraternised with some in its fellowship. Long experienced servants of Christ know how difficult it is to get a whole assembly to act in unison, in a case of discipline; but this does not invalidate the assembly's act, nor avouch that it is not a Scriptural and therefore a proper action. (Compare 2 Cor. ii. 6, where we read, "This punishment was inflicted by the many,"* "the more" margin R.V.). It has always to be kept in mind that such

*The same words used in this sense occur in 1 and 2 Cor., six times in all; "the more" (1 Cor. ix. 19), "most of" (x. 5), "the greater part" (xv. 5, see also 2 Cor. iv. 15; ix. 2, R.V.).

an act must be clearly Scriptural, and excommunication the last resort, after all else has failed. But when such discipline is enacted with the Lord's authority, it is the duty of all in the assembly to give it effect, and avoid keeping company with the one so put away until restoration is effected. It is mistaken friendship to act otherwise, and all who do so are in danger of becoming partakers with the offender in his sin. Here, in the case before us, some were "overthrown" as to their faith by this means, hence the exhortation "Let every one that nameth the Name of the Lord, depart from iniquity" (ver. 19), in other words, "Avoid those who have been Scripturally put away" from the assembly. Again, "if a man purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour" (ver. 21), which is parallel to the "turn away from" of chap. iii. 5, R.V. The importance of complete separation from and no connivance with such persons, is indicated by the use of so many forcible exhortations in this connection. At ver. 16 it is written, "Shun profane babblings;" at ver. 19, "depart from iniquity," *flee* (from) youthful lusts (ver. 22); "Refuse foolish and ignorant questionings" (ver. 23), and from those holding a form of godliness, but who deny the power thereof, "turn away" (chap. iii. 5). If those whose faith had been overthrown through the influence of unsound teachers had given heed to such exhortations, it would have saved them from the dreadful consequences of the sin into which they fell, even to "intoxication in error" (see R.V. mar., ver. 26). It is a well known fact that when men become

entangled in erroneous doctrine, they get so absorbed with it, they become so engrossed in it, that it may aptly be compared to intoxication. It is also said of those who gave ear to them, that they fell into the "snare of the devil," having been actually taken alive by him (ver. 26, mar. R.V.). What fearful consequences are these of giving heed to men who lead others astray from the truth! So awful are they, that there is only a chance of their recovery: as it is written, "if peradventure God may give them repentance;" it is only a "perhaps" that they may have repentance given them to the acknowledgment of the truth and final recovery.

It is under such painful and trying circumstances that to the Lord's servant clear instructions are given how to proceed. First of all, "the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle to all, apt to teach, forbearing, in meekness, correcting those that oppose themselves; if peradventure God may give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil unto the will of God, having been taken captive by him." I have transposed the two last clauses to give the sense more simply. They had fallen into the snare of the devil, giving ear to erroneous teachers, and the servant of the Lord endeavours to recover them out of that snare unto the will of God.

In the foregoing, there are four distinct representatives:—(1) The false teachers who were overthrowing the faith of those who lent an ear to them. (2) Those who

were overthrown and had become opponents of the truth. (3) The servant of the Lord who seeks to preserve by his ministry the assembly, and recover those who have been led astray. (4) The devil, who laid his snare privily to catch the saints, and some of whom, unhappily, were caught therein.

What a monstrous use has been made of this portion of the Word by some! Thousands of Christians sound in faith and godly in life, have been said to be in this snare of the devil, and treated as so many lepers, because they would not give up the position that obedience to God's Word had brought them into. And what disastrous consequences have followed this perversion of the truth! Division has followed division to the ends of the earth, with all their attendant sorrows, yet with many there is no recognition of Divine retribution in these divisions or self-judgment as to their causes. And some are now seeking entrance amongst those whom they have long misrepresented and branded as being in "the snare of the devil," without the least acknowledgment or confession of their evil ways. God's way of recovery is by confession of sin and acknowledgment of the truth, with demonstration as to soundness in the faith generally, and such will be the way that commends itself to all who love the Lord and seek to honour His Word. Where this is genuine, there will be confidence, accompanied by mutual fellowship in the truth, as a natural consequence.

When there has been true self-judgment and confession of sin toward God, how easy it is then to acknowledge to our brethren wherein we had done them injury. Where the latter is lacking, we may safely infer that the former is unreal.

Going Forth in The Name.

A LETTER TO A YOUNG EVANGELIST.

YOUR letter telling me of your decision to make known abroad the good news, was as a drink of "cold water to a thirsty soul."

I am always cheered when I hear of the Lord thrusting forth labourers into His vineyard. This is the Lord's own province, and He makes no mistakes. He selects His workers, fits them for the work, and then sends them to it.

He watches over this Divine prerogative with the utmost jealousy. He will brook no interference. His was the death; and His is the life and salvation. It is His Gospel that is to be preached to every creature in all the world, and He alone possesses the right to send out those who shall announce that Gospel to all.

Men may equip themselves at Colleges and in Seminaries until they obtain the approval of those who profess to be able to pronounce as to what is the correct fitness of the preacher, but "except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it."

The acquisition of a pure accent and perfect grammatical utterance is but wretched compensation for the absence of the Master's commission and the Master's power. And how many have failed here. The fitness granted by the Lord has been discounted, and to it has been added some College course of education that has perhaps enabled the recipient to cut a finer figure on the platform, but has failed to produce that "speech" and that

"preaching" that is "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Cor. ii. 4). Those whom the Lord despatches on His errands, durst not go with the excellency of speech or of wisdom. The enticing words of "man's wisdom" may attract crowds and gain converts, but their faith will stand in "the wisdom of men" and not in the power of God.

What a blessing it is that our Lord Jesus will have nothing but what comes from Himself!

Every bit of fitness, every bit of power must come from Christ in glory. And there is enough in Him to meet every need, to cover every demand that His service necessitates. His servants may and will go forth in weakness and trembling, but with them He sends the Divine energy, the Holy Ghost, for only as one is gripped and held in the grasp of the Holy Ghost, can this solemn and blessed work be carried on. Your letter breathes the right spirit, which I pray God to maintain in you in power. The "fervent" spirit can be sustained only by the Lord, and the burning love for Him and His interests, will only continue so long as He Himself is the object of the soul.

The wear and tear of contact with the world, the inward tendency, so natural to all, to compromise; the trials of faith so sure to come; the contrariness of the flesh, and the depressing effect of the worldliness of many professed believers and their almost absolute indifference to all that constitutes the interests of Christ—will certainly tend to cast you into the ruts and practices of the professional evangelist. May God preserve you, and keep you from

following any man save the Man Christ Jesus, that you may be the *servant of Christ* from the heart.

What a blessed service! *His* messenger to do *His* will. The ear open to hear His voice however low He whispers. The mind alert to receive and ready to retain all He says, the heart engaged with Him in all His peerless worth, and the feet shod and ready to run for Him. "Whose I am, and whom I serve."

What an honour then to be *His* servant, unknown, perhaps, until that day, never having received the seal of man's approval! Yet, to have His approval then, will be worth all the sorrow and suffering you may be called upon to bear for your Divine Master now. My beloved brother, I see much suffering ahead for you, and I feel the tears in my eyes for you now—not the tears of regret, but of fellowship with you in this blessed service, and in your suffering for Christ's sake.

You will have to cut off a right hand and pluck out a right eye, perhaps. The nearest relationships will prove the greatest hindrances, and will seek to dispute the reign of Christ in the heart.

Forget not the words of your Lord, "If any man will come after me and forsake not his father, mother, . . . he cannot be *My* disciple. He that loveth his life shall lose it. He that loseth his life for *My* sake and the Gospel's shall keep it."

Depend upon it, you will be tested, and that sorely and thoroughly if you act as THE LORD'S SERVANT. You may know what it is to be in want, to be cold and naked, to be traduced, misrepresented,

misjudged, your best deeds and words misconstrued, your very motives adversely commented upon, and your person set at nought.

Your life may be shortened by your labours, and your friends will say you acted foolishly and killed yourself.

But there is the other side of the picture. Words of mine will fail to describe the precious, sweet revelations the Lord will make to you. He will delight to converse with you, and will impart his secrets to you, for "the meek He will guide in judgment, the *meek* will He teach *His way*."

He will show you much of His preciousness. He will unfold the rich and varied excellences and glories of His lovely Person, until you feel that the only thing that keeps you from Him is the weight of your body. And you will long earnestly and unceasingly for His presence, for He has won your heart. You will meet also with choice spirits here and there, who will understand and love you. The reaper's joy will be yours, sometimes, for your Lord will give you a little fruit now and then to cheer and encourage you. The souls thus won by you, will keep you in undying love and remembrance, and will prove your "joy and crown of rejoicing at the coming of Christ."

But do not forget, dear brother, that if you give all your goods to feed the poor, and your body to be burned, and LACK LOVE, you are NOTHING. Service not inspired by love to Christ and His interests, is merely carnal energy. But when the love of Christ constrains, abandon your whole being to its all consuming fire and

melting tenderness. "He that goeth forth AND WEEPETH, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." May God give you so much of His own love for souls, that you will weep again the Redeemer's tears.

Ask Him to shew you the value of a soul. I have been asking for that, too. It is a solemn request, and it will lead to the most solemn sacrifices.

But "they that sow in tears shall reap in joy," and "we shall reap in due season, if we faint not." Now, what shall I say more? One thing to you. However much failure you may observe in your life, maintain God's standard of holiness—CHRIST. Rest satisfied with no attainment short of Christ likeness. If defeated, rise again and again and again.

And now, I will close this long letter to you with the words of the Lord Jesus, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age" (Matt. xxviii. 20).

Not Expectants but Contributors.

WE should ever remember that we are not to be *expectants* from the scene around us, but *contributors*. In order to this, we must be continually drawing from our Father's exhaustless treasury. If we are looking to creature streams, or human props, we shall be disappointed; and thus, instead of being happy contributors, we shall be miserable murmurers. A true contributor never complains of want of love. He walks in love and manifests love; and his language is, "I have all and abound." Oh! that it were thus with us all. C. H. M.

Israel and the Church.

V.—THEIR RELATION TO THE WORLD.

WM. HOSTE, B.A., BRIGHTON.

WE will next consider Israel and the Church in relation to the world outside. Up to the call of Abraham, there had been no thought of choosing and calling out a particular nation. God had dealt with individuals as such, and had manifested His glory and His grace through them. In Gen. xii. 1, 2, the promise to Abraham is, "I will make of thee a great nation." God, who "knew what was in man," was going to manifest the creature at his best, surrounded by every privilege and safeguard, and at the same time to reveal Himself and His own heart of grace in His dealings with the chosen nation. The terms of this call foreshadowed that the position of this nation would be one of separation. "Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred and from thy father's house." What words could speak more clearly of separation? Later on in chap. xv., the land which the nation should occupy is specified as limited. The whole of the Old Testament from Gen. xii. onwards, is taken up with the history of Israel; other nations are only mentioned as they come into contact with her. Israel was intended to be the centre round which the other nations should revolve, and through whom they should find blessing. As we read, "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of

the children of Israel" (Deut. xxxii. 8; and Psa. lxxvii. 7—"God shall bless us and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him." When God brought His people out of Egypt, it was to bring them into a land of separation, which He had "fenced" around for them (Isa. v. 2). With this agree the words of Balaam: "Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations" (Num. xxiii. 9). The whole world, indeed, is divided into two classes: on one side Israel, and on the other the Gentiles, or the nations of the earth. This separation was partly guaranteed by circumcision. No uncircumcised person was allowed to partake of the passover (Exod. xii. 48), nor, as we gather by inference from Judg. xiv. 3 and Acts xi. 3, to intermarry or eat with the chosen race. The manifested presence of Jehovah in the midst of Israel would also separate her from the surrounding nations. Moses said, "Is it not that THOU goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and Thy people from all the people that are on the face of the earth" (Exod. xxxiii. 16). God Himself built up "a middle wall of partition" between Israel and the other nations. He, too, was "a wall of fire" about His people, so that it could truly be said, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord" (Psa. xxxiii. 12). It was only when they rebelled and forsook the Lord, that the enemy came in like a flood through the breaches in the walls, and the beloved people were scattered among the nations, as it is to this day. But they will be gathered out again and brought back to their own land (Isaiah xi. 10, 12).

The same separation will be preserved in their judgment. For when the living nations will be appearing before the Son of Man "seated on the throne of His glory" (Matt. xxv. 33), Israel, who will be judged apart (Matt. xix. 28), will be referred to by Him as "My brethren" (Matt. xxv. 40). During the millennial reign of Christ, they will be still a people apart, the centre of the manifestation of Messiah's glory, and the channel of blessing to all the nations of the earth.

(b) The Church, on the other hand, is not a nation, but a company gathered out of all nations—Jew and Gentile. Between such gathered out ones "the middle wall of partition has been broken down" (Eph. ii. 14). The Church is morally separated from the world, but not ceremonially like Israel, "for else must we needs go out of the world" (1 Cor. v. 10). She is called to submission to (Rom. xiii. 1) and intercession for "the powers that be" (1 Tim. ii. 1-3), but not to share in the government of this world in the absence of Him who is at once its rejected King and her own rightful Lord. Certain small countries have from time to time claimed to be the chosen nation of God, but He never had but one chosen nation on earth, which was Israel. Men talk of "Christian Nations," but such a thing does not exist in point of fact. Christendom is made up of "Christianized" nations, but not one of them is Christian. All this strikes at the root of much that is current in the "religious world." Where do we find such a thing in the New Testament as a "National Church," or a "Church established by law?" Where

do we find any expression parallel to "The Church of England" or "The Church of Scotland?" We read, indeed, of "the church" in a town, *e.g.*, "The church at Jerusalem" (Acts viii. 1)—made up probably of many separate companies of believers in that city—but we never read of "the Church" of a country, always of "the Churches" (*e.g.*, "The Churches of Galatia" (Gal. i. 2), "The Churches which are in Asia" (Rev. i. 11). In the early days, the Church was persecuted by the State, now the professing Church and the State patronise one another. It was right and proper for a David, or a Solomon in a theocracy, as the viceroy of God, to take the lead in carrying out His will, but "in the church" kings and princes have no status as such. All believers are brethren in Christ, "made kings and priests unto God" (Rev. i. 6), and responsible to Him for the exercise of the gifts bestowed on them by Christ the Head. So that again we see that the great worldly, national systems of religion are framed on the Jewish theocratic model—not the New Testament.

III. The point we shall next consider is, the internal relations of Israel and the Church. (a) The children of Israel were divided into twelve tribes, with definite mutual positions, relations, and responsibilities. This twelve-fold division was "writ large" on the twelve stones of the High Priest's Breastplate, and in the twelve loaves of shewbread always placed on the table before the Lord. The same fact was shewn forth at the passage of the Jordan by the twelve stones erected in the bed of the river—symbol of death,

and in those other twelve stones carried out of death, so to speak, on to resurrection ground and set up in Gilgal. Later on, in a day of declension, Elijah on Mount Carmel could not admit anything less than this truth. "Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob" (1 Kings xviii. 31), Paul (Acts xxvi. 7) and James (chap. i. 1), even when "Ichabod" was written on the nation, could still by faith see "the twelve tribes."

(b) The Church is a divine unity, to which the undivided loaf at the Lord's table bears witness, "Seeing that there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread" (1 Cor. x. 6, *R.V.*, *mar.*). Alas! for the tribes of Christendom! Would that there were only twelve! There is not one of them that is not a work of the flesh! The simile of the many different regiments of an army has often been alleged to excuse the denominations of Christendom. But the regiments of an army are not *rival* organisations. Nor do they recruit from one another's ranks. "The Church" in a town, its local expression in no way denies the truth that "there is one body," and that we should keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Denominationalism budded in apostolic times (1 Cor. i. 12), bore its characteristic fruit down the ages, and is now in "the yellow leaf." The movement for the union of Christendom, is but the presage of that vast religious confederacy, "without Christ," which as "Mystery, Babylon," is seen in Rev. xvii., seated on the scarlet coloured beast and destined to be destroyed by it.

Buying the Truth.

TO "buy the truth and sell it not" may cost us the loss of this world's and this life's things; but it cannot cost us too much if it is really God's truth we are buying. Our Lord knew it was the truth of God and the will of God that He should make us His own; and He at once became as a man who, having found treasure hid in a field, "for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath and BUYETH that field." And shall we on our part count that we can ever "buy the truth" at too great a cost, or too self-sacrificingly refuse to sell it? To carnal minds the truth will often seem as small a thing as the birth-right did to Esau, when he sold it for a mess of pottage. The truth of believer's baptism (Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 16), or of the Lord's supper each first day of the week (Acts xx. 7), or any other part of "the apostle's doctrine and fellowship," may seem even to God's children not sufficiently important to be always and everywhere adhered to. The fear of man, or the love of a fellow-creature's company and smile, may tempt us to *sell* the truth of God in these matters, and not to buy it. But let us never yield to this. That which is God's truth for this or that time or place, is His truth also for all times and places, even till our Master comes. *H. Dyer.*

Christ Our Object.

Throned in glory—brightest glory,
 Jesus dwells in heaven above,
 Higher than the highest angel,
 Object of the Father's love:
 For our hearts' full satisfaction,
 God to us presents His Son—
 That loved Object which doth ever
 Fully satisfy His own.

The Lord of Glory.

OH Jesus, Lord of Glory, I bless the wondrous
 love,
 The marvellous compassion which drew Thee
 from above, [to be,
 To Bethlehem's manger cradle, the Virgin's child
 The Man of Sorrows seeking poor fallen ones like me.

Oh Jesus, Lord of Glory, adoringly I trace
 Thy path of lowly service, Thy deeds of power and
 grace; [and free,
 But, Oh! Thy words they thrill me—Salvation full
 On guilty souls bestowing, on *sinful men* like me.

Oh Jesus, Lord of Glory, as on Thy Cross I gaze,
 And view Thee wounded, dying, my heart is all
 amaze; [tree,
 For there, of God forsaken, "made sin" upon the
 In Thee the Lamb, the victim, *my Substitute* I see.

They knew Thee not, O Saviour; they scourged
 Thy sacred form;
 They spat on Thee, and mocked Thee with cruel
 crown of thorn;
 Thy thunders might have crushed them, yet on that
 shameful tree
 The Lord of glory bore it all, in love to *ransom* me.

Oh Jesus, Lord of Glory, Thou'rt now, gone up on
 high,
 Redemption's work completed—no more for sin to
 die;
 Yet in that glory seated, appearing there for me,
 By thine own blood prevailing my *Great High Priest*
 I see.

Oh Jesus, Lord of Glory, on that night of parting
 pain, [again;"
 Thou saidest to Thy people, "I will surely come
 It is this hope which keeps me still looking Lord for
 Thee,
 And saying in my vigil, "He is *coming* soon for me."

Oh Jesus, Lord of Glory, words fail me to express
 The half of all Thy glory, of all Thy matchless grace,
 But when "caught up" in glory, Thy wounded
 form I see,
 My song shall be His praises "*Who gave Himself*
 for me."

Riverton, N.Z.

S. J. DECK.

The Bible Annotator.

BRIEF BIBLE STUDIES.

FOUR ASPECTS OF CHRISTIAN LIFE.

Fruit-bearers abiding IN Christ (John xv. 5).
 Witness-bearers being FOR Christ (Acts i. 8).
 Cross-bearers following AFTER Christ (Luke xiv. 27).
 Burden-bearers being LIKE Christ (Gal. vi. 2).

THREEFOLD REJOICING IN ROMANS V.

In Hope of Glory (ver. 2).
 In Present Tribulation (ver. 3).
 In God (ver. 11).

The word *Kaukaomai* is the same in each of these three verses, and is elsewhere rendered "glory" (2 Cor. xi. 30), "boast" (Eph. ii. 9), and "rejoice" (Phil. iii. 3).

GROWING FAITH IN GOD'S ABILITY.

"With God nothing is impossible" (Luke i. 37).
 "Is anything too hard for the Lord" (Gen. xviii. 14).
 "I know that Thou canst do everything" (Job xlii. 2).

CONVERSION, SERVICE, HOPE, IN I THESS. i. 9, 10.

PAST—"Ye turned to God from idols."
 PRESENT—"To serve the living and true God."
 FUTURE—"To wait for His Son."

OUTLINES OF GOSPEL SUBJECTS.

THE SINNER'S STATE BY NATURE.

As described in Eph. ii. 12.

CHRISTLESS—"Without Christ."
 FRIENDLESS—"Aliens."
 HOMELESS—"Strangers."
 HOPELESS—"Having no Hope."
 GODLESS—"Without God."

BIBLE ROBES.

The LONG Robe of Pretension (Luke xx. 46).
 The RENT Robe of Sorrow (Job. i. 20).
 The SCARLET Robe of Mockery (Matt. xxvii. 28).
 The BEST Robe of Righteousness (Luke xv. 22).
 The WHITE Robe of the Redeemed (Rev. vii. 9).

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Is it always because of sin unconfessed and unforsaken, that Divine chastisement comes upon the believer? No. "Chastisement" and "chastening," as the words are used in Heb. xii. 5-11, include instruction, training, admonition, and all that a

father does for his son. It is a mistake to regard "chastisement" as only punitive, and because of unjudged wrongdoing. That the dealings of God with His people governmentally do include most solemn retributive acts, is clearly seen in the case of Moses (Deut. iii. 23-27; Num. xx. 12) and David (2 Sam. xii. 9, 10), but it would be wrong to say that all He allows to come or sends upon His people in the way of trial and suffering is of this character. Paul had a "thorn in the flesh"—which is described as a "messenger of Satan" permitted to make his life a martyrdom, lest he should be "exalted overmuch" by the greatness of the revelations he had in Paradise (2 Cor. xii. 7). In other words, it was a preventive to keep him from sinning, and no doubt many of the burdens and trials, which keep us dependent and humble, are allowed for the same reason. When Paul discovered this, he ceased to ask for the removal of his "thorn;" yea, he gloried in his weakness—whatever it was—because it brought the "power of Christ" so near to him.

Answers to Correspondents.

QUARTUS.—You will find much to help you in the symbolic teaching of the Book of Revelation in the valuable "Notes" by the late Thomas Newberry on that book. We know of nothing better.

W. S.—Read prayerfully the following Scriptures in answer to your query about "worry":—Phil. iv. 6, 7; 1 Pet. v. 7; Psa. xxxvii. 7; lv. 22, and be specially careful not to increase your burden by interfering in other people's strifes (see Prov. xxvi. 17).

G. M., DUBLIN.—Teachers of household baptism—that is of unregenerate children and servants—may say that they do not teach their doctrine publicly, but what of that, when they do so privately, and have it sent by post in pamphlets, and also advertised on other books by the same writers. If the baptism of unregenerate households, bringing them thereby "into the kingdom," and "unto Christ," as they avow, is found in God's Word, then let it be taught fully and openly like any other truth of Scripture. Why should it be labelled "private" and spoken of as a "personal" belief, if it is part of the faith "once delivered to the saints?" If it is only a tradition, long held and privately nursed, which they are ashamed of, or unable to defend in open court, then let it be renounced and repudiated along with the rest of the same kind,

which they confess to have been delivered from. It would surely be a serious responsibility for any who guide and oversee in God's assembly, as those who will have to give an account to Him (Heb. xiii. 17), to invite or receive men as teachers who have openly avowed their belief, both orally and in print, in what we believe to be a figment of Ritualism, and a cause of division.

INQUIRER, COLERAINE.—There is nothing in the Word to shew that the one who gives thanks for the bread at the Lord's Supper must also give thanks for the cup. That he may, if so guided, is according to the principle of the Spirit's guidance; that he *MUST*, is of the tradition or legislation of man.

W. L., ALBERTA.—The safe course for you to take is to consult godly and well proved labourers who have been in the country since the assemblies you name were formed, some of whom were used by God in the founding of them and know their doctrine and condition from the beginning. Do not be misled by the misrepresentations of men who are seeking to "draw away disciples" (Acts xx. 30) after themselves.

J. M., DUNDEE.—The pamphlet you send, published in India, but evidently intended for Christians in Britain, is not likely to do much harm to any who know their Bibles, but it may upset young believers, more by its violent denunciations than its convincing teaching. It is to be regretted that brethren who have given themselves to the evangelization of the heathen, do not find sufficient to occupy their time in other work than publishing such diatribes, and sending them broadcast over the earth to create trouble and do mischief.

G. R., GOVAN.—A low spiritual condition, the heart having departed from God, is the chief cause of believers becoming infected with current errors, such as you name. "Faults in the heart breed errors in the mind," is a true saying, and no effort to prevent or restore by mere argument or denunciation, will prevail, apart from restoration of soul to God. Wholesome ministry of the Word, bearing on the truths denied, is the best means of prevention.

Answers to Special Questions.

VI.—Is it according to the Word to say that all believers gather in the Name of the Lord Jesus (Matt. xviii. 20); these in sects and those outside of them alike.

ANSWER A.—All true Christians "believe on the

Name of the Son of God" (1 John v. 13), and presumably aim at ordering their lives according to the Word, "doing all in the Name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. iii. 17). But very many have not been taught, nor are they in any measure exercised as to how they assemble corporately for worship and service. They simply do as their parents did, or go wherever they get that which best meets their wishes. It would be idle to speak of all who in every sect come together for religious purposes, being gathered "in the Name of the Lord," as these words are used in Holy Scripture. G. S.

ANSWER B.—The words of Matt. xviii. 20, have been frittered away to such an extent, by some who attempt to expound them, that they are supposed to apply to every kind of coming together in which the Name of the Lord Jesus is mentioned. But this is not their meaning. As the late Mr. Thos. Newberry says in his booklet, "Jesus in the Midst"—"It is around the Person of a once-crucified but now risen and glorified Christ, His disciples are to gather. In the Name of Him to whom all authority in heaven and earth is given, we are to meet. And it is by the Holy Ghost sent down from this glorified One, that we are united *together* in fellowship, guided in discipline, and *qualified* for worship." Can any sect or denomination lay claim to be so gathered, united, and guided? W.H.

ANSWER C.—A look at the signboard fixed in front of most of the popular "churches," and a reference to their "constitution," will convince any ordinary mind in what name those who are wont to assemble there come together, and by what distinguishing name they wish to be known among men. No doubt they use the Name of the Lord in their worship and invoke it for blessing. But to be gathered in (or unto His Name, as the word is in Matt. xviii. 20) they are not, and cannot be, so long as they own a sectarian name which separates them from other Christians, and unites them on a basis which either excludes other saints who do not subscribe to their peculiar views, or includes unsaved ones who do. To be "gathered" implies a Gatherer, One who leads or draws together to a common centre those who yield themselves to His leading. This is the work of the Divine Spirit, and He leads along the lines of the Word, never contrary to it. J. D.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—Quite recently a pamphlet was sent us by post, in which the writer labours hard to show that there is virtually nothing distinctive in

being gathered unto the Name of the Lord Jesus, that "the church is in ruins," and, therefore, such assembling in church capacity, as is described in 1 Cor. v. 4, and service "for the sake of the Name," as is commended in 3 John 7, r.v., are impossible. We can easily understand how such as hold these views can go and come with all denominations, and see little difference between one way of meeting and another, for if all is "in ruins," what does it matter among which part of the wreckage we sit down. But some have learned from the Word of God that man's failure can never alter God's truth, and that He the ever-living Lord, in whose Name His people gathered at the beginning, owning Him as Head and Lord, is still to be thus honoured by gathering in His Name alone. And this will separate all who do so gather from all sects and parties, and keep them apart from every circle where His Name is disowned and His Word denied. This may not be popular, but it is what the Lord commends (see Rev. iii. 8).

Notes on Current Topics.

Tent Work begins this month in many places. The great mass of mankind become more indifferent to things eternal as the years go by, and less inclined to go and hear the Gospel. Preachers who visit through the day "excavating" and seeking to get in touch with the people, and who are prepared to go on until God makes "a break," usually gather fruit, and it remains. But we cannot say so much for the modern "mission" style of working, where all is cut and dry beforehand, and the time limit fixed in which God must work. We believe much of the barrenness and rootless profession which is mourned over, may be traced to such human devices as their cause.

Indifference to God's Truth.—It is often remarked that few believers are now brought out from worldly religious systems to gather in the Lord's Name alone, compared with earlier years, and many reasons other than the right one are adduced as the cause. It may fairly be questioned whether there are so many truly born again Christians in the denominations as a quarter of a century ago. The preachers and the preaching are different. Then, there were many earnest Gospellers, now few. Most were at least sound in fundamentals, however lacking in spiritual power; now a race of young preachers, educated at the feet of "Higher Critic" Professors, who have virtually given up the funda-

mentals of the Gospel and renounced the authority of the Bible, fill the pulpits, and the effect has been to produce Laodiceanism—everybody seemingly well satisfied with themselves and their churches. Worldliness has come in like a flood. "Cake and candy sales" and "bazaars," with all their horrors, have done their work, and there is little desire left for God's truth among those who once were spiritual and bright. The other side is, that the attractive spiritual power among those who are "outside the camp" is generally less than it once was, and their clear-ring testimony and walk in the truth of separation to God in all things, less heard and seen. There is need for a cleansing and revival within, then God will appear in glory as in ancient days, and there will be a testimony that will draw other seekers after God, and attract to His truth.

Millennial Dawn, with its fundamental errors and flagrant distortions of "the faith once for all delivered," is being actively propagated by lady colporteurs selling its books from door to door, and encouraging conversation with the unwary; by public lectures on "catchy" subjects, which the lecturer promises to give new light upon. Usually, those who are led into its net, are professors without life, who have become tired of their "religion," and go hunting for something new, and backsliders who have got away from God and His Word and so lost all discernment between truth and error. Let those who shepherd the flock, warn young believers against the evils of these latter day "doctrines of demons."

Questions Requiring Answers.

VII.—Is it according to God's Word that ministering brethren go in and out among meetings begun in division, with an open door to all, including many under discipline. If they do, can it be for godly order and edification that they be welcomed to teach in assemblies where such companies and their founders, are regarded in the light of Rom. xvi. 17.

VIII.—Will you give some help on the two passages, Heb. vi. 4-8; x. 26-29, which are a cause of distress to many? Do they apply to unsaved professors, or to backslidden believers?

IX.—Is there any Scripture authority for Training Colleges and such like Institutions, in which certain young men and women who are specially favoured, are prepared for Missionary Work?

The Heavenly Hope.

W. H. BENNET, YEovil.

THOSE whose "citizenship is in heaven" are possessors of a heavenly *hope*, which is expressed in the words, "From whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. iii. 20). The One there who *died* for us, *lives* for us, and will soon fulfil His word of promise "I will *come again* and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also;" and for *Him* we look. This bright hope, which the Church so cherished in early days, was soon obscured, and then lost sight of. During recent years it has been greatly revived amongst some of the Lord's people; but the question as to how much we know of its purifying power may well exercise our hearts.

The word rendered "*we look for*" denotes a prolonged, steadfast, earnest gaze of expectation. It is not a feverish excitement, such as led some at Thessalonica to give up their daily occupations, but a calm, settled attitude of heart towards the Lord, that would lead us, however occupied here, to be always ready to welcome Him.

He for whom we thus wait is described as "THE SAVIOUR, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST." As *Saviour* He will come to complete His blessed work of salvation; as *Lord* He will make manifest His power over both the dead and the living (Rom. xiv. 9); as *Jesus*—the true Joshua—He will lead His people into full possession of their inheritance; as the *Christ* He will also appear as the One anointed by Jehovah for all His mighty work. The

glory of every title He bears will then be fully displayed to His own, and will in due time be manifested to the whole vast creation, just as His saints will have in the glorious transformation of the body of humiliation the first blessed proof of that power by which he will ultimately subdue all things to Himself. The present body is not "vile" in the *modern* sense of the word (Rom. xii. 1), and the R.V. here gives the true meaning—"Who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory."

The human body, simply as such, is of no small account in the sight of God, for it was formed by His own hand; and when a sinner has trusted Christ, and is resting in Him as the Saviour of the lost, the body is looked upon as a *redeemed* body, and is sanctified as the temple of the Holy Ghost. Yet though so precious in the sight of God, it is still a "mortal body," for sin dwells in it, and it is often proved to be weak even when "the spirit is willing." This will be true no longer when our bodies are "*conformed to the body of His glory.*"

Who can form any conception of the magnitude of the change that awaits us? The body of Christ, during that period which is spoken of as "the days of his flesh," was in a state of humiliation, for He came in "the likeness of sinful flesh," but His body knew no sinful weakness, had no stain of mortality, and could not see corruption. His body is now a body of glory, and He is in the heaven of heavens, in the immediate presence of God. It is into the likeness of His body

that our bodies are to be transformed, according to the high purpose of Him who predestinated us "to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many *brethren*." As we try to consider that future glorious condition we feel the force of the words, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." This we cannot know till we "see Him as He is;" but we can say without hesitation that the glorified body will be one that can never know pain or suffering, weakness or weariness—a body, every member of which will instantaneously and without effort respond to the wish of the mind, while the mind itself will evermore be in perfect harmony with the will of God.

The *corruption* in which the body of every departed saint is sown, will give place to *incorruption*; the *dishonour* attaching to the body, which is "dead because of sin," will be forgotten by reason of the *glory* of that body when quickened; present *weakness* will be exchanged for abiding *energy*; while all that is characteristic of the *natural* body will give place to the as yet unknown powers of the *spiritual* body. Like the body of Christ Himself, it will be *worthy* of the presence of God, and will enable us to stand without fear in the full blaze of His glory.

The word "change" denotes *external* transformation, and thus beautifully harmonises with the blessed truth that the *inward* change has already been wrought. Even *now* "the spirit is life because of righteousness," and "*now* are we children of God;" but then, in the body of glory, the spirit will find suited capabilities to carry out all its desires.

We should mark well, too, that the *body* is to be *transformed*, and not another substituted for it. Great and marvellous as the change will be, it will be a *change*, and there will be identity. Reason may ask, How can this be? or even go further and affirm its impossibility. But it is sufficient for the believer that Scripture affirms that it shall be. To those who denied the resurrection, the Lord said, "Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the Scriptures, neither the *power of God*?" The apostle seems to take up that word of the Lord when he says "according to the working whereby *He is able* to subdue all things unto Himself." Our Lord already sits at God's right hand as the Mighty Conqueror of death and the grave, as well as of the powers of darkness; but the full results of His victory will not be seen till all things are subdued to Himself. To this end He will exercise His power when the appointed time arrives, but the *first* display of it will indeed be glorious, when, in one moment, in the twinkling of an eye, all His saints shall be raised or changed, and the last trace of mortality or corruptibility shall vanish from every ransomed body. Meanwhile may we, as those who look for such a glorious change, ever remember that our present bodies are really *bodies of humiliation*, and be content to treat them as such, neither ministering to mere fleshly appetite, nor to pride of appearance. Instead of imitating those who, loving not the cross of Christ, "mind earthly things," may we rather with the apostle be weeping over them!

The Assembly Life of Believers

ITS PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

PART II. BY THE EDITOR.

FEW words have been more perverted from their Scriptural use and meaning, than the word which is generally rendered "church" in our English Bibles. In common phraseology, people speak of (a) "going to church," which means a building set apart for religious purposes; (b) of "joining the church," which has reference to becoming a member of the congregation of people who meet in it; (c) of "Mr. B.'s church," which means the people over whom he presides, besides many other uses of the word. In the New Testament Scriptures the Greek word *ecclesia*, which is generally translated "church,"—and which would be better rendered Assembly—means a company of people called out and brought together, as for example, in Acts xix. 32, where it is used to describe a company of silversmiths called out from the rest of the populace of Ephesus, and brought together by Demetrius to consider the danger brought upon their craft by Paul's preaching, and in verse 39, to the "lawful assembly" of citizens called together to transact public business. The word is used by the Lord Jesus first in Matt. xvi. 18, where He uses the words "My Church" in reference to the entire company of His people of the present dispensation, and next in Matt. xviii. 17, where it has reference to a local and accessible company of believers, who stately assemble together and can act unitedly. These two first uses of the word are especially worthy of our consideration, as they indicate the two main

uses of the same word in the Epistles, as being applicable (1) to the body of Christ (Eph. i. 23), and (2) to a local company of Christians, in the habit of assembling together in a city (Acts xiii. 1; xiv. 27), or in a house (Rom. xvi. 5; Col. iv. 15). It is to this latter aspect of the church we would direct attention in this series of papers, and seek to gather from the Word what is there said regarding its constitution and character.

We take it, that as a principle it will be readily admitted by all who love the Word of God, and have learned to be guided by it alone, that if the pattern of what God's assembly was at the beginning, and is to be to the end, is given there, it is the responsibility of all who belong to Christ and call Him Lord, to acknowledge His right to say how His people are to be brought and kept together in the places where their lot is cast. The common notion that a Christian is at liberty to choose his "church" in the same way as he may his dwelling-house, and to call and pay for his "minister" as he does for his doctor, has no authority whatever from the Word of God. The pattern of what the local assembly was at the beginning is given in the Word, and there is not a single hint that it may be altered or repealed because of man's disobedience and sin. On the contrary, the children of God, amid the last days, are cast upon "the words spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 17), as Paul had committed the elders of the local assembly at Ephesus, in view of approaching evils and divisions, to "God and the Word of His grace" (Acts xx. 32). The

obedient child of God will therefore seek to be found in such church association as the Word prescribes, and to separate himself from all that it prohibits, however pleasing to nature and highly esteemed among men. It is no part of his responsibility to inquire why one good man goes here and another there, why there are so many denominations and differences of opinion among believers regarding church government and the like, why one is an Episcopalian, another a Presbyterian, and a third a Baptist, or why certain Christians, because they find themselves more at liberty to go and to do as they please, attach themselves to nothing, but freely mingle with all, and go wherever they find an open door for service. Least of all, to find an excuse for not being where he acknowledges the Word would lead him, because those who so assemble are "cold" or carnal, or not agreed among themselves. The one who has prepared his heart to "seek the law of the Lord to do it" (Ezra vii. 10), will reach forth beyond the failings and frailties of others, and make it his one aim and object to do that which he knows will be pleasing unto the Lord. When once this becomes a settled purpose, it is wonderful how difficulties vanish, and "the way of the Lord," which is "strength to the upright" (Prov. x. 29), becomes a delight. And just because it is the Lord's way and not man's, it will always be despised by the unregenerate, turned away from by the carnal, and opposed by those who have their own preconceived opinions, which, even in true Christians, die hard. It is in such Scriptural and godly fellowship with fellow-

believers that much is learned of the ways of God, which to those who walk in isolation or remain among the unconverted or in unscriptural associations, is unknown, and it is in walking with those who belong to Christ in the paths marked out in the Word, that many valuable lessons in patience, forbearance, and consideration of others are learned, as well as experience of spiritual fellowship and mutual help enjoyed, of which those know nothing who abide alone, or remain in association with the world's religious systems, in which the living and the dead are massed together in church membership, and all is ordered according to man. When once the eyes of God's children are opened to the simple truth, that God has said all that is to be said, about His Assembly and its functions, that what He has said is to be found in His Word, and that this is to be observed by His people all through the present dispensation, and to be owned and obeyed in the very same way as other commandments and precepts which He has given, then it all becomes simple and easy. First, I have to find out what is written in the Word; next I have to seek spiritual condition to do it, and then to find out where and with whom I may, without hindrance from man and his rules, be free to give effect to that which the Lord has commanded, and which in obedience to Him I am individually responsible to practice as He has taught me of His will. It is no question of whether those who thus assemble are few or many, but are they gathered according to the Word? If they are, that is where I ought to be.

Israel and the Church.

VI.—THE CALLING OF ISRAEL.

WM. HOSTE, B.A., BRIGHTON.

WE will next compare Israel's calling with that of the Church.

The calling of Israel was AN EARTHLY calling. They were God's earthly people. They were, it is true, specially privileged by His manifested presence in their midst, and were in a special covenant relation to Him as a people, but the character of their blessings, privileges, and position was none the less earthly and connected with the earth.

This does not prejudice the fact that the true men of God in the nation enjoyed, as we have seen, the spiritual blessings of forgiveness, justification, and communion with God, with a hope beyond this earthly scene. Doubtless many like Abraham "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. xi. 10). Certainly, all godly Israelites who die, will enjoy heavenly blessing, but Israel, viewed as a people alive on the earth at any given time, is nationally called to an earthly position and blessing. One reason—perhaps the greatest—why the Jew is so generally unpopular, is not a religious but an economic one, though Satan hates them for their national connection with Christ, and God in government permits persecution on account of their rejection of Him. The Jew is admirably fitted for the earth, and the Gentiles see with chagrin that instead of their getting the better of the Jew it is the other way, hence disabilities

are imposed and persecutions inflicted upon the chosen race.

The earthly calling of Israel is shewn, we may say briefly, in three ways. (a) By the fact that their blessing was connected with an earthly place. (b) It was material in character. (c) It was conditional on obedience to law.

(a.) Israel's blessing was connected with an earthly place—the promised land. Abraham was called by Jehovah into this land (Gen. xii. 1), and though in the following chapter we read that he was told to "Arise and walk through it," yet it could not be his actually, for "the iniquity of the Amorites," its then possessors, "was not yet full." Leviticus xviii. 24-30; xx. 22-24, describe the character of that iniquity, and sufficiently disposes of the argument of those who find such a mysterious providence in the total destruction of those "honest peasants," the Canaanites. It was in mercy to the whole world and succeeding generations, that such a moral pest-house as their land had become, should be drastically disinfected. When God's moment came—that blessed "due time," never too soon, never too late (see Rom. v. 6; Gal. vi. 9; 1 Pet. v. 6)—God brought His people out of Egypt, that He might bring them into the goodly land of promise, "a land flowing with milk and honey" (Exod. vi. 6, 8). They could neither inherit the blessings in Egypt nor in the wilderness. They must possess the land. This they failed to do through sloth or unbelief, but in proportion as they did so, they were prospered. There they enjoyed great national prosperity in

measure as they were faithful to God. The immense territory promised to Abraham, "from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates," and so forth (Gen. xvi.), enclosed in a triangle, of which the two greater sides are about 900 miles long, and the base, the eastern end of the Mediterranean, about 400 miles long, containing, roughly speaking, 180,000 square miles—the British Isles contain some 121,377 square miles—never was possessed, not even in Solomon's reign, though doubtless it will be in a future age. Departure from God was marked by incursions and invasions of the surrounding nations, and later on, when Israel's cup of iniquity was full, they were deprived of their land, not all at once, as if God lingered over the people in long-suffering patience, but gradually. First, the ten tribes of Israel were deprived of their land—"So was Israel carried away out of their land to Assyria unto this day" (2 Kings xvii. 23). They will be found again, probably, as is usual with lost things, not far from where they were lost. In the meantime we may be sure that wherever the lost tribes are, they are not the mixed race inhabiting the British Isles, according to the "vain babblings" of certain teachers. About two hundred years later, Judah too was judged, as we read, "So Judah was carried away out of their land" (2 Kings xiv. 21). This first captivity lasted seventy years, and was succeeded by a partial restoration; which was followed in 70 A.D., by a final dispersion of Judah "as it is this day" (see Hosea iii. 4). But Judah and Israel will be brought back to their land,

not together, but part of Judah first in unbelief, and then the rest, both becoming one nation again in their land (see Isa. x. 20; xi. 11; six. 24; xxvii. 13; xliii. 6; xlix. 12-22; lx. 8, 9; lxvi. 20; Hos. x. 6, etc.). There they will dwell in the Millennial age (see Ezek. xl.-xlviii.) in the full enjoyment of earthly blessing, under the beneficent reign of Christ their King.

Punctuality.

IT is a "failing"—perhaps a term of more severity ought to be used—with certain believers, that they are always late in coming to the meetings. Even the assembling together of saints on the Lord's Day morning, to shew forth the Lord's death, finds them dropping in while the first hymn is being sung. If these late comers had a long journey, or if they were mothers with many household duties, or servant maids detained through no fault of theirs, some consideration would be due to them. But these are not usually the habitual late comers. They are often young men and others living within easy distance of the place of meeting, who have no excuse at all. It is generally laziness or negligence, or both combined, that is the cause of such Christians being late. Fifteen minutes earlier out of bed would get them out of the "black list," and if well used in dealing with God and His Word, would have a wonderful effect on their own enjoyment of the Lord's presence in the meeting, as well as contribute to the edification and comfort of others.

Drawing the People.

THERE is a growing disposition in the religious world to adopt any and every means that will "draw the people." Instrumental music was one of the first attractions, possibly an organ to "aid in leading the praise." This was soon supplemented by the soloist, cornet player, and all the rest. As one thing lost its attraction others were brought in, until in many of the Sunday evening Services, as advertised in the newspapers, it will be hard to find the "sermon," or at anyrate anything in the nature of such preaching of the Word of God as arouses the careless and leads the anxious to Christ. After all has been done, it has to be admitted that only a very small proportion of "the people" can be got inside the doors of the most popular of these "Services." Notwithstanding the "catchy" subjects, the orchestral music, the trained singers from opera and concert halls who are engaged to "draw" the people, those who are most wanted do not go. But suppose they did, what would be the spiritual result under such conditions? Is there any room for God to work in such circles? We believe not, and although just because He is God and sovereign in His acts, He may bless His own Word in the most unexpected places,—as it is on record He has done when quoted in a tap room—yet it is not in such mixed and unscriptural surroundings that God usually works. If we would see "the hand of the Lord" with us, as in Acts xi. 21, we must be clean before God, ready for His use, and our associations must be such as He approves

and commands in His holy Word. The Gospel of Christ made known by a man who is right with God, and in earnest for souls, will never fail to do its work. It needs no embellishments borrowed from the godless world, either to "draw the people" or to give it acceptance. The best way to draw the people is to have a dozen of newly saved sinners in the "ring," men and women saved from their former ways and set on the road to heaven. There will be no lack of drawing power if there is work being done for eternity. When it became "noised abroad" (Acts ii. 6) that the early disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit, and speaking of "the wonderful works of God" we are told "the multitude came together." And in Antioch (Acts xiii. 14) where there was no miraculous display or speaking with tongues, but the simple preaching of "forgiveness of sins" in Christ's Name, followed by the conversion of some who had heard the Word, we are told that on the next Sabbath day "almost the whole city" came together, not to hear some eloquent discourse on some popular or "catchy" subject, but "to hear the Word of God" (ver. 44). Yes, when God is at work and sinners are being saved, there will be no need to use fantastic means to "draw" the people. They will come, and God will use His Word in real blessing among them, as we have seen again and again. Praise be to His Name. If half of the time spent in devising and magnifying means to "draw the people" were spent in dealing with God about them, there would be Divine power to bring them under the sound of the Word of God.

A Device of Satan.

ONE of the devices of the great adversary, which in our day he uses with remarkable success is, to get a number of lifeless professors brought into companies of believers who assemble in the Lord's Name. These become a dead-weight and a hindrance to the godly, and as might be expected, if they get the upper hand, soon reduce the testimony of that assembly to the lowest level. Of course they profess to be the Lord's. They can give "day and date" perhaps for their conversion. Like the rootless wheat, that "sprang up immediately" in the rocky soil (Matt. xiii. 5), they may seem to make rapid progress in growth and energy, more by far than others who have been truly born of God. They may themselves sincerely believe that they are converted, and so far as outward conduct goes, do nothing to belie their profession. For it does not always, or even generally follow, that a lifeless professor, who finds his way into a company of God's people, breaks down in morality, or manifests his true condition before God by a plunge into "the mire" of open ungodliness. Those who were outwardly moral before they "professed," are not likely to "fall away" after such a fashion. If they did—however sad the result to themselves—the assembly would be free from the incubus of their presence. But the most dangerous kind of lifeless professor is the one who gets "into power," and exercises his evil influence to level down everything to his taste and liking. To those lacking spiritual discernment he may seem a very

Joab in zeal for "the cause," but like the captain of David's host he works for his own hand, as time will tell. How comes it that such lifeless professors find their way into and remain, it may be for years, in an assembly professedly composed of God's people? There was less danger of it once than now. When there was a "cross" involved in being one of the despised few who had gone "without the camp" to own a rejected Lord, meeting perhaps in some plain whitewashed building in a back street, there was nothing to attract the carnal or the natural man. But when an assembly has grown in numbers, has an attractive hall, and has in many ways conformed to the sects around it, when those who "examine" newcomers have little spiritual discernment, when the standard of conversion becomes lower and lower, until anybody who can state a few evangelical doctrines will "pass," it becomes easy for lifeless professors to enter and continue among the children of God without being detected for many a day, until some one sent from God turns on the "Searchlight," or some "offence" gives occasion for the inward condition to come out in action. It becomes a matter of solemn responsibility that those who introduce or commend new comers to God's Assembly be men of spiritual discernment, who seek the Lord in connection with each case, lest they bring in those who have not the life of God in them. Men are needed who will act for God, and who will not yield to the clamour of those who would bring the Moabite and the Ammorite into the congregation of the Lord.

An Open Door.

IT is sometimes made a boast by certain workers, "I preach wherever I get an open door." So be it. We do not think anybody will find fault with that, provided it is a door which has been opened by the Lord. There are "open doors" which are not of the Lord's opening. How do we know them? Well, one distinctive mark of such doors is, that you dare not take in a whole Bible with you when you enter them to preach. "A whole Bible," says somebody, "whatever do you mean by not taking in a whole Bible?" Just this: that there are certain lines of truth in the Book that you dare not mention inside that open door. Of course they are in the Bible which you carry under your arm, and use to give your address from, but suppose the Lord gave you a message, say on Believer's Baptism or Separation from the unconverted in Church association, what would happen if you gave out the Lord's message to His born again people there? In very many cases you would never be asked back. Perhaps those who invited you will say you "took advantage" of their invitation, to speak what they did not expect or want, and you will be regarded henceforth as an "unwise" brother, not one of the kind that is wanted there. Had you observed a discreet silence, and said nothing but what could be "enjoyed" by believers away from God and living in alliance with the world, you would have been commended as one of the right sort, but what then? Would the Lord whom you serve, have been pleased? If He had a

message for His people on these subjects, and you withheld it for fear of giving offence and closing the door against you, what would have been the result in your spiritual condition and your fellowship with the Lord? A door opened of the Lord will always be known by this: there will be room inside it for the Lord's message, the Word that He has for His people there, at that particular time, whatever it may be, and any door that is not of this character cannot be a door opened by the Lord. The Lord's open door has always room for His Word, as He may give it to His servant for the occasion. Wherever God has a people, and His servant a message in season, there will be no need to compromise any part of it to get an open door, or a people to hear it.

The Christian "Growing Old."

"And Moses went up . . . to the TOP of Pisgah. His eye was not dim nor his moisture fled" (Deut. xxxiv. 4, 7, marg.).

THEY call it "going down the hill" when we are growing old, And speak with mournful accents when our years are nearly told;

They sigh when talking of the past, the days that used to be,
As if the future were not bright with Immortality.

But life is not a "going down," 'tis climbing higher, higher,
Until we see the land, the home our souls so much desire;
For if the eye of sense grows dim, it is but dim to earth,
While Faith's all-seeing eye grows keen to see the Saviour's worth.

The bygone years, though years of joy, we wish not back again—
They had their days of failure too, of sorrow and of pain;
But in the land to which we go, the home beyond the tomb,
No sin, no sorrow ere shall come, but joy for ever bloom.

Though now in truth "the outward man" must perish and decay,
The "inward man" shall be renewed by grace from day to day,
And they who "planted by the Lord," unshaken in their root,
E'en in old age shall flourish green, and still bring forth their fruit.

It is not years that make us old, the spirit may be young
Though for full "threescore years and ten" the bells of life have rung;

God has recorded in the Word—that blessed Book of truth—
That they who "wait upon the Lord shall still renew their youth."

And when the eyes now growing dim, shall see our Lord the King,
And ears now dull with age shall hear the songs of heaven ring;
And on the head now hoary, shall be placed a crown of gold,
Then we shall know the lasting joy of never growing old.

The Preacher's Corner.

OUTLINES OF GOSPEL SUBJECTS.

A GOSPEL INVITATION.

(Isaiah xlv. 22.)

- An Easy Way—"Look."
 A Divine Object—"Unto Me."
 A Glorious Certainty—"And be ye saved."
 A Full Invitation—"All the ends of the earth."

GOD'S SALVATION.

- GRACE is its Bringer (Titus ii. 11).
 The GOSPEL its Proclamation (Eph. i. 13).
 FAITH its Receiver (Rom. i. 16).
 1. Not Law, not Sacraments, not Religion.
 2. For all, unto all, may be shared by all.
 3. Faith relies on facts, Feelings follow.

"AFAR OFF."

- Afar off, because Unclean (Luke xvii. 14).
 Afar off, because Aliens (Eph. ii. 12, 13).
 Afar off, because Damned (Luke xvi. 23).
 1. The sinner in a state of Nature.
 2. The sinner in the Practice of Sin.
 3. The sinner after death, as a Christ-rejector.

BRIEFS FOR WORKERS.

GOSPEL SERVICE IN THREE ASPECTS.

- SOWERS (Mark iv. 14), putting in the Seed.
 PLANTERS (1 Cor. iii. 6), rooting the Converts.
 HUSBANDMEN (2 Tim. ii. 6), bringing in the Fruits.

FULL SPIRITUAL OUTFIT.

- SHOD to Walk (Deut. xxxiii. 25, with Eph. vi. 15.)
 GIRDED to Serve (Psa. xviii. 32, with John xiii. 4).
 ARMED to Fight (Eph. vi. 10, with 1 Tim. vi. 12).

Notes on Texts.

Philippians ii. 10, 11.—"That at (or in, R.V.) the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." This sublime passage is often interpreted as if it read "that at the Name Jesus" every knee should bow. But it says "the Name of," or belonging to Jesus, which is that of Lord—the Supreme Lord—JEHOVAH, as He is here and elsewhere named. Compare Isa. vi. 1, 9, with John xii. 41, where the JEHOVAH of the Old Testament is identified with the "Jesus" of the New.

Hebrews ii. 1.—"Lest at any time we let them slip" margin, "run out as leaking vessels." The R.V. gives "lest we drift away from them." The danger in the case of the Hebrews was not to lose by leakage what they had in them, but to drift away on the currents flowing around them, if their watchfulness became relaxed, from the things which they had heard, especially the Perfection of the Person and completeness of the Work of the Son of God (as see chapr i.).

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Q.—Are the words of Philippians iv. 15-17, capable of the interpretation that Paul was making known his wants to the saints at Philippi, and can they be used as a precedent for preachers either orally or in their "Reports" soliciting money, or telling who gives and what they get in the way of remuneration for their preaching? Ans.—The very reverse of both. The whole paragraph—verses 10-19—is a Divinely drawn picture of Christian liberality on the part of the Philippian Church, and of perfect delicacy and courtesy with the thankful acknowledgment of that which had been sent him, on the part of the apostle. If the pattern here set forth, of a Church sending their fellowship gift—twice over, too, within a few weeks—to the Lord's servant when distant from them ninety miles—as he was in Thessalonica—evangelising in a region where there were few helpers, it would go a long way to solve the problem of how the great unreached districts of our own land are to be evangelised, and give the death-blow to that evil system of giving so much money for so much preaching, just at the time when it looks like paying for the work done. The reference to money matters by preachers either in their public utterances, in telling how they "live by faith," or in tabulating their income in Reports, can scarcely be said to be derived from this passage; at least, not from the part of it where the apostle tells us, "Not because I desire a gift" (verse 17).

Answers to Correspondents.

QUERIST.—The "Interlinear Greek and English Testament," published by S. Bagster & Sons, will best meet your requirements.

J. W., GLASGOW.—The hymn, with its accompanying tune, may be found in "The Praise Book," No. 231. We fear that this splendid collection of hymns for worship, is no longer to be had new, but you may be able to procure a second-hand copy.

A. G., DEVON.—It matters very little which form of phraseology those who hold and teach the baptism of unregenerate Households use to describe their theory, whether it brings those who submit to it "into the kingdom"—"into the great house," or only "connects them outwardly with that which will save them" (whatever that may mean), they are alike directly opposed to the fundamental truth of the utter ruin and alienation of the unregenerate sinner, and his place "without Christ," "afar off," with the wrath of God abiding on him, (John iii. 36), whether child of Christian or Hindu, until Christ is received as Saviour and confessed as Lord (Rom. x. 9 unto salvation).

G. S., BOLTON.—There is nothing in the Word to sanction the first day of the week being called "Sabbath," or to support the statement as given in the Church Catechisms that the Sabbath was changed from the seventh to the first day of the week. The two days and what they witness to, are entirely distinct. The Sabbath is the memorial of God's creation rest, broken by sin, and a foreshadow of "the coming Sabbath rest" (Heb. iv. 9, R.V.) that remaineth for the people of God. The "first day of the week," called in Rev. i. 10, "The Lord's Day," is the memorial of our Lord's resurrection, and as such is to be hallowed and honoured in worship and service (Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xvi. 1). Christians need to be reminded that it is not a day for sight-seeing, pleasure, or lazy lounging at home, but of godly rest and active service for the Lord.

W. L., ONTARIO.—There is a vast difference between one groping his way out from the darkness of traditional teaching into the light of the truth, and another losing the light he had by trifling with it. It is Godlike to be patient and considerate of those who advance slowly, but are willing to learn and obey what they do learn of the will of God. Usually those who get a grasp of God's Word after such a manner value it, as that which is of God and cost them something. Very different is the case of those who either never had or loved the truth, or who have trifled with the light they once had until they lost it, and now in darkness themselves, seek to drag others into the same condition. Firm resistance rather than forbearance, is required to meet such conditions.

W. S., ALNWICK.—"The Epistle of James" is certainly not to be disposed of in the way your friend proposes, by summarily handing it over to "the Jews." It is undoubtedly part of the God-breathed "All Scripture," which is profitable and

necessary to the "man of God" for his instruction and equipment, and it would be a mercy if more use were made of its practical and searching message than generally is, in this day of flippant profession. Many of the expressions found in it indicate, that it was originally written to meet the need of certain Jewish believers during that period recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, when the greater part of those who composed the Church were from among the Jewish people. Some recent Chronologies have shewn that the Epistle was among the earliest of the New Testament writings, when the meeting places of these believers were evidently still known as "synagogues" (chap. ii. 2, R.V.).

Answers to Special Questions.

VII.—Is it according to God's Word that ministering brethren go in and out among meetings begun in division, with an open door to all, including many under discipline. If they do, can it be for godly order and edification, that they be welcomed to teach in assemblies where such companies and their founders, are regarded in the light of Rom. xvi. 17.

ANSWER A.—Division among the children of God is a deep dishonour to the Lord's Name which they bear, and a hindrance and stumbling to young believers and others seeking after the Lord's ways. No servant of Christ who realises the evil accruing from such divisions, will either support or condone them.

G. S.

ANSWER B.—It would be wrong to say that ALL divisions are sinful and to be avoided. There have been cases, where the determined retention of evil doctrine and evildoers necessitated those who feared the Lord and sought to honour His Name severing their connection with such a company, in order to avoid being partakers of other men's sins (1 Tim. v. 22). But such a step should only be taken after all service and remonstrance has failed, and with the fellowship of other assemblies who have full knowledge of the real condition of things. When such a course becomes necessary, the causes should be made known, and not a blind acquiescence in a judgment open to question demanded.

W. M.

ANSWER C.—Meetings, begun by a few lawless and restless spirits, who could not get their way in assemblies where they had long been troublers, are springing up all over, and as lawlessness and departure from the truth increase, are likely to multiply. True, most of them have only a short

existence, but they can do infinite mischief while they continue, and give trouble to others. If preachers associate themselves with such companies, either on the ground that they are unconcerned as to their origin, so long as they get what is called "an open door," they ought to be made to feel that such ways are not to the edification of saints, and that those who practise them cannot be regarded as ensamples to the flock and fitted to rule and teach. If John Mark was "unprofitable" (2 Tim. iv. 11) as a servant, because of his unstable ways, and on this account refused as a co-worker by the apostle Paul (Acts xv. 37-40), men who openly support and help to perpetuate division, where none should exist, are unsafe as teachers, and should be so treated while they persist in their evil course.

J. M.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—Few divisions among Christians occur because of fundamental evils in doctrine or in practice. Most are caused by determined men who must have their way, and if they do not get it, they go out and "begin a new meeting." It is remarkable how much we hear about "love and forbearance," and how little of either is shewn under such conditions, generally least of all by the very men who are most given to exhort to liberality, and to vehemently denounce division, over "differences of judgment." But what are the facts? Take a case. Here is a company of simple, godly believers in a country town. They began to gather in the Lord's Name some twenty years ago, and have gone on happily and unitedly ever since. A stranger comes, commended from a distant place. They receive him in good faith, and give him scope for what ability he possesses, more than he ought to have perhaps until he "prove" himself, as the Word instructs (1 Tim. iii. 10). Before he is there long, he begins to find fault with much that is done; it is "out of date;" he knows of something better. A true Absalom, he sighs for power, and commences his struggle for the reins of government by speaking disparagingly of the brethren who have served the saints for half a lifetime. If he can drive them from their place well and good, he will "deliver" saints from the "bondage" they are kept in, under such rule. But if this fail, he will lead out his following and begin on new lines, which are to work wonders, and bring about such a "revival" as has neither been seen nor heard of. This is the point at which some, especially such as are easily caught by every new device, become inveigled, and where others who have the same ideas, but were unable to

give them effect, shew where their sympathies are. They flock to the new meeting as certain in Israel did around the standard of Absalom, because it is what they have wanted for long, but either dare not, or could not raise it for themselves. Those who hasten to "shew fellowship" with such movements, plainly manifest what spirit they are of. We believe that God is using such events to open the eyes of many of His people to things they were slow to exercise themselves in, and to teach us all the need of holding fast with a firm and godly grasp, all of His truth that He has taught us, lest by trifling with it, it may be lost in its authority and power in our souls, as to very many it already is.

Notes on Current Events.

The Death of King Edward, and the proclamation of his son as King, may well remind us of the word, "He removeth kings and setteth up kings" (Dan. ii. 21), and stir the children of God in these lands to such prayer as 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2, commands. To the Christian, whoever is on the throne, or whatever Government is in power, "The Lord reigneth" is always a word of peace and comfort, and to Him he directly looks, on Him he counts for security, liberty, and peace.

Fellowship "in furtherance of the Gospel" (Phil. i. 5, R.V.) is a grace which needs development in many assemblies of the Lord's people, not only in distant lands—the needs of which are well kept before them by frequent visits of missionary brethren—but in needy parts of these home lands, where evangelists who have a heart for the Gospel and are willing to work, go in the Summer season with tents, preaching the Gospel in the open air and visiting from door to door all day and every day. Such labour is something very different in character from having "a week's meetings" or "a mission"—as it is now coming to be called—in a well appointed hall, where everything is provided, and little else is done by the preacher than to give a thirty minutes' address.

Questions Requiring Answers.

VIII.—Will you give some help on the two passages, Heb. vi. 4-8; x. 26-29, which are a cause of distress to many? Do they apply to unsaved professors, or to backslidden believers?

Restoration and Fruitbearing.

VERY beautiful are the words of the prophet of Judah of ancient time, setting forth the healed, restored, revived, and refreshed condition of God's people in days to come. "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely, I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon" (Hosea xiv. 4-7). Without disturbing the primary application of these words, we may surely learn from and be edified by them in the present time of heavenly blessing, and the Spirit's indwelling in the saints and servants of God. First, there is the "healing" of the backslidden state, ever the first necessity, without which no spiritual blessing can be known. This is apt to be forgotten or glossed over. But God, who sees the heart, will not be mocked; if there is departure in heart (Heb. iii. 12) from Him, it must be judged and owned; then there will be healing and reviving. The "dew" on the branch and the "roots" in the soil, the beauty of the "lily" and the "olive," with the fragrance of the "cedar" and the fruitfulness of the "vine," will follow, for God delights to revive the self-judged and humble heart, and the indwelling Spirit never fails to flow through cleansed and sanctified channels, bearing life and refreshing to others. It is this preliminary dealing with God about sin and failure, this heart-searching and use of the sharp two-edged sword (Heb. iv. 12)

on self, that is the first step toward that revived and fruit-bearing condition which is so often prayed for, and so much needed in our day. There are many who would welcome the reviving and the blessing, who have little exercise of soul in the self-judgment and the healing, but the Lord does His work in His own appointed way, and if we would know His hand in blessing, we must prove it first in healing our backslidings. Then, as restored, revived, and refreshed, the Divine life in full health, and the Divine Spirit ungrieved and unquenched, there will be fruit to God, and rich abiding blessing will flow to others. A ministry of soft and delectable things will always be demanded by a heart-backslidden and barren people. But this is not the means that God will use to arouse, to humble and to bring to that state in which He can revive His people. The message of the prophets to backsliding Judah was not always what they wanted, but what God saw they needed. It did not consist of a rehearsal of doctrines upon which they were all agreed, but was generally a message straight to the conscience, bringing their sin to their remembrance to humble them. It was the incisive word "Thou art the man" (2 Sam. xii. 7) from God by the mouth of the prophet, that brought David to his knees before God and caused him to pray "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation (Psa. li. 12). This is the need of the time and the Lord's way to meet that need. There must be no minimising of sin, no winking at departure from God, no catering to the crowd, but honest dealing with God and His Word

Christ's Ambassadors.

AN ADDRESS AT A WORKERS' CONFERENCE.

SOME of the titles given to the people of God express their privileges; others their responsibilities. Some tell of their place in the Divine presence and in the embrace of the Divine love; others, of their attitude toward their brethren and the world.

A brief consideration of one of these may, by the Divine blessing, enable us to more fully appreciate the dignity and feel the responsibility which the Lord has put upon us in leaving us in the world for a brief period to represent Him among men, and to bear His Name and His Word before men as "Ambassadors for Christ."

This title here given to the servants of Christ especially connects them with the Risen Lord in glory, with all authority given to Him in heaven and on earth. It may be said to be of a double character. First, it shews the Christian in his relation to Christ as Lord, a subject of and servant in His Kingdom, to whom His Master has entrusted a sacred charge; second, in relation to the world in which he stands as a representative of God and Christ, an ambassador sent from the court of heaven.

In 2 Cor. v. 20, R.V., we read—"We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God." Such is the position and such the message of the heavenly ambassador—a position at once of the highest honour and of the heaviest responsibility. Let us see what we can

learn from it, and may the Divine Spirit cause us to feel its solemnity.

An ambassador is "a representative of one kingdom at the court of another"—as for example the British Ambassador in Turkey, or the American Ambassador in London. His presence is the sign of amicable relations between the two countries; his withdrawal is a sign of the rupture of diplomacy and is often the precursor of war.

He is there to represent his absent Sovereign, to maintain his claims, to look after his interests, and to communicate his messages—in short, to *be* and to *do* what the Sovereign himself would be and do, if he were there. He is not the servant of the country in which he resides, nor does he regard it as his home. He is supported by and controlled from his own land. He remains a subject of his own King and Government, and continual communication is kept up between him and his Sovereign. He stands there a stranger in a strange land, retaining his nationality, his nature, and his language, and holds himself ready at any moment to go home at his Sovereign's call. If he act foolishly or unworthily, he disgraces his country, and is an unworthy representative of it. The people amongst whom he is, judge of his King and country by the representative they have among them. In what a solemn and deeply responsible light this places the heavenly ambassador.

TRUE OF ALL BELIEVERS.

The title of "Ambassador" may have been applied especially to Paul and his fellow-apostles, but not to them exclusively. In varied measures, all believers

have been "put in trust with the Gospel" (1 Thess. ii. 4), and sent into the world to represent Christ, even as He was sent to declare the Father (John i. 18, with xx. 21). You will observe that this title is intimately connected with "the ministry of Reconciliation" (v. 18), and this again is based on the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ (v. 22). At the Cross "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." Reconciliation has now been effected: peace has been made through the blood of the Cross (Col. i. 20), and as the result, all things in heaven and on earth will yet be reconciled and re-adjusted according to God. The believing sinner is already reconciled (Col. i. 21, with Rom. v. 10), and the things in heaven and earth will yet be so, on the ground of a full atonement having been made.

GRACE REIGNS.

Meanwhile grace is on the throne, and judgment is postponed. Yes, "grace reigns" (Rom. v. 20) and peace is proclaimed (Eph. ii. 13-17). It is the "acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke iv. 19), "the accepted time" and "the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2). Not that God winks at sin, or will neglect to judge it, but throughout this age of grace He does not charge it home upon men. A full amnesty is declared: forgiveness is proclaimed (Acts xiii. 38). No man's sin need keep him out of heaven.

THE AMBASSADOR'S MESSAGE.

The ambassador's message is "Be ye reconciled to God." It is more a royal command than an invitation. It is the authoritative message of the throne in the heavens through its ambassador,

commanding men everywhere to repent (Acts xvii. 30), asking sinners to lay down their weapons of enmity, and accepting the amnesty provided, pass over from the rule of Satan, to become subjects in the kingdom of the Son of God (Col. i. 13).

And Christ's ambassador is not only a preacher of peace, but likewise a man in quest of new subjects to grace his Master's kingdom, fresh disciples to learn his Master's will (Matt. xxviii. 18). His character and ways preach as well as his words, and people look at what he is, and what he does, as well as listen to what he says. How grand it is when Christ's ambassador can turn to those among whom he has spoken the message of God, and testify, as Paul did to the Thessalonians: "We preached unto you the Gospel" (1 Thess. ii. 9), and "Ye are witnesses how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves" (1 Thess. ii. 10).

HIS LIFE TESTIMONY.

The testimony of the lips and the life must go together. If a man's words are not supported by his life, they will have little weight—he will soon prove a stumbling block rather than a true representative. In certain heathen countries, the natives say that our British ships brought Bibles and rum together. Such ways greatly hinder the progress of the Gospel among the nations, and prejudice the heathen against the servants of God and their message.

AN UNFAITHFUL AMBASSADOR.

An unfaithful ambassador dishonours his country; but an unholy preacher causes his God and the Gospel he preaches

to be blasphemed. An unfaithful or inconsistent Christian does more to hinder the Gospel, than all the opposition of scoffers and sceptics together. Even in humble spheres this great principle obtains and operates for good or evil. A young Christian girl, when asked by some one under whose preaching she had been converted, replied—"I was not converted under any man's preaching, it was my aunt's practising that brought me to see there is a reality in Christ and His salvation." And we may be assured that no one lives "unto himself;" we are all making our mark upon those who are around us, who narrowly watch our ways while they listen to our words, and form their conclusions accordingly.

How important then that all who speak the message of God's grace to men, should so live as to be themselves living witnesses of its power.

AN AMBASSADOR IN A CHAIN.

In one respect the "Ambassador of Christ" is a contrast to those of earthly kingdoms. He represents a "throne of grace." God is not dealing in righteousness at present with the world, but in grace. The conditions upon which his ambassadors remain among those who have crucified and cast out "the Lord of Glory" are, that God is not exacting from men at present that which in righteousness he might well demand. They are in "the tribulation and hingedom and patience" (Rev. i. 9), and therefore they must suffer along with the suffering Gospel (2 Tim. i. 8, R.V.). The apostle who wrote these words had to speak of himself to the Ephesian saints as "an

ambassador in a chain" (Eph. vi. 20, R.V.). It is the day of a silent heaven. God is forbearing with man's sin. So must His servants. They need not expect better treatment than their Master, at the hands of those who despise His message. They will not "reign as kings" (1 Cor. iv. 8, 9) in a world where He got a felon's cross, if they are true to Him. They must suffer, and learn to take it patiently. The day of their recompence will come, as sure as the Lord has promised it (2 Thess. i. 6, 7), but they must not pre-date it by taking vengeance into their own hands, or calling for it at the hand of others.

Soon the reign of grace will be over. Then the ambassadors of heaven will be recalled, and all the fruit of their labours with them (see 1 Thess. iv. 17) to be gathered to their own country, and set down around that throne which ruled them while they were on earth. The next sight we get of those who were heaven's ambassadors on earth is seated on thrones in peace, crowned with glory (Rev. iv. 4), while the throne of God is preparing itself for *judgment* (Rev. iv. 5) on that earth, which had rejected their message. Grace no longer reigns. The great amnesty is then withdrawn; peace is taken from the earth (Rev. vi. 4), and judgment will presently sweep the whole scene.

The Evening and the Morning.

"Time's sun is fast setting, its twilight is nigh,
Its evening is falling in clouds o'er the sky,
Its shadows are stretching in ominous gloom,
Its midnight approaches—the midnight of doom.
But the bright coming glory will break as the day,
And the saved of the Lord will be all caught away."

The Assembly Life of Believers

ITS PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

PART III. BY THE EDITOR.

THE formation of the Church as the body of Christ, composed of all saints from Pentecost until the return of the Son of God from heaven, is, as we are told in Matt. xvi. 18, and in 1 Cor. xii. 13, a Divine work, in which man has no share. The believing sinner is the subject of it, and may either know and rejoice in the place of unique privilege into which he has thus been brought, or through lack of clear and Scriptural teaching regarding his calling and portion in Christ, he may live and die having little knowledge or enjoyment of it. Yet all believers alike are in and of that Church which Christ is building, the body which is being formed, and which in its complete condition will be presented "the church glorious," without spot or wrinkle or any such thing (Eph. v. 27). The local assembly, in contrast to this, is formed through the agency of men, called and fitted by God no doubt, yet liable to err, either in including those whom God has not received or in excluding those who ought to be there. The means through which such local companies come into existence is plainly set before us in the Word, especially in the Acts of the Apostles. In fulfilment of the commission given by the Lord (see Matt. xxviii. 19-20; Mark xv. 15, 16; Luke xxiv. 47-49), His servants preached the Gospel—first to the Jews (Acts ii. 22) and later to the Gentiles (Acts x. 42-48)—with the result that sinners believed and

were saved, becoming disciples of the Lord (Acts xi. 26; xiii. 52; xiv. 21, mar.). These being baptised according to the Divine commission, were led on in the Word of the Lord, being taught "all things whatsoever" He had commanded (Acts xviii. 11; xx. 31), alike in their individual and assembly life, with the result that in each place to which the Gospel of God was carried and preached for the conversion of sinners (1 Thess. i. 5-9), and the Word of God taught and received for the instruction and edification of saints (1 Thess. ii. 13, 14) there remained after the first preachers had gone, assemblies composed of believers, all formed according to the same pattern. Not so many "branches" of one church, but each having an individual existence of its own, to be dealt with and praised or blamed by the Lord (see Rev. i. ii.) according to its condition, yet all so united, so mutually dependent, that when occasion required, they could act together (see 2 Cor. viii. 1, 19), and could be cared for (2 Cor. xi. 28) by those who founded them. When one was converted in early times, he had no need to ask what church he would join, or with what local company of believers he would seek to be identified. There was only one assembly in each place, or if there were various meeting places—as in larger cities and towns there may have been—they were all the same in character and constitution—not various denominations bearing different names and holding different doctrines as now, but simply and only Churches of God, assembling in the Name of the Lord Jesus, according to the Word in Matthew

xviii. 20, composed of believers only, and open to receive all God's truth as taught by His sent and qualified servants (1 Cor. iv. 17; Acts xv. 32, 36, 41). All this is set aside and practically rendered void, by those who teach that there is no local assembly, nor any circle of privilege and responsibility other than the body of Christ, into which all believers are brought by the act of God, and in which they continue for ever, for of His own body. Christ is the Saviour, or Preserver (Eph. v. 23), so that it can neither be marred nor maimed, by men or demons.

In the city of Jerusalem, as the result of Peter's preaching on the Pentecostal day, the Word was received by about three thousand Spirit-convicted souls, who immediately were baptised and added to the one hundred and twenty disciples who were together before (Acts i. 15), and of these disciples it is recorded that "they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers" (Acts ii. 42)—words which have no meaning save as applied to "the church which was at Jerusalem" (Acts viii. 1), that is, the local assembly there, into which they had been brought, to share the teaching of the apostles, the fellowship of saints, the breaking of the bread and the prayers, in all of which they "continued stedfastly." Such words could not be applied to their membership in the body of Christ, which is a position in which "continuing stedfastly" has no meaning, all being of God and of grace. Into the local assembly one is brought by his own desire in seeking such a place (see Acts ix. 26), and by the

act of the assembly in receiving or welcoming him "in the Lord" (Rom. xvi. 1, 2). On the part of the one desiring to be thus identified with the local assembly, there will doubtless be some exercise of heart as to the import of the step he desires to take, and some perception of the fact that he is seeking to share the privileges and responsibilities of God's assembly, while on the part of those who receive, there will be that discernment and care exercised which is worthy of so important and responsible an act.

The attitude of the Christian assembly toward those who have been truly born of God, and are seeking to walk according to the truth in subjection to the Lord Jesus, may be fittingly expressed in the words—"Come thou with us and we will do thee good" (Num. x. 29), and the hearty response of the obedient believer who is exercised in what will be well pleasing to the Lord, and whose spiritual instincts enable him to discern with whom the Lord is and where there is a desire to give effect to His Word, apart from the authority or commandments of men, will be, "We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you" (Zech. viii. 23). It is not a matter of proselytising or getting people to "join us" or "do as we do," but a return to the ancient and Scriptural polity of God's assembly as given in the Word. When God's people are assembled as the Word directs, and when the Spirit of the Lord is able to use them in worship and in service without human restraint, God is honoured by them, and they themselves are blessed. How many have cause to thank God for

deliverance from worldly and unscriptural church associations in which their spiritual life was withered, their spiritual energies cramped and hindered, and their spiritual condition reduced to bitter bondage under clerical and worldly rule, which it was vain to seek to remedy or appeal against, seeing it was part of the organisation! Such liberty is not generally gained without a sacrifice, or such a separation made without some loss. But the joy of being free to do the will of God in so far as it is known, and of being where further light from the Word can be welcomed and when received obeyed, amply compensates for what one has to sacrifice in the way of human friendship and influence. To walk thus humbly in the path of obedience to the Lord, will still involve the experience expressed in the memorable yet oft-forgotten words of the Divine Master — “If any man will COME AFTER Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me” (Matt. xvi. 24). “This honour have all His saints” (Psa. cxlix. 9). Yet how comparatively few avail themselves of it! In our time, many who love the Lord are ill at ease in their church associations, which they own are becoming more corrupt as the years go by. Yet they remain in them, rather than lose “caste” by going forth without the camp of worldly religion, to assemble simply and only in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, according to the pattern given in the Sacred Word. You may say strong things against the world’s religion, so long as you give it your patronage, but separate from it, and you are at once a branded man.

Israel and the Church.

VII.—THE BLESSINGS OF ISRAEL.

WM. HOSTE, B.A., BRIGHTON

THE earthly calling of Israel was shown by the character of the blessings attached to it. These were material and connected with the earth, as was foreshadowed by the blessings enjoyed by the forefathers—“Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold” (Gen. xiii. 2). As Jehovah promised, “I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee” (Gen. xvii. 6). Later, we read of Isaac, “He sowed in that land and received in the same year a hundred-fold” (Gen. xxvi. 12), and of Jacob, “The man had much cattle and maid-servants and manservants and camels and asses” (Gen. xxx. 43). This is further exemplified by the blessing of the twelve patriarchs by Jacob, and of the twelve tribes by Moses (*e.g.*, those of Joseph, Gen. xlix. 25; Deut. xxxiii. 13-17). We may roughly divide these blessings under the three headings of (1) Physical Condition, (2) Material Provision, (3) National Position.

(1) PHYSICAL FITNESS promised. If an Israelite walked with God, he was to be a healthy and a long lived man. “I will put none of these diseases upon thee which I have brought upon the Egyptians” (Exod. xv. 26). Of Moses we read—“His eye was not dim, nor was his natural force abated” (Deut. xxxiv. 7). Caleb could testify, “I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me” (Josh. xiv. 10), and we read of David,

“the man after God’s own heart,” “He died in a good old age full of days” (2 Chron. xxix. 29).

(2) MATERIAL PROSPERITY vouchsafed. The obedient Israelite would be also a prosperous man. He would be blessed in the city and in the field, in his family and in his flocks, in his basket and in his store. It was only necessary to take a walk in his fields and orchards, and notice the state of his crops, his vines, and his fig trees, to gauge his relation to God. If they were wrong, he was wrong; if they prospered he was pleasing God. We see in the prophets (*e.g.*, Haggai and Habakkuk) how often it was just here that Israel suffered when under the chastening hand of God. “Ye have sown much and brought in little. The heaven over you is stayed with dew and the earth is stayed from her fruit.” I called for a drought upon the land.” Israel ought to have known that Jehovah had a controversy with her. This makes the faith of Habakkuk all the more remarkable, for though he saw around him the signs of Jehovah’s judgment on the nation—no blossom on the fig tree, no fruit in the vines, yet he could say, “I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.” His individual faith thus triumphed in the midst of national departure and disaster.

(3) NATIONAL POSITION AND PROTECTION guaranteed. “The Lord shall cause thine enemies, that rise up against thee, to be smitten before thy face” (Deut. xxviii. 7), a promise often exemplified in the case of David, of whom we read, “The Lord delivered him out of the hand

of all his enemies” (2 Sam. xxii. 1). Then later, in the same chapter in Deuteronomy, “All the people of the earth . . . shall be afraid of thee.” “The Lord shall make thee the head and not the tail”—a state of things very different to the present condition of Israel, but seen in the reigns of Solomon, Uzziah, Hezekiah, and other kings. Now all national life, not to say prosperity, is lost to Israel. In “Zionism” we may surely see the dry bones of Israel beginning to come together, preparatory to a partial national return in unbelief to their land.

The enjoyment of these blessings was conditional ON OBEDIENCE TO LAW. The ordinances of the Levitical economy were suited to men “living in the world” (Col. ii. 20), and are called in Col. ii. 8, 20, “the rudiments of the world,” or in Gal. iv. 9, “the weak and beggarly elements.” Thus the promise of immunity from disease depended on hearkening to the voice of the Lord . . . and giving ear to His commandments” (Exod. xv. 26), and so with the individual and national blessings already referred to (Deut. xxviii. 1). The condition and position of Israel in the world “scattered and oppressed,” is a standing witness that legal obedience never secures divine blessings, though their eventual enjoyment is guaranteed to the nation by the covenant of grace given to the fathers, founded on the work of Christ, which their sin and unbelief can neither forfeit nor cause to fail.

The world in its unrest is calling for some one to bring harmony into its discord, but whilst it scoffs at Christ, it will accept an Antichrist.—
H. GROVES.

Doctrine and Practice.

IT is a common frailty of human nature to be diligent in keeping other people right, when the one who does so is far away from the path of rectitude himself. In the spiritual kingdom it has sometimes been found that the most zealous advocates of certain lines of teaching have been the least diligent in giving effect to them in their own practice. For example, here is a brother who is a specialist in teaching the truth of separation. He contends vigorously in his teaching for the unequal yoke and a "clean cut" from "the world." This is the doctrine; what of the practice? He is an enthusiastic co-operator, unequally yoked as a co-partner in business with hundreds who make no profession of being born again. Although his name does not appear on the signboard, as in the case of "Black and Brown," the grocers next door, he is in every sense a partner in the concern, sharing its profits and responsible for its principles of trading, as these two are in their little business. The fact that there are two hundred partners in the one and only two in the other makes no difference: they are the same in principle, and there is no getting away from the fact that the member of the Co-operative Association is unequally yoked with unbelievers in his business, and responsible before God for whatever is done by the concern in which he is a partner. Is it any wonder that his teaching on separation falls flat on those who know what his position is? Then there is that brother who owns a property in which there is a licensed

house, by means of which hundreds are robbed and ruined, soul and body. Of course his name is not on its signboard, nor does it appear in its connection. He has an agent who transacts the business for him. Quite so, but he pockets the proceeds of that unholy traffic, in which God sees he has part and lot. These and suchlike inconsistencies are what causes the truth of God to be defamed, and those who profess to own it regarded as hypocrites. Let the life be regulated by the doctrine of the Lord. If this is not to be, then better cease to speak of it than cause it to be blasphemed by an inconsistent life testimony.

Light Literature.

THERE are numbers of the Lord's people suffering in spiritual life from reading the world's light literature. The fictitious tale of "plot and counterplot" to be "continued in our next," devoured with zest, while the daily portion of heavenly manna gathered from the Word is neglected, has its defiling and soul-blighting effects on all who drink of such streams of putrid waters. There is need for a trumpet blast of no uncertain sound to be given among the people of God on this prevalent habit. There can be no doubt that many who hold high place and stand as teachers and guides in spiritual things, are far gone in the habit of reading fiction. Their bookshelves, too plainly tell on what pastures they feed, and where they derive the "thoughts" in which their dry and withering ministry abounds.

The Preachers' Corner.

SUGGESTIVE GOSPEL OUTLINES.

THE SINNER'S RUIN.

- By Nature, a Child of Wrath (Eph. ii. 3).
 By Practice, a Wanderer (Isa. liii. 6).
 In Mind, an Enemy (Rom. viii. 7).
 In Guilt, a Criminal (Rom. iii. 19).

THE NEW BIRTH.

- The Agent—The Spirit of God (John iii. 5).
 The Instrument—The Word of God (1 Pet. i. 23).
 The Means—Receiving Christ (John i. 12-14).
 The Evidence—Love to God (1 John v. 1).

SALVATION IS OF THE LORD.

- He it was who Procured it (Isa. lxiii. 5).
 He it is who Sends it (Tit. ii. 11; Acts xiii. 12).
 He makes it Known (Psa. xcvi. 2; Eph. ii. 12).
 He Alone can Impart it (Isa. lxi. 10).
 There is None in any other (Acts iv. 12).

BIBLE STUDIES AND SUBJECTS.

THE GRACE OF GOD.

- Saved by Grace (Eph. ii. 9)—Our Position.
 Standing in Grace (Rom. v. 2)—Our Relation.
 Disciplined in Grace (Tit. ii. 12)—Our Education.
 Growing in Grace (2 Pet. iii. 18)—Our Progress.

THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT.

- Power to Walk after Christ (Gal. v. 16).
 Power to Work for Christ (Acts vi. 8).
 Power to Witness unto Christ (Acts i. 8).

SYMBOLS OF A LOCAL CHURCH.

- A Temple (2 Cor. iii. 16)—To be filled with God.
 A Pillar (1 Tim. iii. 15)—To bear Witness to God.
 A Lampstand (Rev. i. 20)—Giving Light for God.

Notes on Texts.

Gal. ii. 20.—"I am crucified with Christ." The R.V. gives "I have been crucified with Christ," which is better. The Greek perfect tense expresses a past action having continuous results. This co-crucifixion (Rom. vi. 16), was actually at the Cross, while the present effect is in the believer.

1 Cor. xi. 28.—"Let a man examine (R.V., prove) himself." The image here is the crucible and the fire, with the gold being tested and separated from the dross. Such is to be the work of the saint upon himself, the proving of his works, ways, words,

motives, aims, and desires. If he carries on this business searchingly and unsparingly, he will have little time or inclination to pass summary judgments upon others.

1 Cor. iii. 1-3.—"I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ." In their relationship they were "brethren," born of God; in their standing they were "in Christ," but in their state they were carnal, only "babes" in age and growth, walking "after the manner of man" (ver. 3, R.V.).

Answers to Correspondents.

VERITAS.—A thoroughly reliable and helpful volume on the Future Life, is "Facts and Theories of a Future State," by F. W. Grant. So far as we know, it is the fullest and best book on the subject issued.

STUDENT.—As a rule, Church history is a dry morsel to the soul, and does not edify. Andrew Miller's three volumes of "Short Papers on Church History" are an exception, and are full of valuable, Scriptural and spiritual expositions, as well as historic facts.

A. F., DUBLIN.—The baptism in one Spirit into one body (1 Cor. xii. 13) is common to all the children of God; it is the operation of the living Lord (see John i. 33, where He is revealed as the appointed Baptist in the Holy Ghost), and is never repeated. But the same verse (1 Cor. xii. 13) adds, "and have all been made to drink into one Spirit." Here there is room for varying experiences: some may be "filled" (Eph. v. 18), others carnal, and not walking in the Spirit.

A. E. M., HENLEY.—There is with some a tendency to go beyond what is revealed in the Word in speaking of the intermediate or unclothed state. Our safeguard is to keep to what God has made known, and to use the words of inspiration in speaking of it. We read of "the spirits of just men" (Heb. xii. 23), and of "the spirits in prison" (1 Pet. iii. 19). "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts vii. 59), was Stephen's dying word. At death, the soul and spirit leave the body; neither ceases to be, but until resurrection remains unclothed—in personality as a soul, in individuality as a spirit. Thus, as our Lord's "soul" (Acts ii. 31) and "spirit" (Luke xxiii. 46) are each described as existing apart from His body, so are those of His saints (Acts vii. 59, with Rev. xx. 4).

J. C., TORONTO.—1 Tim. vi. 8, does not deal with the matter of acquiring a house to live in, which in some cases is a necessity, when none can be rented, but warns against setting the heart on earthly riches and taking forbidden means to acquire them. "They that desire to be rich (r.v.) includes many who never become so, but are ensnared in their attempts.

E. C., KEIGHLEY.—Acts ii., verse 14, incidentally shews that the Lord approved of the election of Matthias to fill the place of Judas, and recognised him as one of "the eleven." The apostleship and ministry of Paul was to the Gentiles (Rom. xv. 16), and of another order.

A. G., SHEFFIELD.—If the "holy" children of 1 Cor. vii. 14, are to be baptised because of their relation to a regenerate parent, so may the unbelieving wife whose husband is a Christian, for the same word in ver. 14, rendered "sanctified," is applied to the unbelieving partner, either husband or wife. They must be "scant of proof" for household or infant baptism, who apply to this passage for it.

G. L., MANCHESTER.—The words "spirit and soul and body" (1 Thess. v. 23) describe the three constituent parts of man during life. "Spirit" is not the Holy Spirit, nor the new nature, as some teach, but "the spirit of man which is in him" (1 Cor. ii. 11). And this is common to all men, regenerate and unregenerate alike. It is formed "within him" by the great Creator (Zech. xii. 1), and is that higher part of man's being which enables him to understand human things. In the regenerate, the Spirit of God witnesses with their spirit (Rom. viii. 16), a word which clearly distinguishes, while it tells the symphony between the renewed spirit of the believer and the indwelling Spirit of God.

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Answers to Special Questions.

VIII.—Will you give some help on the two passages, Heb. vi. 4-8; x. 26-29, which are a cause of distress to many? Do they apply to unsaved professors, or to backslidden believers?

The number of answers sent in to this question would fill a full number. Many of them are much too long, and others not to the point. We give the salient points of a few, and commend them to the careful consideration of our readers. We think it will be for general edification to deal with the two passages separately, taking Heb. vi. 1-8, for the present.

ANSWER A.—The Hebrews here addressed were a very privileged people, having known the great Pentecostal operation of the Spirit and seen the wonders of the Lord's right hand, as well as heard the apostle's testimony to Christ's person and work. Many were truly saved, but others may have only been outwardly moved to a profession. Like certain who in the days of the Lord's ministry, followed as disciples (John vi. 66), and then "went back," so these were in danger of apostatising from the truths they had heard, and in returning to Judaism. To them and others like them, the solemn verses 4-6, apply. J. S.

ANSWER B.—To get the proper answer to this question it is needful to consider (a) Who are here addressed? (b) What is the "falling away?" The answer to (a) is they were Hebrews, possibly all of them having professed conversion at or since Pentecost, and are addressed in view of such profession as "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling" (chap. iii. 1). But they had not all advanced, some had rather gone back. Such had not only continued but "become babes" and "become dull of hearing"—words which clearly mean retrogression, going back to shadows and ritual which in the case of some might mean complete apostasy from what they had learned. That some of them were truly born of God the writer had no doubt (see ver. 9), but he gives them all the warning, and leaves it to do its work—a form of ministry not unnecessary in our time, when counterfeit professors, with many attractive qualities, are plentiful. In verses 4, 5, there are five things said of them, neither, nor all of which can be counted the equivalent of the new birth. It is not said that such as are described had "faith" in Christ, or were "saved," or "sealed" by the Spirit. All was outward, and capable of existing apart from spiritual life. (b) To "fall away" was to drop the profession, to go out like those in 1 John ii. 19, manifesting their true character, not becoming unsaved, but only shewing that they always had been. A. G.

ANSWER C.—Those who think the persons described in verses 4, 5, must be true believers, mostly base their belief on the things said concerning them. Let us see what these are. They were "enlightened"—so, and in the same sense were those in John xii. 36, and Balaam, "whose eyes were opened" (Num. xxiv. 16), yet they were not saved. "Tasted of the heavenly gift" and "the good Word of God." So did the stony ground hearers (Matt. xiii. 20), receiving it "with joy."

Yet they had "no root," and fell away. "Partakers of the Holy Ghost,"—mark, it is not born or sealed of the Spirit—but as Saul in his day (1 Sam. x. 6-10), or as the very "place" which was shaken (Acts iv. 31), and as many now who assemble where God the Spirit is dwelling (see 1 Cor. xiv. 25; 1 Cor. iii. 16). "Powers of the age to come, in days of miracles and works of power, such as Judas, who doubtless performed them, and Simon Magus who was attracted by them, and others who cast out demons (Matt. vii. 20), yet of whom the Lord said, "I never knew you." The passage is solemn and searching, meant to be so, and has its use now as it had then, not to bring doubt upon the feeblest of those "in Christ," who are in His hand and can never perish (John x. 28), but to warn heady, flippant professors that mere adhesion to "the doctrine of Christ, apart from manifested life and growth, is no evidence of true conversion, and may easily become apostasy. W. H.

ANSWER D.—That a backsliding believer can be restored we know (Luke xxiii. 32; Gal. vi. 1), but those referred to cannot be renewed to repentance, because they have rejected the person and work of Christ, than which there is no Saviour. There was in their day a special liability among the Hebrews to this, by a return to their old religion, its sacrifices and altars, and in ours to Ritualism, with its imposing and sense-pleasing ceremonies, and to Rationalism, as expressed in Higher Criticism, New Theology, and the Divine in man, the one setting aside the Divine Person of the Son of God, and the other overshadowing His one great sacrifice offered once for all on the Cross. W. J. M.

ANSWER E.—The opening word of chap. vi.—"Therefore"—is the connecting link with the close of chap. v., which is occupied with growth. Those addressed are believers, they had life, they were "partakers of the heavenly calling," but they had not grown; they remained in babyhood, able only to use milk. They were to go on to "full growth," not again laying the foundation but building on it. The five distinct statements that follow mark them as God's people, "If they shall fall away"—from Christ? No! (John x. 28). From grace? No! (Rom. v. 2). What then? From obedience; from going on with God and His Word to full growth: from growth in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is the only safeguard from "falling from our own steadfastness" (2 Pet. iii. 17). Here it is not salvation, but the "things which accompany salvation" (ver. 9) that were lacking

in some, who, while they continued in disobedience and unconfessed sin, neglecting the great sacrifice which alone can cleanse from such sin, it is impossible to "renew them unto repentance, so as to bring forth fruit unto God. A. L.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—It will be noted that the first four replies assume that those described were professors of Christianity, who at the beginning gave all the outward evidences of being Christians, yet ultimately by their lack of growth in Divine life and progress in the knowledge of Christ on the one hand, and their possible return to the "Jews' religion"—as Paul described effete Judaism (Gal. i. 14)—they were in danger of apostatising and so making it manifest that they were as soil which, although watered and dressed, beareth only thorns and briars, to be rejected. The fifth answer affirms they were true believers, stunted through living in disobedience, and therefore unfruitful to God. These two differing views have been and are held by spiritual men and able scholars on both sides. Two things are evident: (1) The passage does not teach that any true child of God or sheep of Christ can ultimately perish, for this would be a contradiction of such passages as John x. 28; Eph. 1. 13; iv. 30; Rom. viii. 30, 38, 39, where no obscurity of meaning is possible; and (2) that professors who make no progress, but remain in an infantile condition, ever needing to be led on first principles, with no capacity to receive and no exercise to obey the Word of God, may well cause those who watch for souls to fear, lest one day they may manifest that they are rootless and lifeless, and as barren land that yields nothing in return for all the care expended on it—nothing but thorns.

Questions Requiring Answers.

Help in answering the following questions will be welcomed. All answers should be short and definite, giving the Word, and avoiding reference to persons. We have a large number of queries on matters of real interest sent us by those exercised about them, which will appear in the Magazine as space permits.

IX.—Is there any Scripture authority for Training Colleges and such like Institutions, in which certain young men and women who are specially favoured, are prepared for Missionary Work?

X.—To what class do the words of Rom. xiv. 1 apply? Can they be rightly used to warrant the reception of one to the assembly who denies and opposes such truths of Scripture as the baptism of believers by immersion?

Separation to God.

Read Lev. xx. 24-26; John xvii. 14-18.

H. B. THOMPSON, BANGOR.

TRUTHS which were fully taught thirty years ago and helpful to us as young believers then, are very little heard of now. By some, the truth of separation to God is regarded as out of date and hardly ever spoken of. In some places it would be considered out of place to give out what God has written in His Word on this subject. It is not wanted. Thank God there are still those who, having learned such truths, seek by the grace of God to walk in them and teach them to others, just because they are in God's Book, which never changes, and which, the longer I live, I seek grace to reverence and obey in all things. I would especially seek for the help of young believers to turn to some portions of the Word, which suggest a train of thought, which if developed and meditated on at home, will prove helpful and practical. Do not let us be like the slothful man, of whom it is said, that he "roasteth not that which he took in hunting" (Prov. xii. 27), but let us dig deep in the Word of God and feed on it. This is what brings strength to the soul. Separation is a fundamental truth of God's Word, and is extensively taught there.

In Genesis i. we read that God said "Let there be light, and light was" (ver. 3). Then immediately, that "God divided the light from the darkness" (verse 4). The application of this is clearly seen in the New Testament. The apostle Paul, writing to the Thessalonians

—which was the first epistle that he wrote—tells them, that they are "all children of the light and of the day," and "not of the night nor of darkness" (1 Thess. v. 4, 5). The Ephesians are reminded that though they were once "darkness," they are now "light in the Lord" (Eph. v. 8), and the Corinthians are asked "What communion hath light with darkness" (2 Cor. vi. 14)? The children of God are separated by God from the world, and it is the will of God that they remain so separated here, as they will be in eternity. When we come to the end of the Book of God, we find the righteous and the wicked eternally separate, the children of God dwelling with Him who is their righteous God and Father, and the wicked with their father the devil in conscious misery (Rev. xxi. 3, 8), and this is to be so for ever.

In Genesis, chap. iv. and v., we see the two families, the two seeds, the line of Cain and of Seth, their character and their ways. There is a marked difference and separation between them. In chap. vi. this separation of the light and the darkness ceases, and the two lines become amalgamated. The "sons of God" intermarried with the "daughters of men." This unholy union brought the judgment of God in the flood. Some say these sons of God were angels. I do not believe it. Angels, we are told, do not marry (Matt. xxii. 30); they are spirits. These sons of God of Genesis vi. were the line of Seth (see Luke iii. 38, where they are traced to Adam, who "was the son of God"), that godly line in which was Enoch "the seventh" from Adam (Jude 14). They

became enamoured with "the daughters of men"—the seed of Cain, and leaving the place of separation intermarried with them. The same thing has been done again and again by children of God, and always with the same result, loss and ruin to the Christian. Let those who contemplate marriage be clear as to this, and take God into their counsel. In Gen. xxiv., where Abraham's servant seeks a bride for Isaac, there is more about prayer and seeking guidance from God, than in any other part of Genesis.

The people of Israel were a chosen, redeemed, and separated people (Deut. vii. 6). God had "severed" them from other people that they should be His (Lev. xx. 26). They were to dwell alone and not be reckoned among the nations (Numb. xxiii. 9). Their separation was to be real and manifest. They were to be Jehovah's witnesses (Isa. xliii. 10) among the nations. He was their God, and He meant that the surrounding nations who knew Him not, might see the blessedness of that people whose God was Jehovah. In order to maintain this testimony they were to be obedient to His Word: only thus could they be blessed and made a blessing. He gave them His Word, and it was to be well with them while they kept it (Deut. iv. 40). He gave them very explicit commandments what they were to do, and what they were not to do in all departments of life. They were not to intermarry with the nations (Deut. vii. 3). Why? Because God had so commanded. They were not to plough with an ox and an ass together; they were not to wear

a garment of woollen and linen together (Deut. xxii. 16, 11). They were not to eat of certain beasts and fowls (Deut. xiv. 3, 19). Why? Because God had commanded it. It did not matter if the "other people" from whom God had separated them did it, that was to be no rule for them, it was theirs to obey the Word of their God. They were "a special people unto Jehovah," and His Word was to them their rule, not the practices of the nations around. And so it ought to be with the children of God now. The Lord Jesus says of His people "I have chosen you out of the world" (John xv. 19). "I have given them Thy Word" (John xvii. 14). The people of God are to be separate from the world and ruled in all things by the Word. There is to be no unhallowed alliance with, no conformity to the world. If there is whole-hearted obedience to God's Word, there will be true separation from the world, from its pleasures, its politics, its Co-operative Societies, and its religion alike, just because they are of the world, and the whole world lieth in the "Evil One" (1 John v. 19, R.V.). It does not take much discernment to see the Egypt world and the Sodom world, but it does require spirituality and acquaintance with God and His Word to discern the Babylon world, with its false religion, adorned with portions of the Word of God. It is this especially we need to be on our guard against, lest the wily adversary trip us up and lead us back into association with that from which God's Word brought some of us out long ago. There is a word in 2 Cor. vi. 14, 18, to which I will

refer briefly in this connection. As I said before, our separation to God and unto the Name of the Lord Jesus if real, is so inclusive as to bring us out from every association, every confederation, every amalgamation of this present world, whether political, philanthropic, or religious. God allows no unhallowed union of His people with the world. His Word is "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, what communion hath LIGHT with darkness"? This is very definite, very plain, is it not? And hear what follows, "Wherefore COME OUT from among them and be ye separate and touch not the unclean." In the language of the New Testament there are two tenses in the imperative mood. The one signifies to do a thing once for all, and not to delay in doing it. This last word means to come out *instantly* and COMPLETELY, and when once out to there remain, not even "touching" that which is forbidden by and opposed to God. Therefore the believer's separation to God and from the world is to be instant complete and final. In Psalm cxix. 60, we read, "I made haste, and delayed not to keep Thy commandments." This word "delayed" means to "stand questioning." He did not stand questioning the why and the wherefore of God's commandment, but instantly obeyed. This is what pleases God, and brings blessing to the obedient soul, for in the keeping of His commandments "there is great reward" (Psa. xix. 11).

"HOW SEPARATION TO GOD IS LOST" will (God willing) appear next month.

"Ye are my Witnesses."

AN ADDRESS TO VILLAGE WORKERS.

BY THE EDITOR.

IT is good and pleasant to meet with so many young and earnest workers, engaged in the happy and honourable work of spreading the Gospel among the villages. It is a work in which the Great Soul-winner set us His own example, when He went through the villages "teaching and preaching" (Matt. ix. 35). Let us look at a few passages of the Word where He speaks to His servants as *Witnesses*.

When the wondering disciples asked their ascending Lord "Wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" His memorable answer was: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power (authority). But ye shall receive power (strength) after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be *witnesses unto Me*" (Acts i. 6-8). This is a word of great importance to all the Lord's people who live in this present age of grace and the Spirit's presence on the earth. It is in full accord with what the Lord had said in the upper room to His disciples before He went to the Cross. Speaking of the coming Paraclete, who was to be sent from the Father, to take His place as Helper, Advocate and Strength of the little band who were to be left on earth to represent their absent Lord, who was going to represent them in heaven, He said, "When the Comforter is come . . . He shall bear witness of Me," and then he immediately added, "And ye also shall

bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning" (John xiv. 26, 27). The believer is left on earth to be a co-witness with the Spirit to Christ, and to the Gospel throughout this age of grace. This is his business in the world. He is not a world reformer, he is not a politician. His business here is not to overturn governments however corrupt, or lead in public agitations against this or the other depravity that may arise among the kings and rulers of earth. He has no call, no commission to enter on any such lines of service. He is simply a "witness," and his testimony is to be concerning his heavenly Lord and Master—"Ye shall be witnesses unto Me."

WHAT A WITNESS TELLS.

A witness in a law court is called to tell what he has seen and heard in connection with the case before the judge. Second-hand information is of no value; what others told him will not be received. He must tell what he has personally seen with his own eyes and heard with his own ears. And so the Lord, in speaking with the Rabbi of Jerusalem, said, "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen" (John iii. 11). A witness does not deal in generalities or in theories, he gives his personal experience; he simply speaks what he is assured of. "We know that we are of God" (1 John v. 12); "I know whom I have believed" (2 Tim. i. 12), are words that have in them the ring of the certainty and assurance that gives weight to the testimony of a true witness. It was the consciousness of this that gave boldness to the Lord's early witnesses, when the world and its

religious and political leaders were against them. "We are witnesses of these things, so also is the Holy Ghost" (Acts v. 32), was Peter's clear-ring testimony before the Council, and we are told the result of his testimony was, that "they were cut to the heart" (ver. 33). A halting, hesitating, muffled testimony, is of no value whatever. Men who have not quite made up what they call their "minds," or are uncertain of what they believe—whatever their forte may be in the Church or in the world—are not witnesses. A witness must know something and be able to state definitely and clearly what that something is.

I remember being in a Criminal Court in the city of Aberdeen, where a case of alleged homicide was being tried. There were many witnesses whose testimony was exceedingly vague. At last one little boy was brought to the witness stand. He was so small that he had to be raised up on a stool, and so young that the judge would not put him on oath. But before he had spoken a dozen words, it was evident to all that he had the prisoner's fate in his hands. He told what he knew, what he had actually seen and heard, and his evidence convicted the prisoner at the bar. He was there within sight and sound of the tragedy. Let all who "testify the Gospel of the grace of God" (Acts xx. 24) remember, that it is not "polished" essays, or "cultured" sermons, or "deep" discourses that lost sinners need to convict them of sin and lead those who are convicted to the Saviour, but the Gospel of Christ spoken in plain and Scriptural terms, from a

heart that knows its saving power, and in the power of that Spirit who has come out from heaven expressly to give it effect (1 Pet. i. 12) in those who hear.

A PATTERN WITNESS.

John the Baptist is honoured by the Spirit in being described as "a man sent from God." His work was definite. It was simply this: "The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light" (John i. 7). And how well he fulfilled his mission is attested by the words of his disciples, who, when they saw their master's followers leaving him and going after Jesus, came to John saying, "Rabbi, He to whom thou bearest witness, behold, the same baptiseth and all come to Him" (John iii. 26), to which John gave answer, "Ye, yourselves, bear me witness that I said I am not the Christ." And then in the joy of his heart, as he saw the true Bridegroom winning hearts to Himself, he gladly owned "He must increase, but I must decrease." John's testimony was to "the Lamb of God" (John i. 26), and when he preached away his disciples to his Lord, he rejoiced. This is just the sort of preaching that God always uses in bringing sinners to Christ. "A true witness delivereth souls" (Prov. xiv. 25), not only from their sins, but from man, and self, and all that comes in front of or is opposed to Christ Jesus the Lord.

A WITNESS IS A MARTYR.

"When the blood of Thy martyr Stephen was shed, I was standing by" (Acts xxii. 20), says Paul. That word rendered "martyr" is the ordinary word for witness. It reminds us that a faithful witness may have to seal his testimony in

his blood, as the Lord Himself, "the Faithful Witness" (Rev. i. 5) did. There must be no shrinking back, no flinching for fear of what men will say or do. If we speak and act according to God and His truth, we may expect that some will oppose us. In spite of opposition, of persecution, and what is, perhaps, a greater snare to us in these quiet times—the fear of being ostracised and accounted "peculiar," perhaps "mad" by religious worldlings and apostate professors who "swim with the current" and are "all things to all men" in a sense the apostle never was—the man of God must speak the whole counsel of God with his lips, and act in his life and ways according to the truth, "witnessing to small and great" (Acts xxvi. 22) all that God has made known to him, and in which his heart and soul rejoice.

FALSE WITNESSES.

It is recorded that in the trial of the Lord before the high priest, many bare false witness against Him, "but their witness agreed not together" (Matt. xiv. 53). This, in an ordinary court of justice would have ruined their case. And when the lip and life testimony of those who stand among men as His witnesses does not agree, when men do not act what they preach, then they are "false witnesses" (1 Cor. xv. 15), and become a cause of offence or stumbling, rather than a means of blessing to those who know them.

The time for this earnest witnessing will soon be over, and the witnesses who now stand in the land of the stranger, to speak well of their Lord and Master and His Gospel, will soon be in their own

country, where such service is no longer needed. Let us buy up the opportunities then while they are with us, and with a zeal begotten of love to Christ, and sustained by the indwelling Spirit—who be it ever remembered is pre-eminently the Spirit of Witness to Christ in the world with the Gospel in this age of grace—let us continue witnessing to small and great, that which we have seen and experienced in our own souls. Let us not be ashamed of “the testimony of the Lord,” but speak as we “ought to speak” (Eph. vi. 20), that glorious message which God has made the appointed means of the salvation of sinners—“the Gospel of Christ which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Rom. i. 16).

Following Up.

IT is an unfortunate habit that some preachers have, of telling their hearers when they begin to speak, that they intend to “follow up” the ministry of the previous speaker. Very often it happens, that what they say has not the slightest connection with what has gone before, further than a casual reference to “what brother so and so said.” And it sometimes taxes the most attentive hearer, to discern any connection with what had gone before in their deliverance. As a rule, it would be better for speakers to give the message they think they have from the Lord for His people, and make no reference to “following up” what has gone before. If it happens to fit in, the hearers will readily discern it.

Israel and the Church.

WM. HOSTE, B.A., BRIGHTON

VIII.—THE CHURCH'S BLESSINGS.

THE place of blessing of the Church is not *earthly* but HEAVENLY. The blessings of a Christian do not depend on the land he lives in, but on his being “in Christ”—a thing equally possible in Scotland or the Soudan, in China or the Cape. There are lands of special privilege where the Word of God can be read and the Gospel heard by all, yet many live and die in such lands, to their vastly greater responsibility, be it said, who through unbelief never share in the Church's blessings. There are some ill-taught souls who resort to Jerusalem as a specially favoured spot in which to serve the Lord and await His return. But when His feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives (see Acts i. 1; Zech. xiv. 4) the Church will have been caught away, and Israel as a nation will be once more on the scene. The place of blessing is now “the heavenlies.” “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus” (Eph. i. 3). Of course we are still on the earth, being still in this mortal body, but our spiritual place before God in Christ is connected with another sphere, even an heavenly. This is the place of blessing for the Church, because it is the place of her Lord's exaltation (Eph. i. 20), and of her association with Him there (chap. ii. 6). It is also the place where principali-

ties and powers learn through her the manifold wisdom of God (chap. iii. 10), and where the saints learn the wiles of the devil and experience conflict with spiritual wickedness (chap. vi. 12). This heavenly position involves great responsibility. A heavenly man should be characterised by heavenly ways. His citizenship (Phil. iii. 20) is in heaven. He is a stranger and pilgrim on the earth. One sometimes meets fellow-countrymen abroad, whose behaviour and general tone are such as not to make one proud of one's connection with them. Let us not bring discredit on our heavenly fatherland. Only one—at once “the Lord from Heaven” and “the Son of Man which is in heaven” has perfectly exhibited heavenly ways down here. As we trace His heavenly footsteps in the Gospels, how earthly ours appear! But He has left us “an example than we should follow His steps” (1 Pet. ii. 21). We are lent by heaven to earth. We possess a heavenly nature; we have a heavenly hope (Col. i. 5). We shall one day bear the image of the heavenly (1 Cor. xv. 49), “for when we shall see Him we shall be like Him.” We should bear His moral image here now. This is not by merely copying Him. The moon cannot copy the light of the sun. It is by reflecting Him; for this we must be in His presence. We behold the heavenly Man at the well of Sychar, at the home of Bethany, on the sea of Galilee, in the garden of Gethsemane, on the hill of Calvary, and on the Father's throne, and beholding “we are changed into the same image from glory to glory” (2 Cor. iii. 18).

The blessings of the Church are not

material but *spiritual*. Generally speaking, the Lord's people are not rich in this world's goods. “God hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith” (James ii. 5). “The poor saints” is an expression we meet with in the Word of God now and again. No hint is given that their poverty was due to a lack of Divine favour. In these days of excessive competition and unfair methods, the business man that will “live godly in Christ Jesus” will not only suffer persecution, but may also loss of profits. How few there are who count the “reproach of Christ” greater riches than the *treasures* of Egypt! The idea that “gain is godliness” is widespread in Christendom. The reverse is the truth. “Godliness with contentment is great gain.” There are exceptions to the general rule that the Lord's people are not wealthy. To some, riches are entrusted. They are the Lord's stewards, responsible for the faithful use of their means. Such are not exhorted to “sell all that they have and give to the poor” (that was a special case), but rather “not to be high-minded, nor to trust in uncertain riches but . . . to be ready to distribute” (1 Tim. vi. 17, 18). A rich Christian may be “purse proud” and “think more highly of himself than he ought to think.” He is also exposed to the adulation of the servile and to the jealousy of the democratic element, and “who can stand before envy?” Let such keep in view the day when they will have to give account of their stewardship to the Lord. If a full basket and store were promised to the obedient Israelite, it is not to the Christian now. Ask that

weakly prisoner in his dungeon in Rome, whether his barns are full and his vines fruitful. He will tell you he has none, but that "he knows how to abound and to suffer need, and that he has learned in whatsoever state he is, to be content"—though not "therewith" as the A.V. of Phil. iv. 11 puts it. "Having food and raiment," the same apostle writes elsewhere, "let us be therewith content" (1 Tim. iv. 8); words well known to all, but by how few obeyed! The thirst for riches in the world is seen also in the Church, and sad indeed are the shipwrecks of faith and testimony that often result.

The Power of Example.

IF the leaders of an assembly are worldly in their ways, lax in their lives, and generally manifest little practical separation from the ungodly around them, it need hardly be expected that "the flock" who follow the example set before them will be different. It is a law in nature and in grace that "like produces like." If leading brethren in the assembly and Christian parents in the family go in for affinity with the world in business affairs, if they indulge in social intercourse with the ungodly, approximating to their latest fashions in dress, following in their wake in style, sharing such games and pursuits as those who know not God occupy their time in, it will be more than a wonder if the younger ones who follow on, do not go a long way further along these lines than their elders and parents. It becomes, therefore, a matter of the first importance, what sort of example assembly leaders and parents set before the coming generation.

"That I may know Him."

EVERY true believer knows Christ, but there is a deeper knowledge. It can scarcely be called another, yet it differs from what is generally understood by the words *knowing Christ*, in many particulars. The "*knowing God*" that is true of every believer is beautifully put in Gal. iv. 9, "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather, ARE KNOWN OF (by) God." The Lord Jesus says, "I know My sheep and am known of Mine" (John x. 14). "The Lord *knoweth* them that are His" (2 Tim. ii. 19).

The security, the peace, the joy of the child new born into the Kingdom of God all rest upon this. He is henceforth "*known of God*," or as Rotherham renders it, "*acknowledged by God*." There is at the same time the knowledge of God, hitherto unknown, imparted to the soul. The believer knows Him whom to know is life eternal (John xvii. 3). This is the knowledge of relationship. The child knows very early its parents, and recognises and rejoices in them, for his every need is met by them. He knows them as the source of all supplies. This is at first the entire strength of his attachment to them. It is selfish—utterly. It has its exact counterpart in the spiritual world: And the regret of it all is, that so very many of God's beloved children remain in this respect as babes, during the whole of their experience here. Such can easily always be recognised. They are *not* soul-winners. They may exhibit much activity with a fanfare of trumpets, but they know little if anything of what it is to weep for

the sins of God's people, or the agony of wrestling in prayer for the souls of men. They are petted and "huffy," and always anxious to be much made of and have their own place. They love recognition and the chief seats. To refer to *them*, is as the breath of heaven to their souls. They are a very real sorrow to all who desire to go on with and for God. Let the strong with kindness and grace bear with and *teach* them, and by all means LOVE them, because "they belong to Christ." But their condition is not normal to the Christian. What do they need? "Desire the sincere milk of the Word that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. ii. 2). Lack of this always leads to the state described in 1 Cor. iii. 1-4. Such do not go on to the strong meat of the Word. Content with the babe's diet, they have to be content with its digestion—the strength (or weakness), the aspirations, the intelligence, the general inability that all characterise the *babe*. But what is the normal condition? The child who desires the sincere milk of the Word will soon find himself feeding on its strong meat—the deep and mighty things of the Word. As he finds from the Scriptures what grace has done for Him, he finds himself in a large place. The extent of the work of God for him amazes him. The place that he had and has in the heart of God is a revelation to his soul. For a considerable time he is occupied, and rightly so, with the immensity of the glory of the blessings that are now his. He can do nothing but learn of this his new found inheritance, and going from one room of it to another, revel in and dilate on its

Glories. By and by he begins to think of the GIVER. He finds that the Scriptures are infinitely more a revelation of Christ Himself—the personal Christ—than of His blessings. What then? All is changed. Christ is seen. The glory of that Light blinds him to all the faint glimmers of earth's illuminations. "What have I to do any more with idols, I have seen HIM" (Hos. xiv. 8). All that belongs to this scene then loses its power of attraction.

Once it was the blessing, now it is the Lord. The cry of the soul now is—"Whom have I in heaven but *Thee*, and there is none on earth that I desire beside *Thee*." The Person of Christ Jesus, the Son who came forth from the Father, engages his affections now. The personal glories and moral excellencies of the blessed Lord draw the heart away from earth to Himself. This is the Holy Spirit's delight. It is His particular work to reveal Christ, and where He finds a thirst for Christ, He is at hand to take of Christ's and show them to that soul.

This is the keyword to such an experience, and the watchword of it—"THAT I MAY KNOW HIM."

Only One.

HERE'S only one Bible and only one God,
 Only one Love in our hearts shed abroad,
 Only one Offering by which we're forgiven,
 Only one Spirit to guide us to heaven.
 Only one Saviour who for us has died,
 Only one Shepherd to keep and to guide,
 Only one Doctrine, one Truth, and one Way;
 Only one Pathway for all who obey.

Oh, why should men talk of "Theologies New"?
 God is unchangeable, faithful, and true;
 His Word like Himself is eternal and sure,
 And all that it says shall for ever endure.

M. PERRY.

The Preachers' Corner.

OUTLINES OF GOSPEL SUBJECTS.

THE PARABLE OF THE PEARL.

(Matthew xiii. 45, 46.)

The Merchantman, Christ (1 Tim. i. 15.)

The Pearl, The Church (Eph. v. 25; Rev. xxi. 9.)

The Price, His Blood, (1 Pet. i. 19; 2 Cor. viii. 9.)

A TRIPLE TYPE,

In Exodus, chap. xii.

SAFE by the Blood (ver. 13)—Sprinkled.

SURE by the Word (ver. 23)—Received.

SATISFIED with the Person (ver. 8)—Appropriated.

THREE QUESTIONS ON "SALVATION."

The Need of Salvation (Luke xiii. 23, 24.)

The Way of Salvation (Acts xvi. 30, 31.)

The Neglect of Salvation (Heb. ii. 3.)

Common Statements.

EXAMINED IN THE LIGHT OF GOD'S WORD.

"Hold fast the form of Sound Words" (2 Tim. i. 13.)

It is more than ever necessary, in this day of erroneous teachings and clever opposition to the truth by sceptics and cavillers, that all who preach and teach, should express themselves in or according to the language of the inspired Word. Some common and oft-repeated sayings which pass from one generation to another, need to be examined and revised by the standard of the Scriptures.

Give Your Heart to God.—There is more law than Gospel in such a demand. The Gospel is rather God has given His heart to you (see John iii. 16 and 1 John iv. 10). Before any can give their heart to God, they must be born again. The Word is, "My son, give Me thine heart" (Prov. xxiii. 26).

Salvation is a Finished Work.—This is an incorrect statement. The work which the Father gave the Son to do (John xvii. 4) and the atonement He made by His death upon the Cross (John xix. 31) upon which man's salvation depends and which is its procuring cause, is indeed finished, but salvation is not begun, until the sinner believes on the Lord Jesus (Acts xvi. 31), and confesses Him as Lord (Rom. x. 9). Then, in one aspect, he is saved (Eph. ii. 9), in another he is being saved (Heb. vii. 25), and he is also looking for salvation (Heb. ix. 28; Rom. xiii. 11). Then only will it be "finished."

Answers to Correspondents.

YOUNG BELIEVER.—We are unable to endorse or commend the teaching in the book you send us. It fails in rightly dividing the Word of truth, and makes no distinction between the saints of the present time which compose the Church, and those who will be saved after the present outcalling of grace is complete. The result is, that the writer makes part of the Church to pass through "the great tribulation," whereas the Word clearly teaches that all who are of the Church will be with Christ in heaven (2 Thess ii. 1) before it begins.

G. M., LANARKSHIRE.—We believe that most of the local assemblies of believers, even in apostolic times, were small in numbers, and that more than one meeting place would be in most towns and cities, not with differing doctrines or constitution, but for convenience and utility. It is very rare to see a large company meeting in one place either spiritually healthy, or with half the number fulfilling their functions. Usually, larger gifts monopolise all the preaching, younger ones are pushed into a corner, and through time—as has been seen again and again—it becomes practically like the great denominations, with perhaps a plurality or select circle of ministers, who do all the preaching in turn. In smaller assemblies, there is usually more freedom; more take part, and there is less tendency to incipient clerisy creeping in. There also, if otherwise healthy conditions obtain, younger ones develop grace and gift, there is more real fellowship enjoyed, and all feel more or less responsibility. When a "hive off" takes place under godly conditions, there is room made for many who were formerly mute and inactive, both in the old and new companies, with fresh energy and blessing in the Gospel.

J. M., GLASGOW.—We hear no complaints about scarcity of funds to carry on efficient Gospel work where the Lord's people are taught from the Word their responsibilities as well as their privileges. In fact, it has often amazed us to see the cheerful liberality of many assemblies almost wholly consisting of working men and women. We fear that in large assemblies, composed of well-to-do people, worldliness, dress, and money spent on self and pleasure in various ways, are the chief causes of the Lord's treasury being robbed. When there is continuous need for making "special collections," putting round "bags" at every opportunity, and withal not getting ends to meet, there is a serious lack either of heart or conscience, which plain and

honest ministry of God's Word alone can properly deal with. On the other hand, some may want to know more fully than they are informed, what is being done with the money collected.

J. W., PARTICK.—It is surely both desirable and comely that those who have ability and desire to lead the praise of the Lord's people when assembled for worship, or in meetings for ministry of the Word, should have full opportunity to do so, and that others of no recognised ability should desist, and in this it would be well for overseeing brethren to give their "advice" (2 Cor. viii. 10). Beyond this we are unable to go. No appointment (less still, election by ballot) to any spiritual function, is commanded or recognised in the Word of God.

Answers to Special Questions.

VIII.—Will you give some help on the two passages, Heb. vi. 4-8; x. 26-29, which are a cause of distress to many? Do they apply to unsaved professors, or to backslidden believers?

The former of the above passages was dealt with last month. We now give the substance of four replies on the latter.

ANSWER A.—Apostasy is here presented in another aspect from that of chap. vi. There, it manifested itself in the lifeless professor "falling away" and ceasing to "go on to maturity. Here is in view one who had learned the truth of Christ's One Sacrifice sinning wilfully or turning his back deliberately upon it, after having professed faith therein, becoming, as such invariably do, an "adversary." For such, nothing but judgment remains. It is not assumed that any one born again can ever do this, but a professor may, and therefore the warning is so given as to be a searching message to all.

J. S.

ANSWER B.—To "sin wilfully" here means to "miss the road," not in ignorance but in determined self-will and by deliberate choice, going back to Jewish sacrifices and thus turning to that which God had set aside and they themselves had professed to be converted from. They thus rejected Christ and insulted the Spirit of Grace who testifies of Him and had wrought upon them. Those described are not backsliding saints but "adversaries," for whom judgment is in store.

W. L.

ANSWER C.—The reference in verse 28, is to Numb. xv. 30-36, where the presumptuous man who "reproached" the Lord and "despised" His Word, breaking his rest by "working" when he

should have been resting, died "without mercy." Death without pity was the doom of one who turned from Jehovah as revealed in His covenant (Deut. xvii. 2-7) to serve other gods. "Of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy to hath trodden under foot the Son of God?" which all who apostatise from God's revealed Gospel do. It is a terrible sin, and those who in this day of proud denial of the Deity and atoning sacrifice of God's Son, with the deification of man to be "as God," may well tremble at the prospect here set forth as awaiting them.

A. M.

ANSWER D.—Although the words toward mere professors who become apostates are intended to be used as a searching message to all, it is not implied that any who have been born of God can ever reach the apostate condition here set forth in its fulness. But they are to take warning and remember that "the Lord will judge His people" (verse 30). In Deut. xxvii. 36—which is the passage here referred to—the distinction is clearly made between His "servants" and His "enemies," and His mode of dealing with each. To those who are true saints, the word of encouragement and confidence is renewed (verse 32-39, as in Chap. vi. 10), here, their share in suffering being especially mentioned as an evidence of their faith.

R. D.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—The first stage of departure from Christ and the truth of Christianity in early times was marked by ceasing to assemble with the people of God (compare ver. 25 with 2 Thess. -ii. 1, where the same form of words are used to describe the gathering together of saints unto Christ now, and at His coming, and is nowhere else found in N.T.). To go out from the company of the saved was reckoned by the apostle to show that they were not "of" them (1 John ii. 19). And the same is true now, only amid the divisions in Christendom many find a refuge and retain the Christian name who have in heart become apostates from Christ and the truth. That such should not be always followed up and treated as backsliders is clear from this warning, much less spoken of as "dear brethren who do not meet as we do," as if that were all that is wrong with them. Some who, although they had been in assemblies of saints, and regarded as "sanctified" in the sense of 1 Cor. vii. 14, never had Christ, and when they come out in their true colours and become "adversaries" are hopeless. Others, possibly led astray under their seductive influence, and badly lacking in "endurance" (36), may nevertheless not be of those

who "draw back to perdition." They have Divine life as evidenced in their earlier love, when they suffered loss and became partakers with others in their persecutions. Such may be recovered (Jude 22) and encouraged—as the word "exhorting on another" in verse 25 implies—and in nothing perhaps in our day is spiritual discernment and godly wisdom more called into exercise than in dealing aright with such cases.

Correspondence.

LIFELESS PROFESSORS IN ASSEMBLIES.

"I am thankful to the Lord for the paper, 'A Device of Satan,' which appeared in the May number of 'The Believer's Magazine.' It expresses what is being experienced by many servants of the Lord who serve Him in the assemblies of His people at the present time. I have personally *tried for years to exercise the consciences of brethren* who have primarily to do with the examination of persons who seek to be received to Christian fellowship, in regard to the solemn responsibility they assume in commending those who have little if anything about them to give confidence that they are born of God. If those who take the place of guides and shepherds in the assemblies, have the popular notion that all who can give a Scripture text which they believed, and name a time when they "decided," or tell the preacher's name who "dealt" with them, are to be acknowledged as children of God, baptised on their profession, and received as saints, then it is no wonder if very many unregenerate professors are creeping into assemblies. It was not so thirty years ago, when some of us applied for fellowship. We had to undergo a searching examination, not only in regard to what we believed, but as to how we lived. Our home life, testimony in the world, conduct in the workshop, credit at the grocer's, were all looked into, and if there was anything not square or straight, reception was deferred. Those who took oversight, had night after night of prayer over certain doubtful cases, and God in some wonderful ways manifested what would have blighted assembly testimony. I believe the lack of spiritual discernment, godly care, full time for God to manifest doubtful cases, and a general easy and slipshod way of reckoning everybody who makes a decent profession to be Christians, and receiving them as such, has more to do with the prevalent low spiritual condition and drifting away from the paths of the Word so common, than anything else.

In some larger assemblies, nobody knows who is and who is not of "the number of the names together" (Acts i. 15). They go and come as they please. There is no pastoral work, no visitation of absentees, no naming of those who go astray, or go back into the world. It would reveal the evil condition of things to make any mention of such matters, so they are simply allowed to drift, until some crisis brings the hidden condition to light. Then all who are away from God or never knew Him, manifest themselves, and take the side of opposition to what is of the Spirit and the truth. This has been seen again and again; dissension, division, and a wrecked testimony being the result. The beginning of all the evil was, the slipshod manner in which many were brought in at the first. A fearful responsibility lies at the door of those who have been levelling down the gates and demanding free access to God's assembly for all who say they are Christians. The effect on many who are not unaware of the need of care has been, to cause them to relax their hand for fear of being considered "narrow"—a terrible offence in the eyes of some. But is there no dishonour and no blame in bringing into God's assembly those who are children of the devil in the garb of saints of God! Brought there by the adversary for the purpose of dragging God's assembly down to the only level on which they can walk, that of the flesh, according to the spirit of the age, which is always against God. It lies with those who see where things are going and have access with the truth, to use the edge of the Word to search and expose this great artifice of the adversary. In nearly the whole of Christendom he has his own way in this matter. The popular "Churches" are filled with lifeless professors, as their ways and occupations prove. No doubt he is very angry at a few feeble folk for seeking to return to the old paths, and trying to maintain a clear however feeble testimony to the Name of his Conqueror. Once he defamed and persecuted those who gathered outside the camp of the world's religion, in separation unto Christ. From press and pulpit they were banned, yet they grew and God blessed them. What if he succeed by corruption, by the sowing of tares among the wheat, by the bringing in of a generation, many of them children of those who first so gathered, who know the theory of the Gospel, but lack the life of God? He will try! Let us not be his helpers in this, but ever seeking in godly discernment to be fellow-helpers with the Truth (3 John 8). W. M.

The Lord Standing By.

HOW many of the servants of Christ, placed in lone and trying positions, have been encouraged and cheered by the glowing words of the aged apostle, nearing the end of his course, bereft of all human aid and sympathy, standing at Nero's judgment seat. Standing there solitary and forsaken, at the close of a long and honoured service, he is not cast down or disappointed, for he is able to triumphantly testify—"Nevertheless, the Lord stood by me and strengthened me" (2 Tim. iv. 17, R.V.). To have "the Lord strong and mighty" (Psa. xxiv. 8), standing by, to strengthen for service, to succour in temptation, to shield in trouble, is the portion of all who go forth in His Name to do His work, in the way that He has appointed. This is the solace and the strength of the true servant. In fulfilling the ministry given him by the Lord, he may not always count upon his brethren in Christ and fellow-servants of the same Lord "standing by" him, or approving of his service. To some he will give offence in going "too far;" in the estimation of others of will be "unfaithful" in not going far enough, as he pursues the path appointed for him by the Lord, for not all who serve the same Master, see eye to eye in their apprehension of the Lord's will. But for each the great thing, the chief thing is, to make it the heart's delight to do that which pleases Him, and to prove in blessed experience the fulfilment of the promise, "Lo, I am with you all the days" (Matt. xxviii. 20, R.V.). It is one thing to read this promise, to

know theoretically it is in the Bible; quite another to prove the reality of it, in the soul's enjoyment of the Lord standing by to strengthen, to help and bless. Spiritual condition, a Scriptural path, in such service as is "the work of the Lord" (1 Cor. xv. 58), with stedfast continuance therein, in dependence upon Himself, are essential to the conscious enjoyment of the Lord standing by His servant, giving His approval of, and His blessing on his words and work. Such an experience can never be known in forbidden paths or in worldly alliances. It is reserved to the saint and servant who makes it his one aim to please the Lord and to gain His approval. And to such, even if all others give them the cold shoulder, He never fails to manifest Himself, taking His place by their side in the hour of trial. Let it ever be our ambition and our aim to have the Lord standing by us in all our service for His Name. This will amply recompense whatever else may be lost in the way of doing His blessed will. And nothing less than the Divine Lord's presence and approval is worth aiming at by His servant. Everything else will disappoint and grieve, sooner or later. What is generally regarded as "success" is often as the morning cloud that passes away. To stand high in the estimation of fellow-saints is, a precarious honour, but he who aims at pleasing the Lord and doing His will, and by grace pursues His purpose and His path, will please all who are worth pleasing among His people. Let it be the aim, the daily habit of the soul, to seek the Lord's will, to do His commandments, to please Him well in all things.

How Separation to God is Lost.

H. B. THOMPSON, BANGOR.

IN the seventeenth chapter of John, the Lord Jesus in speaking to the Father of His own, says, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (ver. 16). Their separation from the world, in its character and measure, was to be like His. And these words were uttered by the Lord in full view of His rejection and the shameful death of the Cross. The world then was, and the world now is, ruled by the power of darkness (Eph. vi. 12) and the Christian's place is in separation from it. He is to have "no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" (Eph. v. 11). He is "in the world" yet not "of the world," and all his actions are to manifest this. Delivered out of the present world by the Cross of Christ (Gal. i. 4), and sent back into it as the Father sent the Son (John xvii. 18), God's people are His witnesses among men, lights shining in the midst of the darkness around them (Phil. ii. 15). In view of this, let us, dear children of God, ask ourselves individually this question—Is my aim in life to own the claims of the Lord Jesus, who has bought me with His own blood and delivered me from the present evil world according to the will of God, to glorify Him? Can I really, truthfully sing

"I love to own Lord Jesus,
Thy claims o'er me divine;
Bought with Thy blood most precious,
Whose can I be but Thine."

If we make this our aim in life, there will be no co-mingling of light and darkness,

no fellowship with the unconverted, either in their pleasures, their Co-operative Societies, their politics, or their religion. Separation to God will be all round and real in everything.

Satan has always sought to oppose this, and break down the barriers that God set up between His people and the world. We have seen that He succeeded in getting the "sons of God" to intermarry with the "daughters of men"—the godly seed of Seth with the ungodly daughters of Cain—and judgment followed. When Jehovah called forth a nation to the place of separation unto Him to be His witness in the world, a distinct and special people, governed by His Word, in whose midst He dwelt, He gave them special instructions not to mix or intermarry with the heathen nations around them, or to in any way have fellowship with their idolatrous ways (Deut. vii. 1-6), because, said Jehovah, "Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God." This was the reason. While they kept the Word of the Lord and remained in separation unto Him, He was their Defender and their Keeper. No enemy could reach them with the presence of Jehovah in their midst and His cloud spread as a covering over them. If Balaam seeks to curse them, God puts words of blessing into his mouth—"How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed?" And in the same message he tells of their position in separation to God—"Lo the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." When he returned to Balak he had virtually to say, "I cannot turn God against His people, they are His, He is for them and

has blessed them and I cannot reverse it." But if he cannot turn God against Israel, he will try to turn Israel against God. And in this he was successful. How? By getting them to disobey the Word of the Lord in regard to separation. Balaam "taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel" (Rev. ii. 14). Midianite women were brought into the camp, unhallowed union with the ungodly and the worship of idols (Numb. xxv. 1-6) ensued, the wall of separation was broken down, and judgment followed. The lessons and warnings of this terrible scene are carried to the New Testament as a warning to God's people of the present age, not to disobey His Word.

God called from the midst of Israel the favoured nation, a certain class to be specially separated unto Him. In the midst of the separated people, God raised up of their young men to be Nazarites (see Amos ii. 11 with Numb. vi.). They were to "separate themselves unto the Lord" and all the days of their separation drink no wine. They were evidently a power for God in the midst of His people (Judges xiii. 5) for their deliverance. But the enemy had his eye on these young men and others whom God had raised up in the midst of His people as prophets. What do we read in Amos ii. 12—"Ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink, and commanded the prophets—prophesy not." There are many being spoiled for God and His service by the same means to-day, not only by the ungodly but by some of God's people who have got away from Him in heart, and astray themselves, they

are seeking to lead others into the same path. It is a bad sign in any child of God, when he turns away from any part of the Word, and does not want to hear any truth, however unpalatable to the flesh, that God has caused to be written in the Holy Scriptures, all of which are "God-breathed."

Psalms cvi. 35-42 tells us, that Israel, instead of maintaining the place of separation into which God had called them, soon "mingled among the heathen and learned their works" until the land became polluted with blood, and, because of their unholy ways, the Lord "abhorred His inheritance." Dear children of God, let us give heed to the warnings of the Word against unequal yokes and unholy alliances with the world. "We cannot be exclusive," say some. "We must mingle with our fellows," say others, and under the plea of "reaching" the unconverted with the Gospel, all sorts of forbidden alliances are formed. But what saith the Scriptures—"Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God" (James iv. 4). The path of obedience is the path of blessing, and the more humbly but firmly we walk in it, God will make us the means of blessing to others. Many who once owned these truths are now seeking to tone them down, and oppose others who, through the Lord's mercy would hold them fast and teach them to others. But we must not let them go on this account. Let God be honoured and His Word obeyed at all costs. To walk in separation to God as His Word commands, may cause you the loss of friendships and bring you into

difficulties, to tread a narrower path than many are prepared to walk in. But God has anticipated all this, and to such as "Come out from among them and be separate" He gives the promise "I will receive you and be a Father to you, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. vi. 17-18). Whatever you may have to suffer for obedience to the Word, only brings you into a position in which you will the more prove the all-sufficiency of God's grace, and can only throw you into the arms of your own Father, who is the Lord God All-sufficient.

"Thyself and the Doctrine."

IN order to be of any real service to others, I must be right with God myself. If I would hold fast the doctrine of the Lord in its integrity, in a day when much of it is being set aside, it is of the first importance that my own soul be in a right condition. Hence the force of the apostle's word, "Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine" (1 Tim. iv. 16). The doctrine of the Lord in the hands of an unspiritual man, will share the same fate sooner or later, as the ark of God did when in the custody of Hophni and Phinehas, Eli's godless sons. It was taken from them, and became a captive in the land of the enemies of the Lord (1 Sam. ii. 12; iv. 4, 11). The truth can only be held fast aright and used in a way worthy of God, for the blessing of others, when it is guarded by the indwelling Spirit of God, and held fast in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus (2 Tim. i. 13, 14).

The Assembly Life of Believers

ITS PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

PART IV. BY THE EDITOR.

IN the early days of the Church, the manifested presence of God within, and fierce persecution from the world without, prevented false professors in any numbers from finding their way into assemblies of the saints. As time wore on, spiritual power declined, godly care was relaxed, and as in the parable, "while men slept" (Matt. xiii. 25) an enemy sowed tares among the wheat, so "certain crept in unawares" (Jude 4) to assemblies who were not true Christians, not members of the Church which is Christ's body. Even in the days of the apostles, some were found in assemblies who were troublers, whom Paul desired would cut themselves off (Gal. v. 12, R.V.). Others held and taught such doctrines as were not according to godliness (1 Tim. i. 3; vi. 3-6), and two at least who evidently were once men of influence and possibly of gift in the Ephesus assembly, had given up the fundamentals and made shipwreck of the faith (1 Tim. i. 20). Such conditions called forth greater care, more vigilance and much godly discernment, and with these new developments came fuller legislation and instruction from God, telling the saints whom to "avoid" (Rom. xvi. 17), whom to "refuse" (Tit. iii. 10, R.V.), and from whom to "turn away" (2 Tim. iii. 5), even if they bore the Christian name. The Second Epistles—which mostly deal with a further advance in departure from the Lord, His Word and His ways, give counsel and

guidance—all in the way of restriction and care—in dealing with conditions which were then arising, such as the apostle had forewarned of in his address to the elders at Ephesus (Acts xx. 29, 30). When these actually arose, they brought into existence another class of men, different in kind from the clearly-defined circles of the assembly and the world. When these evils became more fully developed, the servants of the Lord were face to face with a third circle, which in earlier times was not visible, namely, persons professing the Christian name, yet holding and teaching doctrines subversive of the faith as delivered by the apostles, and forming around themselves and their peculiar doctrines coteries of disciples, led astray under their influence and by their teachings. This was something different from what we read of in Acts ii. 44; v. 13, when all that believed were together, of one heart and soul (Acts iv. 32), and with one mind and one mouth glorifying God (Rom. xv. 6), while “of the rest durst no man join himself to them” (Acts ii. 44; v. 13). It was with these, who professing the Christian name, yet held doctrines subversive of the faith, and with such as had been led astray by them, that the apostles and their co-workers had their greatest troubles, and it is over those who occupy the same position now, that most of the controversies regarding receiving and refusing arise, and not over untaught believers who know little but are willing to learn of the will of God. There is a place in God’s assembly for the young who need shepherd care (John xxi. 15), for those “weak in the faith” who need

instruction and “support” (Rom. xiv. 1, with 1 Thess. v. 14), and even for the “unruly” who need to be “warned,” and the erring who need to be restored and healed (Gal. vi. 1), but there is not for those who hold and teach such error as subverts the simple, or who persist in such acts of selfwill and perversity (see Matt. xviii. 17) as set aside all godly order in the house of God, where Divine rule should have its place of honour, and the behaviour of the saints should in all things be according to it (1 Tim. iii. 15). If that which professes to be the sphere in which Christ’s Headship is owned, His Lordship acknowledged, and His Word obeyed, becomes very much a voluntary association, in which each may do what he pleases and bring in whomsoever and whatsoever he will, it is no great wonder if, as these evils mature, such assemblies find themselves bereft of spiritual power and unable to cope with evil doctrines and worldly practices springing up in their midst, for it is only as the Word of God is honoured, that the power of God is experienced for protection and in edification among the saints.

THREE ASSEMBLY FUNCTIONS.

There are three assembly acts, in which all, according to the measure of their intelligence and ability, are called to share. (1) The *Reception* or welcoming of a fellow-believer into their fellowship. (2) The *Expulsion* of one who through continuance in such sin as the Scripture marks out for excommunication, has in obedience to the Word of the Lord to be put away from among them, with a view to bring him to humiliation and repent-

ance. (3) The *Restoration* of such as have become repentant, renouncing their evil ways, or being recovered from the evil doctrines in which they had become ensnared, and manifesting true restoration to God. In either case it is the whole assembly that are called to act as the words "Ye receive" (Rom. xvi. 2), "put away from among yourselves" (1 Cor. v. 13), "Ye should forgive him" (2 Cor. ii. 7), tell. Those tending the flock and taking the oversight (1 Pet. v. 2) will, in this as in all else connected with the assembly's welfare, doubtless take the lead (Heb. xiii. 17, R.V.) in all these acts, setting before the saints their responsibilities connected with them, but it is not the overseers apart from the assembly who bring in, put away, or restore. Hence the need of such wholesome ministry in all assemblies, as keeps the responsibilities as well as the privileges of Christian fellowship before the Lord's people, exercising them in what each is expected to do, and stirring up, not to look only to our own things but also on the things of others (Phil. ii. 4), considering one another to provoke unto love and to good works" (Heb. x. 24). For the fellowship of saints as set forth in the Word is a practical thing, including not only a common share in the worship of God and the spread of His Gospel, but a common share in each other's joys and sorrows, rejoicing with those that do rejoice and weeping with those that weep. The word translated "fellowship," means "partnership," and embraces much more than being in the same company, and breaking the same loaf at the Lord's Supper.

Israel and the Church.

WM. HOSTE, B.A., BRIGHTON

IX.—THE CHARACTER OF THE CHURCH'S BLESSINGS.

THE Christian cannot count on exemption from *bodily* sickness. No doubt godliness, and with it abstinence from all forms of excess, tend to good health and long life, but some of the greatest saints have been the greatest sufferers. Timothy had "often infirmities" (1 Tim. iv. 23), Paul had his "thorn in the flesh" (2 Cor. xii. 7), Epaphroditus was sick nigh unto death (Phil. ii. 27), Trophimus was left ill at Miletum (2 Tim. iv. 20). Of how many saints has it been said, "Lord, he whom Thou lovest is sick?" Many of the Lord's brightest lights, if not under beds (Luke vii. 18) are to be found on them. Many never shine so brightly, as when promoted to the dark school of suffering. It is therefore unscriptural to assert that sickness is necessarily punitive. This was certainly the case in 1 Cor. xi. 30, but sickness is oftentimes preventive (2 Cor. xii. 7)—"Lest I should be exalted." Sometimes it is purging, that the fruitful branch may bear more fruit (John xv. 2); sometimes to teach the sufferer the precious art of sympathy (2 Cor. i. 4). Sickness should lead to much more exercise of soul among God's people than it often does, and the prayers of fellow-believers and especially of "the elders" may well be enlisted, not only for bodily recovery, but for spiritual blessing. Jas. v. 14 is as true to faith as Jas. v. 13, but a great deal of present-day fanatical teaching attached to it, is not true at all.

It is not true, for instance, as we have heard, that "all sickness is the result of sin in the sufferer." Nor is it true that healing is only denied to unbelief, and that no remedies should be taken. "Use a little wine for thy stomach's sake" (1 Tim. v. 23) proves the contrary, and 1 Tim. iv. 4 is as true of medicine as of meat. And 2 Tim. iv. 20 shews, that the faith of an apostle did not avail to heal Trophimus, while Romans viii. 11, assuredly points to the future.

Position *in the world* is not promised to the Church. The Church was never intended to be a great worldly system like Daniel's tree, in which "the birds of the air" might roost (Luke viii. 5, 12), any more than an annual like the mustard plant, is intended to become a perennial tree. "Catching fish" was more lucrative than "catching men" in these early days. Pre-eminence in the Church was then a post of danger. "Livings," "Benefices," "Church Lands," "Episcopal Places," and "Spiritual Peerages" were all unknown to the apostles. We never read of one of them coming forward as a candidate either for the Jewish Sanhedrim or the Roman Senate. Saul of Tarsus was probably a member of the former body, but lost his seat automatically, when he met Jesus Christ. He could hardly rub shoulders on equal terms with those who had crucified His Lord, yet we are told by some to-day "the apostles would have had great influence in such places." They had more important and more influential work to do, which they thus describe: "We will give ourselves continually to *prayer* and the *ministry of the Word*"

(Acts vi. 4). The claim to temporal power is the legitimate outcome of a great worldly system like the Papacy, but "the true Church" is called to something higher. Israel was promised the necks of her enemies. The Church is promised to feel the heels of hers, but to come out "more than conqueror" through Him that loved her, at last. In closing, it would be well to enumerate a few of the blessings which the Church enjoys, which Israel never will possess. Elect "before the foundation of the world" (Eph. i. 4), and predestinated "unto the adoption of sons" (ver. 5). It will be noticed that while election guarantees the blessing, predestination determines the special character of that blessing. The Church is united to Christ (ver. 22, 23) as her risen head in heaven by the Holy Ghost sent down to earth—being baptised into the body—Gentiles as well as Jews losing their distinctive natural character, becoming together "members one of another" and temples of the Holy Ghost, individually and collectively. These blessings are guaranteed to the believer by the grace of God. He holds them not only in promise as Israel did, but as present possessions. Nor can they be lost through unfaithfulness, although the enjoyment of them greatly depends on the measure of the believer's obedience to the Word of God and his cleaving with purpose of heart to the Lord.

Intercession.

When it is well with thee before thy God,
Remember them with whom it is not well;
Bear them upon thy heart before that God,
In whose glad presence thou has't come to dwell.

Fellowship of His Sufferings.

THE inevitable result, or rather, accompaniment, of our getting "to know Him," is accepted with a full heart. It is "the power of His resurrection and the *fellowship of His sufferings*, being made *conformable unto His death*." This is the crucial point. Here I have no rights. I am nothing, am dead, with no "dignity" to offend. "The fellowship of His sufferings." Weigh the words well. "Neither did His brethren believe in Him." You may be called upon to have *fellowship with Him thus. It is hard when loved friends change, and one is conscious that there is no acceptance with them. But then it is "with Him."* That changes all. What blessed company! "If a man WILL come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross *daily* and follow ME." Like a bird liberated, all the desires are upward. Christ is precious. The Scriptures that present His person are full of interest now. His personal loveliness, His moral glories, His Divine attributes as revealed in the Word, are all dwelt upon now, especially where His deep love for His own and the glorious relationship existing between Himself and His beloved are described, as in the Song of Songs. If the soul sings, it is, "Tell me more about Jesus." The question may be asked, "What is thy Beloved more than another beloved?" and triumphant is the reply—"My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand." "Yea, He is altogether lovely." The soul is consumed with desire for Christ. Oh! to see Him, to be with Him, to be

like Him. Paul's desire is then understood. "I have a desire to depart and to be *with Christ*, which is far better." The soul is now in the heavenly Canaan, feeding on the old corn of the land—that is *Christ*. He is all. This is Beulah Land. The soul feels like Christian and Hopeful when from Beulah's heights they got a glimpse of the reflection of the glory of the Celestial City. "Christian with desire fell sick. Hopeful also had a fit or two of the same disease. Wherefore, here they lay by it awhile, crying out, because of their pangs." "If ye find my beloved, tell Him that I am sick of love" (*Cant. v. 8*).

There is nothing here beyond Canaan, for Canaan is heaven begun. But there is conflict. Yes, but not the conflict of the wilderness. The conflict of the wilderness was with Amalek—the flesh. Canaan is the type of the heavenlies. It was in Canaan that Israel's greatest battles were fought. The land was theirs, given to them by God; but every inch of ground was stubbornly contested by the enemy. *So long as they kept right with God, they were victors. We cannot rise higher than Ephesians, for God sees us in the heavenlies there, and it is there the conflict is.* "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against spiritual wickedness in the heavenly places" (*Eph. vi. 9*). There is armour mended here. I must put it on and keep it on, if I am to know the pathway of power and victory. Here, too, Christ becomes increasingly precious, for this is *His* place, where He is displayed. Satan also is here, for he is "the prince of the power of the air." I have no might,

but when I have on the armour, I have put on Christ, and when I "in Him" resist the devil, he meets Christ and flees. He cannot stand before Him. He utterly destroyed Satan's power long ago—at Calvary. It is here, when wearied with the sore conflict, and perhaps utterly exhausted, even physically, that Christ becomes more and more to the soul as the "best wine that goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak." Yes, and to speak of *Him*. "THAT I MAY KNOW HIM," a Christian of one idea—but that idea—HIM. But let His Word test me, "And hereby we *do know*, that we *know Him*, if we keep His commandments" (1 John ii. 3). This is indeed a test. Is there anything not yielded up *to Him* or *for Him*? Is there any command or desire of His, not yet obeyed? But with ourselves yielded to Him (Rom. xii. 1), with nothing between the outshining of His face and the soul, then the Holy Spirit will dominate all, for He is then in His element. And should distracting voices be heard, try the spirits by 1 John iv. 2. It is God's infallible test. The next step is—when the Holy Spirit leads—OBEY. No matter at what cost. If not, He will soon find someone who will. Obey the Spirit. When He says, "Go join thyself to this chariot," be sure you obey. If Christ is all, you will *always* know the *Spirit's voice*. Be swift to hear and quick to obey. The Spirit never leads away from the Word of God, ever to it. Feed on God's Word, "meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all" (1 Tim. iv. 15).

Pulling Down.

IT is a too common but a very reprehensible habit among a certain class of preachers, to attack or pull down, if they can, what has been built up in the way of teaching by those who have preceded them on the same platform, sometimes in the same meeting. This generally begets a party spirit among those who hear, and greatly hinders godly edification. If error had been taught, it would of course be necessary for those who are responsible, to put that right. But it is not often that error is taught from public platforms, at Conferences, and the like. What happens most frequently is, that a speaker expresses his mind somewhat differently from what is generally held, on some point concerning which there is room for individual exercise, and no distinct Scripture commandment, and those who follow, proceed immediately to correct or denounce—not always with that wisdom or intelligence which carries conviction—the utterances of the previous speaker, with the result that a bad spirit is often generated in the meeting, and frequently all its spiritual ministry forgotten in that uncalled for attack. A private interview with the speaker, might have brought out that there was nothing in it, more than a different way of stating what they both believed, and the unseemly appearance of strife between those who stand before the flock as teachers and guides avoided. We believe that one of the most common causes of schism and party-making would be gone, if this evil habit were brought to an end.

The Bible Annotator.

SUGGESTIVE BIBLE STUDIES.

"IN CHRIST JESUS."

MADE NIGH in His Blood (Eph. ii. 13, R.V.).

SAVED in His Life (Rom. v. 10, R.V.).

ACCEPTED in His Person (Eph. i. 6).

TRUE HOLINESS.

Its Pattern is in Christ (Acts iv. 27; Heb. vii. 26).

Its Standard in the Word (2 Pet. ii. 21; Col. i. 22).

Its Power is of the Spirit (Rom. i. 4; 1 Cor. vi. 19).

VITAL GODLINESS.

Profession of Godliness (1 Tim. ii. 10)—With our lips.

The Practice of Godliness (1 Tim. iv. 7)—In our Lives.

Pursuit of Godliness (1 Tim. vi. 11)—As our Object.

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The Young Believer's Question Box.

One who for many years gave bright evidence of being a child of God, and was used in leading others to the Saviour, fell into sin some years ago, such sin as the world repudiates. He has been deeply chastened, and as I believe completely restored in soul to God. His walk is godly, and he bears a humble and contrite spirit. Yet the Christians among whom he was before his fall will not recognise him, as they think to do so would mar their testimony among those who still remember his earlier history. Is this a right spirit and a Scriptural attitude?

There are sins which not only affect the believer's communion with God, but give "great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme" (2 Sam. xii. 14). If a believer's sin is between himself and his God alone, then self-judgment, true confession, Divine forgiveness, full renunciation and cleansing (Prov. xxiii. 13; 1 John i. 8, 10) bring restoration. But if the sin be of such a character as is described in 1 Cor. v., for which expulsion from the assembly is commanded, longer time may be necessary to prove the genuineness of confession and restoration and renew confidence among fellow-believers. The tendency of the times is, to be satisfied with an unsatisfactory and deplorably shallow repentance, and to yield to the loud demands either of the sinning man or his partisans for an almost immediate restoration to the privileges of the assembly, whether those who seek the welfare of the flock see any marks of true humiliation or otherwise. The result is, many are brought back in an unbroken

spirit, either to repeat their sin, or to cause trouble, and shew vindictiveness toward those who sought to act according to God in their case. If there is true humiliation before God, and real restoration of soul, there will be no impatience under delay, and no desire to be brought back until all are satisfied. On the other hand, human pride and the fear of being reproached by the world for having one in our company who has erred in the past, must not, if God has forgiven him, deter us from welcoming back to Christian love and care even a prodigal. The remembrance of a restored Peter being reinstated in his ministry before all his brethren, and having the lambs and sheep of the flock committed to his care by the Lord (John xxi. 15, 16), and within six weeks of his denial of the Lord being made the chosen messenger of God to charge home the denial of their Messiah on his people, and lead three thousand converted sinners to confess Jesus as their Lord, may surely remind us, that God's abounding grace is very different from the thoughts of those who like the elder brother in the parable (Luke xv. 28), stand severely aloof from "the sinner converted from the error of his ways," and the scene of heavenly joy there set forth as celebrating his restoration.

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Answers to Correspondents.

STUDENT.—Alford's "Revision and Notes on the Old Testament" include only the Book of Genesis, with the first twenty-five chapters of Exodus. The author's death prevented his completion of the work.

INQUIRER.—The lines you ask for are found in Bailey's poem, "The Return to Palestine." They refer to the present condition of scattered Israel, and are as follows—

"A thousand dwellings they may have,
Dwellings, but not a home,
To them there is none but the sacred soil
And the land whereto they come."

W. G., PORTSMOUTH.—The difference between ignorance of the truth and opposition to it, after having heard it, is well marked out in the Word, and in the character of God's dealings with men. The R.V. of Acts xix. 9, tells of certain who having heard Paul's message concerning the kingdom of God "became hardened and disobedient"—not from ignorance of the truth, but having heard it and felt its power, they then disbelieved and rejected it. Latterly they "spake evil" of it as is often done still.

T. B., GLASGOW.—For the information of your friend and other Christians emigrating to Canada, we would simply say, that the reports you have heard regarding the "exclusiveness" of assemblies there, are unfounded. They continue in the Word as they began, and receive all who are seeking to own that Word as their rule. But they rightly refuse to open their gates to men bringing "divers and strange doctrines" subversive of their faith and contrary to the Word of God, which have elsewhere caused dissension and division.

J. G., LONDON.—As worship is higher than ministry and giving to God is more honourable than receiving from Him, we believe the earliest hours of the Lord's Day should be devoted to the assembling of the saints for united worship and shewing forth of the Lord's death. The order of 1 Cor. xi-xiv. indicates that this is the way of the Spirit. A sermon at 11, with worship and the Lord's Supper following it, often hurriedly, does not give to the latter the place it ought to have, and the tendency ever is, where the "address" or "sermon" is a standing institution, for people to come, not to worship God, but to hear Mr. So and So, and when he disappears so do they.

A. W., SUSSEX.—The presence of Romanists and others who are virtually so, although nominally in the English Church, make such boarding schools and other educational seminaries as you describe, places of great danger to young people. It is by such means that Rome and her agents work in these days and ensnare many. Christian parents may well pause, before they send their sons and daughters to be educated in such establishments. Monks and nuns expelled from France have found a place of refuge in these islands, and they with many others in the pay of Rome, are diligently working—especially in schools, hospitals, and suchlike, to gain converts to Popery.

Answers to Special Questions.

IX.—Is there any Scripture authority for Training Colleges and such like Institutions, in which certain young men and women who are specially favoured, are prepared for Missionary Work?

ANSWER A.—There is nothing in the New Testament Scriptures approximating to Colleges or Training Institutions in which men were prepared for "the ministry"—as the professional term is—at home, or for missionary work abroad. Moral and spiritual qualifications there are to be sought for

(2 Cor. vi. 3-9) in all who share in public ministry, with gift, grace, and good report of those who have the fullest opportunity of knowing their individual life and testimony since conversion (Acts xvi. 12), BEFORE being taken up or in any way accredited as called to such a responsible work. Experience, which can only be gained in dealing with God and His Word practically, and the details and trials of daily life and service, will fill up that which is lacking, and develop whatever gifts the Divine Head of the Church may have imparted. No mechanical course of study or training can impart this, but very frequently hinders it. J. S.

ANSWER B.—Natural ability, such as an apt scholar possesses, and spiritual gift such as the Lord alone can impart, should always be distinguished. Unless there is the presence of spiritual gift as given by the Lord (see Eph. iv. 8, 11) and "grace" to use it for Him, no amount of education or training, can make a "minister of Jesus Christ." This is just where Christendom is wholly astray. If a young person has inclinations toward "the ministry" as a profession, or the parents want to give one of their sons to "the Church," he is sent to College for the necessary training, which he may acquire passing all his examinations with honour, apart from any gift of either evangelist, pastor, or teacher, or even without being the Lord's at all. Such is the prevalent and acknowledged method of making ministers in the various denominations. And the way in which "missionaries" are found to go to heathen lands is much the same. They are prepared for their future life by a course of training. And the arguments in favour of this are so reasonable and acceptable to the natural mind, that few ever question the system or dare to raise their voice against it. But when we open the Book of God, which in this as in all else connected with the Lord's work is to be our all-sufficient Guide and Counsellor, or we can find no authority, no precept from the Lord, and no example in the lives of His apostles for either College, probationary training, or course of studies, either in dead languages, arts or sciences, as a pre-requisite to ministry of the Gospel at home or abroad. And I submit that we are not at liberty in the things of God, to invent or support what has no sanction whatever from God in His Word. W. M.

ANSWER C.—When some thirty years ago my eyes were opened—as I believe by the Spirit of God—to see that the prevailing system of making and appointing ministers and missionaries was

contrary to the principles of the New Testament and the practices of the early Church, I withdrew my presence and support from the church in which it was recognised. Since then, I have learned in some measure to look to the risen Lord in heaven as Giver of all gifts for the carrying on of His work in the world and for the edification of His people in the Church. If He require an educated man, He can find him, as He found Saul of Tarsus. If He want an "unlearned" yet earnest and capable man, He can call him from his nets as He did Peter. If He need a medical man to help in ministering to the body as well as the soul, He can lay His hand on a "Luke, the beloved physician" (Col. iv. 14). He needs no help of ours. He finds His servants and qualifies them Himself. And I have observed that those who have at His call gone forth to other lands as missionaries without any human training or course of study, but with spiritual gifts and grace which had commended them to the confidence of the saints, have given as good an account of themselves as evangelists and ministers of the Word, as any known to me who had that training now considered so necessary, and apart from which, few have been authenticated as missionaries in recent years. Fear of being considered "hostile" to missionary work, keeps many silent on this matter, but I am convinced that among those who exercise themselves in the way that the Lord's servants should be recognised, acknowledged and supported, there is a widespread feeling, that it is all away from the principles of Scripture, that when once a young person is passed through one of these institutions, he must be recognised as fitted to go abroad as a missionary or be acknowledged as a preacher at home, however poorly furnished in spiritual gifts and experience. And whereunto this may grow none can forecast, for a single step beyond or apart from the Word, has often ere now, led to great departures from the ways of the Lord. G. W.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—We are told in Mark iii. 13-19, that when the Lord was about to send forth those who were to serve Him in the world, "He went up into a mountain and called unto Him whom He would, and they came unto Him." Then from among those thus called, He appointed twelve that they "might be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach." The call and the appointment were His, and before they were sent out they were first to be "with Him." And in this lay their qualification for bearing witness to Him (John xv. 27) in later years. After the conversion and call

to the ministry of Saul of Tarsus (Acts ix. 15; 1 Tim. i. 12) he was evidently three years in Arabia (Gal. i. 17) before we have any record of his public ministry. In times when the tendency is to make a "short cut" to the front, and for inexperienced and incapable young persons to assume places of responsibility for which they have little spiritual fitness, it is worthy of remembrance that companionship with the Lord, learning of His will, being trained by His discipline, being transformed by beholding His example, and learning by painful experience of the evil of the heart how insufficient all that is of man by nature is for the service of the Lord, preceded going forth in public service among the earliest heralds of the Gospel. But this is something altogether different, alike in character and result, from what is known as the prescribed "course of training"—which in ecclesiastical usage must precede appointment to ministry—or going forth as recognised missionaries to regions beyond. Whatever may be said in favour of those whom God has definitely called and spiritually fitted for such a service, giving themselves to the study of medicine and such like, it has absolutely nothing to do with their call to or qualification for spiritual work. This is something that cannot be acquired in seminaries or by study. It is of God and by grace alone, and would be so all the same if the called one had never been an hour in such places, or had any of the qualifications which they bestow. The danger in all such "helps" is, that they come in course to be thought a necessity, apart from which no one can be authenticated as a qualified servant. And conversely, all who thus acquire such aids are, no matter how destitute of spiritual gift and condition. We are not decriing an educated ministry, nor raising any question as to the desirability of those who believe themselves Divinely called to serve the Lord in the Gospel at home or abroad, acquiring medical skill and such like, but we think a growing danger of our time is, that "the first things" which constitute a missionary or a preacher, namely, evidences of a Divine call, spiritual gift, godly life, with experience in faith's trials, self-denial, bearing the cross and enduring hardness, may gradually be less regarded as necessary qualifications in those who go forth in the honourable service of the Lord Jesus. There never was a time when the whole world was so open to the Gospel as it is at present. Let the Lord's people, therefore, earnestly pray that He may call and furnish those whom He will send on His service.

Taking Hold on God.

THE ancient prophet of Judah makes his complaint to God concerning the indifference prevailing in his time, in the following plaintive words—"There is none that calleth upon Thy Name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of Thee" (Isa. lxiv. 7). Yet there never had been more need for definitely dealing with God, for the prophet goes on to tell how "Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation, and our beautiful house where our fathers praised Thee is burned up with fire, and all our pleasant things laid waste" (ver. 11). It was just in such conditions that men of God in earlier times had stirred themselves up to call upon Jehovah's Name, confessing their own and their people's sin, and laying hold on God for restoration and revival. The prayers of a Moses, a Hannah, and an Elijah, with Jehovah's answers of peace, were recorded in the annals of the kingdom. But they had no heart, no desire to so deal with God for themselves and the conditions in the midst of which they lived. The leaders of the people were self-satisfied and quite content to go on as they were, hiding their fallen condition from their eyes, and possibly seeking to divert the attention of the people from it. Such conditions are alas! too common in our own time. There is a dearth of spiritual freshness and power felt everywhere. The days of ancient might when men trembled before the Word of the Lord, are no longer with us. The full flow of the Spirit's power is little known. The sense of God's nearness which causes men to report that "God is

in you of a truth" (1 Cor. xiv. 25), is a record of the past. Conversions of the old clear-cut type, which caused the world to stand still with wonder, are few and far between. Conviction of sin, of the deep and thorough quality, preceding such conversion, is rare. The holy calm and depth in Divine worship, the fragrance of the breath of prayer and praise so grateful to the spiritual and so acceptable to God, is sadly lacking, and a flippant verbiage of empty words has come instead. The "cup and platter," the mere externals of God's worship and work receive undue attention, while the inner and vital forces are enfeebled and neglected. There is only one true remedy for all this decline and degeneracy—just one. It is GOD. If there is to be any reviving and recovery worthy of the name, it must come from God. It must be sought by personal, definite dealing with a real and living God, by the individual "laying hold" on God, bringing himself and his condition into the Divine presence, remaining under God's searching eye for examination, while he cries "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts" (Psa. cxxxix. 23). And when the light exposes and the blood cleanseth, the forgiven, restored and revived soul will not return to self-complacency nor be satisfied with its barren surroundings. It will stir itself up to "lay hold on God" and bring Him into the scene. Who knows to what measure, the power of God in the midst of His people might be restored, if even a few were stirred up after such a manner to lay hold on God, who never turns away the heart-cry of the righteous.

“The Throne of Grace.”

FRANKLIN FERGUSON, NEW ZEALAND.

A MOST precious and very comforting portion of Scripture is Heb. iv. 14-16, and we shall do well to quote it in full: “Having then a Great High Priest, who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but One that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need” (R.V.).

Although through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ our sins are forgiven, and we are eternally saved, yet we are still in the body and “compassed with infirmity” (Heb. v. 2). But our ever gracious God and Father has made loving provision, by “the throne of grace,” to meet the weaknesses and supply the needs of his children.

Infirmity is feebleness, failing, a want of strength. In itself it is not sinful, though sin is the original cause of it. To say of such and such an evil habit or besetting sin, “It is my infirmity,” is quite a mistake: the true and shorter word for it is *sin*. The great apostle Paul, in referring to Christ's strength being made perfect in his (Paul's) weakness, says, “Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities . . . for when I am weak, then am I strong” (2 Cor. xii. 9-10). It would have been quite inconsistent with

truth, for him to have gloried in infirmities and taken pleasure in them, had they been sins. Sin calls for chastening, but infirmity appeals for help; and when that help is the power of Christ resting upon us, then our very weaknesses become sources of richest blessing and sweetest comfort.

Our great High Priest is “touched with the *feeling* of our infirmities.” He was not tempted with sin, for the Evil One found in Him a perfectly holy nature which could not respond to temptation. But He was in all points tested like as we are, that He might have sympathy for us. And here let us remark, that though the Son of God became a real man, with human feelings and sympathies, yet in this respect He differed from us, that whereas there is sin in all saints, in Him was no sin, and He knew no sin (1 John iii. 5; 2 Cor. v. 21); so that He and no other man could say, “The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me” (John xiv. 30).

As “the *Man* Christ Jesus” He could feel tired with a journey; could feel the discomforts of His surroundings. He understood the pangs of hunger and thirst; knew the feeling of loneliness; wept at the grave of a loved one; felt the sharp arrows of criticism and false imputation; experienced the relentless opposition of Satan. In short, He was no stranger to all that goes to make up the experiences of this life, and right well did He know its trials and sorrows. But these things came upon One who was “God manifest in the flesh,” as well as “the Man Christ Jesus;” therefore He could never break down, whatever the test. But He has fully *felt* what trial

means, and has perfect knowledge how to help all who now come unto Him.

Herein is where we need our great High Priest. We are but human, and constantly are finding that our frame will not stand the pressure of this present life, and unless sustained by divine power, we cannot help giving way under the strain. For the very purpose of relieving and strengthening us, the Lord liveth, and, blessed be His Name, He will not fail the least of us, but at our cry of distress will hasten to assist, pouring His comforts into our soul, giving power to the faint, and to them that have no might increasing strength (Isa. xl. 29).

“Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need” (R.V.). By referring to Young’s Analytical Concordance, we find that in this place “mercy” means kindness, beneficence; and in the Psalms, where “mercy” occurs so often, it is given in the Newberry Bible as “lovingkindness.” Also “grace” in this instance is graciousness, and indicates a *friendly willingness* to help in time of need. “Mercy” is not exactly mercy for the past, but present kindness full of love, alleviating the suffering, cheering the tried, and strengthening the weak who are drawing near by reason of their many infirmities to “the throne of grace.”

Let us draw near “with boldness.” The word implies *the speaking all one thinks*, and that perfect love which casteth out fear (1 John iv. 18) emboldens us to use all holy frankness. Fear not, but open thy mouth wide in petition! His

mercy is for *all* the children, and “his mercy endureth for ever” (Psa. cvii. 1). Now shall our mouth be filled with laughter and our tongue with singing, as we come from “the throne of grace” saying, “The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad” (Psa. cxxvi. 2-3).

And when the Lord has gathered us to the Father’s house of many mansions, and “the throne of grace” is needed no more—

“Shall the memory be banished
Of His kindness and His care,
When the wants and woes are vanished,
Which He loved to soothe and share?”

The Epistle of Christ.

HENRY W. SOLTAU.

THE apostle says in 2 Cor. iii. 2, “Ye are our epistle”—our letter. Not *letters*, but letter, as if Christ had sent down a letter for people to read. This is a beautiful expression, “the letter of Christ”—because it means that we are not individually epistles but that altogether we form a letter. Just as a letter contains many things, so each believer should be sharing some part, making up one letter, so that the world may have one complete epistle to read. One believer may be called especially to show forth the grace of patience under peculiar circumstances of trial; another the grace of lowliness in circumstances where pride would naturally triumph; another the grace of meekness, another gentleness, another love, according to the position in which each is placed, all setting forth Christ, forming one letter “known and read of all men.”

Israel and the Church.

WM. HOSTE, B.A., BRIGHTON

WE will now seek to distinguish between Israel and the Church, as to the character of their WORSHIP.

Perhaps in no particular has Christendom more flagrantly and universally departed from the Divine pattern. Practically everywhere worship is according to "the rudiments of the world," that is, after the Jewish system. We shall divide this part of the subject under four heads: (1) The Worshippers, (2) The place of Worship, (3) Preparation for Worship, (4) The Worship.

I. The *Worshippers*.—Speaking generally, we may divide Israel into three classes: (a) the *Warriors*—that is, every male of the twelve tribes "from twenty years old and upward; all that were able to go forth to war" (Num. i. 3). (b) The *Workers*—the Levites who were given to Aaron "that they might minister unto him," and "do the service of the tabernacle" (Num. iii. 6, 7); and (c) the *Worshippers*—namely, one family alone of the tribe of Levi, Aaron and his sons, "they shall keep their priesthood" (Num. iii. 10). These three classes were distinct and separate; their functions did not overlap. The Levites, as such, were not expected to fight the battles of Jehovah. No other tribe but they, could do the service of the sanctuary, but even they could not perform the office of a priest. That belonged alone to the priestly family. It will not be needful to enter at length into the privileges and duties of Aaron and his sons, it will suffice to notice

certain points which distinguished them from the rest of Israel.

1. They occupied a *Separate Position*. It was Jehovah who called them to this, not themselves nor their fellows, as we learn from Exod. xxviii. 1. The Lord said, "Bring them near unto thee, Aaron thy brother and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel." They were sanctified or set apart to their office, with elaborate divinely-appointed ceremonial (Lev. viii. 6-24). The daughters of Aaron might eat of the offerings, but did not act publicly as priests.

2. They were called to a *Definite Service*. The object of the call is specified "that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons" (Exod. xxviii. 1). No other family on earth has ever been recognised by God as priests unto Him, but the family of Aaron. The warning to all outsiders was a solemn one, "The stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death" (Num. iii. 10). Not even was our Lord Himself a priest upon earth, being of the tribe of Judah (Heb. vii. 13; viii. 4). It was a serious offence calling at once for divine judgment for even a Levite (e.g., Korah, Num. xvi.) or a king (e.g., Uzziah, 2 Chron. xxvi. 16-20), to usurp the priestly functions. How serious, then, must have been the sin of Jeroboam, "who made priests of the lowest of the people" (1 Kings xii. 31), and of those who in our own day consecrate to a fancy priesthood unregenerate and even ungodly men.

3. They wore a *Distinctive Dress*. Their priestly garments were divinely appointed

and described (Exod. xxviii.). Nothing was left to the imagination or invention of man. Texture and make all had a divine meaning, and as the sons of Aaron moved through the camp or appeared at the door of the tabernacle they were conspicuous to every eye as the priests of Jehovah.

4. They enjoyed *Peculiar Privileges*. As those who had received the anointing oil, they alone could offer burnt offerings (Lev. i. 5-8), the skins of the victims belonging in each case to the officiating priest (Lev. vii. 8). They alone could enter into the holy place (Exod. xxviii. 43; Num. iv. 5, 19, 20), to burn incense upon the altar of gold (Exod. xxx. 7; 2 Chron. ii. 6, 18). For their sustenance they received a tenth of the best of the tithes of the Levites (Num. xvii. 28), and also all the hallowed things of the children of Israel (Num. xvii. 8-19).

5. They ate a *Certain Food*. To them belonged the ram of consecration and the bread of consecration (Lev. viii. 31), as also the meal offerings (Lev. vi. 16, 17), the trespass offerings (Lev. vii. 6), and the sin offerings of which the blood had not been brought into the tabernacle to make atonement (Lev. vi. 26). They had certain parts of the peace offerings (the right thigh being for the officiating priest, Lev. vii. 24). They alone enjoyed the privilege of eating the twelve loaves of shewbread in the holy place (Lev. xxiv. 9; Matt. xii. 4).

6. They had *Particular Responsibilities*, such as keeping the burnt offering always burning (Lev. xii. 13), and seeing that the candlestick was always alight (Num. viii.

1). They alone were qualified to discern between leprosy and other diseases, and to carry out the cleansing of the leper according to the divine ritual. To them, too, belonged the responsibility of teaching the statutes of Jehovah to His people Israel (Lev. x. 11).

7. They were called to a *Special Holiness*. They were to wash in the laver before approaching the altar or the tabernacle (Exod. xxx. 19). They were to abstain from marriage with certain persons (Lev. xxi. 7), and from defiling themselves generally for the dead (Lev. xxi. 1). They must be without defect in order to offer the holy things (Lev. xxi. 21), and without defilement in order to partake of them (Lev. xxii. 4-6; 10-13).

All this clearly shows that the priests formed a privileged and strictly exclusive class among the children of Israel. They alone might draw near to God. They were the indispensable intermediaries between the people and Jehovah.

It can hardly be denied that now in the matter of priesthood the present great religious systems of Christendom correspond very closely to the Jewish model. They, too, have their orders of priests separate from the "laity" or common people. Such do not, it is true, belong to any divinely appointed family, nor are they required to give any proof of personal conversion to God, or of a saving knowledge of Christ. If, professing to feel called to the office, they can exhibit a certificate of moral conduct, and satisfy their examiners as to a modicum of theological attainment, they are set apart with solemn services to their sacred

office by their fellow-men. They enjoy henceforth a position and privilege which, it is believed by some, they can never lose either in time or eternity, according to the phrase, "once a priest always a priest." They alone are qualified to perform certain functions, for instance, to dispense the Lord's Supper, or as it is termed, "celebrate the Eucharist." or "say Mass." They alone have the right to sit within the "communion rails," and approach the "holy table" or so-called "altar." They too, in many cases, live of the tithe. They have besides their sacred vestments, and even in private life are known by a distinctive dress. They are, too, as in the case of the sons of Aaron, the indispensable intermediaries between "the laity" and God. There is one point, however, on which the priesthood of Christendom differs from that of Israel. Special holiness, though appreciated, is not essential, as in the case of the priests of Israel. Priests may be personally wicked men, and yet, according to the current ecclesiastical theory, their ministrations are not invalidated thereby, "but for as much (as the 26th article of the Church of England informs us) as they do not minister the Word and Sacraments in their own name but in Christ's (*sic*) and do minister by His (*sic*) communion and authority, we may use their ministry both in hearing the Word of God and in receiving of the sacraments." Even in the more distinctly Protestant and evangelical denominations, whose ministers would deprecate any sacerdotal claims, gift and ministry have almost universally suppressed the common priest-

hood of the Lord's people, or to use old Testament language, the Levite, if he has not usurped the priesthood, has at anyrate infringed on its rights—a most (Num. iv. 15, 18, 19) serious offence in the sight of God.

The Lord in the Midst.

THOS. NEWBERRY, EDITOR OF 'ENGLISHMAN'S BIBLE.'

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

In the midst of the Church universal, He is seen as walking "in the midst of the seven golden lampstands," and He is in the midst of the assembly of disciples gathered to His Name; not *in* His Name merely, but *to* or *unto* His Name; that is to His person.

When the Lordship of Christ is owned, every question is easily settled as to the Church and its discipline; and when the Lordship of Christ is recognised and submitted to in the assembly, the blessing is unbounded; when none lifts hand or foot without Him; not only *not* acting *contrary* to His will, but *not* acting *without* His will.

Now that the Lord Jesus is away, the Holy Ghost is not setting up a democracy but maintaining the Lordship of Christ and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Him.

The Assembly Life of Believers

ITS PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

PART V. BY THE EDITOR.

THE receiving or welcoming of a believer to the fellowship of saints, although in itself a joyful as it always ought to be a hearty act, is not to be regarded as a light matter, or hurried through with little thought or care. The following wise and sober words of another, regarding it, are well worth remembering.

“The receiving of a believer into the fellowship of an assembly, whether it be one newly converted, or one from a sect, is no trivial matter; for first, it affects the whole assembly and therefore ought not to be the act of an individual; secondly, it is not an act that can be done to-day and cancelled in a week. Once received into fellowship, there is no power to separate such an one until such sin has been committed as warrants their being put away upon Scriptural grounds. Thirdly, it carries with it not merely the privilege of breaking bread, but all the privileges connected with “the coming in and going out” (Acts ix. 28) among the believers. If this were understood, brethren would no longer take upon themselves the responsibility as individuals of bringing others to the breaking of bread; on the contrary, they would gladly seek the help of those who care for the flock, so that each believer might be introduced in a godly and Scriptural way and at once be received with confidence by the whole assembly.”*

In the case of one newly converted,

* “Thoughts on Fellowship,” by J. R. C. See *The Northern Witness*, 1880, Vol. x., page 117.

nothing beyond clear evidence of conversion with a desire to learn and do the will of the Lord would be required to ensure his hearty reception. In days of much empty profession, time for godly discernment and care may be necessary, or if personally unknown, the testimony of one like Barnabas, in whom the Lord's people have confidence. He was able to testify how Paul had (1) “seen the Lord in the way,” and (2) “preached boldly at Damascus in the Name of Jesus” (Acts ix. 26, 28)—in other words, of his conversion and his practice. The evangelist—naturally a sanguine man in estimating the reality of those who profess to be converted under his ministry—ought not to hasten the reception of his converts, but leave this to others having fuller opportunity of knowing their ways, and less likely to be partial, while on the other hand they ought not to be over-suspicious or dilatory and so leave the young believer to be picked up by, or drift into, one of the world's religious denominations. And when one is received, he should then be lovingly cared for and “taught the way of God more perfectly” (Acts xviii. 26). There is ample scope for such Priscilla and Aquila service amongst young believers, and evidently fewer to share it as the years go by.

With one who has been in a sect, greater care is needed. First, regarding his conversion. Many who have not been born of God, are in full membership of “the churches,” and while a profession of being converted may be required in others, the standard is so generally low, that any who can give a clear statement of evangelical

doctrine may pass, without much difficulty. Then, as most of the denominations now regard fundamental error with complacency and permit it to be taught in their pulpits, it may be necessary to inquire whether the applicant is personally sound in the faith, otherwise he may bring in such error as will corrupt and mislead others. And as there must be some cause why he is leaving the denomination of his choice, it is only reasonable that he should be asked what this is, otherwise you may give refuge to one who is a troubler, or has had a quarrel, or cannot get his way, or may be fleeing from such discipline as exists in the place where he has been. All this may require time, which no right-minded person will grudge, while it leaves room for God to manifest what may not be apparent at first sight, and to give others the opportunity of satisfying themselves that the applicant is a true believer and desires to walk according to the Word. All this is rudely set aside by those who claim and use the liberty of bringing in their personal friends, or any whom they think fit, frequently with only a very casual acquaintance of their faith or practice, and without the least consideration of the convictions of others, with the result, that in many companies where such practices have become the rule, they do not know "the number of the names together" (Acts i. 15), or make any attempt to exercise that godly care and rule enjoined in such Scriptures as 1 Thess. v. 12-14; 1 Pet. v. 2, or to exercise such discipline on those who require it as is commanded in 1 Cor. v.

Whatever time may be necessary to

make the welcome of one seeking to "join himself to" (Acts ix. 26) a company of believers, hearty, such delay is not rejection, nor does it warrant the oft-used but utterly inapplicable term of "exclusion," nor is it a "barrier to fellowship," for as may be easily ascertained by any who have the wish to do so, it is in assemblies where such care is exercised, that the larger number of believers are to be found "continuing steadfastly" in the ways of the Lord, and not where the practice prevails of any who take the Christian name coming casually to "break bread" and then disappearing, nobody knows where, or has the least interest to inquire. For, however attractive to some the theory may be that there is no assembly responsibility other than that which belongs to all who are born again, there is not even one of its most ardent advocates but has to recognise and act in the most practical way on the truth of "assembly fellowship," in simple, mundanethings. For example, when money is required to pay the hall rent and to meet the current expenses for which they are mutually responsible: do they then appeal to the "church universal," or to "all believers who form the church, in that place, but do not all come," to meet their liabilities? No chain is stronger than its weakest link, and here manifestly the "church universal," theory—which is the only aspect of the church some see, or will allow others to own—fails, for a church that never assembles cannot be held liable in local affairs, nor would any ordinary house owner accept it as a tenant, to be held liable for his yearly rent.

Things Hard to Explain.

HOW one who keeps his store open on Saturday night till close on twelve o'clock, and gets up just in time to eat a hurried breakfast and go off to the morning meeting without opening his Bible, or bending his knee, expects to be "led of the Spirit" in worship, or to help others nearer to God by his ministry. Can you explain that?

Why Christians who profess to have been delivered "from the present evil world," and sing that it is now to them "a wilderness wide," send their children to dancing schools and musical entertainments to acquire the necessary equipment to go "into good society" and "get on" in the world. Can anybody explain that?

Why a preacher who dilates on the grace of "humility," and seeks to impress on his hearers the fact that they are followers of "the despised and rejected Nazarene," should consider it necessary to go to the platform wearing a white vest with a heavy gold Albert dangling in front of it, to deliver his message. Such things happen, and are not considered by some to be the least incongruous. How do you explain that?

That when young people, professing to be the Lord's, assemble together in a social capacity, there is frequently as much unseemly friovlity and fleshly flirtation indulged as in any worldly company. Yet the "indiscretion" is looked upon lightly and passed over, because a few hymns were sung and perhaps "a prayer said" at the beginning. Do the prayer and the hymns sanctify the ungodly conduct

that follows after, or what? Perhaps some who indulge in such things, or wink at them, will explain?

When that fellow-believer called the other day, you said you were "very pleased to see her," and when she was leaving, you hoped it "would not be long" before she called again. But no sooner had she gone, than the tune was changed, and all her faults and failings, with the "ridiculous" things she said, were rehearsed in the hearing of the household, some of which are unconverted. They heard all that was said to the visitor, then what was said *about* her, after she had gone, and although they dare *say* little, they think a good deal. Can you explain what the effect of such "double tongued" (1 Tim. iii. 8) hypocrisy is likely to be upon them?

In the Light of His Countenance.

I AM only as a little daisy in the Lord's garden, yet it is for His pleasure that I blossom and shew forth His virtues in the lowly sphere in which He has planted me. I know that He thinks much of me, for He gives me daily some mark of His favour, and causes the light of His countenance to shine upon me. Daisies do not open out into full bloom on a cold, sunless day, but when the warm rays of the sun fall upon them, they open out and expand in all their beauty. So be it, O Lord, with all of us who are Thy people. "Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us" (Psa. ix. 6). "In the light of the King's countenance is life" (Prov. xvi. 15).

The Preachers' Corner.

OUTLINES OF GOSPEL SUBJECTS.

THE GOSPEL'S BLESSINGS.

- Gospel of God's Grace (Acts xx. 24)—To the Guilty.
 Gospel of Christ's Glory (2 Cor. iv. 4)—To the Empty.
 The Gospel of Peace (Rom. x. 15)—To the Troubled.
 The Gospel of Salvation (Eph. i. 13)—To the Lost.

THE FREENESS OF THE GOSPEL.

- The Love Gift is to "the World" (John iii. 16).
 The Ransom given was "for All" (1 Tim. ii. 6).
 The Proclamation is to "every creature" (Mark xvi. 15).
 The Invitation is to "Whosoever will" (Rev. xxii. 17).
 The Open Door is for "Any Man" (John x. 9).

THROUGH CHRIST'S BLOOD.

- REDEMPTION from the Bondage of Sin (Eph. i. 7).
 REMISSION of the Guilt of Sin (Acts x. 43).
 RECONCILIATION from the Effects of Sin (Rom. v. 10).

THE WORD OF CHRIST.

- Of Grace—"Neither do I condemn thee" (John viii. 11).
 Of Pardon—"Thy sins be forgiven" (Luke vii. 48).
 Word of Life—"Lazarus, come forth" (John xi. 43).
 Word of Power—"Come out of him" (Luke iv. 35).
 Word of Peace—"Peace, be still" (Mark iv. 39).

Familiar Statements.

EXAMINED IN THE LIGHT OF THE WORD.

Come to Christ.—This may be an invitation, showing the way is clear, the work complete, and nothing to be done (Luke xiv. 17), but it is not the Gospel. The Gospel is Divinely stated in 1 Cor. xv. 1-4.

King of the Church.—The Scriptures speak of Christ as "Head of the Church which is His body" (Col. i.), "King of the Jews," and "King of Nations" (Rev. xv. 3, marg.), but never as King of His Church. The character of His relation to His people now, is Lord and Head, rather than King.

Brethren in Jesus.—The relationship of believers one to another, is "in Christ" (Eph. i. 1; Col. i. 1). It is incorrect to say "all one in Jesus" or

to write, "Yours in Jesus." "In Christ," as risen and glorified, is the true Christian position.

The Lord's Children.—Believers are 'children of God' (John i. 12; 1 John iii. 1, R.V.), members of Christ's body (Eph. v. 30), and servants of the Lord (2 Tim. ii. 24), but are never spoken of as "children of Christ," or "The Lord's children." In Heb. ii. 13, it is God's children whom He has given to Christ to bring safely home to glory, who are in view.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Is it pleasing to God, that one who belongs to Christ, should take part in a workman's strike, refusing to serve his master, with whom he has no quarrel, at the call of the officials of a Trade Union? The will of the Lord to all His own who serve an earthly master, whether Christian or Pagan, is clearly set forth in Eph. vi. 5, 6; Col. iii. 22, 25; 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2; 1 Peter ii. 18, 19, and should be the only rule to the Christian servant. If one puts himself under the control of any governing body which prohibits him from obeying the Word of God, he is clearly in a false position. There are real difficulties to be met, and Satan can easily stir up his forces to oppose those who by grace seek to be obedient to God in such matters, but we have never known any man to be ultimately a loser, either in spiritual or temporal things, who stood for God in a time of crisis and trial. It is not when all is fair and flowing that faith is put to the test, but in the day when the Christian is called to cleave to the Lord and His Word at all costs, no matter what others do, or how popular and reasonable the cause may be. Here also is God's opportunity to provide "a way of escape" (1 Cor. x. 13) for His trusting but sorely tried child, in His own time and way.

Answers to Correspondents.

NEMO.—The book most likely to give you the help you seek is, "Some Lessons of the Revised Version," by Dr. Westcott.

G. M., DUNS.—The original tune for the hymn, "I'm waiting for Thee, Lord," is the Scotch air, "The Land of the Leal." No other suits it so well.

J. N., TENBY.—The absence of "miracles" in

the present dispensation, is not to be attributed to the failure of the Church in testimony, as some say, but to the fact that their day is past. When they appear again, it will be by Satanic agency to deceive (2 Thess ii. 9, 10, R.V.), not as in the past to confirm the Word spoken (Mark xvi. 17).

A. E. W., HUTH.—It is not good that young believers should be occupied with the unprofitable controversies which such pamphlets as you describe, posted to them by contentious persons, keep active. The better way is to fortify them with the truth, healthfully ministered from the Word, to establish and confirm their souls. Then they will have no taste for such vagaries.

W. L., SUFFOLK.—It is better to go on quietly, waiting upon God to open your way, than to take any step in doubt, on a matter which involves not only your own but another's welfare. Take Psalm xxvii. 14 as your guide, and you will not be disappointed.

G. S., BRADFORD.—Where there are several younger brethren able to give a short word in the Gospel, cottage meetings, or an empty shop temporarily rented in some needy district, where they will have full scope for their energies in finding a congregation and carrying on Gospel work in a godly way, with the co-operation of fellowsaints, has been much blessed in many very places. Where preachers are treading on each other's heels or waiting their turn of the platform, it is better to stretch forth after such work, than to "rust out" in indolence, while there is so much need all around.

R. G., BELFAST.—While it is true that "after meetings" conducted in the way they often are, have been accountable for much of the shallow profession that you and others rightly seek to avoid, yet it cannot be denied that very many whose consciences have been awakened during the preaching of the Word, have been led to the Lord by the personal efforts of godly workers who watch for souls on such occasions. We think it well to give opportunity at least for personal conversation at the close of the public preaching of the Gospel, and then to see that no evil use is made of the occasion, either to disseminate false doctrine, or to unduly press for a profession of conversion.

A. W., CATHCART.—A healthy assembly of God's people does not require the continuous help of "ministering brethren" from other places to keep its wheels going. If in a right spiritual condition, with no hindrances imposed by man's interference, there will be development of gift and scope to use

it within its own borders. In the fellowship of service, evangelists and teachers may often, in the Lord's will visit such assemblies, and will, if true men, be the means of blessing. This is something entirely different from what the sects call "supply"—which means that a steady stream of "unemployed" preachers can be had on application to a central bureau, where such affairs are managed. But a living Head in heaven, and a present Spirit on earth, as Administrator and Director of all the functions of spiritual ministry, do away with the need of any such system, which alike shuts out what is of God and brings in that which is not. A newly formed assembly may need "nursing" (1 Thess. ii. 7) and "help" in its infant days (Acts xviii. 27) from those fitted by God to give it, but it is no evidence of spiritual health or growth to be dependent on such extraneous aids all the way. A healthy babe in a perambulator is a sight beautiful in its season; not so a confirmed invalid in a bath chair.

Answers to Special Questions.

X.—To what class do the words of Rom. xiv. 1 apply? Can they be rightly used to warrant the reception of one to an assembly, who denies and opposes such truths of Scripture as the baptism of believers by immersion?

ANSWER A.—The case of one "weak in the faith" in Rom. xiv. 1, is not a Christian holding perverted views of baptism, or any other clearly revealed truth or commandment of the Lord, but one who has scruples of conscience regarding certain meats and drinks which others eat and he cannot. And the "receive ye" is not to Church association, but to social fellowship. If one "denies and opposes" any revealed truth of the Word, help must be found elsewhere as to how to deal with him. This Scripture does not give it. W. S.

ANSWER B.—The "weak" here, is a vegetarian: one with a morbid conscience, who, from fear of defilement by eating what may have been offered to idols, eats no meat at all. This is all right for him, but it must not be made a rule for others. The "strong" here, are such as had fuller light, and liberty, and could eat all kinds of food. These were not to reproach the "weak," or to judge him harshly, but receive and company with him as one whom God had welcomed. It was not a matter of God's revealed will, concerning which there could

not be two opposing views equally right, but of a personal matter, in which each is left free to act according to his conscience. The same difficulty regarding "meats and drinks" may not exist in our day, but the principle of toleration in all that is merely personal and not a contravention or disregard of any commandment of the Lord holds good, and should be practised wherever it tends to peace. But to apply such a principle to the neglect or rejection of what God has said on baptism, or any other ordinance or truth, would be going direct in the face of such Scriptures as Psa. cxix. 128, and leaving it open to make the Scriptures teach anything.

J. S.

ANSWER C.—If a Christian does not see the privilege and duty of being baptised after believing, as the Word everywhere enjoins (Mark xvi. 16; Acts viii. 12), he will have to be borne with and taught, for some sincerely though mistakenly think that they were Scripturally baptised when christened as infants. But while giving them all credit for sincerity, and walking in all the light they have, it must never be conceded that a mistaken view of baptism, which is in reality its counterfeit, is to be regarded in any sense as the thing which the Lord has commanded. This is where the tendency is to err, accepting anything and everything as baptism that takes the name, and thus virtually ignoring all difference between God's truth and man's perversion of it. Then, again, one who holds and defends infant sprinkling, or any other corruption of the Divine ordinance, is not "weak in faith," but STRONG IN ERROR, for which a very different rule is prescribed in Scripture.

W. M.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—The case in view in Rom. xiv. 1, is evidently that of a recent convert from Judaism or Paganism, who, although one of those "in Rome beloved of God, called saints" (chap. i. 7), and doubtless in the fellowship of one of the companies of believers in the habit of assembling somewhere in the Imperial City for worship and other united functions, was liable to be kept at a distance in personal and social intercourse by "the strong," who had entered more fully into the liberty of the Gospel. The principle of toleration in things concerning which there is no commandment from the Lord is here laid down, and the earnest exhortation to "the strong"—with whom manifestly the apostle's own convictions lay—not to reproach or criticise (judge) the scruples of the weak, and to "the weak" not to impose his scruples as a rule upon others, or charge them with self-indulgence,

because they were not bound by his rigid law of conscience. When the apostle wrote a few months before to the Galatians—with whom the foundations of the Gospel were in peril—he uses a very different tone (see Gal. i. 8). There is to be no toleration where God's revealed truth is denied, or supplanted by a perversion of it put in its stead. Baptism, although not a foundation of the Gospel, is first in order next to it, and must not be frittered away, as if two opposing views could be equally true, and their advocates capable of walking in "happy fellowship," as we are sometimes asked to believe. True fellowship is not characterised by the suppression of any part of God's Word, nor by agreeing to differ on it, nor by relegating any revealed commandment of God to the place of "meats and drinks," which each may take or leave as he likes, but in "holding fast the faithful Word," and walking together "in the truth" (3 John 3). If an assembly of believers receive one to its fellowship, in the full knowledge that he denies the truth of believers' baptism by immersion, they need find no fault, if, after a time, they find some being perverted from the truth. It is exactly what they may expect under such conditions.

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Questions Requiring Answers.

Help in answering the following questions will be welcomed. All answers should be short and definite, giving the Word, and avoiding reference to persons. We have a large number of queries on matters of real interest sent us by those exercised about them, which will appear in the Magazine as space permits.

XI.—Is there anything in the Word to support the doctrine now being taught, that one may be born again, without having eternal life or the seal of the Holy Spirit?

XII.—What is meant by destroying the temple of God, in 1 Cor. iii. 17?

XIII.—Is it according to the teaching of the Word to say that the Church is nowhere seen in "The Acts."

XIV.—Is the personal advent of the Lord, to be secret to the world, or in manifested glory?

XV.—Ought one who has failed to meet his obligations in business, publicly preach the Gospel to the world, or minister the Word in the assembly of believers?

XVI.—Should evangelists or others, who minister the Word in places where they are not locally in assembly fellowship, take part in cases of difficulty or discipline in such assemblies?

Satisfied in God.

IT is good to be saved by God's grace and set on the way to glory, but it is better to be satisfied with God Himself on the road. There are many truly saved who are not satisfied. They know God as their salvation and they are not afraid (Isa. xii. 2), but they seek their satisfaction more or less in something other than God, it may be in His gifts or in the circumstances by which they are surrounded, or the experiences through which they pass, or in the fellowship of their brethren. There is no real satisfaction to the renewed soul save in God Himself. "O satisfy us early with THY mercy that we may rejoice and be glad all our days" (Psa. xc. 14) is the true heart-breathing of one who seeks his satisfaction in the living God. To be "satisfied" is to be filled, "saturated" as the chemists say, the fluid having as much of the substance in it as it can take. "He satisfieth the longing soul" (Psa. cvii. 9) just means that God reveals Himself to it in such a way that it is "abundantly satisfied" (Psa. xxxvi. 8)—not self-satisfied, but satisfied in God. This does not mean that there is no further advance or attainment possible, or that the saint does not need to watch and pray that he may be kept from forsaking the Fountain (Jer. ii. 13) for some "broken cistern" in which there is nothing to satisfy the soul. But it does mean that the new life has found the element in which it is at home, and the portion that is according to its nature and its desire. It is satisfied in God. It is just in such conditions that

the enemy seeks to drive by his blasts or lure by his wiles the soul from the God in whom it finds its delight. And he too often succeeds. How many of God's dear children are going about unsatisfied, ill at ease, first trying one scheme, then another, all doomed to disappointment and failure, just because they have ceased to find the satisfaction of their souls in God, as they did in simpler and fresher days. And He who loves them and purchased them at such an infinite cost, even the blood of His own dear Son, puts too high a value upon them to allow them to settle down or be at ease, while they seek their satisfaction and pasture in anything short of Himself. So they are emptied from vessel to vessel, hurried over rough places, allowed to suffer loss, and it may be to endure pain, all to lead them back unto Himself, who alone "satisfieth the longing soul and filleth the hungry soul with goodness" (Psa. cvii. 9). Does the Christian reader feel the force of this in his own experience? Is there a desire for, a craving after something that you do not possess, do not enjoy. Is it peace, is it rest, is it power? They are all in God, and God delights to give. But He will be enquired of, He will be sought after. The gifts are not enjoyed apart from the Giver. Seek restoration of soul to God. Have everything adjusted between your soul and Him, then His blessings will flow. "I have satiated the weary soul" (Jer. xxxi. 25) is true now to the saint who seeks God and His face from day to day, and there is nothing nearer than this to "the days of heaven on earth" (Deut. xi. 21).

Paul a Pattern Saint.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY DR. NEATBY.
READ PHILIPPIANS, CHAPTER III.

PAUL was a model Christian. I think he is the only man presented in the Word as a pattern. "That in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting" (1 Tim. i. 16). Paul was the first (or chief) of sinners (1 Tim. i. 15). He was a pattern in his *conversion*, and also in his *walk*. "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. xi. 1).

Saul of Tarsus was a typical man. What a marvellous conversion was his! He was the chief of sinners. Was he a drunkard then? No. Was he a liar? No. Was he an unclean person? No, not a bit; but as "touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless" (Phil. iii. 5). You have not met his like in all your travels. He was a model man after the flesh. He was of noble birth, had a grand education at the feet of Gamaliel, was a distinguished man, and, I daresay, a member of the Jewish Sanhedrim. But what made him the chief of sinners? He had vowed to blot out the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ from under heaven; this was what constituted him the chief of sinners. God's greatest enemy must be the chief of sinners, and Saul was that. God does not esteem guilt according to the human standard, and the man who most opposes God in His choicest work, that man is of sinners the chief.

God loved His Son, and the Son dwelt in the bosom of the Father, but He came

forth from the bosom of the Father down to this sinful world, became Man and went about doing good. He was finally rejected by His creatures, Jews and Gentiles, and was nailed upon a cross, His crucifiers mockingly saying that God might take Him if He found any pleasure in Him (Matt. xxvii. 43). God has now raised and exalted his blessed Son. Jesus has "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. i. 3). But He was not sitting there whilst Stephen was being stoned. Jesus was seen by Stephen "standing on the right hand of God" (Acts vii. 55). And Saul was consenting unto Stephen's death. The clothes were laid down at Saul's feet. He was chairman of that bloody scene.

Now follow Saul a little further. He was on his way to Damascus, and was approaching the city. His prey was "them that call on the Name of the Lord Jesus." They had committed no other crime but they called on the Lord's Name. Saul's commission was to bring them to prison; this was the purpose to which he applied his great talents. To Saul's utter amazement, the Lord appeared to him in the way. You would not be more surprised to see a person, whom you knew to be dead for twenty years, walk in at that door, than Saul was surprised to see Jesus that day. He verily believed the story that Jesus was stolen out of the tomb; he believed it with all his heart. Saul cried out "Who art Thou, Lord?" and he receives the answer, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest" (Acts ix. 5). And now what will become of Saul? If a man find his

enemy will he let him go? Of course he will not? Jesus has found his enemy. Saul lies prostrate on the ground, and Jesus looks on him with those eyes that are as a flame of fire. Those eyes can look right through Saul's pocket, and can see the documents inside. There is no need of evidence. Oh, the magnificence of grace! Thank God, the words are not "depart from Me ye cursed." It might have been so, and even Saul of Tarsus could not have said why it should not be. Jesus speaks words of compassion and pity. He gives a message of salvation to that very wicked man. Paul was made a minister and a witness of the things that he had seen. What had he seen? He had seen Christ in glory, and that is the substance of his witness, till his head rolls on the scaffold at Rome. The Son of God had won his heart. "The Son of God who loved me, and gave Himself for me." No wonder that Jesus won his heart.

The apostle tells us here in verse 8, that he had "suffered the loss of all things." Yes, he says he had counted them all "as dung," and then it was not much that he lost. The moment he counted them as dung, he was glad to be quit of them. He has now got "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord," and he is glad to lose everything that belongs to the old creation. That light which is welcome to you in a dark cellar is not much in the light of the sun. If you hold a lighted candle to the sun, the light of the candle goes out as it were, because of the more exceeding light. Paul had seen Christ in the glory, and for the "excellency of the knowledge

of Christ Jesus my Lord" he suffers the loss of all things. The heart and soul of Christianity is Christ from first to last. Paul had found a personal Saviour; One to lead him through all this troubled world; to be with him in every difficulty and sorrow; to be with him in life, or in death if it comes; to be with him for ever. "Christ Jesus MY Lord." Oh, the joy of Paul's heart! He had found a personal friend, a "friend that sticketh closer than a brother." When all forsook him, Christ stood by him. He had found in Christ his all in all.

(To be Continued).

Personal Study of the Word.

THERE is no form of godly edifying, or means of spiritual refreshment and furnishing for the children of God, equal in value to personal devout study of the Sacred Word, under the Spirit's teaching and guidance into all the truth (John xvi. 13). To reverently search the Scriptures, marking with Spirit-taught intelligence and attention what the Word says, receiving its testimony by faith as the very words of the eternal God, is the only way to have the truth so "implanted" (Jas. i. 21, R.V.) in the inner man, as to prove its daily saving power. As the truth of God is thus made good to the individual saint by the abiding Spirit (1 John ii. 27), it becomes a living, active power in the soul, dwelling richly in the heart (Col. iii. 16), cleansing the ways (Psa. cxix. 9, 10), and enlightening the path (Psa. cxix. 105). There is always blessing to the soul in coming in contact with the "living" Word of God.

A Patron, or a Partner.

THOS. D. W. MUIR, DETROIT, U.S.A.

THERE is a great difference between being a "patron" and a "partner." The one may have a passing interest in a man or his business, which makes him try to help it along by patronising it in some way. The other is interested because it is his business and hence everything he does, is done from the standpoint of a partner, whose prospects are bound up in the success of the concern.

Now, "God is faithful," by whom ye were called "into the fellowship—or partnership—of His Son Jesus Christ." (I Cor. i. 9). This means partnership in everything that concerns Him. It is ours now to be in fellowship in the spread of the Gospel of Christ. It is ours now to be partakers of the afflictions of the Gospel; that is, to be partakers with Him in His rejection. And it will be ours also to share—to be partners in—His glory by and bye.

WHAT IS GOD'S BUSINESS?

God has now a business in hand. In a word, it is the glorifying of His Son in this world, where men have despised and rejected Him. For this reason, He is having the Gospel of His grace made known to sinners; and every one who hears and obeys the message, receives life everlasting, and becomes a "partaker of the glory that is to be revealed" at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God is also gathering saints together, to know and own Christ Jesus as their Lord, and their Master in all things. His person pre-eminent, His Name exalted, and His authority as Lord, not only over

the individual, but owned in the assembly of His people, "For where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. xviii. 20); His people thus gathered in His Name, ensures His presence and power!

Now the question before us is, What practical part have you and I in this business, dear children of God? Are we realising that, according to the Word of God, we are partners in this work God has in hand? Or are we simply patrons, having a friendly feeling towards it, and willing, in a way, to help it along, when it suits us?

The apostle could thank God for the "fellowship in the Gospel" which the saints at Philippi had shewn from the first days, of which we read in Acts xvi., until that time—ten or eleven years after—(Phil. i. 3-5). This was certainly part of the "fellowship" into which they had been "called." Years had passed since that memorable day when Lydia, the seller of purple, whose heart the Lord had opened to attend to His message of life by His servants, had seen her privilege, as a partner in the great work of making Christ known, and had thrown her house open to the servants of God. In that way she shewed her

FELLOWSHIP IN THE BUSINESS.

In the Epistle to the Philippians, Lydia is not mentioned. Others had been raised up during those years, but the same blessed spirit characterised them. They sought to carry on the work of the Gospel by having fellowship in it, because they were partners in it. It was not merely the apostle's work that they were

interested in; it was GOD'S work, with which He had identified them as partners with Himself and His Son, Jesus Christ. And the practical expression of this as sent by them through Epaphroditus to God's servant, then in bonds, was reckoned as a sweet savour offering unto God Himself.

Many there are who have a desire to help on any good thing that may attract their attention, or perchance have a feeling of responsibility to keep up their share of the current expenses of the assembly—many, alas, don't even have that! But they fail to rise to the thought of partnership in it all. They are simply patrons. One may patronise the Gospel by their presence occasionally, or by helping on the "cause" somewhat by contributing of their means, and yet, all this may be done without any sense of the fact that this work is simply part of the business GOD is carrying on, and in which they are by grace His partners—a work in which God would have us to be "workers together with Him."

I may attend a Gospel meeting as a critic—some do. I may attend a Gospel meeting because I have nothing else to do and it is my habit to go. I may attend because I like the preacher, the preaching, or the singing, and yet I may never know what it is to feel I have an atom of responsibility in the Word preached, or its results. And I may congratulate myself that I am fulfilling all that is to be expected of me, as one called "into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."

The Lord grant that these things may more deeply exercise us His own people,

that we may more intelligently live for Him here. May we learn the true secret of fellowship with Him in all that He is doing. This would lift our share in it above the low motive of human patronage in the things of God, to the higher and more Scriptural thought of fellowship with Him. Our time, our ability—great or small—our influence, our means, our ALL for Him. Why? Because we are HIS and it is His right? That ought to be enough to make us yield ourselves to Him for evermore. But there is another reason, and that is, He has in most marvellous grace lifted us up out of the dunghill, to set us among the princes of His people, and associated us with Him in all His honourable and glorious work. He has called us into partnership with Himself in it, and such grace is worthy of nothing less than our utmost devotion. May it be ours to rise to it, for His Name's sake.

Heaven's Millionaire.

NOT rich is he, o'er-stocked with earthly pelf,
 Who hath no care for other than himself,
 Who only lives for worldly gain and ease,
 And best is pleased when he himself doth please;
 Who robs the poor to satisfy his greed,
 And hath no God in all his silly creed;
 Who only gains that he may gain the more;
 Why rate him rich, this man whom God calls poor?

But rather rich is he, whose honest heart
 Hath chosen Christ's true riches, as his part;
 Who with his Lord's approval is content,
 And in His service spendeth and is spent;
 Who for another's weal delights to live,
 And only gains that he may have to give;
 This man whose home is heaven, whose wealth is
 there.

Why call him poor? He's heaven's own millionaire!

Israel and the Church.

PART IX.—THE PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS.

WM. HOSTE, B.A., BRIGHTON

THE priesthood, as generally recognised in Christendom is a distinct official class enjoying peculiar privileges, and exercising certain functions which without their intervention cannot be performed.

When we turn to the Acts and Epistles we see at once how great is the contrast between all this and the simplicity and spirituality of the Divine order for the Church.

The priesthood, sacrifices, and holy places of the old dispensation were but "figures of the true." Those who frame their worship on the Jewish model are putting back the clock 2000 years, and are turning from the substance to the shadow. As we have seen, no Israelite could be at once a soldier, a Levite, and a priest, but every Christian is all three. He is a soldier in his conflict with Satan and the world. He is a Levite in his ministry to the Church and his fellow-men. He is a priest in his worship to God. This is the highest privilege, and it does not belong to some separate caste in the Church of God, to "the clergy" or to some human order of priests. All believers are priests. "Ye also," writes the apostle Peter* to all believers, "as living stones

are built up a spiritual house an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. ii. 5).

Then, again, the apostle John, writing to the seven churches in Asia, representative of the whole Church of Christ, ascribes glory to Jesus Christ in these terms, "Unto Him that loveth us and loosed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen!" (Rev. i. 5, 6, R.V.). All who by faith are regenerated by the Holy Spirit are born into the priestly family, both those who fail, like Nadab and Abihu, and those who are faithful like Eleazar and Ithamar. A sinner who believes is not only forgiven, he is constituted a worshipper. There is no order of high priests or of officiating priests recognised in the Acts and Epistles as distinguished from the rank and file of Christians. Not one mention is made from 1 Cor. xi. to 1 Cor. xiv. of any official class of presiding persons corresponding to the modern "clergy." We have "a High Priest over the house of God," "Jesus the Son of God" (Heb. iv. 14; x. 21), and there is not another. When we read in the Acts "that a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith," it simply means that a number of Jewish priests became believers in the Lord Jesus, and so *ipso facto* priests of the heavenly order. I well remember the interest of a young converted Jew in Paris, of the name of Cohen (priest), when told that, claiming as he did to belong by natural birth

* I am quite aware that some ultra-dispensationalists would take from us the Epistles of Peter, and apply them to Jews of a future dispensation. Though these Epistles may have a future application, I believe it to be certain that they are primarily addressed to the Church. Those to whom Peter wrote had a heavenly inheritance to look forward to (chap. i., 3), might suffer as Christians, and were exhorted to glorify God in this Name (chap. iv., 16—R.V.). There are many other indications in the First Epistle that "the strangers of the dispersion" (chap. i., 1) is only another name for scattered Christians.

to the one family whom God had recognised as earthly priests, he had now through faith in Christ become a spiritual priest to God. It will be seen at once that if all believers are priests, one class among them should not be distinguished from the rest by a special dress, title, food, or privileges. All such pretensions are but a counterfeit and sham; a denial of the spiritual character of the dispensation in which we live.

There are three things constantly confounded, but essentially different—oversight, gift, and priesthood. (1) *Oversight* is the work of the bishop* or overseer, called also elder in Acts xx. 28, where the apostle, speaking to the elders of Ephesus, says, “The flock . . . over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers” (bishops). A bishop may be gifted as an evangelist or teacher, and so “labour in the Word or doctrine” (1 Tim. v. 17), but this is not essential to his position as overseer, which depends rather on his character and experience as a Christian, and on the possession of certain qualities and graces rather than on the possession of a gift properly so-called.

No young believer is called to the work of oversight in the Church of God, nor are all old believers either. All who “stretch forth” to this work (not office) of oversight should weigh themselves solemnly in the light of 1 Tim. iii. 1-7 and Titus i. 7-9.

(2) Then as to *Gift*. Though all believers are called to some service (at any rate to be “helps” (1 Cor. xii. 28) if nothing else), and so may be viewed from this point of

view as “Levites,” yet all are not gifted in the sense of Eph. iv. 11—all are not evangelists, nor yet pastors and teachers. It is a serious abuse when a brother, under cover of his priestly liberty for worship, insists on inflicting unprofitable ministry on the assembly. Liberty as to priesthood, does not in itself qualify a man to edify the saints. For this the Spirit will use those who are gifted for this service. Those who are thus gifted are to be known by their work, rather than by the title of their gift. It is somewhat cold comfort for a flock to learn that a certain man is to be called “Shepherd So and So,” if he does not give them anything to eat. We never read of Dr. Paul or of Pastor Barnabas, much less of the Reverend Silas or of his lordship Bishop Timothy of Ephesus, but we know what these men were by their works.

(3) When we come to *Priesthood* it is different. Not all believers are bishops, nor have all received distinct gifts, but all are priests unto God. All have not the same spiritual energy, nor the same preparedness of soul for the exercise of their priesthood, but all have “received the anointing oil,” and all are priests in the same sense and with the same title. What more blessed sight on earth than a redeemed company around the table of the Lord worshipping the one Father as a holy priesthood, and what more glorifying to God? Anyone who dares to intervene between his fellow-believers and God, as an intermediary priest, is setting on one side the High Priesthood of Christ, quenching the action of the Holy Spirit, and infringing on

* Bishop is only a corruption of the Greek word *episcopos*—one who oversees.

the liberty of his fellow-priests. One man priesthood is a dishonour to Christ, the death-knell of spiritual worship, and the bane of Christendom.

The Assembly Life of Believers

ITS PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

PART VI. BY THE EDITOR.

THE fellowship of saints in its assembly aspect has its privileges and also its responsibilities. Some of these may be briefly enumerated.

I. Their united WORSHIP of God, as a holy priesthood (1 Pet. ii. 5), fitted and guided by the Spirit (Phil. iii. 3, R.V.), and the Word. As individuals, believers may bless the Lord "at all times" (Psa. xxxiv. 1) and offer the sacrifice of praise to God "continually" (Heb. xiii. 15). But when the whole Church comes together into one place (1 Cor. xiv. 23), it is to unitedly express the worship that is due unto God, whom we know as Father, and "the Father seeketh such to worship Him" (John iv. 23). It is when thus assembled, that the Divine principles of 1 Cor. xiv. are to be acknowledged and practised. Such an assembling is essentially different in character from a meeting for ministry of the Word, in which a number of the Lord's people come together to hear one or more whom the Lord has gifted as teachers, and equally so from a meeting when the unconverted are invited to hear the Gospel preached by an evangelist. The Lord calls together His people when they assemble for worship, and He Himself is "in the midst" as Lord, to whom all honour is to be paid. Those who come

together do not arrange what is to be said or done beforehand, but count on the present guidance of the Spirit of God, who dwells in the Church, as the Source of all power for spiritual worship and edifying ministry. Those brought into the assembly, whether as young believers newly brought out from the world by conversion to God, or those older in the faith brought out from worldly religion with its human arrangements and cut and dry forms, need to be taught the truth of God regarding these things, so that they may intelligently and with true exercise of heart take their part in that which God has called them unto, and which it is for their own and their brethren's blessing that they should share. There are many complaints that so few take part in leading audibly the prayers, thanksgivings, and worship of the assembly when thus gathered. But may part of the cause not be, that many hardly know how or when to do so? When a certain few always lead the thanksgivings, give out the hymns, read the Word and give whatever ministry there may be, it becomes a sort of "unwritten law" that they are expected to keep the chimes going, and generally they do. But each male believer who has ability to express himself intelligently and is in a right condition of soul, may, and certainly often would be heard leading the worship of the assembled saints, if the truth of God were exercising his heart as it ought to do. It is not here a question of gift. That comes under the subject of ministry, but here it is worship, in which all in virtue of their common priesthood may share, subject

always to the Lordship of Christ, the leading of the Spirit, and the truth of the Word. When Christians sit listless, turning over the leaves of their hymn books or gazing around the room, instead of being silently occupied in meditation on the person and work of Christ, it is little wonder if they have nothing to offer and manifest little spiritual interest in the exercises of others. In order to enjoy in full measure the presence and blessing of the Lord in the midst of His assembled people, it is necessary for each one to come up in personal communion with Him. If the week is spent in worldliness, if the early hours of the Lord's Day are spent in bed, then a hurried dressing and breakfast, with little, perhaps no time, with God and over His Word, it is no great wonder if there is silence and apathy, or worse still, carnal activity filling up time, or inflicting upon others what is intended for ministry which is utterly destitute of grip or freshness. Pauses in true spiritual worship, when the heart is silent before the Lord are truly blessed, and ought never to be disturbed—for the sake of doing something—but pauses of spiritual poverty, because nobody has anything to offer, are the result of backsliding in heart and carnality of spirit, and ought to be a cause of self-judgment to us all. Although the worship of God is the primary object in such a gathering, yet this does not exclude words of ministry from any to whom they may be given. Very frequently a presentation of Christ, in some of His many glories, and of His work, in some of its many aspects, in the grace and power of the Spirit, nourishes the

spirit of worship among the saints, and brings forth a fuller and richer measure of it. But ministry on general subjects, quenching the flame of spiritual worship, is not in season at such a time. Wherever it has become the rule for a "ministering brother" to give his stated address, often out of all keeping with the character of the gathering—the spirit of true worship declines, and God's people come to *get* rather than to *GIVE*.

Money for God's Work.

HENRY GROVES, OF KENDAL.

IT is painful, as we run our eyes down the religious periodicals of the day, to read the continual cry for "money, money, money," as though that were the one pressing need for carrying on the work of God. One cannot help feeling that if an equally urgent and united cry were raised to God, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, for the power of the Holy Ghost, there would not only be results in spiritual blessing a hundred-fold, but, without even mentioning the need of money, the heart of the Church would be touched, funds would flow in for the service of God, so that for what He would have us do there would surely be no lack. It is true that "means" are wanted for everything that has to be done here, but it makes all the difference in the practical carrying out of the work of God, whether God Himself be before the eye, or whether the question of means to carry on a work comes first, and God second. Let us lay it down as a fact, that God never lacks means for what HE has to do.

The Preachers' Corner.

OUTLINES OF GOSPEL SUBJECTS.

THREE GOSPEL BLESSINGS.

- Pardon of Sins (Isa. lv. 7; Acts xiii. 38).
 Peace of Conscience (Col. i. 20; Rom. v. 1).
 Power for Life (Eph. iii. 20; 1 Pet. i. 5).
 1. By the Sovereign Grace of God.
 2. Through the Finished Work of Christ.
 3. From the Indwelling Spirit of God.

DIVINE ABUNDANCE.

- Abundant Mercy (1 Pet. i. 3).
 Abundant Pardon (Isa. lv. 7).
 Abundant Grace (Rom. v. 20).
 Abundant Life (John x. 10).

1. To meet Ruined Man in his MISERY.
 2. To absolve Sinful Man from his GUILT.
 3. To deal with Helpless Man in his NEED.
 4. To renew Fallen Man in his NATURE.

STUDIES ON SCRIPTURE CHARACTERS.

MARY OF BETHANY.

Luke x. 39; John xi. 32; xii. 3.
 "At Jesus Feet."

- As a Learner—Hearing His Word.
 As a Supplicant—Expressing Her Grief.
 As a Worshipper—Anointing His Feet.

BARNABAS, THE SON OF CONSOLATION.

Acts xi. 24.

- His Fitness—"A Good Man."
 His Fulness—"Full of the Holy Ghost."
 His Faithfulness—"And of Faith."
 His Fruitfulness—"Much People Added."

The Young Believer's Question Box.

What is meant by having a "a good report" of them which are without? (1 Tim. iii. 7). How does this accord with 1 Pet. iv. 4—"Speaking evil of you?" The word "good report" is vague, "a good testimony," as in R.V., is better. It means that no truthful witness can bring a charge of evil, but that the man's blameless life commends his profession to every upright worldly person. None lacking such a testimony should be recognised as morally fit for oversight or prominence in God's assembly. The world, although unable to judge of spiritual things—because the natural man cannot know them (1 Cor. ii. 14)—may nevertheless judge and testify aright in matters of moral right and wrong.

The passage has nothing to say of false accusations that may at any time be brought against a blameless child or servant of God, such as 1 Pet. iv. 4 refers to.

Answers to Correspondents.

ANON.—Sharpe's Translation of the New Testament bears the date of 1856, Alford's of 1869. Copies of both may still be had, we believe.

G. A., LANARKSHIRE.—If the young believers recently added to the fellowship of your assembly are to "continue stedfastly" and take part intelligently in worship and service, they need to be taught the truth of God regarding these and other assembly functions. The lack of such teaching generally is one cause of the little interest taken in assembly life, compared with what used to be, when such truths were given their proper place in public ministry.

J. L., CUMBERLAND.—If from any cause whatever, a servant of the Lord finds that he is not wanted, or his ministry acceptable in the assembly where he is, he ought not to insist on continuing it. If he is right and they are wrong, God will vindicate him sooner or later, and meantime open other doors in which he can happily exercise his ministry without human interference. No man who seeks God's honour and His people's blessing will ever force his ministry, or be a cause of trouble or division. The world is wide enough for the evangelist, and the need of God's saints more than enough for the teacher, with any number of open doors for all His truth. Why then should any man be at a loss to know where or what to preach?

C. W., LONDON.—You do not need to be disturbed by the infidel challenge of your fellow-clerk regarding the Deity of the Son of God. His contention is worthless. It is the echo of a German myth which has long ago been exploded. The word "Godhead" is found thrice in our Authorized New Testament, and in each case it represents a different word in the original, as you can prove by consulting a Concordance. In Acts xvii. 29 it means "The Divine," and in Rom. i. 20, "Divinity," which even the heathen could recognise in creation around and above them. But in Col. ii. 9, where the Spirit is directing attention to the person of the Lord Jesus, He uses a word which claims for Him more than Divinity, even absolute DEITY. He was and is, and ever will be God. As John in the closing words of his first Epistle, speaking of

the Son, says, "This is the TRUE GOD, and eternal life."

E. L., NORWICH.—There is nothing in the Word to support the theory of the sleep of the soul between death and resurrection. Phil. i. 23; Luke xxiii. 43; 2 Cor. v. 8, with many other Scriptures, clearly teach—while the whole testimony of the New Testament assumes—the conscious existence of the redeemed as spirits (Heb. xii. 23) in the unclothed state, while Luke xvi. 23, 24; 2 Pet. ii. 9; Rev. xx. 13 teach clearly the conscious existence of the lost now, while awaiting judgment.

A. G., MANITOBA.—If one bearing the Christian name has wronged the world, he ought not only to confess his sin to God and to his brethren who have suffered in their testimony from his conduct, but also to make restitution to those whom he has defrauded, as soon as it is in his power to do so. No testimony that he can offer in the Gospel will be of much value, where he is known, until this has been done.

W. J. M., LIVERPOOL.—The spirit of utter indifference to eternal things that pervades the masses of mankind, the apostasy of most of the up-to-date preachers in the world's denominations from the fundamentals of Bible teaching and the futile attempts of some to attract the crowd by offering them a dilution in the form of religious entertainment, make it harder as the years go by, to get the ears of the unconverted to hear the Gospel. Nevertheless, wherever there is found a thoroughly hearty, evangelistic and energetic company of God's true people "striving together" (Phil. i. 27) in the spread of the Gospel, giving God His place and not hindering by human interference the operations of the Spirit to do His own work in His own way, there is always found a people to hear, and manifest fruit of the Gospel in true conversions. It is not grander halls, nor more refined preaching that we need—some who have both are as barren as the heath in the desert—but more laying hold on God by prayer, more energetic holding forth of His Word by lip and shewing forth of God's praises by life. Then there will be real success in Gospel work everywhere.

G. R., LANARKSHIRE.—If one who has been received into the fellowship of an assembly of believers should absent himself from some unknown cause, those who have shepherd care should visit and seek to restore him. If he persists in remaining away, gives no reason, and has manifestly gone back to the world, indulging the flesh and joining himself

to his former ways, with no desire for help or intercourse on spiritual things, it is to be feared that 1 John ii. 19 would apply to his case. When this is clear to those who have vainly sought his restoration, then it will be necessary to acquaint the assembly of the position he has taken, so that they may act toward him as the Word instructs them. He has not been "put away" in the sense of 1 Cor. v. 4, 13, but if in his life he is manifesting any of the sins for which such ex-communication is commanded, his relation to the assembly would be the same as if he had been. It is often because such cases are neglected and no mention made of them, that trouble arises, some contending that because they have not been put away they may be companied with, and others claiming that they may return without any explanation or statement whatever. Such matters evidence the slack and unworthy manner in which such cases are very often dealt with.

Answers to Special Questions.

XI.—Is there anything in the Word to support the doctrine now being taught, that one may be born again, without having eternal life, or the seal of the Holy Spirit?

ANSWER A.—In this age of the Gospel's power and the Spirit's presence, all who believe receive eternal life (John iii. 15) and the seal of the Holy Spirit (Eph. i. 13). It is not intelligence or experience but faith, that is said to bring these into their possession, so that all who believe have them. Any teaching which says the contrary is opposed to God's truth and should be refused. A. S.

ANSWER B.—Attempts to differentiate between being "born again" and "having eternal life," and to show that one may be a child of God, born of the Spirit yet not sealed, have often been made, but never supported by the Scriptures. Inferences, analogies and strained interpretations there have been, but no clear, convincing testimony of the Word, for the simple reason that there is none. When one is born of God, he gets life, he begins to live—this all will admit. If the life be not "eternal life," what is it? "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His" (Rom. viii. 9) puts the theory out of court that one may not be sealed and yet be Christ's. J. H.

ANSWER C.—That the new birth and the seal of the Spirit are varied operations of the same Spirit, Scripture makes clear, but that the former may

exist without the latter at this present time, it does not teach. There are special cases named in Acts, as there were special modes of conveying the Spirit (see Chap. viii. 16, 17; xix. 1-6), but these were peculiar to the inauguration of the dispensation, and as there are no apostles or any other through whose hands such gifts are communicated now, the time and means are clearly stated in Eph. i. 13, see R.V. The figment of one having life but not "eternal life" is scarcely worthy of notice. It is one of these "dense" theories which certain writers labour to establish by tortuous processes, which few if any can follow, all so unlike the clear statements of the Word. I have before me pamphlets by Raven, Mace, and others, in which the writers seek to shew their skill by cutting fine distinctions which I am satisfied Scripture does not warrant, which have made endless "word fightings" where they were introduced, ending in divisions. There is to certain minds a charm in "hair splitting" on such matters, while the great fundamental truths of the Word are being neglected or removed.

W. M.

EDITOR'S NOTE—We need only add to the above, that those who hold and teach such doctrines, are not the men whom those who know how easily simple Christians are upset and turned aside, will readily bring unto assemblies as teachers, no matter how well they can talk on other subjects.

Notes on Points of Present Interest.

PRESERVING YOUNG BELIEVERS.—If you desire to keep young converts, whose senses are scarcely yet exercised to discern between true and false doctrine, from being led astray, see that the spiritual atmosphere of the assembly is warm and the ministry suited to their need. Then there will be little desire to go listening to the errors of Millennial Dawnism, or other erroneous teachings, or to run about after popular but unsound preachers who seek to catch the crowd.

PRECEPT AND EXAMPLE.—If you bring those to preach who are in the habit of going in and out among sects, or appearing on platforms alongside clerics, need you wonder if you find those who learn more from a man's practices than from his preaching, claiming and using the liberty to "go where they like," and doing it, too, until they get ensnared wholly in the meshes of the world's religion. Then you remember when it is too late.

Example is always more likely to be followed than precept, for good or evil.

NO RESPONSIBILITY.—One effect of the novel teaching that there is no local assembly—other than the whole of God's people in the place, who of course never assemble—is, that those who accept it, feel no responsibility in visiting such as are absent, restoring such as wander, or acting as God's Word bids them toward those who need discipline. How can they, when they do not know them? And how can godly oversight work be done according to 1 Thess. v. 14, among Christians dispersed among all denominations, each with a "pastor" of his own choice, whom he pays a salary for looking after him?

CONFIRMING THE CHURCHES.—It is recorded in Acts xv. 41 of Paul and Silas that "they went through Syria and Cilicia confirming the churches." This is a most necessary work never more needed than now. These "churches" had all come into existence through the labours of servants of Christ, preaching the Gospel and teaching the "all things" which the Lord had commanded (Matt. xxviii. 20). They were composed of believers who assembled together in the Lord's Name, and could be gathered together to hear the ministry of the Lord's servants, as "the Church" at Antioch could be "gathered together" (Acts xiv. 27) to hear what the Lord had done through the ministry of Paul and Barnabas. In these times, as now, a local church or assembly—such as these just named—was a company of Christians in the habit of assembling together for worship, ministry, prayer and other functions, not a number of persons found in all denominations who neither know each other nor want to be found together.

HUNGRY SOULS.—There never was a time in the remembrance of servants of Christ who minister the Word and wait upon their ministry, when true children of God could be got together to hear an edifying ministry of the Word as now. Few of them get, or expect anything in their denominations. Most of the ministers are either half Agnostics, Higher Critics, or more occupied in playing golf and attending football matches than in seeking green pastures for their flocks. A fresh and seasonable ministry of Christ and of the truth as they are able to hear it, never lacks its hearers, even if given by those who are "outside the camp" of the world's religion. Wherever there are pastures green, Christ's hungry sheep will find them out, and there will be no need to use baits to bring them.

God, a Very Present Help.

IT is recorded in the story of the Reformation, that when Luther and his fellow-labourers of that stormy time became discouraged by reason of the oppression of their enemies, they were accustomed to say one to another, "Let us read the forty-sixth Psalm," and by means of its words of Divine encouragement and holy cheer, they girded themselves anew for the work that the Lord had given them to do. As it is in the dark night that the stars of heaven shed forth their silvery light upon our path, so in times of trouble and conscious need do certain portions of the Sacred Word become as voices from the heavens to the sorely tried people of God. The forty-sixth Psalm brings God very near, and reveals Him as "a very present help" to His people "in trouble." What a solace to the soul, beset with hosts of evil without, and deeply conscious of the lack of any reserve of power within to resist their might, it is, to fall back upon the resources of a faithful God, and say "God is our Refuge"—in which we hide, and "our Strength" upon whom we firmly lean—a "very present help in trouble." It is in the dark and cloudy day, when all human help is vain, that God, the faithful God of His people, becomes the stay and support and portion of the soul. Then it is, that thus confiding, thus reposing in God, they "will not fear," though earth and seas become convulsed, and everything shakes and moves upon which men build their confidence. God is near, God is a very present help, God is in the midst.

And He is both "Jehovah of Hosts," with all power on His side, mighty to save, strong to deliver, and yet the "God of Jacob," who stoops to help the one whom He calls "a worm" (Isa. xli. 14). What mysteries of sovereign grace and mercy are here! What a revelation of the God with whom we have to do, of the God who charges Himself with all His people's need and care! How our hearts should confide in His faithfulness, how we should trust even when we cannot trace His hand! To all the questionings of our unbelief, which in spite of past deliverances would often doubt the love of His heart or judge the wisdom of His hand in the way He leads us, His answer is—"BE STILL, and know that I am God"—yes, GOD. And "God is faithful." He can never be anything less than Himself, or anything different from what He has promised. He may test to the utmost strain the faith of His people, but He can never forsake or leave them in the hand of their foes. And "this God is OUR God, for ever and ever." He has been the God of His people all through the ages. He has been their Shield and their Help when the enemy came in like a flood. When the adversaries of their soul rose up against them, He made bare His holy arm in their defence and for their deliverance. And He is the same God still. He may lead His people by a way that they know not and in paths that seem strange and hard to nature in them, but He can never forsake them or leave them to sink. He is their God, "a very present help" ever close at hand to hide in, to lean upon and to prove, in "time of trouble."

“ All His Benefits.”

W. H. BENNETT, YEOMAN.

WHAT child of God can survey the past, whether his course may have been a short or a long one, without adopting the words of the Psalmist—“ Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits ?” Not that any of us can recall *all* the benefits received from His gracious hand ; when we “ would declare and speak of them ” we find “ they are more than can be numbered.” There are some mercies—some special deliverances or some answers to our supplications—that stand out prominently and have an abiding place in the memory. But what of the daily and hourly blessings that come almost unobserved or unthought of ? And what of the unseen deliverances of which we shall know nothing until we reach the end of our pilgrimage and review the path that is behind us ?

Though we may discern many of the snares which the great enemy spreads for our feet, and gratefully own that if “ our soul is escaped ” it is only because the Lord “ hath not given us as a prey ” to him, it is very certain that we are not aware of *all* his designs against us. We may look back on some sharp trial or affliction, and think of the “ benefit ” of deliverance from it ; we may even see that the trial itself was a benefit, and yet not be aware of the extent of that benefit. When the Lord gave Paul an affliction so sore that it was as “ a thorn (or stake) in the flesh,” he did not in a moment know that it was the Lord’s gift, or what was

the object of it ; but in answer to prayer he learnt that it was sent lest he should be exalted above measure, and he found that grace to bear was better than deliverance from it. Had Paul been puffed up through the abundance of the revelations he received, he would indeed have fallen into the snare of the devil, the Lord’s name would have been dishonoured, and the Church of God would have suffered. But “ the messenger of Satan ” nourished his spirit of dependence upon the Lord, and often as the snare was spread for him it was broken, and he escaped. So God often saves His people from false paths by hedging their way with thorns, of which they feel the sharpness.

But if we know not how many snares are spread for us by powers of darkness, we may have even less conception of what we owe to angels of light. We do know that they are “ all ministering spirits,” and that they are sent forth to render service for the heirs of salvation ; but the extent of that service, and the measure of our indebtedness to it, we do not know. We have some examples of their ministry in Scripture, and the assurance that “ the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him and delivereth them.” Beautiful indeed are these lines concerning the Church of God—

“ Holy angels watch around her,
She is their Creator’s bride ;
He with chords eternal bound her
To Himself the Crucified.”

Of this ministry of holy angels we have yet to learn particulars when we have the joy of their visible companionship.

As we thus reflect ever so feebly upon

the gracious way of our God with us, do we not involuntarily repeat the question asked in another Psalm—"What shall I render unto the Lord for *all His benefits* toward me?" In Psa. ciii. the special thought in the word "benefits" is God's *actions* on our behalf, His *dealings* with us; in Psa. cxvi. His *blessings conferred upon us*; but all God's *dealings* with His people are *blessings*, and every one will say in the end, "Thou hast dealt well with Thy servant according to Thy word."

What then can we render? God alone can teach us this; but we may remember the example of some who "first gave their own selves to the Lord" (2 Cor. viii. 5), for only as we give *ourselves* to Him in deed and truth, will our ears be open to receive the answer.

Fragrant and Fruitful.

"A TREE planted by the rivers." This beautiful and expressive figure of the saint who meditates on the law of Jehovah "day and night" (Psa. i. 3), is believed to be taken from the orange tree—the only tree known to have blossoms, fruit, and evergreen leaves, all at the same time. Who could walk in an orange grove without breathing its sweetness, delighting in its refreshing fruit, and admiring its beautiful blossoms? So the saint whose planting is by the hidden rivulets of the Word, will be easily known. He spreads the fragrance of Christ around him. His testimony has fruit and freshness in it. He needs not to tell where his roots are abiding. For such is only of the fulness of God.

Paul a Pattern Saint.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS DR. NEATBY,
ON PHIL. III. SECOND PART.

THE Apostle expresses his desire "That I may ~~win~~ Christ, and be found in Him" (verses 8 and 9). What does this mean, "to be found in Him"—in Him? Up till that day when Saul was going to Damascus, he was not "in Him." He was in the first Adam, in the nature in which he was born. He had been educated, but that did not make a new man of him. His education might make him a better man among men, but he was still in the old Adam, and of course the fruit is according to the nature of the tree. Nicodemus, another Pharisee, comes to Jesus and says, in effect, "You are a great Teacher come from God, and we know it because of the mighty works that you do. I have come to be taught. You are a great Teacher, and now here I am, ready for you to teach me." What does the Lord Jesus say? "Ye must be born again." You must bring me a new man; I cannot teach the old one. That which is born of the flesh, is flesh, and will not do for God. God does not reform people; He does not mend the old Adam; He brings in a new man. God speaks of the *first* man and the *second*. Was there no man between Adam and Christ? I thought Cain was the second man? Yes, Cain is the second man *from* Adam, for Adam begat a son in his own image. But there is no new man till Christ comes. The Second Man is the Lord from heaven, and Paul wants to be in that Man. "In Him" there is no

condemnation. In Him, the soul is highly favoured and blessed. I am "in Christ" (Eph. i. 2), and all that belongs to Christ belongs to me. The Father sees me in His Son, and loves me with the same love with which He loves the Son. It is a fact. As I stand before you here this afternoon, I know I am loved by God as He loves His Son. Nothing to me, but all glory to God. The blood of Jesus Christ stands between me and a lost hell! Thank God! I am now "in Christ." In Christ I am clothed with a perfect, Divine righteousness which is of God. "Not having on mine own righteousness" (verse 9). There are three acts of Divine righteousness that I would call your attention to for a moment. The Lord Jesus willingly, of His own love, presented Himself before God to do His will. No one compelled Him; He was the "freewill offering." It would not have been righteous to put my sins upon an unwilling substitute. But the Son of God, the Maker of heaven and earth, deigns to come and suffer in my stead. Was it a righteous thing for God to treat the Lord Jesus Christ just as He would have treated me in my sins? Heaven and hell say that it was; and any upright man knows that it was righteous of God to do so. There is another act of Divine righteousness, and it is at Joseph's tomb. It was righteous of God to raise his Son from that tomb and take Him up to the glory. Christ had borne all that was due to the sinner because of his sins; He had magnified the law and borne its curse; He had satisfied all God's righteous claims, and glorified God on the earth.

Was it not a righteous thing for God to raise His Son and say "Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." Yes, undoubtedly it was. Now, I ask you to look at another act of that same righteousness. I was a sinner; Christ has borne my sins, and God has raised Him from the dead. Is it not a righteous thing for God to forgive me now? The Devil cannot say it is not righteous; and any upright creature that ever came out of God's hand owns that it is righteous. The sentence has fallen upon a willing Victim; the mighty work of redemption has been accomplished to the glory of God, and it is a righteous thing for God to forgive any sinner that believes in Jesus.

And then Christ is everything; both Lord and Christ. Now everything comes by Christ; everything is measured and judged of by Christ. And so the whole of Paul's life is summed up in this "one thing I do" (verse 13). Other people may do many things, but "this one thing I do." They may have many irons in the fire, I have one—"this one thing I do"—"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (verse 14). This "high calling" should be rendered "calling on high." The words "high calling" may mean a noble or honourable calling, they may mean a very worldly calling; but the words here should properly be, "calling on high," where Christ is. "I press toward the mark." This is a word painting of a man running a race. He is bent forward, reaching forward, running toward the mark. If he would look to the right

or left, and especially if he looked back, he would lose steps. He forgets all but the mark, and he rushes onward with breathless energy to the mark for the prize. What is the mark? It is Christ in glory. He has apprehended me, but I have not apprehended Him yet. So, on I go, for I must apprehend Him, and after I have seized Him, I shall have the prize. And what is the prize? It is still only, eternally, CHRIST. To reach Christ in the glory, and to possess Christ in the glory for ever and ever.

Fruitful Gospel Efforts.

IT is not always where the most elaborate arrangements are made, or the "best" preachers, according to man's judgment, secured to take the "services," that the most abiding fruit is usually gathered; but where there is a sense of the need of God felt among the Lord's people, and a laying hold together on Him, for His Divine power to go forth with the Gospel preached in all simplicity and plainness. The spiritual state of the preacher, his clean and filled condition, has more to do with true conversions than brilliancy of gift or great persuasiveness of speech. "A vessel meet for the Master's use," a clean and ready "ram's horn" through which God can speak, is of more use as an evangelist than one of many talents, if defiled by sin, or puffed up with self-importance. Where the preacher is right with God, and the Lord's people "striving together" with one heart and soul in the work of the Gospel, there must be results, and there always is abiding fruit. God is never behind in doing His own work.

Israel and the Church.

WM. HOSTE, B.A., BRIGHTON.

X.—THE PLACE OF WORSHIP.

WE have now to compare the place in which the priests of Israel exercised their priesthood, with the Church's place of worship. In Exodus xx. 24, 25, provision was made for the erection of temporary altars as in patriarchal times (e.g., Josh. viii. 30), but these were exceptional, and were in no way inconsistent with the thought of a special habitation of Jehovah in the midst of His people, to be their centre of gathering and place of worship. So in Exodus xxv. we read—"Let them make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them . . . according to all that I shew thee after the pattern of the tabernacle which was shewed thee in the mount" (vers. 8, 9, 40). This was fully carried out, and the glory of Jehovah filled that tabernacle. How this ought to have stilled every murmur, allayed every fear, and filled their hearts with praise! But priest and people soon departed, and in the prophecy of Amos we have the divine estimate of the tabernacle service during the desert wanderings. "Have ye offered unto Me sacrifice and offerings in the wilderness forty years, house of Israel? But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your God which ye made for yourselves (chap. v. 25, 26). Surely this may suggest solemn heart-searchings to our minds as to how our service appears to God. This condition of failure accounts for the

exhortation of Deut. xii. as to the ONE place which the Lord would choose to put His Name there, to which alone they should bring their sacrifices and there partake of them before the Lord. This promise was temporarily and partially fulfilled in the choice of Shiloh in Ephraim (Josh. xviii. 1) which remained the centre of worship until the time of Samuel, when the ark was taken thence, never to return, and Ichabod was written over its gates. The fact that Samuel and others erected occasional altars, according to Exodus xxiv., in no way proves that they were not subject to the direction of Deut. xii. and much less that such directions had not then been given—according to the arbitrary and topsy-turvy theory of certain “higher critics”—but simply that God had “refused the tabernacle of Shiloh” (Psa. lxxviii. 60), but had not yet manifested His choice of Mount Zion. Besides, it was a time of failure and disorder, and the condition for choosing the habitation prescribed in Deut. xii. 10, which was “rest from all your enemies round about,” had not yet fully been realised. It was only when “the Lord had given David rest round about from all His enemies” (2 Sam. xii. 1), that the king had the Spirit-given thought “to find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob” (Psa. cxxxii. 5). Though he was permitted to prepare materials and to communicate “the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit” (1 Chron. xxviii. 11-19), it was Solomon who built the house. Then the glory of the Lord filled it (2 Chron. v. 7) and only withdrew four hundred years

later, prior to the destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar (see Ezek. ix. 3; x. 4, 8, 19, 23). Then the Lord Himself became to His people “a sanctuary for a little while” (Ezek. xi. 16, R.V.). Seventy years later, the temple was rebuilt under Zerubbabel, and later, in its restored and beautified state, the work of Herod the Great, it was recognised by our Lord, first as “His Father’s house” (John ii. 16), and then when marked for judgment as “YOUR house” (Matt. xxiii. 38). Destroyed in A.D. 70, it will be rebuilt again by the nation when brought back in unbelief to Jerusalem, for we read of a temple as existing in the last days (see 2 Thess. ii. 4; Matt. xxiv. 15; Rev. xi. 1). In the Millennial age, a temple will be built once more after a Divine pattern (see Ezek. xl., etc.), again, be it noted, after the deliverance of Israel from her enemies—Gog and his hosts. It will suffice now, to briefly sum up certain characteristics of the house of God of the earthly people Israel.

1. It was of *material construction*—“a building made with hands” (Heb. ix. 24)—a worldly sanctuary; material and earthly as contrasted with spiritual and heavenly.

2. It was of *symbolical meaning*—“a pattern of things in the heavens” (Heb. ix. 23). It included various vessels, two altars, a laver, a mercy-seat, &c. All were symbolical, and the very materials were figurative. The gold spake of Divine glory, the silver of redemption, the brass of Divine judgment, and so forth. “In His temple doth every one speak of His glory” (Psa. xxix. 9).

3. It was for a *temporary purpose*—"a figure for the time then present" (Heb. ix. 8) the shadow of a coming substance.

4. It was of *aesthetic beauty*, that is, a beauty appreciated by the senses, that of gold, goodly stones, fine linen, blue, purple and scarlet, etc. The house of God on earth was to be, as Solomon said, "exceeding magnificent" (1 Chron. xxii. 5).

5. It was *unique in its claims*. It was the only place where God chose to put His Name (see Deut. xii. 11), the one place of sacrifice and of offering, the solitary building on the earth that has ever been rightly called "the house of God." The synagogues in the Gospels, were only Jewish places of gathering for reading the law, but made no claim to be houses of God.

6. It was *Sacred in character*, composed of the holy place and the holy of holies accessible to high priests and priests alone. This was the temple proper (*naos*). Here Uzziah entered to burn incense (2 Chron. xxvi. 16), and here Judas cast down the pieces of silver (Matt. xxvii. 6). But our Lord never entered there. Besides this, there were the outer precincts (*hieron*) to which our Lord did continually resort. At the dedication of the temple by Solomon, Jehovah sealed it as His dwelling place with manifested glory, and as long as the day of longsuffering lasted, His glory filled the Holiest, as it will again on a future day (Ezek. xliii.). The absence of the glory in Zerubbabel's temple marked an abnormal state of things, though it was to be compensated for later, by the personal presence of the Desire of all nations (Hag. ii. 7).

7. It was of *Divine pattern*. This is most important. Every detail of form, material, weight, and colour was prescribed. Nothing was left to human fancy or art. Any addition or omission would have been a grievous sin.

Right Position and Condition.

BY THE LATE J. G. BELLETT, OF DUBLIN.

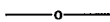
POSITION may be quite according to God, but the practical godly grace with which it is filled and occupied, may be scanty and poor. And how should this warn us not to count on the virtue of a merely pure and separated position! If it be trusted in, or held with an unjudged and unwatched heart, even they among the uncircumcised may rebuke us. Much love and service is often to be found *within*, while little of the power of holiness, and of the mind of heaven, accompanies those who go outside. What I mean is this—that there is often less grace and *moral* power in the purer position, than there is in the defiled connection. There is no lesson I would more press on the attention of my own soul than this—and I think I can say I value it: position without power, principles beyond practice, jealousy about orthodoxy and truth, and mysteries, with little personal communion with the Lord—all these the soul stands in constant fear of, and in equal judgment and refusal. The earnestness about many and many a right thing that was found at Ephesus, the stir and activity even of a religious nature that prevailed at Sardis, and the orthodoxy of Laodicea, were all challenged by the

Lord, and we deeply justify the challenge (Rev. ii. iii).

The tithing of mint and anise, when judgment and mercy were passed by, was exposed by the Divine mind of Christ, and in the Spirit, the saint joins in the exposure.

We refuse position without power, as we would principles without practice; or truth, and mysteries, and knowledge, without Christ Himself, and personal communion with Him. But in the stainless, perfect page of the Word, we find *all* honoured, and nothing is thoroughly according to God but where each and all is in its place and measure honoured.

The call of God separates us, but we need the Spirit of God to occupy the place according to God, and the loving devoted mind. "Salt is good"—that is the Divine principle is the good thing. But salt may lose its saltness. The right position, or the divine principle, may be understood and avowed, but there may be *no power* of life in it.



How a Work of Grace Began.

THE Lord's people in that spiritually dark place had been praying for it many days, and their expectation was, that the Lord would send some gifted evangelist to move the place by his powerful appeals to the people on the great truths of the Gospel, so seldom heard in that neglected parish. Month after month came and went, but still there was no sign of the coming season of refreshing to the saints, and of awakening amongst the lost. The faith of some

began to fail, and the patience of others became very sorely tried. A few simple brethren who had for years been carrying on a small meeting for preaching of the Gospel, were just on the eve of giving it up, so few came, and the whole affair was so languid. They had virtually decided not to continue the apparently fruitless effort beyond another week. On the following Sunday night a Christian servant maid brought a companion with her to the little Gospel meeting, and at the close introduced her as "a sister in Christ saved only last Friday night" The effect of this simple incident on the group of downcast workers was marvellous. They gathered around the new-born soul, grasped her hand, and welcomed her, as a first-fruits of the expected ingathering. Nor were they disappointed, for that newly saved Christian girl had the joy of seeing her fellow-servant brought to Christ the following week. Then the three servant girls went out visiting, and brought in others to hear the Word—and God saved one and another of them. The whole place was moved, not as the praying saints had thought, and in fact planned, by the powerful preaching of some great evangelist, but by the power of God operating through a servant maid, whose heart was true to Christ, and who was yearning and praying for the conversion of others. Revivals and awakenings generally come in what we call "irregular" ways, and God hardly ever repeats His modes. He uses whomsoever He will, very often the least expected instruments. But then God is Sovereign, and one may not dictate to Him. It is

ours to lay hold on His promise and wait for the operation of His hand. Thus shall we know His blessing "as showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men" (Mic. v. 7). For such seasons let us look.

The Saints.

THIS title belongs to *all* the people of God, not as many have been accustomed to think—to a select few only. All the "born again" people in Rome were called "saints"—that is, they were *saints* by their calling: it was their common heritage. The believers in Corinth were all saints (1 Cor. i. 2), so were those at Ephesus (Eph. i. 1), and elsewhere. It was when God's people began to depart from the simplicity of His Word, that the family became divided into two or more distinct grades, and then the term "saint" became limited to those who were supposed to be holier and better than the rest. And so we find at the top of the opening Gospel in the New Testament "The Gospel according to *Saint* Matthew." Of course Matthew was a saint—nobody questions that—but it is not in the common sense of that word, that he is here so named. It is an extra title given to him—a sort of ecclesiastical prefix, to let people understand that he was more than an ordinary saved person. And the same, or even more has been done to John, for he has been honoured with the extraordinary appellation of "*Saint John the Divine*" on the heading of "The Book of Revelation." We often wonder what the beloved disciple would have said, had any one addressed

him as "Divine" in the days of his earthly service here! Mary Magdalene and Simon the Tanner were saints, in exactly the same sense, as Matthew, and Peter, and John. That is, they were saints by the calling of God as we are.

The Christian and Politics.

A POLITICIAN is one who takes an interest in the government of his country, and exercises the civil privileges conferred upon him, in voting for one to represent him in Parliament. In the earthly life and ways of the Lord Jesus, He left us an example that we should follow in His steps (1 Pet. ii. 21). All that He did and omitted to do, was equally perfect and well pleasing to God, and an example for us to follow. He was not a politician. He took no part in seeking to obtain the redress of wrongs among the Jewish people. He refused to enter upon questions regarding Cæsar's rights. He paid the tribute, and told others to render the things to Cæsar that to him belonged (Matt. xxii. 17-22). That was all. The Scripture teaches believers how to live and act as husbands, fathers, masters, servants, and subjects, but there is an entire absence of any principle or commandment to guide them in exercising rule in the world, or in appointing others to such a place. If a Christian enters upon the troubled waters of politics, he must grope his way in the darkness, for there is no ray of light cast from the Word of God to guide him in such a course. This of itself will be enough to deter all who fear God and honour His Word, from going forth on such a dangerous path.

The Bible Annotator.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE STUDY.

A FULL CHRIST TO MEET OUR NEED.

Christ the Saviour (1 John iv. c4). Delivers from sin.
 Christ the Sanctifier (Heb. ii. 11). Sets apart to God.
 Christ the Satisfier (Psa. cvii. 9). Fills the Heart.
 Christ the Shepherd (Psa. xxiii. 1). Guides the Steps.

PERSONAL HOLINESS.

In Heart and Worship (Psa. xcix. 5).
 In Body and Actions (Rom. xii. 1; vi. 19).
 In Life and Conduct (1 Pet. i. 15; 2 Pet. iii. 11).
 In Social and Family Life (Lev. xx. 7, 26; 1 Pet. ii. 9).

PRACTICAL SEPARATION.

From the Desires of the Flesh (2 Tim. ii. 22).
 From the Lusts of the World (Tit. ii. 12).
 From the Appearance of Evil (1 Thess. v. 22).
 From the Works of Darkness (Eph. v. 11).
 From Companionship of Ungodly (2 Cor. vi. 17).

Notes on Scripture Words.

Sleep (1 Cor. xi. 30). The word comes from the same Greek as our word "cemetery" and is always applied in Scripture to the death of believers (see John xi. 11; Acts vii. 60; 1 Thess. iv. 14). It is never used to describe their spiritual or moral torpor. For this, an entirely different word is used in 1 Thess. v. 6, 7. Nor does the word refer to the condition of the soul after death, but to the rest from activity in a life in mortal flesh.

Wind (John iii. 8). The first two words of this verse translated "The wind" and the last two "the Spirit" are exactly the same. The R.V. margin reads—"The Spirit breatheth Where He listeth (or willet) and thou hearest His voice." The Divine Spirit's sovereign operation in new birth is the subject of the chapter, and this change is in full harmony with the context.

"Finished" (John xix. 30). In the language spoken by the Lord, it was one word, "Tetelestai," elsewhere rendered "performed" (Luke ii. 39), "accomplished" (Luke xii. 50), "fulfilled" (Rev. xvii. 17), from which we learn its meaning. The work which the Father had given Him to do and finish (John iv. 34), He had brought to perfection, accomplished fully, to the entire satisfaction of His God, of which His resurrection was the witness (Acts xiii. 29, 30; ii. 22, 24) and the proof.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

What is a "gift" in the sense of Rom. xii. 6? Is it a natural ability a man has before his conversion dedicated to the Lord after, or is it a purely spiritual endowment given by the Lord to such as He pleases? The gift (*chrisma*) is from the Lord to the individual (Eph. iv. 8), and the power for the exercise of such a gift is the Divine Spirit (1 Cor. xii. 4, 7, 9). As the talents were given to each man "according to his ability" to use them (see Matt. xxv. 15), so spiritual gift is generally, if not always, bestowed according to the natural endowment of the receiver. It needs to be remembered that a "gift has to be stirred up" (2 Tim. i. 6) and kept in proper condition for its profitable exercise, whether that be in preaching the Gospel to the world, or in ministering the Word to the Church. Many a gifted evangelist and teacher has become useless because he neglected his gift, or failed to maintain the right spiritual condition in which it could be profitably used.

Answers to Correspondents.

INQUIRER.—The papers you ask for appeared in "Word and Work" for 1880. You may be able to procure a secondhand volume.

YOUNG BELIEVER.—Our advice to you is, not to enter into arguments with those who hold erroneous views of the future life, or discuss with any who deny the fundamentals of the faith as given in the Holy Scriptures. You will only bring barrenness to your soul by such disputations, and there is great danger of being led into their snare by parleying with such persons. Better far to spend your spare time over your Bible, where you will learn the will of God and be "furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. iii. 17).

A. L., MANCHESTER.—There is no Scriptural authority for concluding that sickness or any deep trial through which a believer may be called to pass, is necessarily a sign of Divine displeasure or a penal act of God because of his sin. The sickness of Epaphroditus (Phil. ii. 25-30), the "often infirmities" of Timothy (1 Tim. v. 23), and the oft-recurring ailments and afflictions of Paul (2 Cor. xi. 27; xii. 10), are all recorded in the Word, but there is not a suggestion that these came upon them because of disobedience, or failure in their path of service. It is for each believer to be "exercised" (Heb. xii. 11) by all God's dealings with him, and

to seek to learn and profit by them. Some of the holiest and most spiritual Christians we have ever known, were invalids, and from their beds of languishing sent forth such a ministry of Christ, as has cheered and edified thousands of their fellow-believers. We fear that there is much one-sided and erroneous teaching abroad on this subject, which is calculated to mislead the untaught, and to bring those who give heed to it into darkness and doubt.

D. M., ALDERSHOT.—The "Earnest of the Spirit" (2 Cor. i. 22), is not an attainment, or something given to certain believers and withheld from others. Here, and in Eph. i. 14, it is clearly the Divine Spirit given as a foretaste and first enjoyment of the heavenly inheritance reserved in heaven for all who are begotten of God (1 Pet. i. 3). As a Seal, the Spirit claims and secures the believing one for God; as an Earnest, He brings to him the foretaste and pledge of what God has secured for him and makes him long to reach the fulness of it. And so the saints of a former generation understood it, when they sang—

"I once have tasted Canaan's grapes,
And now I tain would go
To where my Lord His vineyard keeps,
And where the clusters grow."

W. J., Co Down.—We are wholly at one with you regarding the need of Grace as well as Truth in dealing with those who from various causes have adopted ideas in regard to Church association which are apart from the teaching of the Word. We must remember how long it took some of us to unlearn much that we at one time sincerely believed to be according to truth, and how slowly we have acquired any right knowledge of God's will that we now enjoy. But the chief difficulty seems to be, when those who are manifestly untaught in the Word, persist in teaching others, and in opposing all who differ from them. Forbearance under such conditions is not always right, especially if the Lord's people are being spoiled and scattered by such teaching. To "withstand" that which is contrary to God and His Word is sometimes necessary (Gal. ii. 11), even if it be found in a true servant of Christ. But the manner and spirit in which it is done, calls for special care. It is just here where failure often comes in, and the flesh gets scope to act. It takes one who is "spiritual" (Gal. vi. 1) to restore an erring one, and to recover him from either wrong doing or wrong doctrine.

W. S., GLASGOW.—It would ye entirely wrong to

"take a vote" or seek to press upon an assembly of God's people any course, on the ground that a majority are in favour of it. Majorities are not always right, and in the things of God among His people oneness of mind is enjoined, and is ever to be sought for (see Phil. ii. 2; Rom. xv. 5, 6; 2 Cor. xiii. 11). If this is not attained, it is better to wait on God and exercise patience with those who are of a contrary mind, than to push matters against the consciences of others. Some whose zeal for the truth is commendable, often fail to see that when they have given their testimony to what they believe to be the way of the Lord in any matter, they have fulfilled their responsibility so far as they are individually concerned, and if that course is not adopted by others, they will not be blame-worthy before God for the consequences. In individual life and service, one can act promptly and decisively on his convictions, but in assembly matters we have to wait upon others, and often to learn needed lessons of patience in so doing.

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Questions Requiring Answers.

In carrying the following questions forward into another year, we again invite the help of all to whom the Lord has given the ability to help in their answers. Many seek and find instruction in this way, on matters of real heart exercise and difficulty, and greatly value the help thus given. Let all answers be short, and definite, leading to the Word of God.

I.—What is meant by destroying the temple of God, in 1 Cor. iii. 17?

II.—In Heb. iv. 15 it is said that the Lord was in "all points tempted like as we are." What does this mean?

III.—Is it according to the teaching of the Word to say that the Church is not seen in "The Acts," and that the present dispensation did not begin at Pentecost?

IV.—Is the personal advent of the Lord, to be secret to the world, or in manifested glory?

V.—Ought one who has failed to meet his obligations in business, publicly preach the Gospel to the world, or minister the Word in the assembly of believers?

VI.—Should evangelists, or others who minister the Word in places where they are not locally in assembly fellowship, take part in cases of difficulty or discipline in such assemblies?

THE BELIEVER'S MAGAZINE FOR 1911.

BY the good hand of the Lord upon us we are permitted—with the present issue—to complete the TWENTIETH YEAR of "The Believer's Magazine." We are deeply grateful for all the help given, for the hearty fellowship continued, and for the many co-workers raised up to share in this service. Many who were our earliest helpers have been called to their rest, and we miss their valued ministry and words of godly counsel, but the great Head of the Church, who loves His people and provides for their need, has graciously raised up others to feed the flock and minister the Word in season. Never have we had so many willing helpers, and so much hearty fellowship in providing seasonable words for the pages of "The Believer's Magazine," and assisting in its circulation, as throughout the year which is now closing. To the Lord's great Name be all the praise.

Believing that the Lord has need of it, and will continue to give the Word in season to His people through its columns, we hope to continue the Magazine for its TWENTY-FIRST year on exactly the same lines as hitherto, giving "ALL GOD'S TRUTH FOR ALL GOD'S PEOPLE," in due proportion, ever welcoming all that tends to spiritual edification, godly harmony and peace. We shall value all ministry that has such ends in view with words of comfort, exhortation, and cheer in all departments of the service of the Lord. We are especially indebted to our many helpers who send us reliable tidings of work and workers in their midst, month by month, which we are assured are greatly valued by, and bring cheer to many of God's people at home and far away, whose hearts are enlarged and whose prayerful and practical fellowship is extended thereby in the servants of the Lord and in their work.

Special Papers for 1911.

By Accredited Writers.

- Who was Jesus Christ?** Dr. J. Norman Case.
- The Lord's Prayer.** W. J. McClure.
- Old Paths to Walk in.** Thos. D. W. Muir.
- Words to Young Believers.** F. G. Bergin.
- Fellowship with Christ.** Franklin Ferguson.
- Gathering unto The Name.** Donald Munro.
- Israel and the Church.** William Hosté.
- Worship.** William Laing.
- Christian GIVING.** William Laing.
- The Breaking of Bread.** William Laing.

Words of Godly Edification.

By Departed Leaders.

- Daily Guidance.** Geo. Muller.
- Our Intercessor and Accuser.** J. G. Bellett.
- Christian Fellowship.** Henry Craik.
- Outside the Camp.** H. W. Soltau.
- The Love of the World.** Alfred J. Holiday.
- Clean Vessels.** Donald Ross.
- Answers to Prayer.** R. C. Chapman.
- The Love of Money.** James Campbell.

The Editor's papers on **The Assembly Life of Believers**, will be continued, also a Series of Papers on **Truths of The Future Life**, dealing simply with the State after Death, Immortality, Resurrection, and the Eternal Destiny of Mankind as revealed in the Word, to confirm and establish believers in these vital truths, all of which are now being denied.

Primary Truths of the Faith :

Twelve Plain Papers on **The Person and Work of the Lord Jesus**, for the edification and profit of all, will appear month by month through the year as follows :—

- The Eternal Word.** Thomas Newberry.
- The Son of God.** Henry Groves.
- The Incarnation.** A. O. Molesworth.
- The Cross of Christ.** Henry Heath.
- The Atonement.** J. G. Bellett.
- The Burial of the Lord Jesus.** W. H. Bennet.
- The Resurrection of Christ.** Henry Dyer.
- The Enthroned Sin Purger.** William Lincoln.
- The High Priesthood of Christ.** J. L. Harris.
- Jesus Christ our Lord.** Alf. J. Holiday.
- Head of the Church.** J. M. Code.
- The Lord's Coming.** J. Denham Smith.

Notes and Comments on contested Truths of the Sacred Word. **Biblical Solutions** of difficult passages.

Conference Addresses, by well known teachers. **Expositions** on many Practical Subjects. **Helps** in Christian Work. **Answers** to Questions on Assembly matters. **Correspondence** on all edifying and helpful subjects. **Intelligence** of the Lord's Work and Workers. The help of all lovers of the Truth, in naming, introducing, and recommending "**The Believer's Magazine**" in the Assemblies where they are, will be much esteemed, and packets of Specimen Copies will be cheerfully sent to all who desire to introduce it to friends.

J. R.