

THE
Believer's Magazine

A Store and Treasury

OF

BIBLE EXPOSITION, SCRIPTURE STUDY, AND
MINISTRY OF THE TRUTH OF GOD,

WITH QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON BIBLE SUBJECTS.

EDITED BY

JOHN RITCHIE.

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The Believer's Magazine.

A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF BIBLICAL EXPOSITION AND TEACHING.

"Be Still, and Know that I am God."

A Message of Cheer for the Opening Year.

WE step across the threshold of the opening year under conditions that no living Christian in the British Isles has ever known before. The Empire is at war, sharing in the greatest struggle this world has ever known, the effects of which are already felt by every family and household in these islands and far beyond them. Over a million of her sons are in battle array, and hundreds of thousands are in training to follow. Thousands upon thousands—God alone knows their number—lie buried in their unknown graves in the fields of Belgium and France, and in the depths of the Pacific Ocean and the North Sea. Within the last few days the roar of German guns and the bursting of shells have carried death and desolation to peaceful homes in undefended towns on the English coast. And we are told the bells have rung and the flags hung high in honour of the massacre, in a land that bears the Christian name and owns the Protestant faith, whose ruler claims "God the Lord" as his "own God," and the Giver of the victory to his army and his navy. To the heathen world that knows not God, the whole scene is all-bewildering. To the man of reason, who has no anchor to his soul, it is depressing. To the "man in Christ," who has been raised to a place from which he is able to read transpiring events in the light of heaven with an open

Bible in his hand, the things that are coming to pass are none other than what the unerring Word has taught him to expect. Although the dark days through which he is passing deeply move his heart with compassion for suffering humanity, and give chastening to his soul before God (Dan. x. 12), they do not cause him to fear either the judgment of an offended God or the might of a powerful and angry foe. For he has heard in the depths of his soul the still small voice of that God whose words have come from the throne in the heavens, in their soul-calming power, "*Be still, and know that I am GOD*" (Psa. xlvi. 10). Yes, God. Not a God who is the creation of fallen man's nature and his haughty spirit, a war-god who waits on man's call to conquer and to curse, but God revealed in His Son, who loves His enemies, and is of tender mercy, Whom to know is "life eternal" (John xvii. 3). He is "A Refuge in times of trouble. And they that *know* Thy Name will put their trust in Thee, for Thou Lord hast not forsaken them that seek Thee" (Psa. ix. 9, 10). "And if GOD be for us, WHO can be against us?" (Rom. viii. 31). In the confidence of faith, let us therefore step forth fearlessly, into the untrodden year, leaning on the Divine faithfulness, and daily "increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col. i. 10).
J. R.

The Coming of the Lord, AND THE EVENTS WHICH WILL FOLLOW;

WITH NOTES ON THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

W. H. HUNTER.

INTRODUCTORY.

SOME six months have passed away since a cloud arose in the half-civilised, half-savage, lands which lie to the northward of the Great Sea; to which Elijah's servant looked out from Carmel on the day when God answered by fire; and an awestruck people confessed that "THE LORD HE IS GOD." For the greater part of these months the heavens have been blackened by the grim shadow; and in Europe, Asia, and Africa, the words which the late John Bright uttered in 1855, have again been made true: for "the angel of death has been abroad throughout the land, you may almost hear the beating of his wings." Multitudes weep in secret because of the graves where their loved ones lie "unknelled and unknown," and palaces and cottages are joined together in the fellowship of grief, a fellowship of broken hearts and of souls steeped in sorrow.

Under these circumstances the New Year is opening upon us, and what can we do or say? We can trust in the living Father; we can call upon the Name of the Lord; we can hear the still small voice which the prophet heard, saying unto us, "Be still, and know that I AM GOD;" and we can even sing, "sing amidst disaster"—

"Midst the darkness, storm, and sorrow,
One bright gleam I see;
Well I know the blessed morrow,
Christ will come for me."

But it is needful for us to have "understanding of the times," particularly of times like the present, when men's hearts are being moved to their depths; and when children of God (whose hearts are stirred no less deeply than those of their fellows) who know that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming again, are in peculiar danger of being turned aside from the way of Christ and the Word of God. For times of emotion, which are often times of blessing, are always times of peril.

These children of God, like their brethren of old, have heard that "the Antichrist shall come," and that "even now there are many antichrists" (1 John ii. 18), and they know that this is true. But there are around them those who say (and who speak or write as if they had authority) that "it is becoming every day more apparent that we are at war with Antichrist" (meaning thereby the militarism of the German Empire), and other like words. And the peril is, that the "little children" of God's grace should be deceived by the wiles of the devil, and should be led to look and to wait for developments of things upon the earth, instead of "looking for the Saviour," and waiting for God's Son from heaven.

There is a way of deliverance, a path in which there is present salvation, even for those whose knowledge is but limited, and whose feet are not strong; if these will but set themselves to recover for themselves the way into that large upper room, to which the man bearing the pitcher of water (a somewhat unusual sight in Jerusalem, which had a rainfall equal to that of London, and in which

every house or group of houses had a cistern hewn out of the rock), led the disciples on the day which terminated in the night of the betrayal.

Every believing soul has a right of entry into that upper room ; and in it on the night in question words were spoken which are still "the power of God unto salvation" for those who believe ; salvation from Satan's snares and from men's mistakes ; if the believer will but listen with a renewed interest and with a deepened faith to the utterances of Him who spake and speaks as man never spake.

In one particular respect ,modern believers should differ in position from the eleven disciples who formed the initial audience for this utterance, and their response should differ from that of the candid confessed ignorance of the spokesman of those disciples.

The Lord Jesus had just convinced the men that He was really and in very person about to leave them ; going from them, as He said, whither they knew, and by a way which they also knew. But he was interrupted. Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?" The interruption, and the want of knowledge and understanding on the part of the interrupter, brought out the difference between his position and that of the saints of to-day. They also brought out very clearly the fact that the words spoken were not intended only for the disciples of that olden time, but were directly and definitely uttered "for us also . . . if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead" (Rom. iv.

24), as we know that He went into heaven, into His Father's house, and on to His Father's throne ; and know also something of what mediæval saints used to call the *Via Dolorosa* ; the "sorrowful way" of Pilate's judgment hall, of Calvary's Cross, and of the rich man's grave ; by which He went.

Those who are born of God have learned this, and listening to the words of that night, will learn further what the purpose was which the Lord had in mind when He went, and what His course will be when that purpose is accomplished.

The purpose was very specific, and was declared in very precise terms. "I go to prepare a place for you." With equal precision He described the course which He will follow, and the action He will take when His work of preparation shall be completed. "I will come again and RECEIVE YOU to Myself, that where I am, you may be also." "Where I am : " whether "in the air," where He will receive His own, or in the heavens above, or on the earth beneath, or in the great City of which the glory of God shall be the Light, and the Lamb shall be the Lamp.

To those who are willing to listen to the utterance, and to believe it (for it is very much a matter of the will, and "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the utterance of Christ"), the words contain a definite and determined promise, and form a present foundation for "the sure word of prophecy," the fulfilment of which must precede the fulfilment of every unfulfilled prophetic Word, whether in the Old Testament or in the New.

The promise and the prediction are to

all, and for all those who are children of God through faith, in Christ Jesus; and who are therefore members of the body of Christ. Neither littleness of faith, nor want of understanding, will deprive any one of these of part in the promise, or place in the experience when the prediction is fulfilled. But in the meantime those children of the family, those members of the Body, who believe it not, are robbing themselves of a present and a purifying portion and are waiting for "the conversion of the world" as to which no word has come to them from God; while some who do believe it are, through confusion of understanding, waiting for "wars and rumours of wars," for signs and wonders, for trouble and great tribulation, instead of taking into their own hearts and minds, the words of the upper room, "I will come again and receive YOU unto Myself."

Notwithstanding all these things (for it is written, "Shall their want of faith make of none effect the faithfulness of God?" (Rom. iii. 3, R.V.), the words remain unshaken, unchangeable, as living and as vitalising as when they fell from the lips of the Speaker who had just broken the bread. And there are still even in the earth those who do fully believe them, who seek to understand them as they were spoken, and who therefore look for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will come FOR THEM from heaven, and who shall change their bodies without any bodily death. In this way and with this expectation saints in apostolic days lived and died waiting for the Son of God from heaven, to receive them unto Himself.

The Book of Esther,

AND ITS MESSAGE TO US FOR TO-DAY.

W. J. M'CLURE, CALIFORNIA.

A BOOK of the Bible in which there is no Divine Name found—which speaks to us of God hiding Himself,—yet full of God's love and care for His people, and in manifesting His power as the One who "bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought" and "maketh the devices of the people of none effect." Such a book is this little Book of Esther.

There are several lines of truth illustrated here, which we desire to look at, and in doing so we trust that they may be opened up to us afresh by the Holy Spirit, causing them to become more real and precious to our souls.

These truths may be spoken of as evangelical, practical, prophetic, and dispensational. We shall take them up in the order named.

The Evangelical or Gospel aspect is seen in the two decrees of life and death sent forth by the king. First,

THE DECREE OF DEATH.

Through the machinations of Haman, all the Jews in the great Medo-Persian Empire were thus brought under the death sentence. The decree signed by the king had been posted to the authorities to exterminate them. Although this was the result of that diabolical hatred of Haman, the Jews' enemy, it had become law, and behind it was the authority of the throne. And "the writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse" In this we have a picture of that which

concerns us all. Satan, our adversary, by introducing sin into the world, brought all under the death sentence.

Wherever that decree came, which Ahasuerus sent forth, it produced the same effect upon the people against whom it was directed. They were plunged into sorrow, weeping and wailing, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. Suppose that we could have gone to a company in some city, who were in this state of distress, and enquired what had happened to cause such grief, we should have been told of the edict which had just been published. And if we had attempted to comfort them by saying, "Don't distress yourselves so, it will all pass over, and no harm will befall you or your children," they would have reminded us of the character of Medo-Persian law, "That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed." And the sinner who has been awakened to see that he is under the sentence of death, gets no real comfort from lies that Satan is scattering.

ESTHER'S NOBLE RESOLVE

is a foreshadow of the Cross of Christ. "So will I go into the presence of the king, which is not according to law: and if I perish, I perish." We know the sequel. The sceptre was held out to her, she became the deliverer of her people. Haman's plans were upset, and the Jews brought into favour. Her intervention here but faintly pictures the Son of God. He looked down upon the awful work of Satan, and saw sinners doomed to die. How could He deliver them from so great a death? Only by incarnation, redemption, and resurrection.

By Christ's death He made atonement, secured reconciliation, stripped the adversary of his power, and after His resurrection entered into the presence of God as the Representative of His people.

THE DECREE OF LIFE.

Written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, it was sent "by posts on horseback, and riders on mules, camels, and young dromedaries" (verse 10). "So the posts that rode upon mules and camels went out, being hastened and pressed on by the king's commandment." This second decree of life, reminds us of the proclamation of Acts xiii. 38, 39, "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by Him all that believe are justified from all things."

The effect produced was very wonderful. "In every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day" (chap. viii. 17). It would be difficult to imagine a greater contrast than we have between the feelings which were produced by the first decree and those which were produced by the second. Then it was weeping and wailing; now it is light and gladness. Just what is known in the history of every soul which knows conviction of sin and salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. This decree came from the same throne which had issued the first, and it had the same authority. It is the Word of God that comes to the soul. This is what gives certainty of salvation, to all who believe.

The Hope of the Christian.

SIR ROBERT ANDERSON, K.C.B.

THE Christian has been "begotten to a living hope." And this hope is no mere dogma, no vague forecast, no "cunningly devised fable." It moulds character and controls conduct. "He that hath this *hope* set on Him, purifies himself even as He is pure" (1 John iii. 3, R.V.). The grace of God that brings salvation teaches those whom it saves, and its teaching leads them to live "soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for the blessed *hope* and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ" (Tit. ii. 11-13, R.V.).

"I will come again and receive you to Myself," was His parting promise on the night of the betrayal. Does this point to the great day of wrath? The suggestion is absurd. But we are told it means the death of a believer. Here we may sadly admit that such a belief is not much more false and foolish than many another that is popularly held. Death is not His coming again to us, but our going to Him. And while for the Christian death has no terrors—for sin is gone, and therefore has lost its sting—it is none the less an outrage, bringing home to us the fact of our still unrepaid ruin as fallen creatures. And while the "intermediate state" is one of rest and blessedness, consciously enjoyed with Christ, we must guard against the sentiment which connects it with thoughts of glory and "the activities of higher service above!" The condition of the dead in Christ is as definitely one of

expectancy as is that of the living Christian here. There can be no glory and no service until realisation of the hope to which they were begotten by the resurrection from the dead.

For the dead in Christ resurrection is the crown and climax of redemption. The Lord Jesus Christ has triumphed over death. But more than this: He "gives the victory to us." Death therefore has no longer any claim upon His people. It is one of the "mysteries" of the faith, that at the coming of the Lord, His people then living on earth shall pass at once to glory "with death untasted and the grave unknown." The corruptible shall *put on* incorruption, the mortal immortality. And "*then* shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 51-57, and see 1 Thess. iv. 15-17). Such, then, is the distinctive hope of the Christian. Not pardon, not peace, most certainly not death, but the appearing in glory of Him Whom the world last saw as "the Crucified Jew." Whom His people worship as enthroned at the right hand of God. For what constitutes a Christian is not accepting the Christian's creed, but accepting Christ as Saviour and Lord. It is a question of personal loyalty and love. When the apostle Paul took up the pen to sign the Epistle to the Corinthians, he added the solemn postscript, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. The Lord is coming." And to those "who have loved His appearing" will be given "the crown of righteousness" in that day.

The Roman Empire of the Past.

A BIBLE READING. BY DR. S. P. TREGELLES.

IN the vision given to Nebuchadnezzar of the great image, four monarchies are symbolised in the metals of which it is composed. That which especially interests us is the fourth of these, because under it, during its changes and processes, the Lord, His early disciples, and ourselves live. For although the Roman Empire does not now exist in its undivided condition, it still bears sway. It may not be necessary for our spiritual apprehension of the vision, or the lessons that God would teach us by it, that we should know exactly its geographical limits, yet surely if we possess the opportunity to compare these facts with Scripture, we do well to take advantage thereof.

The power of Rome was in an undeveloped condition at the time of Daniel's prophetic vision. In its republican days, it had added to its territory several of the kingdoms into which the *third* or Grecian Empire became divided, after Alexander's death. Its monarchy began about the time of Julius Cæsar, who brought the last fragments of Grecian sovereignty under the Roman sway. At the beginning of the rule of this fourth or Roman Empire, its territories were approximately Italy, Gaul, the Spanish Peninsula, Greece, Macedonia, Thrace, and Illyricum, in Europe; in Africa, the northern coasts and Egypt; in Asia, Syria and Asia Minor, the River Euphrates being about its limit. Britain—or the parts of it which had been invaded by Julius Cæsar, was afterwards made a part of the

great Roman Empire. Under subsequent emperors, other conquests were made and countries added. In Germany, the Roman boundary was a rampart from the Rhine south-east to the Danube. After Constantine, it became divided into east and west. The latter soon became a prey to the northern invaders, and the former passed into the hands of the Mohammedan conquerers. This, then, is the empire which is marked out in the prophetic Word, and which is to appear in ten kingdoms—symbolised by the ten toes on the two feet of the Great Image—just before its final destruction by The Stone falling thereon at the coming of the Lord in judgment. It may be questioned whether the tenfold division of this empire will be according to its ancient geographical boundaries, but it seems clear that at least the *seat* of all its kingdoms must be within the Roman boundary. Beyond this, it may not be safe to hazard an opinion. For there may be districts and countries beyond the ancient Roman earth which will be connected with parts of its ten kingdoms. But the Scriptures, which are our only authoritative guide in such matters, inform us that it is “out of” the fourth kingdom that the “ten” are to arise, and these ten kingdoms do not come into view until a certain process of deterioration—the mixing of the iron with clay—is complete. Whatever have been the changes in the Roman earth, there has been seen no such tenfold division as is here represented. When it is seen, the predicted judgment of the Gentiles is at hand. May all who are willing to be taught of God, learn and understand.

The Christian's Place

OF SEPARATION AND OF SERVICE.

IN times of national peril such as the present, it is of great value to the Christian, to know exactly from God what his place is, and the part he is expected to take in the common distress. The Word makes the path so plain that none need mistake it. The Christian is a "citizen" of heaven (Phil. iii 20), and a "stranger" on earth (I Pet. ii. 11), and as such he has no place in the world's strifes. He belongs to God, and not a hair of his head can perish without his heavenly Father's permission (Matt. x. 26). In this reposes the confidence of his soul, and by its power he is kept apart from and above the turmoil and the fear which rages around.

And as simple confidence in God brings peace to the soul and the assurance of security, so the place of communion with God, far above the many voices and conflicting opinions of men, in separation from the world and its thoughts, is the true sphere of influence and usefulness for the saint at such a time. There are few so well acquainted with God, and in His counsels regarding the things that are coming on the earth, as to occupy the place of intercessors. Yet this is the place of true influence and of highest service. It was so with Abraham in the day of the first great war recorded in the Bible. He stood before the Lord, by the side of his altar at the door of his tent, a solitary man in communion with God, far from the world's strife. He had no part in the great battle of the nine kings. His

interests, which were all secured by the promise of God, were not involved by that sanguinary conflict. It was otherwise with Lot, who had left the place of separation to God, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. He was taken captive by the victorious kings. Abraham *had* an interest in the captive—what that was the expression "his brother," tells—and through his influence, Lot was delivered. The man of the world, and the back-slidden Christian, must always be so affected and mixed up with the world's strifes, but the man who abides and walks with God will be apart, not without exercise and interest in it, yet separate from it all. Daniel, in Babylon, purposed in heart, prayerful in spirit, faithful in conduct, turning to God three times a day, while thrones overturned and empires fell, received light and understanding from Him, and by means of His Word, which preserved his own feet in the path, he guided others through the intricacies and dangers of these eventful years. May the children of God of this time, be much with Him in fervent prayer, for now as ever "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man, AVAILETH MUCH" (James v. 16). This is the special sphere of influence and service to which God calls His people in times of distress and disaster in the world. Like Esther of old, they have "come to the Kingdom for such a time as this" (Esther iv. 14). And while outward events may be read by men of the world as instruments of deliverance, the decree of life and victory comes through those who draw near to the throne. J. R.

Profaning God's Name.

FEW things in the progress of the disastrous European war have more saddened the hearts of those who seek to hallow the Divine Name, when they take it on their lips, than the audacious and profane manner in which it has been used by some in high places, who claim to be in special favour with the Holy One, and to have His assistance and approval in the carrying out of their plans. But a claim of this kind needs to be tested. It has been made before by some who were enemies of heaven and servants of the powers of hell. King Saul could use the Lord's Name, and even "inquire" of Him (1 Sam. xxviii. 6), although, because of his evil deeds, Jehovah had become his "enemy" (ver. 16). Ahab could "inquire at the Word of the Lord" (2 Chron. xviii. 4), to meet the scruples of Jehoshaphat his ally, but the God who knew his heart and his deeds has put it on record, that "there was none like Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord" (1 Kings xxi. 25). When a man's deeds are in direct opposition to the Word and ways of God, characterised by flagrant disobedience to His plain commandments, we may be absolutely certain that God has nothing at all in common with that man, for He tells us Himself that "the face of the Lord is against them that do evil" (1 Pet. iii. 12). We believe that the great deceiver is able to so blind those who are under his power that they may *think* they have the Divine sanction in their most diabolical deeds, and that in their acts of murder

they are "offering service unto God" (John xvi. 2, R.V.). But a coming day of righteous judgment will "convince all that are ungodly of their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed" (Jude 15), and that the God, whose Name they profaned, will give them according to their works. "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry" (1 Pet. iii. 12), but if any man—be he Emperor, Sultan, King, or beggar—claims to have God with him in doing work that is manifestly of the devil, he is a profaner of God's Name and a liar, and the truth is not in him.

Talebearing.

THE word translated "talebearer" in Prov. xxvi. 20, originally meant no more than a chatterer, a talkative person, one whose tongue incessantly goes. The word, however, like the person that it describes, has made progress, and a "talebearer" has come to mean one who tells tales only to other people's discredit. There does not seem to be a word yet coined to describe a person who habitually speaks only of other people's graces and excellencies. But God tells us in Psalm xv. 1-4, that the man who "abides" in His tabernacle, "speaks the truth in his heart, and takes up no reproach against his neighbour." He is not a talebearer, nor a receiver of reproaches brought by others, against his neighbour or brother.

Earth's True Ruler.

When the last wild, lawless uproar,
Showeth man's poor rule is vain,
Then the glorious King descendeth,
In His mighty power, to reign.

The Bible Student's Corner.

SUBJECTS FOR YOUNG BELIEVERS.

THREE OFFICES OF CHRIST.

Christ our Passover (1 Cor. v. 7)—Sacrificed for us.

Christ our Advocate (1 John ii. 1)—Living for us.

Christ our Hope (1 Tim. i. 1)—Coming for us.

CHRIST FOR ME.

The Work of Christ gives Peace (Col. i. 20).

The Word of Christ gives Assurance (John v. 24).

The Person of Christ gives Satisfaction (Phil. iii. 8).

THREE GREAT FACTS

In Ephesians, Chap. i., True of all Believers.

CHOSEN by God (ver. 4)—The Divine Purpose.

REDEEMED by Christ (ver. 7)—The Procuring Cause.

SEALED by the Spirit (v. 13)—The Preserving Power.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

I have been exercised as to my responsibility to enlist in the King's Army, being a young man free from all home responsibilities. I asked a brother who is a prominent teacher at our large Conferences, whether it was the right thing for a Christian to become of his own choice a soldier, and his reply was, that "under certain circumstances it might," which did not help me one way or another. Another, while ministering the Word, said, that while our souls were God's, Cæsar (meaning the King) might claim our service, and we are told to "render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's" (Matt. xxii. 21). I am not at all clear before God that this is right. Can you give me help in the matter from God's Word?

In the last three issues of "The Believer's Magazine," simple and definite ministry of God's Word bearing on this subject has been given by various writers, which we are informed has been helpful to very many exercised as you are. We have pleasure in sending you the numbers in which these papers appear, and would ask you to bring them to the Word of God, and thus "prove all things." It is lamentable that those who stand before God's people as teachers and guides should be unable to give a Scriptural and clear lead on a matter of so great importance to Christian young men in a time of crisis, which we are certain will be a turning point in the lives of thousands. There is no question meanwhile of compulsory service, so that the theory of "Cæsar's" claim does not really stand at all. And if it should come, the question for each to consider is: Does the higher claim of God to yield

ourselves unto Him, and our bodies as "living sacrifices" for His service (Rom. xii. 1), preclude the giving of that which is His to another, and as we read the Scriptures, to a work which is opposed in spirit and in act to the character of true Christianity, and to the emphatic words addressed by God to His people here (see Rom. xii. 19-21). Of course there are those who are able to "explain away" these Scriptures, or turn away their point by saying they do not apply to war. And by the same "process" the whole Book of God may be disposed of, which is exactly what the devil wants to be done. Our advice to you is: Do not move a single step, without a clear and convincing "Thus saith the Lord."

Answers to Correspondents.

QUERIST.—The writers you name are all semi-infidels, who learned their theology "in Germany" at the feet of those professors whose exaltation of man and dethronement of God has had more to do with the bringing about of the present European war than any can ever know, till the judgment day reveals it. Leave their books severely alone, and read your Bible on your knees before God.

G. S., EDINBURGH.—It is truly blessed to see the Lord's hand with you in your lowly service for His Name. Go on in dependence upon God, who will never fail those who seek to honour His Word in doing His work.

A. D., RENFREWSHIRE.—If you put yourself under the "auspices" of the religious world in your service, you must submit to its rule. We have never seen it to be according to God, to preach where they take collections from the ungodly. Has God become unable to finance His own business?

J. G., AYRSHIRE.—Very likely some of the young men who have joined the army, did so under pressure. But what counsel did they receive from those who claim to be "over them in the Lord?" Were they simply allowed to drift, without any clear lead from the men to whom they naturally look for guidance? If so, the Lord may yet have something to say to you and others on the matter.

A. M'L., COLERAINE.—There is no Scriptural ground whatever for the appointment of any man to spiritual work, either in preaching the Gospel or in shepherding the flock. Nor, of course, for paying any one a salary for such work. But if one has the necessary qualifications, and uses his time in doing the work, the saints, if spiritual, will recognise him

in it, and God, through His own channels, will see that he lacks nothing while he does His work at His bidding.

A. F., LANARKSHIRE.—There are many tokens of a real desire among Christians, who have known something of the power of God in their midst in former years, to return to the simple lines on which Gospel work was conducted, with God's rich blessing and much abiding fruit then. The "up to date" methods—of which we heard so much a few years ago—have utterly failed, alike to hold, to keep, or to interest those who were supposed to have been brought by them. And while some are too ignorant to see, or too proud to own their failure, godly folks who gave way to them—in many cases for the sake of peace—are seeking back to the old way which leaves room for God to carry on His work as He sees fit, and has no need for claptrap attractions.

Points of Practical Interest.

Under this head we hope to give brief answers to queries of general interest to all, which do not require lengthy replies such as "Answers to Special Questions" supply.

Reconciliation is not an "inward experience" wrought by the Spirit, for which a seeking soul has to wait. We are told in Rom. v. 10, that we are "reconciled to God by the death of His Son." It was therefore accomplished at the Cross. And like every other blessing which flows from the death of Christ, it is "received" (see Rom. v. 11) by the sinner in believing...

Without the Camp.—The words of Heb. xiii. 13, have been well expounded as "a definite step, followed by a continuous habit." They certainly give no encouragement to any to go back, or to whittle down the importance of the attitude of soul here enjoined.

The Reformation.—The Reformers—whatever were their mistakes—made no secret of their complete separation from the Church of Rome. They denied its claim to be God's church in any sense, and openly denounced its doctrines and practices as "blasphemous fables" and "dangerous deceits." Now, certain who call themselves Protestants would fraternise with the corrupt and persecuting Papacy as "a sister Church." We do not think that Rome has ever acknowledged the compliment. But the "spirit of concession" marks the character of the times. What would Luther or Knox have had to say to such patronage?

Prayer.—There is no command or example in the Word, either of prayer for or prayer to the Holy

Spirit, since His descent to indwell the believer (1 Cor. vi. 19) and the church (1 Cor. iii. 16). But prayer in the Spirit is clearly enjoined in Jude 20; Eph. vi. 18. And this alone is true prayer (Rom. viii. 26, 27).

Arrangement.—The principle of the Word is, that where the servant, under his individual responsibility to the Lord, convenes or conducts a meeting, either for the preaching of the Gospel or the ministry of the Word, he is to arrange it as he is guided and believes to profit. But when he with fellow-servants is gathered "in ecclesia" (1 Cor. xi. 23, 28) with the Lord "in the midst," all are alike subject to Him, and no prearrangement is permissible, either by intimation or preparation.

Assembly Acts.—The proper time and place for assembly functions to be performed, such as receiving, rebuking, restoring is, when the assembly as such is gathered together on the Lord's Day around the Lord's table. Neither a week night prayer meeting nor any other gathering, has the same character.

The Voice of God to His People,

IN THE GREAT EUROPEAN WAR.

ALTHOUGH no longer a dweller in the British Isles or in Europe, I am still a subject of the British Empire, and have very many spiritual relations and links of holy memory with children of God who being locally near—if not actually in—the scenes of this awful conflict, are daily affected by the sorrows thereof. As an anxious observer from afar, seeking to bear on my heart before our Lord the needs and dangers of my beloved brethren in Christ, many of whom are giving of their sons to defend the cause of the weak, and of their substance to relieve the distress of those who have been robbed and ruined by the strong, I desire in all lowliness of mind to offer them a few considerations from the ever precious Word of God, which have, I trust, been humbling yet comforting to my own soul.

That this war of nations has in it a voice to the people of God, none but an unbeliever will deny. What that voice is, heart exercise before God is needed to discern. That wars are the direct work of Satan, I have no doubt. So were Job's disasters and diseases, and Peter's sifting, yet for both, God had to give the adversary His permission. And the withdrawal of His hand for a season was that His saints and servants might be tested and disciplined

for their good. That God has such a purpose in permitting His own people who are in the British Empire—for I am especially thinking of them—to endure the experiences of these terrible times for our ultimate blessing, I do not doubt. But the measure of real "profit" we get out of these experiences, will depend entirely upon the "exercise" (Heb. xii. 11) of our hearts before God regarding them. Divine chastisement is a present experience of God's people. The world has its judgment coming on, ours is present (Rev. iii. 19). And when a national calamity such as this war is permitted by God, it is surely a voice from Him to His people to examine ourselves and our ways before Him, and to humble ourselves under His mighty hand (1 Pet. v. 6). It is easier to read and point out the sins and misdeeds of our foes, than to judge and confess our own. Yet it is the latter that we are especially called to. The boastful spirit and haughty temper of Germany, glorying in her armies, is open to all. But how far have we as a nation gone along the same lines? Has not the God, whose Name we own on the coin of the realm, and by whose favour we stand, been greatly forgotten? Is He not dishonoured still by loud boasting that we must "see this thing through?" In the "prayer and intercession" that arises, how little there is of honest confession of our sins and definite turning from them! Look, too, at the open violation of the Lord's Day: the crowded pleasure houses, the football matches, the social gatherings for self-indulgence, the little regard for the dishonour to God's Name, and the disregard for His Word which have increased terribly within recent years! Are our hands clean before God in these things? Has there been the clear testimony against, and the definite repudiation by us that a former generation of God's people gave to these things? It cannot be for nought that God has permitted so many of His people to weep their bitter tears over loved ones to be seen no more. And the end is not yet. God may have to allow defeat and disaster to overtake us, as He did His people of old, because they were stiffnecked and refused to hear His voice (2 Chron. xxxvi. 16). It is vain to expect that all who bear the Christian name in these lands will "hear the rod" (Mic. vi. 9). But they that "fear the Lord" and think on "His Name" (Mal. iii. 16), although a feeble remnant, may, by taking the place of humiliation and confession unto repentance, have power with God and prevail. It was the "poor wise man" that delivered his city from the great

king and his armies (Eccl. ix. 15), and if through grace a people who "know their God," and have "understanding of the times" are raised up in this time of crisis, to deal WITH God and act FOR God, honouring His Word, whether others hear or forbear, we may surely believe that God will be true to Himself and to His Word, for "He saveth such as be of a contrite spirit" (Psa. xxxiv. 18). J. G.

The late Mr. Alpheus Wilkes.

AN APPRECIATION.

On Lord's Day, 13th December, 1914, our brother, Mr. Alpheus Wilkes, B.A., of Torquay, who was well known to assemblies throughout this country, passed peacefully into the presence of his Lord and Master, whom he had loved and served, in his 78th year. Our beloved brother had many qualities both to love and to admire, and of him it could be truly said, that he required to be known to appreciate his worth, and that to know him best was to love him most.

Up till fully five years ago—when he was laid aside with an affection of the brain—Mr. Wilkes ministered the Word to the children of God with much acceptance, his ministry being most helpful and refreshing. He often used to tell the writer that his great desire was to be useful to the saints.

For a number of years, he was a Rector of the Church of England, but latterly severed his connection with that Church, and in obedience to the call of God came out, looking to the Lord alone for his support. His yearly visits to the North were looked forward to with delight, and were greatly appreciated, his ministry being fraught with blessing. Of our departed brother it can be said that he "oft refreshed the saints."

It is given to few to use the gift of teaching the saints, and it is sad to think that, as one by one such gifted and devoted servants of the Lord are being called home, there does not seem to be others raised up to fill their places.

The need for God-given teachers seems to be greater than ever, and it therefore behoves the children of God to pray that the Lord will raise up others endowed by the Holy Spirit to continue in this blessed ministry, so that the saints may be edified and comforted. Meantime, let us carry out the injunction to "remember those who have spoken unto us the Word of God," and to "follow their faith considering the end of their conversation," or manner of life.

T. H. C.

The Church and the Nation.

W. R. LEWIS, HEREFORD.

AS we still live in that period of time—perhaps now approaching its end—when the Roman Empire is in abeyance (Rev. xvii. 8), it is instructive to go back to the origin of the various nations of the earth, for it is amongst these that we now live. The days of Gentile dominion—the Times of the Gentiles—date from Nebucnezzar, and they will continue until the Son of Man comes with power and great glory (Luke xxi. 27). But national distinctions have an earlier origin and a later end. The rise of the various nations dates from Babel, its sin and judgment. Until that period there were no tongues or nations. The moral ground of the division of Gen. x. was the irreligious confederacy of chapter xi. In self-exaltation they sought a unity of their own without God, and in Divine judgment they were scattered and their language confounded. So that the many languages of the earth have a miraculous origin, and the various nations have their source in the Divine government of the Most High. This is God's millennial title, and when the landmarks and geographical divisions, which men, in their pride and lust of power have been allowed to make and remake, are annulled; and when the kingdoms of the world become that "of our Lord and of His Christ," the original divisions of Gen. x. and Deut. xxxii. 8, will no doubt reappear. Each nation now asserts itself according to its own will and power, but when Christ comes to reign in Zion, there will be a last and final settlement (Isa. ii. 4, R.V.).

The times of Gentile dominion will then end, and Israel will again have the ascendancy. But national distinctions will still continue. These will only cease when the Eternal State begins. Then all time-distinctions end, and the tabernacle of God will be "with men" (Rev. xxi. 3). It would seem also that only then, will the full restoration of unity of language take place. An earnest of the removal of this penalty was the gift of tongues at Pentecost. And when the full outpouring of the Spirit, according to Joel ii. 28, "upon all flesh," takes place, a still fuller removal of the penalty may be expected, for the Lord will "turn to the people a pure language that they may all call upon the Name of the Lord to serve Him with one consent" (Zeph. iii. 9). And the missionaries of those days amongst the heathen will not have, we apprehend, the difficulties that our brethren have to-day. But however great the blessings of millennial days will be in Immanuel's land, and those countries more intimately connected with it, it will only be in the Eternal State that sin and its effects will be entirely banished. So that languages, as well as national distinctions, would seem to exist on earth throughout the millennium.

The reason for such distinctions is due to sin, but the distinctions themselves, and the various languages confirmatory thereof, are due to the judgment of God. They are God-ordained, and as such have to be owned by the believer. But our nationality is solely a governmental relationship, and not a moral one. As children of God we are "not of the world," while in human

relations we belong to one or other of the nations of earth, and speak one or other of its languages. We do not become denationalised on being born again. It is one of those relative conditions in the world, *e.g.*, family, social, and other relationships, which are not altered by reason of the new and eternal relationship which it has pleased God to give us. We must not overlook this. In the remembrance of it we shall "render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, which we can do without identifying ourselves with national politics.

But in spiritual things we enter another realm. We belong to God's great family found in every nation. In our walk as children of God we own that our common *citizenship* is in heaven. When we pray, we approach the throne of grace as those who are one, in an infinitely blessed sense, with all the redeemed. And in His presence, all time-distinctions, whether family, social, or national, are set aside for the time being. In the light of this, how are we to pray, especially in these days of grave national crisis? "Supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving" are, we read, to be made "for all men, for kings and all that are in high place, that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who willeth that all men shall be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. ii. 1-4, R.V.).

If our prayers are to be effectual, they must be in accordance with this good and acceptable and perfect will of God. We learn from this Scripture, as also from Eph. vi. 18, 19, that God has two great

interests in the world to-day: first, His *saints*, and secondly, His *Gospel*. True prayer will therefore centre around these subjects—the *welfare* of the one, and the *furtherance* of the other. It is in connection with these two interests, that we have this direction for prayer for the powers that be. There is no direction to pray politically. We know not what the will of God may be as to the political results of the present conflict. If such considerations are brought into our prayers, we shall certainly find difficulty in praying "in the Spirit," with all saints—say our brethren of Germany. We may be sure that in all true prayer in the Spirit, it can be joined in heartily by all the spiritual. Thank God we can all join in prayer that His people may lead a "tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity," and that the Gospel may not be hindered. And as in the peace of the world we have peace, so we can surely pray that the nations may recognise God's hand upon them in this present scourge, for He deals with nations as well as with individuals (Job xxxiv. 29; Jonah and iii.), that He may in His mercy grant a speedy end to this terrible conflict. We shall think, too, of the sorrowing and distressed, and pray that they may know His comfort, and be reached by His Word.

God's purpose is to bless His people. No doubt those who have sought to walk in separation from the world, will not altogether escape the trials resulting from this awful conflict, but they will be sustained, as Elijah was (1 Kings xvii.), and those who are exercised by them will find in them the means of spiritual blessing.

The Sacredness of Life.

LIFE belongs to God, as from Him it came in the day that the Lord God breathed into man's lifeless form "the breath of life" (Gen. ii. 7). And thus it was that man became God's "offspring," for He "giveth to all life and breath and all things" (Acts xvii. 25). To take with ruthless hand that which to God belongs, and which He alone can give, incurs the Divine displeasure, and must bring upon the offender sure retribution, here and hereafter. When violence had over-spread the earth, and human life was accounted of little value, God brought upon the evildoers the judgment of the deluge (Gen. vi. 11-13), and immediately after it, introduced the law of man's accountability for his fellow's life, with the penalty of death to be inflicted upon the murderer (Gen. ix. 5-6). The reason for this is given in the words, "for in the image of God made He man" (ver. 6). And as that image still remains upon man (1 Cor. xi. 7), so does the judgment upon those who efface it. To those who wantonly and wilfully take the life of a fellow-man the solemn words apply, "his blood will I require at thy hand." How awful, therefore, must be the judgment of those who plan and give commandment for wholesale carnage and destruction of human life! How utterly opposed to God is the spirit of those that gloat over seas of shed blood, and celebrate as "victories" the death of thousands! It is the spirit of its ruler, that "now worketh in the sons of disobedience," for he was "a murderer from the beginning," and will

be to the end. But are all who bear the Christian name, and profess themselves followers of the "meek and lowly" One, free from this devilish merriment over the shedding of innocent blood? Has the just and holy God no controversy with His own, while they share with the devil-deceived world in its rejoicing over the loss of precious lives which are the property of the God who gave them being? We verily believe that He has, and that His chastisement is and will be upon all who share it, until their sin is confessed, renounced, and turned away from. It is vain to seek God's face and implore His protection, if His Word is ignored, and His claims denied. Even where His mercy is extended in forgiveness, His governmental dealings in judgment may remain in solemn force against an individual and a people. Manasseh, the king, "shed innocent blood very much" (2 Kings xxi. 16). Yet, when he was in affliction, and "humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers," we read that "God was entreated of him and all his sins" (2 Chron. xxxiii. 12, 19), and as a pardoned sinner he went to his grave in peace. Was this the end of it? By no means. The retribution was exacted in after years from those who were evidently accomplices in his sin, but had not repented. So Judah, over which he had ruled, and who took no stand against his deeds, was carried captive to Babylon "FOR the sins of Manasseh," and "for the innocent blood that he shed . . . which the Lord WOULD NOT PARDON." These are solemn words, and they have a message to us to-day. J. R.

The Coming of the Lord, AND THE EVENTS WHICH WILL FOLLOW;

WITH SOME NOTES ON THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

BY W. H. HUNTER.

WHEN Christ ascended up far above all the heavens (Eph. iv. 10), God gave to Him, as the meed of His merit, the chief place upon the throne ("My Father's Throne," He called it), the place on the right hand of the Majesty, which He now occupies, and from whence He exercises all authority whether in heaven or on earth. Together with this, God gave Him other gifts, of which we cannot now speak particularly, except in respect of one (to us) unlooked for gift; for God gave Him "a revelation," an unveiling, "to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John" (Rev. i. 1).

Attention of a more careful sort than is usually vouchsafed to the words quoted, should be paid to the terms which John employs to describe the duty which was laid upon him by His Divine Master: the reason being that the words indicate that the Book of Revelation, as we know it, was from the outset divided into two main parts. First, an introduction, in which the message was borne directly to the servant by the Master, in the greater part of which the Lord speaks in the first person singular, and speaks of things which were then (and are now) present. And secondly, a main theme in which the Lord is spoken of in the third person, which concerns things which were then (and are still) to come; and in which the

intermediate messenger—"His angel"—appears from time to time.

In the Book of Revelation the introduction consists of chapters i., ii., and iii., while the main theme begins with the commencement of chapter iv.

Further, the Lord Himself sub-divided the introduction into two sections, and thus practically articulated the Book into three divisions, when He commanded John to write (1) the things which thou sawest (just now, as Dean Alford adds in explanation of the meaning of the words which the Lord used); (2) the things which are; and (3) the things which shall come to pass after these things; or, if for the purpose of bringing into sight the connection which is so forcibly indicated by the very words employed, one may put part of the phrase more literally—"the things which shall come to pass *meta tauta*."

If these words, however unfamiliar they may seem to be to some, be kept in view, and if we pass directly to chap. iv. 1, where John heard a trumpet-like voice in which he, a man on earth, was addressed personally by a heavenly speaker; a voice which lifted him from the earth, and which said, "Come up hither, and I will shew thee the things which must come to pass *meta tauta*," the most casual of readers can hardly fail to see and to note the importance of the direct link between chap. i. 19 and chap. iv. 1, as indicated by the repetition of the same words in the two verses.

In chap. iv. 1, the work of "revelation" began, the veil was actually drawn aside. John looked, or, in other words, he

became a "seer," as it was in Israel when God Himself was King, and when those who were afterwards called prophets were called seers (1 Sam. ix. 9).

The first vision granted to this seer was that of a Throne which had been set in heaven (not "above the heavens") and of ONE who sat upon the throne—for the invisible God had become such that a man could look upon Him, and could note the fact that He was *alone on that Throne*.

The importance of this great vision has been overlooked, but it will appear if, along with the words quoted, the words of the Son be read as they appear at the close of the introduction to the Book: "I also overcame, and am set down *with My Father on His Throne*" (chap. iii. 21). For the conditions which govern "the things which are," which characterise the present era; are that above the heavens two Divine personalities sit upon the Father's Throne, that of the two the Son is in the chief place, that the Throne is "Throne of Grace," and therefore that "Grace triumphant reigns."

The conditions which will dominate the *meta tauta* things, the things which shall come to pass after "the things which are" have passed away, are, that the Throne will be set in heaven, that the Father will sit upon it alone, and that the "day of the Lord" will be ushered in: the day which shall be of wrath, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness; a day in which the blood of men shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as dung, because they had sinned against the LORD (Zeph. i. 14).

Love in Action.

WE remember hearing the late Henry Dyer, in one of his addresses, say "There is real love in the heart of every true child of God, but like the water in the well of Sychar it is sometimes down deep, and needs an occasion to bring it out." Such an "occasion" seems to have come in the tale of devastation that has been wrought among the towns and villages of Belgium, and in the distress and destitution which the devastation of thousands of its homes, has brought upon its peoples. But our present thoughts are more concerning the children of God, who have shared the common desolation. Without any formal appeal or organisation, the flow of freewill offerings and gifts from fellow-saints in home and far-off lands has been wonderful. It has brought us back to that bright picture of early fellowship recorded by the Divine Spirit in Acts xi. 28-30, where, in the day of a threatened famine in the land from which the first heralds of the Gospel went forth, "the disciples," having the Divine love in their hearts (Rom. v. 4), which first goes *up* to God and then *out* to those who are His (1 John v. 1), "every man" of them too, "determined according to his ability to send relief to the brethren which dwelt in Judea. Which also they did." It must be a joy to God to see, amid the cold shadows of these last days, a glow of that love which so marked the saints of early times burst forth so spontaneously, in a day of common distress. May He graciously fan this heavenly flame and guard it from the enemy's power.

New Testament Mysteries.

WILLIAM HOSTE, B.A.

X.—THE MYSTERY OF GOD.

"The Mystery of God, even Christ, in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. ii. 2).

OF all the Divine Mysteries, none can be greater than this, for it is "the Mystery of GOD, even *Christ." He it is who is, "in these last days," the final revelation of God to man. Not that the Mystery is yet fully consummated. That will not be till the seventh trumpet of the Apocalypse has sounded, and the kingdoms of this world are transferred to their rightful King. "In the days of the voice of the seventh angel . . . the Mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets" (Rev. x. 7). That this declaration had been concerning the kingdom glory of Christ is clear from chap. xi. 15. "And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever." When Christ returns, as the Son of Man, in the clouds, "every eye shall see Him," for His coming will be as the lightning, and His glory will fill the earth; but even now to those who have eyes to see, "the Mystery of God" is revealed, "even Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and know-

* Of the many divergent readings in the MSS. of this passage, that adopted here is favoured by such scholars as Drs. Scrivener, Lightfoot, and others, and seems to correspond best with the rest of Scripture. It is important to note that Christ is not in opposition to "God," but to "Mystery;" and the meaning is the Mystery of God, which mystery is Christ.

ledge."* Some translate "in which," but "in whom" is better, for only a Divine Person can contain all fulness.

The circumstances of the Epistle to the Colossians are noteworthy. The condition of the saints, their faith and love (chap. i. 4), and their order and steadfastness (chap. ii. 5), called forth the thanksgiving of the apostle. But Satan was attacking their good condition, not openly by tempting to gross sin, but by undermining their faith. Moral evil is sure to follow doctrinal error. Doctrine is not human opinion, but the revelation of God's thoughts concerning Christ, man, sin, and atonement. The Colossians were in danger of being beguiled by philosophy and vain deceit and by the earthly principles of worldly religion. "Meat and drink, and holy-days, and new moons, and sabbaths"—the shadows, were obscuring Christ the reality. They were "not holding the Head." What a body is without a head, so is a Christian or a church out of touch with Christ. What was the remedy? The only one that can ever set a Christian or a church right—Christ Himself. A serious feature of Satan's attack was, that his agents (like their successors to-day, who quote much Hebrew and Greek while knowing but little) lay claim to a special wisdom and an intuitive knowledge in Divine things.

* As to the difference between "wisdom" and "knowledge," considered as human attributes, we may say, speaking generally that the latter is acquired in the schools of learning, the former in the school of experience. Knowledge without wisdom is pedantry. Knowledge stores up facts; wisdom turns them to profit. Wise men lay up knowledge and know how to use it aright (Prov. x. 14; xv. 2). Knowledge is theory. Wisdom practice. Knowledge tabulates diseases and remedies. Wisdom diagnoses and prescribes. Knowledge puffeth up; wisdom humbleth. As has been said, "We know that we all have knowledge; would that we knew that we have not all wisdom."

They could talk of the "assured results of the Higher Criticism," or of "the agreement of all scholars" with their own conclusions, or what was the equivalent of these boasts in their day. These pretensions beguiled the simple then as now. The apostle accordingly, in his deep concern for them, prays that their hearts "might" be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding (for how much lack of comfort and spiritual understanding are breaches of fellowship responsible?), to the acknowledgment of the Mystery of God, even Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Why should they "compass themselves about with the sparks" of human philosophy, when they had such resources of Divine wisdom and knowledge in Christ, in whom the Mystery of God is revealed.

God had in times past made partial revelations of Himself. In creation His eternal power and Godhead, as Elohim, were clearly seen. To the patriarchs in their pilgrim journeys, He had made Himself known as *El-shaddai, the all-providing God; to Israel as Jehovah, the unchanging covenant-keeping God. That there was a fuller revelation still to come was an open secret. Prophets spake of a Child to be born who should bear the unheard of name of "God with us" (Isaiah vii. 14), of a Son who should receive the undreamt of titles, "Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace"

* Derived, as some believe, from Hebrew *shad*, a breast. It is in this sense that I take it here. This interpretation enables us to distinguish between Elohim and El-shaddai, which is otherwise difficult.

(Isaiah ix. 6); of a coming ruler of Israel "whose goings forth had been from of old, from everlasting." Such words could only mean a revelation of God in human form. Surely there would be no room for doubt in face of such a manifestation. The godly of the nation waited down the centuries for the fulfilment of the promise. And in "the fulness of time, God sent forth His Son." And when He came there were some who were waiting for redemption in Israel. Can it be that the long expected promise is fulfilled in the babe of Bethlehem, in the homeless Stranger of Galilee, in the meek and lowly Jesus, the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, in the lonely rejected Man of Calvary—crying out in the darkness, "My God, My God! why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Yes, this is "the Mystery of God, even Christ." And God has attested it by raising Him from the dead and giving "Him glory," that our faith and hope might be in God." And "in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." He is at once the Treasury, the Owner of the Treasure, and the Treasurer.

(To be continued).

A Quiet Resting Place.

"My people shall dwell in quiet resting-places"

(Isa. xxxii. 18).

"IN ME . . . peace" (John xvi. 33).

"Hid WITH CHRIST, in God" (Col. iii. 3).

A QUIET haven for the soul
While seas of trouble roar,
Men's hearts are failing them for fear,
As fails their earthly store:
"With Christ in God," my all secure,
No power of earth or hell
Can reach the haven of my "rest,"
The "place" in which I dwell,

The Future Roman Empire.

A BIBLE READING. BY DR. S. P. TREGELLES.

THE increasing development of monarchic government throughout the countries which fall within the scope of the ancient Roman Empire is a well attested fact. The Napoleonic wars broke up many connexions which had for long subsisted among nations in Western Europe, alike in feudal and ecclesiastical arrangements. The Vienna compact of 1815, which attempted to reunite the broken fragments, did not long continue, nor could it, for the Word of God has plainly declared that the nations which composed the Roman Empire of the past must be brought into a condition answering to the clay-iron feet of the Great Image described in Daniel, chap. ii. The same governmental principles will prevail in all these ten kingdoms. There will the same adulteration of power, which is symbolised in the iron mixed with potter's clay, for the ten toes, although distinct, are parts of one image, and so they have a corporate connexion. And thus the empire will exist in the future as in the past. It may seem at present as though such a division of the European countries that constituted the western half of the Roman Empire would be impossible. But nothing can frustrate the Word of God when the appointed time has come for its fulfilment. The separation of countries which are *in*, from others which are *not* in the Roman Empire can, as recent events may surely prove, be effected in a very brief period of time, either by the fortunes of war or by conference at

its conclusion. The overthrow of Austrian despotism in the past—a remarkable event truly—was the work of a few days, and its detachment from countries which are not included in the Roman Empire, may be more remarkable still. Baden, Bavaria, and Wurtemberg, which were in the Empire, must finally be severed from the German confederation, and have only been kept where they are by the strong hand of military despotism. We do not require to predict when or by what means such changes will take place. Enough for us to know, that the Word of God is true and its fulfilment sure. The introduction of popular monarchial principles of government in such countries as have not yet received them, the dissolution of unions between countries one of which *does*, and the other of which does *not* fall within the limits of the Roman Empire, *must* take place, and the iron-clay form of government must continue to that time, when the whole image shall be destroyed by “the Stone” falling upon it. In the opening years of the nineteenth century, Europe seemed to be passing under the despotic rule of one great conqueror; since then it seems in certain countries as if the voice of the people would prevail. But from the Word of God we learn that the power of the rulers will not be able to silence the voice of the subject, nor will the people by their clamour be able to rid themselves of the monarchs that rule over them. The “iron” and the “clay” will continue to the end. When that end may come, we cannot tell. Nor need we attempt to predict the steps that may lead to it.

Prophecy, and our Hope.

Notes of an Address. By F. CHRISTOPHER BLAND.

IT is very important to distinguish between the prophetic Scriptures and the hope of the Church, which is the personal return of the Lord. Prophecy relates to events on the earth: the hope of the Church is from heaven. The nation of Israel, in their own land, is the platform upon which God's prophetic dealings are to take place as a centre, and the surrounding nations are dealt with only in so far as they have to do with that people and that land. When Israel as a nation rejected their King, and refused the testimony of the Spirit through the apostles, as we have it recorded in the Acts, they were "broken off," and became Lo-Ammi, not a people (Hosea i. 9). The thread of prophecy was then broken off also, and it will not be resumed until Israel has been restored to their land, as the Word of God tells us they shall be. Then that wonderful prophetic thread will be taken up again, and spun out to the end. I will use a simple illustration. Suppose there had been a godly Jew in the city of Jerusalem, who heard the Lord utter these words in Luke xxi., about the invasion of Palestine by the Roman armies, the scattering of the Jewish people, and the downtreading of the city of Jerusalem "until the times of the Gentiles" are fulfilled. And that in order to escape, he had gone into a cave, and there had fallen asleep and slept for over 1800 years, awaking just in time to see the "signs" spoken of in verse 25, begin to come to pass. That Jew would

not have missed the fulfilment of anything of which the Word of God has spoken concerning the people of Israel. The timeless gap of over eighteen centuries, which has come in between the breaking off and the taking up again of the thread of prophecy, has been occupied with the outcalling of God's heavenly people, the Church, that mystic body of which Christ in heaven is the Head and His people the members. They are called meantime to a heavenly citizenship (Eph. ii. 19), also to heavenly worship through their Great High Priest, who has already passed through the heavens (Heb. iv. 14), and to a walk here on earth worthy of such a calling: a heavenly people whose path is outside "the course of this world," independent of its times and seasons, a people *in* the world but not *of* the world, waiting for God's Son from heaven (1 Thess. i. 10), whose last word from the throne is, "Surely I come quickly" (Rev. xxii. 20). After the calling of the Church has been completed, and the present visit to the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His Name is fulfilled, and the whole received up into heaven, then, as we are told in Acts xv., "After this, God will return and build the tabernacle of David which has fallen down," and restore the ruins thereof. The two callings, with their hopes, are always kept quite distinct in the Word of God, although often much confused in the teaching of men. And one result of this confusion is, that much which belongs alone to the earthly people is allowed to govern the hope of the Church. But the hope of the Church is from heaven.

The Preacher's Column.

OUTLINES OF EVANGELISTIC SUBJECTS.

THE GOSPEL.

- The Gospel of God (Rom. i. 1)—Its Author.
 The Gospel of Jesus Christ (Mark i. 1)—Its Theme.
 The Gospel of Salvation (Eph. i. 18)—Its Object.

HOW THE GOSPEL IS TREATED.

- The Gospel Preached (1 Thess. i. 5)—In Power.
 The Gospel Perverted (Gal. i. 7)—In Opposition.
 The Gospel Hid (2 Cor. iv. 4)—For Condemnation.
 The Gospel Received (1 Cor. xv. 1)—Unto Salvation.

CHRIST THE ROCK.

- As a FOUNDATION to Build on (1 Pet. ii. 4).
 As a CLEFT to Hide in (Song. ii. 14).
 As a SHADOW to Shelter (Psa. xxxii. 2).
 As a FORTRESS to Defend (Psa. xxxi. 3).

BIBLE STUDIES FOR YOUNG BELIEVERS.

CHRIST THE SHEPHERD.

- Purchased His Sheep (Acts xx. 28).
 Seeks and Saves (Luke xv. 4, 5).
 Knows and Marks (John x. 14, 27).
 Feeds and Leads (Psa. xxiii. 2, 3).

SEVEN LINKS WITH CHRIST.

- Crucified with Christ (Gall ii. 20)—Our Judgment.
 Dead with Christ (2 Tim. ii. 11)—Our Doom.
 Buried in Christ (Rom. vi. 4)—Our End.
 Raised with Christ (Col. ii. 12)—Our Separation.
 Suffering with Christ (Rom. viii. 17)—Our Fellowship.
 Seated with Christ (Eph. ii. 6)—Our Portion.
 Glorified with Christ (Rom. viii. 19)—Our Prospect.

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The Young Believer's Question Box.

In the January number of "The Believer's Magazine" a short paper on "Profaning God's Name" (page 9), has been very helpful to a number of young Christians who work in a large engineering work here, in which there are many infidels and scoffers, who point to the Kaiser of Germany's utterances and references to God, in connection with the cruelties and atrocities which are committed by his soldiers with his approval, if not by his command, as proofs of "the hypocrisy and rottenness of religion." How can this be met?

By admitting that it is true, and immediately insisting on the vital difference between false "religion" and the Christianity which is of God and according to His Word. From the death of Abel outside Eden, at the hand of his religious brother, Cain, who had his altar and his offering,

while he himself "was of that wicked one" (John iii. 12), to the murder of the Son of God outside Jerusalem, by the leaders of "the Jews' religion" (Acts xiii. 27), and along all the centuries of Church history, false religion has even been the relentless persecutor of God's saints, and the author of the worst infamies perpetrated on mankind. Religion stoned Stephen, and inspired the persecutions of Pagan Rome. The "Massacre of St. Bartholomew" on August 21, 1572, in which 10,000 French Protestants were slain on the streets of Paris, was unquestionably the work of "the Church," which the Pope celebrated by a "Te Deum," and ordered public rejoicings in honour of the crime, while he gave his absolution and blessing to the chief leader in that infamy. The Inquisition in Spain, and the Covenanter "killing time" in Scotland were managed by the religious authorities of these times, all claiming Divine sanction for their atrocities, and performing them in the Name of God, as the commissioners of heaven. But "the god of this age" (2 Cor. iv. 4), who is the manager of its false religion, is not to be associated with "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory" (Eph. i. 17), who is the "God and Father" of the born again Christian also. We ought to protest in unmistakeable terms against the blasphemy of laying to the charge of the God or the Bible, such infamies as the breaking of solemn obligations, the torture and murder of defenceless victims, and the reckless plunging of millions into all the horrors of war to satiate the lust for power, and gratify the pride of men who have no fear of God before their eyes, and who set no value on human life. That God in mercy bears long with such guilt, we know. But there is a set time for and a limit to such forbearance. Then, God, who has long kept silence, will "speak in His wrath" (Psa. ii. 3) with a voice that none can mistake or fail to hear. We believe this will come, and that the time is not far off.

Answers to Correspondents.

G. S., AYRSHIRE.—John Welch, a godly Covenanter preacher of Ayr, was banished to France by James VI. in 1605. He says in his last testimony that the cause of his banishment was, that he held and taught without reserve, "that Christ is the only Head of His Church, and that she is to be free from all jurisdiction except Christ's in her government." These are good points to remember, and especially to work out in practise by all who own

Him as their Head and Lord. And it has to be remembered that there are smaller "authorities" than Kings and Parliaments, who at times attempt to legislate for and "boss" Christ's churches here, who have to be resisted in the spirit of "the martyrs," whose sepulchres we garnish, but whose noble example is apt to be neglected for something much softer and easier to the flesh.

A. L., GRIMSBY.—The word "salvation," in Phil. ii. 12, is not to be confused with that in Eph. i. 13, which is that "salvation" which all true believers in Christ receive and possess in believing (1 Cor. xv. 2). It is rather to be placed in the company of Paul's own "salvation," referred to in Phil. i. 19, which was deliverance from prison. The "salvation" the saints were here enjoined to "work out" was not from hell, or sin, but from the snares and dangers that beset and surrounded them during the period of their "sojourning here" (1 Pet. i. 17). And the "fear" was not of condemnation, but that "reverence and godly fear" (Heb. xii. 28), which becometh those who bear God's Name among men.

W. S., OXFORD.—"The Fathers," so-called, however one may revere their memory as witnesses at a time when confession of Christ's Name brought imprisonment and death, are not safe guides in doctrine. For thus early had men substituted tradition for God's Word. An example from Ignatius—who lived in the age immediately following the apostles, and is said to have been contemporary with John, writes—"Let all reverence the deacons as Jesus Christ, and the bishop as the Father, and the presbyters as the council of God and the assembly of the apostles." This is a striking contrast to Paul's last words in Acts xx. 28-32. The only pure fountain of true doctrine is the Book of God, and 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17, claims that its contents are amply sufficient for all purposes in all ages. We do not therefore go to "the Church" or to "the Fathers" to ascertain what is truth, but to God and His Word, which abide unchanged.

J. M., CANADA.—There are two relations in view in the Scriptures you quote. Gal. iii. 13 tells of redemption from "the curse of the law," by being "made a curse for us." But Gal. iv. 5 speaks of redemption for them that were "under law," in order that they might receive the place "of sons," instead of being treated as children not of age. The distinction, although important, is little heard of.

W. N., CROYDON.—There are three conditions of

existence named in 2 Cor. v. 1-6, not two as your letter asserts. First, the present "burdened" state in which all now are, who live on earth in mortal bodies. Second, the "naked" or unclothed state, which is entered on by the spirit at death; third, the "clothed upon" condition which is attained at resurrection of the dead or change of the living, at Christ's coming. The second is said to be "very far better" (Phil. i. 21, R.V.) than the first, yet not the Christian's final destiny nor his proper hope, toward which his "earnest desire" reaches forth. But it is not "sleep" in the sense of unconsciousness, nor is it "possession of some other kind of body from heaven." It is described as a being "absent from the body" (2 Cor. v. 8, R.V.), yet "at home with the Lord." And faith asks no more.

A. L., FOLKESTONE.—The words of Matthew xxi. 24, "Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder," have primary reference to the relation of Jew and Gentile to the Lord Jesus. The Jew, to whom He in His lowly form found "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence" (1 Pet. ii. 8) fell, and as a nation they were "broken." The Gentiles, upon whom in their sin and unbelief the "stone cut out without hands" (Dan. ii. 45) will fall, when Christ comes in judgment, will "grind them to powder," destroying summarily and finally all who are the subjects of that judgment (see Rev. xix. 19, 21). The "broken" Israel nation will rise again; but the Gentile powers ground "to powder," never.

Points of Practical Interest.

Under this head, we hope to give brief Answers to Queries of general interest to all, which do not require lengthy replies such as "Answers to Special Questions" supply.

Five Words.—Whether taken literally, or as an illustration of brevity, a "five words" (1 Cor. xiv. 19) ministry from God, and to the point, is of great value in the assembly of God. Yet how little there is of it!

Oratory.—Attempts at oratory to produce "effect" are always offensive in the things of God, alike in preaching of the Gospel and ministry of the Word. They are usually adopted by those who have "nothing to say," and who must therefore make up for the lack of sound matter by working up what the late Mr. Alpheus Wilkes suitably named "froth."

Halfway.—There are those who oppose separation to God, and from the world in its politics,

pastimes and religion, out and out and make no secret of it. We know their whereabouts exactly. And there are some who, having learned their deliverance by the Cross of Christ from "the present evil age" (Gal. i. 4), and their call by God to separation therefrom, and seek through grace to maintain it consistently and fully. They also are "well known" (2 Cor. vi. 9). But a third class has now come into view, who, when it suits them, can TALK of separation, and when in certain circles, teach it, but who at the same time go hand in glove with the world's politics, and out and in with its religion. This halfway class are neither respected by the world, nor of any real value to the Church. Their "facing both ways" line of things is a stumbling stone to everybody, and judging by the fact that they are continually seeking to justify *their doings*, it does not seem to be much of a pleasure or comfort to themselves. But there is real satisfaction in pleasing God

Demons.—We know from the records of Scripture that demons can occupy the bodies of men and of beasts (Mark v. 8, 13). They do not die with their victims, but pass to others, so that the very demons which incited men to some of the greatest tragedies this world has ever known, may be in others and at work on earth at the present hour. That they will be especially active toward the close of the present age in religious circles, 1 Tim. iv. 3 informs us, and in Rev. xvi. 13, 14, they are shown to be able to drive "the kings of the earth" to battle against "God Almighty." Need we then wonder if loud boastings of the strength of armies, the power of navies, with threats of extermination on all who refuse to submit to their dictum, increases, as "the day" of man's last outburst against the throne of God, and his final defeat at the hands of the Lamb and His army (Rev. xvii. 14) draws nigh? Such devil-devised and demon-energised war, is exactly what God's Word foretells. What a mercy that the saints of God will be safe in their Father's house in heaven, before the last and worst of it comes!

Answers to Special Questions.

Help in answering these questions will be valued. Answers must be brief, leading TO the Word, free from personal reference, and local events.

Rule in the Local Assembly.—It is generally recognised that there are some fitted to shepherd and guide and rule in each assembly of Christians, however small. But is there any Scripture to warrant a few of such brethren coming together

say in a city or a county, and exercising rule, which is sometimes at variance with and overreaches that of brethren in a local assembly?

ANSWER A.—In Christian assemblies where godly liberty is enjoyed, there must be Scriptural rule. Its character is described in 1 Thess. v. 12-14; Heb. xii. 7; and those who exercise it in 1 Tim. iii. 1-5; Titus i. 7-9. It may be necessary for such to come together for mutual counsel and fellowship in their service, but it cannot be too plainly made known that they have no administrative power in so meeting. This always is in and by "the church" (Matt. xviii. 17-17; 1 Cor. v. 13), that is the local assembly as a whole, including those who guide.

J. G.

ANSWER B.—Apostles, who had an authority which nobody now possesses, could and did give guidance to the early churches planted by them, apart from the Word, which was then incomplete. And they could enact discipline in these churches in a manner such as none now can imitate (1 Tim. i. 20). Any coming together of leading brethren of assemblies, either locally in one assembly or in a group, can only be for counsel, never for legislation or disciplinary purposes. And even in this, care is needed not to isolate their city or "county" from other assemblies, or assume any sort of metropolitan supervision over them. This has been tried and has failed, and ever must, because it is not according to God.

W. W.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—The character of rule in the Church, is shepherd rule, as the word used to describe it (1 Pet. v. 2) clearly shews.

"The Shepherd that feeds,
Is the Shepherd that leads."

This is according to the pattern set before us in the present Shepherd rule of the Lord Jesus. He feeds and He leads (Psa. xxiii. 2, 3). He is Shepherd and Bishop (1 Pet. ii. 25). The rule exercised in the world is of an entirely different character, described by another word (Matt. xx. 25). "But it shall not be so among you," was the Lord's emphatic word immediately following His description of such rule. Regarding outside intervention in matters belonging to an assembly, there is neither commandment for nor example of it in the Word. It savours of clerical assumption, seldom does any good, generally much evil, and may usually be regarded in the same light as some distant cousin's interference in some delicate family matter, which none save a parent has either the heart, the skill, the knowledge, or the patience to set right.

Christ is Head over All.

A GLORIOUS TRUTH FOR TRYING TIMES.

IN the great unfolding of Divine mysteries in the Epistle to the Ephesians, there stands in the forefront the grand announcement from the throne in the heavens, that in the exaltation of His Son to the place of supreme power at His own right hand, "God gave Him," among other glories, which He alone will bear, "to be Head over all things to the Church, which is His body" (chap. i. 22, 23). Other Scriptures tell that He is Head of the Church (Eph. v. 23; Col. i. 18), but here He is said to be "Head over all to the Church." Things in the great world are under the power of Satan, who is its "prince" (John xiv. 30). The living Lord in heaven does not yet exercise all the authority with which He has been invested, which extends, as He informs us, to all things "in heaven and on earth" (Matt. xxviii. 18). Nor has He yet taken His great power and reigned (Rev. xi. 17), casting forth the usurper, and putting down all alien rule that exalts itself against Him, as yet He shall (1 Cor. xv. 24). But He is exercising that authority which belongs to Him as "Head over all things to the Church." Things on earth are not just allowed to go anyhow. The devil is not "the disposer of events," so far as the saints of God are concerned. No weapon that is formed against them can prosper. No shaft of man or demon can hit them, without the permission of the Lord in heaven. He may, He often does allow the adversary to sift them, as He did Peter. But this is for their good.

He permits the wrath of man and the passions of rulers to bring them into straits, where they are cast upon the arm of the Lord for deliverance. But this is for their blessing and ultimate victory. "Though war should rise" against them (Psa. xxvii. 3, R.V.), "even then" they may be "confident" that no bolt can reach them without the permission of Him who sits upon the throne. For He does not sit upon that throne as a mere spectator of events that are transpiring here, but as the supreme "Head over all," holding the helm, governing all for His people's ultimate good. Yes, blessed be His Name! the living Lord is even now, and for His Church, "the Governor" among the angry nations, and to those who commit themselves and their all to His hand, He will not fail to exercise His mighty power either for their exemption or deliverance, or to give them endurance to bear whatever they may be called upon to meet in these times of testing and of sifting. Let the heart be open to receive and faith ready to grasp the glorious fact; that the living Christ on the throne of God is "Head over all things to His Church," that He is there to make "all things work together" for our good, and there will be peace and quiet confidence, Faith, reposing in the Lord's eternal love and Almighty power, will bring rest. In this assurance may we not each say to our own souls :

"O leave it all with Jesus, drooping soul,
Tell not half thy story—but the whole :
Worlds on worlds are hanging—On His hand,
Life and death are waiting—His command,
Yes, His tender bosom, makes thee room,
O come home."
J. R.

The Coming of the Lord, AND THE EVENTS WHICH WILL FOLLOW;

WITH SOME NOTES ON THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

By W. H. HUNTER.

WHAT is it that will occasion the change, which will mark the boundary between "the things which are" and the *meta tauta* things?

There is no manner of doubt as to the answer. The change will be wrought at the coming again of the Lord FOR His people; the coming again which was promised in the upper room, concerning which the Word of the Lord is clear, and the events connected with which have been outlined in deft and decisive strokes by the Holy Spirit of God, who is "the right hand" of the LORD.

At the time appointed by the Father, God Himself will rise from His place on the Throne, on which the Son now sits with Him, and will "lead" (rather than "bring," as in both A.V. and R.V. of 1 Thess. iv. 14) with Jesus all those who have been hushed to sleep by Jesus (the disembodied spirits of those who, like Stephen, had fallen asleep pending the day of His coming, whom He had received, and had made exceeding glad with His countenance) to the "heaven" of Rev. iv. 2. From that heaven the Lord Himself will descend with a shout: with the voice of an archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. That is to say, that the bodily remains which had once clothed the disembodied spirits which are with Christ, will be wakened into activity by the shout of the Lord, which will be heard

by each, in the same personal and direct way as the shout to Lazarus was heard by him in the cemetery outside Bethany, as he lay in his grave-clothes with corruption doing its destructive work in his remains. Thus the one-time "dead in Christ" will be brought back to the place and standing of those who are alive and remain to the coming of the Lord; and for one ineffable moment the Holy Spirit will hold in the arms of His infinite tenderness the Bride which Christ is to "receive" from Him. That ineffable moment had its foreshadow in the "sweet story of old" concerning Rebekah's journey across the desert under the guidance of Abraham's servant, unto the point at which that servant lifted her in his arms from the camel, as he replied to her question, "What man is this who walketh in the field to meet us?"

When that moment is reached, the members of the body of Christ will be done with the earth, wherefore the archangel will lift *his* voice, and will summon the angels, over whom he is chief, the ministering spirits who had been "sent forth to minister for the heirs of salvation" to attend these heirs in their upward flight "to meet the Lord in the air."

Then the "trump of God" will sound; "the last trump" (1 Cor. xv. 52), which will be as a voice talking and saying, "Come up hither;" and the heirs will be caught up together; each of them shall see the Lord face to face, and shall be changed into His own image; and "so shall we ever be with the Lord."

The words as to the TRUMP OF GOD,

together with those which define that trump as being "the last" of a series, have furnished expositors, both great and small, with occasion for much ingenious speculation, to which it is neither necessary nor desirable that reference should be made here. It is sufficient to say that the only sound basis of interpretation for such a New Testament metaphor as that of the "trumpet" in the New Testament words already quoted, will be found in the Old Testament types. In the present case, Numbers x. will supply a key to the understanding of the figure of speech which is in point; as the silver trumpets in the type served at one time to do for the Israelite just what the Old and New Testaments now do for the Christian: they made the voice of the Lord (signified by the breathings of the priests) audible to the ears of men, and that particularly, on the occasions when the redeemed were called to meet their Lord. The trump of God is the voice of God; the voice through which, when the first day of the week has come, God still calls disciples together "to break bread" as it did of old (Acts xx. 7), and the voice now adds that thus coming together they will meet the Lord (Matt. xviii. 20). When, therefore, the day of the Lord's coming again has arrived, the trump of God will send forth no unfamiliar sound to those who, week after week, have yielded themselves in obedience to its call; for the sound of "the last trump" will be as that of the many sounds which have preceded it, and once again in it the Word of God will call the saints together to meet Lord—this time, in the air.

The Decline of Gentile Rule.

NOTES OF A BIBLE READING. DR. S. P. TREGELLES.

WHEN Nebuchadnezzar received the committal of power from God, it was simply power from Himself, not derived from men, not dependent on the will of others, but put by God into his hand and exercised in responsibility to Him alone as the only Ruler of princes. Nebuchadnezzar might rightly bear, so far as man was concerned, the name of autocrat: his will was law. How this power deteriorated in its character in the kingdoms that succeeded his, the Scriptures inform us. The second kingdom—the Medo-Persian—is said to be "inferior" (Dan. ii. 39) to his, and this is exemplified in the power of its king. We learn from chap. vi. that Darius was unable to deliver Daniel from the lions' den because of "the presidents, the governors, the princes, and counsellors" (ver. 7) who were associated with him in the rule of the kingdom. Of the third or Grecian power, we have not so much detailed information in the Word, but enough is said to show its deterioration, in the fact that the empire of Alexander the Great became "divided," and remained in a broken and fragmentary condition until its end. The fourth, or Roman kingdom, was to be "strong as iron." As a metal, iron is in many respects "inferior" to brass, although for certain purposes it is possessed of more strength and capable of more extensive application. The "potter's clay" (ver. 4), means simply earthenware, hard but brittle. An image which stood partly upon feet of earthenware would be very stable, so long

as there was nothing but direct pressure brought to bear upon its feet, but a blow falling upon them would break them to pieces, and that only the more thoroughly from the fact of iron being intermixed with the earthenware. Power in the hands of the people is here seen, having no internal stability, although something is still left of the strength of the iron. The "stone" in its falling on the feet of this great image, symbolises, not grace, but judgment. "The Divine Stone" is an appellation of our Lord (see Psa. cxviii.; Isa. viii.; Acts iv.; 1 Pet. ii.). Its falling is connected with the day of His coming, when He shall take to Himself His great power, and shall reign (Rev. xi. 17). The Church is built upon Christ as the living Stone (1 Pet. ii. 4); Israel stumbled on it, and was broken (Matt. xxi. 44; Isa. viii. 14); the Gentile powers in their last condition will be crushed in judgment by it. How clearly all this shows the line of demarcation which God has made between the world and its power and the Church and its place. The Church is built upon the Stone; the image is destroyed by it. When the saints rightly value their place as identified with Christ and resting upon Him, they will see aright how to act as to any connection with the world and its power. A saint, who identifies himself with the world-power as represented in this image, would be so far seeking to be put into the place which will receive the Lord's judgment, instead of realising his union with Him who will execute that judgment. May the eyes of God's people be opened to see, and their ways governed by the position into which they have thus been brought.

The Church and the Nation.

PART II. W. R. LEWIS, HEREFORD.

IT is often difficult for us, living as we do, at almost the end of the Church's history on earth, to find our true bearings in relation to much that was simple enough to the saints of early times. It will, indeed, be impossible for us to do so unless we use the Word of God as a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path, and are thus enabled to see things from the Divine point of view. We live in days when the Church and the world,—so distinct in the sight of God,—have become by men practically identified with each other. We may indeed by grace have learnt to know that the Cross of Christ has separated the believer for ever from the world, yet how slow we are to practically own this truth! And how difficult it is to unlearn that which has been taught and practised for centuries! In apostolic days, that line of separation was clearly marked. But how different it is to-day! We can expect little help from those who still recognise an "Established" Church, and still less perhaps from those who consider politics form part of Christianity, as is generally the case in "Nonconformity."

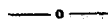
Reference is sometimes made for our guidance in connection with the confession of our national sin, to Dan. ix. But we must remember that Daniel stood in a very different relation to the Jews and to Jerusalem, from that in which a child of God now stands towards the country in which God has seen fit to place him. Daniel's position towards his people

and the beloved city, answered rather to ours in relation to the children of God and the house of God. When he says, "We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled even by departing from Thy precepts and from Thy judgments," he uses language which we can only rightly use when confessing the sins of the true people of God. To identify ourselves with the sins of any nation now, would be quite another matter, and no guidance for this, we believe, is afforded us in Scripture. As Daniel identified himself with the people of God in his days, and not with the Babylonians, so we, identifying ourselves with the children of God, would seek grace from Him to confess our common sins. But how can we confess the sins of the nation? There is, as we saw last month, a governmental relationship with the nation, which we must own, but we have no right to identify ourselves morally with its politics or its aims, for these are essentially "of the world." The nation, as a governmental institution, is one thing. What it does as such is quite another. There we find "the world," for it is animated by "the prince of this world" (1 John v. 19; Acts iv. 25; Rev. xviii. 3). All the worst features of the state of the Gentiles, as portrayed in Rom. i., existed in Paul's day in the Empire, and especially in the City to the saints in which that Epistle was addressed. Yet, though the apostle was a Roman citizen, we never find that he humbled himself on account of their national sins, or called upon the saints to do so. As an indictment of human guilt in the presentation of the

Gospel, he did refer to those sins, but never, we believe, did he call to the Church for humiliation and confession because of them.

Some may consider this a trifling distinction, but it is only as we apprehend by faith our place of separation that we can act as God would have us, and become a blessing to others. If the Church becomes identified with the world, she can but bring a curse upon it (Gen. xii. 17; Deut. iv. 6; Matt. v. 13, 14; 1 Thess. v. 5). God in His grace has made a difference, but if we do not recognise it, our influence and power in intercession is gone. If we identify ourselves with the national sins, that is to say, with the world, we descend from our place of influence, and lose our power with God and with men.

We may and should confess our own deep failures and sins, but the ripening iniquity of the world—now largely wearing a Christian dress, but still the world—and of this nation so highly favoured, should rather be a call to go forth with increased faith and zeal with that Gospel which is still "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," and pray that He would grant to many in these solemn and closing days, repentance unto life. Let us indeed pray *for* all men, but we deny our calling if we pray *with* them. Let us rather seek to remember the two great interests on the heart of God, and so pray in fellowship with Him.



THE CHRISTIAN'S BADGE.

Here on earth we wear the badge
Of the heavenly stranger band:
Satisfied with pilgrim staff,
Till we reach the Fatherland.

New Testament Mysteries.

THE MYSTERY OF GOD.

BART II. WILLIAM HOSTE, B.A.

"The Mystery of God, even Christ, in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. ii. 2).

CHRIST is *the Treasury*. He is the repository of all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; "in Him they are hid"—hid, that is, from the wise and prudent, and also in the sense that they are inexhaustible. There will always be more to know than has ever been revealed.

(2) He is also the *Owner of the Treasure*, for He possesses what He contains. He was omniscient in incarnation, as before, being "the wisdom of God." The words in Philippians chap. ii. 7, "He made Himself of no reputation," are literally "He emptied Himself," and are explained by the words that immediately follow, "taking upon Him the form—or the mode of existence—of a servant." He did not

* On these words, or rather on a misunderstanding of them the Higher Critics have built up their theory of the *Kenosis* (the emptying), according to which our Lord entered into a condition down here in which he knew less of the Hebrew Scriptures and language and also of matters of fact than the critics. But it may be questioned whether they really know as much as they pretend. Has anyone who knows them been impressed to say to them, "Now we know that YE know all things?" The words of our Lord in Mark xiii. 32, are the solitary proof adduced of the *Kenosis* theory. The words are omitted in some MSS., but their admitted difficulty favours their genuineness. We may be sure there is no contradiction in Scripture, and we must not allow one obscure verse to annul the general positive teaching of Scripture. The verse does not, as a matter of fact, limit the knowledge of Christ as "the Son of Man," but as the Son, and so goes further than the *Kenosis* theory. In the next verse the Lord says, "Watch and pray for ye know not when the time is," so that His "not knowing the day" had nothing in common with their human ignorance. The statement, moreover, does not read like an admission of intrinsic limitation on our Lord's knowledge. Why it was that He "who knew the Father as the Father knew Him" was unaware of a day known to the Father, seems beyond our understanding. Clearly, it did not lead the apostles to doubt His omniscience when they said, "Now we are sure that Thou knowest all things," nor oblige the Lord to correct them with the proviso, "except the day of My coming."

divest Himself of His Divine attributes, but held them in abeyance: that is, He did not make independent use of them. He did not speak, act, or judge "from Himself," or on His own initiative. To continue to do so, would have been manifestly inconsistent with the position of a servant (Greek, *doulos*—a slave), which He had voluntarily entered upon. That our Lord possessed nothing short of omniscience during "the days of His flesh," is clear to all who bow to the Scriptures. He claimed it in word, and proved it in deed. He knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray Him. "One of you is a devil," He said to the twelve, at an early point in His ministry. (John vi. 64, 70; xiii. 11), but He acted as though He did not know. He took men on their profession and reputation, and allowed them to manifest themselves in their own time. Judas was chosen as apostle, no doubt, on his public record as a disciple. Had he been omitted, the other disciples, it may be, would have thought an injustice had been done. This omniscience of our Lord in incarnation resulted naturally from what He had been before incarnation. He was the same personality as He had ever been. He claimed to know God in a way enjoyed by no one else. "No man knoweth the Father save the Son" (Matt. xi. 27), and with the same absolute knowledge with which the Father knew Him. "As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father" (John x. 15), and the word used here implies accurate knowledge. To know the Infinite God accurately, includes all other knowledge, as the

greater includes the less, and implies omniscience. The Lord enjoyed conscious knowledge not only of past time, "Before Abraham was I am" (John viii. 58), but of a past eternity. "Father glorify Thou Me with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was" (John xvii. 3). If he had forgotten nothing of a past eternity, surely His memory of past history was at least as good as the critics!

In the Book of Isaiah, Jehovah attests His superiority over the idols of the heathen by His power to foretell the future. He challenges them to do the same. "I have declared the former things from the beginning . . . let them bring them forth and shew us what shall happen; let them shew the former things . . . and shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods. . . Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times the things that are not yet done" (chaps. xlvi. 3; xli. 22; xli. 9, 10). This is the prerogative of God alone, and this power Christ claimed. He knew the future, not merely as a prophet by inspiration of God, but in Himself. He did not prelude His words with a "thus saith the Lord," but with "Verily, verily, I say unto you," "My words shall never pass away." He knew He would come in glory (Matt. xxvi. 64), that all would stand before Him to be judged (Matt. vii. 22; xxv. 31; John v. 22). He knew what the judged would say, and what He would reply (Luke xiii. 23). He knew all things that

should come upon Him (John xviii. 4), and He knew He would reign in this scene of His rejection (Matt. xix. 28).

Again, in the Old Testament Scriptures, to read the heart is declared to be the prerogative of Jehovah. "I the Lord search the heart" (Jer. xxvii. 21). "The Lord searcheth all hearts and understandeth all the imaginations of the thought" (1 Chron. xxviii. 9). "The Lord looketh at the heart" (1 Sam. xvi. 7). To claim such knowledge is to claim omniscience, and nothing short of this was claimed for and by Christ. "He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man for He knew what was in man" (John ii. 24, 25). "I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you" (John v. 42). "He knew in Himself that His disciples murmured at it" (John vi. 61). "He knew their thoughts" (Matt. xii. 15; Luke vi. 8). "He knew they were desirous to ask Him" (John xvi. 19). One day "God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ" (Rom. ii. 16), for all secrets are known to Him. In relation to His Manhood, the Lord could be said to be "full of wisdom," and yet to "increase in wisdom" (not knowledge) (Luke ii. 40, 52). In presence of the elder men he acted as was seemly for a boy of twelve: "He heard them and asked them questions." But they soon made the discovery that they needed to ask Him questions, for we read, "All that heard were astonished at His understanding and answers."

God's Fulness in the Life Divine,
His Wisdom in its depths and powers:
His Glories all in Thee combine,
And Thou in all this grace art ours.

The Coming Kingdom of Christ.

NOTES OF A LECTURE, BY LEONARD STRONG.

WHEN God created and furnished the earth, He placed it under the dominion of man (Gen. i. 26). But we soon see a mysterious antagonistic power arising and prevailing by craft to mar the beauty of the scene, wresting the dominion from Adam's hand. This antagonistic power can be traced throughout the Scripture history, ever operating against God, seeking to hinder the fulfilment of His purposes, and to deprive man of his blessing. It was to Abraham and his Seed that God gave His promise concerning the ultimate blessing of families and nations in the earth. From Abraham was to come the nation and the Seed through whom all nations were to be blessed. To Israel the place of honour was given among the peoples, and her king was to have dominion "from the river to the ends of the earth." The throne of David, God had promised He would establish for ever. But it was soon proved that man as he is, is unable to fulfil the Divine purpose, and that it is only in the Second Man, the last Adam, the true Seed, who is the Amen, or fulfiller of the purposes of God, that all that was lost in the first man's fall is to be recovered and restored, and that God's kingdom can be established and man's blessing secured. The sins of David's house, as wrought in Manasseh, Hezekiah's son, brought the kingdom to an end (2 Kings xxi. 10-15), and the dominion passed into the hands of the Gentiles, as Jer. xxvii. 6-8, 19-22, tells us. The Book of Daniel tells us how this dominion is

to continue in the hands of the Gentiles until Christ in person comes to overturn it (Ezek. xxi. 27), and to reign on David's throne (Luke i. 32, 33), which at His first coming was denied Him by His own (John i. 11; xix. 15).

In the king's vision of the Great Image, and Daniel's interpretation of it, we have the character of the rule of the four empires which are to continue during the times of the Gentiles described, and its final fall at the coming of the Lord in judgment, as a Stone cut out without hands (Dan. ii. 44, 45), which becomes a great mountain and fills the whole earth. And this kingdom, which the God of heaven will set up, is to "stand for ever," and not, like the four empires which preceded it, pass away or be absorbed by that which overthrew them. The destruction of Gentile dominion will therefore precede and become introductory to the coming kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. In this vision and its interpretation, and wherever else it is spoken of in Scripture, the setting up of the kingdom is said to be effected *suddenly*, and by *judgment*. How contrary is all this to the commonly received notion that the kingdom of Christ was introduced among men at His first coming, and has been gradually extending throughout these eighteen centuries by means of the preaching of the Gospel! That the Gospel has been preached, and that God has been and is using it through all this period, we most surely believe, but its work has been the taking out of a people from the world for Christ in heaven, to be associated with Him in His heavenly glory, not for an earthly kingdom.

A Newspaper Education.

ONE who professes to be a Christian, but who "walks as other Gentiles," taking much part in civil and political matters, was arguing in favour of Christians bearing arms, and if occasion demand, putting their fellow-believers of the opposing nations to the death. One who was conversing with him, quoted text after text bearing on the points at issue to no purpose, for it was evident the Word of God had no authority over the man's mind. He claimed the right to "think for himself." When the conversation had ceased, and the two men parted, the Christian who had been seeking to bring the Word to bear on the subject discussed, remarked—"Scripture has no authority with my friend. He has not accustomed himself to consult the Word on these things, but has had more of a newspaper education regarding them." The words, "a newspaper education," struck me at the time as being exceedingly expressive, and I fear they apply to too many who bear the Christian name. If a Christian get his "education" out of the newspapers, where atheists, sceptics, and all sorts of men ventilate their opinions, often with a candour and cleverness which appeals forcibly to the natural mind, and neglect to take counsel from the Lord by the daily reading of His Word, his mind will become perverted from God. And the result will be, that he will get out of the current of God's thoughts and ways. "A newspaper education" is one of the most potent powers of evil at the present hour. By means of it many are led astray.

Spoiling Young Preachers.

A VETERAN preacher of the Word, who had been listening to two young and promising speakers, remarked to one who walked with him toward their home. "We need to pray much for them, that God will preserve them from getting proud of their gifts, and that they may be kept from giving out more than they take in." These two depravities have spoiled many a young preacher. The danger of becoming conceited, is largely due to the foolish and generally extravagant commendations often showered upon beginners, telling them "how well they did." Very likely the devil had told them that before, for it is quite in his line to puff up with pride all who give their ear to his whispers. A word of wise encouragement is God-like; senseless adulation is from the devil. And when there is great demand for a young preacher, and he "goes at it" all the time, there is imminent danger that he will exhaust his treasury, and have to deal in borrowed or second-hand matter, which is always stale. For if the matter is not gathered fresh from the Word, and taken into his own soul as food, enriching and edifying his spiritual life, it will not be given out with power and blessing to others. The fact that one has a store of well arranged "notes" on a subject, and can give them out in an orderly way in the form of an address, is no guarantee at all that they will be for the edification of those who hear. A good memory, and ready "delivery," are not the same as a ministry of truth in the unction and freshness of the Holy Ghost.

The Preacher's Column.

OUTLINES OF EVANGELISTIC ADDRESSES.

RUIN, REMEDY, RESULT.

RUIN in Adam, Fallen (Eph. ii. 3).

RECOVERY in Christ, Risen (Eph. ii. 5, 6).

RESULT in Me, Regenerated (Eph. ii. 10).

CASTING DOWN, LIFTING UP, AND SAVING.

An Old Time Gospel, in Job xxii. 29.

Casting Down of the Sinner (Matt. xv. 30).

Lifting Up of the Saviour (John iii. 14, 15).

Saving of the Believer (Acts xvi. 31).

PEACE, IN A TIME OF WAR.

A Message of Mercy and Judgment from
Deut. xx. 10-12.

Peace Proclaimed (ver. 10, with Rom. x. 15).

Surrender Demanded (ver. 11, with Acts xi. 21).

Submission Secured (ver. 11, with Acts xi. 21).

Retribution Effected (ver. 12, with 2 Thess. i. 7-9).

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Six of us—all young men in the assembly here—are being hard pressed to enlist. We had been exercised to know the will of God as expressed in His Word, and had from our own study of that Word decided that it was not for us to bear arms. But some recent arguments advanced in favour of Christians becoming soldiers have more or less disturbed the minds of two of our number. We are desirous to have definite help from the Word.

If the Word of God has come with power to the soul, no arguments or reasonings of men should be allowed to silence its voice or render its authority nugatory. It is a sound, as it is a safe rule in the things of God, that matters concerning which we are uncertain, should never be allowed to cause doubt on that concerning which we are Divinely assured. The heavenly calling of the saint, his severance from the world, his strangership here, and his business on earth as the representative of a rejected and unresisting Lord, are truths plainly taught in God's Word, which, when allowed to "effectually work" (1 Thess. ii. 13) in forming the minds, and controlling the actions of God's people, save them from being "carried about" with every changing "wind of doctrine" and reasoning of men. Some who assume the responsibility of giving guidance in this matter, admit that they "know of no Scripture giving definite instructions," and seem to think that this leaves it open to Chris-

tian young men to act as they would in a matter of "meat and drinks," concerning which every man is to be "fully persuaded in his own mind." We cannot accept this as being the mind of God concerning a matter which to thousands will be the turning point in their lives. Nor can we believe that God has omitted to give simple and clear directions to His people, which the youngest, whose spiritual "senses" have not been depraved by listening to the reasonings of worldly-minded men, can understand and obey.

Answers to Correspondents.

G. L., GREENOCK.—The words of Heb. iii. 14, do not teach "conditional salvation" as your friend asserts. "Holding fast the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end," is not a condition of being made "partakers of Christ," but rather the evidence that those who do so are partakers.

E. W., KESWICK.—"Conditional Immortality" is the denial of man's existence beyond death, and therefore of the Divinely asserted fact, that the ungodly are "reserved unto the day of judgment to be punished" (2 Pet. ii. 9). A teacher of this fundamental error ought not to be heard, or recognised as fit to minister the Word of God anywhere.

W. S., LONDON.—There is nothing in the Word to warrant the change of the Lord's Supper from the early hours of the Lord's Day to its evening. As you doubtless know, the Jewish day began at sunset. So when the disciples assembled "in the evening," they gave the first hours of the memorial day to the keeping of the memorial feast. And this was the chief object of their coming together (Acts xx. 7). The fact of it being a "supper," determines nothing as to the hour of its observance, but reminds us that this is the night (Rom. xiii. 12) of the Lord's absence, and that we keep the feast looking for the breaking of the morning—"till He come."

G. S., ROCKFERRY.—From time to time, movements have arisen, which in their early stages seemed very like the work of the Spirit of God, luring many true Christians, who eventually had their souls perverted and their faith wrecked by the after developments of these movements. The test of everything that takes Christ's Name is the Truth. If the doctrines and the practices of any movement are in opposition to the Word of God, you may be very sure it is not a work of the Spirit of God. For He is "the Spirit of Truth" (John

xvi. 13), and can never associate Himself with the propagation of error.

Points of Practical Profit.

Brief Answers to Questions of common interest, not requiring lengthy replies such as are supplied in "Answers to Special Questions," now appear in this column.

Contributions.—It matters little whether a bag or box is passed round, or whether gifts are dropped into a box set in a convenient place where all in the assembly, and no others, may reach it. The more important thing is, that all the saints should be instructed as to WHY they give, and kept well informed as to WHAT becomes of their offerings.

Duration of Meeting.—The time and duration of the Lord's Day morning meeting must be adapted to the place and the circumstances of those who assemble. As a rule, 10.30 or 11 a.m. is a convenient time, and an hour and a half, a suitable duration. Undue prolongation may cause household servants trouble. And unless there is something very special in spiritual power, a long drawn out meeting becomes a weariness to the flesh.

Recognition of Gift.—While the church has no warrant from Scripture to choose or appoint its ministers, it has a distinct and definite example of how to act toward those in its midst, who manifest that they have gift, with grace to use it (see Acts xiii. 1-3). If their ministry is fresh and for the edification of God's people, ample scope should surely be given for the exercise of it. But if from any cause whatever it is refused—and it may be, from other reasons than inefficiency, and often is from jealousy—then the Lord's servant should wait on his Master, for He may have other spheres to set open to him. But in no case should he press his ministry to cause strife and party making. If he is a clean and sanctified vessel, the Lord will find plenty of good uses for him elsewhere.

Visitation.—The chief work of "overseers" is to feed and shepherd the Lord's flock (Acts xx. 28), bringing again the wandering, binding up the broken, strengthening the sick (Ezek. xxxiv. 16). This is true Christian work. And there is great need for such work everywhere. It does not require "gift" in the same sense as the public teacher, but rather aptitude to bring the word of help home to the heart for comfort, and, if need be, to the conscience for self-examination or reproof, and both can be best done privately. If all who attend "oversight meetings" and gatherings where an opportunity to talk is the chief attraction, were put

through this "riddle" as they enter, and only those who DO pastoral work admitted, the quantity might be less, but the quality would be undoubtedly better than it usually is, in such assemblings.

Arguments n Favour of Christians Enlisting.

EXAMINED IN THE LIGHT OF GOD'S WORD.

As many of the people of God are being called upon to bear arms in the present European War, and as some are being misled by fallacious arguments set forth in favour of such a step, or led to the unwarrantable conclusion that there is no Scripture teaching on the subject, but that each is to be guided by his own instincts and volitions, it seems to be a duty to bring the principal arguments being used, to the light of the Word of God, and have them examined there. Among those which have lately appeared, the chief are, as follows:

1. **Subjection** to "powers" (Tit. iii. 1). This is, as a principle, always right. But when they ask the Christian to do what he cannot do without disobeying God and defiling himself, he puts the higher claim first, and says, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts v. 29). And it is worthy of being noted, that when for the first time under Gentile rule, the commandment of the king would have involved disobedience to the will of God, Daniel and his companions "purposed in heart" that they would obey God and leave it with Him to defend them, which He did (Dan. i. 8, 9).

2. **The Sword** in Rom. xiii. 4, is not that of the warrior, slaying innocent and guilty alike who oppose him, but the sword of the magistrate—here, the symbol of his authority received from God. But no magistrate can inflict death until the accused has been proved guilty, so that the application of such a Scripture to justify wholesale slaughter of innocent and guilty alike, is a dangerous misuse of the whole passage.

3. **Dispensational Distinctions** have to be observed. It is wrong to quote God's justification of war in Old Testament times, or His use of it to punish His foes in time to come, (Rev. xvi. 6, 16) as being applicable to the present reign of grace, and displays ignorance of dispensational distinctions, which are vital to a right judgment on this matter. Law and grace in action are strikingly contrasted in such Scriptures as Matt. v. 37, 38 and Rom. xii. 19, 20.

4. **National Retribution.** The very extraordinary assertion is made, that war is national retribution at the hand of God for evil-doing, and that God in

dealing it out, puts the Christian soldier into the place of executioner, (an office one would suppose, that few who bear the Name of Christ would of their own choice wish to fill). But when the Christian soldier is in the firing line, is there not the danger that he may empty his rifle into the heart of his brother in Christ, just as likely as into that of the "murderer?" Who then is liable to retribution?

5. **Silence.** The Baptist's words to soldiers to "be content with their pay" (Luke iii. 14), and his silence regarding the wrong of their being in the army, are rather weak defences for Christian soldiering. Were these men born of God? Did they belong to the present age of grace? Were they not of a different calling from the heavenly people of the present age? Would converted centurions have been allowed to leave the Roman army, any more than those converted after enlistment to-day? Scripture does not call Christians to do that which is impossible, but it does give counsel to prevent them getting into a position from which they cannot lawfully extricate themselves.

6. **Rebellion.** They must have a strange estimate of a soldier's calling, and of the place he assumes in taking the oath, who advise one to join the King's forces and then to rebel if he is commanded to do what the Word of God forbids. Can such claim the Divine protection? Would he not rather disgrace his Christian profession and likely be shot as a traitor?

7. **No Divine Rule.** The theory that there is no Divine Rule and no principle or precept to guide, is untenable. That enlistment must be a matter of "individual conscience" everybody knows. But conscience is to be enlightened and guided by the authority of the Word of God. And that Word, when bowed to, will not lead one Christian to take one way and another the opposite, on a matter so vital to life and testimony as this. It will not do either to bring in "differences of judgment," and principles governing the use of "meats and drinks" and suchlike (Rom. xiv. 5), concerning which there is no Scripture legislation, and apply to a matter of eternal importance such as this, which has to be decided rather in the light of whether a Christian man is "his own," to do as he pleases, or "the Lord's," to be ever at His disposal; whether he is "of the world" judging, avenging, and slaying his fellows, or "in Christ," in "the kingdom and patience," not resisting evil or putting wrong right, but as a "stranger" here, waiting His time, who has said, "Vengeance is Mine; I will repay."

In Remembrance.

Dr. Robert M'Killiam, London, passed to his rest with Christ on Saturday, February 6, after a period of suffering. The name of our departed friend has been well known to the Lord's people for twenty-four years as Editor of "The Morning Star," while his ministry in and around London, and at Conferences throughout the British Isles, has been shared and enjoyed by very many. Although it was not our lot to often meet with the Lord's departed servant, we have always held him in esteem, for the candour of his testimony to what he believed to be the truth. Another link of loving interest grew out of the fact that at the age of ten we sat in the doctor's Sunday School Class, in the Northern village in which as a young man he began his career as a medical practitioner, and although no remembered words of his are now with us, the peaceful countenance and the earnest eye left a lasting impression. When the grace of God brought us salvation and the Gospel made it known, in after years, "the Doctor"—as we always spoke of him—was one of the first to hear of it. When, some years ago, after giving an address to young believers in Devonshire House, London, a venerable man of God poured out his heart in earnest prayer, we at once recognised the familiar voice of our dear Sunday School teacher of boyhood, although we had not heard it for thirty-five years, and, needless to add, we rejoiced together. Now the labourer's work is done, his course is finished, and his rest is blessed.

Francis Logg, evangelist, of Aberdeen, who fell asleep on January 25, was well known and much esteemed throughout the northern counties, in which he had spent the greater part of twenty-five years, taking the Gospel to neglected country places during the Summer, by means of daily house to house visitation and nightly meetings in a canvas tent, visiting among the smaller assemblies along the coast, and in agricultural districts the rest of the year, with occasional visits south and across the Channel. He was a diligent labourer, and endured a good deal of "hardness" in his service, saying little about it. His widow and only son, who reside at 11 Hilton Street, Aberdeen, keenly feel their loss, and will be remembered in their sorrow by those who owe their conversion to the ministry of the Lord's departed servant. A brief biography and photo. appear in this month's "Christian Worker."

A God of Deliverances.

BY men of the world, natural and visible agents are accredited as giving prosperity in days of peace, and deliverance in times of danger. But the Christian should see the hand of God in everything. The fact that he has been severed from the world by the Cross of Christ, and has now become a sojourner in it, does not make him indifferent to its dangers, or oblivious to the operations of God's hand in the deliverances He works for it. Although he takes no part in its politics, he prays incessantly for its rulers, and in times of crisis he "carries to the Lord in prayer" what he knows to be with God alone in His Providence to control, and in His Power to bestow. To "regard not the operation of His hands" (Psa. xxviii. 5), is to disown God as the Supreme Governor of His own universe, and to dishonour Him as the One who "worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" ((Eph. i. 11). Nothing comes by chance, but is either sent or allowed by God, all for some wise purpose and all in mercy. The present war is no exception. Awful alike in its fury, and in its loss of precious life, it is under the control of the God of heaven, and just as His own people who are sojourners in the nations whose armies are in deadly conflict with each other, are now exercised before Him, and dealing with Him in regard to this great work of Satan, so will its issue be. It is not to be expected that men, who are blinded to the devil's wiles, or others who have imbibed the spirit of the age, will do

other than sneer at such a statement, or pity the ignorance of those who make it, yet our firm conviction and fearless confession is, that it is neither with great Generals and their armies on the fields of war, nor with skilled Admirals and their great navies on the high seas, but with *the saints of God on their knees*, that the issue of this tremendous conflict lies. If we do not realise this, Satan does, and will seek by every device at his disposal to hinder prayer. There have been times of crisis to the British Empire and to the people and work of God therein, in years long gone by, in which great deliverances were wrought by God in answer to His people's cries, which may well encourage us of this time to "continue instant in prayer."

Three hundred and twenty-seven years ago, the Spanish Armada sailed from the coast of Spain for the shores of Britain. It consisted of 132 warships, manned by 8000 sailors, carrying 20,000 soldiers. Its object was to subjugate Britain to the Pope, and make Rome the sole teacher of "culture" and religion to the British nation, and ultimately to the whole of Europe. The secret agents of the Papacy had been preparing for the event, while nominal Protestants were irresolute and unexercised. True saints of God, who were in the secret of His counsel, continued in earnest prayer that the God in whom they trusted might make bare His arm, and overturn the devices of the enemy—His and theirs. And thus the answer and the deliverance came. The skilled Admiral of the great Armada died before it had sailed. It encountered two great

storms before it reached the English coast, where it appeared on July 30, 1588, extended seven miles at sea. Disaster followed disaster: artifice and tempest scattered the great fleet, causing what of it remained, to flee to the northern seas, where furious winds dashed the vessels against rocks and cliffs to utter destruction. Throughout the British Isles this was recognised as the act of God, and national thanks was given to Him. Even the people of Spain acknowledged the Divine Hand that was against them. All Europe was solemnised, and a medal struck to commemorate the event bore the text, "The Lord sent His wind and scattered them." Would to God the same spirit of submission under God's mighty hand, with confession of our failures and sins, and dependence on God as expressed in prayer, were more found among God's people in the present crisis. Then we should soon have to acknowledge that "His right hand and His holy arm" had brought us deliverance.

J. R.

"Be Still and Know that I am God."

Amid disorder, din, and strife,
The world so weary of its load,
There comes to saints a voice from heaven,
"Be still, and know that I am God."

No seeming triumph of the foe,
Can wrest from heaven the ruling rod:
God's plan is sure, it cannot fail,
"Be still, and know that I am God."

We ask no sign, we simply trust,
He knows each winding of the road,
Our cause is safe, we calmly wait;
Our hearts are "still," for GOD IS GOD.

The Coming of the Lord.

BY W. H. HUNTER.

THE main theme of the Book of Revelation, the part which is more directly apocalyptic, is developed on two lines, one of which is heavenly, and the other earthly. The lines are concurrent to a large extent, have a measure of parallelism, and stand to each other in the relation of cause to effect, until a point of convergence is reached, at which the heavens are opened, and CHRIST comes down to the earth in His own Person, and brings His saints with Him.

For the sake of simplicity, the earthly line will be pursued for the main part in these Notes; although the heavenly line must be considered briefly at the outset, in order to bring out the fact that in the *meta tauta* times, development on the earth below, will be the direct outcome of Divine action in the heaven above.

To begin, then, with the first vision of the seer, in which John noted that the throne on which the HOLY ONE sat alone was encompassed by two circles of which (if we may judge from the rainbows which we have seen) the plane of the one was vertical in direction, while that of the other was horizontal, for in it the throne was girdled by twenty-four thrones, on which sat twenty-four presbyters—elder-brethren—who were clothed in white raiment and were crowned with gold.

The time which was chosen to describe the occupants of the twenty-four thrones is as significant as is the number of the thrones in the circle.

Years before the Book of Revelation

was written, John's great colleague, his beloved fellow-worker, had as an elder-brother written to elder-brethren (using in 1 Pet. v. 1 the identical letter-for-letter word which John uses in Rev. iv. 4), and had described these representative men as a compassing circle around the "flock of God;" for he had described that flock as being "among" them; had exhorted them to onerous, self-sacrificing service, and had pointed them on to crowns of glory which waited for such as became "types" of the flock. These words of Peter were very familiar to John, and to John's Master; and if wisdom and grace be sought for their understanding, it may be that they will guide the seekers to the significance of the presbyters in Rev. iv.

As to the number twenty-four, there need be no difficulty, as Scripture always serves to interpret Scripture. We are coming by and by to a word from one of the presbyters, who seems to have been distressed because he saw John weep, and who spoke to him about the "Root of David," apparently feeling sure that John, even though he was so grievously upset, would understand that word; and it is to David's time—that is to say, to 1 Chron. xxiv. and xxv.—to which we must return in order to find the origin of the symbolical number. The chapters referred to relate to the division into courses of the Priests and of the Levites which David organised in view of the impending erection of the temple. The division was effected in the first instance by lot, and although the courses were grievously weakened through the captivity, from which only four of them

returned, yet the twenty-four were reconstituted from the four, and as Luke i. 5-8 indicates, these courses continued unto the time when "the Word became flesh."

In Israel, the sacred year (itself a great redemption type) formed a complete typical cycle, a cycle which began with the first of the priestly courses, and which ended with the twenty-fourth. Here in the first of the visions which he saw, John beheld the antitype of the former typical things, the representation which had, so to speak, been made concrete in the representative elders, and in the twenty-four courses which covered the redemption day which began when the Holy Spirit came down to dwell with the redeemed on the earth, and which will end when those redeemed are caught up from the earth and are presented to their Redeemer by the same Blessed Spirit: in whose power, course has succeeded course upon the earth in priestly service and worship, and will succeed until the number of the "kingdom of priests" is fulfilled, and the redemption cycle is completed.

In this first vision, God is seen in the midst of those who represent the worshipping church, amongst the gathered saints who are linked with Him by the cherubim of glory, who move from Him to the saints, and from the saints to Him; for now they are "in the midst of the Throne," and again they are "round about the Throne;" so that moved and empowered by these "living ones," the redeemed fall down before the Eternal Creator as they cast their crowns before the Throne, and cry "Thou art worthy, O Lord, for Thou hast created."

The Church and the Nation.

PART III. W. R. LEWIS, HEREFORD.

OUR standing in Christ before God does not depend upon the character of our walk. Yet, the two are intimately connected, and if the one is feebly apprehended the other will surely suffer. Christian consistency is to walk worthily of the vocation wherewith we are called.

It needs courage, indeed, to face the dangers of the battlefield, but it may need still greater courage to take the unpopular step of refusing for the truth's sake to become a combatant. In the apostolic age, there were many converted soldiers and slave owners, and there have been since. But the fact that good men like Captain Hedley Vickars and John Newton have been soldiers and slave owners, and saw no inconsistency in their position, does not prove that it *is* consistent with the Christian profession. Human conduct must be tested by Divine principles, not Divine principles by human conduct. As the truth of God and the calling and relationships of the children of God are seen in clearer light, things that we once saw no reason to question, are found to be manifestly opposed to the mind of God. He does not govern us with a code. He desires our intelligent and willing obedience, and there are many things which as Master He will teach the renewed mind, which as Lord He does not command. The apostle did not exact from Philemon the manumission of his slave, but reminded him of the ways of God, and, taught by the Spirit, Philemon ordered his conduct on that pattern. Our obedience is not

demanding merely in the form of duty, but is the result of the development of the Divine life within us.

It is true that God Himself has in certain circumstances enjoined the taking of human life. The One who said, "Thou shalt not kill," expressly ordered Israel to exterminate the Canaanites (Deut. vii. 2). They were to be executioners of Divine judgment. Again, the law of Gen. ix. 6, has never been abrogated. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed" is a command which is the root of all civil government. God has committed to man the responsibility to restrain and punish the violent (Rom. xiii.). But it is significant that there is no hint that the Christian will be in a position which will necessitate his carrying out the sentence. It is never supposed that he would voluntarily enter it. When nations are involved, this restraint has generally to take the form of military force, for there is no authority yet in the earth powerful enough to enforce compliance with international law. When the Roman Empire is revived, there will be a measure of such control in the Roman earth—a control, however, energised by Satanic power. Only when the Prince of Peace comes, in possession of omnipotent power, will the nations be completely and righteously under control. Till then there must be wars. But however judicially justifiable homicide and war may be in the restraint and punishment of violence by the powers that be, the Church of God, with every member of it, has quite another function. The attempt of the professing Church to act on the

world's principle of asserting power has always resulted in the toleration of evil and the persecution of the truth ; while the attempt of any nation to act on anything like Christian principles has been to give the rein to ungodliness and to strengthen the hands of the wicked. The Church is called to *suffer* in fellowship with her rejected Head ; whereas in the nation, *authority* is owned of God. The two are really mutually exclusive, and union can only take place by compromise. We can be thankful for any measure of just government, and pray that it may be continued. But when a Christian becomes an instrument in the assertion of this authority, grave moral questions are involved.

To be an efficient soldier, there must be a total surrender of individual conscience to the control and authority of another. Instead of Christ being the supreme Master of the conscience, it is in the keeping of his commanding officer who, according to military law, has professedly the whole responsibility before God and man for what the soldier does in obedience to his orders. Such discipline is considered necessary to attain the end in view. But the question for us to consider is, whether a child of God is justified in voluntarily putting himself in a position where he is simply a machine, to act without question and without conscience ? Is he free from responsibility before God, if he, in obedience to his commanding officer, does something morally wrong ; and enters a position where, even if he would, he cannot form a judgment on the nature of the command ? Did the

guilt of the soldiers in Matt. xxvii. 27, only consist in the cruel manner in which they carried out the sentence ? The ecclesiastical and civil powers had passed their sentence, and the whole populace had endorsed it. But could the soldiers shelter themselves behind their orders at the bar of God ? Had they no conscience in the matter ? It is true that these took diabolical pleasure in their cruel task, and that a soldier may be efficient without being cruel, but had they been devout, even then, no human orders could absolve them surely from the guilt of crucifying the Christ of God (Acts ii. 5, 23). The Christian's rule of conduct should be to do whatsoever he does, whether in word or in deed, in the Name of the Lord Jesus ; to act in obedience to Him and under His authority. But if by the very conditions of his service, he binds himself without hesitation, or enquiry, to perform acts having a moral character which may be plainly condemned by the dictates even of the natural conscience, and much more by the authoritative will of Christ, is that *consistent* discipleship ?

Again, apart from some amount of keenness in his profession, a soldier can hardly become efficient. But how can a *consistent* Christian be keen in work which is utterly at variance with the disposition he ought to cultivate ? There should be increasingly with him a sense of the worth of a human soul, and the irrecoverable ruin in a man's dying unprepared. Can he, in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, voluntarily be an instrument in hurling such souls into a lost eternity ? If the opponent is a Christian, to slay him

is to smite a member of Christ. If an unbeliever, it is to plunge him into everlasting torment.

Even the world sees something incompatible in those in "holy orders" becoming combatants. "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." Are they so in this matter? Every believer has received "the mighty ordination of the pierced hands," and is called to walk consistently with this solemn yet glorious "call." The Lord give us to know His will and courage to do it, as good soldiers of His, for His Name's sake.

Cleansing First.

IN the days of Nehemiah's reformation at Jerusalem, we are told that his message to the Levites, the men who were to carry on the service of the house of the Lord, was, "I commanded the Levites that they should CLEANSE THEMSELVES, and that they should come and keep the gates" (Neh. xiii. 22). Before they could become guardians of the purity of the city of God in which His temple stood, keeping intruders who had no right to be there from entering in at the gates, they had to be clean "themselves." The lesson from this is plain. Those who seek to serve God in guarding His courts against men and things that would defile them, must be personally clean in their own lives, and free from all that is unworthy of the God whom they serve and the service they engage in. This has not always been so, with the result that men's attempts to guard the gates, have been resisted by those who see their condition.

The Book of Esther,

AND ITS MESSAGE TO US FOR TO-DAY.

PART II.—WM. J. McCLURE, CALIFORNIA.

THE practical truths taught in this Book of Esther may next be considered. The omission of all Divine names characterises the book. It must seem strange to many, that there should be in the Bible a book without the Name of God once in it. That this is the case, is one of the many evidences of the inspiration of the Bible. If it had been the work of man, it would have been otherwise.

But we may be asked, Why is the Divine Name omitted in Esther? We believe the answer to be just this. God is dealing governmentally with His own people, and although working *for* them, He does not manifest Himself as *with* them. Away back in the Book of Deuteronomy xxxi. 17 and xxxii. 20, we read, "I will hide My face from them." In the time of Esther, He is doing that. The time to which this Book refers was remarkable. The way had been opened up for the people who had been led into Babylonian captivity to return to their own land. Some had gone, but a great many seem to have preferred to remain where they were. Perhaps they found better opportunities for the acquisition of wealth. Or, they may have reckoned they would have less trouble there, than back in their own land. Whatever may have been the cause that led to their not going up to Jerusalem when God made the way clear, it shows how sadly they had departed from that state of soul which found

expression in the words of *Psa. cxxii. 1*, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy walls, O Jerusalem." So if they will by their own choice remain where they cannot offer God's sacrifices in the appointed place, then He must "hide His face," for He cannot publicly identify Himself with them in that condition.

This line of truth ought to speak to the consciences of many of God's people in our own day. It is a very solemn thing to know His mind, and yet not be prepared to do it, for it is only as the believer obeys the truth that has been made known to him, that he can have the conscious presence of God. One who has never known certain truths, may not have a bad conscience in failing to practise them. But it is not so with one who has learned these truths. God does not walk with His wilfully disobedient child. The Lord Jesus said, "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me. And he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him" (*John xiv. 21*). And this will be God's way, as long as He has a people on this earth, as it ever has been. How many are the examples the Word of God gives of it! If a Lot will bury himself in the society and politics of Sodom, then he must suffer for it! Away out on the plains of Mamre, living in separation from such a guilty scene, Abraham has the unspeakable joy of entertaining the Lord, and in quiet communion learning His mind. Lot has no such honour. Two

angels are all he can receive. They are reluctant to accept his hospitality, and there is nothing approaching communion between them. Nor does he know aught of God's purposes. Sodom's overthrow was almost as much a surprise to him as it was to the people of Sodom. And yet God has a true care over His own. How very comforting are these words in *2 Tim. ii. 13, R.V.*, "*If we are faithless, He abideth faithful; He cannot deny Himself.*" In Esther, we have a faithless people, but a faithful, covenant-keeping God. Fail as they may, He will be true to Himself. And so this little Book, in which God's Name does not occur, is yet full of His activity for His own. Haman may lay his plans with consummate skill, and everything bid fair for their success. Power, wealth, and favour with the king, all may assure him that he cannot fail, and that it is only a question of hours, and his hatred will be satisfied in seeing Mordecai hanging on the gallows which he has erected, and the rest of the despised race exterminated. But God is looking on. Not a move of the enemy has escaped His sleepless eye. At the right moment, He takes a hand in the game. Haman is checkmated; his schemes are upset, and the Jew is delivered from what seemed inevitable death and destruction. May our hearts heed the message of this wonderful story. If we walk with God we shall know His secret, enjoy His presence, and have His acknowledged Name upon us. But if we remain in alliance with the world, we must not expect to have either His enjoyed companionship or His acknowledged presence with us.

The World's Judgment.

RECOLLECTIONS OF AN ADDRESS BY J. G. BELLETT.

THE world has long been preparing itself for judgment. It is now in the time of its manhood. All its elements are in their full form and vigour. Civil and ecclesiastical things are alike come to full age. The world is in full activity, and is "playing the man." But Christ is still rejected, and faith has to own a weak cause in the presence of an advancing world, and of growing apostacies in much of that which bears the Lord's Name. Thus it is at the present moment and thus it will be. The Divine judgment is to fall on the world in the hour of its pride and vigour. This may be serious to the thoughts of our natural hearts, but it is plain to the judgment of faith. It is the will of God that such should be. The Apocalypse presents the world in that condition, in the coming hour of its judgment. The ecclesiastical apostacy is seen riding on the Beast in the hour of its overthrow, and the Beast is ruling the whole world as he is met by the Lord. There is no token of any weakening of present conditions, but rather an exhibition of their surpassing strength and honour, just before their end. We are not yet, it is true, in the time described in the Apocalypse, but we see all the energies which will then play their part, preparing to fill their places. The people of the world do not discern this. They judge that such progress is desirable, because by means of it the natural man's ends are best served. But there is nothing of God in it all. He is not now preparing the

earth for Himself or for His people. Judgment alone will do this. It will clear the whole scene for God to bring peace to the earth, and to shed forth glory in the place where judgment has done its work of purification. Things on earth are not in the meantime being disposed by Christ, although all authority is given into His hand for judgment. But He waits, and faith accepts what nature cannot. May we learn this, and lay it to heart. It is our safeguard in the midst of this solemn moment in the history of the world. The Lord is watching over His own work, and gathering out His elect, but the material out from which they are taken is left for Divine judgment. The gospel as it now goes forth among the nations of the earth in not producing a millennial world or spreading out another garden of Eden. It proposes no such thing. Its object is to take out from the doomed world a people for the heavens, a heavenly people for an earth-rejected Christ. The day of His presence will make the world what it should be, but only when that presence can righteously return to it to reign over it. The SWORD of judgment must go before the THRONE of glory. The earth must be purged of its corruptions ere it can be a place of blessing or a garden of Divine delights among men. As the rest of Solomon's time was prepared by the sword of David, so must the earth be cleared and cleansed by judgment, ere the beams of glory can break over it.

"This earth, the scene of all His woe,
A homeless wild to thee,
Full soon upon His heavenly throne,
Its rightful King will see."

Jerusalem "Trodden Down."

A BIBLE READING. BY HENRY DYER, BATH.

THROUGHOUT the period that government in the earth is given into the hand of the Gentiles, Jerusalem, the city and centre of Israel's rule, is, as the Lord Himself tells us, to be "trodden down." And this word not only means that it is *oppressed*, but also *defiled*. This applies to the people as well as to the city. The Jew is oppressed and hated in many lands, but he is more "trodden down" in accepting from the hand of a Gentile King a patent of nobility and having his family name Gentileized, than when his forefathers suffered in the Roman Ghetto and in the Spanish dungeon. The suffering Jew was "trodden down" under the heel of Gentile oppression, but the modern Jew who, laden with the "thick clay" (Hab. ii. 6) of gain, becomes a millionaire through bargaining with the Gentile, is "trodden down" as mire in the streets of such commerce as costs him his national honour. Jerusalem is at this hour groaning under Turkish misrule, with its Jewish population in poverty. But if it rose to wealth and splendour, and Jewish millionaires should rebuild its temple with a more than Herod magnificence, it would still be "trodden down of the Gentiles," because in the sight of God it would be only a defiled city. This was what our Lord meant when He said to its people just before His crucifixion, "Behold your house is left to you *desolate*" (Matt. xxiii. 39). It was "adorned with goodly stones and gifts" when He uttered these words, and thus it stood for some forty

years, but it was spiritually "desolate," for its priests and rulers had rejected the God-sent Messiah. If the Jew should soon return to his own land, and under better culture find it regain much of its fertility; he will assume that he is again the object of God's favour. But he will, under these conditions of being enriched by Gentile trading, be even more "trodden down" in the sight of God than when he was made poor. Even now, the Jewish people in many lands are being "holpen with a little help," and many "cleave to them with flatteries" (Daniel xi. 34). This is helping to deceive them, and the still Christ-rejecting Jew vainly imagines that these are tokens of his restoration to the favour of God, instead of being abandoned to his own delusions, which will lead him on to the acknowledgment of Antichrist. And this, the darkest hour of his degradation and national guilt, will be a time of great earthly but godless prosperity. The last guilty monarch of these "times of the Gentiles" will be obeyed by the Jews in Jerusalem as their king and his image worshipped in their temple as their God. But the period of Jerusalem's downtreading will come to an end, and the day of her glory and of Israel's blessing will follow as surely as the Word of the Lord has said it. No real solution of the "Eastern Question" can ever take place apart from the replacing of the Jew in his land, with the restoration of the city of Jerusalem to her place of pre-eminence as the centre of God's rule in the earth. Then her period of being "trodden down" will cease, and her glory will again break.

The Preacher's Column.

SIMPLE OUTLINES OF GOSPEL SUBJECTS.

THE WORK OF CHRIST.

He died as our RANSOM (1 Tim. ii. 6).
 He rose as our JUSTIFICATION (Rom. iv. 25).
 He lives as our SAVIOUR (Rom. v. 10).
 He comes as our GLORIFIER (2 Thess. i. 10).

THE BELIEVING SOUL AND THE SAVIOUR.

Comes to Christ for Salvation (John vi. 37).
 Enters into Christ for Security (John x. 9).
 Builds on Christ for Stability (1 Pet. ii. 6).
 Eats of Christ for Strength (John vi. 57).

THE WRATH OF GOD.

PREDICTED, for the Sinner (Job xxxvi. 18).
 ENDURED, by the Saviour (Psa. lxxxviii. 7).
 ESCAPED, by the Believer (1 Thess. i. 10).
 ABIDETH, on the Unbeliever (John iii. 36).

The Young Believer's Question Box.

I have been asked by a professing Christian, who is a man of the world, if I object to act as an armed warrior in defence of the country in which I live, upon what principle I pay taxes for the support of others to do so. I know there is a difference, but would value help from the Word so as to answer him Scripturally.

A Christian pays his tax or "tribute" (Rom. xiii. 6-7), because the Word commands him so to do. In the case of the Christians at Rome, it would be to support an army of pagans, who were used as instruments to persecute them. We are not called upon to analyse what becomes of the money paid. Our responsibility terminates with the payment to Caesar of that which is his due (Matt. xxii. 21). And the same principle is seen in the Lord's payment of the temple tax, as recorded in Matt. xvii. 24-27. He had called that temple "a house of merchandise" (John ii. 16), and was presently to characterise it as "a den of thieves" (Matt. xxi. 13). Still, He paid the "half shekel," and that even when they had no just claim to it. And the reason given was, "lest we cause them to stumble." But it would be quite a different matter, and one touching his personal responsibility to God, if that Christian who pays a tax, which may ultimately be used to provide arms to kill his brother, or to support false religion to deceive his neighbour, were to engage in either the one or the other at the call of the world-power

under which he lives. Then, such examples as are given in Acts iv. 19, 20; Dan. iii. 17, 18, would be his example in refusing to disobey God. We had thought that this distinction would have been clear even to "a man of the world," but nobody is so blind as those who do not want to see.

Answers to Correspondents.

J. M., WINNIPEG.—There is nothing, so far as we know in the Word of God, to warrant the passing by of an assembly of Christians, Scripturally gathered, because there is some one in it, that you think ought not to be there. It would be your responsibility to inform those taking oversight what you know, but not to forestall their judgment by acting apart from them and others in the matter.

R. G., SEDLFY.—"Leaving the principles" (Heb. vi. 1), does not mean deserting them, as a runaway does his regiment, but rather ceasing to be occupied with them only, as a child with his alphabet, yet ever using them, as that child grown up uses his A B C in all the words he spells. In Divine things nothing is lost in progress, but carried on through growth, all the way from birth to manhood.

W. S., NORWOOD.—The lack of power in attracting Christians to a Scriptural position may—as you say—be the carnal condition of those who are in it. And in many cases it would be quite safe to add: the lack of grip that the truth they profess to own has upon themselves. For how can any who run in and out among sects, and support all sorts of sectarian institutions, expect to draw anybody to a separated and Scriptural position?

J. M'C., BANGOR.—When a professed expositor of Scripture is so dissatisfied with every known translation of the originals, that he has to create one of his own, it is well to watch his doctrine. We have usually found some fad or foible—if nothing worse—behind the constant references to "the Greek" by amateur translators. A full and reverent use of the Authorised Version—which is best known—in a ministry in the Holy Ghost, will do the hearers more good.

A. B., GLASGOW.—So long as professing Christians refuse to recognise the heavenly character and calling of the church, and their place of separation from the world, they will be ready to unite and work with those who give themselves to "world-improving schemes." Arguments and exhortations

fall flat upon such people. They need to be brought back to the Cross, and its power brought to bear upon them. This will either sever them from the world, or send them right into it (1 John ii. 19).

A. G., CHELTENHAM.—The Lord Jesus was and is God and man. Godhead in all its fulness and true manhood in all its perfectness are eternally united in Him. Speculation as to how the two are conjoined is irreverent, and to us in our present condition inexplicable. The same glorious Person is in view throughout; in life, in death, in resurrection, and in glory. It is not for us to analyse and define, but to believe and worship,

H. N., PORTSMOUTH.—The apostle Paul was not the twelfth, chosen to fill the place of Judas. This is clear from his own words in 1 Cor. xv. 5, 6. And Gal. i. 12, tells us that Paul's apostleship was of another order from that of "the twelve."

J. R., STIRLING.—We know of no Scriptural prohibition to a Christian serving as an employee in a Co-operative or other concern in which the shareholders may be unequally yoked. An employee is not a partner, so that the prohibition does not apply to him. But while he may so serve with all fidelity, he will be in special danger of first imbibing and then defending the principles, if not in sharing the profits of that which his daily duties make him so familiar with.

Points of Practical Profit to All.

These short Answers to Questions from readers in many lands on points of practical value to all, are intended to meet such queries as do not require lengthy answers dealing with such varied aspects of the subjects as appear in "Answers to Special Questions."

Encouragement.—You should certainly encourage your young men to go out preaching the Gospel, and the best form of it is to go with them. It is the lack of this actual fellowship—for there is plenty of speaking about it—from which they generally suffer.

Paul Baptising.—The words of 1 Cor. i. 17, although extensively used to depreciate the value of Christian baptism, have no such meaning. They simply say, that baptising was not Paul's special work, for which he had the Lord's commission, but that preaching was. Still, he had those converted under his preaching baptised by other hands, and addresses them and others in his Epistles, as believers who had been baptised (see Acts xviii. 8; Rom. vi. 5; Col. ii. 12).

Regions Beyond.—This phrase is usually accepted as meaning heathen lands and unevangelised

regions beyond the seas—all needy enough, no doubt, of the true evangelist and his message. But the context and connexion in which it appears, seems rather to point to the districts and towns just beyond Corinth and Achaia, which the Lord's servants longed to reach, but, like many in our own time, could not then, because of the cold and heartless, and, we may surely add, worldly and niggardly condition of the well to do saints in these churches. For while the preacher gives his labour without "hire," the churches—or, failing them, individual Christians—must see that "the sinews of war" are not withheld from the Lord's workers.

Letters of Commendation.—Some see no use of them. They prefer to "use their own discernment." The phrase, reduced to practice means, that when one entirely unknown, never heard of before, comes forward five minutes before the assembly's worship begins—not infrequently AFTER it has begun—two brethren—or it may be one—at the door, "discern" that the stranger is a saint worthy of a place in the fellowship of the assembly, and either then and there "receive" him, or name him to the rest, who of course know no more of him than they do who commend him. Had he brought a letter from those in the place where he resides, whose signatories are responsible brethren in the assembly where he habitually meets, those who have no knowledge of the man welcome him, because they have confidence in their fellow-saints in that place, who have already welcomed him to the assembly there. To say that the man is received, "not because of what he is," but "because of where he comes from," is nonsense, and worse, for it is an entire misrepresentation of the whole matter. They simply act on the testimony of those who know what they have no possible means of knowing; namely, that the bearer of the letter is a Christian sound in doctrine, clean in conduct, and worthy of being welcomed to their fellowship. Were this godly and perfectly Scriptural habit (see Rom. xvi. 1; Acts xviii. 27) more observed by assemblies than in some quarters it is, there would be fewer complaints of "false brethren" and "vain talkers" getting in and doing untold mischief.

Answers to Special Questions.

Help in answering these questions will be valued. Answers must be brief, leading TO the Word, free from personal reference, and local events.

The Great Multitude.—Who form the "great multitude that no man could number," named in

Rev. vii. 9? Are they the Church being now called out by the Gospel, or a subsequent company? If the latter, by what means are they saved, and may they include some now on the earth?

ANSWER A.—That they are NOT the Church, is clear from the following description given of them by "one of the elders," who puts the question—"Who are these and whence came they?" knowing what then was passing through John's mind. "They came out of the great tribulation" (ver. 14, R.V.). The Church will not be in it. They are "before the throne." The Church sits in it with her Lord (Rev. iii. 21). They are a company of saints preserved by God for heavenly blessing, but their position and their song are not the same as those of the Church described in chap. v. 8, 9. They form one of the "families" (Eph. iii. 15) of the heavenly people, but the place and the portion of the Church will be unique (Eph. iii. 21). A. G.

ANSWER B.—"The seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth" (Rev. v. 6), after the present outcalling of the Church has been completed, may represent in symbolic language that fulness of the Spirit's working which will be manifested in the age beyond the present, when the "saving health" of the Lord will be "made known" through restored Israel "among all nations" (Psa. lxxvii. 1, 2). Messengers from God will then "declare His glory among the Gentiles," and many will be saved from among those who have not before "heard the fame or seen the glory of the Lord" (Isa. lxvii. 10). We dare not say of Gospel despisers. J. T.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—It will help us toward a right solution of the subject, raised in our question to remember, that chapter iv. opens the third division of the Book of Revelation (see chap. i. 19), which is distinguished as "the things which shall come to pass hereafter," or "after these." The things which were shown to John from chap. iv. onward, refer to events which will take place AFTER the present working of God in the outcalling of the Church has been completed. John had been shown in symbol the Church in glory "in the midst of the throne" (ver. 6), in the place of special nearness (see the promise in chap. iii. 21), and again in chap. v. 8 in worship. But there are "saints," made mention of in the same verse, whose "prayers" these glorified worshippers present to God. These "saints" are not in heaven, but on earth, and in need. They are those who pass through and come out from "the great tribulation." That they

are saved AFTER the Lord comes FOR His own is certain, else they would have been "caught up" with the rest, as in 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17. That many—especially those who have not heard the Gospel as it is now made known—will hear and believe the testimony of God's witnesses of that time, is clear from such Scriptures as Matt. xxiv. 14; Isa. lxvi. 19. But it would be a dangerous inference to say—as some are now saying with all authority, as if it were clearly taught in the Word—that Christ-rejecters of the present time will be found among them. The solemn words of 2 Thess. ii. 7-11, have distinct reference to those who "received not the love of the truth that they might be saved," but we know of nothing at all to warrant the belief that such will have "a second chance" later, and a place among another company of the saved. Sophistries of this sort are helping to harden sinners, and to deceive them to their doom.

Correspondence.

A DAY OF OPPORTUNITY.

An earnest GOSPELLER, who has long made it his special line of service to go wherever crowds of careless souls are found, and spread the message of salvation by voice and tract, writes: "This is a day of special opportunity, and it should be made good use of while it is with us. In training camps all over the British Isles, there are at present thousands of young men, who are shortly to be on the field of battle, and in all probability many of them will never return. They can be reached at present with the Gospel. I have given many thousands of clear and pointed tracts and booklets, which were courteously received, and I believe earnestly read, for these dear men know that they may have to meet God before long. Let Christians in whose districts there are camps of soldiers, get access by permission—which will readily be granted—to spread the Gospel. They are being well supplied with secular reading, but, so far as I know, little of a distinct Gospel character is sent. And the same applies to our sailors in the Navy, where parcels of Gospel books and magazines are allowed and always welcome. Those who can personally circulate should do so now, and others, unable to take actual part in such service, may help in providing the material which others will gladly send or give. What is done should be done speedily, for the time is short, and the days are passing."

A. G.

The Whole Word of God.

AS children of God and servants of the Lord, we need a closer acquaintance with the whole Word of God: not select portions of it, which yield us pleasure and profit; but the whole Book. No part of it can be neglected without loss to the soul; its warnings as well as its promises, its reproofs as well as its encouragements, are all needed by all the people of God. He who created us anew, and has provided for us a continuous supply to sustain the life He has imparted, and maintain the new man He has formed, has given all that we need for spiritual health and growth. All is in Christ. And Christ is presented to the soul by the Spirit through the Word. The saint who would grow in "grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. iii. 18), must not neglect any part of that Word in which Christ in all His virtues and fulness is treasured for his use. The whole Book is full of Christ, and he must give his soul its full range and scope. Anything less, will leave him lacking and one-sided. One ruminating only among the promises will become flabby and lacking in bone and muscle. One delving always among the precepts will become hard and heartless, lacking in the mellow graces of the Spirit of Christ. "The man of God" needs "all Scripture" for his full furnishing and equipment (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17). "The servant of the Lord" who has all sorts and conditions of men to meet and deal with, must be well acquainted with "the truth" and all of it, if he is to be used in instructing those

who are untaught, and delivering those who have become ensnared in the net of error (2 Tim. ii. 25). The Christian warrior needs the whole "shield of the faith," and the entire "sword of the Spirit" (Eph. vi. 16, 17) in the great struggle with spiritual foes in which he is, not sometimes, but always engaged. It was the "it is written," and the "it is written again" (Matt. iv. 4, 7), brought forth by the Lord in the hour of His temptation, that vanquished the great adversary. And in order to know and have and be able to use all God's truth, it must all be read and dealt with daily, personally and honestly, first for our own sanctification and edification, then in a full, wholesome ministry for the help of others. "Scrappy" ministry is cheap yet common enough, very easily got up and quickly forgotten. "Tit-bits" tickle and please, but do not feed. "Specialists," who have one or two "lines," soon play themselves out. God's people feel what their souls need, and know when they get it. A full crib brings a hungry flock. And the flock of God, to be well fed and easily led, need the whole of the pastures their Owner has provided—all His truth, nothing kept back, nothing overdone. A wholesome, Holy Ghost ministry of all God's Word in due season, suited to the condition of the hearers, is the means used by the Spirit who has the present care of the Church, for its edification, its revival if declining, and its restoration if backsliding. Where these are lacking spiritual life declines. O for a deeper love for, and a free flowing wholesome ministry from "the WHOLE Word of God."

The Coming of the Lord, AND THE EVENTS WHICH WILL FOLLOW:

WITH SOME NOTES ON THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

BY W. H. HUNTER.

IN the second vision of the seer, he noted that the constitution of the circle which he beheld in the first vision had undergone a marked change. The Throne was no longer in the centre, but with the presbyters and the cherubim, formed a part of the circle, into the midst of which passed One who became the cynosure of all eyes, the object of the delight of every heart, including the heart of God. For as He stood "in the midst," it was apparent that He had come by the way of the altar by the path of death and judgment; for He bore in His own body the marks of the sacrificial wounds from which He had suffered, the tokens of the death by which He died. John had heard that "the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David," was coming; but when He came he saw a "little Lamb,"* who had all power, and whose eyes were in every place (for He had seven horns and seven eyes), and who had taken the position in the midst of the circle because upon the right hand of Him that sat on the Throne there lay a "little Book" which was written within and without, and was sealed with seven seals. Concerning this little Book, creation had been challenged in resounding tones which had reached the highest heaven and had searched the lowest hell, to

produce one worthy to open that little Book, and to loose the seven seals which held it.

The Book lay lightly upon the outstretched hand, but the fear of God lay heavily upon Creation, and not even the most hardened and embittered leader of rebellion against the Most High moved one step towards the Book, although there had been conflict of some sort and at some time regarding it, as it is written that the Lamb had "*prevailed* to open it."

The little Lamb took the little Book, the Omnipotent Hand yielding it unto Him without demur, thus owning the merit and the right of the Redeemer to the sealed evidence of the purchased possession—the record of the tale of His redemption and of His redeemed. That which the Creator did Creation endorsed, for when the Redeemer took the Book, first the Living Ones and the presbyters fell at His feet in worship, in the presence of God Most High, and poured out the rapture of their hearts in a new song. Secondly, myriads of myriads of angels and countless millions more, who stood (not sat) without the circle which had the Lamb in the midst, said (not sang) with one great voice, that the Lamb who had been slain was worthy. And thirdly, every created being, whether in heaven or on earth, or in the darkness of the under world, openly confessed that it was right and fitting that "Blessing and honour and glory and power should be unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." And the four Living Ones said Amen!

Will this be the day of Phil. ii. 10, 11?

* Dean Alford observed on the peculiarity of the diminutive form used, "little Lamb," instead of "Lamb," as in John i. 29; 1 Pet. i. 19, etc., and declared, for reasons which he gave, that "the alteration of the word appeared to be purposely made."

or do we look for another day like unto it, at or near "the end," but before Christ shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, "that God may be all in all?"

Whatever the answer to this question may prove to be, the day will be characteristically that of the "new song," in which the four Living Ones and the twenty-four presbyters join in a divine harmony of worship and praise to the little Lamb. It will be well for those who would "overcome," if they can learn the words of that song in this present day, and will seek to know and understand their own part in it.

There are two ways in which the words of the song may be read: authority exists for both; but the competent scholarship of the present time holds that the authority which supports the first of the two following readings is superior to that on which the second of the two is based.

According to the first of the two readings, the song is general throughout, all sing all the words.

"Thou art worthy to take the Book,
And to open the seals thereof:
For Thou wast slain, and didst redeem
*men** to God, in Thy blood,
Out of every tribe, and tongue, and
people, and nation.
And didst make them to God a kingdom
and priests;
And they shall reign upon the earth."

According to the second reading the

song is sung in parts. First, the presbyters sing—

"Thou art worthy to take the Book,
And to open the seals thereof;
For Thou wast slain, and didst redeem us
to God, in Thy blood
Out of every tribe, and tongue, and
people, and nation."

Then the Living Ones reply—

"And didst make them to God a kingdom
and priests,
And they shall reign upon the earth."

The new song is a redemption melody pure and simple, and it is clear that, if the second reading be that which should be accepted (which is doubtful), the Cherubim who have no part in the redemption, except through the men whom they have helped on their way to glory, can only take their part in the song by singing of that which redemption brought to the redeemed.

Reality.

BE real to thyself,
Be real to thy God,
Be real with thy fellow-men;
Keep thou the one true road.

Dread unreality,
And be what thou dost seem.
The true is fairer than the false,
Whatever men may dream.

Quell not before the bad;
Be brave for truth and right.
Fear God alone, and ever walk
As in His holy sight.

Keep converse with the true,
Lest thou become a lie,
Thy life a fiction, and thy words
Mere words of mockery.

* The word *men* (printed in italics) is an addition to the text on which this reading is founded (see Rev. v. 9, R.V.), but is necessary for the purpose of the translation from the ancient tongue to our modern manner of speech.

Light from the Book of Daniel.

SIMPLE TALKES TO YOUNG BELIEVERS.

BY THE EDITOR.

SOME of you who are only a short time "in Christ," have been asking whether the Bible gives any light on the present European war, and how it will end. You have been invited to attend Christadelphian lectures, where great revelations are promised regarding "the coming kingdom" and "the end of the world." Some of us know, that while these are the somewhat attractive names on the *menu*, the dishes when they are served, consist of a general hash of denials of the foundation truths of the Gospel. Do not listen to their words, do not read their books, do not keep company with their followers. Do you ask—Why? The answer is because God says in Proverbs xix. 27, "Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge." I came across that verse shortly after I was converted, just at a time that a vendor of error was persistently pestering me with his doctrines. It enabled me to give him a straight "No," and after forty years I thank God for it. A full-orbed "No" is by far the most effective means of ridding yourselves of all kinds of proselytisers. This only by the way. God knows how inquisitive we all are regarding the future, not so much the *eternal* future as the temporal. All sorts of men want to know what is to happen. The ungodly will read anything from *Old Moore's Almanac* to *Baxter's Prophecies* about what is coming, and consult palmists,

fortune tellers, and spiritualists as to their own future. For whatever their lips say, "men's hearts are all" failing them for fear" (Luke xxi. 26) of what awaits the world and themselves, whose heaven is here and now. To meet the desires of the Christian, and to preserve him from being drawn away by "the error of the wicked" (2 Pet. iii. 17), God has given him "the sure Word of prophecy," which He tells us is to be unto him as "a light that shineth in a dark place" (2 Pet. i. 19), "until the Daystar arise." And to this light he is to "take heed."

"The Book of Daniel" is that part of the prophetic Word which more especially sheds its light upon what is to be the future of the Gentiles, that is, the peoples among whom we live, of whom in our unconverted days we formed a part (see Eph. ii. 12), but from whom we have been "taken out" (Acts xv. 14), and now only sojourn among them as "strangers" without a home (1 Pet. ii. 11, 12) and as "pilgrims," going to our home in heaven.

It is remarkable, too, that this light was first given to a young man who had been carried away as a captive from the land of his fathers, for no faults of his own, and placed in a heathen palace where his faithfulness to God and His Word was to be tested in various ways. And it is beautiful to trace throughout the twelve chapters of this remarkable Book, how this prophet of God was preserved simple, and faithful and true, sound as a bell in his allegiance to his God, upright and without fault to his earthly master as a servant, unselfish and of an "excellent spirit" toward his companions in exile. He

was a man "greatly beloved" in heaven, honoured by visits from an angel to guard him in the lions' den when in danger (chap. vi. 22), to give him understanding when in doubt (chap. viii. 16, 17), and to impart strength in time of weakness (chap. x. 19). We are allowed to trace his straight course from early youth, right on to over fourscore years, in sunshine and shadow, in suffering and exaltation, hated and beloved, yet always true to God, neither fawning before kings nor fearing before foes, but "purposed in heart" (chap. i. 8), to keep himself clean for God to use, and to cleave to His Word at all costs. That Word he had no doubt learned to love and "hide in his heart" (Psa. cxix. 11) in early years at Jerusalem, where he may have been converted during the great Revival which took place in the days of Josiah, his godly kinsman, when the long lost Book of the Law was dug up from under the rubbish, where it had been buried for years. Those who are converted in a Revival like that, usually carry the stamp and the savour of it with them all their course. There is room for a lot of Daniels in our time—young men who have got such a grip of the Word of God and it of them, that they can be counted upon to "stand like the brave" in the day of trial, and not turn turtle at the first blast, like a ship full enough in sail but without ballast, having plenty of show without, but empty within. May God raise up among you young men many Daniels, who will stand like a rock for God, no matter where, and honour His Word no matter who gives it up. We have seen the man. We will next look at his message.

Admitting the Whole Book.

A SERVANT of Christ living in a town where there are frequent meetings of an interdenominational character, was recently waited upon to inquire whether he would be agreeable to cast in his lot with them in their association, or at least to give them his presence occasionally, and take part in their Conferences. These, they were careful to inform him, were conducted on lines that "give no offence to the local clergy," and introduce "no debatable or denominational doctrines." It was known to this servant of Christ, that some of the said "clergy" were of the "Higher Critic" persuasion, and that any plain teaching on the need of being born again would be resented, and regarded as "debatable" doctrine by not a few of those who were active workers in connection with the movement. And experience had taught him that it would be impossible to go into that circle as the Lord's freeman, to speak what He might give, without compromising his liberty or creating trouble if he used it. So he quietly remarked, "I am always willing to give any little help that I can in the service of the Lord, but I like to state to all who invite me, that I will take the whole Book of God with me, and go with the desire to speak whatever message the Lord may see fit to give me." The deputation said they would "lay his principles before the committee, and let him know." They have not yet done so. I fear they will not, for I am confident there is not an inter-denominational concern on earth, that will admit the whole Book of God,

New Testament Mysteries.

THE MYSTERY OF GOD.

PART III. WILLIAM HOSTE, B.A.

“The Mystery of God, even Christ, in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col. ii. 2).

THE reply of our Lord to Mary, shows that even at the early age of twelve He had full consciousness of His Divine mission and of His heavenly relationships. This need not surprise us, as the same was true from conception (Psa. xxii. 9, 10). He was the “wisdom of God,” but His wisdom was manifested along *natural, lines.

The Lord's omniscience shines out in the records of His ministry. He knew Zaccheus and Peter by name, before He met them. He knew of the death of Lazarus before the news reached Him. He knew the past history of the Bethesda cripple and of the man born blind. Numberless instances could be adduced. He was acquainted with Nathaniel before Philip brought him to Him. The answer to his enquiry, “Whence knowest Thou me?” convinced Nathaniel that He who had seen him when hidden from the eyes of man, could only be the Son of God. And guileless souls will never doubt the Deity of Him who knows them through and through. Could omniscience go further than our Lord's knowledge in the episode of the tribute money (Matt. xvii. 27)? He knew a certain fish had

swallowed a piece of money. He left Peter free to go to the sea and cast his hook where he would. He knew that no other fish would take the hook, but that this very fish would be the first taken up. He knew the piece of money would be a stater, the very sum required, two didrachma, to pay the temple tax. One instance more may suffice: the incident of the search for a room where to observe the Passover. The Lord, in sending forth His disciples into the city, left them free to take their own road, but knew that by the way they would chose, they would meet a man bearing a pitcher of water—a most unusual sight in an eastern city, where it is the woman's work to carry water—that the man would be going to the very house, in which the owner had furnished and prepared a large upper room, and that he would willingly place it at their disposal. Again we may ask, could omniscience go further?

(3) He is also Himself *the Treasure*, for “it pleased all the fulness to dwell in Him.” He was God's treasure, in whom His soul delighted. He is the wisdom of God, through whom all God's wisdom and knowledge are revealed, in Creation, Providence, and Redemption. “The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth” (Prov. iii. 19). He was the “Wise Architect.” who prepared the heavens (Prov. viii. 30, R.V.). He is the Creator of “all things that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible.” Angelic hosts, the stellar universe, the spirit of man, “the *springs of the sea,” “the †goodly wings of the peacock,” “the flower” of the

* It is mere trifling to adduce our Lord's silence as to the facts of astronomy and modern discovery, as a proof of His non-acquaintance with these facts. The mere pedant loves to display his knowledge to all, but “The prudent man concealeth knowledge” (Prov. xii. 23). The Lord's mission was not to hypnotise men with his knowledge of science and MSS., but to impart to them the knowledge of sin and of God.

* Job xxxviii. 16. † Job xxxix. 13.

field, *the bones of the behemoth, are but examples of His creative wisdom. The beneficent laws of Nature, the gifts of sun and rain, fruitful seasons and harvests, display His providential wisdom. Above all, the depths both of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God are seen in His ways in redemption and grace, in "reconciling the world unto Himself." Christ "crucified" is unto them which are called "the power of God and the wisdom of God," and proves that "the foolishness of God is wiser than man." "God hath concluded them all (both Jew and Gentile) in unbelief that He might have mercy upon all," and it is His purpose that "now, unto principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God."

(4) The Lord, too, is the *Treasurer*. He is the antitype of the treasurer, Eliakim (Isa. xxii. 22)--the man whom God raised up, who was to bear on His shoulder the key of the House of David, "who openeth and no man shutteth," not to the self-satisfied Laodiceans, but to the Philadelphians of "little strength," who had "kept His Word and had not denied His Name." It is the function of the Holy Spirit to unfold "the unsearchable riches of Christ" by means of the written Word. Christ does not so much give us wisdom, but "is made unto us wisdom, even righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." As a ray of light may be split up into light, heat, and chemical energy, so

Divine wisdom is here seen resolved into its three constituents, by each of which is solved—an otherwise insoluble problem. Is the question, How can a guilty sinner be justified before a righteous God? Christ is made unto us "righteousness." Is it, How can an unclean sinner be made fit for a Holy God? Christ is made unto us "sanctification." Or is it, How can a helpless sinner be delivered from the thralldom of sin and Satan? Christ is made unto us "redemption." Christ does not give us stores of blessing and strength and wisdom, but He becomes to us moment by moment all that we need and trust Him to be, and becomes in very deed the revelation of God to our souls.

The Christian's Battle Song.

ONWARD, children of the day,
Dauntless in the deadly fray,
Charge the hostile foe's array,
Bid the rebels flee.
Girded by Almighty power,
Faith beholds the tempest lower,
Faith awaits the conflict hour,
Sure of victory.

Forward, soldiers brave and true,
Christ the Lord hath need of you,
Boldly all His bidding do,
Who would faint or flee?
Clad in armour of the light,
Strengthen'd by the Spirit's might.
Ye shall put the foe to flight,
Firm your ranks shall be.

Fight till ye possess the land,
Not a foe shall 'gainst you stand,
Shielded by the Lord's right hand,
His salvation see.
Sound the glory of His fame,
Jesus evermore the same,
Let the Saviour's peerless Name,
Now your war-song be.

* Job xl. 18.

† A comparison of Isaiah xxii. and Rev. iii. 7, seems to shew that the opening referred to is primarily an opening of the treasury of God, revealing Christ in the Word to His humble people. To learn of the meek and lowly Teacher, the disciple should be meek and lowly.

Jerusalem's Coming Glory.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY HENRY DYER.

THE day on which the Lord returns, when "His feet shall stand" upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east (Zech. xiv. 1-5), will be the greatest day in Jerusalem's chequered history. Since the day that the children of Judah smote it with the sword, and set the city on fire (Judges i.), it had, during the fifteen centuries between then the time that the Lord told of its fall by the Romans, been besieged seventeen times, and twice razed to the ground. No city on earth has had such a history. But its last deliverance, on that day when the great oppressor of Israel is "trodden under foot in the land and on the mountains of Israel" (Isa. xix. 24-27), when the Lord will perform His whole work upon Mount Zion and on Jerusalem (Isa. x. 12), will be the greatest. Her darkness will end in the solemn overthrow of Antichrist, and all who sighed and cried for her abominations (Ezek. ix. 4), the faithful remnant within her, watched over by God, and kept from participation in her sin, will become the nucleus of the new nation and the beginning of the marvellous spiritual as well as temporal blessing, which will characterise the millennial kingdom of a thousand years. Purged of her dross, Jerusalem will put on her "beautiful garments" as the "holy city," into which no more shall come the unclean (Isa. li. 17; lii. 9, 10). "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth," God is known in her palaces for a refuge (Psa. xlviii. 2, 13), and throughout the

whole period of the thousand years' reign of the Lord Jesus, her blessing never flags. Every child born within her gates, becomes by birth of the Spirit a child of God (Jer. xxxi. 34) Boys and girls playing in her streets (Zech. viii. 5) all "know the Lord," and all within her walls are secure. She will be a city of peace (Isa. lxvi. 12). No wars will ever disturb her. She will be a city of holiness (Zech. xiv. 20, 21), nothing unclean will enter her gates. Living waters will flow out from her, all the year, to give life and health to the inhabitants of the land (Zech. xiv. 8). Her very typography will be changed. No longer embedded as now among hills, and as it were hidden from view, but "lifted up" with the whole land "turned as a plain" (Zech. xiv. 10), she will be conspicuous from afar, and thus exalted, "all peoples shall flow into" (Mic. iv. 1) her. All the "families of the earth" shall assemble there to "worship the King" (Zech. xiv. 17), and the power of the reigning King will compel their homage without a sound of war or the clash of swords. Thus a worldwide and beneficent rule will go forth from restored Jerusalem for a thousand years, and from Jerusalem "a greater than Solomon," who is "King over all the earth," will send forth His sceptre to rule the world. Thus Jerusalem, the scene of our Lord's bitterest sorrows and of His rejection and His death, becomes the centre of His earthly glory and of God's delight. Man's long guilty day of murderous war will be ended, and under the true Solomon the weary earth will cease its groan, and know its sabbath of rest.

“He Commanded them not.”

THE solemn record of the death of Nadab and Abihu, Aaron's sons, in Lev. x. 1-3, has its message to the children of God of all times, to none more than to us “upon whom the ends of the ages are come” (1 Cor. x. 11, R.V.). The two priests “died before the Lord,” because they offered “strange fire” in their censers. That was their sin; and the inspired comment upon it is, that it was something which they had adopted and used before the Lord “which He commanded them not,” or, as in the R.V.—“which He had not commanded them.” It was not that God had forbidden it, but that He had not commanded such fire to be used. What He had commanded was clear and plain (Exod. xxx. 9, with which compare xvi. 12), and they were not at liberty to add to that which the Lord had spoken. His Word was all-sufficient and contained all that He wanted to be used in His worship and service. But these two sons of Aaron failed to own the sufficiency of that Word, and they were visited with judgment swift and awful, for their sin. There is a disposition in some to take liberties in the worship and service of God in our time, which He will not own, and can never bless. It is often said in defence of certain practices, “If they are not commanded in the Word, they are not forbidden.” But this is reasoning altogether unworthy of any Christian who believes in the authority and sufficiency of the Holy Word to guide him in all that concerns the worship and service of his God. And the Apostle assures us in his

last Epistle, written especially to give direction to those engaged in the service of God in the midst of the “last days” and “perilous times” of this age, that the “Holy Scriptures” are all-sufficient to furnish “the man of God” unto all “good works.” Dare any say in the face of this, that God has omitted to give commandment for anything He wants to be used in His service? And what He has “not commanded,” we are not at liberty to add, or to bring in, without incurring His displeasure, and if persisted in, His judgment. That judgment may not take the same form as it did in the case of the two disobedient priests, who lived under the law: but a barren and unblest ministry may mark the hand of God in chastisement.

J. R.

Honouring God and His Word.

THE ambition of every child of God should be to honour every word of the living God and to be content with that honour which comes from God only. To such a one, the crowns and sceptres of earth, its glories, dignities and riches are esteemed as toys, not worth grasping at, for with Paul he has learned to say, “I do count them all dung and dross that I may win Christ.” Our Lord says, “If any man SERVE ME, him will my Father honour;” and here is found the true clue to honour. Not that which comes from man, but that which comes now in measure to the faithful servant from the living God, and will come yet more openly and manifestly in the day of eternal recompence and reward at the judgment seat of Christ.—*Henry Craik.*

The Preacher's Column.

OUTLINES OF EVANGELISTIC SUBJECTS.

MAN'S UNIVERSAL RUIN.

- All under Sin, by Nature (Gal. iii. 22).
 All gone Astray, in Practice (Isa. liii. 6).
 All Guilty before God, in Judgment (Rom. iii. 19).

GOD'S UNIVERSAL REMEDY.

- He has had Mercy upon All (Rom. xi. 32).
 He will have all to be Saved (1 Tim. ii. 4).
 He sends Salvation to All (Tit. ii. 11).
 He invites all to receive it (Isa. xlv. 22).

GOD'S GREAT SALVATION.

- A PRESENT POSSESSION by Faith (Eph. ii. 8).
 A PROGRESSIVE EXPERIENCE in Work (Phil. ii. 12).
 A HAPPY PROSPECT to Hope (Rom. xiii. 11).

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Does the Lord's parable—or life story—of the rich man, teach the eternal doom of the ungodly?

The "eternal" state is not primarily in view in it. It is the state immediately after death and before resurrection that is described, while "in hades"—the unseen world, where the soul exists apart from the body. But our Lord's words most clearly tell that it is a state of *conscious misery* to the lost, not of *Annihilation*; of *memory awake*, not of *Sleep*; of *fixed hopelessness*, not of *Restoration*. When "hades" is emptied—as Rev xx. 14 tells it shall be—it is not for a "second chance" to the lost, but into "the lake of fire."

Answers to Correspondents.

ANON.—The Epistles of Paul were not written in the order in which they appear in the New Testament. There is evidence—which those capable of judging think conclusive—that the Epistles to the Thessalonians, Corinthians, and Galatians, were all written before the Epistle to the saints at Rome. This seems to be the solution of your difficulty.

G. R., BEBMINSTER.—The words of a poet, quoted by Paul when preaching to idolators at Athens (Acts xvii. 18), would scarcely be authority for repeating long selections from "our own poets" in preaching the Gospel to those who have and can read the Bible. The Word itself has the "teeth" to grip sinners, and all else used in preaching must be as the feather to the arrow.

J. M., PORT-GLASGOW.—The roll of nominal adherents to a doctrine, settles nothing regarding its being of God. We have simply to ask—"Is it in the Word of God?" If it is, then it claims our faith and obedience; if not—whatever value it may have as the word of man—it cannot be pressed as having any Divine claim, nor its neglect, or even its rejection spoken of as "lawlessness."

D. S., LANARKSHIRE.—The Gospel is for all (Mark xvi. 15), and it should be our ambition, as it was the apostle's (Rom. xv. 20, R.V., marg.), to carry it into new and unevangelised fields. If those who most need it do not come to where you preach, then you must "go" to them. When the Lord says "Go out into the highways and hedges and COMPEL them to come in" (Luke xiv. 23), He means active and aggressive labour, which finds no answer in congregating in some well appointed hall, and indolently praying that the Lord will "SEND the people in."

W. D., CO. FERMANAGH.—The perfect fulfilment of the prophetic Scriptures in all their details, in the birth, life, and death of the Lord Jesus, has always been a trouble with sceptics. But infidelity is nothing if not bold; so Bolingbroke, a French infidel of the last century, while admitting that the Lord's death is distinctly foretold in Isa. liii, said that He by a series of prearranged incidents brought about His own crucifixion, so that His followers might be able to appeal to the prophet in proof of His Divine mission. Infidelity will stick at nothing, so you need not wonder at the blasphemies used to discredit the Word of God. And the worst of them all, are those that come from men professing to be teachers of the truth—some of them pledged and handsomely paid to uphold it—who teach scepticism thinly veneered with religion, in the pulpit.

Points of Practical Profit to All.

These short Answers to Questions from readers in many lands on points of practical value to all, are intended to meet such queries as do not require lengthy answers dealing with such varied aspects of the subjects as appear in "Answers to Special Questions."

The Sword.—"The sword" in Rom. xiii. 4 is figurative, and is not to be taken literally, as Peter took it in Luke xxii. 36. It is entrusted to the civil authorities for the punishment of evildoers, and the protection of those that do well. The passage teaches that the Christian, who is in a country where governmental rule obtains, is not

to "take the law into his own hands" even for his own defence. The civil power is under obligation to do this on his behalf.

The Sermon on the Mount.—The principles and precepts of these chapters, like all God's Word, are of abiding value, and profitable for teaching, &c. (2 Tim. iii. 16). But this does not mean, that all God's inspired Words are for personal application, alike in all dispensations and under all conditions. The precepts given by the Lord in these chapters were to His DISCIPLES, primarily for the period of His presence with them, and ultimately for the time when His kingdom and rule will be manifest on earth under the administration of Divine power, when righteousness will prevail. In an age when righteousness suffers and lawlessness reigns, in which the devil is the "prince" of this world, it is obvious that a literal and continuous obedience of Matt. v. 32-42 is impossible.

Expediency.—You are not required to give up what is lawful, at the call of, or out of deference to the opinion of another. But if the continuation of the lawful habit is to cause a weak brother to stumble, or to embolden him to go a step beyond and sin, then because of the supremacy of love, it is to be given up for his sake. This is the teaching of 1 Cor. x. 23-24; Rom. xiv. 14-15.

New Birth.—It is a novel doctrine surely, that "faith has no connection with the new birth." Perhaps those who are responsible for it had forgotten John i. 12, 13, and 1 John v. 1. There is ground for the fear that under all such unscriptural theories, there lurks fundamental error regarding man's ruin and responsibility. There will not, we fear, be much confidence in the Gospel's power to reach and convert sinners, or much energy in spreading it, where such views are held.

Worldly Position.—Worldly position and possessions give no title to any man to teach or rule in the church. Grace and gift, with a godly testimony, are needed for the latter. But is this always observed? Is it not a fact that the man who wears the "goodly apparel" and the "gold ring" (Jas. ii. 2), and lives in the fine house, is most commonly found in "the eldership" or "the oversight," and has the final word in what shall be? Whereas the day labourer, however spiritually fit to minister and guide, is usually reckoned unworthy of any place. This is the way of the world, but God will never own it in the church, nor will He bless where it is in practice. We do not make a bid for Socialism, but for spiritual work to be done

by spiritual men, whom God has called to and fitted for it, irrespective of their worldly position.

Association.—The words of 1 Cor. xv. 33, as well as the general teaching of the Word, show the evil effects of association with the unconverted, and the life stories of Abraham in Egypt, Lot in Sodom, and Jehoshaphat's alliances with Ahab, demonstrate its results in varied forms. There is no form of the devil's strategy more successful in blighting the spiritual lives of God's people and spoiling their testimony, in our day, than unholy alliances and unequal yokes. And yet there is less said about them and fewer warnings given to young Christians about them than there used to be. Is it for fear of giving offence? Or is it because there are fewer in a morally clean and spiritually fit condition to do so consistently and effectively?

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Correspondence.

INNOVATIONS IN ASSEMBLY GOSPEL WORK.

Some six years ago, through simply reading my Bible, I was brought out from a denomination where spiritual worship was impossible owing to man's hindrances, and where Gospel work on the simple lines of the Scripture pattern was repudiated to make way for something to attract the crowd. It was my privilege to be received into the fellowship of a small but spiritual assembly of God's people, seeking to order their worship and service by the Word, and I can say it was good to be there. We had precious seasons of spiritual worship, helpful times in the study of the Word, and much blessing in the preaching of the Gospel, which always brought a good congregation to hear it. About four months ago, I was moved to another town, and commended to the assembly there, which is large, and composed of more influential people. But there are some things that perplex me. They have an organ, which a brother told me was purchased and brought in by three well-to-do brethren, without consulting the assembly. There is usually a solo singer, often a young female attired in worldly dress and jewels. And some of the preachers are from denominational missions. This is so unlike what I have been accustomed to, and so far from what I have learned from the Word, that I am much exercised as to whether I can with a good conscience toward God, continue to share in Gospel work conducted on such lines. I am told that several of the Christians in the assembly have stated their

objections to these things, but have received no satisfaction and but little courtesy. In fact, one was told that if he was not pleased, he could stay away, which he does. I would be thankful for any help from the Word as to my path, and I am sure others would value it.

If there is any hope of bringing the Word of God to bear on the consciences of those who are primarily responsible for bringing in these innovations, it is your first duty to do so in all wisdom and with grace, at the same time pointing out that if you are compelled to withdraw your fellowship from the assembly's Gospel work, it is because you are unable to continue as a sharer in what is admittedly borrowed from the world's religion, and has no place in the Scripture pattern which is to be our guide. The fact that a few men of imperious wills can do as they like without consideration of others, and ride roughshod over the consciences of their brethren in such a graceless manner, indicates a great lack of soul-exercise among the saints who compose the assembly, as to their personal responsibility in permitting such a condition of things to grow up in their midst. And it manifests an utter lack of that "largeness of heart" and "brotherly love" of which we read and hear so much, on the part of those who act in such a loveless manner. For true love never so acts. If others have remonstrated with no good result, it would be useless for you to do more than state your case, and lay the responsibility at their door. If they think more of their organ and soloists than of the fellowship of saints, let them stick to them. But your responsibility is to act before God on the light you have, and not to trifle with it by a silent acquiescence in what you believe to be contrary to God. We have seen more than one healthy and fruitful Gospel work ruined by a few headstrong men, who had no hand in creating it and who could not continue it by any gift or grace that they possess, but who somehow have been allowed to scramble into a position where they find it possible to bring in ways and means borrowed from the world's religious systems, the spirit and ways of which they evidently have not been delivered from. It is not of God to quarrel over it. Time will tell who is right. There is plenty of scope to carry on Gospel work on God's own simple lines, which we have long proved to be the best. And there will be no lack of godly helpers or of real blessing, if you begin, in some new sphere quietly, under God's guidance, and in His way.

THE VALUE OF GOD'S WORD.

"As an old Campaigner, now over fourscore years, but still able to go forth among the villages preaching the Gospel, I would say to dear young brethren, who share in this glorious work—'Preach the Word.' Singing, storytelling, and the like, are only of secondary value; but the Word of God is the weapon that does the work, and what its Author always uses. The very reading of a chapter secures a hearing—usually a respectful hearing—and I have never yet known the preaching of the Word to fail in bringing life and light to souls. Although it is perhaps a bit old-fashioned, and not among the popular attractions which are called "up to date," yet I would repeat with all confidence—'Preach the Word.'" J. G.

INTEREST IN PROPHETIC TRUTH.

An aged PREACHER says—"I have not seen such an interest in Prophetic Truth—and in this I include the whole testimony of the Word to the coming of the Lord FOR and WITH His saints, the judgment of the nations and the doom of Christendom—for many years as at present. In places where it would have been difficult to get a score outside ordinary meeting-goers eight months ago, there are full halls and earnest hearers. Of course it is not given to all who are otherwise fitted to preach, to deal with such subjects in a way to arrest and retain the interest of hearers, and to bring their solemn message home to the conscience and the heart. But there are some to whom God has given this grace, and they should be given every facility at present while the public mind is awake, to hold forth the Word of God to saved and unsaved on these subjects. If halls used at ordinary times are not suited, or if those whom we desire to reach will not come to them, then let places be hired to which they will go, and servants of Christ known to be fitted for such ministry invited to occupy them. The devil is busy enough taking full advantage of the awakened interest to spread his delusions and deceptions, as they are found in 'Millennial Dawn'—now being masked by cinematograph displays to draw the crowd, and Christadelphian lectures with popular titles, which are used as an appetiser to lead on to annihilation and earthly paradise delusions. These will go on, but it is our business to cast the wholesome 'meal' of the truth into this seething 'pot' of death (2 Kings iv. 20). Let assemblies wake up and use the God-given opportunity while it is with them."

The Voice of the Lord

IN THE TERRIBLE EVENTS OF THE HOUR.

NO living Christian in these lands has ever passed through a time like the present. The voice of the Lord is surely speaking in the events which are transpiring on every side, and He means that voice to be heard by His people. Unless the ear has become dull toward God through listening to the unbelieving assertion that God takes no hand in the affairs of the world, it cannot surely fail to hear the voice that speaks to all hearts through the dire events and disasters of the hour. The "world of the ungodly" will not hear the voice of God in such things. They will find causes for them all, and shut out God from the whole scene. But with the Christian it ought to be otherwise. He knows that nothing comes into his life or across his path by chance, and that the God who marks the sparrow's fall (Matt. x. 29), allows nothing to happen to His people without a purpose. Surely He who by such events "openeth their ear to discipline" (Job xxxvi. 10), means that they should heed and be "exercised thereby" (Heb. xii. 11). That God is not the author of atrocities and disasters, we know. He forbids them. But if He withdraw for a season His restraining hand, and allow men to reap what they sow, if He permit the powers of hell—ever bent on man's destruction—to have their way even for a time, in order to expose the proud boast of culture and civilization with the ascent of man to deity, and to teach men and nations what the first proud Gentile king had to learn in abase-

ment with the beasts of the field, and afterwards confess "that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men," and that "those that walk in pride He is able to abase" (Dan. iv. 32, 37), it surely behoves His people who sojourn as strangers among these war-swept and death-strewn lands, to humble themselves "under the mighty hand of God," while in these dire events, which affect them in common with others, they see His hand and hear His voice. The loss of loved ones on the fields of war, anxieties and fears regarding others who are there, the shadow of death resting on the whole land, with no rift in the cloud or sign of its passing, unheard of disasters on rail and on ocean may all surely exercise believing hearts before God, and send each to his chamber to examine himself in the searchlight of the Divine presence. Then it shall be that the word spoken by God to His own in ancient time, will be realised, "Ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done, saith the Lord" (Ezek. xiv. 23). It is along these lines, in hearing the voice of the Lord in the events of the times, and in close personal dealing with God about our own lives and ways and shortcomings, that blessing will come to the people of God, and deliverance by His hand for the nations who have been set in deadly conflict with each other by the powers of hell. We are deeply convinced that this is the special part God's people are called to take, the path in which they are called to walk, and the service that they are best fitted to render toward God on behalf of their fellow-men, in this awful struggle among the nations.

J. R.

The Coming of the Lord, AND THE EVENTS WHICH WILL FOLLOW:

WITH SOME NOTES ON THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

BY W. H. HUNTER.

CONCERNING the little Book which in the day of the new song is to pass from the hand of the One upon the Throne to that of the Lamb in the midst; the suggestion has already been offered in these notes, that the Book contains the sealed record of the "purchased possession," or, in other words, the secret list of the names of those redeemed unto God in the blood of the Lamb.

The very words of the song go far towards proving the soundness of the suggestion, and towards establishing the conclusions to be drawn from it; as the words relate only to the Lamb's redemption, and to the results of that redemption both to the redeemed and to God.

But the words do not stand alone; and with them should be read an Old Testament redemption story, which shines like a polished gem in a sombre setting, and bears in these church times a definite message concerning sovereign grace to church members—the members of "the Church which is His Body"—and concerning the significance of the sealed Book.

The story is told in Jeremiah xxxii. It relates to a very small transaction in respect of the sale and purchase of a parcel of land which was situated in Anathoth (an outlying suburb of Jerusalem mainly inhabited by priestly families) and which under peculiar circumstances, but under the provisions of the

Divine Law, changed hands in a "cloudy and dark day."

The purchaser of the land, Jeremiah himself, was "in trouble," as non-paying yet unwilling guests in His Majesty's houses of detention say, or as he said himself, he was shut up and could not go forth. Further, the final doom of Jerusalem had been pronounced; the time was at hand, the adversaries were at the gates, famine prevailed within the walls, and the Chaldeans held in their possession all the lands without, including those in the suburb of Anathoth. Alien enemies of their sort, recognise no ownership except that which the sword has vested in themselves, so that at the time of the land deal in question, title deeds and records of purchase might have had some historic value in the history of a people, beside which all other histories pall and become insignificant, but intrinsically they were worth next to nothing even to a free man, much less to a persecuted prisoner like Jeremiah the prophet of God.

That was the time chosen by a mean cousin of Jeremiah's to claim the prophet's help as his "goel" or "kinsman who had right to redeem," and to whom, according to the Law, he had right to appeal. God knew Jeremiah well; His compassion for him was unailing, and His patience with him was unbounded; and He felt that He must intervene Himself in a personal way, if the transaction in which He was so deeply interested was to be brought off. God did intervene: Jeremiah "knew that it was the Word of the LORD," and bad bargain as it was, he bought the field and weighed good money for it, "seventeen

shekels of silver" (Jeremiah xxxii. 9).

"The secret of the LORD is with them that fear Him"; and Jeremiah realised how pregnant with importance the transaction was which had been completed that day, and of which, because of the Word of the LORD, he had borne the cost. He took as great pains with the matters relating to the legal registration of the title, the conveyance of the parcel of land to himself, as if it had included all the heritage of Abraham between the zones of Dan and Beersheba; and he narrated, or made Baruch narrate, in minute detail, the methods which he adopted for the preservation of the tablets or documents, on which what he termed the "evidence" of the purchase was inscribed, for all time.

His methods were very effective: this fact has been made clear in these astonishing times by the excavations conducted by scientists in Mesopotamia, in Egypt, and in Palestine; of which excavations and of their results one example will suffice here. Dr. Sellin, dug at Tel-Taanak, near the site of the ancient Taanach (a royal city of the Canaanites smitten by Joshua, which lay on the southerly side of the great plain of Megiddo) and there discovered a "large clay box," in which were contained eight tablets or inscribed fragments, still in readable condition. The tablets were records of ancient transactions, records which had been protected just as Jeremiah's records were protected, which had continued for "many days," many years, many centuries, and had at length been brought to light again.

One day, when the due time comes, Jeremiah's records will be again read.

Hé spoke to the LORD about that, and the LORD answered him in words of promise of good, and of blessing for the Anathoth district where his land was situated, and said that "men shall buy fields for money" therein; when those days are reached, seventeen shekels will not buy Jeremiah's field.

In the meantime, as we doubt not, God watches over the "earthen vessel" which contains the evidences of the purchase "both which is sealed" and "which is open," and through that hidden vessel He speaks to His people of a redemption in which not only was the price paid and the purchase of the possession completed, but the limits of the possession were written in two records which are diverse in form, but are in exact accord in substance; one record, which is yet sealed, is that "little Book" which God holds in secret, but of which the "little Lamb" will one day break the seals; and the other is open, is in the hands of men, and has gone to the ends of the earth in the form of another little Book which we call "the Bible."

Jeremiah's redemption of the field in the land of Benjamin is amongst the things of old time which happened "as types," and which were written for our admonition, upon whom "the revenues of the ages have devolved," and the story of the redemption remains unto this day as a clue to guide those who have been redeemed in the blood of the Lamb, to the interpretation of the mystery of the "little Book."

To *preach* Christ is good.
To *live* Christ is better.
To be *with* Christ is best.

Songs for the Night.

BY THE EDITOR.

SOME of the Psalms are written for the use of God's earthly people, to express their praises in the bright Millennial day, when "the Lord reigneth" and the people of all lands shall "make a joyful noise unto the Lord" (Psa. xcix.-c.). Others are for the night, and express the longings and hopes of a people who will then be passing through the darkest hour of their experience, while they wait upon God for deliverance as those that "watch for the morning" (Psa. cxxx. 6). Without depriving the earthly people of their portion, we may surely find, in these Psalms, fit expressions of our own faith and hope as well as promises to be claimed and proved in this the house of our pilgrimage. A brief word from three of these, form the theme of our present short meditation together. The first is a *Prediction*, the second a *Promise*, the third a *Song of Praise*.

1. "The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in *from this time forth*, and even for evermore" (Psa. cxxi. 8). These words were given in a time of trial, when the eyes of the saint were lifted to the Lord from whence his "aid" was to come. He knew not what awaited him, nor the way he was to take. "The Lord shall preserve thy going out" be it in conflict or in flight, for there are some kinds of foes we are to "flee" from, others to "resist." But whichever may be God's way, if we take it, He will "preserve." And when all is over, and we are "coming in" in peace, He will preserve from self-exaltation and pride, which so

oft overcome when trial has failed. This is God's prediction of *Preserving Mercy*.

2. "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people from *henceforth even for ever*" (Psa. cxxv. 2). Here is God's promise of *Encircling Power*. No enemy can enter that guarded spot. Jerusalem sits in peace amid her impregnable defences. The Lord is "round about" His people to-day, from henceforth and unto eternity. What a stronghold is this for the day of trouble! Let the soul repose in the promise, and prove its sustaining power. Then there will be peace. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee" (Isa. xxvi. 3).

3. "We will bless the Lord *from this time forth* and unto eternity" (Psa. cxy. 18). The knowledge of preservation leads the heart into peace, and the outcome of peace possessed and enjoyed is *praise*. And this praise goes up to God, in honour of His Name, here and now. It will be easy enough to praise God in heaven, but we are called upon to praise Him now, amid the shadows and trials of life; to send up our praises to heaven, and to "shew forth" God's praises (1 Pet. ii. 9) among men, while we are here. There is fear among the unconverted, for they know not God's preserving mercy. But we know it. Truly safe and peaceful is that soul whose confidence is stayed upon God, proving His faithfulness, enjoying His care, and continually uttering His praises, even "now" among the trials and troubles of life, and "henceforth unto eternity," in that land toward which our faces are set.

The Book of Esther,

AND ITS MESSAGE TO US FOR TO-DAY.

PART III. W. J. M'CLURE, CALIFORNIA.

IT is striking that the two principal actors in the chief drama of Esther should be Haman an Agagite (chap. iii. 1) and Mordecai, a descendant of Saul, the king of Israel (chap. ii. 5). It is a far cry from Persia to Palestine, and from Mordecai to Saul, yet we may say that they meet here. The undying enmity of the Amalekite toward God and His people is here seen in all its old time venom. And oh! the irony of it. What the Amalekite seeks to do to the people of God is just what God had commanded Saul to do to him—exterminate him. Away in 1 Sam. xv., God sent forth Saul on a mission. Its terms were clear: "Go and utterly smite Amalek, and *utterly destroy* all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman." How was this command of God obeyed? We read that "Saul and the people *spared Agag*" (ver. 9). This failure to obey the Word of God came very near costing Israel dearly. There is no thanks due to Saul and the people of that day, that an Agagite is not successful in wiping out the whole race in Persia now. Israel was well able to carry out the command of God then, but they are as weakness itself now in the presence of a crafty and powerful foe. May we learn our lesson well from these half-fought battles of God's people of old. Many an Agag of the flesh could have been overcome in the early days of Christian life, when there was freshness and power. But it

was spared, and now it asserts its mastery when days of weakness have come. Some habit which should have been broken, some association which should have been given up, now proves to be a Haman. Yet even here the grace of God intervenes, in saving His people from the full consequences of their sin. And He is the same compassionate God to His people now. Wherever there is true brokenness of heart on account of failure, He is ready to work on behalf of His own against the enemy. His word is, "Them that honour Me I will honour" (1 Sam. iii. 30), and in no other part of the Word do we get a better example of this truth, than in the case of Mordecai, the Jew.

THE AMALEKITE IN POWER.

One of that race, of whom God had said to Israel, "Thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it" (Deut. xxv. 19), and of whom He had said, "The Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation" (Exod. xvii. 16), had been exalted by king Ahasuerus to the place of power, and all were commanded to bow to him. To Mordecai the Jew this was a clear issue. He simply cannot do it, for God has forbidden it. "And all the king's servants that were in the king's gate bowed, and revered Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him. *But Mordecai bowed not nor did him reverence*" (chap. iii. 2). Here is a true hero. Many a man does something on the spur of the moment, that puts him in the hero class. But had he thought the matter over quietly, he would never have done it. To stand

steadfast and unmoveable day after day in the face of grett odds, is courage of a different kind. And it has to be remembered that this Haman was a popular man. "All the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed and revered him." Why could Mordecai not at least appear to do so also? It was but a small affair. However such unworthy time-serving might suit others, it is not for Mordecai. He will not go with the popular thing. It is much the easier path, but he is determined to honour God, to maintain a good conscience, no matter what the cost. And he knows too that by his refusal to bow to Haman he is involving more than himself. This would touch him keenly. And there would be the thought that many of his race would reproach him for ever, in being the cause of the awful calamity that was sure to befall them. And some might tell him not to be so very stiff, that if he would only yield a little and do as others had done, he might placate Haman, and win favour for his people. All this would try him more than the hostility of the enemy. But Mordecai, single and lonely, stood firm. It was his to do the right, and leave God to look after the consequences. It was the day of faith's trial in the path of doing the will of God. The enemy appeared to triumph, the Jews are condemned, and their enemy is exalted.

THE HAND OF GOD AT WORK.

In chap. vi. we have the king's sleepless night and what came of it. "On *that* night could not the king sleep." Why is this particular night emphasised? Haman is waiting on the next dawn, as perhaps

he never waited for any, for he is to see a sight that will gratify his eyes on that day. He has a gallows erected on his own grounds, and in the morning he will go and get the king's consent to hang Mordecai thereon. When he came into the royal presence the king had the first word, and it was, "What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?" The whole issue, to speak after the manner of men, had been changed through the circumstance of that sleepless night. The king, unable to sleep, commanded that they should bring the "Book of records of the Chronicles," and read it to him. And there he heard for the first time of a very meritorious service rendered to the state by Mordecai, when he saved the king's life (chap. ii. 21, 23). And the king asked, "What honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this?" to which the answer was given, "There is nothing done for him." The king evidently felt that it was not to his credit, to pass over such a great service. And here surely we see the overruling hand of God. He it was who saw to it that the reward, so righteously due, was only deferred until the right time. And it is good for us to remember that for all true service rendered to the Lord, there will be a sure recompence. Even if man appears to hinder, it can only be a case of deferred reward. All that has been done for Christ, will yet receive its proper mead of praise, even if it be but the common duties saints render to the men of the world (Col. iii. 22). And it is in view of this day of reward that the Lord speaks His last word of cheer to His servants.

David's Psalms and Praises.

RECOLLECTIONS OF AN ADDRESS BY J. G. BELLETT.

IT was as a shepherd lad, while pasturing his father's flock on the lone mountains of Israel, that David learned to sing his sweet psalms and songs of praise to the God of Israel. It was in these early years, also, that his fingers learned to sweep the chords of his harp, which had been the companion of his early youth. It was the Spirit of Christ that moved him from time to time to indite those psalms which he afterwards delivered to the chief singers for the temple which was soon to be built on Moriah. As we read, "For in the days of David and Asaph of old, there were chief of the singers and songs of praise and thanksgiving unto God" (Neh. xii. 46). David, the Bethlehem shepherd, the sweet psalmist of Israel, was thus the man chosen of God to raise the voice of praise in Jehovah's sanctuary, for it was not until his day that the melody of song is named in the worship of the ransomed people.

On the Red Sea shore they had indeed sung their song of deliverance and of triumph. But that song died away as the trials and sorrows of the wilderness brought complainings and murmurings from their lips, and stole from their memories the sense of the Lord's deliverance which He had wrought for them. They were indeed a delivered but not a rested people while they passed through the trackless desert, the ark wandering with them toward the land of promise. But when they had reached the land of His choice and Jehovah, according to His

promise, had established them there, and the ark had been brought up with great joy and set in its resting-place in the tent which David had prepared for it, then it was that he by the Spirit ordained the service of song, and ordered the singers, each in his course, to minister in one ceaseless melody of praise until the glory of the kingdom should break over the land, and the temple should be raised in its appointed place. And thus it was that they ministered before the dwelling-place of the tabernacle of the congregation with singing, until Solomon had built the house of the Lord (1 Chron. vi. 31). Faint, yet lovely, is this type of Him who, having met and triumphed over all our foes, is now as the Victor on the throne of God, teaching us to sing God's praises, and tuning our hearts to celebrate His triumphs. His saints are now His instrument of song, answering to the touch of His hand, and vibrating with those resurrection joys which in "the midst of the church" He leads forth to His God and Father. True, indeed, His temple is not yet built, nor has His kingdom in its glory yet dawned, but He has sent forth the Spirit to dwell in His Church, that we may speak one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord (Eph. v. 19). O, that our hearts may be to Him what the stringed instrument was to David's hand of old. For it is not the heavenly trumpets and anthems of angels that our God has chosen, but human hearts, in which His grace has become known, that He now causes to vibrate to His joys and praises.

New Testament Mysteries.

"MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT."—I.
WM. HOSTE, B.A.

LEAVING for later consideration the last of the Divine Mysteries, that of "Universal Headship" (Eph. i. 9, 10), let us turn to the solemn subject of what we may call the Mysteries of Satan, namely "Mystery, Babylon the Great" and the "Mystery of Iniquity." These two consummations of evil though sometimes confused, are really distinct, one being on the religious, the other on the worldly plane.

The Mysteries of God are, as we have seen, the unfoldings of His infinite resources in view of man's failures: the Mysteries of Satan are those failures in full development. If one who had seen the "Ecclesia," at the beginning of the present dispensation, in the first Spring-tide of her love and devotion, "betrothed as a chaste virgin to Christ," continuing "steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and prayers," and bearing a bright testimony to her absent and returning Lord, had fallen asleep, not for the twenty years of the legend, but for the whole course of the present age, what would be his horror on awakening to see in the place of professed testimony for God, no longer "a chaste virgin," but an abandoned woman, bearing on her brazen forehead the name of infamy—"Mystery, Babylon the Great, mother of harlots, and of abominations of the earth?" What means this horrible portent, and why is she called after Babylon, rather than after Sodom, Tyre, or any

other place prominent in Old Testament history? Because of the relation which historical Babylon bore to Israel, and the spiritual significance of that relation. The countries brought into contact with Israel in old time, seem to represent the world in its various phases of evil. Thus Egypt would stand for the world in its ungodliness and self-sufficiency. "The river is mine, and I have made it" (Ezek. xxix. 9). Israel in Egypt corresponds with man in his unregenerate state. Tyre would represent the world in its commercial rivalries and race for wealth (Ezek. xxvi. 2). What it is but the spirit of Tyre that is behind the present war? Edom is the world in its hatred of God's people (Amos i. 4). Sodom the world in its fleshly corruption, and Babylon in its religious corruption and persecution of the saints.

Israel was never again to return to Egypt as a nation, but might and did fall under the power of Babylon.

It is remarkable that the very king, through whom God granted deliverance from the open hostility of the Assyrian, was the first to fall under the basilisk spell of Babylon, presenting herself as his friend and sympathiser, but how soon to rob his treasury and lead his people captive. Babylon was, in fact, the first great Gentile power to subjugate the people of God, and is regarded as their greatest enemy. Satan always makes his most deadly attack first, and at the last goes back to it again.

Babylon was the beginning of the kingdom of Nimrod, the grandson of Ham, "the mighty hunter before the

Lord" (Gen. x. 9), a hunter, surely, of nobler quarry than mere beasts, of "the bodies and souls of men" (see Rev. xviii. 13, marg.). From the words, "He began to be mighty on the earth," we may gather that he was a successful conqueror of men. Not only so, but he was a mighty leader against God, for comparing this passage with the account of the building of Babel and its tower in chap. xi., we see that he was the *Great Initiator, the brain of that tremendous undertaking which marked the first confederate departure from God since the flood; but the confederation ended in †confusion and dispersion, as all man-made associations must. "Associate yourselves and ye shall be broken in pieces." "Union is strength" only when it is a union which is of God and with God.

Nothing is said of the destruction of the tower of Babel, and there seems to be no doubt it became later the great temple of Belus, or ‡Bel, the mighty lord, rival of the Lord of Lords. This temple was half a mile in circumference and 660 feet in height, loftier than the Great Pyramid. It was constructed in eight successive towers, gradually decreasing in width, and surmounted by a golden statue, 40 feet high.

It is remarkable that Arabs call the

* Nimrod is represented by tradition as a black man with an enormous head, very ugly, and lame. He was evidently the archetype of the fire gods of Greek and Roman Mythology, Hephaistos and Vulcan, who were deformed monsters and lame to boot, and is no doubt the forerunner of the last great leader against God, that is to be, the Man of Sin. It is remarkable that Bel was a title attached to his name, Satan thus associating with himself this evil man.

† Babel, from a Hebrew root, signifying, "to confound."

‡ Our Lord recognised Beelzebub (the lord of flies of Ekron) as none other than Satan himself.

inimense mound, which to-day marks the ruin of the tower; Birs Nimroud, thus marking its identity with its founder. Even if it cannot be proved that Nimrod claimed divine honours in his lifetime, he certainly *was deified after his death. Babylon was a centre of idolatry and "Satan's seat" in a special degree, and thus the rival and opponent of Jerusalem, where was Jehovah's throne, "between the cherubim." The judgment of God fell on Babylon, not only because of the evil she had worked against Jerusalem (Jer. li. 34), but first and foremost on account of her shameless idolatries. "Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods He hath broken unto the ground" (Isa. xxi. 9). "Two things shall come to thee in a moment . . . the loss of children and widowhood . . . for the multitude of thy sorceries and for the great abundance of thine enchantments" (Isa. xlvi. 9). "A sword is upon . . . the inhabitants of Babylon . . . for it is the land of graven images, they are mad upon their idols" (Jer. l. 35, 38). All idolatry is addressed to some demon, "for the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God;" that of Babylon to Bel, the prince of the demons. Israel, by her departure from God to Baal, made it necessary for God in righteousness to hand them over to Babylon. It was fitting that their bodies should be carried where their hearts had already wandered. To-day, when we see the feet of professed believers turned to Babylon, we know that they have trod the path in heart before.

* "The Two Babylons," by Hislop.

The Preacher's Column.

OUTLINES OF EVANGELISTIC ADDRESSES.

THE GOSPEL CALL.

- Called unto Eternal Life (1 Tim. iv. 16).
 Called into Marvellous Light (1 Pet. ii. 9).
 Called to Holy Liberty (Gal. v. 13).
 Called to Eternal Glory (1 Pet. v. 10).

THE SINNER'S CONFESSION.

- Confession of Sin under Conviction (Psa. xxii. 5).
 Confession of Faith, in Christ's Person (John vi. 69).
 Confession of Christ unto Salvation (Rom. x. 9).

FROM THE PIT TO THE PLACE OF PRAISE.

Psalm xl. 1-3.

- Sinner's Place—"In the Pit."
 Saviour's Power—"Brought me out."
 Saves One's Place—"Upon a Rock."
 Saint's Praise—"New Song in my Mouth."

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Can it be accepted, as taught in Scripture, that any living king or ruler of the present time, is **THE Antichrist**?

The Word informs us that the manifestation of **Antichrist** waits on the removal of the true people of God from earth to heaven, and the full apostasy of **Christless** professors who are left on earth, from the Christian faith (2 Thess. i. 1-3). That the **Antichrist** will be a Jew seems evident, otherwise he could not be welcomed in "his own name" (John v. 45) by the Jewish people, who will be in their own land, as their Messiah. But he is not to be confounded—as is very generally done—with the **Coming Prince**, the future head of the revived **Roman Empire**, the last great Kaiser of Europe and of Christendom. The one will be the **POLITICAL**, the other the **ECCLESIASTICAL** head of that coming time. And while both are described by God morally as "beasts" (Rev. xiii. 2, 11), who are endowed directly by the devil (ver. 2, 12) for their work, in the eyes of men, they will both be personalities of attractive qualities, commanding universal admiration, and compelling worldwide subjection and homage (see ver. 3, 14). While such rulers as **Nimrod**, **Pharaoh**, **Nebuchadnezzar**, and **Antiochus**, of Bible history, may foreshadow the last great monarch of days to come, and some present time proud military rulers and apostate preachers and

ecclesiastics may embody many of those traits which will have their full development in the coming king and his satellite prophet, it cannot be affirmed from Scripture, and ought not to be accepted, that either is already existent, and can be named as living personages.

Answers to Correspondents.

W. J., DURHAM.—Your ecclesiastical friend, who affirms that "preaching" is to be limited to "ordained men," may not have observed that the Holy Ghost's record of the very earliest preaching beyond the bounds of Jerusalem tells us, that **ALL** the scattered Christians "went everywhere preaching the Word" EXCEPT THE APOSTLES, who remained in Jerusalem (Acts viii. 1, 4). In other words, it was the **UNORDAINED** who did the preaching, the "ordained" (Mark iii. 14), although commanded to "go" (Matt. xxviii. 19), seem to have been in no great hurry to obey. Perhaps your critic may not have far to go to find a parallel. At anyrate—"As ye go, PREACH" (Matt. x. 7), and let those find fault who have nothing better to do.

QUÆRE.—The "work of an evangelist" is not to settle "church disputes," but to preach the Gospel. And the more simply and fully that he gives himself to his appointed service, the greater measure of success he will likely have in it.

J. D., EASTBOURNE.—The Word forewarns us that Satan will yet produce his imitation of Christ (2 Thess. ii. 8, 9). Even now, his ministers are attractive personalities (2 Cor. xi. 13, 14), some of them with as much "evangelical" doctrine and fervour as commends them to those who cannot easily be caught by the fair show of Ritualism, nor the reasonings of Rationalism. But a "seasoning" of Gospel truth in a leavened mass of fundamental error, is far more dangerous, and the simple and unwary ought to be warned to keep themselves apart from those who provide it, and from many popular Conferences, in which some of those who teach Annihilation and such like, are welcomed.

G. R., TORONTO.—A clear and definite testimony to the Divine judgment on sin (Rom. i. 18), with wrath to come upon all who continue in it (Eph. v. 5, 6), is especially necessary in our time, in which, as Dr. Trench remarks, there is on the part of most "a foregone determination to get rid of the reality of God's anger against sin." It will be a bad day when this note becomes silent, or even

soft in the evangelist's testimony. But it needs much grace and a right state of soul to sound it, after the pattern of the One who wept over Jerusalem as He told its doom.

Points of Practical Profit to All.

These short Answers to Questions from readers in many lands on points of practical value to all, are intended to meet such queries as do not require lengthy answers dealing with such varied aspects of the subjects as appear in "Answers to Special Questions."

The Rod.—The symbol of "the rod" expresses parental authority; that of "the sword" magisterial and governmental rule. The way of God with His children is that of a Father, and all His Fatherly discipline has as its object "our profit" (Heb. xii. 10).

Retaliation.—The principle and the practice of "paying our enemies in their own coin" is accepted and acclaimed as being the "right thing" in the world, but the example of our Divine Lord, when He suffered for righteousness, was not after this fashion (1 Pet. ii. 21-23). Nor is it to be that of His followers now (1 Pet. ii. 19, 20). To "endure grief," to take suffering "patiently," and if the "will of God be so" (1 Pet. iii. 17), to "take joyfully the spoiling of your goods" (Heb. x. 24), is a higher and a more honourable path for God's people than retaliation, which any barbarian might render, and which many who "know not God" would be ever ashamed to threaten.

Spiritual Gift.—While all true gift is from the living Lord in heaven (Eph. iv. 8, 11), and its power for edification (1 Cor. xii. 4, 7, 11) of the Holy Spirit, its care and cultivation (2 Tim. i. 6), as well as the right spiritual condition in which it can be used for blessing to others (Acts xi. 23), is in the responsibility of the one who holds it. If spiritual condition fails, the Spirit is grieved, and a true gift will then become void of power for blessing, and may even be lost. Hence the folly of "placing" or "recognising" any man as fit for spiritual functions as a minister for all time.

Church Property.—Ownership of a hall by an individual, or by a trust, gives no right to either to interfere with the functions of the assembly meeting in it, or the Lord's servants who minister within its walls. It would be infinitely better to worship God under the blue heavens on the green hillside, as many of our fathers had to do in order to preserve their liberty to do the will of God, than to be under bondage in spiritual things to property holders,

whether saints or sinners. Trouble on this score seems to be increasing in certain quarters, and points to the necessity of seeing that no obligations are entered upon, which would in any degree hinder obedience to any part of the Word of God. "Constitutions," like "creeds," tend to hinder those who subscribe them from "going and growing" in the knowledge and practice of God's truth, which is usually learned according to the measure that saints are free and willing to obey it.

The Sinking of the "Lusitania," With Narratives by some of the Survivors.

No event of the great war among European nations has produced such widespread horror as the sinking of the Cunard Line passenger steamer "Lusitania" by a torpedo from a German submarine, while within sight of the Irish coast, carrying over eleven hundred of her living freight to an ocean grave. The barbarity and guilt of a nation which bears the Christian name, sanctioning and approving such a crime, and glorying in attacking an unarmed ship, carrying defenceless men, women, and children, may well be left for God to deal with, which in His own time and way He assuredly will. But it is for us to hear His voice and see His hand in this great calamity, and set ourselves to learn the lessons He would teach us by it.

The great Trans-Atlantic liner, on which it is estimated over half a million passengers have crossed the ocean during the eight years she has sailed, was considered impregnable and immune from danger, the pride of owners, and the glory of her officers and crew. Having wrested the blue riband of the Atlantic from the German liner, "Kaiser Wilhelm II."—a fact which may have had more to do with the atrocity of her doom than appears, for wounded pride is devilish in its revenge—she became the favourite greyhound of the ocean. She was a veritable floating palace, with every comfort and luxury that skill and money could provide. Now she lies in the ocean's depths, reminding us that nothing is safe or beyond the reach of death and disaster, save that which is "in Christ," and secure by the power which holds worlds in their spheres. The voice that surely comes to the soul from events like this is, "Cease from man" (Isa. ii. 22), for all that he can produce is only like himself, and reminds us of the Psalmist's

word, "Thou carriest them away as with a flood" (Psa. xc. 5).

The Loss of a well-known Lady Missionary.

Among the passengers who sailed from New York on that May day at noon, was Miss Bessie C. Maclay, of Glasgow, who had laboured among the women and children of the Malay Peninsula for twenty-one years, and was returning to the homeland. There is every fear that our sister is among those who perished. A brief memoir and account of her service, with photo., appear in this month's "Christian Worker."

Mr. Matthew Muir, Evangelist, of Uddingston,

who had laboured in the United States for some time, was a passenger, and is one of those rescued. He sends a striking personal account of the disaster and of his own deliverance, of which the following is the sum:—

On Friday, May 7, while walking on the vessel's deck, a passenger by his side pointed to the foam track of a torpedo, shot from a submarine some 300 yards distant, which a moment later struck the ship. Within a few minutes she listed. Securing a lifebelt, he reached the deck while the first lifeboat, filled with women and children, was capsized while being lowered, and nearly all its occupants perished. By means of a rope he swung himself clear of the sinking ship, and dropped into the sea, first sinking then rising, and while struggling in the water he saw the doomed vessel take her last plunge to the depths—a sight he will never forget. After some thirty minutes in the water, in the Lord's mercy he was picked up in an exhausted state by a lifeboat, and landed by a trawler at Queenstown six hours later. After twenty-four hours' treatment in an hospital, he was able to proceed to his home at 20 Spindlehouse Road, Uddingston, where he now is, feeling the effects of his experience in severe nerve strain and exhaustion, but filled with praise to God for His saving mercy. Our brother did not come in contact with Miss Maclay on board the ship, but met and had fellowship with a brother belonging to Clones, in the North of Ireland, who was very diligent throughout the voyage, giving tracts and speaking to fellow-passengers of the Saviour. Half-an-hour before the disaster, Mr. Muir saw this brother earnestly engaged speaking to one who sat next him at lunch, and overheard him quote a text from the Word. He adds, "I do not know whether this brother was rescued or lost, but I

can say he was faithful unto death." By the same mail in which Mr. Muir's narrative reached us, there came a letter from this brother, who is safe in Belfast, and we had the pleasure of putting our two brethren, who had been parted in the hour of agony, and knew not each other's fate, again in touch. The Irish brother is

Mr. Joseph Glancy, converted in Belfast, in the assembly at Victoria Hall there, and for the past year and a half, in the East End Assembly, Toronto. Other passengers on the "Lusitania" were Mr. and Mrs. Freeman, of London (Mrs. Freeman is a daughter of the late Alexander Grant), who are among the rescued, and Mr. Cecil H. Weir, son of Mr. Thomas Weir, of Cardross, and grandson of the late Daniel Hamilton, of Bothwell, who perished. Much sympathy will go forth toward the bereaved parents, and especially to the young widow (a daughter of the late David Fulton, of Glasgow) who, with her fatherless child, is in Victoria, B.C. This sea disaster, followed quickly by another on the Scottish railway, and the daily death-roll which brings its tears and sorrow to numberless homes, should surely bring all of us to our knees and lay us on our faces before the Lord, to seek His face and plead for His speedy deliverance from those war fiends' power who are laying desolate the face of Europe, and using unheard of means for the destruction of precious life and the blotting out of all testimony that is of God on this earth. This, we are more and more convinced, is the real issue in this awful struggle, and like all the devil's doings it is aimed at defiance of God, His Christ and His Truth

Questions Requiring Answers.

Scriptural help on these subjects, which are of general interest will be welcomed. Let answers be brief, and, as far as possible leading to the Word of God.

Date of the Crucifixion.—Can any say if the date given in most of our Bibles—A.D. 33—as being the year of our Lord's death, is correct? I notice that it is questioned.

Recognising Division.—What ought to be the attitude of local assemblies toward a few disaffected brethren who, for purely personal reasons, go out from the assembly in which they cannot have their way, and form a new meeting?

Church Property.—Is it according to Scripture for the local Assembly to own property, and if so, under what conditions?

Cast Thy Burden on the Lord.

THERE are many burdened hearts in this time of national distress. Some have their loved ones facing death on the fields of war, or keeping vigil on the high seas, of whose danger they think by day and night. And there are wives whose husbands and mothers whose sons lie broken and wounded in a land of strangers, whose sufferings and sorrows are ever in their thoughts. They wonder if they will ever see their loved ones' faces on earth again. Fears and anxieties regarding them has furrowed many a brow and whitened many a head. And there is the daily toll of death and disaster on land and sea, which racks the nerves and burdens the hearts of the strongest and most courageous of us. It would be no credit to any to remain unmoved and unexercised amid such conditions. God has given His creature man a sympathetic nature, which responds to the sorrows of others as well as his own. And it is the will of God that it should be so. But these anxieties and sorrows of life may become a crushing burden, beneath which the strongest will eventually totter and fall. It is not the will of God that it be so among His redeemed and beloved people. He means them to use Himself as their Burden-bearer. The word from God to each and all of His people is, "Cast thy burden on the Lord, and He shall sustain thee" (Psa. lv. 22). The marginal reading of the Revised Bible renders the word "burden"—that which He hath given thee. It may either be a gift to bring to His altar in the spirit of thanksgiving, or

a burden to lay upon Himself in the exercise of faith. In either case it is what He has given, or permitted to come, in order that He may be approached and used and proved in the personal experiences of the soul. And it is to be noted, that the Word does not say that the Lord will remove the burden or dispose of it at once. He does far better than that, for the promise is, "He shall sustain THEE." Divine strength comes afresh into the life; "the power of Christ," as the apostle speaks, "rests upon" (2 Cor. xii. 9, R.V.) the one who in conscious dependence bows to the will of God, and accepts that which "He hath given" as being the very best that unfailing love and unerring wisdom can send or allow. It is open to all the Lord's own to use this most precious Word of promise and of power in the varied experiences of life. It is their privilege, as their daily "burden" comes upon the soul, to acquire the holy habit of casting it "upon the Lord," and then leaving the disposal of it to His wisdom. But the trouble with most of us is, that we tell the Lord our sorrow, and lay before Him our burden, and then come away, bearing it as if we never meant Him to undertake it for us. But to "cast" it upon Him, means to leave it with Him, wholly in His hands, entirely at His disposal, willing through grace to do, or to trustingly submit to His will. "Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you" (1 Pet. v. 7).

He knows, He loves, He cares,

Nothing this truth can dim;

God always does **THE BEST** for those

Who leave the choice to Him.

J. R.

The Coming of the Lord, AND THE EVENTS WHICH WILL FOLLOW:

WITH SOME NOTES ON THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

By W. H. HUNTER.

WHEN the Lord led His disciples out as far as to Bethany and lifted up His hands and blessed them, and in the act was borne up into heaven; not one of those citizens of His, who hated Him and therefore would have none of Him or of His rule; had the faintest idea of what was occurring on that bright Summer day. In like manner Christ will come again for His people, and these will go to Him as unexpectedly and as secretly as He was parted from the disciples at the time of His ascension; while the men on the earth will know no more of that which will then come to pass, than the people in the crowded streets of Jerusalem knew of the departure of their rejected King.

But they will not long remain without tokens which some of them will be unable to ignore; for first, there will be no part of the earth from which some of the residents will not be taken "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye;" and secondly, when the Lamb breaks the bindings of the sealed evidence, the Day of the Lord will break upon the world, and His judgments will begin to flood the earth. But even then, in wrath God will remember mercy, for when His judgments are in the earth He will give the inhabitants of the world opportunity to learn righteousness (Isa. xxvi. 9).

The Lamb will open the seals one at a time, and in accordance with the decreed order. That order has been declared, and

if it be studied, it will appear that the first four of the seals will form a special series, complete in itself, and marked out from the series which are to follow it, by two distinctive features. The first of these features is that after the opening of each of the seals in the special series, the four Living Ones will rise one by one in succession, and will in turn say "Come;"* while the second feature is that the judgments which will follow the opening of these seals will be *providential* in their character, they will not appear to have anything of the supernatural about them; as the fact that God will have intervened directly, and that His hand will have been stretched out in anger against the earth, will be concealed for the time being, from the generation upon which His judgments will have begun to fall.

In response to the calls of the Living Ones, four agencies, who appeared to John in the guise of riders upon four horses of distinguishing colours, will come forth in succession to undertake the duty for which they were prepared the conduct of the preliminary stages of the "strange work" of God.

Unlike the rider in Zech. i. 8, there is no word as to these riders appearing in human form; but they carry gear of man's device, and bestride steeds suitable for earthly movements; so that it may safely be suggested that they point to the use of earthly measures for the execution of heavenly purposes: the blinded minds "of them that believe not" will detect the movement of the earthly measures,

*The most reliable authorities omit the words "and see" after each word "Come" (as does B.V.).

but will fail to discern the power of God in and through them. "Not once or twice" in human history has this been the case already, and the "god of this world" will be very busy on that day.

John observed that the first rider in the series sat on a WHITE horse, had a bow, received a crown as a gift, and went forth conquering and to conquer. John did not say so, but we may venture to add that the rider on the white horse, the horse of royal hue, seems to carry with him as he passes from view a reminiscence of the Gospel of the Kingdom.

The horse of the second rider was RED, fiery red, and to that rider it was given to take peace from the earth (*the peace* is the term used, which seems to imply that at the moment at which the rider on the red horse moves forward, wars will have ceased, and their noise will have been hushed on the earth), and to that gift was added another, "a great sword."

The third rider followed upon a BLACK horse, a horse of melancholy blackness; the rider himself bore a pair of scales, and as he passed on his way, a voice from the midst of the Cherubim said, that bread should be delivered to the people by weight; (Lev. xxvi. 26) for the harvest of the field (wheat, barley, and other grains) should be broken, but that the harvest of the vineyards, and of the olive gardens, should remain as yet without hurt.

The fourth horse was of a ghastly PALE colour, a greenish yellow, like unto the face of a man dying of the plague; and for the first time in the series the rider (*a*) was followed by an attendant; perhaps more accurately, by a consort; and (*b*)

his name was disclosed. "His name was Death, and Hades followed with him," and to them authority was given over the fourth part of the generation upon the earth, to kill with sword, hunger, and wild beasts. That the killing referred to is to be of human beings is evident, as the work was not committed to Death alone, but to Death and to Hades, because amongst mankind Death can only reach the bodies of his victims, and is incapable of touching the souls; wherefore Hades, which still imprisons and controls the souls of the lost of the human family, was joined with him in the work; Hades which has made ready for that day, and has "enlarged herself and opened her mouth without measure" (Isa. v. 14).

The words which relate to the aid which Death will then be able to obtain from "the beasts of the earth," are very quiet, but they are very grim. They would have but little meaning to-day, civilisation has so far subdued the very worst of these wild beasts, that comparatively recently a petition was presented to the Council of the Governor-General of India praying for a close time for tigers, as the balance between tigers and deer had been destroyed, and in certain parts the cultivators of the soil were suffering from the ravages of the gentle grain-eating creatures which, no longer kept down by the tigers, were destroying their crops! But the words were not written for to-day, and they can only mean that in the days for which they were written, modern civilisation will have been so completely broken down that the wild beasts will be able to resume their one time place of terror.

Light from the Book of Daniel.

SIMPLE TALKS TO YOUNG BELIEVERS.—II.

BY THE EDITOR.

IT is a great mercy that as Christians we are not obliged to read all that ungodly men have written, to learn what awaits the present world, or to be at the mercy of those who teach divers and strange doctrines regarding its progress and end. God has caused to be written in His holy Word all that He sees we need to know, and our wisdom is to be content with the information He has given us, and to allow it to form our minds and fashion our conduct while we are here. One class of religious teachers tell us—or at anyrate used to tell us before the great European War among so-called Christian nations upset their theories—that the world of mankind is to be gradually civilised and made Christian by means of the efforts of Educationists and Scientists and Philanthropists and Socialists, and by means of the good influences of the Church and the preaching of the Gospel. And when this great work has been brought to its consummation, the Millennium will begin, wars will cease, swords will be beat into ploughshares, and the “good times” prophesied of in the Bible will be with us, especially those of them that tell of earthly riches and worldly prosperity. For, if you have heard or read much of these things, which we have been accustomed to hear were at our doors, you will no doubt have noticed that there is little or nothing said about going to heaven, or being made fit to dwell with God and Christ. The kind of millennium

that men of the world want is not the righteous rule of Christ, with His Name upon every lip, and His praise sounding through the whole earth, but a glorified worldliness, such as appears in Royal processions, State banquets, and International Exhibitions, where human pride is displayed and man’s genius worshipped. God’s Millennium will be the exaltation of His Son to the throne of universal Empire, and this will be brought about by the judgment and utter confusion of all who disown Him now as Saviour and Lord, and despise the great salvation which He died to procure and lives to impart to all who come to Him as sinners in this the day of His grace to men.

The second and seventh chapters of the Book of Daniel tell us what has been and is yet to be the course of the four great world empires, which in the arrangement of God are destined to rule in the world during the time that His elect nation of Israel and His chosen city of Jerusalem are in degradation because of sin and Christ-rejection.

In a dream of the night, the first great Gentile king, who was permitted by God to conquer and lead into captivity the last of the kings of Judah, with many of the people, was given to see a great image in human form, composed of gold and silver, brass and iron, which Daniel by wisdom given him from heaven interpreted to symbolise the four great empires of Chaldea, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome, which, in the Divine purpose, were to successively bear rule on this earth, to be followed by a kingdom set up by “*the God of heaven*” (*chap. ii. 44*),

and administered by the "Son of Man" (chap. vii. 13, 14), whom "all people, nations, and languages" would serve. And this kingdom of God, as the prophet distinctly informs us, will be introduced by "a Stone" falling with a sudden crash on that great image symbolising these great world powers, and crushing the whole of it to pieces, which the wind will carry away and scatter like chaff (chap. ii. 35). Then the Stone which had destroyed the image "became a great mountain and filled the whole earth," which Daniel says represents a kingdom which shall "stand for ever," and shall neither pass into the hands of another nor be destroyed by a conqueror, as others before it had been. "The Stone" is a name belonging to the Lord Jesus Christ alone. "Set at nought" by some (Acts iv. 11), disallowed by many (1 Pet. ii. 7), yet "chosen of God." He is exalted to the honour of being Saviour now and Judge hereafter. The Jews, as a nation, fell upon that Stone, and were "broken," as they are this day. Upon the godless Gentile world represented in the image, it will fall, and as the Lord forewarned will "grind them to powder" (Matt. xxi. 44). But thanks be to God, there is another company which, although it does not appear in this Book of Daniel, or indeed in the Old Testament at all, is fully described in its relation to this same Stone in the New Testament Scriptures. That is the Church, composed of all the saved of this present dispensation of grace. They have come to Christ and are built upon Him as "the living Stone" (1 Pet. ii. 4, 5). In the *past*, the Jew

stumbled and fell, and was broken and scattered among the nations. In the *future*, the Gentiles, proud and rebellious, will be crushed in sudden and awful judgment by the Man whom God has appointed to be the world's Judge (Acts xvii. 31). In the *present*, all who belong to Christ by redemption on His part and by faith on theirs, are built on Him as their Rock of salvation, never to be moved from them or they removed from Him, for they each, like Peter, are Rock-men, having the life and nature of the living Son of God, whose throne they will hereafter share. And this clearly distinguishes them from all the nations upon whom the Stone is to fall, and should surely keep them separate from the politics and wars and vain hopes of the present evil world. So you see that the coming Kingdom of the Son of Man is to be introduced by a sudden catastrophe of judgment, and not by the gradual diffusion of that which is good. It has been the vain dream of more than one of the world's great rulers to hold the sceptre of universal empire, and bring about that "golden age" of which poets have sung. It was lately reported that the German Emperor, addressing his troops on the battlefield, in October, 1914, said: "A new empire shall arise more splendid than the world has yet seen, a *Roman-German* Empire, which shall rule the world." But while the ambition for such an empire may exist, the Utopian dream can never be realised. For there is no place for such an empire in the Word of God, and that Word shall stand unchanged for ever. The time may be near or distant, but the issue is with God.

Spiritual Minded Christians.

BY ALEXANDER MATTHEWS, TACOMA, U.S.A

A SPIRITUALLY minded man is one who is led and taught by the Spirit of God : one who walks in the Spirit, and realises by the Spirit that he is an object of God's continual care and blessing. The eye of his heart is on Christ : he finds satisfaction nowhere else, than in His presence. The language of his heart is "All my springs are in Thee." Being thus occupied with Christ he is constrained by Him to take up life's various duties, relationships, and necessary employments as unto Him. He is consciously dependent on the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit to do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and so to walk as God's obedient child in subjection to the Word of God.

All saints are not equally spiritual. The best in these days seem to be but feeble ; yet one may be feeble without being carnal. The unspiritual state of many is often painfully evident now, as it was in the apostle days (I Cor. iii. 1). How very solemn this is !

Spirituality produces effects. There are three we will consider. First, DISCERNMENT : "He that is spiritual judgeth (or discerneth) all things" (I Cor. ii. 15). None have ability to examine and distinguish between things that differ, to discern the workings of Satan, of the flesh, and of the spirit of the world, as those who are spiritually minded. This is a reason why when evil is judged and decidedly dealt with, some see no need for such action, they see nothing wrong. The Corinthian saints had moral and

doctrinal evil among them, yet apparently they had no exercise of conscience about it, for they were carnal. Carnal Christians fail to discern the holiness of the path marked out by the Spirit of God in the Word.

Second, only those who are spiritual are ABLE TO RECEIVE THE TEACHING that the Spirit of God is ever ready to impart. To the Corinthians the apostle writes : "I have fed you with milk and not with meat, for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able" (I Cor. iii. 2). Only thus can we account for many Christians with intelligent minds who hear divine truth ministered, yet it produces no result in their lives. There must be a right spiritual state in both speaker and hearers, if lasting blessing is to result.

Third, a spiritual Christian is able TO RESTORE OTHERS. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one." It does not follow that because I am a child of God I am fitted to set right others who are wrong. Only one who is "spiritual" can rightly do this service. Such will not be hard and legal, nor self-confident in their way, but will act in meekness, in humility, and in dependence upon the Lord, knowing full well that in themselves is the same tendency to evil, and that but for the grace of God, they themselves would fall. While seeking to restore others they remember the word, "considering thyself lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. vi. 1). May we have grace to hearken to His voice who says, "Walk in the Spirit." Without this, there is no spirituality.

New Testament Mysteries.

"MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT."—II.

WILLIAM HOSTE, B.A.

BABYLON was built on both sides of the Euphrates in an immense square of, at the lowest computation, 34 miles in circumference (Herodotus made it 60 miles), of $8\frac{1}{2}$ miles to each square. The river was spanned by a great bridge of stone, clamped with iron and roofed over, which connected the two parts of the city, but of which no trace remains to-day. The temple of Belus was in the western city; the Hanging Gardens, built by Queen Semiramis on successive tiers of arches, up to the height of the walls, were on the eastern side of the river. There was a moat of running water around the city and the walls, pierced for a hundred gates of solid brass, were at least 300 feet high and 70 feet broad, surmounted by a street on which a chariot of four-horses could easily turn. Of all these enormous walls, the greatest known in the history of the world, nothing is seen to-day, though when the prophecies were uttered foretelling her utter ruin, nothing could have seemed less probable than such a catastrophe. But no word of God can fall to the ground. Isaiah prophesied more than 165 years before the taking of Babylon and 200 years before Herodotus, "the father of history," as the world calls him, and yet he not only names the man destined by God to be the first to humble Babylon, but describes the manner of its capture. Cyrus accomplished this in 538 B.C., after more than two years' siege, by turning aside, as is

well known, the course of the Euphrates. It was taken a second time by Darius Hystaspes in 516 B.C., and later on by Alexander the Great. Through centuries, the great city declined, until eventually the prophecies were literally fulfilled, the broad walls of Babylon were "utterly broken," and she herself "became heaps."

Some students of prophecy believe that Babylon must be rebuilt, on the ground that two or three specific details named in the prophecies have not been fulfilled in the destruction that has already taken place. I think a more careful reading of the prophecies goes to shew that such an idea is mistaken.

Let us examine the supposed discrepancies. Does it not say that the judgment of Babylon should "come upon her suddenly? which she should not know?" (Isa. xlvii. 11). How reconcile this with centuries of decline and decay? The words of the prophet may quite well mean that she should be taken by surprise, as indeed she was. Her judgment was to come upon her suddenly, but it does not say it was to be consummated suddenly. But then does not Isaiah xiii. 19 distinctly say that "Babylon shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrha: it shall never be inhabited nor dwelt in from generation to generation?" Yes, the *effect* was to be the same in both cases. Babylon, like Sodom and Gomorrha, should *not be inhabited*, but it does not say that the *manner* of their judgment should be the same (see also Jer. l. 40). That Hillah, an Arab town of some importance, exists to-day in the neighbourhood, does not negative this, as it

remains to be proved that this place is within the site of ancient Babylon. The fact that in its gardens there are said to be no traces of ruins would rather prove the contrary. But again does it not say that no stone should be taken from Babylon to build with, and is it not well known that neighbouring cities were built from her bricks? This last fact is so, but it is not accurate to apply the words of Jer. li. 25, 26, to Babylon as a whole. They are addressed to "the destroying mountain," even "Birs Nimroud." "They shall not take of thee a stone for a corner nor a stone for a foundation." This has been literally fulfilled. The great mound of ruins is truly a "burnt mountain"—vitrified by a judgment of fire, and thus quite unfit to produce either corner or foundation stones.

The idea that Babylon must be rebuilt is not only far-fetched and *mistaken, but introduces confusion into the description of the woman's seat in Rev. xvii. 9, 18. The city on which she rests is built, we are told, on seven mountains, and was, when the apostle wrote, "reigning over the kings of the earth." This was certainly not true then of Babylon, nor do seven hills exist in the plain of Shinar, on which the literal city of Babylon could be rebuilt. We have one city which corresponds with this twofold description, and we need no other.

But when it is affirmed that the prophecies against Babylon have been so literally fulfilled as to render needless any

* The reader is recommended to read "Keith on Prophecy" (to which the present writer owes much information), if he would be convinced that the prophecies against Babylon have been literally and adequately fulfilled.

future rebuilding of the historical city, it is not meant that these prophecies have been exhausted. There is a "fulfilment" still to come, as we shall now see.

For centuries, Babylon had only been an immense historical reminiscence and nothing more,* a title to be conferred half in flattery, half in reprobation on one or another of the great modern capitals of Christendom, when suddenly the Prophetic Word presents her to us as an actual reality. "Great Babylon," we read, "came in remembrance before God to give unto her the fierceness of his wrath" (Rev. xvi. 19). "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen" (Rev. xviii. 7). But how can that fall which has already fallen, or that be judged which has already been destroyed? Only by having once more come into existence under a new guise. It has been affirmed, with what truth I know not, that the Germans on the Russian frontier have changed their plans of campaign seven times, whereas the Grand Duke Nicholas is at his first. Be that as it may, one thing is certain, Satan is at his first plan. It was, indeed, a crushing, personal reverse for him when Babylon was razed to the ground. "Bel was confounded." He found himself without a seat, and obliged to seek a new sphere, wherein to carry out the old policy. Here we see the malignant subtlety of Satan toward the Eve of the New Creation. Persecution had but fanned her faith, might not patronage extinguish it? We know too well how he succeeded in his effort, and what the result has been.

* The Babylon where Peter wrote his First Epistle was probably a small town in Egypt.

The Converting Power of God.

THE only kind of preaching that is of any use, is preaching in the power of the Holy Ghost. All other kinds only make sham converts, who have not the life of God in them. The vital question for all who preach is not large meetings, or grand addresses, but to have the converting power of God with them. When preachers are right with God, and preaching His Word in the Holy Ghost, there is sure to be work done for eternity, and the devil will most certainly oppose it. There will be no need for instrumental music at this kind of meetings, to draw the people. The presence of God will attract, and the power of God will arrest and save. We may have large meetings, grand preaching, fine singing, and not a breath of God's power in it all. There is plenty of this all around, from the beginning of the year to its end. But what is it all worth to God? It takes the power of God to convert sinners, and that power is only with the spiritual man. Carnal preachers, however clever, know nothing of it. Even true men may lose it, and need to be set right with God, before they have it again. The channels through which it flows must be cleaned out, and then God, who loves mercy, will work in His own way through His own chosen instruments, not as we dictate to Him, but as He wills. There will be no need for organs then to bait the people. God's first preachers had none of them, yet they got a hold on the people, and there were thousands converted. When preachers are right with God, they get a grip of men.—*Donald Ross.*

Scattered to Preach.

WHEN the early Christians were all scattered abroad by persecution, we are told they "went everywhere preaching the Word" (Acts viii. 4). Very likely most or all would work with their hands to provide themselves with the necessities of life, but this is of so little account in God's reckoning of things, that no mention is made of it. It is different in our days. Large numbers of the children of God have gone to various parts of the earth in recent years. But what are they doing? If the Holy Ghost were to give an account of how most of them are occupying their time and spending their strength, how different it would be from what He records in these early chapters in Acts! Instead of telling that they preached "everywhere," and that multitudes were converted, would He not rather have to record the floating of great business concerns, partnerships with the ungodly, fine houses built and grandly furnished, and in many instances the loss of all in the end, including their own testimony as Christians. Truly the fine gold has become dim, and we need to cry to God to preserve us from the spirit of this evil age in which we live.—**JAMES CAMPBELL.**

The King's Countenance.

SHOW me Thy face, the heaviest cross
Will then be light to bear,
There will be gain in every loss,
And peace with every care.

Show me Thy face, and I shall be
Attentive to Thy Word,
My only aim, my daily joy,
To serve and please the Lord.

The Preacher's Column.

OUTLINES OF EVANGELISTIC ADDRESSES.

THE GOSPEL.

- The Gospel of the Grace of God (Acts xx. 24).
 The Gospel of the Glory of Christ (2 Cor. iv. 4, R.V.).
 The Gospel of our Salvation (Eph. i. 13).
 1. Its Character and its Message.
 2. Its Subject and its Object.
 3. Its Purpose and its Power.

THREE CARDINAL TRUTHS.

- Redeemed by the Blood of Christ (1 Pet. i. 19).
 Regenerated by the Spirit of God (John iii. 6).
 Renewed by the Word of God (2 Cor. iv. 16, 1 Psa. ii. 2).
 The First, meets our need as Slaves of Sin.
 The Second, as fallen Sons of Adam.
 The Third, as living Children of God.

THINGS WHICH ARE PREPARED.

- Salvation for the Sinner (Kukr ii. 30, 31).
 Satisfaction for the Believer (Psa. xxiii. 5).
 Blessings for the Spiritual (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10).
 A Place for the Glorified (John xiv. 2).
 The First, is provided by the Cross (1 Cor. i. 18).
 The Second, by the Living Lord (Heb. xiii. 20).
 The Third, are revealed by the Spirit (John xvi. 13).
 The Fourth, awaits us in Heaven (Heb. xi. 16).

The Young Believer's Question Box.

At our assembly Bible reading on a recent evening, it was advanced by a brother, who claims to have knowledge of the original Greek, that the word "Psalms" in Eph. v. 19; Col. iii. 16, means "a song accompanied by instrumental music," and this is our warrant for using an organ in the service of the Gospel. Can this be accepted as according to truth?

When one has a theory or a heresy that he wants others to accept, it is no uncommon habit to garnish it with Scripture in order to make it acceptable. And if he can darken counsel by using "the original"—which goes a long way with some simple folk—he is more likely to succeed among those who receive without question all that their instructors say, in much the same spirit as pious Romanists "hear the church." But people of ordinary intelligence and some spiritual sense, who read their English Bible and use their "discernment" (Phil. i. 9, R.V.) are not so likely to be misled. To base a theory for the use of instrumental music in the worship or service of God upon such a flimsy foundation, tells its own tale. The section in both Epistles, where

the words occur, is occupied with that which makes melody in the heart "unto the Lord," and yields edification to "one another." The thought of "service in the Gospel" is not in view in these passages. And in the many places, both in the Acts and the Epistles where Gospel preaching is recorded, there is not a single case in which "music" of any sort can be found, even by an expert searcher. We are familiar with the argument derived from the word "Psalm." Dr. R. Chenevix Trench says in his "Bible Synonyms," that it comes from a word which signifies the musician's touch of the lyre, then the instrument itself, and latterly, the song to which it was the accompaniment. That there were "musical instruments of God" (1 Chron. xvii. 42) used with His approval in the literal temple worship of an earthly people with "a worldly sanctuary" we know, but the point which all who advocate their use in the present age of spiritual worship, in which the worshippers "worship the Father in spirit and in truth" (John iv. 21-23) evade is, that none of the ritual or instruments of the worship of a past age, in a temple made with hands, has been transferred to the present age of spiritual worship of a heavenly people who "worship by the Spirit of God" (Phil. iii. 3, R.V.), and not with "timbrel and harp" (Psa. cxlix. 3). The only other place in Paul's Epistles where the word "psalm" occurs, is in 1 Cor. xiv. 26, where the assembly gathered for worship is in view. It will scarcely be seriously claimed that the "psalm" was sung "accompanied by music" there, and yet this is the only single occurrence of its use in a public and collective capacity. So that if the argument of your learned friend has any consistency at all, it is in the assembly of saints, and not in a Gospel meeting, where his "psalm" with its organ or cornet accompaniment should be in use. Perhaps he has not gone quite far enough along the road that leads to Rome, to advocate the use of instrumental music in the "morning meeting." But that may come in due time, where such fallacies are received as truth.

Answers to Correspondents.

QUERIST.—The Revised reading of the words of Luke iii. 23, supply the information you seek. They are, "And Jesus Himself, when He began to teach, was about thirty years of age."

X.—The absolutely accurate fulfilment of the prophetic words of God, concerning events of the past, may safely guide us in our expectation of a

literal fulfilment of what is yet to come. The prophet's words concerning the Virgin's Son (Isa. vii. 14), the entry to Jerusalem on an ass (Zech. ix. 9), the thirty pieces of silver for which Judas sold Him (Zech. xi. 12, 13), the piercing of His hands and feet (Psa. xxii. 18), and the giving of Him vinegar to drink (Psa. lxix. 21), have been fulfilled in every jot and tittle. And so must those which concern His glory and kingdom.

J. L., BELFAST.—The Word of God gives no countenance whatever to the public ministry of women in preaching and teaching before mixed audiences. Nor do we think it can be the place of any who take the Word of God as their guide to be found among their hearers. Of course there are those who like to show their liberality and breadth of mind by patronising with their presence what they profess to see to be without Scripture warrant and even against Scripture command, but we cannot advise you to follow their example. It is safer to follow what light you have from God and keep looking for more, than to trifle with what light you have and lose it. God's truth is not like an ornament to be worn or put off at pleasure, according to circumstances. It is the royal command of a King to His subject, to be heard and kept, and the Word of a Father to His child to be revered and obeyed.

W. G., CARMARTHEN.—The words of 1 Cor. ix. 25-27, do not refer to a believer's ultimate salvation, but to a servant's reward. Other Scriptures—which, be it remembered, cannot be rendered of none effect by any difference of opinion regarding the application of passages which are uncertain—abundantly show, that all who are in Christ are saved (1 Cor. xv. 3) and kept safe (Rom. v. 9) in His life and by His power (John x. 28).

J. M., GOVAN.—The use of strong drink by a child of God—even when prescribed by a doctor—is a matter of conscience between the patient and his God. We know the case of one who, in his unconverted days, had been addicted to strong drink, who when he had it prescribed for him in a serious illness, said to his doctor—"I do not feel free before God to take what I have thanked Him time and again through twenty years, for delivering me from. He is able to keep me alive if His will be so, without me taking into my lips that which my soul revolts against. And if I have to die, I will rather die sober, than enter the presence of God under the influence of strong drink." He did not die, but still lives in good health to glorify God.

Points of Practical Profit to All.

Many of our readers gratefully acknowledge help in matters of difficulty, and guidance in paths of perplexity through the brief Notes here given. They have necessarily to be short, and are meant to be suggestive, leading to personal, prayerful thought and consultation of the Word of God. By it we are to "Prove all things" (1 Thess. v. 21).

Prayer.—Prayer, in order to be heard, must be according to the will of God (1 John v. 14). Unless you are fully assured what the will of God is regarding the present conflict of European nations, you had better not dictate to Him in your approaches to His footstool, anything as to its outcome, or to whom He ought to give the victory. "Prayer and supplication for all saints" (Eph. vi. 18, 19), is a safe and Scriptural exercise, in which all praying hearts may engage, and never was it more needed than now. But the destiny of nations is with God.

Prophetic Interpretation.—There is diversity of thought among devout students of the Word respecting details in the interpretation of certain prophecies, especially such as are presented in the language of symbols. It could scarcely be otherwise. In all probability, in this as in much else, "the vision" will become plain when its fulfilment is near. But when expositors positively assert that the Lord will come on a certain day, and that He need not be expected until that day—as they have fixed it on the calendar—they surely part company with God's Word altogether, and pass into a region of error, where none who fear God and are "looking for that blessed hope" (Tit. ii. 13) can follow. Forbearance is not the right attitude toward those who lead into such error as amounts to a denial of the clearly revealed hope of the church, but withdrawal and separation (1 Tim. vi. 3-5) from their teaching.

The Jews.—The fact that many of the Jewish people who are at present living in Gentile lands, look with hope to a return to their own land, need not be taken as a revival of interest either in the promises of God or a token of repentance regarding their rejection of Christ. Many will return to Palestine and resume their national existence there in unbelief, and the time for this return may not be far off. And there is little likelihood of such a return being hindered but rather furthered by the present upheaval among the European nations. But those who so return will not be men of Abraham's faith, for many of them will receive the Antichrist as their Messiah (John v. 43), and have to be purged of their dross (Isa. i. 22-25) and refined as silver while in their land (Zech. xiii. 2, 8.)

The Psalms.—That many of the Psalms—notably Psalms xvi. and xxii.—express the personal experiences of our Divine Lord in life and in death, is unquestionable. But great discrimination is surely required in applying whatever is not actually found on the Lord's lips, or used by the Spirit as applicable to Him (as for example Acts ii. 25; Heb. ii. 8, 13), especially such experiences in their entirety as are found in Psalm lxix. 1-5 and others of a similar kind. "The sufferings of Christ" were altogether different in kind from those of His people, and are generally described by the Spirit (see Isa. liii.) in such language as cannot apply to any other.

Correspondence.

THE SANCTITY OF THE LORD'S DAY.

"Not only among worldly people, but to an ever-increasing extent by Christians, is the sanctity and honour due to the Lord's Day being set aside. Since the war began this is very manifest, and if continued it cannot fail to bring Divine chastisement from the hand of God. To a Christian, the Lord's claims should be first, no matter how others treat them. A very large number of God's people in the British Isles are at work the greater part of each Lord's Day. The Government bid them, and they obey. If there had been more exercise of soul before God over this, and much prayer, there might have been 'a way of escape' (1 Cor. x. 13) found, as surely as there was for Daniel, when a royal edict would have compelled him to disobey the law of his God. Newspapers issued on the Lord's Day are bought and read by many who belong to Christ. There is no excuse for this at all, and full consideration of what is due to the Lord, and its effect on the ungodly, would prevent it. In place of seasons of needed restful meditation on the Word, many indulge in long walks, leaving no time for personal or family devotion. These are the habits which are eating at the core of spiritual health, and which prove a stumbling block to the unconverted. The Lord is jealous of His own day, and if we, who are His people, disregard its sanctity, He will have a controversy with us, and cause us to learn it in some solemn way. The Lord awaken and exercise His people in this thing." G. S.

THE VALUE OF GODLY COUNSEL.

"As a young Christian, with little knowledge of my Bible, I have on several occasions been on the verge of being led into associations which would have been harmful to my spiritual life, and into

paths which God has forbidden to His children. I had practically no teaching, and I did not at the time of my conversion have much to help me from others who were in Christ before me. But in God's providence I was removed to a village in which there is a little assembly of God's people seeking to be guided in their worship and walk by the Word of God, and I was led into the company of two elder brethren who are in the same employment. These godly men took a deep interest in my spiritual welfare, and invited me to their homes to spend many evenings. They were lovers of God's Word, and the time was occupied in reading and speaking of the things of Christ. I was greatly helped by their godly counsel and Christian example, and now, after many years, I look back on those dear fathers in Christ as the greatest helps I ever had in the things of God. They were not what would be called preachers, but they did a work among young believers which was of great value, and I am sure there are many who have thanked God for their service. Here is a field all but unoccupied, and it is from lack of this kind of service that so many go astray." W. L.

TRUTHS WHICH ARE NEGLECTED.

"At a recent Conference, at which there were some hundreds of young Christians present from many places where there are few opportunities to hear the Word ministered, I could not help being struck by the entire lack of definite teaching on the subjects of separation from the world's religion and gathering to the Lord's Name. Twenty years ago it was not so. Able and godly brethren, who knew the need and the value of these and kindred truths, gave them due place in their ministry, with the result that those lately converted learned the will of God and acted accordingly. Is it that those who occupy the platform now on such occasions, do not know these truths, or are they losing their hold on them in practice, and consequently have to be kept in the background in teaching? Or does fear of giving offence to some who have no sympathy with such truths, rule them out? If these truths are in God's Book, and their ministry necessary to the edification of His people and for the ruling of their lives, why should they be thus neglected? I am quite sure that a wise and well-balanced presentation of truths relating to the assembly life of God's people would produce a better condition of things than at present exists in many places.

W. R.

Christ's Legacy of Peace.

IT was the Lord's last hour with His disciples. They were together in a quiet upper room in Jerusalem, and from His holy lips there flowed words of loving counsel and holy cheer. The shadows of the Cross had already fallen across His path. Judas had left the circle, and was planning His betrayal. In a few hours, Peter would deny and the rest forsake Him. The agony in the garden, the tumult of the midnight arrest, the rude scenes in Pilate and Herod's courts, and the awful hours of Golgatha were all before Him, and near. Yet He was in peace. If ever the words of the prophet, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee" (Isa. xxvi. 3), were fulfilled on earth, surely it was in Christ in that hour. And then it was that He named the legacy He was leaving to His few disciples of that time, and to His people of all times throughout the present period of His absence from earth. Of gold and silver He had none. He had not a shekel to bequeath. But He had a richer legacy to leave, than millionaires bequeath to their heirs. "Peace I leave with you" (John xiv. 27). "PEACE." He was to make it by the blood of His Cross (Col. i. 20), and Himself (Eph. ii. 13) maintain it on the throne for all His people. But this was not all, for He adds, "My peace I give unto you." That very peace that He Himself had possessed and enjoyed, amid all the troubled scenes of His life on earth. "*My* peace." But He parted with it as a last legacy to His

own who were to remain in this hostile world. "Peace with God" (Rom. v. 1), His people surely all enjoy. They fear no wrath. They see no frown on God's face. But the legacy of Christ is more than this—it is the possession and enjoyment of *His* peace, which no power of man or craft of demons ever disturbed. This peace is left and given to saints of this troubled time. It is theirs by His bequest. But in order to its enjoyment in the soul, it has to be appropriated and used. And then its voice is to be heard and its rule acknowledged in the heart and life. Surely this is what the apostle has in view in that mighty word of Col. iii. 15, R.V., "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts"—let it arbitrate, deciding in every debate and questioning that may arise as to God's dealings, whether in what He sends, or allows others to do or bring. As an "umpire" it brings the light and love of heaven to bear on all earth's troubles, and "has its way" in turning them, like the storm of Gennesaret, into "a great calm." May thus it be with the reader and with all saints, in these times of trouble, these days of distress. There is just one panacea, one real remedy for all earth's troubles. It is "My peace." And this is the apostle's benedictory prayer: "The Lord Himself give you peace at all times, in all ways" (2 Thess. iii. 16, R.V.). What he gives, let our faith receive, and make daily use of in the varied scenes of life. Amid all its fears and forebodings and cares, there is "My Peace."

"It is enough: earth's trials soon shall cease
And we shall dwell amid heaven's perfect peace."

J. R.

New Birth and Sonship.

SIR ROBERT ANDERSON, K.C.B.

NOTE.—“Divers and strange doctrines” on the New Birth, are prevalent everywhere. Some of recent date, are perplexing young and untaught Christians. To all such, these papers will be of special value.—ED.

“**A**DAM was the son of God ; all men, therefore, must be sons of God.”

How eager men are to claim this relationship, while utterly indifferent to the responsibilities and duties which it involves ! But it is a flagrant fallacy to argue that because Adam was the son of God, the descendants of fallen Adam are also sons. And Scripture knows no such sonship.

Of the Lord Jesus Christ it is written : “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name : which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God ” (John i. 11-13).

True it is that, when preaching to Athenian idolaters, the Apostle Paul adopted the words of a heathen poet : “For we are also His offspring ” (Acts xvii. 28). But no doctrine of sonship can be founded upon this. The word here used is one of wide significance ; and the argument he based on it would be equally valid if the lower creation were included in it. The language of Hebrews ii. 14 also is perverted to support this figment. But, as the sequel shows, “the children ” there spoken of are “the seed of Abraham.”* Most certain it is that all

* “For verily not of angels doth He take hold, but He taketh hold of the seed of Abraham ” (verse 16, R.V.) “We must not here understand *mankind* as some have done ” (Alford).

men are God’s creatures. But they only are children of God who have been begotten of God ; and there is only one way in which sinners can thus be begotten.

This truth has always been resisted by the professing Church. The profane heresy of “the brotherhood of Jesus,” so popular to-day, is but a phase of the old heresy of redemption by the Incarnation, which, under the influence of pagan philosophy, leavened the teaching of some of the greatest of the Fathers. Not that they were so heretical as their modern disciples and imitators. For while with them Calvary was indeed overshadowed by Bethlehem, it was not reduced to being merely a display of heroic self-sacrifice. They did not deny the Atonement.

And the Western Church, though refusing saintship to those who thus erred, took refuge in a heresy more evil still. The great Augustine of Hippo was its most distinguished exponent. While rejecting the Alexandrian conception of a God “immanent ” in human nature, he and his school were no less corrupted by Greek philosophy. The Deity of their theology was an alienated and angry God, between whom and men depraved and doomed, the Church was a mediator. For “the bosom of the Church ” afforded the only refuge from Divine wrath ; and to bring men within that shelter was their aim.*

To this end, the simple baptism of the New Testament—a public confession of Christ by those whom the Gospel had won—was remodelled on pagan lines as a

* “Augustine substituted an organised Church and a supernatural hierarchy, for an ever-present Christ ” (Dean Farrar.)

mystical regeneration and cleansing from sin, bringing the sinner into a sphere where a mystically-endowed priesthood could minister to him further grace.

But some one will exclaim: "Why speak of these heresies? Positive truth is what is wanted." Yes, in these days people are intolerant of all denunciations of error. But the seeming triumph of Satan, from the day of the Eden Fall to the present hour, has been largely due to his skill in using "positive truth." Men would be startled by a direct denial of Divine truth; so he adopts the very words in which it is revealed, and then corrupts them, or explains them away. Take, for example, the Lord's explicit declaration: "Ye must be born again." He does not challenge this: it is the creed of Christendom. But what does it mean? Baptismal regeneration! And the other "sacrament" will satisfy the Master's words about eating His flesh and drinking His blood. Thus the Word of God, while formally accepted, is made of none effect by the traditions of men.

—o:o—

Conformed to Christ.

AS the melted wax takes the impress of the seal, so the moment the saints are caught up to meet the Lord in the air, their bodies will take the impress of His glorious body then manifested. And the sight of Him will stamp its impress on the mind and heart, and on all faculties of the soul, as well as on the resurrection body, and thus we shall be conformed to the pattern of the Divine Redeemer, the Lord Jesus.—THOMAS NEWBERRY.

The World's Woe.

ITS CAUSE AND CURE.

THE EDITOR.

FOR six millenniums the weary world has groaned beneath its woe. Since that dark day of Adam's fall, in which his kingdom, like himself, came under the dominion of the great deceiver, "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." The fair scene in Eden, with its garden of delights and peaceful rivers, was exchanged for the thorn-cursed earth with its toil, and the many sorrows which fall to the lot of fallen man. *Sin* wrought the change, and brought the sorrow and the groan. Soon Adam's firstborn stained the earth with his brother's blood, and then went forth to enjoy himself in the world and forget his guilt. His descendants filled the earth with violence and corruption, and God swept the scene with the judgment of the Flood. Thus ended the first two thousand years of man's sin and sorrow. For another two millenniums, the long dark stream flowed on, with varying gleams of heavenly light and joy in the lives of men of faith, who had come back to God reposing on the promise of a coming Deliverer and Restorer, in whom they hoped as the woman's Seed, who would crush the destroyer; and as David's Son, who would bring the promised blessings to Israel's tribes, and through them to the world. But the time was long, and the way-worn pilgrim host passed one generation after another from the scene, dying "according to faith" (Heb. xi. 13, R.V.), "not having received the promises." At

length, and at the time appointed, "the Dayspring from on high" (Luke i. 78), came. He came to His own, and presented Himself as Zion's King (Matt. xxi. 5-9) and the world's Deliverer. But "His own received Him not," their cry was, "Not this Man." And that same week, they gave their King a felon's cross. Even then, God's mercy lingered, and after He had been "received up into heaven," the message was sent by God to the guilty people, that if they repented of their sin, He would "send Jesus Christ" back to set up His kingdom among them, giving the "times of refreshing" and of worldwide blessing of which prophets had spoken. It was a wonderful message, an unheard of opportunity, a day never to be forgotten. But Israel set their glorified Messiah "at nought" (Acts iv. 11), as they had "despised" Him in humiliation, and wrath has come upon them "to the uttermost" (1 Thess. ii. 16). The scattered nation, "tribes of the wandering foot," without a home, without a king, oppressed, persecuted, are fighting on all the battlefields of Europe to-day against each other, filling their cup of woe to the brim, all because they refused their King and "knew not the time of their visitation." Blame emperors, governors, persecutors if you will, but the cause of all their woe is read in their own words, uttered on that day in which they crucified their King—"His blood be on us and on our children" (Matt. xxvii. 25). The rejection of Christ, is the cause of all the woes of the Jewish people at the present hour. To the great Gospel world, God is now giving a brief "visit" of grace, in which, through the

Gospel preached to all nations, Christ is presented for their acceptance as Saviour and Lord. Out from these nations God is taking a people "for His Name" (Acts xv. 14), who are to be with Christ in heavenly glory. But the world is the same godless world still. It has no room for God's Christ, for He is still "disallowed of men" (1 Pet. ii. 4). And the place of supreme honour that God claims for His Son in exaltation, is "disallowed" Him by Gentile nations, as surely as His Messiahship was by Israel. All the woes of this poor world, with all its boasted wisdom and religion, come from the fact that it "disallows" Christ His place and His honour. Its millions locked in the grip of deadly war, its rivers of shed blood and tears, its widows' wails and orphan cries, and the dark shadows of its last long struggle, all come, without a doubt and as surely as God has said it, because, "they received not the love of the truth," (2 Thess. ii. 12). And not until the day of the enthronement of the Prince of Peace will the angry and sinburdened nations beat their swords into ploughshares, and study war no more. Then, munitions, shells, submarines, dreadnoughts, will all go to the scrap heap, and Christ will reign in peace without the aid of army or fleet. And His reign will bring peace to the weary world. O that His people, purchased by His blood, may be kept intently looking for "that blessed hope"—the first glad signal of the coming day of deliverance to the weary and groaning earth.

The whole creation groans.
And waits to hear the voice
That shall restore her comeliness,
And make her wastes rejoice.

Come, Lord, and wipe away
The woe, the curse, the stain,
And make this blighted world
of ours
Thine own fair world again.

The Coming of the Lord,

AND THE EVENTS WHICH WILL FOLLOW;

WITH SOME NOTES ON THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

BY W. H. HUNTER.

THE call of the fourth Living One to the rider on the PALE horse will bring to a close, for the time being, the activities of the Cherubim in connection with "the day of vengeance of our God," and will mark the end of the providential stage of the judgments in the opening part of that day, the judgments which the Lord Jesus Christ described as being introductory, as being like unto the beginning of the pangs of a woman in travail, which lead on towards the more bitter pains of parturition.

The words of the Lord referred to will be found in Matthew xxiv. 7 and in Mark xiii. 8. They were uttered as Christ sat on the Mount of Olives, and looked across the valley upon the buildings of the Temple from which He had just turned away for ever, and which He had doomed to destruction. "YOUR house is left unto you desolate." "YOUR house," although it was not more than four days since He had spoken of it as the LORD'S HOUSE. But events had moved rapidly in those four days: the purposes of God had ripened fast; and the destruction of the Temple and the treading down of the city by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled, had become but a question of brief years.

The words thus spoken differ in form and in substance from those which were spoken two days later in the privacy of the upper room: and distinction should be drawn between the two occasions and

the two utterances if the confusion of mind under which many have laboured, is to be avoided. The address in the upper room (which followed the Lord's Supper) was about heavenly things and a heavenly people, and related to the coming again of the SON OF GOD. The Olivet words were about earthly things and an earthly people, and led on to words concerning signs and tokens, and the coming of the SON OF MAN in visible power and great glory.

The disciples had asked the Lord what the SIGN of His coming and of "the end of the age" should be, knowing as yet nothing of that which they were to hear in the upper room. He answered them in words which, though difficult to understand then, become clear and enlightening now, when blended with the part of the Book of Revelation in which the events which shall follow the opening of the seals of the little Book are sketched. Scripture serves to interpret Scripture, and words which, when read alone seem to be indefinite and obscure, present well defined outlines when focussed by means of other words of God's breathing.

Christ spoke to the disciples of the days in which the beginning of the pangs of travail should come upon the nation of Israel, and upon the earth of which the nation formed part. He said that in those days (1) False Christs and false prophets shall come and shall deceive many; (2) wars shall deluge the earth with blood; wars, some of which will be racial "nation against nation," some dynastic "kingdom against kingdom," and which will develop until all parts of

the earth shall be involved ; (3) famines shall ravage the countries ; (4) pestilences shall devastate the towns ; and (5) earthquakes shall fill up the scene and shall strike terror to the souls of men. God will begin to make "inquisition for blood," yet will not forget "the cry of the afflicted" (Psa. ix. 12) ; therefore the Lord added, that then "*this* Gospel of the Kingdom" (the Gospel which He and the twelve and the seventy had been preaching to the lost sheep of the house of Israel), shall be preached not only in all the Roman world* (Matt. xxiv. 14), but among "all the Gentile nations" (Mark xiii. 10). It is obvious that the preaching will be effective, as disciples of the true Christ will be found on earth then, disciples who will be hated by "all the Gentile nations" for His Name's sake, will be afflicted, and will be slain ; even though the love of many shall, because of the abounding iniquity, wax cold.

If the words themselves be laid beside those in Rev. vi. 1-8, it will be seen that the events which will more immediately follow the coming of the Lord for His people may be outlined as follows :—First, a great and widespread "revival of religion" (if that expression may be used in the sense in which it is commonly employed amongst the "Free Churches") will take place in the earth. The revival will be characterised by a large degree of sincerity ; it will lead to an unprecedented increase of interest in things unseen, and will probably be due to a reaction from

the universal indifference to and unconcern about the things of God, which dull and cloud the intelligence of men at the present time ; a reaction which, it may be, will be brought about by the amazement which will follow the instant removal of so many living men and women from the earth without any apparent cause. That revival of interest in things unseen will make the way for the preaching of "the Gospel of the Kingdom," and will also make the way for the false Christs, who are to come, and whom Satan may even now be preparing for "the day," in which they will find their opportunity, and in which men who have been aroused to grim earnestness in the north and in the south, and in the east and in the west, will flock to their banners and will bow the knee at their feet.

Secondly. These grimly earnest men will be ready to fight and slay and die for their form of religion, and for their own accepted amongst the false Christs, and so doing will believe that they are doing God service. The wars, therefore, which will follow the taking of "the peace" from the earth, whether racial or dynastic, will be in the nature of religious wars. Such have always been the most bloody and the most ruthless of all wars ; and in the struggle which will follow the course of the rider on the RED horse, the followers of the racial Christs, black, yellow, red, whatever their hue may be ; and of the dynastic Christs, monarchs and governors of kingdoms ; will assert their possession of Divine authority for deeds of darkness and of hell, will claim for themselves Messianic power and glory, and will support their assertions and their claims by

* The word which is translated "world" in Matt. xxiv. 14, is that used in Luke ii. 1 to designate that part of the earth in which the inhabitants owned Caesar's sway, and were enrolled in his lists, as liable to taxation and to military service.

signs and wonders which will stagger humanity, and will leave asphyxiating gases, poisoned waters, and other forms of frightfulness, far in the background.

Thirdly. Black famine will follow on the heels of the dogs of war.

“ Byzantines boast that on the sod,
Where once their Sultan's horse has trod,
Grows neither blade, nor plant, nor tree;”

and too often have such made their boast good in stricken lands and invaded countries. But in the day of the BLACK horse it will not only be in lands and countries in some comparatively limited region; but “the peace will be taken from the earth,” and the famine will follow it. It is unnecessary to labour this point now, the present generation has become well aware of what war means to conquered lands and to downtrodden peoples, and we may let it pass at that.

Fourthly. On the heels of the RED and the BLACK horses will ride Death and Hades, with their team of plague and pestilence (such as the “Black Death,” as it was once called, which invaded Asia and Europe in the middle of the fourteenth century, and finally reached England, in which it cut off *one-half* of the whole population), and authority will be given unto them to kill with sword and hunger, and with death and wild beasts, one-fourth of the human race, which will then be upon the earth; as this, having regard to the fact that the work of the rider on the RED horse will be to take peace “from the earth,” seems to be the significance of the phrase “over the fourth part of the earth.” If to this tale of death be added the number of the wounded amongst men,

the hunger-bitten, and the plague-stricken, something may be understood of that which was within the vision of the Saviour of men, when He spoke of “the beginning of the pangs.”

The Value of Prophecy.

DR. S. P. TREGELLES.

THE prophetic Word is of great value to the children of God. By its means, they learn how to walk in the midst of present things, according to God. It is by use of the “sure Word of prophecy” that they learn God's estimate of men and things around them; what will be the final issue of principles working in the systems which men have set up, and the relation of the people of God to these systems. It is sad, therefore, to see the extensive portions of God's Word, which deal with these subjects, overlooked and neglected by many, and lightly esteemed by some who were once apparently interested in them. There is such a thing as having held truths and then let them slip. And there is a possibility of having once learned and presented certain truths to others, and when the time of their application arrives, failing in their use and losing them. Most spiritual minds feel conscious how great the power of Satan is at this time, and how dangerous his working. To learn his wiles and see from God's Word what he is to be doing before it come to pass, is knowledge which is to be used as a safeguard, that we be not carried away by the error of the wicked.

New Testament Mysteries.

“MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT.”—III.

WM. HOSTE, B.A.

IT has been affirmed in writing by some interpreters of the Revelation, that the tremendous scenes at the opening of the sixth seal in chap. vi. represent the triumph of Christianity, under Constantine, over Paganism. This interpretation has two flaws. It is inadequate and inaccurate. It would be truer to say that Paganism triumphed over Christianity, for then principles were introduced which broke down the wall of separation between Christianity and Paganism, between the Church and the world, and prepared the way for “Mystery, Babylon.” What could surpass the consummate wickedness of Satan seducing the Bride of Christ from her allegiance, ousting her from her place of public testimony, and substituting by an act of diabolical legerdemain a shameless counterfeit, his own mistress? All this happened gradually. Little by little “the Church” took the place of Christ. And Ecclesiastical authority replaced that of the Lord. Christianity, the pure doctrine of Christ’s Person and Work, was eclipsed in Christendom, by a mixture of Christian terms and worldly principles. This was “Babylon” in the bud. In the Revelation we see her in full bloom. Professing to represent God, she belies Him; pretending to minister the Word of God and the sacraments, she denies the one and counterfeits the other. And yet there are profounder “depths of Satan” *than that*. He has too well succeeded in persuading millions that

outside of this “Church” there is no salvation, and worse still, in engulfing within her fold many true children of God, who cling to her as “their church,” and are deeply offended if warned to flee from her.

A CITY AND A SYSTEM.

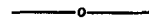
Literal Babylon represents a city, the capital of the first great Gentile power, the centre of an idolatrous system; “Mystery, Babylon” an idolatrous system centred in a city, the capital of the last great Gentile power. One of the seven angels, who had just poured out the vials of God’s wrath, is commissioned to shew John the judgment of the great whore, just as later to display the glory of the Bride. The scene is laid in a desert, for the highest “kultur” of man cannot make the world anything else. Nothing but Christ can do this world good. Nothing but Christ can justify the sinner or sanctify the saint. The great whore is referred to in verse 1 as “seated upon many waters,” explained in verse 15 to mean “peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.” This describes her characteristic position for centuries past, the world-wide scope of her spiritual empire. But the special position in which the angel displays her to John is as “seated upon a scarlet-coloured beast.” The preposition “upon” is the same in both places, but in verse 3 it governs a case denoting motion on to. She has clambered up on to the beast. At last she has realised her secular ambitions, and is seen in the zenith of her power—prelude to her everlasting abasement. A rider not only rides, but guides his steed. So the woman is seated on the

beast and "reigns over the kings of the earth." It matters nothing that the beast is "full of the names of blasphemy." Ecclesiastical corruption is profoundly indifferent to Christian principle. Spiritual life and separation from the world are immaterial; position, wealth, talent are indispensable. Does not she herself flaunt the shameless name—"Mystery, Babylon, the Great, mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth"? This subtitle "mother of harlots," is expressive of the true scope of Babylon. Just as Babylon in old days described often more than the city, so "Mystery Babylon" has daughters, harlots like herself, in externals perhaps diverse, in essential principles the same. The scarlet-coloured beast represents the Roman world in its last phase, but the fact that the ten horns are not crowned, would shew, that the scene before us precedes the "hour" in which the ten kings will receive power as kings with "the beast" (chap. xvii. 12).

The woman is arrayed in purple and scarlet costume, thus rivalling by imitation the regal glory of the world, and is decked (*lit.* gilded) with gold and precious stones and pearls, in contrast with that which becometh women professing godliness, good works (1 Tim. ii. 9, 10).

She holds a golden cup in her hand, travesty of the cup of salvation, and "full," not of joy and communion, but of abominations and filthiness. She is viewed, not as Israel of old as an adulteress, but as is proper for one, who counterfeits the affianced bride, as an abandoned woman, committing fornication with the kings of the earth, and making the people drunk

with the wine of her fornication. The great ones of the earth are not deceived, policy alone shapes their ends. But the vulgar crowd is deceived—intoxicated with her religious displays, art, music, oratory and millinery, as they are by operatic scenes or theatrical shows. And she is intoxicated herself. Instead of being "filled with the Spirit," she is "drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." But her triumph is short; her judgment lingereth not. It will fall first on the System by the hand of man (see chap. xvii. 16), and later on the City from the hand of God (chap. xvi. 19). The greatest earthquake of history will divide her into three parts, and the cities of the nations will fall.



Unfailing Grace.

THE Grace of God never fails us. We learned it somewhat when as sinners we came to God at first, but we know it now as believers every day. Of all the things that we have to do, there is nothing harder than to live on the bounty of God's free grace. We like to bear our own burdens and shift for ourselves. "Of His fulness have we all received, and grace for grace" (John i. 16); that is, grace *upon* grace. We have seen on the seashore wave follow wave, and still they come, for the whole mighty ocean from pole to pole is behind. Let us live in the atmosphere of this unfailing grace of God, and prove its sufficiency amid all the difficulties of life daily.—*Alexander Stewart.*

The Preacher's Column.

OUTLINES OF EVANGELISTIC SUBJECTS.

OUR GREAT DELIVERER.

- He Delivers Sinners from Sin's Bondage (Luke iv. 18).
 He Rescues from the Power of Darkness (Col. i. 13).
 He Severs from the present evil World (Gal. i. 4).
 He Delivers from every evil Work (2 Tim. iv. 18).

THREE STAGES OF CHRISTIAN LIFE.

- Deliverance from the Service of Satan (Col. i. 13).
 Discipleship to the Lord Jesus (Matt. xxviii. 19, R.V.).
 Delight in the Service of the Lord (Isa. lviii. 13, 14).

The FIRST is Enjoyed when Christ is Received.

The SECOND is Seen when Christ is Confessed.

The THIRD is Assured when Christ is Obeyed.

SALVATION, SANCTIFICATION, SERVICE.

- Salvation, is the Sinner's rescue by God (Rom. i. 16).
 Sanctification, is his setting apart for God (Heb. x. 12).
 Service, is his surrender to God (Rom. xii. 1).

Salvation is Emancipation from Sin's PRACTICE.

Sanctification is Separation from Sin's POLLUTION.

Service is Subjection to God's PLAN.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Do "the times of restitution of all things" mentioned in Acts iii. 21, include the giving to the unconverted of former ages, and to the heathen who have died without hearing the Gospel "another chance," as the saying is? This is being taught in so-called evangelical circles, and is having, I fear, disastrous results.

The habit of wrenching part of a text from its context, and then reading into it something concerning which it has nothing at all to say, is a common pravity among those who seek to introduce error, garnished with misapplied Scripture. The apostle Peter is speaking to the Jewish people of their rejected Messiah, "whom the heavens must receive until the restoration of all things, which God spake by the mouth of all His holy prophets" (Acts iii. 21, R.V.). The message of the prophets was, as Peter himself elsewhere tells us, "the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow" (1 Pet. i. 12), and these glories are connected with Israel's restoration to earthly blessing, when Christ shall be owned by them as their Messiah. The unconverted of past and present ages will have no share in these blessings, and no part in these "times," for as Rev. xx. 5 tells us, their bodies will be in the grave, and their souls in hell (hades) during the whole of the millennial reign. Those who seek a

peg in Scripture upon which to hang their theory of "a second chance"—which is a denial of all that God has said concerning Christ-rejecters—must therefore be deprived of this Scripture for the Satanic use to which they put it.

Answers to Correspondents.

ALEPH.—The words of 2 Thess. ii. 7-12, leave no doubt that the coming of Antichrist will be as a judicial visitation from God upon Christendom for its rejection of the Gospel of Christ.

YOUNG PREACHER.—It is yours to preach Christ, and leave results with God. If you are called and fitted to preach to larger congregations, you will no doubt need more grace, which God ever gives "according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (Eph. iv. 7). But be careful not to exceed your measure, in attempting more than you have either gift or grace to accomplish. Many make shipwreck of their service on this rock.

A. D., BOWNESS.—There is no principle of Scripture set aside in a few ardent Gossellers taking up Gospel meetings in a hall or room other than that used for the assembly's worship. It is not always the best place for a live and energetic Gospel work. But while none should interfere or hinder, going about it in a right spirit and way will be necessary, in order to ensure the fellowship and practical sympathy of godly people in the work.

G. B., Co. DUBLIN.—It may be a safeguard against obtrusive ministry to choose your preachers, but it is no guarantee that you will have a spiritual or efficient ministry in the freshness and power of the Spirit, which is necessary to convert sinners and builds up saints. To leave room for God to send and use whom He will, with the necessary rule that prevents the Divine principle being abused, is the Scriptural way. And we have always found where it is practised in a godly manner, it yields the most fruitful ministry. For God ever delights in blessing, where His Word is owned.

W. J. B., AYRSHIRE.—When the person and work of Christ form the subject of brief words of ministry, leading forth the hearts of the assembled worshippers in a richer and fuller worship, it cannot but be in season and of the Spirit, even if before the breaking of the bread. But those who exercise such a ministry should make it their aim not to diminish worship by using much of the time, and not to occupy the minds of the saints with any subject other than that which helps on to the special object

of the meeting, namely, the remembrance of the Lord Jesus. Desultory and scrappy ministry, least of all 'stray thoughts' without cohesion, do not tend toward an increased flow of worship. Like much else, such subjects can be best ventilated so as to exercise the minds of Christians, by wise and seasonable reference to them in ordinary ministry of the Word by local brethren, of which, unfortunately, there is a general lack, and in many cases little room for the exercise of what remains.

C. S., TORONTO.—The truth of God regarding the separation of His people from the world, and their gathering to the Name of the Lord, is not to be regarded as something that may be treated with indifference. If not fundamental to the believer's salvation, it is vital to the glory of the Lord, which should surely count as something with all who profess to love His Name. By a gradual "levelling down" process, truths which are our only authority for being gathered as we are, definitely outside the sects of Christendom, have lost their point and power, and have been so "explained" in pamphlets by defenders of pan-sectarian church position, that their authority is "explained away." And young believers are left to infer that it does not matter what one holds or practices on such matters. We can have no part or parley with such opinions. If the Word of God calls us to separation from the world's religion, and from hobnobbing with "clerisy," which is its pet idol, then let our obedience be full and our testimony firm and clear. There can be no halfway house on this road. And there ought to be no cringing fear of giving offence to those who "run with the hare and hunt with the hounds," by sharing in what an honoured servant of Christ called a "conspiracy of silence," in public ministry on all this line of God's truth.

Answers to Special Questions.

Help in answering these questions will be valued. Answers must be brief, leading TO the Word, free from personal reference, or allusion to local events.

WHAT IS FUNDAMENTAL ERROR?

We are familiar with the statement that one holding and teaching "fundamental error" is unfit for the fellowship of an assembly of God's people, and, if found in one, that Scripture commends his expulsion. But what is "fundamental error?" With some, the phrase seems to have a very limited application.

ANSWER A.—Six foundation facts are named in Heb. vi. 1-2, which embrace the doctrine of Christ's

person and work, man's sin, need of repentance and conversion, salvation by grace through faith, and the eternal judgment of the ungodly. In our day, it is not so much open denial of these and other great truths, as the perversion of them that is common. It needs men of true spiritual acumen to deal with those who hold and insidiously teach such errors, for most of them deny that they hold them, while they secretly leaven all to whom they have access by spreading them. J. S.

ANSWER B.—Fundamental error regarding the Gospel, the Person and Work of Christ, and the eternal punishment of the wicked, although common enough, is generally so repugnant to spiritual instinct and opposed to evangelical teaching, that few true children of God are found to accept it, or sympathise with those who teach it. But it is otherwise with such errors as Conditional Immortality, Annihilation, Sleep of the Soul, and the Hope of a Final Restitution of all, or at least a second chance for all, in virtue of Christ's atoning work. Yet these vagaries and unscriptural doctrines aim a direct blow at the Gospel, and utterly deny God's distinct warnings to those who reject it (see Acts xiii. 40, 41; 2 Thess. i. 8, 9). None holding such doctrines—and we do not discriminate between holders and teachers, for all who hold it teach, if not publicly, secretly—should have any place in an assembly of God's people, no matter what their gifts or graces. W. M.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—Such passages as Gal. i. 8, 9; 1 Tim. i. 19, 20; 2 Tim. ii. 16-18 show, in what light God regards erroneous teaching, and what place those who are its advocates are to have. And 1 Tim. iii. 15, 16; 1 John ii. 20-23; 2 John 9, 10, may surely teach us what the Christian and the Church are especially called to bear witness to, and guard as a sacred trust against all error. But there are doctrines, while not directly a denial of what are usually regarded as fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, which are nevertheless perversions of the faith, and as such ought not to be tolerated, or those who teach them permitted to do so in the midst of God's assembled saints. It is to such persons that the principles of 1 Tim. i. 5, 6; Tit. i. 10, 11, apply. They have to be silenced in order to prevent their unwholesome and unedifying words doing harm to those who are easily beguiled, and which, if continued, would create factions and spread discord and foster division (Acts xx. 29, 30) among those who are exhorted to be "of one mind" and to "live in peace" (2 Cor. xiii. 11).

To such, the words of Titus iii. 10 and of Rom. xvi. 17, 18, surely apply. And there are foundation truths of the Church, as well as of the Gospel, which cannot be set aside or supplanted at man's will. It is of these that the apostle writes in 1 Cor. iii. 11, when he says, "No other foundation can any one lay than that is laid." It is not personal salvation, but God's temple and what men as builders bring into it, that is here in view (ver. 16, 17), with the responsibility and judgment of those who bring in such persons or teachings as "defile" that temple. Slackness in one department of God's truth generally leads to indifference in others, and there is abundant evidence in these easygoing times of latitudinarianism in the things of God, that where error is allowed and condoned concerning what is reckoned to be of only secondary value, it is apt to spread. Our only safeguard is that expressed by the Psalmist—"I esteem ALL Thy precepts concerning ALL things to be right, and I hate EVERY false way" (Psa. cxix. 28).

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Points of Practical Profit to All.

Many of our readers gratefully acknowledge help in matters of difficulty, and guidance in paths of perplexity through the brief Notes here given. They have necessarily to be short, and are meant to be suggestive, leading to personal, prayerful thought and consultation of the Word of God. By it we are to "Prove all things" (1 Thess. v. 21).

Support.—Clearly, the man who has been called and fitted by the Lord to "do the work of an evangelist" (2 Tim. iv. 5), and who gives all his time and energy to that work, is entitled to the support of the Lord's people. And so far as we know, he usually gets it.

Collections.—There need be no rigid rule as to WHERE the box is set, or WHEN the bag is passed round. Only, let the former be set where all who are expected to contribute and no others, can reach it. A time to "take the collection" least likely to draw the mind from what has preceded, or is to follow, is NOT in the middle of prayer or ministry, as is sometimes done to secure "a better collection." When God's people are right in heart they do not fail in their giving. When they are not, sound ministry of the Word to reach the root of the trouble—rather than devices borrowed from the religious world—is the right remedy.

Subjection.—The Word is explicit in its teaching, that godly subjection is to be rendered by Christian servants to their "masters according to the flesh" (Eph. vi. 7-8), whether saved or unsaved. But it

nowhere enjoins such subjection, if they, or any acting on their behalf, ask a Christian to do what would dishonour the Lord and involve disobedience to His Word. This has to be kept in view steadily, especially in a time when Divine claims are reckoned as nothing.

Savourless Preaching.—A few books, a retentive memory, and a good delivery are all that some need to set them up as preachers. But their preaching has neither freshness nor savour. All who have spiritual discernment feel that it lacks what is needed to save sinners and nourish Divine life in saints. Better far for a young preacher to give what he has gathered from the Word and fed on in his own soul, however "plain" the fare may be, than to give what is not his own, but learned as a schoolboy's lesson, and then rehearsed without heart or soul or substance in it.

The Apostasy.—"The falling away" of 2 Thess. i. 3, R.V., is not as your correspondent avers, a "lack of interest in the Church," nor a "falling off in its membership," but a renunciation by the so-called church itself of the fundamental truths of the faith, and a withdrawal into a denial of the Father and the Son. The "New Theology," as expressed in the manifesto of the minister of "The City Temple," London, and evidently approved of by the popular preachers who fraternise with him is, that "Jesus Christ was and is Divine, and SO ARE WE," that "Our being is the same as God's," and that "every man is a potential Christ," leaves no room for doubt what the apostasy is, and how far it has advanced. Let those who would keep out of its vortex, watch their company and their associations!

Covering Sin.—The words, "love covereth a multitude of sins" (1 Pet. iv. 8, R.V.), do not mean that such sins as are subjects for church discipline (1 Cor. v.) are to be unreported by those that know they exist, but that no unnecessary exposure be made of faults and failings which spiritual service may recover those who have so erred from, and which love may thus cover. But while love thus covers the sin, it is always careful not to condone it, and to have no fellowship with it.

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Questions Requiring Answers.

What Scriptures warrant the common belief that the Holy Spirit ceases His work on earth when the Lord comes?

Will the Lord Jesus reign personally in Jerusalem, or by deputy?

God's Judgment on Pride.

THE testimony of the Book of God, from its beginning to its close is, that when vain man's pride and rebellion reaches its height, then Divine judgment comes down swiftly upon it. The hour of its greatest triumph and loftiest presumption is the time of its degradation at the hand of heaven. In the light of this, present events and the lofty thoughts of men and nations need to be weighed by God's people in the balances of the sanctuary, if they are to be kept in God's counsel regarding them, and preserved from standing in "the counsel of the ungodly" (Psa. i. 1), and thus judging of men and things in the false and flickering light of "man's day."

The *Antediluvians* were a people great in their generation, "men of renown" in the estimate of each other. But in the judgment of heaven, they were great alone in "wickedness" (Gen. vi. 5), and in the day of their unbelieving hardness of heart, the flood took them unawares (Matt. xxiv. 39) in judgment.

The *Babel* builders, in the day of their proud confederacy, when their city and tower had made progress, were swiftly confounded and scattered by judgment from heaven (Gen. xi.).

Pharoah, the king, had hardened his heart against God, and raised his arm to withstand His work of redemption at the Red Sea. And there his power was broken, for the Lord's right hand "dashed in pieces the enemy" (Exod. xv. 6).

Nebuchadnezzar had conquered Jerusalem, and become the Lord's whip to

chastise His backsliding people for their sins. But the Gentile glorified himself, and walking amid the magnificence of his palace his proud heart said, "Is not this great Babylon which I have builded?" While the word was on his lips, on Nebuchadnezzar God's judgment fell, and as he afterwards confessed, he learned by that experience, that "those that walk in pride He is able to abase" (Dan. iv. 37).

Haman, the Agagite, in the zenith of his prosperity, erected a gallows upon which to hang Mordecai, the Jew, but he thereby sealed his doom and was hung on his own gallows. The *Herod* of Acts xii. 21, seated on his throne, arrayed in royal apparel, was smitten by an angel of the Lord "because he gave not God the glory." And the *Beast* of Rev. xiii., the last great ruler of the Roman world—whom the whole world will wonder after—is to be caught in his last act of rebellion against the Son of God, and with his satellite, THE *Antichrist*, who will claim Divine honours (2 Thess. ii. 4-8), hurled without trial or mercy, into the lake of fire (Rev. xix. 20). Such is to be the inglorious end of the last great "king over all the children of pride" (Job xli. 34).

The proud boast and impious challenge to Divine intervention in the affairs of nations, which is heard from more than one of the European belligerent powers, towards whom God has proclaimed a "liberty to the sword" (Jer. xxxii. 17), and upon whom it has fallen in awful severity, is surely a striking proof of the existence of the same proud spirit which met its punishment in Pharoah and Nebuchadnezzar and Herod of the past,

and shall yet meet a more condign vengeance from heaven in the leader of the last great confederacy of rebels and proud boasters against God and His Christ that this world shall ever see. If any doubt that the judicial hand of God is upon the nations, who are pouring forth each other's blood like water, and determined to end each other's existence, they must be blind indeed. If the awful ravages on the battlefields of Europe and on the high seas are dismissed with the infidel comment that they are but "incidents in the struggle," and that God has no message in them to His own people in these lands, then it may be expected that woes more appalling await us. For although in this age of grace, God is not calling men to account personally for their sins, as once He did in times when "every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward" (Heb. ii. 2), it needs to be remembered that He has not ceased to be "Governor among the nations" (Psa. xxii. 29). Let the people of God beware of fraternising with those who "reply against" the Divine hand, or becoming leavened by their proud spirit and loud boastings. To imbibe the spirit of the age, to go along with it in its course, and to become conformed to its ways, must bring loss of spiritual power in service, blindness to the eye of spiritual discernment, and if not repented of and departed from, Divine rebuke and chastisement (Rev. iii. 19). For the Lord is too jealous of His honour, to allow His people to go after the ungodly world, without causing them to know of His displeasure.

J. R.

The Water and the Blood.

SIR ROBERT ANDERSON, K.C.B., LL.D.

IT cannot be asserted too plainly that no one is a child of God who has not been born of God; and that no sacrament, no ordinance of religion, can procure the new birth in any sense, or in any degree. The salvation of a sinner is God's work altogether. Baptismal Regeneration was a doctrine of ancient Paganism, but it has no place in Christianity. Scripture knows nothing of it. Never even once in the New Testament is water baptism mentioned in connection with the new birth, or with the Spirit's work. This is not an expression of opinion, but a statement of fact which anyone can test with the aid of a Concordance.

That baptism is *referred to* in "the Nicodemus sermon" is, no doubt, the traditional view of the third chapter of John. But the judgment of a weighty minority of theologians, from Calvin to the late Bishop Ryle of Liverpool, bars the assertion that this is the "orthodox" interpretation of the passage. Dr. Ryle's "six reasons" for rejecting it, seem to me indeed to make an end of controversy upon the subject.* The traditional view is practically vetoed by the glaring anachronism it involves. For the Lord reproved Nicodemus for his ignorance of a birth by water and Spirit. But how could he have known anything of Christian baptism? It had not yet been instituted, and even the apostles themselves knew nothing of it.

To fall back upon John's baptism, only

* "Expository Thoughts on the Gospel."

makes matters worse. For what relation had John's baptism to the new birth? But, we are told, the Jewish baptism of proselytes was a baptism of regeneration. Are we then to hold that the Lord's teaching about the Kingdom was based on a mere human ordinance, which had no Scriptural warrant, and which the Jews in days of apostasy derived from ancient paganism? The suggestion is positively profane.

We stand upon certainty when we aver, first, that the truth to which the Lord appealed was truth Divinely revealed, and that therefore it is in the Scriptures of the Old Testament that we must seek for the meaning of His words; and, secondly, that His words must imply redemption by blood, for on no other ground can anyone enter the Kingdom. In the sequel, recorded in verses 14-18, the Lord is not unfolding an alternative way of obtaining life; the birth by water and Spirit must, like the serpent lifted up, point to Calvary.

And, lastly, the water of John iii. 5 must have the same significance as the water of 1 John v. 6, 8—"This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood" (R.V.). And let us not forget the words which follow:—"There are three who bear witness—the Spirit, and the water, and the blood." What then does the water signify? No one whose mind is not steeped in Sacramentalism can imagine that in the threefold "witness of God," baptism is here sandwiched between the Holy Spirit and the blood of Christ. And the attempt to explain the words by the

fact recorded in John xix. 34, savours of a materialism that is wholly foreign to Christianity.

Such an explanation, moreover, is utterly inadequate. The force of the language is, that the mission and ministry of Christ were characterised by water and blood. It was not that at the death of Christ blood and water flowed from His pierced side; but that His coming, regarded as a whole, was "with the water and with the blood." This, which is plain even in our English Version, is made very emphatic in the original by the change of the preposition in the sixth verse.*

But what is the significance of this? The statement that the advent of Christ was characterised by blood is to be explained, not by the shambles, but by the types. It shuts out the "brotherhood of Jesus" lie, that He took flesh and blood in order to raise humanity by the splendid example of a perfect life and a martyr's death. It tells us that redemption was the great purpose of His coming. And this implies a ruin that allowed of no other remedy. Hence the emphasis with which it is asserted; hence, also, the hostility which it provokes in the human heart. The answer of the Jews was to crucify Him, thus aiding unwittingly in the fulfilment of His mission. His rejection by the Christianised Sadducees of to-day is as definite, though not as brutal.

The Christian understands "the blood"

* The English reader can judge of the force of this preposition by its use in 1 Corinthians iv. 21, where the apostle says, "Shall I come unto you *with* a rod, or *in* love?" that is, "Is my coming to be characterised by severity, or by love?" ("With" and "in" represent the same preposition in the Greek.)

by reference to the Hebrew Scriptures, which spell out for him the great truth of redemption. His thoughts turn back to the Passover, and with humble joy his faith finds utterance in the words, "Redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." But so profound is the prevailing ignorance of the types that we fail to understand "the water."

A redeemed sinner needs cleansing as really as a lost sinner needs redemption. And the sin-offering and the water of purification were for a redeemed people. And these cannot be separated; for it was to the sin-offering that the water of purification owed its efficacy. It was because it had flowed over the ashes of the sacrifice that it availed to cleanse.

A False "Spirituality."

I HAVE long observed that when Christians delay in their obedience to God's Word, their frequent subterfuge is an affectation of hyper-spirituality. So also righteous men, who are in worldly systems, will oft engage themselves in reading or even in writing on spiritual subjects, whilst certain matters, which press heavily on their souls (or did once till the conscience became seared, and the light was withdrawn), they refuse to look at. Easily could I cite cases many, but I forbear. Let us remember that our God seeks obedient children.—WILLIAM LINCOLN.

WATCHFULNESS.—If a Christian becomes unwatchful, old habits will return and show themselves at every opportunity.—H. W. Soltan.

New Testament Mysteries.

"MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT."—IV.

WILLIAM HOSTE, B.A.

THAT there should be no doubt as to which city is meant, two indications are given. The seven heads of the beast are, as we have seen, "seven mountains on which the woman sitteth," and as if that was not enough, the apostle closes the chapter with the direct statement, "The woman which thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth." Of what other city but Rome could this be said, when the apostle was writing? But it is important to note that the destruction of "Babylon" as a religious system, precedes its destruction as a political centre. As we contemplate the gigantic systems of Christendom, with their hoary traditions, vested interests, wealth, ministers, influence, it may seem impossible that such "walls built up to heaven" should ever be "utterly broken." But, as with literal Babylon of old, her hour will at length sound, and the world will rebel against her hypocrisy and corruption. "The ten kings shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire, for God shalt put into their heart to fulfil His will" (chap. xvii. 17). There can be no difficulty in recognising "Babylon" in that widespread religious system, which, while making exclusive claim to be "the Church of God," is the greatest earthly enemy that Church has ever had. But though Rome is "Babylon," she is not exclusively so; she has daughters who are "bone of her bone and

flesh of her flesh." There are many, indeed, who denounce Popery, who are, without suspecting it, linked with her in principle. The immense nebula, known as "the Milky Way," so familiar an object at night in both hemispheres, appears to be at such a distance as to have no possible connection with our solar system, and yet astronomers are only stating an ascertained fact, when they tell us that we really form an integral part of it. So with Babylon. Many form part of her, who think themselves far from her. Everything that negatives the essentially spiritual character of Christianity, that substitutes for entrance into the church by personal conversion, entrance by sacrament and ceremonial, that recognises "sacred places," "sacred persons," and "sacred vestments," in this dispensation, savours of earthly religion, produces confusion, and is of the essence of "Mystery, Babylon." Though the union of the various communions of Christendom under the hegemony of Rome, may appear an unpractical dream, there are signs that such a consummation may soon pass within the range of practical politics. It has lately been suggested by a well-known exponent of the "New Theology," that a General Council of the Churches of Christendom should be convened, and the Pope invited to fill the Presidential Chair. This proposition has been hailed with acclamation by certain leading Nonconformists.

It needs no prophetic gift to foretell the tremendous changes which must follow in the train of the present war. Things will never be the same again. New conditions

must arise, which are likely to force the Churches by the very instinct of self-preservation to join hands at any sacrifice. Then will be realised the "Reunion of Christendom," so long the dream of unregenerate ecclesiasticism, and so soon to issue in Divine judgment. There are expressions in Rev. xviii. which can with difficulty be applied to a religious system, such as the references to "the merchants of the earth" in verses 11-16, and the shipmasters of verse 17; but the difficulty disappears if we bear in mind that the woman represents not only a religious system, but a city as well, and that city—the centre of a great political system. Rev. xviii.—includes the fall of both. And then what follows on the Divine programme? That very "Ecclesia," which seemed to have been the occasion of Satan's greatest triumph, is manifested as the Bride of Christ. God has preserved her in spite of all, and heaven is glad. "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints" (Rev. xix. 7-8). How solemn then, in view of all this, is the voice from heaven, God's message to His people, who are, often without realising it, linked with Babylon to-day. "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. xviii. 4).

(To be continued).

The Coming of the Lord, AND THE EVENTS WHICH WILL FOLLOW:

WITH SOME NOTES ON THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

BY W. H. HUNTER.

WITH the opening of the fifth seal, the sequence of the events on the earth, which are to follow the coming of the Lord, would appear to be checked for the moment, as a heavenly vision of martyred souls was opened to the seer: a vision which had arisen out of the actions of men on the earth who will in those days abhor and slay without pity faithful disciples of the true Christ, whose witness against the false Christs will only cease with their lives.

John saw the souls of these martyrs "underneath the altar." The phrase is difficult enough, but is also of importance as well as of intense interest, and should not be passed over without consideration.

To begin with "the altar." It will be remembered that both in respect of the tabernacle in the wilderness (Exod. xxv. 9) and of the temple in the land (1 Chron. xxviii. 11), the buildings and the vessels connected with the Divine service therein, were formed "after the pattern of things in the heavens," which Moses in the one case, and David in the other, were given to see; and also that while the earthly copies of the heavenly originals were made clean by the blood of bulls and goats, the heavenly things themselves required better sacrifices than these (Heb. ix. 23). Further, in a later part of the Revelation which was vouchsafed to John for his brethren's sake, he saw a temple of God "in heaven." When these facts are collated

the conclusion seems to be inevitable, that in the first place, the altar which John saw in Rev. vi. 9, was within the curtilage of and was connected with the temple of which he beheld the opening in Rev. xi. 19; and in the second place, that temple and altar were the things in the heavens, the patterns of which David "had by the Spirit" and in accordance with which Solomon fashioned the house which he built for the Name of the LORD, and the altar which stood before that house.

Then, as to that which was "underneath" the altar. At a time when a horror of great darkness fell upon David; a horror which may be compared with that which fell upon his father Abraham in the period of reaction after the slaughter of the kings; God, who never suffers His people to be tempted above that they are able, broke through the darkness with a ray of grace and deliverance, and shewed to David first, a place for an altar through which the plague which was destroying his city and his people, might be stayed (2 Sam. xxiv. 21); and secondly, shewed him that for which he had been seeking for years—a place for "the altar of the burnt offering for Israel" (1 Chron. xxii. 1).

David found both sites at once in the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite, and therefore bought the threshing-floor and its appurtenances for fifty shekels of silver; but subsequently he enlarged his purchase, for he bought the "place of the threshing floor" for six hundred shekels of gold (a price which was one hundred and eighty times greater than that which he had agreed to pay for the floor), and set that place (which formed the summit of

Mount Moriah) apart as the site for the temple, for which he was to prepare and which his successor was to build.

There was a place on Moriah of which God had told Abraham centuries before David's trouble and David's purchase, a place on which Abraham built the altar upon which he bound Isaac his son, and the name of which he called "Jehovah-Jireh." It was said of that place, "*In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.*" and although the point cannot be discussed here, there is no reasonable doubt that the place of Abraham's altar became the threshing-floor of Araunah, and the place where (1) Solomon built "the altar of burnt offering for Israel," (2) where Zerubbabel rebuilt that altar in his day, and (3) where the altar of Herod's temple stood, an altar which John himself had once known so well and which remained up to the time when Titus and his Romans overthrew the temple, in accordance with the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, so thoroughly, that not one stone was left upon another which was not thrown down.

In the mount of the LORD the place of Abraham's altar and the threshing-floor of the Jebusite may still be seen, and though the sacred spot has been hidden from the eyes of Christendom for centuries, it can at the present time be identified with some measure of certainty. For in these last times, God has permitted hidden things to be revealed, and lost things to be discovered, that those who wait upon Him "may see, and know, and consider, and understand together."

Since David bought the summit of Moriah, that summit has, from time to

time, been escarped, enclosed by retaining walls, and levelled; and in this way has been formed into a plateau which Mohammedans call "Haram-esh-Sherif." From the surface of this plateau a mass of the limestone rock of which the original summit was composed, still projects, having escaped the levellings of the ages, and is in fact the actual crest of the mountain. The rock is enclosed on all sides by the octagonal walls and is completely covered by the dome of the building which has been called the Mosque of Omar, for the greater part of the years which have elapsed since A.D. 637; when Constantine's one time church fell into the hands of the Saracens; and is known by the appellation (also Mohammedan) of *Es-Sakhra*, the "Locked-Up Stone" of Jerusalem. Much of ancient Christian and of more modern Islamic legend has gathered around this Locked-up Stone, but there is practically no division of opinion amongst scholars and travellers as to the identity of the stone, or as to the history of which it remains the centre. *Es-Sakhra* was once the threshing-floor of Araunah, and undoubtedly was the site of the altar of burnt offering in the temple of Solomon, as well as in the temples of Zerubbabel and of Herod the king, which succeeded the house which Solomon built for the Name of the LORD.

It is significant for our present purpose that this mass of limestone rock is hollow—that is to say, that a cave lies beneath its surface, to which access can be obtained by means of steps which are cut in the rock itself. Both the Lord Himself in the days of His flesh, and John His ser-

vant must have been well acquainted with this rock, upon which the altar stood up to A.D. 70; and they must have known equally well of the hollow which lay beneath the rock. And it would seem that this familiar knowledge of the altar and of the base upon which it was founded, led John to behold a heavenly altar which rested upon a base with a space "underneath the altar," without undue astonishment, and to learn that the space underneath the altar was occupied by "the souls of them that had been slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held;" and that, like unto the widow of the city of the unjust judge, these cried with importunity unto their Lord that He would judge and avenge their blood on their murderers who still dwelt upon the earth.

The eyes of the Lord were upon the martyrs, and His ears were open to their cry, and robes were given to them and comfortable words, that they should *rest* a little longer, for *their numbers were still incomplete*: there were others still to be slain: the day of the "great tribulation" had not even yet been reached.

It is needful for us that we should seek to understand the vision; even though we behold it with dim eyes and feeble intelligence; as it emphasises and accentuates the difference between the coming days in which the seals will be opened, and those in which we live: which are truly days of red rapine and of the noise of war, days of rebuke and of contumely; and yet are days of grace and of compassion for sinful men, from whom God still holds back His judgment and His vengeance. For

Christ is on the Throne, the Holy Spirit is on the earth (because the saints who form the Church, which is the Body of Christ, have not yet been caught up to meet the Lord in the air), and the Righteous one is still the propitiation for the whole world. (1 John xi. 2).

Grace Alone Keeps Us Right.

IN the midst of the lone African desert there are the same conflicts of the soul as in the great city. When first I set forth on my journey, I had thought that being alone with God, and far away from all controversies and evil influences, I would surely attain to a more spiritual state of soul, and have less trouble in keeping in communion with God. But I soon learned that the chief cause of all our backsliding in heart from God is something that cannot be left behind or run away from, but is tied to us no matter where we may be. This old self-nature, this "evil heart of unbelief," in the absence of Christian fellowship and the helps that flow from it, is more apt in solitude to increase than to diminish its demands. The grace of God alone can keep us right with Himself wherever we are and in whatever state.—*F. S. Arnot.*

Simple Rules for Christian Conduct.

- I. Never proceed *ahead* of your FAITH.
- II. Never linger *behind* your CONSCIENCE.
- III. Never walk in *advance* of your BIBLE.
- IV. Never speak *above* your KNOWLEDGE.
- V. Never testify *beyond* your EXPERIENCE.
- VI. Never act *against* your AFFECTION.
- VII. Never *ascend* at the expense of your BRETHREN.

T. BAIRD.

Death and Resurrection.

GOD'S PRINCIPLE OF VICTORY.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. G. BELLETT OF DUBLIN.

DEATH and resurrection has been God's principle in a world where the power of death had entered. The ancient penalty, "in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," has never been rescinded. Everything in some form has suffered from it. But it has been met with infinite value for us by the Son of God. "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment," and Jesus has met this appointment. Death had its way against Him. His soul was made an offering for sin. And by death and judgment He destroyed him that had the power of death, and rose with new life for those who had been subject to bondage. This was glorious triumph over all the strength of the enemy. And this was also the entire vindication of God. All now that has life, must, have it by the death and resurrection of the Son of God. And all that has life to God, or that will have any place in His system of glory by and by, must have both death and resurrection in their character. Death and resurrection may introduce to different orders and departments of glory, but it is the common entrance to them all. And here I may observe that the principle of Divine procedure is always the principle of the conduct of faith. It is, therefore, in this being God's principle, His necessary principle in a death-doomed world. Thus it is, that death and resurrection are so often illustrated in the histories of God's servants. We find it more or less through

all the line of the Old Testament worthies, as I may call them. Abel and Seth together, present death and resurrection. Noah was carried through the region of death and judgment into the place of life that lay beyond it. Abraham had the promises, and was heir to all the land; but he walked in the place as a stranger and pilgrim, not having so much as to set his foot on. Joseph was to stand above his brethren, but he is first cast into the pit, and then into the dungeon, as under sentence of death, till at length he rises into the glories of Egypt, which, mystically, are the heavenly and earthly glories of the kingdom. Moses was drawn out from the place of destruction, and again, after another burial as it were in Midian, rises a second time to be the deliverer of Israel. David came from contempt and obscurity to be the slayer of the giant and the deliverer of Israel; and again, as from death in the wilderness, to rule the land as God's king in Zion. In all these distinguished witnesses of God and of His ways, we see the principle exhibited as God's principle. And so it is from the Son of God in the highest, down to the lowest orders in creation. All stand or are to stand before God as dead and risen. Thus the power of the enemy shall be gloriously overthrown, and the holy honour of His own Name as "the living God," shall thus be vindicated for ever.

The Coming One,

WHOSE PRESENCE WILL STILL THE STRIFE.

For Christ its rightful Lord and King
 Earth groans and cries;
 And for her Bridegroom, loved and long-expected
 The Bride still sighs.

The Preacher's Column.

OUTLINES OF EVANGELISTIC SUBJECTS.

THREE IMPOSSIBILITIES.

- Cannot serve God and Mammon (Matt. vi. 24).
 Cannot partake with Christ and demons (1 Cor. x. 21).
 Cannot live to self and Christ (Luke xiv. 26).
 There must be a Choice and Decision.
 There will be Communion and Separation.
 There shall be Discipleship and Devotion.

SPIRITUAL LIFE.

- Regeneration (Titus iii. 5)—Life Originated.
 Renewal (2 Cor. iv. 16)—Life Sustained.
 Resurrection (1 Cor. xv. 22)—Life Victorious.
 The New Birth is a Definite Beginning (John i. 12, 13).
 Growth is a Gradual Process (1 Pet. ii. 2).
 Glorification a grand Consummation (Phil. iii. 20).

THREEFOLD VIEW OF CHRIST.

- On the Cross (John xix. 17-19)—The Dying Surety.
 On the Throne (Heb. x. 12)—Living Representative.
 In the Heart (Eph. iii. 17)—Our Indwelling Strength.
 As Sinners, we begin with Christ Dying.
 As Saved, but liable to fail, we need Christ Living.
 As Saints, we have Christ Indwelling.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Is it according to Scripture to speak of the Christian dead as being engaged in watching our course and otherwise interested in things which are transpiring on earth? And are they now wearing crowns and sharing in worship and service in heaven? Such statements are often read and heard, but are they in accordance with the teaching of the Word?

In seeking to hold fast to the teaching of Scripture regarding the present state of departed saints, in the face of many daring denials of it being that of conscious rest and blessedness, as "absent from the body" but "at home with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 8, R.V.), "with Christ, which is very far better" (Phil. i. 23, R.V.), we must be careful to avoid the use of traditional and non-Scriptural terms, which put a weapon into the enemy's hand for use against the truth. Details of information respecting experiences and occupations of the dead in Christ are nowhere given, and we must not allow sentiment or misused Scripture to supply them. Nor dare we take up words that clearly describe the post-resurrection condition, and apply them to the

present "unclothed" state, between death and resurrection. The scenes in Revelation chap. v. where the redeemed in heaven are seen and heard as crowned worshippers, as well as the final word in chap. xxii. 3, "His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face," have reference to saints in glorified and spiritual bodies (1 Cor. xv. 43, 44), and cannot be used of the intermediate state, without playing in the hands of teachers of error. Yet in Memorial Services, on tombstones, and in biographies of saints and servants of Christ, it is not uncommon to read of marvellous things they are engaged doing since they left us. But this is all of man, and had its origin in the age that conceived the kindred doctrine of saints in heaven praying for their friends on earth and in purgatory. The condition of the dead in Christ—like our own—is one of expectancy, and for them there can be no active service, until at the coming of the Lord they are raised, having put on incorruptibility, as those who are "alive and remain" will then put on immortality (1 Cor. xi. 53, 54).

Answers to Correspondents.

STUDENT.—Your paper is sound in doctrine, but there are too many big words and too much "Greek" in it for ordinary folks to be much the wiser. Cultivate simplicity in dealing with the truth of God.

YOUNG PREACHER.—We rejoice in your desire to go forth preaching the Gospel. Begin where you are, and do not go beyond your measure. You need not call yourself "an evangelist;" leave that to others. Some need to give themselves that title, for nobody who hears them, and watches their course, would ever guess they possess the gift. Serve the Lord only, not a mission, or a Trust, or a church.

C. B., SHEFFIELD.—None can say what the result of the present European war may be in the fulfilment of prophecy, respecting the return of the Jews to Palestine and the resuscitation of the Roman Empire to be ruled by the last great monarch of Christendom. And it is irreverent to speculate. What we do know is, that before the Lord's dealings with His earthly covenant people are resumed, the broken thread of prophecy taken up, and the last great scourge of guilty Christendom—THE Antichrist revealed, the whole of the born again people of God will be called up to heaven—the dead raised, the living changed, and all together with the Lord. Thank God this is something *sure*.

There is not the shadow of a doubt about it. It is Christ's "promise" and our "hope."

J. H., PAISLEY.—Any system or human organisation that hinders the liberty of the Spirit among the people of God in the exercise of their common priesthood as worshippers, or shuts out the gifts of the glorified Head in ministry, ought to be challenged at its beginning, or it will grow, for clerisy in all its grades has that aptitude. If it has fixed its roots so firmly that no appeal to Scripture is of any account, you must either settle down as a "silent member," or if you value your liberty in Christ, come out of the house of bondage, and go where you will be free to do what is "found written" (Neh. viii. 14) in the Book of God, our only guide. It will likely cost you something to take such a step, but then there is "the recompence of the reward" (Heb. xi. 26).

W. H., GOUROCK.—There is no justification on any ground whatever for taking "collections" from the ungodly in connection with the preaching of God's Gospel. If the unconverted want to help in "Red Cross" or other philanthropic work, by all means let them do it. But why should the preaching of God's free grace have anything tacked on to it that is liable to rob it of its grand prerogative of presenting to sinners a salvation "without money?" The average religious man regards his church "collection" as something he is giving to God, a fatal error which it is part of the evangelist's work to disabuse his mind of. Cain's offering was good in itself, but the use he made of it was "evil" (1 John iii. 12). And the preacher who is awake, and not ignorant of "Satan's devices" to obscure the Gospel, will not surely willingly open a door to let him practice his deceivings under the shade of his service for God.

G. C., CARDIFF.—An experience of forty years in going in and out among Scripturally gathered assemblies of Christians, seeking to be guided in their worship and work by the abiding principles of the Word of God, has confirmed in our soul what we personally gathered from the Word of God at the very beginning of our Christian life, namely, that a definite and clear-ring testimony to the Scriptural way of Christians assembling, and the principles which they own in their church association and life, given in a wise and godly manner, in due season, does not repel Christians who are seeking to walk with God, but draws and edifies them. And the best proof of this is, that in places where such a testimony has been borne, the number of Chris-

tians who have been led on in the truth and into fellowship together on the simple lines of the Word, is greater by far than in places where scarcely a word of distinct teaching is ever given on such subjects. If in the past there has been "too much" made of these truths—as some aver—the present uninstructed and unexercised condition of many who "meet as we do," and know next to nothing of the reasons why, is surely sufficient evidence that in many cases they hear "too little." And what may we expect from the coming race, if they are brought up in the belief, that "it doesn't matter much, how you meet."

Points of Practical Profit to All.

Limitation of space permits of only part of what correspondents seek help on, being dealt with each month, and even that with brevity. But as most of the subjects are practical rather than doctrinal in character, this may meet the need, and lead to exercise of heart before God and over His Word.

Punctuality.—The habit of coming late to the assembling of Christians for worship on the first day of the week is greatly to be deprecated. It is not only a distraction to fellow-worshippers, but a dishonour to the Lord in the midst. Fifteen minutes earlier out of bed, would in most cases remedy it.

Bible Readings.—When a few Christians meet casually or otherwise in the house of a fellow-saint, there is no better or more profitable way of spending the time, than having an informal Bible Reading on some seasonable subject. It prevents gossip and levity, and has been the means of blessing to many. Deut. vi. 6, 7, is just as applicable "under grace" as "under law."

Leading the Praise.—Although it is neither comely nor necessary to vote one into the position of psalmody leader, it is surely according to the principles of the Word, that one or more, who possess and are ready to use the ability God has given, should be owned and honoured in this service, and no attempts made or allowed to wrest it from them. Few things are more unseemly in, and none more distressing to an assembly of reverent worshippers, than for incapable persons to thrust themselves forward in leading the praise.

Fruitful Preaching.—If God sets His seal on the preaching of any servant of His, and gives fruit in conversions, it certainly would be wrong to allow any prearrangement to necessitate that brother ceasing to preach the Word in that place if he feels free, and led of the Spirit of God to continue. Many a promising work of grace has been stopped by man's interference with God's arrangements.

Memorials of Dr. James Wardrop, of Glasgow.

On the afternoon of Thursday, 12th August, our venerable brother in Christ, Dr. Wardrop, whose life has been associated with Christian work and testimony in the city of Glasgow for over sixty years, passed peacefully into the presence of the Lord, in his eighty-seventh year. Very many in home and distant lands, to whom he was well known, and by whom he was justly esteemed as fellow-saint as well as "beloved physician," will mourn his loss as a father and a friend. It was our privilege to enjoy his personal friendship and Christian fellowship for over forty years without a cloud or jar, and we would magnify the grace of God that shone in his unblemished life and unsullied Christian testimony throughout the years of his long pilgrimage.

Born in the Townhead of Glasgow, near to the ancient cathedral associated with the name of St. Mungo, who is reported to have given to the then hamlet on the Molendinar Burn the motto: "Let Glasgow flourish through the preaching of the Word," he was brought up after the good Scottish custom of the time, to read and reverence the Bible as the Word of God. About the age of sixteen he was brought to the Saviour, and shortly after his conversion he began to spread the Gospel which had brought peace to his own soul among the Canal men and others in Port Dundas district of the city. He was helped in spiritual life in these early years by the ministry of a quaint preacher of the Presbyterian Church, named William Anderson, who had earned the reputation of being "daft," because he dared to speak out what he believed, and to act according as he was guided by the Word of God. But what the doctor ever delighted to recall as the most eventful experience after his conversion, while in the thick of his early struggles, was his reading of George Müller, of Bristol's early Reports, of how the living God supplied him with all that he required not only for his personal need while engaged in the service of the Lord, but also in providing for some thousands of orphans under his care, in answer to prayer, without asking for anything or telling his wants to any fellow-creature. The fact of a present God, able and willing to meet all the need of those who trust Him, became from that time the pole-star of his life, and in the happy experience of it he walked to the end. In these same Reports of Mr. Müller there is a direct and definite testimony borne to the blessing associated

with a return to the simple and Scriptural way of church fellowship, apart from human creeds and confessions, taking the Word of God alone as our guide and the Name of the Lord alone as our gathering centre (Matt. xviii. 20). Shortly after this, he heard of a small company of Christians who assembled in this way in West Campbell Street, and with them he cast in his lot, "continuing stedfastly" in the same path with assemblies of believers in Buchanan Court, Eglinton and Wellcrofts Halls to the end. His last journey on earth was to a baptismal service held in Wellcroft Hall at the close of the weekly prayer meeting, in which he took part in prayer, and while so engaged was seized with the paralytic stroke which was the messenger to call him Home. Diligent in spreading the Gospel by tract distribution, he was ever ready to speak a word in season to the sick, and to point the dying to the Saviour. His hospitable home was a resting place of many a weary pilgrim, a hospice for missionary workers from lands afar, and an Elim of spiritual solace to countless numbers of wayworn children of God. And it was in the sphere of his household that the doctor's spiritual influence was most powerfully felt. The ancient habit of reading the Book of God daily was never omitted there, nor was the psalm of praise and the voice of prayer. It was good to be there, and to hear him speak of the "faithful God, who keepeth covenant" with His people, and whose "compassions fail not" (Deut. vii. 9) Of his studies and success as a practitioner, his service to the poor, and his ready help in every good work, the public prints have given their record. But to us it was his personal goodness and sweet savour of Christ that excelled. A man of simple habits and careful modes of living, he enjoyed good health, and retained his firm step when well over fourscore years, and was able to undertake his daily rounds, and attend the assemblings of fellow-believers, as in earlier years. Just a week after his seizure, he passed into the presence of the Lord whom he had known and loved for over seventy years. A Memorial Service was held in Wellcroft Hall on August 16th, and then his remains were reverently laid to rest in the presence of a representative gathering of mourners, in Eastfield Cemetery, where his dear elder daughter was laid, scarcely two years before, to await that hour, when at the call of the Lord whom he loved and served, our "brother shall rise again" in the full image of the heavenly.

Divine Protection :

EXERCISED FOR GOD'S PEOPLE IN TIME OF DANGER.

THE story of "the vision of angels," said to have been seen at Mons, has been affirmed and denied many times in the daily papers, some attributing it to imagination, some to superstition, and a few to Divine power in answer to faith exercised for those whose lives were in peril that day. We do not stay to inquire what actually took place in that battle hour, but pass on to that which, although little heeded among us, is the Word of God who cannot lie, and which, when used by faith, never fails. Why should it be though incredible, that God, who cares for His own, sends forth His angels who "excel in strength" (Psa. ciii. 20) to defend and protect them in the time of danger? Are these angels of His not said to be "ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation" (Heb. i. 14, R.V.). And is it not written plainly and simply on the sacred page by the finger of God, that "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them" (Psa. xxxiv. 7). Let the unbelieving world sneer as it will, and the worldly wise, who take the Christian name, take their part in questioning the ability or will of God in working miracles of mercy on behalf of His own. We confess an unflinching faith in the promise of God, and seek to claim the protection and enjoy the peace it is designed to give. The preserving power of God may be administered through men or angels as He sees fit; it may visibly

appear in manifest deliverance from imminent peril, or it may secretly work in overthrowing or rendering of none effect the evil purposes and counsels of those who would seek our hurt. The manner of its exercise is with God. The promise of its exercise "through faith unto salvation" (1 Pet. i. 5), is a writing of the Spirit which can never be annulled and will never fail. It is ours to rest on the promise and to be kept in peace. The writer of the psalm knew well what it was to be delivered "from all his fears," as well as to be "saved out of all his troubles." He knew what it was to have His God "about him as a shield," and to lie down and sleep sustained by God while "ten thousand" were set against him round about (Psa. iii. 5, 6). It was in the confidence of Divine care that his faith expressed itself in the ringing words, "I will both lay me down in peace and sleep: for Thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety" (Psa. iv. 8). In time of danger, when life on land and at sea, by night and by day is in peril, and when so many of the people of God have loved ones on fields of war, may the promise that "the Angel of the Lord encamps," and the Eye that never slumbers (Psa. cxxi. 4) ever keeps guard, be held fast. And a faithful God is of easy access at all times to be reminded of His promise. Faith's confidence in His Word brings peace, and the assurance that against God's power no craft can prevail, and no weapon formed can prosper, gives rest. For

"Not a single shaft can hit
Till our God in love sees fit."

J. R.

Cleansing by Water.

SIR ROBERT ANDERSON, K.C.B., LL.D.

THE sin-offering of Numbers xix. was as necessary to the Israelite as was the Passover. And Christ is the fulfilment of *all* the types. To the contemporaries of the Apostle, moreover, who, unlike ourselves, were well versed in Scripture, the meaning of all this was both clear and profound. For them such a phrase as that He "came with the water" needed no explanation. And, as Ezekiel xxxvi. tells us, when Christ returns in blessing to Israel His coming will be "with the water only." But this is because His first coming was "not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood." Redemption is already accomplished

That rite and that prophecy filled a large and prominent place in Jewish theology and Jewish hopes; and for a Rabbi to be ignorant of them was as extraordinary and as inexcusable as it would be for a Christian minister to be ignorant of "the Nicodemus sermon." Hence our Lord's indignant remonstrance: "Art thou the teacher of Israel, and knowest not these things?"

The wording of our Authorised Version, "Except a man be born of water *and* of the Spirit," lends support to the error of supposing the new birth to be twofold. But the birth "of water and Spirit" is so essentially one that in the next verse, and again in verse 8, the Lord omits the water, and in speaking of the same birth describes it simply as "of the Spirit."*

* Many letters have reached me on this subject. Some still insist that the birth by water is baptism—John's baptism, some say; and some even maintain that it is *natural* birth! But birth by water is a figment of Paganism. Scripture knows nothing of it.

The time when the prophecy of Ezekiel xxxvi. and xxxvii. shall be fulfilled is called by the Lord Himself "the regeneration."* The only other passage where that word occurs is Titus iii. 5: "He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." The word here rendered "washing" is *loutron*. It is a noun substantive, not a verb. To render it "laver" would suggest a false exegesis, for a different, though kindred, word is used for "laver" in the Greek Bible. But it is a significant fact that in the only passage in that Version where it is used in relation to sacred things, it refers to the "water of purification."†

"The *loutron* of regeneration" therefore does not speak to us of the river or the font, but of the great sin-offering.‡ And this gives us a clue to its meaning in the only other passage where it occurs in the New Testament. I refer to Ephesians v. 26, where we read that Christ gave Himself for the Church "that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the *loutron* of water by the Word."

By the *Word*, mark. As we have seen, "the water of purification" owes its efficacy to the sin-offering. It is not to sacraments or human ordinances of religion that the Christian owes his cleansing, but to Calvary. In the type, the Israelite obtained the benefits of the sacrifice by means of the water; and it is by "the Word" that the believing sinner obtains the blessings of Calvary. Hence the language of the Epistle, "the *loutron* of water in the Word."

* Matthew xix. 28.

† "He that is baptised after touching a dead body, if he touch it again, what avails his *loutron*?" (Ecclesiasticus xxxiv. 25).

‡ The Sin-offering of Numbers xix.

The water of purification was, as we have seen, the water of regeneration ; and it is by "the Word" that the sinner is born again to God. The new birth has nothing to do with mystic acts or shibboleths after the pattern of ancient paganism. As Scripture declares, "we are born again by the Word of God"—"the living and eternally abiding Word of God." And to bar all error or mistake, it is added : "And this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you"—preached, as the Apostle has already said, "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven."* Not the Spirit without the Word, nor the Word without the Spirit, but the Word preached in the power of the Spirit.

Men can fix time and place for ordinances, for ordinances relate to earth ; but the new birth is from above. As the Lord said to Nicodemus—referring to the Ezekiel prophecy—"The Spirit breathes where He wills."† In Ezekiel xxxvi. we have the promise : "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean"—water, that is, which owes its cleansing efficacy to the sin-offering. And then "I will put My Spirit within you."

The vision of the dry bones follows. You ask, How can sinners, helpless, hopeless, dead—as dead as dry bones scattered upon the earth—be born again to God ? "Can these bones live ?" is the question of Ezekiel xxxvii. And the answer comes, "Prophecy unto these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the Word of the Lord." Preach to dead, lost

sinners ; call upon them to hear the Word of the Lord. This is man's part. Or if there be anything more, it is, "Prophecy unto the Breath : pray that the Spirit may breathe upon these slain that they may live." The rest is God's work altogether, for "the Spirit breathes where He wills." Not that there is anything arbitrary in His working. God is never arbitrary ; but He is always Sovereign. Men preach ; the Spirit breathes ; and the dry bones live. Thus it is that sinners are born to God.

Self and His Hidingplaces.

THERE is perhaps no sin that so often wraps itself in a cloak of professed devotedness to Christ as self-seeking. It can be found under the guise of the most pronounced spirituality. It can don the garb of deepest humility. It will hide behind all sorts of specious words, such as faithfulness to the Lord, fidelity to the truth, resistance of evil, godly order in the church, and discipline of evildoers. But although such words may deceive the simple and pass for true gold, the hour of trial brings the true character out. Let the man's own name, his position, or his honour be touched, and the real self will appear, and a very unlovely appearance he usually makes. Where Christ is the true object, and His people's good the aim, when misrepresentations are made and service is unrequited or even rejected, the true servant will never defame those who oppose him, but quietly submit or if need be retire, leaving the Lord to defend his character and deal with his traducers in His own time and way.

* 1 Peter i. 12, 23, 25. In verse 25 (as in Ephesians v. 26) the word is *rema*, and in verse 23 it is *logos* ; but this does not affect the question here at issue.

† John iii. 8. *Pneuma* occurs some 370 times in the New Testament, and twenty-three times in John, but nowhere else is it rendered "wind."

Light from the Book of Daniel.

SIMPLE TALKS TO YOUNG BELIEVERS.—III.

BY THE EDITOR.

THE four great Gentile empires which, in the purpose of God, were to bear rule in the earth during the period of Israel's abasement, were shown to King Nebuchadnezzar in the vision of chap. ii. They are there represented by a great image, composed of four metals, standing majestic and glorious in the eyes of man. In chapter vii. the same empires are presented to Daniel the servant of God, under the symbols of four rapacious beasts, devouring each other, which represent these empires in their moral character and conduct as heaven sees them. Arising out of a storm-tossed sea, they are seen to come into existence in the midst of convulsions among "peoples and multitudes," of which these angry waters are the symbol (Rev. xvii. 15). And their history is one long story of war and bloodshed, the strong crushing the weak, as the mighty lion, the rapacious bear, and the agile but cunning leopard seize their prey. So you see God's thoughts are not like man's. The conquests of Chaldea, Medo-Persia, and Greece are described in the books which men have written as "glorious victories," and the leaders and warriors of these times are called "heroes," but in the sight of God they are only monstrosities in wickedness, who have passed from the scenes of their sin and crime to await the judgment of the great day, when "God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing" (Eccl. xii. 14), and give unto every man according as his works

have been (Rev. xx. 13). What an unveiling that day will bring! And what an overturning of the estimates of men that judgment will be! Let us learn to look at men and things in the light of God, now. Then we shall not be misled.

The **FOURTH** Beast, which represents the great Roman Empire, which had its rise shortly before the Lord Jesus was born, under whose government He lived (Luke ii. 1-4; iii. 1-2), and at whose hand He died (Acts iv. 27), is described to the prophet as "dreadful and terrible." It martyred the apostles, persecuted the Church, and sought to blot out the Name of Christ and of Christianity from the earth. Its "teeth of iron and nails of brass" (ver. 19), which "brake in pieces" everything that came under its control, show how entirely away from everything according to God it was in character, and how like the devil, who "was a murderer from the beginning" (John viii. 44). And wherever you see the strong oppressing the weak, and "the great powers," with their huge armies, death-dealing guns, and life-destroying instruments at work upon those who are unable to resist them or flee from them, there you have the spirit if not the actual government by force of "the fourth beast."

But the prophet, after looking in wonder on that awful scene of cruelty and carnage on earth, is taken to behold a scene in heaven, and to the presence of a Throne where justice and judgment, according to righteousness, are meted out. And from that throne the sentence went forth against the beast, whose dominion was brought to an end in awful

judgment, "and his body destroyed and given to the burning flame." We have read of the "Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire" of the past, as man has seen it, but here we have its future and final fall by the act of God, to make way for the everlasting kingdom of the Lord Jesus, who will then "reign in righteousness" over a peaceful earth. There has been many a wicked and wilful king on the Roman throne, and many a tyrant ruling over men since that empire fell, but the worst by far is yet to come. We are told that when the Roman Empire re-appears, including, as it will within it, most of the great empires and kingdoms of Europe and far beyond it, all in open rebellion against God, it will have as its Kaiser one to whom the devil will give—what he offered to the Son of God in the day of the temptation (Luke iv. 6)—all "his power, his seat, and his authority" (Rev. xiii. 2), and that he will use it against God and Christ. That will be an awful experience for the world, and it is drifting on toward it as fast as time can bear it. Thanks be to God, no believer in Christ who is on earth to-day, no member of His body the Church, will be here amid the scenes of that dreadful time. We have the Lord's own promise in Rev. iii. 10, that not only from these horrors, but from the very "hour" in which they will be enacted, He will keep His own. And surely the message that this brings us now is, that with the spirit and acts of proud militarism, which glories in destruction and gloats over the blood and tears which its leaders cause to be shed, the people of God are to have no part.

Sympathy with Sufferers.

W. H. BENNET, Yeovil.

THE Epistle which especially sets forth the ability of the great High Priest to sympathise with His people in their sufferings and temptations, because "He Himself hath suffered, being tempted," also calls upon us to cherish this same spirit of sympathy towards one another. One of the closing exhortations of the Epistle is as follows:—"Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body" (Heb. xiii. 3).

There are no unnecessary words in God's Book, and therefore the very call to *remember* anything itself implies that we are in danger of forgetting it. In most cases we are conscious that this is true, and in the matter before us we may feel that it is so to an extent that humbles us. We hear of outbursts of hostility towards children of God and servants of Christ in one place and another, and our feelings are stirred; but is the sympathy evoked deep and lasting? If not, it behoves us to ask ourselves why, and one answer may possibly be found in the fact that we have such a feeble apprehension of the *oneness* of those who are Christ's.

It is evidently to this *oneness* of His people as "members of His body" that the expression "as bound with them" refers. We are painfully conscious that it is easier to *talk about* the truth of the body of Christ than to *live* it. We may soon *learn* it as written in the Book; but to *know* it in living experience and practical sympathy, necessitates a teach-

ing of the Spirit of God[—]which only the lowly and loving heart can receive. When the apostle Paul taught this truth he spake what he *knew*. "Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it," was his teaching, and his experience is thus given, "Who is weak and I am not weak? Who is offended (*i.e.*, *by stumbling blocks* placed in the way, as Matt. xviii. 6-9) and I burn not?"

How much do we know of this? We *hear* of those who suffer "for the truth's sake," and before whom men place stumbling blocks, seeking to turn them out of the way: do we so feel their "bonds" as to bear them up continually before God in loving intercession? We learn now and again of outbreaks of opposition to the Gospel: does the intelligence we receive lead to prayerful regard for those who have such difficulties? We may, if we will, continually consider that many are labouring where they find little Christian fellowship, and plenty of privations: do we so take these things to heart as to ask how much we can do to help them? The principle contained in the words "*as bound with them*" is very far-reaching.

The Hebrew believers had already manifested this grace; they not only endured much themselves, but "became companions of them that were so used," and "had compassion on them that were in bonds" (Heb. x. 34, 35). But they needed to be put in remembrance, and stirred up to diligence (vi. 11, 12).

The second part of the verse gives a more general exhortation, "Remember . . . them which suffer adversity, as

being yourselves also in the body." The reference here is not to the body of Christ, but to the fact that we are still in the mortal body, and therefore liable to the very same sufferings, whether in person or circumstances, which we see others called to endure. This is a very powerful argument; but do we so consider the *fact* that we are constrained to fulfil the *exhortation*? We know those who suffer much in body, and it may be never get out to the assembly of the Lord's people: do we remember them, and give them evidence that we do so? We know others who have trials in other ways: are we ready to help such as the Lord enables us?

We thus see that the teaching of the highest truths by the Spirit of God leads on to these very simple exhortations, and the reception of the truth into the heart will produce obedience to them. Let us, therefore, take heed how we hear and how we teach, for the testing day is at hand. In that day it will be seen that all teaching that has not as its aim the outflow of the sympathy of Christ in the members of His body towards all fellow-members, according to their need, and the exercise of self-denying energy in the service He has left us here to render, is but "as sounding brass or a tinkling symbol;" while all manifestation of this sympathy will find its acknowledgment in the wonderful words, "*Ye did it unto ME.*"

A Very Present Help.

Our "very present" Helper,
 Our "Refuge" day by day,
 Our "Strength" in time of conflict,
 Our "God" for all the way.

The Book of Esther,

AND ITS MESSAGE TO US TO-DAY.

PART IV. THE EXALTATION OF MORDECAI AND FALL OF HAMAN.

WHEN the thoughts of Ahasuerus were occupied with the reward and exaltation of the faithful Mordecai, Haman was announced, and being brought into the royal presence he is asked, "What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?" Haman sees in this question the chance of his life in having his pride satiated, and in his own reckoning being assured that no one in the kingdom was so worthy of that honour as himself, he proposes that the royal apparel belonging to the king, the crown which he wears, and the horse he rides, be delivered to one of the princes, who will invest the royal favourite and bring him on horseback through the city, proclaiming him openly as "the man whom the king delighteth to honour." Thus surely was the utmost height of Haman's ambition to be fulfilled. But how quickly his bubble burst, for the king gave the order that all the honours he had named were to be conferred upon "Mordecai the Jew." And the man who had been condemned to hang upon Haman's gibbet was on that very day exalted to royal honour, and the God of Israel redeemed His promise, first made in the dark days of Samuel, and true always, "Them that honour Me I will honour" (1 Sam. ii. 30). The man of God who seeks to honour God's Word will find Amalekites of the Haman type—carnal men in high places—demanding to be acknowledged and bowed to in all spheres

of life. Even in the Church, which professes to acknowledge the supreme Lordship of Christ, there are men and principles claiming subjection which must be resisted in the same spirit as Mordecai refused to bow to the Agagite. "Denominationalism"—which is a milder word for sectarianism, a thing unsparingly condemned in 1 Cor. i. 10-13, and registered a work of the flesh in Gal. v. 20, seeks recognition and too often gets it from those who have the Word of the Lord in their hands forbidding it. And the Haman spirit may appear even where outward denominationalism is renounced, as it did in early time in the person of Diotrefes, who loved "the pre-eminence," and insisted on having his will and way in the assembly of God's people, which if any resisted they were "cast out." In the world, the Haman spirit rules all but supreme, putting to the test in many ways the fidelity of God's people to what they have learned of His Word. Take, for example, the attitude of Trades Unionism, which in many parts has well-nigh supreme control of all labour. Christian men are faced with the threat that unless they bow to this Amalekite rule, which in many instances involves direct disobedience to God and the commandments of His Word—and in all cases commits whoever becomes a member to whatever the leaders may determine—they will not be allowed to work for their daily bread or that of those dependent upon them. The whole matter, with the principles involved, has to be faced by the Christian in the light of God's Word, and not in that of public opinion or the

practice of others who bear the Christian name. Nor will compromise and half measures, such as some practise, rid them of the "yoke" which is there all the same in the case of those who only pay their "dues," which go to support and help on the whole propaganda, and provide the dynamite which is used for the perpetration of the crimes which are exacted at the leaders' call. Had Mordecai acted in his day as many act in ours, he would have bowed to the Agagite, seeing it was "no use for a single man to resist and act contrary to the common habit," and that "one man's refusal could effect no change." But Mordecai was of another spirit. He stood for the Word of God, and God honoured him for his obedience. A little more of the Mordecai spirit would give God opportunity to show what He is able to do for those who make His honour their first object, and obedience to His Word their highest aim. For Mordecai's God has not changed. He is the same faithful covenant-keeping God to His people to-day, ready "to show Himself strong in the behalf of those whose heart is perfect toward Him" (2 Chron. xvi. 9), a God "that doest wonders," declaring His strength among the people (Psa. lxxvii. 14). But if any shrink from the cross for fear of its results, He will leave them to fight their own battles, and to reap the results of their disobedience.

A GLORIOUS WORK.—The spread of Christ's Gospel among men is a glorious work. Angels may well envy the lowliest who goes forth to speak of the Saviour to sinners.—*Duncan Matheson.*

An Efficient Ministry.

IN Eph. iv. 11, we have God's own picture of a spiritual and efficient ministry. Those specially gifted as teachers should certainly have full opportunity for the exercise of their ministry, and not be hindered by those who have no qualification to edify the saints, using up the time. But, on the other hand, those who are so gifted must not monopolise all opportunities, thus hindering the development of ability in others whom God may be bringing forward as helpers of His people. For as we read in ver. 12, special gifts are "for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministering" (R.V.), that is, for the fitting of all to take their part in such service as they are able to share, not one or two always preaching and teaching, and all the others listening. The best evidence of a right use of special gifts in an assembly is, that others are led on and fitted to serve, so that the specially gifted ones may pass on to exercise their ministry where there is greater need. But where a few monopolise all opportunities for ministry, all the rest are kept in their swaddling-clothes, and develop nothing.

A. J. HOLIDAY.

Here and There.

Strangers HERE :

Pilgrims through a hostile nation,
In a groaning old creation :
Journeying on through shame and scorning,
Looking for the Star of Morning.

Well known THERE !

Oh, what joy when Christ shall take them
To the Father, who will make them
Welcome in His mansions glorious,
There at home with Christ victorious.

The Highest Privilege.

WE remember hearing an aged servant of the Lord, who had spent many years in his Master's service, preaching the Word say, "I regard it to be my highest privilege on this side of heaven, to be invited by the Lord Jesus to meet with His people, to shew forth His death in the breaking of bread on the first day of the week, and I would not forsake it for the opportunity of preaching to a thousand at that hour." We believe that his testimony had the sanction of the Word of God, and that the highest privilege of God's people on earth is to be found as assembled in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. xxiii. 20) on the first day of each week (Acts xx. 7), for the remembrance of His death in the breaking of bread. There is a growing tendency among certain believers to make less of the great memorial feast than God would have them, and to exalt preaching and teaching at the expense of worship around the table of the Lord. There are various ways in which this is manifested. Some go the length of forsaking the assembly of saints altogether for the time, to preach in some chapel or mission at the hour of united worship and keeping of the remembrance feast. If they were in ignorance of its unique importance, they could be borne with and taught "the way of the Lord more perfectly." But it is among those who consider themselves so well versed in the truth that they assume the place of teaching others, that this practice is most prevalent. And they claim that they have "liberty" to do as they choose.

Some are even found occupying the pulpit, assuming the role of "the minister" for the occasion. Of course such have to bring their teaching into consistency with their practice, and probably the following Lord's Day will occupy most of the time around the Lord's table, exhorting to "largeness of heart," and rebuking all who seek to give God's truth the place He claims for it. This type of preacher has usually a great conceit of the importance of his ministry, and thinks that it has a prior claim to the worship of God. The "highest privilege" of saints according to his way of thinking is, that they sit listening while he speaks. But time usually shows whither such men's ambitions tend. As is well enough known, most of those who move along these lines find their place at last as the "Reverend" A.B., or "Pastor" C.D., presiding over a small denomination in which their "gift" has full scope for his continual exercise to a mute and docile flock, who question nothing, but pay for all that they get.

The Coming Reign of Peace.

SWEET are the visions of the time,
 Portrayed by God's own hand,
 When righteousness and peace shall reign
 Supreme in every land.
 No longer then shall Satan rule
 With cruel iron rod,
 But all earth's kingdoms shall become
 "The Kingdoms of our God."
 The tyrant's power for ever gone,
 Earth from his rage set free,
 The Lamb of God upon the throne
 While earth keeps jubilee.
 How joyful is this prospect fair,
 To all who now bewail
 The evils of the present time
 That mightily prevail. ALBERT MIDLANE.

The Preacher's Column.

OUTLINES OF EVANGELISTIC SUBJECTS.

THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

It was a Propitiation (Rom. iii. 25).

It was a Peacemaking (Col. i. 20).

It was a Purchase (Acts xx. 28).

1. This is Godward, and for all (1 John iv. 10).
2. Once for all made, now proclaimed (Rom. x. 15).
3. He purchased in order to possess (Tit. ii. 14).

SALVATION.

Acquired by Christ's Atonement (Heb. ii. 9).

Assured by Christ's Resurrection (Rom. v. 10).

Proclaimed in the Gospel Message (Acts xiii. 26-).

Posessed by faith in Christ (Acts xvi. 31).

The Cross, is its Procuring Cause (1 Pet. iii. 18).

The Living Lord, its Assuring Source (John xiii. 19).

The Gospel, its Word of Power (Rom. i. 16).

Faith, its Receiving Hand (Eph. ii. 8).

SALVATION'S SECURITIES.

The Work of Christ procures Salvation (Heb. ix. 12).

The Word of God assures Salvation (Acts xvi. 31).

Witness of the Spirit secures Salvation (Eph. iv. 30).

The Work of the Cross is unchangeable (Heb. x. 12).

The Word of God is unbreakable (1 Pet. i. 25).

The Witness of the Spirit is unanswerable (Rom. viii. 15).

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Is there any Scripture authority for the common belief that when a Christian sins, and confesses his sin to God, there is not only forgiveness but an end of it?

The teaching of 1 John i. 8-10 on this subject is full and clear. Self-judgment (1 Cor. xi. 32), leading to humiliation before God, and confession (Psa. xxxii. 5) to Him, bring forgiveness. But we must not stop here: the Word adds, "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." How often the latter part of this verse is omitted, or passed lightly over, whereas God as a Father, when forgiving His wayward child, would at the same time exercise his conscience as to that which led him into sin, and sever him from it, thus making the occasion one of deep heart-searching and cleansing of his ways from a great deal more than the actual sin, which stains his conscience and mars his communion with God. And if his sin involves wrongdoing to another,

then the fault is to be confessed to that one also (Jas. v. 16), and reparation made as far as can be for the wrong done. And it may go even further, for while God in grace forgives, in government He may cause the offender to reap His own sowing. David was forgiven when he confessed his sin: that was grace. But his child died, the sword never departed from his home, and Absalom rose in rebellion, all in consequence of his sin (2 Sam. xii. 14). There are many of the so-called accidents and ills of life, that come upon Christians undoubtedly of this judicial character, and the flippant easygoing way in which sin is dealt with—much of the popular teaching regarding it being a complete distortion of God's forgiving grace—is calculated to help on the godless theory that sin glibly confessed, often because it cannot be hid, makes "an end of it."

Answers to Correspondents.

STUDENT.—"The Englishman's Greek Concordance" is the best book for your purpose. Anybody can use it.

ANON.—There is much to be said in favour of the early morning hour for personal reading and meditation on God's Word, before the bustle of the day begins. But it is not suitable to or possible for all. The point that matters is, to secure the most convenient hour and stick to it. There are few things harder to do, for the enemy knows its value and raises hindrances innumerable.

A. L., WALTHAMSTOW.—If you find that you cannot "abide with God" (1 Cor. vii. 24) in the calling that you adopted in your unconverted days, you should seek an honourable way out of it. But you must not desert it in a manner unworthy of a Christian, leaving obligations unfulfilled, or debts unpaid.

W. M., CO. ANTRIM.—It would be an act of disobedience to one of the plainest commandments of the Lord (see 1 Pet. iii. 8; Phil. ii. 2), for one or more influential or overbearing men to force their action on an assembly of fellow-believers, who do not see with them. True men of God will seek to instruct and lead on fellow-saints in what they judge to be the Lord's way, by showing from the Word what has formed their own convictions on the matter, and submitting this to their consideration, but they will never force their will upon others or endanger the peace of the assembly by

acting without its fellowship, or acquiescence. A true leader will rather efface himself, and leave God to vindicate his action, than divide those who are unable to follow him. Herein lies the distinction between Saul and David's rule, between that which is of man and doomed to final disaster, and that which is according to God, often misunderstood, sometimes misrepresented and persecuted, but ultimately to be vindicated as approved of God and for the highest welfare of His people.

H. G., BIRMINGHAM.—No particular sin is specified as being "a sin unto death" (1 John v. 16). The sins of Aaron's sons (Lev. x. 1, 2) in Old Testament times, of Ananias and Sapphira in the Pentecostal Church (Acts v. 1-6), and of some at Corinth (1 Cor. xi. 30) are solemn warnings that such sins may be found closely connected with a professed allegiance to the will of God. Indeed, the three cases especially named in the Word, are all of this character, not lapses into fleshly lusts, as might be expected. The case in 1 Cor. v., shameful as it was, was not "unto death," for 2 Cor. ii. 6, 7, tells how the result of Church discipline led to humiliation and restoration. But when sin is so concealed or denied that it cannot be so dealt with, God takes the matter in hand Himself.

Answers to Special Questions.

Help in answering these questions will be valued. Answers must be brief, leading TO the Word, free from personal reference, or allusion to local events.

What Scriptures warrant the common belief that the Holy Spirit ceases to work on earth after the Lord comes?

ANSWER A.—Passages such as Ezekiel xxxvii. 23-27; xxxviii. 27, which, by common consent, belong to the period beyond the coming of the Son of God from heaven for His people, surely teach that the operations of the Spirit will continue not only among the people of Israel, but on "all flesh" (Joel ii. 28). But these operations will not be the same in kind as throughout the present age, as for example, in the baptism of those that believe into one body as now (1 Cor. xii. 13). But while it would be according to Scripture to say that His operations will differ from those of the present time, it would be erroneous to say that they will cease.

G. B.

ANSWER B.—"The common belief" of evangelical Christendom is, that the whole world is to be con-

verted before the Lord comes, and that His coming—the only coming they know—will be to reign over a regenerated world which will then become His "kingdom." There will be no need for the Spirit's work in conversion "after the Lord comes," if this be true. But the slightest acquaintance with the dispensational teachings of the Word will put the whole matter right. The Spirit will continue His work as Scripture teaches, but it will not be the same as now.

J. H.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—The Spirit's work is named in the first chapter of Genesis (ver. 2) in connection with the world's preparation for man's abode, and in the last chapter of Revelation (ver. 17), after the Eternal State has been described. From Creation to Pentecost, His work may be traced along the whole course of time. But His coming as "the Comforter"—the Paraclete, a name the full meaning of which, as one remarks, "no single English word can fully convey," was ten days after the Ascension of the Lord to heaven. And His abiding presence in and with the church thus continues, until its completion and glorification at the coming of the Lord from heaven. Then, like that unnamed servant of Gen. xxiv., who went forth from the typical tent in Hebron, in which dwelt the Father who gave, and the Son who was to receive a Bride, who was to win and escort her across the desert, presenting her at last to the Bridegroom, who had come forth to meet them, the Comforter's present ministry of grace toward the heavenly people will be completed. And if—as some gather from 2 Thess. ii. 6, 7—His ascent with the Church removes the last restraint to man's iniquity, and it then bursts forth like a flood, we are not to imagine that nothing is done to cope with it. For we are told in Isa. lix. 19, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." Thus, whatever testimony God raises up for His Name in the age beyond the present, it will be in the power of the Spirit. (Compare Rev. xi. 3, 4, with Zech. iv. 3, 6) And wherever there is new birth in that age, it is by the Spirit of God (Ezek. xxxviii. 14). But the Spirit's abiding presence in the believer as the *Seal* of relationship and the *Earnest* of glory (Eph. i. 13, 14), and in the Church as the Source of all power for worship and service, and the Administrator of all spiritual functions and rule, is peculiar to the present age, and should be more fully known and in practice owned amongst us than it generally is.

Correspondence.

To the Editor of "The Believer's Magazine."

I crave a short space in your widely read magazine to name a subject which is exercising the hearts of very many of the Lord's servants, who seek to help and lead His people in the paths of His Word. In moving through a fairly large part of the country in business, with many opportunities for happy fellowship with fellow-believers, I find the same conditions prevail almost everywhere.

The younger generation of Christians in our assemblies know very little of the truths of God's Word, which are our only authority for assembling as we do, outside of all denominations, in the Name of the Lord alone, with the Word of God as our only standard of faith and practice. These truths are seldom the subjects of public ministry, and are scarcely ever mentioned in our larger gatherings and conferences. The result is, that very many know next to nothing of why they are where they are, and it is very apparent, from the easy way in which many depart from the path of separation to God, and drift into the world's religious systems, that they never learned the truth from God, but either followed their parents or joined themselves to those among whom they were converted. This is right so far as it goes, but it is not enough to keep believers walking with God in the way of His Word in testing times like ours. If we fail in many things, knowing the will of God, there is surely greater danger of failing worse if we know it not. There was in earlier years, at least one meeting weekly in each assembly where these truths—along with others—were simply and plainly taught, and I can testify to the blessing that resulted, and the happy effects that were manifest in the assembly life of those who learned the Lord's way of worship, the Divine principles of ministry, the leading of the Spirit and kindred truths, which ought to regulate our conduct when assembled together. I would recommend a return to the old time weekly Bible Reading, taking up an Epistle or a subject and going through it in order, one opening the subject, others contributing help, with an opportunity for younger ones to ask questions, but avoiding controversy and ruling out contention. It can be done to real profit, and God sought unto gives grace. A week night meeting for ministry by some servant of the Lord, who has the truth and can speak it graciously and faithfully, has been found an excellent means of help. Many Christians have been exercised

in these truths and led on in obedience to them by this means. And from intercourse with many such I know they would avail themselves of the opportunity to hear them. Some who want to walk in other paths may oppose, for it has to be owned that there are those in almost every assembly now, who are not in sympathy with these lines, but will do their utmost to oppose all that tends to keep Christians from wandering into the world's religion and adopting its ways, which some have more in common with than the church position they profess to occupy. I know from experience what this means, but am quite sure that God will richly bless all who seek to own and honour and make known His truth and all of it. Surely the Lord and His Word, and the welfare of His people, have the first claim upon all who love His Name. J. H.

Brief Notes on Points of Practical Interest.

These Notes deal with matters concerning which correspondents seek help. Being mostly of a practical rather than a doctrinal character, they are necessarily suggestive, and should be so considered.

Strangers.—It is in the way of godly care, as of good order, that two or more who have discernment and ability to welcome fellow-believers who are strangers, should give themselves to this service. It is not without its difficulties, and surely needs grace as well as wisdom.

Introducing.—In order to acquaint fellow-worshippers of the presence of those who are with them as visitors, their names and the assembly with which they are in the habit of assembling should be given. This affords opportunity for personal intercourse, giving of hospitality, and inquiries regarding friends in the localities from which they come. And it also tends to prevent disqualified persons, who come uncommended, from imposing themselves, as is frequently done. The formula, "A. B. from — is with us to-day," is rather vague.

Dismissal.—Although no form of "benediction" that requires one to assume a priestly or clerical position can be recommended, surely a reverent and orderly dismissal of all meetings convened in the Lord's Name, whether for worship or ministry of the Word, is called for. The repetition of a suitable Scripture or the singing of a seasonable verse, is found to be a fitting close to such assemblings. A hurried and disorderly and noisy stamped, is neither comely nor profitable.

“The Lord Sitteth King.”

WHEN the Son of God, after being rejected on earth, was raised from the dead and “received up into heaven,” to sit “on the right hand of God” (Mark xvi. 19), the word with which He was greeted by Jehovah was, “Sit Thou at My right hand, until I have made Thy foes Thy footstool” (Psa. cx. 1). And this passage, so frequently quoted in the New Testament Scriptures, describes the present place and attitude of the Lord Jesus in relation to the world. He is still seated on the Throne, waiting. The word which immediately follows in verse 2—“Rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies”—has not yet been spoken to Him. When it is, and He becomes invested with the kingly government of the nations (Dan. vii. 13, 14), the change is immediately celebrated in worship and rejoicing among the glorified heavenly host (Rev. xi. 15-17), who hear from the throne that the kingdom of the world is about to pass under the sceptre of its appointed King, who will presently openly intervene in the affairs of earth, and use the plenitude of power with which He has been invested, to clear the scene by judgment. In the meantime, and throughout the whole of the present age of grace toward the world, Christ is seated on the throne in a *waiting* attitude. He is neither ruling in righteousness nor openly clearing the world of its oppressors by judgment. The silent heavens look down on many a sad, sad scene, yet the hand of Divine power is not openly outstretched to deliver the righteous from trouble, nor to recompense

the wicked for their sin. It is the time of faith's trial and patience. And so far as the Word informs us, the only event that will bring full deliverance to the saints of God on earth is the personal return of the Lord, which will bring them to heaven. But while all this is so, it must not be supposed that the living Lord on the heavenly throne takes no interest in the events which transpire on earth. He assuredly does. And we have the definite assurance given that even now “the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous” (1 Pet. iii. 12), and “all things work together for good to them that love God” (Rom. viii. 28). For although Christ is not yet reigning as King openly, He sits on the throne within the heavens exercising the plenitude of its authority “on earth” (Matt. xxviii. 18) on behalf of “His own which are in the world,” the objects of His present love (John xiii. 1) and ceaseless care. Even now He “sitteth as King,” with the reins of ultimate control of all in His hand. If the heavens are silent they are not impotent, for all the power of the throne of God is at the disposal of the Son for the outworking of the Divine purposes toward the heavenly people, and for their homebringing to the Father's house. And the same all-controlling power is operating secretly, and will soon be manifested openly in preparing among the angry nations a “footstool” for His feet. As saith the prophet, “This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth, and this is the Hand that is stretched out upon all the nations” (Isa. xiv. 26).

The Present Crisis,

AND ITS DANGERS TO SPIRITUAL LIFE.

THE life of God begotten in the soul at new birth is pure and tender. It belongs to heaven, and is easily hurt by things of this lower world, which are antagonistic to it. Like an exotic plant liable to suffer from frost in these cold regions, it needs to be kept in the warm atmosphere of "the love of God" (Jude 21), in order to its preservation in health and strength. The pestilential breath of the world is not good for it. Those who wish to maintain soul-prosperity must keep away entirely from those regions in which half-worldly, half-religious mists and fogs abound. A single hour in the arena of fleshly controversy, whether of a political or a semi-religious character, will load the soul with germs which it may take years to get rid of. The spirit of militarism, so common at present, which lives and breathes in fields of hellish strife, and rejoices over the death of thousands of fellow-mortals as "victories," is not the spirit of Him who was meek and lowly in heart, nor can it do aught but hurt and wither up that life which is of and from Him, in His saints. The pride that stalks abroad in the world of war does not belong to Nazareth, but to Babylon. It is not from Christ, but from Satan, and those who have the life of God in them must watch as well as pray that they allow not this vulture from the pit to settle upon them. The indwelling Spirit of God, whose emblem is a gentle dove (Luke iv. 22) is not the author of revenge or reprisal in a saint, for

evils wrought. Retaliation is a work of the flesh and a denial of the life and character (Isa. liii. 7) and commandments of the Lord (Luke xxvi. 52 ; Rom. xii. 19-21). The Christian will not be able to rid himself of the sorrows and losses and burdens of war when it comes upon the country in which he sojourns as a pilgrim, but while acting as a loyal subject of the State, he must be careful not to reckon himself as thereby called upon to take up arms in its defence, or to join in common cause with the enemies of Christ in war. There is service of many kinds in which a Christian may share without denying his faith or defiling his conscience in the present crisis, and if a demand is made upon him, he has it in his right to offer himself to so serve, and leave room for God to bring him into favour with those who are in power in such matters. And it is wonderful how God acts on behalf of those who desire to do His will, who have no personal or sinister motive, and give no muffled or untruthful reason for their position, but honestly and in a Christian manner give their testimony to that Word of God which controls their life and ways of Daniel and his companions (see Dan. i. 8-10) yet lives, and He shows Himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are true to Him. Men of the world see in the present great upheaval a crisis of nations : some will fall, others will endure. The eye of faith sees in it a time of sifting and of testing among those who belong to Christ, and a day for taking sides with God and Christ and the Word, when there is but little recognition, of either among many who bear the Christian name. J. R.

A Time of Testing

FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

THE whole period of the Christian's sojourn on earth is a time of warfare, discipline, and trial—"the evil day" in which hosts of evil, war against him (Eph. vi. 13). In the beginning it was chiefly by persecution that the tempter wrought. The people of God had their "fiery trial" (1 Pet. iv. 12) then, and their faith was put to the test—as the word in 1 Pet. i. 7 is—and many were tested by bonds, imprisonments, and the sword (Heb. xi. 36, 37) at the hands of the Roman power that ruled over them. In our own land there have been "martyrs" for their faith, and we read the story of their faithful adherence to the Word of God, and revere their memory. But there is little open persecution now. Satan has changed his tactics. He was as the "roaring lion" (1 Pet. v. 8) in these times, seeking to frighten and devour all who stood firm for God and His truth. Now he acts more frequently as the "subtle serpent" (2 Cor. xi. 3), seeking to beguile and corrupt, and as "an angel of light" (2 Cor. xi. 14) to allure and attract from the path of obedience to God by his blandishments. The corruption of truth with error is one of the schemes by which he is allowed to test the fidelity of God's people. Error, in its naked ugliness, would not be an attraction to one truly born of God, but coated with Scripture truth misapplied, it draws many into the net. The only preservative against this wile is to keep in a condition of spiritual health, and in separation from

those who teach what is not according to the Word of God. Some read error in order to refute it, and becoming defiled, fall under its power. As "an angel of light" the enemy appears in many a religious and pleasing form to attract to his snare those who are hunting after that which pleases, rather than that which edifies the soul. Religious pleasantries, got up to charm the senses in music and art, are doing their deadly work at the present time, and those who are drawn after them become an easy prey to the devil's wiles. A desire for popularity as preachers has led some who were once mighty for God, into affinity with the world, and like Samson in Delilah's lap, they have been shorn of their strength. The "love of money" has caused others to become unequally yoked with the ungodly, and silenced their testimony. The only path of safety is "with purpose of heart to cleave unto the Lord" (Acts xi. 23), and to "hold fast" the faithful Word (Tit. i. 9), walking in the truth and with God. Then when testing comes, God will make His grace to abound, and with the trial He will "make a way of escape that we may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. x. 13). And although the fire may consume much that was of little value, the true man who endures the test will come forth as gold, less in bulk but greater in value, than before. As the years go by, these testing experiences will not decrease, nor will the wiles and devices of the great adversary lose anything in their power of seduction, but those who are true to God will prove His faithfulness in standing by and strengthening them while in the fires. J. S.

The Present Evil Age.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS IN DUBLIN. R. J. MAHONEY.

HERE is an expression in the Epistle to the Galatians, chapter i., verse 4, in our version which reads, "That He might deliver us from the present evil world," but which literally and accurately translated reads, "That He might deliver us from the evil age which has set in." This is not the generally accepted character of the time in which we live. It is called "the Christian era," and is believed by many to be a time of great spiritual and scientific progress. But we must look at it from God's standpoint, as He has spoken of it in His Word. We read there "that the whole world lieth in the wicked one" (1 John v. 19). And we may judge of its true character by what is said of him who dominates it. The name given to Satan by the Lord Jesus is "the prince of this world" (John xiv. 30), and in 2 Cor. iv. 3 he is called "the god of this age." It is therefore an "evil age" in God's reckoning. It might naturally be expected that when the Son of God came to this earth a wonderful period of blessing would have begun in the world, but as we all know, the Son of God was rejected and slain. The whole world was represented at His Cross, Jews and Gentiles together joining in putting Him to death (Acts iv. 26, 27). After He was risen from the dead and had ascended to heaven, and the Spirit had come down, we read that a time of wonderful power and blessing, with signs and wonders that caused the ungodly to stand aloof in fear, was experienced in Jerusalem. The words

of Hebrew ii. were addressed to a people who had witnessed these wonders, which are said to have been "the powers of the age to come." They were as a specimen of the age which had opened so brightly. But a mighty flood of opposition and unbelief arose against God's working, so that a few years later, Paul has to speak of "the evil age which has set in." The age which had opened so wonderfully in power and blessing was interrupted, and we hear no more of God working after this manner in the subsequent history of the Acts. The purpose of God concerning the blessing of the earth was broken off, and so it remains for the present. What does God do then? He reveals to Peter in a vision His present work in taking a people out from the world for heaven, by showing him a sheet as it were knit at the four corners, containing all manner of creatures which according to nature and Levitical precept were abominable and unclean, but which He had cleansed and made fit for heaven. This was something altogether new. It tells us what God is doing in the present time of grace, and of the outcalling of a people from the nations by the preaching of the Gospel for His Son in heavenly glory. It is a work altogether of God. The world has no part in it. It is God's own Church, and all that we know of it is revealed in the Word of God. It is wholly separate from the world; in it for a season, but not of it. The age runs on as it began in opposition to God, in rejection of Christ, and will so continue until it ends in open rebellion against God, and all that He is working in grace among men.

"The Mystery of Iniquity."

WM. HOSTE, B.A.

THE destruction of Babylon, the corrupt religious system, will make room for something even worse, the "Mystery of Iniquity." The same process is being enacted to-day in Papist countries, like France and Portugal, where a corrupted faith is giving place to no faith.* In such lands there is a certain liberty of indifference, which allows wide distribution of "Gospels," but hearts open to the Gospel are but few. It will be when the Mystery of Iniquity is revealed that "God shall send men a strong delusion that they may believe a (lit., the) lie." But this will not be till long after the coming of the Lord for His Church. Between that and this will have occurred times of blessing, such as probably will never have been known before in the history of the world. If Satan rises up against himself and destroys Babylon, it will be because she will have served his purpose long enough, and he will have no time to lose "for he knoweth that he hath but a short time." "The Mystery of Iniquity" will be the climax of †lawlessness—when "iniquity shall have come to the full." The promise of Eden will then be consummated. It seemed such a trifling thing to take the forbidden fruit. Really, it was man setting up to be God on his own account, as every act of self-will is

in principle to-day. The "Mystery of Iniquity" is the unexpected consummation of this. Lawlessness had been an age-long fruit of sin: there is nothing new in that. Men like Nimrod had been deified after their death. The "Mystery" was already working in the apostles' time. The Roman Emperors, some of them, were deified in their life time. The "New Theology" pretends that man is divine, but who would ever have imagined that a man would claim to be the only God. We see things working up to a general revolt against all authority in the home, in the nation, and alas! in the churches. ‡Trades Unionism, Socialism, Syndicalism, and kindred godless movements will find an articulate cry in the words, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." All is tending toward two great events, "The Mystery of Lawlessness," and then the "Mystery of His Will." But Israel must first be restored to the place of testimony. The true Pentecost of Joel will prepare her for this. Her testimony will be the Gospel of the Kingdom—"The King is coming!" Multitudes of all flesh will be saved, but it is easy to imagine how intolerable such a testimony will be to the ungodly world of those days, and Satan will prepare his counterblast, "The King *has* come!" and the counterfeit God-man will be presented to an astonished world with the credentials of "all power and signs and lying wonders," in the person of the Man of Sin, the first beast of Revelation xiii. His claims will be sustained with Satanic power by the second beast, the Antichrist, the false

*There are, however, signs as the result of the present war, of a partial return to 'the corrupted faith,' at least in France, and this was to be expected.

†Iniquity in 2 Thess. ii. 7 ought to be translated "lawlessness." So also in verse 8, "that wicked" should be translated "that lawless."

Messiah and King of Israel. These two super-men will form with the Dragon, who inspires them, the Satanic Triad of the last days, a counterfeit of the Trinity. The Dragon once had the highest place of any creature. "Perfect in beauty," "full of wisdom," he "sealed up the sum." He was "the anointed cherub that covered" (Ezek. xxviii.), but not content with this he aimed at the throne of God. "I will exalt my throne above the stars. . . I will be like the Most High" (Isa. xiv. 13, 14). The greatest tragedy in the universe is a Cherub turned Dragon. The Man of Sin will arise out of the revived Roman Empire as the little horn of Daniel vii. Nebuchadnezzar, in his dream, saw four Gentile empires, to whom God intended to entrust the kingdom during the national dethronement of Israel, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome, represented in their official glory by four metals—gold, silver, brass, and iron, decreasing in value as they recede from the Divine ideal of absolute monarchy. An element of weakness is introduced in the feet—the clay—the democratic socialistic element. In chap. vii. the same empires are seen in their moral degradation as four wild beasts—a lion, a bear, a leopard, and a nameless monster, and these decrease in nobility and increase in ferocity. All attempts to form a fifth world empire have failed,* and must fail, for the fifth is "the Kingdom of God and of His Christ."

*The Carthagenians, Moors, Turks, have all come near this, but have failed. The Germans seem to be making another attempt in the present war. Were they to succeed, a fifth world-empire, outside the old Roman Empire, would arise on the ruins of the British and French Empires, which form part of it.

The Coming of the Lord.

WITH SOME NOTES ON THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

BY W. H. HUNTER.

AT the opening of the sixth seal the initial series of the judgments of God, which will usher in the day of His vengeance, will terminate in a manner which the daily press of the time will probably describe as appallingly sensational: for God will arise from His place on the Throne and "will skake terribly (or overawe) the earth" (Isa. ii. 19) with such effect that there shall be "a great earthquake," of which the terrifying consequences will be felt from pole to pole, and in which the planet shall shiver from core to surface, until not one stout heart shall be left amongst men. And not only amongst men! for He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I will shake not the earth only, but the heaven:" and then all things which can be shaken will be shaken, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.

In those days Creation, which now groans and travails in pain, will writhe and toss in the horror of convulsions until men, from kings and chief magistrates to slum dwellers and serfs, shall call, not upon their counterfeit Christs, nor upon the God of this earth; but upon the riven mountains and the trembling rocks, for sudden death, for anything, through which they may be hidden from the face of the One upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; and their cry will be that the Great Day of wrath has come.

The day will be an anticipation of another and later day, in which all men

will at last believe in the hell in which the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched (Mark, ix. 48); but it will not be "the great day of His wrath," for the convulsions of Nature will subside, and concurrently men's fears will subside also, and (like the Pharaoh to whom Moses was sent), the men themselves will again harden their hearts against the LORD.

But certain well marked permanent effects will remain, amongst which effects will be (if we may judge from the fact that we never hear of them again) the disappearance of the false Christs who will be swept out of the way in order to leave the field clear for "the Prince that shall come," *the* Antichrist, that man of sin, the son of perdition.

But the revelation of the man of sin will not be immediate, therefore while the trembling heavens and the scarred earth will come back to quietude, the inhabitants of the earth will breathe freely again, for the terror of the LORD will pass by, and the little Lamb will open the seventh seal of His little book.

No sign upon the earth will follow that opening, but on heaven a hush will fall for "about the space of half an hour" (the suggestion as to a measurement of time is notable, it is the first of the kind since "the day of Pentecost was fully come," and the Spirit of the LORD was poured out on the earth): the inauguration of the second series of God's judgments will be at hand, and these judgments will be the most terrible of all.

But the seventh chapter of Revelation is interposed between the opening of the sixth and the seventh seals, and some

brief reference should be made to that chapter before we pass on to the second, or trumpet series of judgments.

The chapter is parenthetical, in that it interrupts the sequence of the narrative which, as the structure of the text shews, is continued from the last verse of chap. vi. to the first verse of chap. viii. The sequence referred to is as follows:—"When the Lamb opened" (vi. 1); "when He opened" (vi. 3, 5, 7, 9, 12, viii. 1), the nominative throughout being "the Lamb" in vi. 1, and the personal pronoun being employed in the verses which follow merely for the purpose of avoiding repetition. This is not a question of interpretation (or *exegesis*, as people say), but one of grammar of a very elementary sort. If, however, support for the suggestion be required, it will be found in a note appended to the text of Revelation in the most modern English edition of the Greek Testament* by a scholar whose repute is world wide, and who has said that in chap. viii. 1, "*He opened* looks back to vi. 12, the absence of subject showing that vii. is a parenthesis foreign to the seal series."

The parenthesis contains two visions: the one earthly, the other heavenly. They are not continuous, there is an interval between them so far as time is concerned; but they are conjoined in chap. vii. for the purpose of bringing together into one a goodly fellowship of martyrs, who have a distinct place in the purposes of God, whose witness shall be attested by their life blood, which shall be poured out upon

* "The Expositor's Greek Testament"—the note referred to is by Professor James Moffat, D.D.

the earth in the period between the coming again of the Jesus for His people, and His coming to earth, as the Son of Man.

In the first vision John saw a defined number (144,000), chosen out of the tribes of Israel, not a Gentile being numbered amongst them, sealed for service, *not* for salvation. These sealed servants will go forth like the sower in Matt. xiii., like the weepers in Psalm cxxvi., bearing precious seed with them; for they will go out to sow the word, "the word of the Kingdom," and to scatter it not only in all the lands which once formed the Roman Empire, but amongst "*all* the Gentile nations" (Mark xiii. 10).

In the second vision the seer beheld again, and the weepers had returned with rejoicing, and had brought their sheaves with them; a great multitude which no man could number, who had (like the redeemed in chap. v.) been gathered out of every Gentile nation and out of every Jewish tribe, who had come out of *the great tribulation*, who had washed their robes, and who had made these robes bright in the blood of the Lamb: for in this way will the number of the souls which John saw "under the altar," when the Lamb opened the sixth seal, be made complete.

At a later period of his experience John saw a third vision of thrones and martyrs and judgment, and in that vision we may see how the fellowship of chap. vii. were fitted into the place prepared for them in the scheme of millennial glory.

Let it be added, by way of remembrance, that in that goodly fellowship not one saint of the present time, not a

single member of the Body of Christ, will have part or place: for these there is a higher calling, for them there is a greater part, and for them a better place is being prepared.

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The Book of Esther,

IN ITS PROPHETIC ASPECT.

W. J. M'CLURE, CALIFORNIA.

THE teaching of the book of Esther, viewed prophetically, points onward to the time when the Jews, again in their land, will be subjected to a period of unparalleled suffering under the Antichrist, of whom Haman is here a type. His name means "Magnificent," and the Word of God tells us that the coming Antichrist, while the instrument of Satan, endowed with his authority (Rev. xiii. 2) will, in the eyes of men, be the perfection of manhood without God, a person of transcendent ability and attractive personality. The object of Haman was to obtain authority to exterminate the Jews, and the onslaught against the earthly people in time to come will be to thwart God's purpose in blessing the world through them as He has promised. And just as Haman's success seemed assured, having the Persian monarch's power at his disposal, so the prophetic Scriptures teem with allusions to the apparent triumph of the last great enemy of the Jewish people and the conquest of Jerusalem (see Zech. xiv. 1-9; Dan. xi. 45). In their distress they cry unto God for deliverance, asking vengeance upon their foes, and these prayers are recorded in many of the Psalms. And their cries are

heard in heaven. When the armies of the great enemy are gathered around Jerusalem, and everything points to its downfall, the Lord shall "repent Himself for His servants when He seeth that their power is gone" (Deut. xxxii. 36), and as a man of war ready for the fray, "THEN shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations like as He fought in the day of battle." Never has the sun shone on such an array of might as will be gathered under the walls of Jerusalem in that hour. The chivalry of Europe, and far beyond it, in all their might and splendour, will be there, led on by their great emperor and his colleague—

"As if earth in her frenzy, from each region afar,
Had poured out her hosts for the shock of that war."

But the might of the world is a poor thing when God puts forth His arm to deal with it. Quick as the lightning's flash the Lord, accompanied by His armies, descends (Rev. xix. 11-15). His feet will stand upon the Mount of Olives (Zech. xiv. 4), in view of the whole scene. In an instant the two leaders, "the beast and the false prophet," both caught red-handed in their guilt, in the very hour of their apparent triumph and without trial, are hurled alive into the lake of fire. The leaderless host of kings and captains and warriors fall, to become food for the fowls of heaven (Rev. xix. 20-21). And thus will be fulfilled in awful reality the hanging of Haman on the gallows he had reared for Mordecai, with the destruction of his sons and all the enemies of the Jews (Esther vii. 10; ix. 5, 10).

DISPENSATIONALLY, in the setting aside of Vashti for her disobedience and failure

to show her fairness, and the receiving into favour of Esther, the orphan Jewess, we have a picture of the setting aside of that which bears Christ's Name, professing to be His church, but which has failed to "continue in God's goodness," and must therefore be cut off (Rom. xi. 20-24). Then the Jew will again be brought into blessing and acknowledged relationship with God. And as when Mordecai was exalted to royal honour, the Jews had "light and gladness and joy and honour," and the fear of the people fell upon them (chap. viii. 17), so shall it be with the now persecuted and scattered nation, when they look upon Him whom they pierced, and own Him as their Messiah. Happy it is for the saints of this present time that before these events can happen to the earthly people, we who are of the heavenly calling will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, to be with and like Him. And that His coming is near, we surely know. May our hearts respond—"Come, Lord Jesus."

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The Time of Faith's Trial.

"Now for a little while, if need be, ye have been put to grief in manifold trials" (1 Peter i. 6, R. V.).

God would never send you the darkness,
If He thought you could bear the light;
But you would not cling to His guiding hand,
If your way were always bright;
And you would not care to walk by faith
Could you always walk by sight.

So He sends you the blinding tempest,
And the furnace of sevenfold heat;
'Tis the only way, believe me,
To keep you low at His feet,
For 'tis always so easy to wander,
When our lives are fair and sweet.

The Preacher's Column.

OUTLINES OF EVANGELISTIC SUBJECTS.*

THREE GREAT GOSPEL BLESSINGS.

Imputed Righteousness (Rom. iv. 22-24).

Imparted Life (1 John v. 11-13).

Implanted Nature (2 Peter i. 3-4).

The First is ours in virtue of the Cross (Rom. v. 1).

The Second is from the Living Christ in Heaven (Col. iii. 3).

The Third is by the Spirit and the Word (1 Peter i. 22, 23).

THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

The Darkest Exhibition of Man's Sin (Acts iv. 27, 28).

The Brightest Display of God's Love (1 John iii. 10).

The Greatest Witness of Satan's Defeat (Heb. ii. 14).

The Mightiest Work for Man's Salvation (1 Cor. i. 18).

OUR GREAT DELIVERER.

He Delivers Sinners from Sin's Bondage (Luke iv. 18).

He Rescues from the Power of Darkness (Col. i. 13).

He Severs from the present Evil World (Gal. i. 4).

He Delivers from every Evil Work (2 Tim. iv. 18).

* **Five Hundred Evangelistic Subjects**, a New Volume for Preachers, Just Issued, contains Fresh Outlines and Notes of Addresses for the help of all. 1/6, post free.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

About a dozen young men, all lately converted, in a village not far off, in which there is absolutely no spiritual ministry or help in the Word of God, have asked some of us to conduct a weekly Bible Reading in a cottage there. Can you suggest to us the best lines upon which to proceed, and the most suitable subjects to take up?

Foundation Truths of the Gospel, and presentations of the Lord Jesus in His varied offices as Sacrifice, Saviour, High Priest and Lord, are truths well fitted to feed, establish, and help on "new-born babes." We have pleasure in sending you a copy of our book, "Foundation Truths of the Gospel," in which you will find the substance of Twelve Bible Readings given to young believers, one night each week, many years ago, which may be of help to you. The old-fashioned way of conducting such meetings is for one who has some experience in the Christian life, a good acquaintance with the Word of God, and some ability in stating what he knows, to open with a short, simple exposition of the subject, followed by an opportunity for others to express their thoughts,

state their difficulties, and ask questions; the guidance, duration, and order of the gathering being assumed by the one who, for the occasion, opens the subject, thus preventing unprofitable discussion which, if allowed, would hinder edification and lead to contention. We strongly recommend such united reading and consideration of the Word, not only for young Christians, but for blessing to all. We enclose a Card giving a concise, simple Bible subject for each week of next year, which subjects are now used by many assemblies in their mid-week Bible Reading, and by classes of young Christians for their united study, with much spiritual profit. As you will observe, the subjects include the Believer's Salvation, Position, and Calling, his Path through life, and his Prospects hereafter, all of which are just the truths young believers need. We wish you God speed in your happy service, and shall be pleased to hear of its success.

Answers to Correspondents.

ANON.—The author of the precious hymn beginning, "Ours are peace and joy Divine," was, we believe, the late William Reid, who for many years edited "The British Herald."

A. R. T.—If a public statement of false teaching has been made, either orally or in print, it demands an equally public withdrawal, which will not be long withheld if its author's repentance and recovery are real.

J. H., COVENTRY.—The "household of faith" (Gal. vi. 10), ought to have the first consideration in a Christian's liberality—first, because of the closer relation (1 John iii. 17), and next, because while the world may look after its own, it usually neglects the children of God.

G. S., FIFE.—While there is much room for humiliation because of the feeble Gospel testimony in many assemblies of believers who seek to conduct their meetings according to the simple principles and pattern of the Word, this is no reason at all for giving up in favour of a mission conducted on sectarian lines, with the object of building up denominational religion.

A. L., NORWICH.—The Lord's attitude toward the world during this age is that of grace. Grace "reigns" (Rom. v. 21). But this, while it postpones its judgment, neither condones its sin, nor exempts it from its punishment. The living unbeliever is

"condemned already" (John iii. 18), and the unjust, who have died, are "reserved unto the day of judgment to be punished" (2 Pet. ii. 9). There never was more need of a clear and definite testimony to both "mercy and judgment" (Psa. ci. 1) by all who preach the Word than now.

W. G., BELFAST.—While the word "Substitution" may not be found in the Bible, the truth for which it stands is there in its plenitude. And while the full value of the sinbearing (1 Pet. ii. 24) and sinpurging (Heb. i. 3) work of the Son of God is reckoned only to those who by faith become identified with Him, and are henceforth regarded as "in Christ Jesus" (Rom. viii. 1; 1 Cor. i. 30), yet His ransom was "for all" (1 Tim. ii. 6), or there would be no Gospel to preach to sinners. And it is to be noted that in the chapter where the ambassador's great message, "Be reconciled to God," is given, it is immediately followed by "For He hath made Him to be sin for us who know no sin" (2 Cor. v. 20, 21)—words which surely leave no doubt from whence the reconciliation comes. A Gospel that lacks "Christ died for our sins" (1 Cor. xv. 3) as its message, can bring no good news to a sinner.

G. R., BRISTOL.—The principle of the Scriptures regarding united worship is, that in virtue of the common priesthood of believers (1 Pet. ii. 5; Heb. xiii. 15), all males who are not incapacitated morally or physically, may lead the assembly's thanksgiving, but it is the responsibility of all who do, to see that it is in spiritual and not fleshly zeal; that they are under the guidance of the Spirit, that their exercise is in season, and that their utterances are such as others can say "Amen" to.

T. A., READING.—When one who bears the Christian name lapses into fundamental error, or falls under the power of moral evil, the Word distinctly tells us that he not to be companied with personally, or accorded the privileges of the home socially (2 John 10) or of the church collectively (1 Cor. v. 11-13) while in that condition. We are not called upon to say whether the sinning one is a Christian fallen or a mere professor unmasked: that is with God, who knows the heart, and time will in most cases manifest it. Such discipline is God's appointed means to lead to repentance and restoration, which are often hindered by individuals who are out of fellowship with God in His dealings, fraternising with the evildoer and condoling him as a martyr, a course which should be shown from the Word to be wilful, and which, if persisted in, may require to be publicly rebuked (1 Tim. v. 20).

From Camps and Battlefields.

Military Camps, with their hundreds of thousands of soldiers in training, are special fields for spreading the Gospel at present. To reach these outgoing troops with God's message is a work of great importance surely, when we hear that 30,000 of them fall in battle and by disease each week. A few recent notes from workers give some idea of the scope and value of such work. **Weymouth.**—"Eager hands are held out to welcome the Gospel messages." **Aldershot.**—"Have given the parcel of **Soldiers of the King**, which were quickly picked up." **Salisbury.**—"Messages of Peace are splendid for the soldiers. They are seen all over the place reading them." **Bedford.**—"God blesses the booklets, and we see souls passing into peace through the message."

On the Seas.—Battleships, with their hundreds of men, are well evangelised by Christian naval men on board, to whom we have been enabled to send many parcels of Gospel literature. Transport men, minesweepers, and thousands of others, working night and day to protect our lives and shores, may well be remembered by all Christians in sending them the Gospel and the Word of God. One writes, "I received the Gospels and Testaments, and gave them all away." Another, "The tracts and booklets were soon in the hands of our men, and you can see them being read all over the ship."

In Hospitals.—A Christian, who has just returned from France, says:—"The sight of six thousand bleeding, bruised, and broken men brought from the battle front, many in awful agony, was a sight I can never forget." M. Maubert, of Paris, is able to visit some of these hospitals with the Gospel. In answer to an urgent request from other workers in France, we were able to send 5000 booklets and tracts in French, and an equal number in English for distribution among these sufferers.

Colonials, far from home and friends, who have been wounded, are especially remembered. We note with gratitude the loving liberality of Christians in Canada, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand, in sending gifts to provide those of their own countries with the Word of Life.

Christians in War Lands

As may well be understood, children of God, whose lot it is to live in invaded countries and in

lands where war is raging, are passing through times of trial, and in many cases enduring "a great fight of afflictions" (Heb. x. 32). A few recent notes from and concerning them will be welcomed.

France.—"All the brethren from the Paris assembly, who are at the front, have, so far as is at present known, been spared alive."

Belgium.—Most of the small assemblies are able to continue their meetings for worship, although many of their helpers are far away.

Serbia.—Disaster, disease, and death have come in like a flood upon this sad land, now enduring its third invasion. Thousands of the simple peasantry have perished at the hands of the German and Austrian armies. In one village 179 houses were ruined, and 120 aged people and children burnt in a schoolhouse. Mr. Gaskin of Birmingham and Mr. Collins of London do noble work in a hospital at **Skoplje**. In **Belgrade**, which has recently passed into the hands of the invaders, there are children of God who need our sympathy and prayers.

Persia.—Mr. Dawajan and his family have gone to **Tabriz**. The Kurds stole all his effects. Many fugitives are found by the wayside dying from hunger. Mr. Oraham of Urumiah, on his return, found his house burned to the ground, his youngest child had died, and another ill, who has since died.

Armenia.—The sufferings of these sorely persecuted people at the hands of the Turks baffles description. It was stated on good authority in the House of Lords lately, that 800,000 Armenians have been massacred during the past few months. There are many true Christians among them.

Letters from Soldiers in Flanders and the Dardanelles tell of terrible experiences on war swept fields. One writes, "We prove God's care in shielding us in the time of danger." Another tells how in wonderful ways several Christian lads were sent to other duties, in time to save them from certain death by a bursting shell. But there are dangers to spiritual life in the trenches, which cannot be escaped, but must be faced, and Christian soldiers there need our constant prayers.

Wounded Men, lying in hospitals, far from their homes, broken and sore, are deeply grateful for Christian sympathy and such remembrances as can be safely sent them by mail. Fellow-believers may surely especially think of such who are known to them, whose addresses they may readily procure. **Wives and Families** of Christian soldiers and sailors, are cheered by visits from Christians who give themselves to this service.

To Our Readers.

As has been our custom, we have pleasure in giving a condensed preliminary statement regarding the publication of "The Believer's Magazine" for the coming year, and the matter we hope (in the will of God) to give in its pages from many contributors on many themes, to meet the wants of all its readers. It is with heartfelt thankfulness that we close our Twenty-fifth Year, and look forward to the Twenty-sixth with a goodly supply of sound and seasonable Scriptural Expositions from many pens, with the promise of much more as the months go by.

A Concise Coloured Chart of "The Journey of Israel from Egypt's Slavery to Canaan's Fields," with all the incidents of the Wilderness Way noted and filled in, with the Scriptures that describe them and their spiritual meaning and message, will be presented with the January number of the Magazine to all subscribers for 1916.

A Series of **Analytical Notes** on these subjects will be given by the Editor each month, for use in personal study, Weekly Bible readings of believers and classes for young Christians, and a series of **Practical Papers on The Christian's Relation to the World**, Politically, Morally, and Religiously.

Our esteemed contributor, W. H. Hunter, continues his **Notes on the Book of Revelation**, of much present interest to all; William Hoste on **The Mysteries of the New Testament**; W. J. McClure a series of short, practical papers on **Timothy**. In answer to a wide desire for a restatement of truths concerning **Gathering in the Lord's Name**, and the path of **Separation to God**, as set forth in the Word, a series of Twelve simple and definite Papers will be given by twelve well known writers, giving truths which were used in rich blessing to a past generation, and which remain as present truths for us of the day. We earnestly seek the prayerful and practical co-operation of all who are in sympathy with the Magazine, in the extension of its message to a still wider circle, to whom its ministry may be acceptable and of some cheer, in this time of depression and deep exercise to many hearts. We are pleased to say that there is to be no increase of postal rates on small packets, so that "The Believer's Magazine" will still go to all the world at the former price of 1 copy for 1/6 (or 35 cents); 2 copies, 2/6, while four, six, and twelve copies, together to one Address, go Post Paid, at One Penny each, anywhere.

Assured Guidance

IN TIMES OF GENERAL PERPLEXITY.

VERY many of God's people are in perplexity regarding their present path in connexion with the new call to arms, and the urgent demand made upon the manhood of the country to engage in National service. The conflicting counsels of those who have hitherto been looked upon as leaders and guides in things spiritual, and the uncertain sound in the testimony of many who take upon themselves the responsibility of standing in the gate to give judgment in such matters, only increases uncertainty in the minds of many as to what is the path of duty in obedience to the will of God. It is a relief and a comfort to turn from the uncertain counsels of men to the clear and comforting words of the Book of God, words which are as true to-day as when first uttered, giving principles of assured guidance to all who desire to know and do the will of God. The words of the prophet, whatever their primary application, contain principles of abiding value, and bear in them a message of present day guidance to all the children of God. "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His Servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? let him trust in the Name of the Lord and stay upon his God" (Isa. 1. 10). The message is to him that "feareth the Lord" and that "obeyeth the voice of His Servant" who has spoken His Word. These are necessary conditions to ascertain the will of God, and to have His assured guidance. If self-will is at

work and that filial fear of taking any step that would displease God absent, it is vain to seek or to expect Divine light on the path. To one who has his mind set on a certain course, and then goes to God asking Him to sanction it, no assured guidance can come. He lacks that "fear of the Lord," which is the necessary condition to obtain it. Nor need it be expected by any who are in the habit of neglecting to "obey the voice" that speaks through the written Word on all that concerns the course and conduct of the child of God in his earthly path and service. But given the renounced will and the readiness to do whatever the living Lord may appoint, to have no preference for this or that, then to the one who "hath no light" regarding his future steps, the Word is "let him trust in the Name of the Lord"—as he did at first for his salvation (John xx. 31), the knowledge of which came to his soul through the Word (1 John v. 13), and was confirmed by the seal (Eph. i. 13) and witness of the Spirit (Rom. viii. 16). The right attitude of the soul is beautifully expressed in the words, "let him *trust* . . . and *stay* upon his God." Light may not come in an instant, but the waiting time of the soul is rich in blessing, for it is while so "waiting" on the Lord, that the renewed strength is received (Isa. xl. 31) to mount upward as on eagle's wing, and go forward in the way of His commandments when the clear light of heaven shines upon the road. There will be no halting and no hesitancy then, with the Lord's disciple, for

"Light Divine surrounds his goings,
God Himself has marked the way." J. R.

Rule According to God.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS, BY GEORGE F. TRENCH.

WHEN God created Adam, He placed Him in the earth as His vicegerent, to rule (Gen. i. 18). In his kingdom all owned his dominion until he fell. Then he forfeited his dignity, and learned the bitterness of becoming the bondslave of the devil, who had betrayed him, and whom he had accepted as his god (chap. iii. 14-19). Having forfeited his right to rule, Adam and his sons had to learn what the world would become under the rule of Satan. For some seventeen centuries God permitted things to proceed unrestrained, only forbidding man to take his fellow's life apart from Divine appointment to bear the sword. With what result? "The earth was filled with violence" (Gen. vi. 11-13). With the restraining hand of God withdrawn, in order that men might learn what fallen human nature was capable of, the earth became a scene of uncontrolled passion and bloodshed, and God in judgment swept it clean of its degraded inhabitants. Never again has such a judgment come upon mankind, and never will it, until God withdraws for a season His restraining hand and allows the devil to appoint its coming ruler (Rev. xiii. 2), to whom he will give his authority, to be used in demanding world-wide submission to the rule of hell, and to the worship of the beast as god (ver. 4). The result will be so awful in judgment at the hand of God, that men will seek death in order to escape the judgments of that "great and terrible day of the Lord." Noah, brought

through the Flood, was established on the purged earth with extended powers of rule, to restrain men from violence, with the added law that for bloodshed, the murderer should account for his deed by giving up his life to God; and man, as God's executor, should inflict the penalty (Gen. ix. 5, 6). This decree remains, and is used by God to prevent outrage and murder, which Satan would otherwise urge unregenerate man to commit, if unrestrained by fear of condign punishment from God's rulers. Another form of rule was established by God in the midst of His elect earthly nation of Israel, first, for the punishment of the Canaanite nations for their unbridled iniquity and idolatry, the measure of which had become full (Gen. xv. 16), and next, that by just judgment in their midst (Deut. xvi. 18), they might become a witness to the world of what true government, according to God, is, with the ultimate object that the whole earth should become subject to the government of God exercised through them as a nation. But Israel ceased to obey God, and the sceptre departed from them, only to return when they own the Lord Jesus as their Messiah-King, who shall have "dominion unto the ends of the earth," and before whom "all kings shall fall down" and serve (Psa. lxxii. 8, 11). When Israel lost her place of rule, and was exiled and dispersed among the nations, God committed authority in the earth to Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, "over all the children of men" (Dan. ii. 38), and to Cyrus of Persia, over all "the kingdoms of earth" (Ezra i. 2), and this

Gentile rule continues until now, and will until the Lord Jesus, once rejected and put to death by the Roman power, and meanwhile seated on the Father's throne, shall come forth to "put down all rule and all authority," and reign upon the throne of His father David, as King (Luke i. 32, 33). Then Israel shall become the chief of nations and princes over all the earth (Psa. xlv. 16), while the twelve apostles, judging the twelve tribes, shall sit on twelve thrones of administrative government, reigning with Him (Matt. xix. 28). This will be the Millennium, the thousand years of the world's peace under righteous rule. Meanwhile the Lord is rejected on earth, and His people occupy the place of rejection with Him. They do not rebel against the rule of the lands in which they live, but own their rulers as "ministers of God" (Rom. xiii. 4). The Lord when here set the example of this. He acknowledged the rule of the Roman power, unrighteous as it was, to be of God (Matt. xxii. 17, 21), even in the hour of its greatest crime (John xix. 11). But when He was asked to decide a dispute between two brothers regarding an inheritance, he refused on the ground that He had no jurisdiction, for He was not a judge (Luke xii. 14). The Church has no earthly portion here, as her Lord had none, but the Christian is commanded to acknowledge governmental authority as something established by God for his good (Rom. xiii. 1-4), and to make all in authority the subject of his constant "prayers and thanksgivings" (1 Tim. ii. 1-3). It is to be feared that the latter is oft neglected by Christians.

The Church's Eclipse.

THE Church, when it was first set up as God's witness in the world, maintained its testimony in a way worthy of the One whose Name it bore. It was the epistle of Christ, known and read of all. It stood in separation from the world. It was the pillar and ground of the truth. The light on its lampstand shone brightly, and the world, although it opposed and persecuted, owned that it was of God. It could not be hid, for the Lord in its midst was mighty. Its salt had not lost its savour, and the world of the ungodly had to own it. But gradually its light declined, its power departed, conformity to the present evil world eclipsed it. The Church rapidly declined, it formed an unholy alliance with the world and, like Samson, when his Nazarite separation had been lost, it was shorn of its strength, and soon lost its vision of heavenly and eternal things. The regions in which its light first shone so brightly, and its power was felt so mightily, have long been shrouded in the deepest darkness, with scarcely a glimmer of Gospel light to relieve their gloom. Mohammedanism has long spread its wings of darkness over the lands in which the apostles laboured, and in which the first churches, gathered from among the Gentiles, were planted. For centuries they have slept the sleep of a double death. The light that was once in them has long become darkness, and "how great is that darkness." The solemn lesson to be learned by us and by all God's people in favoured lands, in which the light of truth has

so long shone, with liberty to own and obey it, surely is, that privilege misused and light abused will be withdrawn and become darkness. To whom God gives much, of them much will be required. The warning word to Gentile profession of Christ's Name is, that if it "continue not in God's goodness," it shall, like Israel before it, "be cut off" like a fruitless and withered branch which has ceased to serve the purpose for which it was called into existence on this earth. It is no question of the eternal salvation of individuals, but of that and those who profess to be God's testimony in the world who, through departure from His Word, become as lamps in which there is no heavenly light. It was only a brief period, after they left the place of separation to God and adherence to His Word, that they were allowed to continue. The restraining hand of God, which protects that which is of and for Himself in the world, which He preserves by His presence and power as the bush that burned with fire and yet was not consumed, being withdrawn, the sword of the avenger and the corruption of the seducer soon brings to its final stage. And thus it is that true testimony for God declines and perishes. In the light of these solemn facts, the present cataclysm among the nations surely has its voice to all who bear the Name of Christ among men. There may yet be time to repent, to turn unto the Lord, to do the first works, and to seek to the ways of the Word. To all who do, mercy will rejoice against judgment, and there will be blessing. But the repentance must be real, the return must be full, and

not in half measure. All unholy alliances with the world must be severed, and all conformity to its ways, socially and religiously, abandoned. The Lord claims the wholehearted allegiance of His own, and He will not allow them to own other lords and lovers. It was the going after other gods that wrought ruin in Israel, and it has been bowing the knee to the world's religion that has ever been the greatest cause of the eclipse of the Christian and the Church. R. G. S.

Two Ecstatic Experiences.

THE *Enjoyment of God*.—"We joy in God" (Rom. v. 11). This we might describe as the apex of spiritual experience. To be joying in and enjoying God, is indeed to anticipate the blessednesses of heaven. This same chapter speaks of "faith" and "peace" and "love" and "glory." but it seems to reach its heavenly climax in this holy "joy." But let it be carefully observed that the foundation of this joy is the "*Atonement*."

II. *The Employment of God*.—This turns the mind away at once from the *contemplative* to the *aggressive*. "Present your bodies" (Rom. xii. 1). As soon as this wondrous presentation is effected, we enter upon a sphere of service hitherto unknown. We are now employed by *God!* To be in the employment of *earthly Royalty* is considered by many a thing to be eagerly grasped at; but, oh! how much higher and nobler to be engaged in the holy and honourable service of the Most High God. If I am joying in God, I will joy in His employ. T. BAIRD.

The Prepared Place.

WILLIAM LINCOLN.

THE words of this fourteenth chapter of John were uttered after the traitor had gone out. The Lord is left now with His own, and to them He reveals the secrets of His heart. Many things are told them that He had never mentioned before. The chapter opens and closes with the words, "Let not your heart be troubled" (verses 1, 27). He was going from them, and they were to trust in Him unseen as they had in God, never for a moment doubting His interest in them, or fearing He might forget or fail them. He was going to "the Father's house," and there He tells them are "many abodes," plenty of room and full compensation of heavenly bliss for all that they had given up for Him here. He says, "I go to prepare a place for you." Some would make little of the place, but Scripture does not. In the Lord's account it is worth something, for He puts it here in the foreground. It had a chief place in His thoughts, and He uses the word a second time, when He adds, "And if I go and prepare a *place* for you, I will come again." He delivers His own from the world, the condemned, polluted world; but He gives them an "inheritance incorruptible and undefiled" in the heavens (1 Pet. i. 3). And this prepared place is awaiting the saints there. Can we know anything of it now. I believe we may, for it is among the things that God "hath *prepared* for them that love Him," which the Spirit has been given to reveal to us now (1 Cor. ii. 12). It is not the

grandeur and glory of heaven so much that is here in view, as the place into which God, in virtue of the work of His beloved Son, brings those who believe in Him, now in spirit, and into which He will yet bring all His own bodily at the return of the Lord. For it should ever be remembered that we are already made meet to be "partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. i. 12). Here the Lord tells them that He is going by His own death and resurrection, and by His ascension and session at God's right hand, to take possession of it not only for Himself, but as Representative and Forerunner of His people. He was about to enter the holiest by His own blood, and to go into the immediate presence of God, which is to be the proper home of His people. In that inner heaven is our abiding place, kept secure for us because He is there. To His Father He says in chap. xvii. 24, "I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with me where I am." His love will not be satisfied until He has the objects of that love beside Him there. This is our home. We know "the way," as verse 4 says, but the supernatural glory we have not yet seen. But it is there, and His Word is, "I am coming again to receive you unto Myself, that WHERE I am, there ye may be also." The place is very beautiful, the place that He has prepared, but there He is Himself. And the words, "I am coming again to receive you unto Myself," surely mean, that He will clasp us to His bosom, and have His own way with us, and His joy in us before He does anything else.

“The Mystery of Iniquity.”

SECOND PAPER. BY WM. HOSTE, B.A.

IN his vision, Daniel saw the fourth empire as it will be under the ten horns, and therefore in its last stage of development. He describes the rise of “the little horn,” which overthrows three of the ten. In Rev. xiii. the beast is seen with seven heads as well as ten horns, of which one is wounded to death, is healed, and becomes eventually the eighth head or last great Ruler of the revived Roman Empire. The eighth head and the little horn are therefore identical, though in one extraordinary point they will not be. This we shall see later. Let us turn now for a moment to Revelation xiii. The opening words, as is well known, ought to be, “And he (*i.e.*, the dragon) stood upon the sand of the sea shore.” Then follows the rise of the great beast, which we have little difficulty in recognising as the fourth beast of Daniel. It embodies traits of the three previous empires—the leopard, the bear, and the lion; truly a monster “dreadful and terrible,” having, as we have seen, “seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy . . . and the dragon gave him his (*i.e.*, his own) power and his seat and great authority,” and then the apostle adds—“I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death, and his deadly wound was healed” (Rev. xiii. 1-3). The wounding and miraculous recovery of this head is well worth our close attention. In Rev. i. the Lord describes Himself as ‘He that liveth and was dead and is alive for ever

more.’ Throughout the Book, this is characteristic of the Lamb. He has been slain, but is now alive. This word “slain” is the sacrificial word, and is identical with that used of the wounded head of the Beast “slain to death”—the word “as it were” is simply the word translated in chap. v. “*as it had been slain.*” The head will be truly slain and brought to life by Satanic power—a travesty of the resurrection. This marvel seems to be realised in a double way. The then ruler of the Roman Empire will be wounded to death and miraculously healed. But previously, perhaps centuries before, one of the seven heads of the beast will have been slain with a sword, and his spirit, instead of going to Hades, the usual abode of the wicked dead, will have been preserved in the bottomless pit or abyss—the very place Satan will be shut up in during the millennium. The first thing, indeed, we hear of the beast in his personal character is, that he will “ascend out of the bottomless pit,” and make war against God’s two witnesses, and will overcome them and kill them (chap. xi. 7). These two, the present and past rulers, will become in some way mysteriously combined. May it not be, I would suggest, that the wicked spirit of the past “head” will come out of the abyss and take possession of the body of the then present ruler, who had received the deadly wound. If this be so, the dead one will come to life again energized by the spirit of a past Roman Emperor, destined thus to play a second rôle in this world’s affairs. The electrifying bulletin will circle the globe. The deadly wound is healed.

A miracle has been performed by the Dragon's power, and men will worship him, as the Great Lifegiver. The Man of Sin will thus be a dual personality with super-human powers, and he will be an object of almost universal worship.

A Father's Love and Care.

"Your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of all these things" (Matt. vi. 32).

THIS world is a scene of sin and strife,
 And its trials I must share,
 But mine is a sweet and a happy life
 With a Father's love and care;
 I only need to be clothed and fed—
 My wants are but few and small;
 And the Lord who loveth me hath said
 That my Father knows them all.

Let others barn and storehouse build,
 And about to-morrow weep;
 Each hungry raven's mouth is fill'd,
 And they neither sow nor reap;
 And never a care need cloud my brow,
 Nor a tear mine eye bedim,
 For my Father watcheth o'er me now,
 And my needs are known to Him.

Though long be my absent Master's stay,
 And far be my heavenly home,
 I am called to live from day to day
 In the hope that He shall come,
 And with artless ease His grace to show,
 'Mid worry, and strife, and din,
 Who hath taught me how the lilies grow,
 Though they neither toil nor spin.

Thus, simply, O Lord, would I trust in Thee
 Till the days of trust are o'er;
 One word from Thy lips is better to me
 Than the miser's hoarded store.
 And when Thou art pleased my trust to try,
 And my weakness fain would yield,
 O tell me again of the raven's cry,
 And the lilies of the field!

The Best Security. The promises of God are the best security of His people. His bank never fails. He never denies His Word.—Donald Ross.

The Coming of the Lord, AND THE EVENTS WHICH WILL FOLLOW;

WITH SOME NOTES ON THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

BY W. H. HUNTER.

IN the stillness of the solemn hush which fell upon heaven when the Lamb opened the seventh seal, John saw the seven angels who stand in the presence of God, who came silently to the front, and to whom were given seven trumpets.

Certain apocryphal writings, in which legend is blended with truth in such manner as to make analysis impracticable, contain more or less explicit statements concerning these angels of the Presence; but the New Testament has but little to say about them. To God, Christ is all in all; to Christ therefore the Holy Spirit bears witness, not to angels; with Christ God would have His people occupy themselves, and not with the very brightest and most honoured of His messengers, to whom service for Christ of the humblest character is a delight and a weight of glory.

Gabriel when (under the compulsion of the unbelief of the man to whom he had been sent) he introduced himself to Zacharias the priest in the temple at the time of the evening service, describes himself as being one of the seven, for the words which he used concerning his own position are identical with those which John employed with regard to the seven in Rev. viii. 2 (the identity is obscured by difference in translation both in A.V. and R.V.), from which fact the deduction may perhaps be drawn that the angels at the sepulchre and at the

ascension, and possibly the messenger who was sent to Cornelius "about the ninth hour of the day" (the time of the evening sacrifice, and the time at which our Lord died on the Cross) were part of the same exalted number. Further, it may be gathered from Dan. ix. 21; Luke xxiv. 4; and Acts i. 10, that those who have been entrusted with special service among men, service which has required personal manifestation of the servants, have themselves appeared in human guise; while the words of Mark xvi. 5 suggest that their slim and youthful forms, veil the immensity of their experience and the untold ages of their ministry.

The silence in heaven was broken by the sound of prayer. "Another angel," bearing in his hand a golden crown, came and stood at "the altar" (the words look back upon and connect themselves with the altar in ch. vi. 9), to whom was given much incense, that igniting the incense at "the altar," he might offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar before the throne; whether these saints were already amongst the martyred throng whom John first saw under the altar, or were yet upon the earth with the experiences of the great tribulation still before them.

The angelic ministry, whether at "the altar" or at the golden altar, is as different in character and in effect from that of the Great High Priest upon the Throne, as the prayers of saints in the present time differ from those of the future days, of which glimpses are vouchsafed in the Book of Revelation. Now, saints in sorrow and distress, personal or as those

who share the griefs of others, cry for endurance and for grace; then, saints in light will plead for vengeance and for the destruction of their foes. The difference is in accordance with the distinction between the day of salvation and the day of vengeance; and, behold! NOW is the day of salvation; THEN will be the day of vengeance, and in that day the angels of the presence will prepare themselves to sound the trumpets which will have been given unto them.

The judgments of the trumpet series, like unto those of the seals, will be divided into two groups of four and three respectively; the second group being emphatically described as "woes."

In the first group, the trumpet blasts and the ensuing calamities will apparently follow each other in rapid succession, and although the judgments will obviously be from above, and will be outside of and beyond the ordinary course of nature, they will for the greater part affect the being and the lives of mankind, though destruction will fall directly upon part of the lower creation, upon creatures which were never made in the image of God.

First; the third part of vegetation will be "burnt up." Second; the third part of the sea will be turned into blood, the third part of marine genera will be slain, and the third part of the shipping on the sea will be destroyed. Third; the third part of the land waters, the springs and the streams, will become as bitter as the pangs of the death which, through them, will overtake "many men." Fourth; a third part of the heavenly bodies, whether luminaries or lightgivers, such as the sun

and many of the stars ; or illuminated or light reflectors, like the moon and the planets ; will be darkened, so that one-third of each day and night shall be enshrouded in gloom and blackness.

It is significant that no hint is given as to the locality of the part or parts of the earth, or as to the place in the arc of heaven which will be affected by the bewildering experiences which will fall upon men as the first four angels sound. Whether mankind will hear the blasts of these trumpets or not is a moot point, but there can be little doubt that in the pause between the first and the second group, men will hear the scream (though it is unlikely that they will see the form) of an eagle-like creature who, flying through the light and through the darkness of the sky, will cry Woe ! Woe ! Woe ! to the earth dwellers, by reason of the other voices of the trumpets of the three angels who are to sound.

Then the fifth angel will sound, and to a "fallen star" (see Isa. xiv. 12 and Luke x. 18, R.V.) will be given "the key of the pit (or *shaft*) of the abyss." In the Scriptures the key is always a token of imparted authority, and the significance is clear that on that dread day and as a part of the righteous judgment of God, it will be given to the great adversary of men to open a way from the abyss to the earth, and to loose the torments of the unseen world, of Hades (Luke vxi. 24), upon living human beings.

With the word "abyss" we will have more to do before we finish with the woes, while with the horrors of the time of the torment bringers, with which the

earth shall be flooded, it must suffice to say that for the five months during which the woe shall endure, living men shall seek death, shall fly for refuge to the King of Terrors, in order to escape the intolerable burden of existence on earth. But the most desperate efforts at self-destruction, the most scientific attempts at suicide, shall prove to be ineffective, for from these miserable beings, doomed, though still alive, and damned, although yet in the body, it is written that "Death shall flee."

In the School of God.

THERE is a double "patience" spoken of in the Word of God : a patience in *work*—"patient continuance in well-doing" it is called (Rom. ii. 7), and "patience of *hope*" (1 Thess. i. 3). The word includes submissive obedience to the will of God in all the details of life and service, with the confidence that God is doing His very best, and leading us along the right path, however trying it may be to nature. It is by this means that patience is perfected. We naturally want to get along swiftly and easily, but in the School of God waiting hours or years—if His will be so—in which our plans seem to be all thwarted, are the most profitable seasons for the soul. And it is often in this way that we are prepared and furnished for times of greater active service. Our waiting hours in the School of God are of greater importance to Him and of richer value to us, than our times of busiest and as men reckon most successful service.

F. S. ARNOT.

The Preacher's Column.

*OUTLINES OF EVANGELISTIC SUBJECTS.

MAN'S ATTITUDES TOWARDS GOD.

Running from God (Isa. liii. 6)—Ruin.

Repentance toward God (Acts xx. 21)—Return.

Reconciliation with God (Rom. v. 10)—Restoration.

TRUSTING IN THE LORD.

Trusting in Him for SALVATION (Prov. xxix. 25).

Trusting in Him for PEACE (Isa. xxvi. 3).

Trusting in Him for PRESERVATION (Psa. lxi. 4).

THREE GREAT GOSPEL FACTS.

The Blood of Christ shed FOR us (Matt. xxvi. 28)—
Salvation.

The Holy Ghost shed ON us (Tit. iii. 6)—Strength.

The Love of God shed abroad IN us (Rom. v. 5)—
Spirituality.

—o.o.—

The Young Believer's Question Box.

It is my privilege to assemble with a few children of God in a country village, outside of all denominations, in the Name of the Lord alone. We are a feeble few, with little gift among us, yet the Lord is in our midst. We have many precious times around His table, and there is blessing with the Gospel preached. We have been taught that such a company, however small, is a church or assembly of God according to the Scripture pattern, and while making no exclusive claim to this, or any name, we have sought to order our worship and service according to the principles addressed to the early churches. And we know of no other. Recently one came into our midst who denies all this, and affirms that no church testimony is possible now, all being in ruin. Is there any Scripture warrant for such a statement? And if the original pattern of the churches, as given in the Word, is not to be followed, what is? Are we left with nothing to go by at all? Simple Scriptural help on this, will be much esteemed.

That churches like those of apostolic times, which stood in their unity, including all who were Christ's in each place (except such as were under discipline) are no longer visible, all will admit; but that the Scriptural pattern has been withdrawn, or become obsolete, or is no longer workable, in view of the altered conditions, we do not

* Five Hundred Evangelistic Subjects is a New Volume for Evangelists, Preachers, and all Christian Workers. Just Issued. Cloth, 146, Post Free.

admit nor believe. If Christians are to be together at all, there is surely some Divine principle and pattern according to which they are to assemble, and we know of none, save the one which Paul received from the Lord and delivered to the Corinthian Church, and which has been preserved to us in the Word. There is no need to make any claim of being the church, as if gathering in a Scriptural manner gave any superiority over others, but if the presence of the Lord in the midst of "two or three" of His own assembling in His Name gives church character to such a gathering, then it is surely according to God to regard it a church, and to seek to maintain its worship and testimony according to the pattern and standard given in the Word of God. If the church "is in ruins," the Word is not. And it was "to God and and the Word of His grace" that the apostle commended the church at Ephesus in view of wolves without and sectarian leaders within seeking to bring it to ruin. Those who have most to say about "the Church in ruins," are those who formed the last fragments of what once claimed to be its only expression on earth. And now that this claim can no longer be maintained, they have thrown up their hands in despair as if nothing else remains. That there will be "churches" on earth until the Lord comes, Rev. ii.-iii. informs us, and it is ours to use what we have, boasting nothing, but cleaving to the living Lord, seeking to give effect to all of His Word that we know and willing to learn more.

Answers to Correspondents.

W. R., SOUTHPORT.—The wars of David were for the cleansing of the Lord's land of His enemies, and for the protection or recovery of what was His, from the hands of the spoilers. And both were at the distinct commandment of the Lord. The present European conflict can hardly be said to have this character.

S. B., BANGOR.—That the "living ones," or cherubim of Rev. v. 8, 9, are symbolic of the redeemed and glorified saints, is evidenced by their song and ascription of praise to the Lamb. "Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood." Angels do not sing, nor are they redeemed. Redemption to God by Christ's blood, belongs to sinners of earth alone (Eph. i. 7).

W. L., GRIMSBY.—While few are called or fitted for public ministry of the Word, all believers are called to share in some sort of service. And as

Eph. iv. 12 informs us, it is for the fitting of all saints to share in this, that the special gifts of ver. 11 are bestowed by the living Lord, not to absorb in themselves all functions, and continually preach to a mute and indolent congregation of pew-holders, who come to feed and criticise but never do a hand's turn to help others.

H. R., FIFE.—It is useless to expect oneness of mind and unity of action in an assembly of God's people, if diverse doctrines and conflicting principles are constantly taught in their midst, and if leaders seek to guide their following along diverse paths. Both may be wrong, both cannot be right. Better surely to come together for confession before God, and to seek light from His Word, than go on widening the breach, until division severs the last straw of what was once fellowship in the truth.

G. L., GLASGOW.—If brethren who assume the place of teachers and leaders in an assembly, are found more frequently associated with and preaching in sects and missions, thus helping to build up and to extend systems which they profess to have left, it is little wonder if young ones are stumbled and that others who know and seek to obey the truth of God resent their rule. We teach by our practice far more effectually than by our words.

R. S., PECKHAM.—The present call for young men to enlist will, no doubt, prove a testing time to many. Some who have had no more than a lifeless profession will lose it. Others who go into their new surroundings in a backslidden state of soul, will be in danger of being led astray, while those who stand firm for Christ among their fellows will be hardened off to become better Christians than in their hothouse days. Whatever we think of the right or wrong of enlistment, it is the privilege and duty of all who "tarry by the stuff" at home to encircle with their prayers and practical sympathies those who have gone to the place of danger for the defence of their and our homes and liberties.

Notes from War Lands.

Belgium.—God has blessed His Word to some Belgian refugees in Holland. Part of these have returned to Antwerp, and are testifying of Christ. Thus heaven works out its plans through man's wrath on earth. Believers in the nine assemblies, although isolated and sorely tried, are able in most cases to meet for worship, and they go out preaching the Gospel. Several have lately been baptised

and added to the assembly in Brussels. Mr. Gaudibert tells of cheering news from Christians in the trenches.

France.—One of the Lord's bright lights in dark France has been extinguished in the homecall, on the battlefield, of Emile Szumlanski, who was a diligent worker and helper of M. Contesse. Letters from a Romanist converted on the battlefield, a nominal Protestant who discovered among bursting shells he was not a "living Christian," and trusted Christ; a wounded officer able to rejoice in God although he has lost an arm, with a great desire for simple Gospel truth to read, all tell that God is working mightily among the French, who are learning through many sorrows, the bitterness of having as a nation turned from God and His Word. Mr. Thorpe tells of a special effort in the Gospel at Die for two months, with blessing. He is permitted to visit large camps at Marseilles with Gospels, tracts, and booklets. A German-speaking soldier wept for joy at receiving a German Testament.

Holland.—Our brother, P. Wilson, has access to many interned soldiers and sailors in this land, and with Mr. Bain has been preaching the Gospel among them, with clerical opposition.

Italy.—Mr. Buttrum tells of much distress among Christians throughout Italy, whose breadwinners have been called to military service. With a small harvest, increased cost of living, lack of work, and war raging around their country, fellow-believers in Italian assemblies need our prayers and practical sympathy at present.

Poland.—Parts of this unhappy country have been invaded, devastated, taken and retaken by opposing armies several times. What of the inhabitants remain, are existing on whatever they can find to eat in the woods.

Jews, exceeding half-a-million, are said to be fighting in the Allied Forces. Over 11,000 of their villages are said to have been razed to the ground, especially in the districts south-west of Warsaw, and thousands have perished. 480,000 Jews are in the Russian Army, 17,000 in the British, and it is estimated 100,000 are now in Palestine. Many believe that the time of their return to national existence there, is near.

In Great Britain there are many praying hearts, and much intercession is arising to heaven for peace, which God will not deny, but until there is more national humiliation and less boast of victory from growing armies and increased munitions, God may withhold His hand.

BY the good hand of the Lord upon us, we complete, with the present number, a quarter of a century's issue of **The Believer's Magazine**.

The ready help of acceptable writers and accredited ministers of the Word in providing seasonable and edifying ministry to meet the present need of the Lord's people, has been much valued by our readers, and there are thousands of testimonies from grateful hearts, of timely help and godly cheer received through these pages during the years, especially the year now closing, which has been a period of unparalleled stress and strain to very many who love the Lord. New conditions arising all around us, with fresh devices of the ever alert and skilful adversary to trip and waylay the pilgrim people of God on their homeward way, call forth new ministries to strengthen, instruct, warn, and encourage toward closer cleaving to God and the Word of His grace, and to firmer footing of the right road so plainly marked out in the Word.

To stand for the Truth of God amid times of declension and departure, has never been a popular post, nor do we expect it ever will be. Once it was the world—Pagan and openly without God—that obstructed and opposed the progress of the Word of God, and persecuted all who owned and obeyed it. Now, many who bear the Christian name make common cause with the Lord's enemies in opposing, or in what is more deceptive, "corrupting" (2 Cor. ii. 17)—as a huckster does his wares to make gain—the things of God, by adding to them that which makes them acceptable to carnal men, but which deprives those who feed on the leavened bread, of real spiritual health and vigour, such as the man of God needs for godly life and walk, and the Church for spiritual edification and effective testimony. We have been assailed by some who want to "tone down" that testimony, which we are firmly convinced God would have His people bear to the truths that separate them from the world, and gather them in the Name of the Lord. Some hold that this line of teaching is "out of date." We do not believe it. Therefore, we shall seek to stand humbly but firmly for "all that the Lord hath spoken," and that His grace is sufficient to give ability to His own in practice "all the days." We have the assurance that so long as these pages serve the Lord's purpose in ministering to His people of His Truth, He will provide, through the labours of His servants, the Word in season to this end. It is in this confidence that we record His gracious help in the past, and look forward to its continuance in the future.

FOR the coming year we have already in hands a goodly portion of fresh and edifying papers by well known writers, whose contributions have long been valued by our readers. And there has been given us from the store of aged pilgrims, nearing the end of their journey, and in several instances sent by surviving friends from the treasuries of those who have gone to their rest, valuable contributions, hitherto unprinted, of the ministry of great and good men of a former generation, to whose deep searchings in the Book of God, and decided testimony to what they discovered there, we are far more indebted than we know. To meet the present new conditions forced upon Christians by the present upheaval among the nations, and give simple, clear, and Scriptural guidance, wise and experienced servants of the Lord are using their pens.

The following titles and writers, indicate the variety of papers now ready for the press.

A Coloured Presentation Chart of "The Exodus and Journeyings of the Children of Israel from Egypt to Canaan," noting all the chief events of the Pilgrimage, with their Scripture References and Spiritual Meanings, will be given with the January issue to all subscribers for 1916, and Analytical Notes on this subject, which is a very suitable one for Weekly Bible Readings, will appear each month.

The Glories of the Son of God. By George F. Trench, B.A., of Dublin, whose departure we record in the present issue. **The Calling of the Church—The Editor.** **Timothy, his Life and Service—Wm. J. McClure,** California. **Scripture Chronologies, with Practical Notes and Comments thereon—W. B. Johnson,** Canada. **Gathering in the Lord's Name.** Twelve Papers by Twelve Writers. **Coming Events, In the Heavens and the Earth.**—A series of Plain Papers to Young Believers. **Notes on the Book of Revelation—W. H. Hunter.** **The Mystery of God—Wm. Hoste,** B.A. **Notes on Bible Readings—**From the Ministry of J. G. Bellett. **Shepherding the Flock—**By an Old Disciple. **Conference Addresses,** on Practical Subjects, by many Speakers. **Revival Times—**The Reminiscences of Golden Days, by an Evangelist. **Carried to Babylon—**Messages on Declension and Departure from the Ways of God.

Specially written papers will appear on the Present Crisis in European Lands—The Christian's Relation to the State—Devotional Papers for Quiet Hours—The Path of the Pilgrim to his Heavenly Home—Correspondence on Points of Present Interest—Questions and Answers on Difficult Subjects—with Brief Reports of Work and Workers.