

THE
Believer's Magazine

A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF
SCRIPTURE EXPOSITION AND BIBLICAL STUDIES,
WITH QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON DOCTRINAL
AND PRACTICAL SUBJECTS.

EDITED BY
JOHN RITCHIE.

NEW SERIES.—VOL. XVIII.

KILMARNOCK:
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A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF SCRIPTURE EXPOSITION.

A Message of Hope for the Dawning Year.

THE darkest hour precedes the dawn. When man's extremity is reached, and his eye is directed toward God, the hour of his deliverance is near. When human wisdom has been tried only to fail, and its failure is confessed and God called in to deliver, He never turns the prayer of faith away, but as and when He willeth, and by what instrumentality He chooses, He makes "a way of escape" (1 Cor. x. 12) for His own. This is the great lesson of the ages. It is written by the hand of the Spirit on every page of the Book of God. Yet how slow our unbelieving hearts are to learn it! It is recorded for our learning, and as the postle tells us its purpose is that we "might have hope" (Rom. xv. 4). The whole record of Divine deliverance wrought for the redeemed people of ancient time was written, and to be held in constant remembrance by generations following, that they might "set their hope in God" (Psa. lxxviii. 7) who changes not. Man may fail, but "God is faithful," ever true to His Word in which His people hope (Psa. cxix. 49). There must be dark days and trying experiences in the lives of the saints, for continual sunshine is not conducive to faith's growth. But in the trial there is always the danger of losing sight of God and saying, as blind unbelief, hints "there is no hope." The Ebenezers that mark the heavenward

way of the saints forbid the thought that God will ever leave His own to sink in their trial, or that He will forsake them in their need. The storm may dash our little ship as it did the one of old on the lake of Galilee, in which the Lord sailed, but it can never sink it, because He is there. And He is in His people's lives and with them all the days, so that each may say—

"My bark is wafted to the strand by breath Divine,
And on my helm there rests a Hand other than mine.
One who has known in storms to sail, I have on board,

Above the raging of the gale, I see my Lord."

The opening year is anything but bright or full of hope to sight. "Clouds and darkness round us press." The most of Europe is convulsed by war. Sorrow upon sorrow has come to many a peaceful home. And there is no end of the conflict in view. Hopes that ran high have failed, and man's calculations have come to nought. But GOD, in His might and majesty, remains, seated high above the floods, directing every passing wave. Nothing takes Him by surprise. He sees the end from the beginning. And it is to Him His people are to look, in Him they are to hope, and thus be kept in peace. For now, as ever, the Word is sure, "Blessed (happy) is the man who trusteth in the Lord, and whose *hope* the Lord is" (Jer. xvii. 7). Here the heart finds rest, and is at peace.

The Wondrous Cross,

ITS VICTORIES AND ITS VIRTUES.

THE Cross of Christ, the death of the Son of God on Calvary, is the central fact of Scripture. To it faith's far-seeing eye was directed in the ages past, and with us of the present time who look backward, faith's ringing witness ever is, "God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of Christ" (Gal. vi. 14). Viewed from the one side that Cross was

MAN'S GREATEST CRIME.—Twice in his earliest preaching to the Jewish people Peter charges home upon them the murder of the Lord. He first affirms that Jesus of Nazareth had been "approved of God" among them by His works (Acts ii. 22, 23), and next, that He was "holy" and "righteous" (Acts iii. 14, 15)—that is, He was perfect in character and in conduct. Yet they denied this Holy and Righteous One, they desired a murderer, while they killed the Prince of Life. And it was no sudden outburst of passion this, but a deliberate, skilfully planned crime in which priests, Pharisees, Scribes, and people all combined. They dare not carry their plan into effect themselves, for they were a conquered people, but they "desired Pilate that He should be slain" (Acts xiii. 28), and "by the hand of lawless men" He was crucified. Men "under law" desired and called for His murder; men "without law" carried it out. "Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel" (Acts iv. 27) all had their hand in the dark deed. And thus, by man's hate and united act, the only Man who had a right to live,

upon whom death had no claim, died. And no Divine hand was outstretched to shield Him from man's rage, no legion of angels was sent from the shining ranks above to guard Him from the "lawless hands" of men that were ready to seize Him. It was "their hour and the power of darkness." With this crime the world is stained. It has not been repented of. The Jews cried, "His blood be on us and on our children" (Matt. xxvii. 25), and they wander homeless in all lands to-day. Gentiles crowned Him with thorns, blindfolded Him, put a reed in His hand, and they are reaping part of the retribution now. The root cause of all the world's sorrow is its rejection of Christ, and not until it is purged by judgment, and its rightful King ruling it in righteousness, will the world's travail and sorrow end. But the Cross of Christ had also

ITS VICTORIES. By His obedience unto death, never halting, never flinching; the Lord Jesus proved Himself the One who obeyed God perfectly in the midst of a world where all had "come short" and gone astray. He, and He only, always did the things that pleased God. Even with the dark shadow of the Cross on His path, He said, "Not My will, but Thine be done." This was victory indeed. He became Victor over death. Although He died, His death was different from that of all others. "I lay down My life." "No man taketh it from Me, I lay it down of Myself" (John x. 17, 18), are words that He alone could speak. His death was part of the Divine purpose, something that He was to "accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke ix. 31), and we are

told that when He knew that all things were now accomplished, "He bowed His head and gave up His spirit" (John xix. 30). This was a victorious death. And for all His own, death is now "abolished" (2 Tim. i. 10), rendered powerless, like a conquered foe. It was at the Cross that the Lord as the woman's Seed crushed the devil's head (Gen. iii. 15), and brought to nought "him that had the power of death" (Heb. ii. 14, R.V.), who, although still at large, is without the power to finally prevail. Christ is Victor, and His own are "more than conquerors through Him" (Rom. viii. 37). The Cross has also

ITS VIRTUES. The death of Christ was an atoning sacrifice of true satisfaction to God, a death "for our sins," and "because of our offences." In one aspect, it was a *ransom* for all (1 Tim. ii. 6), a *purchase* of all men and things (2 Pet. ii. 2), a *propitiation* (Rom. iii. 25; 1 John ii. 2), for the world, in virtue of which there is salvation for all, and all, without exception, are invited to receive it. It is by Christ's death that the sinner's reconciliation is secured (Rom. v. 10), by His blood peace is made (Col. i. 20). The believer learns after new life and heavenly light enter his being, and the indwelling Spirit, in His office of Teacher, begins to take of the things that are Christ's and shows them to him, that in the shed blood he has redemption (Eph. i. 7), that by it he is justified (Rom. v. 9) and sanctified (Heb. xiii. 12), that it was in "His own body" and "on the tree" (1 Pet. ii. 24), that his sins were borne; that "in His own blood" (Rev. i. 5) he is "loosed" from them, and that Christ's

blood is his present (Heb. x. 19) and eternal title to the presence of God. The sacrifice was unto God, for it was to Him and for His satisfaction it was offered, "a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour" (Eph. v. 2), but its virtues are reckoned to the soul that takes shelter under it. The believer is accepted according to the value that God puts upon Christ's work and its worth—"accepted in the Beloved." He stands before God encircled in all the virtues of Christ's sacrifice, his sins remitted, his judgment past, himself brought nigh, his worthlessness "much more" than met in the worth of Him in whose Name he now believes (John xx. 31), and in whom He stands near and dear to God as Christ Himself is.

It is in the strength of these virtues of the Cross that Christianity, according to the Bible, stands. Where they are *held fast* in a lively faith, and *held forth* in a clear-ring testimony, there will be spiritual power and streams of blessing flowing. But if the Cross of Christ is "made of none effect," by a Ritualism that denies its values, or by a Rationalism that leaves no place for its virtues, spiritual death must result. The preacher who magnifies the Example of Christ, but is silent regarding His vicarious death, who speaks of Christ's blood as His life lived, and the "purifying principle" by which man is to be elevated, while he has nothing to say of the life poured forth as a ransom, and of the penalty borne in His stripes, is as surely "an enemy of the Cross of Christ" (Phil. iii. 18) as the Socinian who openly denies the Atonement.—J. R.

The Christian's Outlook.

A SYMPOSIUM.

TO stand in the light of God into which he has been brought (1 Pet. ii. 9), and in which he is to abide (1 John ii. 9) and to walk (1 John i. 7), is the true standpoint of the Christian—the man in Christ. From thence he is to look upon all things and judge of them accordingly. The “sanctuary of God” (Psa. lxxxiii. 17) was, to the Psalmist, the only place in which the end of all things could be rightly seen, and a true judgment of them formed. His reasonings concerning them in other spheres led him to false findings regarding God’s dealings with himself and others. Only in God’s own light do we see things as they are, in relation to God and Christ and Eternity. To leave that light and walk in the murky lights of man’s—our own or others’ kindling—is to get out of God’s counsel, to become dim in vision, and to “walk as men.” To go to the world’s philosophers, its seers, its newspapers and the like, to get light and understanding concerning men and things in their relation to God, is to be led astray. The Word of God must be our Lesson Book. The Spirit of God our Instructor to guide us into all the truth (John xvi. 13); for it is only as He teaches, that we learn and know the things of God (1 John ii. 20) aright. Man’s wisdom is sure to lead away from God, His Word, and His counsel. The knowledge of the wise is not “the mind of Christ” (1 Cor. ii. 16), nor is the sagacity of men the “eye salve” which the living Lord alone can give (Rev. iii. 18) to cause His own

to see. The prophets of old who had not stood in the Lord’s counsel, to whom He declares He had not spoken, dreamed their dreams out of the deceit of their own hearts, and then ran and told them, as if they were the Word of the Lord, causing His people to forget His Name and to err from His ways (Jer. xxiii. 25-32). And their successors are in the same evil business at the present hour. Until the outburst of the most barbarous war the world has ever known, we were assured it was growing better year by year: universal brotherhood was in the air, the millennium was at our door. Earth was to be heaven below, the ascent of man to Deity was almost reached. No more talk about sin; no need of a crucified Saviour, no Gospel of redemption by blood, no judgment, and, of course, no hell. Now they tell us we are to see a nobler race arise out of this cataclysm of nations, a peaceful world, a purged and purified Christendom; and a revived and catholic Church, with no more dissensions, nor divisions! A fair outlook indeed, but false as the prophet’s dream, in direct opposition to that Word of the Lord which shall stand for ever. The true outlook of the saints, the bright and blessed Hope of the Church, is the personal return of the Lord. The Lord will come to receive from the world His own, to clasp them to His bosom in the air, to conduct them to the Father’s House—the home for which they have long sighed—to present them faultless in the presence of His glory, to reward them for their service and suffering for His Name, and then to lead them out in the manifested glory of His power to

purge the world by judgment dire, and to set up His kingdom. Then, but not till then, shall the weary world, under the sceptre of the rejected Nazarene, enter on its long looked-for Sabbath of peace.

“ And earth His royal Bride shall see,
Beside Him on the Throne.”

The Lost Hope, and Love's Decline.

EDWIN H. BENNETT.

The early Christians waited for the Lord from heaven. They lived and served and suffered, “looking for that blessed hope” (Tit. ii. 13). They “took joyfully the spoiling of their goods,” because they knew that they had in heaven a better and abiding possession (Heb. x. 34, R.V.). The world was to them “a wilderness wide,” because the One on whom their heart's love was set was not there. It had cast Him out and crucified Him. The Church was separate from the world and persecuted by it, in those bright, early years of first love among the people of God. But as love declined the hope was lost, and the Church became united to the world. When the heart says, “My Lord delayeth His coming,” the next stage is to smite fellow-servants who still “hold fast the hope,” and then to join in common cause with the world. When the heart is true to Christ, and waiting for His coming, there will be no lack of service for His Name. To “serve” and to “wait” (1 Thess. i. 9, 10) is the way of love. But when love declines, and the hope is lost, saints become indifferent to that which belongs to Christ, have little interest in His Word and work, and become like the world of the ungodly.

Such was the course of events in the Church at the beginning, and such they are in the lives of the saints individually.

The Church's Failure in Testimony.

WILLIAM HOSTE.

The word “Church” means “a called out people.” It is used (1) of the whole company of believers of the present dispensation from the Pentecost to the coming of the Lord *for* His saints (Eph. i. 22 ; v. 25), and (2) of local companies of such (1 Thess. i. 1 ; Phil. 2). If all who are on earth at any time carried out the will of the Lord, as given in the Word, they would be found separated from the religious world and gathered together unto the Name of the Lord Jesus in such local churches, mutually related, though with individual responsibilities. Each would be, as it were, a microcosm of the whole. Each would be dependent on the Head, and ministered to by the Spirit through the Word. But, alas! this is not to be seen to-day. The Church has failed to keep her garments white and her path separate from the world. Her testimony, as a whole, is in ruins. What, then, is the resource of those who desire to do the will of God? The Word instructs us: “Follow after righteousness WITH THEM that call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (2 Tim. ii. 22). Like the forty-two thousand Jews who, stirred up by the Spirit of God individually, to take the journey from Babylon to Jerusalem, they “came together as one man” (Ezra iii. 1), to raise the altar of the Lord and keep the feasts, “as it was written,” and then began to build the

house of the Lord according to the Divine pattern. No amount of "ruin" in the whole, obliges every local church to remain "in ruins," though it might well prevent one such arrogating to itself the title of "THE Church of God."

The World under Judgment.

J. G. BELLETT.

The world, according to the Scriptures of God, is a lost and judged thing: it is incapable of recovery. The Word of God does not in a single passage of it warrant the thought that it can be advanced or cultivated for God. He has judged it—though in grace the judgment tarries and the long-suffering of God is salvation. But the world is a system past all recovery till the judgment be executed. Separation of His own out of the world is God's way now. And this separation is the deepest and most thorough judgment that could be passed upon it. The withdrawal from it of all that God owns, bespeaks His final thoughts about it, and the attitude of the Church in separation from it seals His judgment.

Man's Last Revolt Against God.

GEORGE F. TRENCH.

Man, tested under all conditions, has failed. Tested under *Innocence*, he fell. With *Conscience* as his guide he so increased in wickedness that the Flood was sent. Under *Law*, with all the privileges of temple, prophet, priest, and king, the chosen people became idolators and, after national defeat, were exiled. With *Christ* in their midst, in all the service of His grace and power, the end

was the Cross. Now, with the Holy Spirit in the Church, and the Gospel with all its saving power in the world, with the living witness of thousands of God's saints, the age will end in the worship of the Beast, and in war against the Lamb and His followers. And in the age to come, with Satan bound and Christ reigning, when righteousness shall rule and iniquity hide its head, many will yield a feigned obedience (see Psa. xviii. 44; lxvi. 3, marg.), not converted, but *only coerced by the power of the rod of iron*, by which the nations will be ruled in that time. But immediately Satan is loosed from his prison, all his own will, at his call, from all lands, by express trains and ocean liners, flock around his standard of revolt against Christ, whom they had professed to own as Lord and King, thus proving man incurably incorrigible, increasing privilege only developing deeper sin. This last and greatest revolt of fallen man seals his doom for ever.

The Final Triumph of Christ.

How blessed it is to see in Rev. xxi. the Church arrayed in glory, in the presence of her Lord, without spot or blemish, with no wrinkles on her brow, in the changeless youth and beauty of heaven. After the last of the devil's rage and man's lawlessness have spent themselves, here in the eternal calm of heaven, beyond all the storms of earth, are seen the glorified saints around their triumphant Lord in victory. God has had His way, the Lamb has received His bride, the triumph over evil is complete, the victory of grace is crowned with endless glory.

God's King,

ALEXANDER STEWART.

THERE is no power but of God ; the powers that be, are ordained of God (Rom. xiii. 1). This is spoken of civil government ; but in the broadest sense it is true. God is the fountain of power, and although (to take the highest example) it can be said of the Son, the Lord Jesus, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever" (Psa. xlv. 5), the power which belongs to Him as Man is derived. When He rose from the dead, to enter upon glories which had become His by conquest, He said, "All power is *given* unto Me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. xxviii. 18). And in the Second Psalm it is written, "Yet have *I set* My King upon My holy hill of Zion ;" and again, "Ask of Me, and I shall *give* Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession."

MAN FORMED TO RULE.

The purpose of God from the beginning was that man should rule. "Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness ; and let them have dominion." And that purpose could not be frustrated. The first man fell, and the sceptre of creature dominion dropped from his grasp. But in the fulness of time, God gave His Son, the Second Man, and He, having stood where the first had fallen, having tasted death, and destroyed him that had the power of death, rose, and ascended to sit on His Father's throne, and to wait for the time when the kingdoms of this world shall be His (Rev. xi.), and the delivered

creation be subject to His sway. Man must rule, and though now we see not yet all things put under him, "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour" (Heb. ii. 8, 9). And we know that He yet must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet (1 Cor. xv. 25).

THE TRUE KING.

But the Lord Jesus was not only Man. He was of a particular race and family of men—the Son of David, the Son of Abraham, born King of the Jews (Matt. i. 2). Before His birth, the angel said to Mary His mother, "The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His Father David, and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke i. 32, 33). These words must have fulfilment, as must also the prediction (among many), "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice *in the earth*. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely ; and this is His Name whereby He shall be called, The LORD our Righteousness" (Jer. xxiii. 5, 6). The sphere of His kingdom is the house of Jacob ; but His beneficent rule will extend far beyond the borders of Israel. "The Lord shall be King over all the earth : in that day shall there be one Lord, and His Name one" (Zech. xiv. 9). He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. earth (Psa. lxxii.).

The Believer's Food.

BY JAMES FORBES.

“CHILDREN, have ye any meat?” Such was the significant resurrection question of the risen Saviour (John xxi. 5).

Why think of work, or activity, of any kind, either Godward or manward, unless this question of “Food” is first attended to? Notice the words of His address, “Children.”

This is a key word to the subject. It indicates life. There can be no relationship in this sense without the new birth, and these men, although defective in many things, and unacquainted with much that was subsequently revealed, yet they were “children.” He could say, “Now ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you” (John xv. 3). Thus were they qualified for the place of children, and as possessing a new life, required a food suited to it.

First, let us enquire about the food. What is the food which suits this new life? The nature of the life must help us to the answer. Each different form of life has been provided with a food to suit it. A spiritual life is bestowed by the Holy Spirit at new birth, and to suit that a spiritual food is required. In John vi. a profound lesson is taught.

There, Christ is presented as the tree of life, the lifegiver to those who eat of Him. How they were to do this was a difficulty to the Jews, and to many others since, the reason being they looked on what He said as literal. But eating His flesh and drinking His blood was illustrative

language of how faith appropriates His sacrifice on the Cross, the substance, of which the passover was the shadow.

This the Jewish people who listened to Him never thought of. “They knew nothing at all, nor did they consider it expedient that ONE man should die for that nation” (John xi. 50). Hence, their total want of understanding His words. But this was His meaning, and all who are born again know, that it is through faith in the crucified Son of God that they received life. No other way is known. You cannot eat of Him in any other way.

Having learned this, we are now somewhat prepared to proceed further. Christ is the Lifegiver. No Cross, no life; no death for Him, then no life for the world. But we must also affirm that just as Christ gives life by His death, so Christ sustains that life. He Himself is its food. This He teaches in John vi. 56. Notice the word “*Eateth.*” As faith at first receives “The Crucified” and is born again, so there has to be a continual receiving, a continual believing on Him. To “Come to Him,” to “Believe on Him,” to “Eat of Him,” are different words expressive of the same thing: it is Himself the Lifegiver who is proved to be the Lifesustainer. Thus do we answer our first question, Christ’s flesh given on the Cross is our food—Christ our Passover sacrificed for us in death, and Christ as “the Old Corn of the Land,” now glorified in heaven, is the strength of His people. A Christian who feeds on Christ becomes strong. One who neglects so to feed, is feeble, and will soon become carnal and worldly.

The Coming of the Lord.

AND THE EVENTS WHICH WILL FOLLOW.

WITH SOME NOTES ON THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

W. H. HUNTER.

WHAT John saw was that from the sea upon which he gazed one beast, and one beast only, rose up; but one which combined in himself—like the superimposed photographs of celebrities which were fashionable some years ago—the characteristics of Daniel's four symbolic beasts in a single concrete personality. He had horns like the fourth beast, a body like the third, feet like those of the second, and a mouth like that of the first. But he was of his father the devil, and his most striking resemblance was to the dragon himself. From these likenesses it may be gathered, that in the beast which is to come, the power and authority of the devil, and the might and experience of the angels who successively burdened the earth in the procession of the world's empires, will be concentrated.

That beast will be a man, a great man; he is "the Prince who shall come" (Dan. ix. 26), his number shall be the number of a man (it is six hundred threescore and six); and one day wisdom and understanding will be given to God's elect to count that number; but that day is not yet.

The place from whence the beast will arise is of great importance to those who would understand this mystery, and when Rev. xiii. 1 is laid alongside of Rev. xi. 7, R.V., and with Rom. x. 7, R.V., the meaning of each will become apparent, and the interpretation of all will be made

plain. The beast which shall come up out of *the Sea* shall come up out of *the Abyss*, and says the Apostle Paul, descent into *the Abyss* is descent into *the place of the dead*. The statements are explicit, the beast, THE Antichrist (1 John ii. 18), THE man of sin, THE son of perdition (2 Thess. ii. 3), shall rise from amongst the dead and damned; one and one only from the uncounted multitude of lost souls, who, responsive to the call of the dragon, will return to earth in order to carry out the work which, apart from him, the devil could not accomplish because of the shortness of the time.

It is obvious that this man must have been great, very great, in his previous day upon the earth; and must therefore remain an impressive and outstanding figure in history; so that when he arises from amongst the dead and signalises his second advent by the slaughter of the two heavenly witnesses, he will be recognised; the sensation in the minds of men will be not only beyond precedent, but beyond description. All the world will wonder after the beast, and when his proclamation is issued one can almost venture to read in anticipation, the words of blasphemy in it—*I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore*—and nearly all the world will believe in him, for God will send them a strong delusion, and they who believed not THE truth will "believe THE lie."

A New Year Desire.

Alone with thee, O Master, where
The light of earthly glory dies;
Misunderstood by all, I'd dare
To do what Thine own heart will prize.

The Preacher's Column.

OUTLINES OF EVANGELISTIC SUBJECTS.

GOD'S MESSAGES TO ALL MEN.

- The Disobedience of all men (Isa. liii. 6).
 A Saviour FOR all men (1 Tim. ii. 5, 6).
 The Gospel proclaimed to all men (Mark xvi. 15).
 Repentance demanded of all men (Acts xvii. 30).

CHRIST APPROPRIATED.

- Admit Him as SAVIOUR (Rev. iii. 20).
 Submit to Him as LORD (Rom. x. 9).
 Commit yourself to Him as KEEPER (2 Tim. i. 12).
 Permit Him to lead you as SHEPHERD (1 Pet. ii. 28).

BRIEF BIBLE STUDIES AND READINGS

HEAVEN.

- The Father's House (John xiv. 2)—For Children.
 A City Home (Heb. xi. 10, 16)—For Pilgrims.
 A Place of Reward (2 Tim. iv. 8)—For Servants.

RELATIONSHIPS OF BELIEVERS.

- Children, by Birth and Nature (1 John iii. 2).
 Sons, in Position and Likeness (Gal. iv. 3).
 Friends, in Character and Intimacy (John xv. 14).

The Young Believer's Question Box.

The words of 1 Cor. ix. 19-23, in which Paul says, "I am made all things to all men," are often made to teach that "for the Gospel's sake," and that "by all means" he may reach sinners by it, a servant of Christ, especially an evangelist, may adopt any means he thinks fit and go into any place where he can get a congregation to hear him. Is this what the passage teaches?

The context shows that Paul is here describing the principles that governed his service, especially in preaching the Gospel, to the unconverted. It has nothing at all to say of church association or identifying himself with his former religion of Judaism. Its central facts are, that he was not lawless, but "under law to Christ," and that his liberty was in all things governed by these great facts. He was "the bondservant of Jesus Christ" (Gal. i. 10) everywhere and always, and whatever he "became," for "the Gospel's sake," did not set aside any commandment of the Lord, or render void in practice any principle of the Word of God. He never literally "became a Jew," but when he preached to Jews he did so in a manner to secure their confidence (see Acts xiii. 26; xxii. 1). And even then he did not always succeed, for the Jews

contradicted, blasphemed, and raised persecution against him (verses 45, 50). When he spoke to Gentiles, he met them on their own ground, using the inscription on a heathen altar as his text, and quoting a heathen poet to enforce his teaching (Acts xvii. 22-28). But he neither partook of the Jews' passover or ate in a heathen temple. All this is of special interest to those who go forth with the Gospel, and tells how they should seek to get the confidence and gain the sympathy of those to whom they speak, rather than cut off their ears and raise unnecessary prejudice by hurling the truths they bear in a hard and callous spirit, as is too often the case, by a certain class of preachers who mistake uncouth manners and unwise methods for "faithfulness." But let none find in this, any authority for using burlesque methods of making known God's holy Gospel, as if that were what Paul said he did, or that they might do, under the name of liberty, or ingoing into association with false religion and preaching under the auspices of worldly and unscriptural systems in which some true children of God are found.

Answers to Correspondents.

BETA.—The Military Act provides for the "exception" of such as you name, but it will be necessary for those who claim it to prove that they have title to regard themselves as being of those so excepted.

E. B., GRAVESEND.—The words, "taken into the number" (1 Tim. v. 9), do not refer to reception to Church fellowship, but as the context clearly shows, to enrolment (R.V.) for support from the assembly's bounty.

G. B., TYNESIDE.—Desecration of the Lord's Day is a sign of the times, and it has been greatly increased since the war began. It would be well if God's people were free of blame in this, but they are not. Some go straight from the worship of God to procure their "Sunday Edition," and there are many at work on Lord's Days who have no need to be. Is it likely that God will fail to mark His displeasure in this among His own?

A. L., BEDS.—You are not bound to own an unjust judgment or an unwarranted act in discipline by a company of Christians, any more than to blindly support a fellow-believer's wrongdoing because he claims to have been "led of the Spirit" in it. Both say they are right, and may honestly believe it, but their claim must be brought to the standard of the Word and tested in its balances,

without bias or prejudice. The day is past, is it to be hoped, that majorities can claim submission to their acts in spiritual spheres, and that the weight of influence can prevent a review of wrong discipline.

W. S., AYRSHIRE.—The word "changed" in 1 Thess. iv. 5, does not mean that the living saint, in his glorified condition, will be another being, but that while the identity of the person is preserved, there will be a change equivalent to that wrought in the saints who pass through death and resurrection, their bodies being "conformed to the body of His (Christ's) glory" (Phil. iii. 21, r.v.). The same word is used of the present heavens, of which it is said in Heb. i. 12, that in their future condition "they shall be changed."

A. G., GLASGOW.—The habit of reading into a statement made by a speaker or writer an imaginary meaning, and then proceeding to argue against it, is common enough among politicians and in Debating Societies, but it should have no place in the things of God. Christian courtesy would surely first inquire whether such was the belief of the speaker or writer before imputing to him a charge of teaching error. And if—as is not uncommon—the accuser is not too keen in his perception, or too friendly toward the accused, he would be well advised to leave the work of administering rebuke, or bringing in a charge of "heresy," to some one less likely to have his judgment beclouded by prejudice, if not by something worse. The love that "thinketh no evil" is not often much in evidence in such matters, though it surely ought to be.

Egypt to Canaan.

Notes for Bible Readings, for Use with Coloured Chart.

Balak and Balaam (Num. xxii.-xxv.). The compact of this wilful king and his hired accomplice, the covetous prophet, brings into view the devices of Satan, the great accuser and adversary, against the people of God. Their long provocation may have caused these plotting foes to imagine they could incite Jehovah to turn against Israel because of their sins, but in this they failed, and from the lips of the false prophet there was poured forth some of the greatest and grandest words of Divine grace toward the redeemed people found in the records of the Word. Their standing in grace, their separation to God (chap. xxiii. 8, 9), their justification before God, His presence in their midst

as King, their final victory (chap. xxiii. 21-24), and the destruction of their foes (chap. xxiv. 4-9), are all announced in glowing words, by a man who "loved the wages of unrighteousness" (2 Pet. ii. 15), and died among the enemies of the Lord (Num. xxxi. 8). Foiled in his effort to curse, this crafty foe he "taught Balak" (Rev. ii. 14) to set a snare before the redeemed people (chap. xxv.), uniting them to the ungodly and bringing judgment on the evildoers. The whole tragic story is designed as a warning to God's people of the danger of Satan's subtlety in using "false teachers" (2 Pet. ii. 1, 2) to ensnare the people of God and bring upon them such chastisement as disobedience to the commandments of God always brings. The Beast and the False Prophet of days to come (Rev. xiii. 2, 11; xix. 20) will be the antitypes of these two enemies, in their actions toward the restored Israel in the latter days.

The Wilderness Ends.—The last stages of the wilderness are full of events of a touching and tender character. **Miriam**, the sister of **Moses**, who led the song of Israel's women on the Red Sea shore, dies (Num. xx. 1). Her sky had been clouded (Num. xii. 1). She had known Divine discipline (ver. 14), but we may surely infer her end was peace. **Aaron**, the high priest, who had accompanied the pilgrim host, passes away ere they reach the land—a contrast to our Great High Priest "who abideth for ever" (Heb. vii. 24-26). And last of all, **Moses**, Israel's great leader, lawgiver, and prophet, passes to his rest, from Pisgah's height, and is buried by the Lord—an honour conferred on no other man. Faithful in God's House as a servant, he failed in "speaking unadvisedly with his lips" (Psa. cvi. 33), and was not allowed to enter the land, although he was permitted to view it. The healing, the song, and the pitching "toward the sunrising" (Num. xxi.), have their story of unflinching grace to tell, and give a bright glimpse of brightness and beauty after a long and weary pilgrimage. Thus one by one, and presently all together, the redeemed of the Lord will pass from the desert sand to the rest that remaineth.

Home Call of Edward Stack, Evangelist.

For well over forty years, the name of Edward Stack has been known in assemblies of believers in the British Isles, and latterly in Canada and the United States, as a fearless preacher of the Gospel and a faithful minister of the Word. While a

soldier, serving in the Hussars, he was awakened in a gambling company through the warning word of a Christian corporal, and converted shortly after under the preaching of Howard Johnston, an honoured soulwinner of that time. He took his stand for the Lord immediately, and testified among his fellows to God's saving grace and power. An empty stall in a stable was the only available place in which to read the Bible and pray, and here, with God and His Word, he grew in grace. He began to preach Christ on the streets, then in a dingy, stuffy, crowded room in Norwich, and the Lord saved many under his preaching. Buying himself out from the army, he went forth preaching the Gospel, first among backwood camps in Canada, enduring much hardness, and next in many parts of the British Isles, and so continued without a break until within a few weeks of his home-call. Blessed with a strong frame, a good voice, and a frank manner, he succeeded in gathering and holding crowds in the open air, from the platform of a Bible carriage, and in canvas tents, a service in which he was always happy and signally used of God. Our first meeting with Mr. Stack was on the Castlegate of Aberdeen in the summer of 1873, where he stood in the centre of a listening crowd, singing the then new hymn—

"Whosoever heareth, shout, shout the sound,
Tell the blessed tidings all the world around."

He had been preaching in many parts of the Eastern Counties with much blessing before this, and was on his way to the Orkney Islands with Rice T. Hopkins, whose labours there had been used of God to the salvation of hundreds, and in the formation of a number of assemblies of believers gathering in "the Name," and seeking to be guided by the Word of the Lord. Here Mr. Stack laboured long, and often visited these far-off sea swept northern isles, summer and winter, often encountering great storms on the way. For a number of summers he visited through most of the Counties of Scotland with the Caledonian Bible carriage, carrying the Gospel into needy places, where it was seldom heard. After his wife's death in 1900, he made a visit to Canada and the United States, and finding many open doors in these great fields, he continued there preaching and teaching, with the exception of one short visit to Great Britain. Hard work began to tell on his strength, and as years advanced, he felt less equal to pioneering with the Gospel, but he was able to give much help among assemblies in ministry

of the Word. He found a resting place with every care in the home of Mr. and Mrs. W. H. M'Whirter, Astoria, N.Y., and there, on October 30, he passed to be with the Lord whom he had loved and served for over forty years, aged 75, being over 50 years in Christ, saved by grace. There is room and need for hundreds of young men, with gift and grace and grit, to go forth into unevangelised places with the Gospel, looking to the Lord alone for their directions and counting upon Him to supply their need; men of faith and courage, with a mind to work—not merely preachers, but labourers—working all day and every day, seeking only to please the One whom they own as Master and Lord

Notes from War Countries.

Belgium.—Anxiety regarding the Belgian Christians known to us, has caused many inquiries regarding their safety and welfare, in view of the dreadful accounts of wholesale deportations we daily hear. But as no mention is made in any recent letters from Belgian brethren who administer the supplies sent for the relief of those who suffer from the war, we may hope that they have been preserved from this form of suffering. Cheering accounts of interest in the meetings continue to come from various places, and our correspondent adds, that "In the midst of all their privations they know and feel the Lord is with them."

France.—A correspondent tells how in a large convalescent camp, on the Somme, TWO THOUSAND MEN were present at a Gospel meeting one night he was there. Surely this is cause for praise. And "the Gospel preached has a clear ring about it," another writes. A group of non-combatants from various parts of Great Britain have seen the Lord's hand in saving power among their fellows, to whom they preach Christ, and they had their first baptism quite lately in a quarry. It was good for these young men that they had the Word of God well "laid up" in them ere they went there. Now it "holds them up," and they hold it forth with blessing to others. In camps at **Calais**, **Etaples**, and **Havre** a full Gospel testimony is continued and a good work is being done.

Italy.—Missionaries known to us in this land, find many opportunities of setting Christ before troops going to the battle fronts, and in comforting sorrowing ones left behind. But the emissaries of Rome are busy, and opposed to the Gospel as ever.

Your Father Knoweth.

FAITH'S ANCHORAGE IN TIME OF TRIAL.

WHEN the Lord was instructing His own regarding the Divine care in matters of daily life, concerning which He had told them not to take "anxious thought," or allow their minds to be harassed by unbelieving fears, after the way of the world, He gave them the assuring words, "Your Father *knoweth* that ye have need of these things" (Luke xii. 30). This is where faith finds its anchorage in every time of trouble; it rests in the great and glorious fact—My Father knows. It assures itself that He is at the helm of life's affairs, that His governance extends to all that happens, and that there is nothing that escapes His notice or is beyond His control. Blessed be His holy Name! He knows and He cares, and whatever He sends or permits, He directs for the present and eternal blessing of His beloved and cared for people. This does not mean that they will be free from trial. No, not at all. The Lord told His little band of followers before He left them, "In the world ye *shall have* tribulation" (John xvi. 32), and this is their present lot. There is "no condemnation" to them that are in Christ Jesus (Rom. viii. 1), and there can be "no separation" from the love of God (Rom. viii. 39), yet there will be tribulation and there must be the trial and the proving of faith. This is an experience of which the unsaved know nothing. The world goes on its way unchecked, but the children of God are receiving their education, and whatever happens to them, their

"Father knoweth." The full results of sin and Christ-rejection by the ungodly world will only be known by them beyond death, and after that judgment to which they are reserved (2 Pet. ii. 9). Yet, here and now, the wicked "perish in their own corruption." And what men sow they reap here (Gal. vi. 8), as well as in eternity. The Christian knows that no sparrow falls without His Father's knowledge, that the very hairs of his head are numbered (Matt. x. 29, 30), and that not a shaft can hit without Divine permission. This is his solace in times of danger. And his confidence in every step of life is, that his Father has the ordering of all in His hand. This will not free him from trial or exempt him from chastisement, but it ought to keep him in constant dependence upon God, with whom all things are possible. In "all his ways" he is told to "acknowledge God," who delights to be trusted, and to "direct the paths" (Prov. iii. 6) of His people. "In everything" he is to let His requests be known to Him, and although the answers may not come as and when he would like them, if his confidence in God's love and wisdom enables him to leave his affairs wholly in His hand, "the peace of God that passeth understanding" will in his present blissful experience be acting as "a garrison" to keep cares and fears and dark forebodings from spoiling his enjoyment of God, who is the Refuge and Strength of His own, and a "very present Help in trouble" (Psa. xli. 1). In the assurance of a Father's love and care, the confiding soul, even in life's dark hours, is kept in peace.

The Untroubled Heart.

(John xiv. 1, 27.)

CHAS. H. JORDAN.

“LET not your heart be troubled.” These words were uttered by the Lord Jesus before He was betrayed and crucified, when He was about to leave those whom His Father had given Him. He had finished His earthly ministry. He had been despised and rejected of men, and had become “a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief.” And now, under the very shadow of the Cross, He seeks to comfort and encourage those who were concerned at His approaching departure. He says to them, “Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” As men speak, He was surely in greater need than they, of such comforting words. Yet, out of the wonderful love He had for them, He manifested more concern about their sorrow than about His own. For this, if for no other reason, these words possess a value without measure for all God’s children. Surely they would be regarded as supremely important, and not easily or quickly forgotten? But was this so? Alas! no. Not many days after, some, at least, to whom the words had been addressed, were terrified at the appearance of the One who had spoken them, and He had then to say to them, “Why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?”

It is well we should notice that the words, “Let not your heart be troubled,” occur twice in this 14th chapter of John. They form the very opening words of the chapter, and are there coupled by our

Lord with an exhortation to His disciples to belief in Himself. From this it would appear that, knowing the weakness of their faith, He had a special reason for addressing them as He did. They were troubled in heart, and that this arose from unbelief may surely be concluded from what is recorded in the last chapters of the Gospels by Mark and Luke. And as our Lord’s words in John xiv. 1, seem to indicate that the true preventive against a troubled heart lies in belief in Himself, so His words in Matthew viii. 26 and in Mark iv. 40, appear to suggest that fear in the heart arises from lack of faith in Himself. Weakness of faith was very marked in His disciples, as shown in several instances, and this caused the Lord much concern on their behalf. Are we to conclude then that those disciples are to be considered as being on a lower plane than ourselves, and that therefore the Lord’s words are not applicable to us? True it is that the words, “Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid,” were spoken by our Lord at a time when their hearts were filled with sorrow at the thought of being parted from Him, amid circumstances of an appalling nature. Yet they come down to us through the ages, losing none of their suitability, as a message of comfort to the human heart. Do they not shine out at this present time with an increased lustre, amid the gloom and sorrow of a sin-stricken world? Was there ever a time in the history of this world, when these words from the very lips of the blessed Son of God could have come with greater comfort than now? His word to

one and all of His own is, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Is there trouble and is there fear in the heart? Then surely it is at such a time we may turn to our Lord and say, "Speak Lord, for Thy servant heareth." "Speak again to my heart with power these precious words, with all their loving sympathy, with all their heavenly comfort, in all their strength, 'Let not *your* heart be troubled, neither let *it* be afraid.' So shall we go forth along the remainder of life's pathway, walking humbly before Thee, and believingly trusting in Thee. And though the path will be rough and toilsome at times, and crossed with many a shadow; yet, while looking unto Thee, our way will be guided and gladdened, and the prospect increasingly brightened, as we hear Thee say to us again and again, "Let not *your* heart be troubled, neither let *it* be afraid."

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A Friend in God

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O Friend of friends—the faithful, true and tried,—
 In Thee, and Thee alone, I now confide.
 Earth's "broken cisterns"—ah! they all have proved
 Unsatisfying—vain—however loved;
 The false will fail—the fondest, they must go!
 Oh, thus it is with all we love below.
 From things of earth then let my heart be free,
 And find its happiness, my God, in Thee,
 Thy Holy Spirit for my Guide and Guest,
 Whate'er my lot, I must be safe and blest.
 Drawing from Thee my daily strength and prayer,
 Finding Thine arm sustains me everywhere;
 While, thro' the clouds of sin and woe, the light
 Of coming glory shines more sweetly bright;
 And this my daily boast—my aim—my end—
 That my Redeemer is my GOD—my FRIEND.

The Triumph of Christ.

ITS UPWARD AND ONWARD COURSE.

BY THE EDITOR.

THE Lord Jesus entered the realm of death as a Conqueror. Death had no claim at all upon Him. His death was a necessity for our redemption, but on His part it was a voluntary act, for no man could take His life from Him; He laid it down of Himself (John x. 18). He submitted to be bound and led to Calvary because He knew it was part of "the determinate counsel" (Acts ii. 23) of God that He should die, but He died at His own time when all was "finished," and by His own act, in "giving up" His spirit (John xix. 30). And although He entered the realm of death and His body was laid in Joseph's tomb, "*it* was not possible that HE should be holden of *it*" (Acts ii. 25). HIS relation to *it* was that of a Victor. He entered its citadel, triumphed over it, and emerged from it a Conqueror. The keys of death, as well as of hades, are in His hand (Rev. i. 18), and against the feeblest of His saints its gates can never prevail. Blessed be God, "death" as well as life is theirs (1 Cor. iii. 22), and over it they are "more than conquerors" (Rom. viii. 37). From the sealed and guarded tomb near the Cross, around which His little band of devoted followers wept and watched, He came forth secretly and silently to announce His victory, and to begin that pathway of triumph upward and onward to the eternal throne before which every knee shall bow, and "every tongue confess

that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father " (Phil. ii. 10, 12). And what a majestic and glorious pathway His has been and is yet to be! First, He manifested Himself to His own on earth, breathing new life into them, speaking peace to them, receiving worship from them, giving commandments for service and assurance of His perpetual presence with them all the days, until the appointed hour in which from their midst and with His hands uplifted in blessing over them, He was silently but visibly " carried up into heaven," where a cloud received Him from their sight. This was the last view that sight had of the conquering Lord, but faith, receiving the testimony of the Word, is led on in the " triumph of Christ " (2 Cor. ii. 14, R.V.), as the apostle speaks, beyond the veil. He passed through the heavens we are told (Heb. iv. 14) above angels and authorities, who owned His claim and became subject to Him (1 Pet. iii. 22). He passed still upward to take His place far above all principalities and powers and might and dominion (Eph. i. 21)—those heavenly hierarchies of unfallen beings who now own His Lordship and learn the secrets of His grace and of the Divine wisdom (Eph. iii. 10) through His church. Passing still upward, still onward, He never halted until He reached and took His seat on " the right hand of the throne of God " (Heb. xii. 2), to be welcomed and greeted as Conqueror, and crowned with the Victor's crown (Heb. ii. 9, Newberry). Here, new glories, offices, and honours awaited Him, for exalted there He received from the Father the gift of the Spirit, for His people on

the earth (Acts ii. 33) He became Head of His body the church (Eph. i. 22), which is now being gathered out from the nations by the preaching of the Gospel, and united to Him in the Spirit (1 Cor. xii. 13) which, when it is complete, will be uplifted, and gathered to Him to share His heavenly glory. Then His earthly people will receive Him as their true Messiah, assemble around Him, and own Him as their King, and at length the whole universe will own His sceptre and bow before His throne, not one being left to dispute His title or rebel against His rule. All His foes will be crushed beneath His feet, and all His saints will share the honours and glories of His triumph. Here is something for faith to lay hold of, for hope to feed on, and for love to let itself loose on in dark and cloudy days. The Lord has triumphed gloriously, and as surely as He is on the throne, so surely shall His people share it with Him. Glory be for ever to His precious Name! In this the " triumph of Christ," His own are being already led on, conquered by grace, laid hold on by Christ (Phil. 12) to become witnesses of His conquest and followers in His train. Do we apprehend and appreciate the honours of such a place? Is it the sphere in which we live and move and have our being? And do we so live in the world and among men as those who are " more than conquerors through Him that loved us?" This is our calling, and this is Christianity according to the Word. It is the privilege of all who belong to Christ to have the power of this in their souls and to live in the enjoyment and manifestation of it from day to day.

Life Beyond the Grave.

IT has ever been the object of the great adversary to darken counsel and obscure the teaching of the Word of God by using man's traditions and opinions to make it "of none effect." In nothing has this been more assiduously carried on in recent years, than concerning the condition of those who have gone from us to the present unclothed state, between death and resurrection. The open infidelity that denies all existence beyond the present life, is less dangerous to God's people than the misinterpretation of Scripture which teaches the sleep of the soul between death and resurrection, its purgatorial cleansing from remaining defilement, and its possible loss of kingdom joys and honours because of failure in the present sphere of Christian life in mortal flesh. The testimony of the Word is simple, clear and definite, that the "dead in Christ" are neither non-existent, nor unconscious, but "present with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 8), "very far better" (Phil. i. 23, R.V.) than when here in mortal bodies. Their warfare is accomplished, their course is finished, and their rewards "laid up" (2 Tim. iv. 8), awaiting the day of bestowal at Christ's judgment seat (2 Cor. v. 10) at or after His coming again (Rev. xxii. 12). The testimony of Scripture on these and kindred points as gathered therefrom by reverent Bible lovers and diligent students of past and present time, is here presented for the confirmation of the faith and comfort of all.

ACCEPTANCE AND ASSURANCE.

The sacred Scriptures still have power

to make "wise unto salvation" all who listen to them, for they give to the sinner the certainty of present acceptance before God through faith in Christ, and to the believer the assurance that to die is "to depart and to be with Christ, which is very far better." If believers need a purifying process after this life to fit them for "final entrance into perfect happiness," how would it be possible, we may ask, for those living on the earth when Christ comes, to be conformed to Him and caught up to be with Him "in a moment in the twinkling of an eye" (see 1 Cor. xv. 51-57)?—*W. H. Bennet.*

SHARING CHRIST'S PRESENT TRIUMPH.

The Lord is not yet wearing His kingly diadems (Rev. xix. 12), or sitting on His own throne, but He is crowned with the Victor's crown, the "glory and honour" garland of victory over death and hell. And it is surely a token of His warm and tender love toward His own, that when they leave the world in which He had no place, He welcomes them to share the joys of that Paradise which His death has procured, and which He has already entered on, while awaiting the honours of the kingdom. And it was to a dying robber, a sinner newly saved, that this word of a Paradise welcome was first spoken. Not to some notable saint or faithful servant, but in the death hour of a criminal, to a sinner just rescued and made clean in the blood of the Lamb, was this joyful Word Paradise first uttered, so that it might be known to all generations following, what gives title and fitness to the presence-joys of Christ.—*Henry Dyer.*

THE "GAIN" OF THE DEPARTED.

Comparatively little in detail is revealed in the Word on the present unclothed state of the departed saints. It would seem as if purposely God has cast a veil over it, lest it might occupy us more than the blessed hope of the Lord's return. But full enough has been revealed to satisfy our hearts regarding loved ones who have preceded us there. It is their "gain" to be there. They are "with Christ"—"present with the Lord," able to enter on the enjoyment of all He communicates to them, to anticipate all that awaits them, and to rest in His unchanging love, we are fully assured.—*Andrew Miller.*

REST AND EXPECTANCY.

While the "intermediate state" is one of rest and blessedness, consciously enjoyed with Christ, we must guard against the sentiment which connects it with 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 the realisation of the hope to which they were begotten by His resurrection from the dead.—*Sir Robert Anderson.*

THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE.

The Christian's bright and blessed hope is not death, not departure to be with Christ, but the personal return of the Lord to raise the dead, to change the living and gather all around Himself. But should the home-call come individually before, it is to be at rest with Christ and "at home with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 8, R.V.).

The Time is Short.

THOMAS BAIRD, NEW YORK.

THE old years recede, and the new advance. These and other changes declare that "the time is short" (1 Cor. vii. 29-31). How short is best judged by the contextual surroundings of the passage.

I. Time is so short that it urgently demands *The Subordination of Conjugal Relationships*—"They that have wives be as though they had none." This does not mean that wives are to be neglected, but it implies that matrimonial obligations must not obscure the main issues of life.

II. The time is so short that it necessitates *The Suppression of Human Grievs*—"They that weep as though they weep not." This does not suppose that we are to be unsympathetic or callous, but while we "weep with those who weep," it is to be "as though we wept not."

III. The time is so short that it calls for *The Elimination of Natural Joys*—"They that rejoice as though they rejoiced not." We must needs "rejoice with them that do rejoice," yet we "rejoice as though we rejoiced not."

IV. The time is so short that it requires *The Moderation of Material Possessions*—"They that buy as though they possessed not." We may possess our possessions, but our possessions must not possess us. Many Christians become *dis*-possessed through being *over*-possessed.

V. The time is so short that God urges on us *The Utilisation of Worldly Opportunitie!*—"They that use this world as not *abusing* it." *Ab*-use signifies the diversion of anything from its proper use.

The Kingdom and the Church.

ALEXANDER STEWART.

AS yet we see not all things put under Christ as King. Israel is scattered and abides without a king. The world groans ; for the Deliverer has not yet come. On every hand is the evidence, that the kingdom of righteousness and peace has not yet been set up. What of the time now present ?

In Luke xix. we read, "And as they heard these things, He added and spake a parable, *because* He was nigh to Jerusalem, and *because* they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear." (It is a question of the manifestation of the kingdom.) The parable follows, of the nobleman who went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. We are now in the gap between these events—the going away of the Lord Jesus, and His coming again—a period during which the god and prince of this world is not Christ, but another who must be cast down and bound when Christ comes ; but a time also in which God is delivering some from the bondage of that usurper, and bringing them under the headship of His Son. Amid the Egyptian darkness, there is one Goshen-spot of light. There are souls on earth who own the Lordship of Jesus. These form the church, the "Ecclesia," the called out, which is the present sphere of the rule of the Lord Jesus Christ. He rules them now, and they shall reign with Him in His kingdom. As Eve with Adam had dominion, so the church, while owing loyal subjection to her Lord, shall most

surely share His throne. He is our Lord, He is the King of Israel.

By various figures, God has set forth our relationship to Christ. Viewed as one with Him, He is the Head, and we the members of a body which is a perfect unity, and which, though diverse, should be controlled throughout by one will. Considered as distinct from Him, He is the Shepherd and we the sheep. He it is who "leads, and feeds, and heals us."

Both in the church, and in the kingdom, the character of Christ's rule is eminently that of the Shepherd. David stands the great figure of Him—that Shepherd King of whom it is written (Psalm lxxvii. 70-72), "He chose David also His servant, and took him from the sheepfolds ; from following the ewes great with young, He brought him to feed Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance. So he fed them according to the integrity of his *heart*, and guided them by the skilfulness of his *hands*." The heart, and the hands, the wisdom and the love of Jesus, are engaged for His sheep. He is no longer with us in bodily presence ; but when He ascended, He gave pastors among His gifts to men. And still in the church are to be found those, who have the pastor's heart, and who, according to the grace given them, feed the flock of God. Sorely is their ministry needed in this cloudy and dark day. While we pray that they may be raised up, let us consider their characteristics, that we may know them, and yield them subjection under Christ.

There is but one Pattern, and what is true of Him, will be true of them in their measure. He is the *Good Shepherd*. The

good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep. Here is the test of pastorate—the life laid down for the sheep. No matter how great the gift, the life must first be laid down, if the church is to be profited. What is needed is “a heart at leisure from itself.” Ease and self-interest—those things in which the old man lives, must be put aside, and in the power of new life, and the strength of new affections, the pastor must set himself to the work which God lays to his hand.

Jesus is also the *Great Shepherd*, who was brought again from the dead. He is carrying us over His shoulder, in His heart, home to God. The pastor likewise must bear the sheep in his bosom. Each name must be written in his heart of hearts; each sheep must be upborne by his continual intercession. By such marks shall he be made manifest to God and to man.

As the *Chief Shepherd*, the Lord stands alone, as the rewarder of those faithful pastors who when He shall appear, shall receive “a crown of glory” that fadeth not.

God Does His Best.

GOD careth for thee, *weeping one*,
His hand is round thee now;
For thee His *best* is always done;
O then, why weapest thou?

God loves thee well, thou *troubled one*,
Heaven wonders at such love;
He loves thee as He loveth none
In angel ranks above.

Throughout the earth His earnest eye
Hath careful searched, to see
What spot it was beneath the sky
That *best* befitted thee.

If thou must weep, then weep for joy,
That God **THY FATHER** is;
Whose grace dost all its powers employ,
To load thy soul with bliss.

The Coming of the Lord.

W. H. HUNTER.

SOME stress has been laid in these notes upon the shortness of the time which is to intervene between Satan's expulsion from heaven and his imprisonment in the abyss. He will himself realise this, for the cause of his “great wrath” will be not so much that he has been “cast out into the earth,” but that his time on earth will be so brief.

The period which will be available for him can be measured very nearly by the duration of the triumphant progress towards universal dominion of Antichrist, to whom authority will be given to do things for “forty and two months” of thirty days each; that is to say, for twelve hundred and sixty days,* or “a time and times and a dividing of a time:” a period similar and equal to that occupied by the testimony of the two Heavenly Witnesses whose ministry, in fact, will cover the first half of the seventieth week, and will thus leave the second half of that week for Antichrist's progress.

It may appear to some students of prophecy that this suggestion as to the division of the seventieth week (a week which is implied though not named in the great prediction in Dan. ix. 24-27), which is based upon the earlier suggestion that the seventieth week will begin with the oath of the great angel that there shall be **DELAY** no longer, conflicts with the statement that the “Prince that shall come” shall make a firm covenant with “the

* Say three years and a half, which probably was the duration of the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

many" *for one week*; as some have concluded that the week of the covenant will coincide with the seventieth week of Gabriel's series, and consequently that such seventieth week will begin after Antichrist shall come, and that his reign and authority must last for double the time so definitely stated in Rev. xiii. 15. A little consideration will show that this conclusion is based upon an unsound assumption, viz., that the covenant which will be entered into *will be kept*, will not be treated as a "scrap of paper," but will run its course to completion; whereas the covenant will be broken (Isa. xxxiii. 5) and, moreover, will be broken *in the midst of the week*; so that the covenant week will never be completed for the best of all reasons that, long before that week will have run its course, Christ will have come back to earth and Antichrist will be in the horrors of hell.

The modern policy of remorseless push and blind haste, which has developed so remarkably during the last half-century (concurrently with the development of scientific discovery and mechanical invention) will reach a climax in the days of Antichrist. So much there will be to be done, so little time to do it in, that every effort must be put forth and every aid, however insignificant it may appear to be, must be pressed into the service. Conscriptio of men, of wealth, of anything, everything, which belongs to some other, will be ruthlessly enforced, and that without conscience clauses or exemptions. Conscience will be out of fashion when the Beast reigns; it is not altogether fashionable now: but it would seem that experi-

ence will have taught the Dragon something—perhaps the Beast will learn the lesson from him—certainly both will agree that in dealing with the Jews, the line of least resistance will be found in bribery rather than in force.

The parenthesis in Rev. vii. makes it very clear that during the judgments which will follow the opening of the seals, a work of recovery will take place amongst the lost tribes of Israel: a movement which, as may readily be imagined, will quicken the Zionist efforts to induce the Jews to return to Palestine from Gentile lands, upon which the hand of the LORD will lie in heavy wrath.

In Palestine, therefore, Antichrist will find an organisation, both political and religious in character, made ready to his hand, which will be capable of being crystallised into a feudatory republic. In that organisation "the many" will be only too ready to accept the Beast's offer of a "firm covenant," a binding treaty which shall be binding for seven years.

It is not difficult to imagine what the terms of the covenant will be. They will be clear and simple, direct and definite, and will be of sensible value to Antichrist at the outset of his career, when the questions with regard to the acceptance or rejection of his claims as the Christ by Christendom will be hanging in the balance.

To Israel, his claim will be that he is the Coming One, the long promised Messiah of Israel, and the many of Israel will set hand and seal to the solemn declaration that they recognise and accept him as such, and will yield him allegiance and worship.

The Preacher's Column.

OUTLINES OF GOSPEL SUBJECTS.

MAN'S RUIN.

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

LIFE IN RELATION TO CHRIST.

- Life IN Christ (John i. 4)—Its Source.
 Life FROM Christ (John x. 28)—Its Gift.
 Life BY Christ (John vi. 37)—Its Sustenance.
 Life LIKE Christ (1 Pet. ii. 21)—Its Pattern.
 Life FOR Christ (Phil. i. 21)—Its Object.

JESUS CHRIST AS LORD.

- EXALTED as Lord (Acts ii. 36)—In Heaven.
 RECEIVED as Lord (Col. ii. 6, R.V.)—At Conversion.
 CONFESSED as Lord (Rom. x. 9, R.V.)—In Testimony.
 OBEYED as Lord (Col. iii. 17)—In Life and Service.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

In what way does a weak brother "perish," as 1 Cor. viii. 11 states? Is it for time or eternity? The words of John x. 28, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall NEVER perish," clearly show that none who belong to Christ, and are possessors of eternal life, can ever perish or be severed from Him as His members, or lost to Him as His sheep. But one who is truly the Lord's may be emboldened to indulge the flesh or take a wrong course, thus bringing himself under "the chastisement of the Lord," even to the loss of earthly life (see 1 Cor. 5. 5) through lack of consideration on the part of others "stronger" than he, whose example he follows, and is thereby ensnared and led into sin. Their example "wounds," or, as the word means, "smites" (ver. 12) those who, being less able to resist evil, fall under its power as by a stroke. Hence the need of godly care in exercising a liberty which, although it may be rightly claimed for oneself, has its evil effects upon others. Surely the remembrance that there are many such "for whom Christ died," and are His by redemption, should cause all to so act and walk as not to become a cause of their fall and of loss to them and dishonour to Him, who is their Lord.

Answers to Correspondents.

NEMO.—It is irreverent to speculate as to what the end of such as have not heard the Gospel will be. We are assured that their judgment is with

God, and that the Judge of all the earth will do right (Gen. xviii. 25). But we are left in no doubt at all regarding the doom of those who reject it (2 Thess. i. 8, 9). And this is what we are called to warn Gospel hearers of, in no uncertain sound.

VISITOR.—Conversational dealing was a great part of the ministry of the Lord Jesus. In a house at Capernaum it is said, "He SPAKE the Word unto them" (Mark ii. 2, R.V.). And the word here rendered "spake," means "to converse, to talk freely as in ordinary conversation." There is a large unoccupied field for those who will go forth visiting from house to house, gathering groups of mothers and such like, and speaking freely to them on eternal things. May the Lord richly bless you in this ministry, and lead you on in the fulfilment of it.

G. D., BANFFSHIRE.—That there will be a people alive on earth whose faith and hope are in God, during the period spoken of by the Lord as "the great tribulation" (Matt. xxiv. 21; Rev. vii. 14, R.V.), many Scriptures clearly tell. But they are not saints of the present outcalling (Acts xv. 14), which forms the ECCLESIA—the church—united to Christ by the Holy Ghost, members of His body, standing in grace, in the enjoyment of access, and sure of glory. Their prayers, their calls for judgment on their enemies, and their lack of assurance of acceptance and deliverance, all mark them as belonging to another age than the present. If you probe deep enough into the teaching of those who say that "part of the church may or must pass through the tribulation," you will find that "the church," in their view, consists of all saints of all ages, past, present, and future, while the Word declares it was a "mystery"—something not yet revealed, until it was made known to Paul "by revelation" (Eph. iii. 3, 4), that its beginning was after the Cross, the Resurrection, and the coming of the Comforter. There were saints on earth in ages before it began, and there will be saints on earth after it is complete and removed to heaven, but not of the same calling or in the same relation as Christ's members and the Spirit's temple. When this is seen, then those who "come out of the great tribulation" (Rev. vii. 9, 14 R.V.) are easily distinguished.

Notes on Current Topics.

Conferences.—Tens of thousands of the Lord's people have within the last few weeks assembled

for praise, prayer, Christian fellowship, and the ministry of God's Word, in accessible cities and centres, and it has been found pleasant, as well as profitable, to so gather. Isolated saints who seldom grasp a brother's hand, lonely ones "discouraged because of the way," needing a message of cheer, and sad-hearted ones requiring the uplifting and comforting word, have all been helped and blessed and sent back to the "daily task" with a firmer hold on God and in a happier state of soul, to bear the burdens of life. Such assemblings are a real "means of grace" to many who do not at ordinary times have much of the ministry of the Word, and it is a mercy from God that it has been possible to continue them in spite of darkened streets and restricted means of transit. They cost little, result in much—where the ministry is from God and to the heart—and should be encouraged and promoted by all who guide and care for the saints of God in the localities where they are.

Evangelists.—It has been remarked that there is little real aggressive evangelistic work carried on in places where there is most need, while city assemblies and well-preached towns have too many evangelists buzzing about them continually. It needs no special grit and calls for no great energy to step on to a platform and "give an address" for thirty or forty minutes, to a congregation gathered automatically or by the energy of others. But the true evangelist goes into new fields where he has often to be hall opener, doorkeeper, hymn distributor, leader of singing, and preacher in turn, also to find a lodging and provide for his necessities. There is ample scope and need for God-sent, evangelic young men, who will give themselves wholly and daily, all the day and every day to spreading the Gospel and dealing with souls. And where such are marked by God's approval, it is the privilege and responsibility of assemblies, as well as of individuals, to minister to them of their substances. It will be a bad day for Gospel work, when such labourers are neglected or discouraged.

Young Men.—There are many well-taught Christian young men of godly life and good testimony, whose help in varied spheres of service would be acceptable and helpful, but who suffer from "bashfulness" and need to be led out by those who are more experienced. It is on record that Paul "would have" Timothy "to go forth with him" (Acts xvii 3), and it is no interference with the Divine prerogative to fit and send forth those who are called to service, for elder brethren to

encourage and lead on those in whom they see the grace of God and the gift of Christ. This is not "making" ministers, but recognising those already called of God, and making room for them to fulfil the ministry they have received in the Lord (Col. iv. 17).

Liberality.—From various quarters there comes the wail that God's people are becoming stinted and niggard in their giving. We have not come in contact with much of this. Our experience is, that where the needs and the responsibility of meeting them are made known, the Lord's people generally rise to the occasion. But they do not like to be badgered from the platform on every occasion about money, nor to have collections taken in the middle of meetings, as if they could not be trusted to put their freewill offerings in a box at the proper time for such a purpose. Wholesome teaching to exercise the conscience may be needed in some cases, and a fearless denunciation of worldliness in others, but the best way to encourage a free hand and an open purse is to minister what will warm the heart, and this will not fail to move the hand in ministering to all that is worthy of being called "the work of the Lord."

Personal Service.—While it is the responsibility of those gifted to minister to saints, and to preach the Gospel to sinners to have all the fellowship in their ministry that is possible with the assembly of which they form a part, they have a personal and direct responsibility to the Lord to fulfil their ministry in other spheres as well. To rent a hall for Gospel work, or addresses to believers, is often a necessity, in order to reach those who most need their ministry. And if fellow-believers do not find it their responsibility to help, they surely should not seek to hinder such efforts. But there is another and wholly different form of "personal" effort in Gospel work coming into vogue, which neither deserves or should receive the sympathy of those who desire to honour the Word of God in the ordering or their service. When a few restless spirits, who want to have Gospel work conducted after the pattern of the sects, take a hall, form a committee of all-sectarian sorts, often of doubtful spiritual life, introduce musical services, engage soloists, and have preachers of all creeds and doctrines, usually ending in a God-dishonouring break-up or in the formation of a "mission," in which anything is allowed but the truth of God, this certainly should not be patronised, but the simple, likely to be ensnared, warned against it.

Falling Asleep of John R. Caldwell, of Glasgow.

On the afternoon of Lord's Day, January 14, at his residence, Courtallam, Helensburgh, Mr. Caldwell fell asleep, and is now at rest in the presence of the Lord. For over half a century his name has been familiar to tens of thousands of the Lord's people, and his ministry by word and pen has been shared by successive generations of Christians in all English-speaking lands. In the city of Glasgow, in which the greater part of his life was spent, and to which he especially devoted his years of active service, there are very many who owe much to the ministry of the Word through his lips, and the day of Christ alone will reveal how far-reaching the effects of his influence and service in the Lord has been. We gladly acknowledge how much we owe to his personal friendship and wise counsel, as well as to his public ministry throughout a period exceeding thirty years. Now the labourer is at rest with the Lord whom he loved and served.

Mr. Caldwell came of a godly parentage, his father being a godly and gracious man esteemed by all who knew him. Brought to a knowledge of Christ in early years, he was led to value the Word of God and to own its claims through the ministry of Gordon Furlong, who in those years was preaching the Gospel and ministering the Word in Scotland with much freshness and power. The Bible from that time became his counsellor, and he found his joy in the daily study thereof. His own words regarding this are: "From that time the Bible became a new Book to me, my constant and loved companion. I read it with opened eyes and beheld in it wondrous things." One result of being thus guided by light from the Book of God was, that with a few others who had been led on in the same path, Mr. Caldwell began to assemble in the Marble Hall, Dumbarton Road, outside of all denominations, simply as disciples of the Lord, owning His Name alone and seeking to be guided in their worship and service by the Spirit and the Word. This was one of the earliest assemblies of its kind in Glasgow, and for many years Mr. Caldwell was associated with it, and gave valued help in preaching the Gospel and ministering the Word to believers therein. But his ministry was not confined to the Marble Hall. In tents, which were used throughout many successive summers in various parts of the city and its suburbs with wonderful blessing, he gave unstinted help, and when the tent season was over he, with others, ministered the Word to young believers in public halls, leading them gently on in

the truth as they were able to receive it. A Bible Class for young men, conducted during the winter months on a week night for several years, was the means of great help and blessing to that generation, many of which have become able preachers and helpers in the assemblies where they live, and others are serving in high places of the field in foreign lands. Mr. Caldwell, in addition to an amiable personality and gracious manner, was uniquely gifted in being able to so link Scripture with Scripture in his ministry that even the simplest hearer could follow him and profit by his teaching, the Word itself being always directly appealed to for what was advanced. His Lord's Day afternoon addresses in central halls of the city, continued for many seasons, were the means of untold blessing to Christians of all persuasions who attended them in large numbers, and it was due to these meetings in great measure that in those years, assemblies in and around Glasgow so rapidly grew and increased in number. Week night addresses in provincial towns and distant villages filled up many a night, and Conferences near and far had his unstinted help. It was a wonder to many how, with the chief responsibility of a large business requiring his daily attention and many others claims besides, he was able to come forth with a fresh and seasonable message to those who waited on his ministry night after night, and provide matter each month for "The Witness," of which he was the editor for 38 years. The secret is found in the following words, which we remember hearing him speak on one occasion to a group of young preachers:—"You should read and meditate on the Word for your own soul's enjoyment, laying it up in the heart. When the Word is dwelling richly in you, it will come to your lips in season as a message to others." For the last few years Mr. Caldwell lived in retirement owing to feeble health, but his interest in the people and the work of God continued to the end. Much loving sympathy will go forth to his widow, son, and five daughters who mourn his loss, and to Mr. George Young, his partner in business (now well advanced in years) who in a recent letter to us gives the following fine testimony to their happy relations:—"We have been 58 years together without a 'crack in the lute,' working unitedly in the Lord's work and in business, and God blessed us in both." May He whose grace sustained His servant raise up "faithful men able to teach others also," whose ministry will lead to that Word which he held so dear.

The Lord is Full of Pity.

A WORD FOR DARK AND CLOUDY DAYS.

IN calling our attention to the example of those who served the Lord, and suffered for His Name with patient endurance in ancient time, the apostle James reminds us that in all their afflictions the Lord who sent or allowed them had an "end" in view. "Ye have heard of the endurance of Job, and have seen the *end* of the Lord, how that the Lord is very pitiful (R.V., full of pity) and of tender mercy" (James v. 10, 11). It is not thus that God's dealings with His people are always read. So long as the path we tread is in the sunshine, with pleasure and brightness on either side, we are ready enough to speak and sing of the love of God and of the goodness He ever imparts. But when the days of darkness come and mercy after mercy seems to fail, when every fountain and spring of happiness becomes dry, while the heavens seem to turn from our cry, then we question whether God is all that we took Him to be, and His Word all that it promised. It is in personal and often through painful experiences that we come to really learn that the Lord is "full of pity" always and ever, and that His "tender mercy" regulates all that He allows us to bear or suffer. "Like as a father *pitieth* His children" (Psa. ciii. 13), and "as a mother *comforteth*" her babe (Isa. lxiii. 13), so the living Lord deals with His people in the time of faith's trial. In all these dealings, the Word assures that He is "full of pity." Whether we so read His ways and receive our

troubles at His hand, "in everything giving thanks" (1 Thess. v. 18), or question His wisdom in allowing and doubt His power in delivering, the great fact remains that "He doeth all things well," and will yet justify all His ways, which are ever and only "right" (Hos. xiv. 9). The peace of the heart in trial, and the endurance of faith in dark hours can only be maintained in the settled conviction that whatever happens, it can only be for our ultimate good. For a God who is "full of pity," and "whose compassions fail not," could neither send or allow anything to come upon His own, save that which will be for their present and eternal blessing. That the people of God in this the time of their training, are not immune from suffering, the Word assures us, but while they are having their dross purged from them in the furnace, they have the blessed consciousness that the Lord Himself, "full of pity," sits as "a Refiner and Purifier" (Mal. iii. 3) watching the process, and that whenever "the end" is reached which He has in view, the hour of their deliverance will come, and their weeping, which has been as for a night, will be followed with a joy that cometh as the morning. Let it be ours then in the passing through of life's dark days to have it settled in our hearts, that "the Lord is full of pity and of tender mercy," that "He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men" (Lam. iii. 33), and that all that He permits or sends has its message to the exercised heart, ever leading to a fuller trust in God, and a richer experience of His deep compassions and His unerring wisdom. J. R.

Divine Guidance and Care,

IN THE CHRISTIAN'S DAILY LIFE.

THE care that God exercises over His people in the entire details of their lives, the guidance He gives in all that concerns their daily walk and conduct, are very fully assured in the Sacred Word. There are many witnesses to this in the recorded lives of His people. In Patriarchal times, the choosing of a bride, the planning of a warfare, and the buying of a grave were all referred to the God in whom they trusted. In this present age of grace, in which God is known to His people as Father, the exalted Christ as Owner and Master, and the indwelling Paraclete as Teacher and Guide, with the written Word in which commandments for his obedience and precepts for his direction are fully given, bring to the Christian the responsibility of consulting God about everything, and referring all the details of his daily life to God for guidance and direction. Yet, alas! how seldom is this done! With how few is it a daily habit! And what loss and sorrow result from the neglect! The conscious enjoyment of a Father's love and care, the joy of doing the will of Him whom we own as Lord, and the daily guidance of the Spirit, are blessings little known among the children of God, compared with what they might and ought to be. It is with the hope of stirring up the minds of fellow-believers to these neglected mercies of our God, which are still at the disposal of His own, that we give the following glowing testimonies of beloved fathers in Christ no longer with us, men of mature

experience, who, in the days of their pilgrimage, practised in full and joyous measure the habit of referring everything to God, proving the blessedness of His guidance and care in their daily walk through life, in a world where snares and pitfalls abound. May the truths set forth in varied aspects from the Word be received in faith and proved in practice, so that their bliss may come into and abide in our lives in these last and perilous days to spiritual life and to godly walk and testimony.

How to Know the Will of God.

How important it is to ascertain the will of God before we undertake anything, because we are then not only blessed in our own souls, but also the work of our hands will prosper. To ascertain the Lord's will, we ought to use Scriptural means. Peayer, the Word of God, and His Spirit should be united together. We should go to the Lord repeatedly in prayer, and ask Him to teach us by His Spirit through His Word. I say by His Spirit through His Word. For if we should think that His Spirit led us to do so and so, because certain facts are so and so, and yet His Word is opposed to the step we are going to take, we should be deceiving ourselves. I never remember in all my Christian course that I ever *sincerely* and *patiently* sought the will of God by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, through the instrumentality of the Word of God, but I have been ALWAYS directed rightly. But if *honesty* of heart and *uprightness* before God were lacking, or if I did not *patiently* wait upon God for

instruction, or if I *preferred* the counsel of my fellow-men to the declarations of the Word of the living God, I made great mistakes.—*George Muller.*

To Whom God Makes Known His Way.

There is given us a promise of deep meaning in Psalm xxv. 9, "The *meek* will He guide in judgment; the *meek* will He teach His way." Here is a double emphasis upon meekness as a condition of such guidance and teaching. *Meekness* is a *real preference* for God's will. Where this holy habit of mind exists, the whole being becomes so open to impression that without any *outward* sign or token, there is an inward recognition and choice of the will of God. The meek soul simply and humbly waits and watches the moving of the Pillar. "The steps of a *good man* are ordered by the Lord" (Psa. xxv. 23). This is true guidance.—*Dr. Pierson.*

Let God Control the Life..

Happy is the Christian who knows what it is in daily experience to carry his cares and burdens to God, and leave them with Him. It is not the Father's will that His children should be fretting and worrying about every little cross-current in their lives, as if they and their affairs were not in their Father's hands, or as if He had ceased to control them. To rest in the Divine love, and have calm, assured confidence in the Divine wisdom that shapes our lives, is to have the very "peace of God" garrisoning the heart and mind against all troubles in a world full of care and disquietude.—*H. F. Witherby.*

Shepherd Rule in the Church.

ALEXANDER STEWART.

IN Zechariah xi. 16, there is a fourfold division of the shepherd's work. "To *visit* those that be cut off, to *seek* the young one, to *heal* that that is broken, and to *feed* that that standeth still." There be many that are called pastors. Let them consider these words of God. Here is the scope and range of their bishopric. How full, how gracious! How altogether after the mind of Christ, a ministry which should fulfil these requirements, and meet the need of each of these classes. The cut-off, the young, the broken, those who stand still, have each their place in His love, and if the tide of it did but swell within us, did we but yearn over the flock, in the bowels of Christ, how earnestly would we pray, "In Thy great grace, O Lord, raise us up such shepherds."

And let not the solemn words that follow (verse 17) be unheeded. "Woe to the idol shepherd, that *leaveth* the flock! The sword shall be upon his arm and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened." The arm and the right eye—power and vision—alike taken away in judgment. Are there none in these days for such cause, suffering such deprivation?

Let us look at three points in John x., bearing directly upon this subject, and set beside each a passage from the Epistles, which answers to it. Of the true Shepherd it is said, John x. 4:—

1. "When He putteth forth His own sheep He goeth before them." To this

corresponds the injunction to the elders in 1 Peter v. 3, to "feed the flock of God, taking the oversight, not as being lords over God's heritage; but *ensamples* to the flock." Emphatically, the pastor is not a lordly prelate, but a leader, and his weight and authority should be in proportion to his forwardness in the ways of God.

2. "The sheep follow Him." In Heb. xiii. 7, we are enjoined, "Remember them which have the rule over you (margin—are the guides) who have spoken unto you the Word of God; whose faith follow." The Shepherd is to lead; the sheep are to follow. These Scriptures give to each his place, and if either fail, the result is the confusion, alas, too common in the church.

3. "They know His voice." Answerable to this is the word (1 Thess. v. 12): "And we beseech you, brethren, to *know* them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you." Here arises the question—How are we to know who are pastors? It may be said, Men will stand up who have no gift, and thrust themselves forward, prompted by the flesh and the devil. How are we to know those who are over us in the Lord? Where there is a difficulty, let Christ be our light. How was it with the Great Shepherd? It is written, "My sheep hear My voice." And there never stood up a man in the church of God, in the power of the Holy Ghost, but the saints heard His voice—or, if you will, the voice of Christ in Him. Here is the true ground of the recognition of all spiritual ministry. By the Spirit they have received, the saints are able to discern whether a man

be sent of God or no. The imposition of the holiest hands constitutes no claim to our submission; but at our peril we shut our ears when God's Word is spoken, by him whom God has qualified and sent to speak it. "My sheep hear my voice." In the day of our spiritual distress we heard it. He said, "It is finished," and darkness fled away. We needed no proof that that was the voice of God. It was His immediate word to our souls, and required no more witness than light does to seeing eyes. And just, as God's Word needs neither crutches nor buttresses, commanding our faith (not because part of it was handed down by an apostate nation, and part by an apostate church); but is its own witness; so God's ministers, be they pastors, teachers, or evangelists, need the credentials neither of priests, nor presbyters. But by manifestation of their gifts, in the power of the Spirit, commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. I do not forget that, through carnality, the ears of His people may be dull. But the great truth remains. And what do I contend for, but the rights of the Spirit of God? His right in the minister, and His right in the saints who are ministered to. Let us but grasp the truth, that the Living God is acting in His church, by those whom He Himself has called to their several ministries, and all will be plain. Faith is needed. Such principles must appear foolishness to those who are destitute of it. But the faith that depends upon God, and draws from His fulness, will be glad to have it as He has appointed. To all such He is "as waters that fail not."

Conformity to this Age :

ITS EFFECT ON THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

THE word of the apostle in Romans xii. 2, "Be not conformed to this age," has its special message to us of this present time. Conformity to this age is a popular and accredited evil among the people of God. "The age" is an "evil" one (Gal. i. 4, R.V.), opposed to God and energised by Satan (Eph. ii. 2), in whose dominion it lies (1 John v. 19, R.V.). Conformity to it, in thought and deed, is therefore a ruinous thing for one who has been rescued out of it by the Cross, and called to fellowship and companionship with an earth-rejected and heaven-accepted Christ. Conformity to this age, the fashioning of ourselves according to its ways, defiles the saint, unfits him for heart fellowship with Christ, blinds his spiritual vision, grieves the indwelling Spirit of God in him, and soon drags him down from his excellency to "walk as other Gentiles," in a vain show, ceasing to see things as God sees them and to live in and act toward the world as the Word instructs him. Of all the sins that beset the Christian, conformity to the age is the most seductive, as it is the most treacherous. It comes in at all corners. It assails the home, it permeates social life, it lurks in church affairs, and can foist itself under the holiest names into the worship and work of God. It needs spiritually anointed eyes (Rev. iii. 18) to see its track, and the power of God in the soul to resist its advances. A defiled Christian in a wrong position like the old

prophet of Bethel (1 Kings xiii. 11), one who has lost touch with God, can be used by "the god of this age" (2 Cor. iv. 4) to bring others under its baneful effects; indeed, it is just this class who are the chief instruments the devil uses to carry out his plans in bringing unwatchful Christians unto the world's snare, thus making them utterly useless to God and Christ. There are many gifted, able, well taught men who, if they were right with God and clean, would be of untold value to the Church of God: they have become worse than useless, because they are away from the path of separation to God and under the power of "the present evil age." Its newspapers are their chief instructors, its maxims form their minds, its fashions rule their lives, its objects govern their ways. An earth-rejected Lord, with the offence of His Cross, "the reproach of Christ" which cleaves to all who go forth unto Him without the camp bearing it, is as little known by them as it was by the Corinthian saints of old who "reigned as kings," while those who had brought them the Gospel were accounted as "the filth of the earth" (1 Cor. iv. 13). This is what saps the spiritual life, takes the song out of the soul, withers up the spirit of service, and brings those who once stood strong in the strength of their spiritual Nazariteship doing wonders, into Delilah's lap, shorn of their power, to make sport to the enemies of the Lord. It is no use trimming the twigs while this taproot of evil is allowed to remain unearthed. Conformity to the present evil age is the dryrot that is working ruin to-day in the Church of God. J. R.

A Message From Beulah Land:

FROM AN AGED PILGRIM.

WITH me, the long pilgrimage of life is nearly over, and I am waiting, as Bunyan puts it, in Beulah Land, within sight of the City, where "there is more rejoicing than in parts more remote from the kingdom to which I am bound." The last sands of life's glass are slowly running out, and the happy prospect gladdens of waking up in the presence of the Lord. I have nothing to adjust, nothing to settle, all is peace and rest. When as a sin-burdened soul I heard the Saviour's voice over sixty years ago say, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest," I came just as I was, and He eased me of my burden. I saw in Him my Surety and my Substitute dying on my account and in my place, and I was saved. Blessed be His Name, that was life's beginning to me. I have proved Him a faithful Shepherd and a true Friend all along the wilderness way, and I can say of Him, "Not one thing has failed of all that He promised." Life has had its conflicts, its shadows, and its sorrows, but these are all behind me now, and I only think of them to magnify the grace that has been sufficient for every need. God has been my Refuge and my Strength in every trial, a very present Help in every trouble. Much, that in the exuberance of my youth I hoped for here, has not been fulfilled; it was not for my good, and He withheld it. There have been failures and disappointments, but He restored and renewed confidence in Himself. The companionship of fellow-pilgrims has been

sweet, the fellowship of saints precious, and the service of the Lord joyous indeed. The path of rejection has had its compensations, and anything that has been suffered for His Name and for His truth, has been a means of keeping me clinging to Himself. I magnify His grace that has borne with my wanderings, and His perfect sympathy that has been shared in my sorrows. He has done all things well. Deep waters that "crossed life's pathway" have been parted by His hand, and the Marahs have been sweetened at His touch. Now the final camping-place has been reached, and the wilderness tent will soon be struck for ever. The rest with Christ and with loved ones gone before, will be very very sweet to me. I know that even now He may come, and that I may "go without dying," with the whole of the pilgrim host, up to the Father's house to the place prepared, which will be best of all. But if not, I shall "put off my present tabernacle," and go to be with Him, to taste the bliss I have long desired of the upper waiting room, while others wait and watch in their tents below. I am more than happy in the prospect, and as I bid you all "good night," it is in the joyful assurance of a speedy reunion in "the morning"—a morning without clouds, the harbinger of that eternal day, when we shall see Him whom now we love, come at last to His own, "worshipped, glorified, and adored" by all above, and owned as Lord by every tongue. It is to this ultimate triumph of Christ that hope's far-seeing eye is directed, but the rest of Paradise will be most blessed.

“A Very Small Thing.”

IT is always grateful to the heart of the Lord's servant to have the fellowship and approval of his brethren in the course he is pursuing, and the service he is rendering to their common Master. But he must not make this his object, else he may be turned aside from the path along which the Lord is leading him. His aim must ever be to please the Lord, to do His will, no matter who may approve or condemn. This is the temper of the apostle's mind in 1 Cor. iv. 1-4, where he writes of himself as a “steward,” whose business it is to be “faithful” to the trust placed in his hands. He aims at pleasing Him to whom one day he shall have to give an account, and pursues his service in the light of that hour in which the secrets of the heart, as well as the service of the hands, in which the motives as well as the manner of his service, must come under the Lord's judgment. If some pass their judgments, and it may be their condemnation, on his doings now, he accounts this “a very small thing,” for it is only yet “man's day” (marg.), and much too early to come to a finding on such matters. And then it is only “man's judgment,” which with him is a “very small” thing as compared with the final award of his heavenly Master, which he will receive in due time. Therefore he goes on steadfastly pursuing his course, not allowing himself to be turned aside by the clashing judgments of his brethren. To the apostle they were as the dust on the balance as contrasted with the approval of his Lord. It needs

much grace and a close acquaintance with the Lord for one to pursue a steady course in the face of the contrary judgments and caustic criticisms of his fellow-saints. If it were only a matter of “yielding” what is his own, the Lord's servant is at liberty to go any length in seeking to please his neighbour for his good “unto edification” (Rom. xvi. 2), or to preserve the spirit of unity and goodwill. But when it is a matter of turning aside from the way of the Lord to become the servant of men (Gal. i. 10), in order to retain the approval of others, the price is too great, and his course is clear. He must brace himself up to pursue his path and fulfil his ministry, reckoning all that may be said against him as “a very small thing” as compared with doing the will of the One whom he calls Lord, and whose approval he seeks. And the converse side of this great and vital principle of the Word may surely have its place in the servant's thoughts as well. The approval and commendation and flattery of those to whom he renders service, does not necessarily imply that he has the approval of the Lord. Fellow-saints may be wholly out of His mind in bestowing their approbations, and therefore these like their criticisms and adverse judgments may well be reckoned as “a very small thing” by the bondservant of the Lord. Indeed, the effusive plaudits of fellow-believers are far more dangerous to the servants of Christ than their adverse judgments, because the latter usually send them to their knees, whereas the former have the danger of “puffing up” their fleshly minds, and leading them on toward the pride which precedes a fall. W. R.

The Word of God.

THE BELIEVER'S DAILY FOOD.

IF it be asked by any—"Where is the believer's spiritual food to be found?" the simplest answer is, "In the Holy Scriptures"—God's Word. There we are told the pure milk is found for newborn babes (1 Pet. ii. 2). There also strong meat may be found for those of full age (Heb. v. 14). It is like the "manna," as it came from heaven, suitable for old and young. Well might we say with David, "Thou preparest a table before Me in the presence of mine enemies." From Genesis to Revelation we can say, "The Scriptures testify of Christ" (John v. 39). This they do in type, in shadow, and in prophecy. Adam, Isaac, and Joseph all speak in type, of Christ. The paschal lamb in Egypt, the burnt and the sin offerings all speak of Him, and in all these aspects we need Him as the food and strength of the soul.

With no less attention let us consider the next question, "When are we to feed?" If we have life, we will cry for food as Israel did in the desert. The Christian's new life, can find no sustenance in the world. When the people had the manna sent, they were told WHEN to gather it (Exod. xvi. 4). Every day, and before the sun waxed hot. What a commanding fact is this. Miraculously provided it was, but they must daily attend to the gathering of it. And in our experience there must be something akin to this. God gives eternal life to those who believe on His Son. But while we are on our journey to the Father's house,

there must be the *daily* feeding on Christ in the Word. If we begin our daily duties without giving some of our time to meditation on what we learn about Christ in the Word, then that is equivalent to refusing to eat the manna, the food supplied for the nourishment of the heaven-born life. If we say "I will wait till mid-day, or till the evening hour, then I will meditate on Christ," we will surely find to our loss that the time has passed, and the pressure of temporal things has unfitted us for the holy exercise of feeding on God's heavenly food, thus producing spiritual weakness and decay.

But what about the want of appetite? Israel found at first that the taste of the manna was as "wafers made with honey" (Exod. xvi. 31). But in Num. xxi. 5, they called it "light bread," and their soul "loathed it." Their memories of Egypt's fare had a resurrection, and hence their turning away from the bread from heaven. If the old desires of the flesh are not denied, not disallowed, then we will soon lose all enjoyment of Christ in the Word.

Let us rather "Desire the sincere milk of the Word, that we may grow thereby" (1 Pet. ii. 2). It is by its habitual use that Christians become "strong" (1 John ii. 14).

Thus, to our risen Lord's question in John xxi. 5, "Children, have ye any meat?" we may well reply, Yes, indeed! Christ is "meat indeed" (John vi. 55), and in the Holy Scriptures He this unfolded. Let us love that Word and daily use it, saying, "Lord, evermore give us this bread!" To feed on Christ as presented in the Word is to grow. J. F.

The Coming of the Lord.

AND THE EVENTS WHICH WILL FOLLOW.

WITH SOME NOTES ON THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

W. H. HUNTER.

HAVING received Antichrist as their Messiah, and entered into covenant with him, the many of Israel will openly own him as their deliverer. He, for his part, will covenant and agree to restore and to maintain for the prescribed period "the sacrifice and the oblation," and to establish "the Jews' religion" in Palestine, perhaps over a wider area, and that by imperial decree. Thus will be fulfilled at last the word spoken to the Jews so long ago, "*I am come in My Father's Name, and ye received Me not: if another shall come in his own name, him will ye receive*" (John v. 43).

It is argued that all this means that Antichrist must be a Jew. No doubt he will tell the Jews that he too is an Israelite, of the tribe of Judah, of the root and lineage of David; and will produce forged evidences which will convince them of the truth of his genealogical claims, for God will send them such strong delusion that they and others like unto them, who have rejected the truth, will believe any lie which the devil and his vanguard from the abyss may bring to them, or that the argument may well be unfounded and unreliable.

It appears to be clear that the first coming of Antichrist to earth (*i.e.*, his birth in the ordinary course of nature) must be (or have been) within the limits of what was once the Roman Empire; and that whatever the race or nationality

of the man may be, his origin must be sought amongst the kingdoms represented by the ten horns of the fourth beast: the place which he won for himself amongst these horns being again represented by the *little horn* before which three of the kingdoms, which were "partly strong and partly brittle," fell. We should therefore think of him at the first as insignificant and unimportant, as developing into a great conqueror, a devastator, a terror to his generation, and as ultimately going the way of all the unsaved of the earth down into the abyss, from which the devil shall recall him to the earth to which he had already been a curse.

In this and other weighty matters contained in the writings of the prophet, history has served to sharpen the lines of the prophetic pictures, and to place events in their true perspective; and then, as it is written, "we have gained fresh confirmation of the prophetic Word" (Prof. Moffat's translation of 2 Pet. i. 19).

The Reign of the Prince of Peace.

"Nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" Micah iv. 3).

The sword is sheathed!

The spear is flung aside;
The gathered hosts disband,
And scatter far and wide.

Man's blood no longer stains

The river's crystal tide,

The sky no longer rings

With shouts of human pride.

'Tis UNIVERSAL PEACE,

Each note of war has died;

The kingdoms all are His,

His strength the earth upstays,

His glory fills the heavens,

His Word the world obeys.

The Preacher's Column.

OUTLINES OF EVANGELISTIC SUBJECTS.

THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

A Propitiation (Rom. iii. 23), toward God.

A Peacemaking (Col. i. 20), with God.

A Purchase (Acts xx. 28) for God.

THE RESULTS OF THE CROSS

To all Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

A Ransom from Sin's Penalty (Matt. xx. 28).

Redemption from Sin's Power (Col. i. 14; Tit. ii. 14).

Reconciliation to God's Favour (Rom. v. 10; Col. i. 21).

THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT

In Connection with the Gospel of Christ.

In Conviction of the Sinner (John xvi. 8; Acts ii. 37).

In Regenerating the Believer (1 Thess. i. 5; John iii. 5).

In Indwelling the Son (Gal. iv. 6; Rom. viii. 14-16).

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Can it be affirmed that Ananias and Sapphira (Acts v.) were unconverted persons who had crept into the newly-formed church at Jerusalem, and that sudden death was part of their doom as hypocrites detected?

There is nothing in the narrative to warrant such a belief. This man and his wife had become part of the company of believers in Jerusalem, and in common with others had, as a result of the new life that had come in and the "one heart and one soul" that possessed them all, sold their property, and brought the proceeds to the apostles. There was no claim made that they should sell their land, or that half or whole of its price should be given up. It was their "own," as ver. 4 tells us, and they were free to do with it as they pleased. Their sin consisted in bringing half and saying they had brought the whole. It was hypocrisy, and that of a very common sort; they wanted to have the reputation for liberality at a low price. They "lied unto God" as Peter told them, and He brought retributive judgment upon them instantly, as later it came upon some in the church at Corinth gradually (1 Cor. xi. 30-32). There is much of such hypocrisy in our own day, the lips confessing in song and in testimony what the conscience and heart condemn as unreal. If God were dwelling and acting in power as He acted then, there would not be "young men" (ver. 10) enough found to carry forth the dead at the close of some popular

gatherings where "experiences" are recorded in "great swelling words" of self praise. The whole passage bears a message of solemn fact to those who are "in the church," and who are dealt with by God according to the profession they make. There are many of the "tragic deaths" of which we hear, that may be found, when all is revealed, to have been no "accident" as men speak, but a visitation of God in Fatherly judgment (1 Pet. i. 17; Heb. xii. 7).

Answers to Correspondents.

BREPHOS.—The words of Psa. cx. 1 and Matt. xxii. 14, are—"Till I make thine enemies Thy footstool"—not WHILE they are being so made. The work of the present age is that of "taking out" from the nations a people for Christ (Acts xv. 14) to be with Him in heavenly glory. The making of Christ's enemies a footstool for His feet is not a work of this age, or of grace, but to be effected by judgment in an age to come.

NOVA.—The passage in Gen. xlix. 24, does not teach that the Lord would come from Joseph's tribe—we know He was to spring from Judah (Mic. v. 2)—but that His glories would result from His sufferings as did Joseph's, who is a foreshadowing type of a rejected but glorified Christ.

A. L., CROMARTY.—The Gospel is to be "preached to every creature under heaven" (Col. ii. 23), and nothing that is taught in God's Word regarding Election or Predestination can make its message other than a genuine offer of salvation by grace to all (Tit. ii. 11). Preachers who entertain the notion that the Gospel has nothing in it for any save the elect, do not usually find many of them among their hearers. The man who, believing all that Scripture teaches about Election, goes forth with a Gospel which he believes has a message of personal, present salvation to every sinner on earth, and expects to see fruit of it in definite conversions to God, is the true evangelist. God raise up many of them.

PERPLEXED.—The confusion to which you refer comes of reading all the Bible as if it referred always to the same persons, and to the same periods. To fail in distinguishing "the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God" (1 Cor. x. 32), and the difference between ages and dispensations, with the principles which apply to each, is the chief cause of the "contradictory" statements that perplex you. "Rightly dividing the Word of

truth" (2 Tim. ii. 15), is a word of great value to all Bible readers.

D. G., DUBLIN.—It has always been Rome's greatest fear that her people should have and read the Bible. Her teaching is, that "The Catholic Rule of Faith is not merely the written Word of God, but the whole Word of God both written and unwritten; in other words, Scripture and tradition, and these propounded and explained by the Catholic Church." And part of the so-called Reformed Anglican Church is fast hastening along the same course, for one of her Canons has issued a book in which he says that the New Testament "is not the sort of book which is calculated to give people their first ideas of religion," and then he adds, "Our Lord intended that men should learn not from a book, but from persons." And these "persons" are to be of priestly class, for he warns against listening to "individual teachers," however able they may be. This is what is creeping in—in other circles, too, although perhaps more stealthily—and what would serve the devil's purpose well. For when people are ignorant of God's Word, they are open to receive any error that may be brought them. The business of all who preach and teach is, to lead their hearers to the Word of God, to search it daily like the noble Bereans (Acts xvii. 10), and thus stand assured that what they have and hold is the very truth of God. Ignorance of God's Word is the bane of our time.

Answers to Special Questions.

Those who teach that unwatchful and unfaithful Christians are to be left behind for some sort of penal punishment on earth, found their doctrine on the parable of the ten virgins, five of whom they say were, not unregenerate professors, as most evangelicals hold, but unwatchful saints. Can this be established from the Word?

ANSWER A.—It has first to be proved that the parable of the ten virgins has any reference to the coming of the Lord for His people, as it is taught in the Pauline Epistles at all. The "then" of verse 1, and the words of verse 13, "the Son of Man cometh," forbid its interpretation as representing events connected with the coming of the "Son from heaven" (1 Thess. i. 9), which is our hope. A. W.

ANSWER B.—It is never safe to build a doctrine on some details of a parable or a type. Grievous error is often supported and spread abroad among

the simple in this way. If the doctrine is clearly taught in plain language in other parts of the Word, it may well be illustrated in parable or foreshadowed in type, but parabolic language being capable of so varied interpretations, is not of itself sufficient to establish this theory. And the whole testimony of the New Testament contradicts it. There is not a hint that any living saint will be left, but that "We who are alive and remain"—not part of us—are to be "caught up together" with the dead in Christ (1 Thess. iv. 17), when the Lord comes. W. L.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—It has to be remembered that while the APPLICATION of such of the Lord's parables as the ten virgins in the preaching of the Gospel, and the warning of religious professors who have lamps without oil is quite allowable, the INTERPRETATION of them must be to those of whom the Lord was speaking. There is nothing in this chapter or in the one that precedes it concerning the Church. As the apostle informs us in Eph. iii. 2-9, the composition, calling, and destiny of the Church was a "mystery hid in God,"—and quite unheard of in times before the Cross—until it was revealed to him as its steward. A "mystery" in the language of the New Testament is not something unintelligible or too deep to be understood, but what lies hidden until the time has come for God to reveal it. As the inception of the Church was made known to Paul, so was its completion and removal from earth to heaven and the manner of it. "Behold I show you a MYSTERY" are the words in which he introduces the manner and character of the Lord's coming for His own. And there is not a word in it to give the slightest hint that any of His own will be left either for chastisement for unfaithfulness, or to undergo tribulation for unwatchfulness. "The dead in Christ" includes all who have passed from earth. "We who are alive and remain" all those who will be in mortal bodies when He comes. Whatever He has to say to us for lukewarmness He says here (Rev. iii. 19), and whatever any may suffer in loss it will be THERE (1 Cor. iii. 15), after being glorified, but not one will be left for judgment among the ungodly.

Practical Points in Assembly Matters.

Halls.—A clean, well-ventilated room or hall, in which those assembling are neither starved by cold nor overcome by heat, tends towards spiritual help, and keeps people from self-occupation during assemblies for worship and hearing of the Word

ministered. Comfortless conditions are very often allowed in halls, that would not be tolerated in homes for a day. This tells its own tale.

Welcoming.—A hearty handshake with a warm welcome at the door costs very little, but does much to make a stranger feel at home. At least two brethren fitted for such service, and in the confidence of the assembly, should devote themselves to this work. We know places where visitors and strangers go in and come out without a word being spoken to them by any. This is more likely to happen in larger assemblies where visitors are more frequent. But it is not a virtue.

Hospitality.—To “entertain strangers” (Heb. xiii. 2), and to “use hospitality one to another” (1 Pet. iv. 4), are apostolic injunctions to be obeyed. To invite a stranger to your home for rest and refreshment between meetings; to offer a passing fellow-saint a bed for the night; or even to give a cup of cold water to one because he “belongs to Christ” (Mark ix. 41), is well pleasing to God, and often leads to abiding friendship and spiritual blessing, while “in that day” it will not fail in its reward.

Visitation.—While there is no great difficulty in getting preachers to fill the platform of our larger halls, where a ready to hand audience may be counted upon, the common lack everywhere is that of pastoral work in its visitation aspect, calling on fellow-saints in their homes—not for gossip or tale-bearing—but for godly intercourse with a view to spiritual help. Far more can be done by a personal visit in the way of cheering those who are discouraged, helping those who are in trial, and restoring such as may be declining, than in any other way. To older brethren, not actively occupied in public ministry, this work is especially committed (1 Pet. v. 1, 3), and those who have the heart for it should begin personally, or with another, without waiting for any appointment or call. Where the work is done and its results appear, recognition on the part of the spiritual will not be wanting. We know some who in pairs make it their work to visit at least two or three households each week, with the definite object of giving spiritual help, and in general their visits are valued.

Gospel Work in a Country Village.

It may be a message of cheer to some of my fellow-workers in the Gospel, if I relate very briefly how the Lord led and blessed His Word in a distant

village and its surrounding rural country, during a winter of enforced restricted service for His Name. Things seemed very dark and dead. The two Presbyterian Churches were thinly attended, and their ministers spiritually dead. There was no hall or open door for the Gospel in the village. Jericho-like, everything seemed “straitly shut up.” A way was open to the throne of grace, and the few known believers who sighed and cried over the spiritual dearth, were got together to pray. The first result was a restored and revived condition in themselves—generally needed, yet often forgotten in prayer for revival. “Revive me” (Psa. cxxxviii. 71) must precede “Revive us” (Psa. lxxxv. 6), and then “Revive Thy work” (Hab. iii. 2) is God’s order. In answer to prayer, a cottage was opened for a Sunday evening meeting, and the first night over a dozen attended—a small beginning—but they were all “virgin soil,” and the Gospel in its simplicity, with the personal testimony of what it had done for the speakers, aroused interest. Meetings continued, interest deepened, conversions began, audiences grew. There is nothing like a few genuine conversions for bringing the people. And we had our first baptism before six weeks. Then the opposition began. The devil roared, the parsons warned the people against the new doctrine—great is the pity it was so “new”—and the “lewd fellows of the baser sort,” encouraged by the lead of the clerics—used mud, stones, and sods freely. But the Lord continued to bless; other and wider doors were opened, a farmer clearing his barn, and a grocer his store for the Sunday evening meetings, now larger and always growing. Bible Readings were begun to lead on those who had been converted, and to help older ones who had long been “hid among the stuff,” but now recovered, were hungering for the Word of Life. These continued on a week night for several months, and the visible result was an assembly of saved ones gathering in the Lord’s Name, outside of and clearly separate from the religion or the world. “Whereunto this may grow” the future will tell, but it was a great joy to us to see the old weapons had not lost their teeth nor the old Gospel its saving power to interest, arouse, attract, and save even in that dark and dead place over which the devil’s banner had floated undisturbed for long years. There are many such villages and hamlets within reach of those who have and can speak the Gospel, just waiting for the messenger of God with the message that the Spirit will use. W. G.

Under His Shadow.

THE BELIEVER'S PLACE OF SECURITY.

IN the richly expressive language of the ninety-first Psalm—"the shadow of the Almighty"—God All-sufficient—is a safe and a peaceful habitation for the trusting soul at all times, under all conditions. Dangers likened to "the arrow that flieth by day," while men are least expectant; "terrors by night," which we are unable to see or shield ourselves against; a "pestilence that walketh in twilight," like a robber seeking his prey; and "destruction that wasteth at noon-day," while all is bright, are all helpless to hurt the trusting, cleaving, confiding saint who "abides under the shadow of the Almighty," who is covered "with His feathers" (soft and downy is their covering!) and who in conscious need and weakness places his trust and finds his refuge "under the shadow of His wings." Sheltered there, protected by power that never fails, o'ershadowed by a care that never yields, watched by an eye that never sleeps, and embraced in a love that never grows cold, the saint is as safe while arrows fly and dangers thicken by day and night, as if he walked the streets of the Golden City, whose gates are never shut by day, for no lurking foe is there.

"Under His shadow," the trusting saint has rich experiences of the Lord's care, even when dangers surround and sorrows press. This is finely and fully expressed in the rich experience of the Psalms, which are just the experiences of the saints "under His shadow" to-day. In Psalm lvii. 1, where calamities threaten,

the language of the soul is, "In the shadow of Thy wings will I make my *Refuge*." and in this "strong habitation" (Psa. lxxi. 3), whereunto the soul "continually resorts," fear takes its flight, and peace—the very "peace of God"—garrisons the heart. And this abiding "under His shadow" has its satisfaction, as well as its security. So we read in Psalm xxxvi. 7-8, of those who "put their trust under the shadow of His wings," that "they shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness" of God's house, and that He shall make them to "drink of the rivers of His pleasures." His peace and His pleasures they share. And their joy is not wanting, for the cleaving, confiding soul goes on to say, "In the shadow of Thy wings will I rejoice" (Psa. lxiii. 7). Then the climax of this sheltered, satisfied, rejoicing soul's experience is reached in the mystic language of the Song of Songs, where the record reads, "I sat down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste" (Song ii. 2). For it is not only in life's hours of danger and distress, in its nights of fear and noontides of uncertainty, that the trusting soul seeks the shelter of "His shadow," but in the full sunlight of its peace and prosperity, when all is bright. "Under His shadow," yields its "great delight" to the Christ-filled heart. So may we each experimentally find Him, hiding, trusting, sitting "Under His shadow," as one of earlier years sang—

"The Spring and Source of all my joys,
The life of my delights,
The glory of my brightest days,
The comfort of my nights."

J. R.

A Worshipper and a Workman.

THE highest privilege of the Christian here on earth is, to draw near to God as His *Worshipper*, to enter into the holiest as a cleansed and anointed *Priest* "to offer up the sacrifice of praise" to God (Heb. xiii. 15), "giving thanks unto His Name." Yet how few seem to appreciate the privilege and use the fitness thus conferred by God. Like the ten cleansed lepers of Luke xvii. 14-15, the greater number who profess to know that they have been washed from their sins in the blood of Christ, and made priests unto God (Rev. i. 5), return to their old religion, and become lost to God as worshippers, in its meshes. To hear a sermon and "get a blessing" is the highest ideal of such Christians. And if they happen to sit under an evangelical or Scriptural ministry, and get enough out of it to keep them alive, they are quite satisfied to sit mute while another—and he not always the best fitted either spiritually or intelligently—expresses the worship of the whole. This is far away from the pattern of a Christian church or assembly of "purged worshippers," as it is given in the Word, and as it ought to be found among the saints. To virtually disown the priesthood conferred upon them by God, to quench the Spirit who is in the believer and in the church to give effect to it, and to exalt one man into a place to which God has not called him or the Word instructed him to take, is, to say the least of it, great presumption, and in practice involves the questioning of the Divine wisdom in ordering the worship

of His people as He has in His Word. And this neglect of the holy privilege of being a worshipper of God in person and in company, results in serious loss to the Christian as a *Workman*, for it is in thus drawing nigh to God as a worshipper that the right spiritual condition is sustained to go forth in the appointed path of service, "always abounding in the work of the Lord" (1 Cor. xv. 58). There may be no lack of effort, no apparent decline in energy, but the quality of the service is not according to its quantity. It lacks the spiritual power and freshness that comes of close acquaintance with God. The holy unction, which is the secret of all fruitful service, is felt to be lacking, even if the ministry is sound in doctrine. The "dew" that revives, and the "breath" that gives life is not there. And no amount of zeal or wrought up fervour "like unto that" (Exod. xxx. 38) makes up for the deficiency. The priest of old had his sphere within as a *Worshipper*, the Levite without as a *Workman*, and the Christian has both. But his spiritual strength in service without, is ever conditioned by the measure of his acquaintance with God in communion with Him within, and his service can never be of any abiding value to God or of real blessing to men, where the spirit of the true worshipper declines and work becomes the chief thing. The drift of our time is largely in this direction, and no doubt the enemy would have it so. For well he knows, if God is robbed of His worship, our work will be of little value in His sight, and its results will be void of blessing to men.

G. W. A.

Balaam and His Parables.

Read Numbers, Chapters xxii. to xxv.
W. J. M'CLURE, CALIFORNIA.

OF all the enemies that crossed the path of Israel on their journey to the land of Canaan, Balaam is the most remarkable. And but for the notices which the Holy Spirit gives us in 2 Pet. ii. 15, 16; Jude 11; and Rev. ii. 14, of this man, we should be left to wonder if he did not know the Lord. His claim to intimacy with God, the appearance at least, of desire to be controlled by God with the knowledge of His mind, as seen in the many beautiful things which he says of Israel, would be calculated to perplex us. But from these New Testament Scriptures it is clearly made manifest that he was an enemy of God's people of no ordinary type, whose Satanic subtilty cost Israel dear.

In Numbers chap. xxii. 8, when the princes, sent by Balak, king of Moab, come to get him to accompany them that he may curse Israel, he says to them, "Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again as the Lord will speak unto me." In verse 9 we read that "God came unto him." Again and again in speaking to the princes in Midian, Balaam uses the words, "Lord" and "Lord God." But God seems to have ignored them, for they imply a relationship that *did not* exist between Him and Balaam. Just here, I would turn to a Scripture which will illustrate what I mean, showing how these words, "Lord" and "God," are used. We read in 2 Chron. xviii. 31, "And it came to pass when the captains

of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat that they said, it is the king of Israel. Therefore they compassed him about to fight, but Jehoshaphat cried out and the Lord helped him, and God moved them to depart from him." Note, *The "LORD" helped him* and "*GOD" moved them*. Jehoshaphat was in covenant relationship with God, as his Lord or Jehovah, and He acts for him as such, even though he is then in a sad state of departure. But toward those Gentiles He can only act as God, the moral Governor of the world.

Had there been in Balaam a real desire to obey God in the matter, he would have broken off all further negotiations with the elders of Midian after God had said, "Thou shalt *not* go with them" (xxii. 12). But the gold of Balak had its great attraction for Balaam. He "loved the wages of unrighteousness" (2 Pet. ii. 15). In verse 20, God says to him, "If the men come to call thee, rise up and go with them." He thus tests the man, and it would seem that without waiting for the men to call him again, he jumps at the chance to go. On the way, the angel of God met him and would have killed him, but for the ass refusing to go forward. When his eyes were opened to see the angel of the Lord, he says, "I have sinned, for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me: now, therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again" (verse 34). Well he knew that it had "displeased" the Lord. But in judgment he is now to be allowed to pursue the path he wishes to follow. So in verse 35 he is told to "go with the men." It is a solemn truth, and one taught in many

other parts of the Word of God, that men are given up to believe and practise, that which they have set their hearts upon. The reins are thrown upon Balaam's neck, and he goes ahead to his doom. The gold and the honours of Balak, which have so captivated him, the price of his soul, are his only for a short time. In chapter xxxi. 8 we see that he falls in battle with the kings of Midian, the enemies of that very Israel concerning whom he had said so many grand things.

This is the end of the man who gave expression to those words, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." If, when he uttered these words he was thinking of Jacob's death, as we have it recorded in Gen. xlix.—and we believe he was,—what a contrast then the two death-scenes present. In Gen. xlix. Jacob passes away in the midst of his children. In the energy of faith, which never appeared so grand as it did then, he tells them what is ahead of them, speaking in prophetic strains of things, some of which are yet in the future. And when he has said all that he has to say, he falls asleep. All is calm and peaceful. Jacob's had been a very chequered life, full of troubles, which grew out of his own faithless scheming and lack of confidence in God. But there was one thing about Jacob which ever and anon would reveal itself in spite of all his inconsistencies: *he knew God*. He could go back to a time when God met him at Bethel. And now, at the close of life, this is seen as never before. His death reminds one of the sun setting in splendour in a cloudless sky after a day of storms.

Man's Sin :

ITS ORIGIN, NATURE, AND JUDGMENT.

BY THE EDITOR.

SIR OLIVER LODGE, a noted Scientist, and recently a confessed Spiritualist, has declared that intelligent men of to-day do not think about sin. Perhaps not. But God thinks about it, and He has told us what His thoughts about it are, in His holy Word. It is not man's intelligence, but his folly, that turns away from God's estimate of sin, or seeks to ignore it. The intelligent man does not shut his eyes to facts, he honestly faces them. But the heart "hardened by the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. iii. 13), and the mind "blinded by the god of this age" (2 Cor. iv. 4, R.V.), turns from the light of God to grope in darkness, while it boasts of superior knowledge and makes high claim to increase of light.

HUMAN ESTIMATES OF SIN.

Among the criminal classes, sin is but another word for crime. To be out of the hands of the police is in their estimation to be "good." With the moral, sin is any departure in open act from the standard of rectitude accepted among them. In religious circles this standard includes some reference to churchgoing, Sabbath-keeping, and humanitarian works, but in few cases is sin now estimated according to the line and plummet of God's Word. The whole trend of man's reasoning is to leave God, His character and His claims, out of reckoning in everything, lowering the standard to suit man's perverted taste, and to meet the thoughts of his darkened mind. So now we have it as

the dictum of our philosophers, that the Fall is "a fable," sin "the underside of good," hell "a doctrine of the dark ages," and punishment, if any, only a natural law, and a discipline for a "nobler life" in the after-world.

SIN IN GOD'S LIGHT.

When we turn to the Word of God we learn what sin is, not as men regard it, but as God knows and describes it, sin as it is viewed by Him who is Light, and "who searcheth all hearts and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts" (1 Chron. xxviii. 9). It is when sin is thus viewed in God's light, and in reference to His throne, that it comes to be seen as "exceeding sinful" (Rom. vii. 13). The work of the Spirit in this age of Gospel grace is to produce this conviction among men (John xvi. 8), and He uses the preaching of the Word to effect it (Acts ii. 37; vii. 54). The conscience answers to the Word, and where the will bows to God's verdict (Rom. iii. 19), the lips confess "I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke v. 8). Where the preaching fails to lead the sinner into God's estimate of sin, conversions are rare, and shallow professions plentiful. A present time want is, a race of evangelists who, having God's thoughts of sin, will so preach that sinners will be deeply convicted, and led to accept God's judgment upon themselves. Then there will be no lack of open ears and hearts to the Gospel, which after all is, as a scoffer characterised it, "good news only to a bad conscience"—a conscience awakened to a sense of sin, and accepting the judgment of God against it.

THE ORIGIN OF SIN.

Scripture is silent regarding the origin of evil, and speculation on things concerning which God has not spoken (Deut. xxix. 29) is irreverent. But He has told us that the mystery of sin is older than the history of man. We read in 2 Peter ii. 4, of "the angels that sinned," and Jude tells us that "they kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation" (ver. 6, R.V.). They exercised their will apart from God, in independence of Him, seeking a higher sphere than that to which He had appointed them, saying in their hearts, "I will exalt, I will ascend, I will be like the most High" (Isa. xiv. 13, 14). Thus they left their "proper habitation," the sphere to which God had appointed them, and for this they lost their "principality." This is the origin of sin so far as Scripture records it. It was rebellion against God, at their own volition. Adam fell by responding to the devil's temptation from without, but here we have the origination of sin from within. The story of the Fall in Gen. iii. is solemn fact and history, and its result is with us to-day in a race estranged from God, separated from Him by sin (Isa. lix. 2), rebels against His throne, and loving to have it so. This does not mean that all are "vicious" and openly degraded, far from it. Saul of Tarsus as a Pharisee could honestly say he had "lived in all good conscience" (Acts xxiii. 1), and that "touching the righteousness of the law" he was "blameless" (Phil. iii. 6). But when the light of heaven shone into his soul, he discovered that he was the very "chief of sinners."

The Church and the World.

NOTE OF AN ADDRESS BY J. G. BELLETT.

THE Scripture surely tells us that the great civil and ecclesiastical systems of the world will advance in strength and magnificence, as the hour of their judgment approaches. This is clearly shown in the "sure Word of prophecy," concerning the civil power, or the *Beast* in Rev. xiii., xix., and the ecclesiastical power in its final stage, as represented by the *Woman* in Rev. xviii. The pledges of these things are already with us, as even the least observant must know. All is on the high road to apostasy in full display, and to the conditions which, according to God, are to precede their judgment. This I own is very plain to me. And as the apostate world is to be in its full glory and strength when its judgment is at the door, so will the church, or that which belongs to God and Christ in the world, be found in its weakness, when the deliverance which He is to bring is at hand. She will pass from her ruins and weakness here to her glory there, while the proud world goes from its greatness to its doom. For the way of the Lord ever has been to abase the proud and to exalt those that are cast down. There is no promise in the New Testament that the church will recover her original beauty and glory, ere her translation comes. The candlesticks in Revelation, chapters ii. and iii., are visited by the Lord in judgment, discovering to them their state as He "whose eyes are as a flame of fire" knows it, and as far as we know them here on earth, there the churches are left. There is no

hint of a restoration to better conditions, or of corporate strength and beauty. But the place of judgment proves itself to be next door to the place of glory (Rev. iv.). This gives no license for relaxation, or lightly holding of the truth of the Word. The saints are to be separate from evil and apart from vessels to dishonour, while they follow righteousness and cherish the graces that become them, with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart (2 Tim. ii.). All this I surely know and own. But I say with all assurance that there is no restoration to church or corporate strength as at the beginning contemplated or promised in the Word. Judgment has already begun at the house of God, and its present ruins witness that judgment. This is strange to the religion of nature, but faith understands it, and is comforted in it. And its effect should surely be to keep the saints of God apart from the purposes and expectations of the world, "looking for that blessed hope," the return of the Lord, whose voice will call them from the place of their weakness to the presence of His glory, while the world is left to ripen in its guilt, and reach the height of its pride and greatness which precedes its judgment and its doom. As I have said, the pledges of these things are already here. The weakness and divided condition of the saints of God, is too well known to need proof. But the Lord will not fail to bring the "many sons" entrusted to His care by the Father, "to glory." Nor will He fail, as the Executor of the Divine judgment, to suddenly bring to nought the pride of the world.

Truth in Due Proportion.

THERE is with some who minister the Word, a sentimental idea, that the children of God should always be fed on the higher truths of the Scriptures, such as the glories of Christ, the heavenly calling of the Christian, the privileges of the saints as children of the Father, and the possessions they have as those who are "in Christ." But if these and kindred truths are constantly the subjects of ministry, while the responsibilities and duties of the people of God are scarcely mentioned, the result will be Antinomianism, with a carelessness regarding outward life among men which becomes a stumbling-block to others, and a scandal to Christianity. It is a grave question with many who have the best opportunity of judging, whether the lack of spiritual power and the unspiritual lives of many who claim to have the enjoyment of high truth, is not the result of those who preach and teach failing to rightly divide the Word of truth. There has been and is a lack of due proportion in general ministry, the practical side of God's truth not being given in the same proportion as we find it in the Word. The Epistle to the Ephesians—which consists of six chapters—sets the believer in the highest place of privilege and possession that the Word reveals; in Christ, in the heavenlies, in the body of Christ, sealed and indwelt by the Spirit, to be presented without spot "the church glorious" at His coming. Yet in this same Epistle the saints are told not to walk in vanity, not to tell lies, not to steal, not to speak evil of one another,

not to indulge filthiness nor foolish talking, not to have fellowship with evildoers. As husbands, wives, parents, children, masters, and servants, these saints of the heavenly calling are each appointed their earthly spheres, and the way of godly living in them. Elsewhere, they are taught not to be in debt (Rom. xiii. 8), not to eat and drink for self-gratification only (Rom. xiv. 15, 20); to provide things honest in the sight of all, to work with their hands, to pay their taxes, and not to defraud each other. These matter of fact subjects, taken up and faithfully pressed home on the consciences of saints, might thin the numbers—for it is certain that there are those who would resent it, and say it was too personal, or not in season—but such ministry would bring about a healthier condition among all who want to be right with God, and to go by His Word in all their ways. It is not what pleases that always profits; nor is it always that which is "appreciated"—as the word is—that sanctifies and edifies—for much only appeals to the intellect or the feelings, but leaves the conscience unsearched. Worldly Christians in unscriptural positions, engrossed in money-making, unequally yoked with the ungodly in corporations and companies where their identity is hid, can "enjoy" what does not disturb their consciences, but they will not have or hear "wholesome words," such as they most need and as God would have them hear. Such are no credit to the faith they profess, nor will they ever be, until they get a thoroughly humbling and cleansing by the action of the Word. W. R.

The Coming of the Lord.

AND THE EVENTS WHICH WILL FOLLOW.

WITH SOME NOTES ON THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

BY THE LATE W. H. HUNTER.

THE developments of the period of forty and two months during which the beast will be enabled to do and to dominate, will be accelerated in pace and increased in extent by the advent of a second beast, whose rising will be "out of the earth," instead of "out of the sea;" the change in the place of origin indicating apparently that the false prophet, the high priest of the Antichrist cult, will be a man brought out from amongst the living, and not from amongst the dead; a man of power and influence who had made himself the head of a great political and religious organisation, which had been disciplined and consolidated under his hegemony. His coming will be opportune, one of the heads of the beast, one of the sectors of his empire will have suffered sudden and distinctive attack from some unsuspected source, and had been "wounded unto death;" so that the prestige of the beast had been shaken, his power tottered, as it appeared as if even he had received a deadly wound, one from which there could be no recovery. But, marvel of marvels, the wound was healed, and all the world wondered after the beast and worshipped the devil, to whom his recovery was due.

Apparently it will be this astonishing recovery which will lead the second beast to yield allegiance to Antichrist, and to join forces with him as a henchman instead of a rival, a priest instead of a

competitive Christ. Who will this man be? From whence will he originate? Of what system will he be the great effective head?

The second vision of Daniel furnishes an indication of what the answer to these questions may be.

That vision occurred about two years after the first vision of the four great world empires: it related to the doings and to the fate of two out of these four great powers, and it was followed by an explanation, in fact, of the significance thereof.

Daniel saw the Medo-Persian monarchy spreading like a green bay tree to the west, from whence its destruction was coming, and to the north, and to the south. He saw likewise the amazing progress of a youthful conqueror whose like (with one exception), has never been seen amongst men; that is to say, he beheld Alexander the Great coming from the west (334 B.C.), crossing the Dardanelles when he was twenty-two years of age, dealing blow after blow to the Persian power, until he completed the destruction of that power and stood over it as a victor (331 B.C.). Three years had sufficed for the obliteration of an Empire which had appeared to be invincible, and the hand which laid it low was that of a lad of twenty-five! Eight years later he died at Babylon: of drink some say, probably Persian slaves spread that tale; of poison as others think. He left a son, but not a successor. Had there been a worthy successor, God alone knows where the limits of the third world empire would have been found. As it was, amongst

the results of Alexander's meteoric career was one which helped mightily in later days in the preaching of the Gospel of the grace of God to the Gentiles, for he spread the knowledge of the Greek tongue, which he spoke, and of Greek literature, in which he delighted, over a great part of the Eastern world, including the part in which the Apostle of the Gentiles afterwards moved and worked. Alexander's death was followed by confusion, treachery, and fierce strife, out of which four Greek-ruled kingdoms emerged (about the year 306 B.C.), one of which was European and unimportant; one straddled the Bosphorus, and was partly European and partly Asiatic; the third was partly Asiatic and partly African; while the fourth and greatest was a purely Asiatic dominion.

It will be with the two last kingdoms of the four that we will have to do here. The third, or African monarchy, for a time held dominion in the Holy Land. It was known as the Ptolemaic kingdom of Egypt, and generally treated the Jews well and fairly. The fourth, or purely Asiatic kingdom, was known as the Seleucia kingdom of Syria, and having wrested Palestine from the hands of their neighbours the Ptolemies of Egypt, for a while dealt with the Jews with clemency and justice, but afterwards developed under one prince particularly (who became a type and foreshadow of the false prophet), a grinding tyranny under which the remnant of Israel was crushed beneath his heel in unspeakable horrors, until, in the compassion of God, a little people who knew their God was raised up, were

made strong, and did exploits, until the hateful yoke was broken off the neck of the remnant, and liberty for the service and worship of their God was restored unto them. Thus quickly do events move in the great dramas of the world-powers which man, in his pride, imagines he effects, but which, as we know, is overruled by "the Most High" who ruleth in the kingdom of men" (Dan. iv. 25).

The Perfect Will of God.

1 Thess. v. 18.

"THIS is God's will concerning you,"
Repeat it day by day,
When things look bright, when things look dark,
'Mid good or ill, always;
If you are in the Father's care,
If subject to His will,
He orders all that comes to you,
So trusting Him, be still.

"This is God's will concerning you,"
The trial and the cross;
The joy, the gladness, peace and rest,
The daily pain and loss;
The bitter and the sweet as well,
The cloud, the bright sunshine,
Through all of these the Father's voice
Keeps saying, "Thou art mine."

Oh, let us see God's hand in all,
And trace His ways in grace;
Knowing that nothing blindly comes
To those who seek His face;
The trial polisheth the gold,
Each stroke the diamond's face;
The sunshine ripens fast the fruit,
And fits it for its place.

"This is God's will concerning you,"
Strange that it should be so;
You may not understand at all,
You may not see, or know;
But whether dark or light the path,
Or long and steep the way,
The joyful confidence is this,
It leads to perfect day.

The Preacher's Column.

OUTLINES OF EVANGELISTIC ADDRESSES.

A UNIVERSAL CALL.

- "All men everywhere" to Repent (Acts xvii. 30).
 "Every Creature under heaven" to Hear (Col. i. 23).
 "Every one that thirsteth" to Drink (Isa. lv. 1).
 1. No respect of persons with God.
 2. No distinction in the message from God.
 3. No restriction to the free gift of God.

CHRIST SEEKING SINNERS

(Luke xix. 10).

- The Fishermen of Galilee on the Lake (Mark i. 16).
 The Samaritan Woman at the Well (John iv. 16).
 The Taxgatherer of Jericho in a Tree (Luke xix. 2).
 The Madman of Gadara in the Tombs (Mark v. 1).
 1. Moral men at their employment.
 2. An Abandoned Woman in her sin.
 3. A Disreputable Man in hiding.
 4. A Demonised Man in distress.

NOTES ON BIBLE READINGS AND STUDIES.

WITH CHRIST.

- With Christ in Death (Gal. ii. 20).
 With Christ in Resurrection (Col. iii. 1).
 With Christ in Suffering (Rom. viii. 17).
 With Christ in Glory (John xvii. 24).

CERTAINTIES IN JOHN'S GOSPEL.

True of all that Believe.

- Shall not (never) perish (chap. iii. 16; x. 28).
 Shall not come into judgment (chap. v. 24).
 Shall not be plucked from Christ (chap. x. 28).
 Shall never thirst again (chap. iv. 14).
 Shall not walk in darkness (chap. viii. 12).
 Shall never die (chap. xi. 26).

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Three young men of the assembly here, have been working in an All-sectarian Mission carried on by some of our leading brethren and a number of evangelicals from the various denominations. In this connexion, the three young brethren have heard and apparently accepted Dr. Bullinger's views that neither Baptism nor the Breaking of Bread, belong to the present dispensation, with the result that they have left the assembly. Ought there not to be warning given in ministry of the Word, and especially by elder brethren in the assembly, of the danger of such mixed associations, in which all sorts of erroneous doctrines are held and disseminated privately and in pamphlets?

Certainly; but if those who take the place of leaders and teachers are "chief in this trespass" (Ezra ix. 2), you need not expect them to "sound an alarm." Most of them are too busily engaged seeking to justify their ways in mixing with sectarian movements by watering down the truth of God that separates those who obey it from these associations in which all sorts of erroneous doctrines are allowed, and those that hold them recognised as fit to teach others. The only remedy known to us is the wholesome ministry of God's Word dealing with these matters, which will preserve those who are willing to walk according to the will of God in such things, and recover others who are led astray in ignorance. But such ministry will be sure to arouse opposition from such as do not want those whom they rule over to hear what would enlighten and set them free. It is, nevertheless, the responsibility of those who know and love the truth to give it out graciously and wisely, leaving the issues in God's keeping. 'All-sectarian Missions' are very popular, with some, and we are asked by such to believe that although one sect with its pet doctrine cannot be defended as Scriptural, six or more in combination, with all their errors retained, may be patronised and accompanied with at will.

Answers to Correspondents.

INQUIRER.—You seem to be far too much occupied with what men say and write, and too little with What saith the Word of the Lord? Our advice to you is, Get to your knees and to your Bible, and allow God to speak to you, and make you "know the *certainty* of the words of truth" (Prov. xxii. 21). Then you will no longer be "tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Eph. iv. 14) as you evidently are.

A. G.—The *ignorance* of superstition which prejudices the mind may hinder people from coming to hear the truth, but by far the greatest hindrance is the *inconsistency* of those who profess to hold it. If the life commend what the lips confess, and the conduct adorn the doctrine held, there will be at least some attracted to inquire about it. But when men who profess to be "heavenly" in calling and "crucified to the world," are found in the world's picture palaces, and running after its follies, they deny in life what they confess with the lips. The only remedy is to bring the sledge hammer of the Word down with full force on these practices. This will either effect a cure or oblige a silence,

possibly a separation, which would be no spiritual loss to those seeking to walk with God and to live according to His Word.

G. S., THORNLIBANK.—The Epistle to the Hebrews teaches that the High Priesthood of the Lord Jesus is a *present* ministry (see chap. iv. 14-16; vii. 24, 25; x. 20, 21) toward His people here on earth. but His Kingship is still future. He is nowhere said to be "King of the church," nor of "the nations," in this age. State Church Christians have much to say of the former, and those who dabble in politics of the latter, but the saint, who knows his place with a rejected Christ on earth, passes on as a pilgrim, proving His faithfulness as Shepherd and His sympathy and succour as Great High Priest.

A. N., FRANCE.—There is abundant evidence in the Word as to the efficacy of prayer to avert calamity and to withhold judgment even when pronounced. The doom of Sodom was decreed by God, yet to praying Abraham the word was given, that if ten righteous men were found among its people, for their sake the city would be spared (Gen. xviii. 26). King Hezekiah was warned of his approaching death, yet, in answer to his prayer, fifteen years were added to his life (Isa. xxxviii. 1-5). Let unbelievers cavil and reasoners express their doubts, but faith lays hold on God, makes known its requests to Him, and leaves the issue in His hands.

Notes on Current Topics.

Gospellers.—So many of our young men have been called to National Service within recent months, that most assemblies are denuded of their most active Gospellers. Older men must come to the front and give what help they can. And Christian women can surely do much to help in inviting, and bringing their neighbours under the Gospel's sound, as well as in visitation and tract-distribution, keeping the wheels in motion till the lads return.

Ministry.—There is in many hearts and homes much anxiety and sorrow which surely should call forth a ministry of comfort and consolation with what will encourage confidence in God in this time of distress. Dry, doctrinal disquisitions are not of much use at any time to uplift the soul and bring more of God into the life. And they are worse than useless as a ministry of grace and comfort to careworn and downcast saints passing through the valley of Baca.

Better or Worse.—We notice in coming into contact with Christian young men who have been in Army training, and in some cases on the battlefields, that some of them are in better spiritual condition than before they left their homes. Being cast upon God for grace to live as Christians ought in their changed surroundings, they are proving His sufficiency and cleaving to His Word more than before. But there are others who either never had the life of God in them, or were so propped up by others, that when the hour of trial came, they did not stand up under it, and are now so like unto the ungodly in their ways, that it is impossible to tell whether they belong to Christ or not.

Hospital Work.—When these and others return—as God grant they may—to their homes, to resume civilian life, there will be a good deal of what the late Henry Dyer called "hospital work" among them. There will be much to heal, and some "amputations" to make: for habits acquired that hurt the soul do not always fall off like Autumn leaves; they need to be firmly but graciously dealt with. The success of these healings and restorations will depend on the spiritual discernment and condition of those who have to deal with them. And if assemblies are not in a warm and hospitable state for the welcoming and help of those returning fellow-saints who have been like men in strange surroundings, many of them will be in danger of straying and becoming backsliders, or of drifting into unscriptural circles where more geniality of its kind is shown them. It is high time we were setting our house in order, in view of these conditions and have the grace to deal with them according to God, when they arise.

Questions Requiring Answers.

The fellowship of all who are fitted to give brief Scriptural answers to these questions, which exercise many hearts, will be esteemed, subject to the rule that they are for general edification.

The Lord's Poor.—Is it the responsibility of a local assembly of Christians to support the aged poor in its midst, and, if so, in what way ought this to be done?

Ordaining Elders.—It is being taught pretty widely, that some sort of ordination is necessary to give status to those who act as overseers or "elders" in the local assembly. Is there anything in the Word to support this?

Church Discipline.—Should cases of Christians going astray, which do not call for excommunication, be brought before the assembly, or dealt with privately by those who shepherd the flock?

Falling Asleep of W. H. Hunter, of Manchester.

Month after month of late, we have had to record the passing of beloved and faithful brethren in Christ, who have long "ministered to the Lord" and served His people. It falls to us now to record the home-call of our esteemed helper, **William Henry Hunter**, of Manchester, who fell asleep at his residence, Bank House, Woodley, Cheshire, on February 27, in his 68th year. Born in the city of Cork, Ireland, in 1849, his youth was spent in England, being educated on Tyneside. Then as a young engineer he began his professional career in Lancashire, where his ability and experience in civil engineering raised him to the position of assistant to Sir Edward Leader Williams in the planning and construction of the Manchester Ship Canal, subsequently taking the place of his chief, in which he continued for some ten years, afterwards becoming consulting engineer to the company, a post which he held up to the time of his death. While yet a young man of twenty-two, he came under the preaching of Henry Grattan Guinness, of Dublin, in the days when in a flame of evangelistic zeal, he was passing through the three kingdoms preaching with remarkable power and great spiritual results. He then learned his need of a Saviour, and by means of the words, "Then Pilate therefore took Jesus and scourged Him," the Spirit so brought the sufferings of the Lord before his awakened and sin-burdened soul that he was able to say, "The Son of God who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20). From that hour, his face was set heavenward, and the language of his heart, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" He found his place as taught by the Word in fellowship with a company of believers gathering in the Name of the Lord alone, outside of all denominations, having the Word as their guide, and in this position he "continued stedfastly" all the years. In Northwich his ministry was much valued, and on his removal to Manchester, he was with the saints in Warwick Street Gospel Hall, Bright Hall, Eccles, and for the last few years in Stockport, the nearest assembly to his home. His devotion to the service of the Lord's people, in whose midst he served, was remarkable. Even in his busiest years, and often when just off a long journey, he was present at the week night meetings, giving what help he could. His wider ministry at Conferences in many parts, and in taking up a series of meetings for exposition of the Word in various towns, were much used in

blessing to God's people. His addresses during the winter months on a week night in a central hall in Manchester, were a source of great blessing to many, and his writings, as they have appeared in these pages for many years, have given help and instruction and blessing to a wider circle than his voice ever reached. We had much in common with our esteemed brother, whose friendship and goodly counsel we enjoyed for well over thirty years. We are glad to say that there is still a number of his papers in our hands, which we hope to continue in these pages, and by means of which he will minister to us still. It was our departed brother's lot to endure a more than ordinary measure of the sorrows of life in the loss of loved ones, but his confidence in God sustained him in the midst of his trials, and kept him from murmuring. For the last few months his health was manifestly failing, but the end was peace. While consciousness remained his thoughts were toward the Lord and His people, and his desire was that, if his life was to be prolonged, he might through grace be helped to serve the Lord in ministering to His people and in preaching His Gospel. But his service here had been fulfilled, his warfare completed, and his course finished, so he passed to his rest with Christ in perfect peace. His body was laid to rest in Stockport Cemetery, where Mr. G. F. Oulton Lee, of Liverpool, conducted an impressive service at the graveside, giving a brief account of Mr. Hunter's conversion and his course, to those who stood around, which included many influential gentlemen connected with the staff of the Ship Canal and public bodies in Manchester, with representative local brethren from many assemblies. Our prayerful sympathies will go forth to the widow, her son, and two daughters, and to his daughter-in-law—the widow of his son Leycester, who died less than two years ago—and her two young children, who mourn his loss. May the remembrance of those who "have spoken to us the Word of God," "whose manner of life" we have seen and known, gird us anew for godly walk and faithful service, while we wait for that hour in which those who have gone before and we who remain shall be found together around Him who loved us unto death. As one and another of those who have long and honourably served the Lord in spreading the Gospel and ministering the Word among us are called to their rest, and so far as we see, few are being raised up to fill the empty places.

Grace for All the Days.

TO the heavenbound pilgrim grace in its plentitude is promised for all the way. There is no stage of the journey, no aspect of Christian life on earth, in which its sufficiency may not be proved and its continuous flow enjoyed in the soul of the saint. It was by "the grace of God" (Tit. ii. 11) that salvation came to us at first in our low and lost estate as sinners. And when we stood convicted, yet confiding, before the Cross, it was grace that "justified us freely" (Rom. iii. 24), and saving us (Eph. ii. 8) from what we were, brought us into a new relationship with God, in which He richly bestowed His grace upon us "in the Beloved" (Eph. i. 6). Nor was this all, for He then made us "to stand"—He "set us," as the word is (Rom. v. 2) in grace, henceforth to be dealt with as a people so standing before Him, and trained therein unto godly and righteous living (Tit. ii. 12) among the sons of men. In this new standing, while being instructed and trained unto life and ways as becometh saints, "grace and peace" breathes in all the words of teaching, counsel, and guidance given to us as to "all saints" (see the salutations in the Epistles, Eph. i. 2; Phil. i. 2; Col. i. 2; Thess. i. 1). It is in the atmosphere of this benign favour of God and its gifts, that the lives of the saints are to be lived on earth. They are exhorted to "continue in the grace of God" (Acts xiii. 43), to hold it fast (Heb. xii. 27), allowing neither legality nor license to deprive them of its daily enjoyment. It is "in grace" that they are

to grow as plant in soil (2 Pet. iii. 18), and their responsibility is to see that this grace is not bestowed upon them by God "in vain" (1 Cor. xv. 10)—that is without making a worthy response to it in their lives. When great demands are made upon them in service to meet the need of others, there is to be no stint in the measure of our doing or giving, for the whole fulness of God in grace is at our disposal and we are reminded in this connexion that "God is able to make all grace abound, that we, always having all-sufficiency in all things, may abound—the word is so God-like—unto every good work" (2 Cor. ix. 8). In the hour of faith's trial, when all that is of Nature fails us, when all the powers of darkness seem to be unchained, and the very messengers of Satan beat and buffet the soul, when to the praying heart the very heavens seem to be silent, and no arm is outstretched to deliver, then the Word comes in due season, "My grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Cor. xii. 9), and the soul quieted as a weaned child, learns that grace enables it to bear and suffer as well as to soar and sing. Yes, blessed be God, there is a plentitude for all possible conditions in which it is possible for the saints to be. And this grace comes to them like the waves of the sea, wave succeeding wave, "grace upon grace" (John i. 17), as need and occasion arise. The world has its sorrows for the people of God, but they have their resources in Himself. In life's darkest days the Lord is their light and they have the bright and blessed assurance that what grace is bestowing will be crowned with glory.

Reviving and Refreshing.

THAT the present dispensation will end in judgment from heaven upon man's lawlessness and ripened iniquity, and not in a millennium of world-wide righteousness and peace as men have dreamed, is clearly taught in the Word of God. That the profession of Christianity will become more and more corrupt until the righteous Lord, whose Name it bears, will utterly reject it and spue it from His mouth (Rev. iii. 16) in disgust, is His own forewarning to all who, while boasting in their attainments, keep Him outside their door in all but Name. But this does not bar the way for God to give revival and restoration of soul to His own, who while *in* the world are not *of* the world (John xvii. 16), if they seek His face and bring His Word to bear upon their ways to prepare them for it. There is no promise given that the Church will ever be restored to primitive purity, unity, and power—none whatever. All who have set forth on such a path of false hopes have been disappointed, and ever will be. It is not God's way to restore to its first estate that which has fallen by its own hand, and drifted from God's Word and way according to its own choice. But it is His way to "revive the spirit of the humble and revive the heart of the contrite" (Isa. lvii. 15), and in this alone lies our hope of blessing in these last toils of the age in which we live. The Word is true to faith at all times and under all conditions. "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My Word" (Isa.

lxvi. 2). The eyes of the Lord will be toward all such: His ear will be ever open to their cry (1 Pet. iii. 12); the dew of heaven will be on their branch and the approval of God will be on their service. Revived themselves, in fellowship with their God, standing in His counsel, seeing men and things in His light, they will be used by Him as His messengers to others, commending His truth, and as channels through which His grace to others will flow. Wherever they are, they will be the means of blessing; saints will be uplifted, cheered, and edified; sinners will be arrested, attracted, and convicted. In short, individually faithful saints of God and servants of Christ whose hearts are true, who are walking in the path of separation from what is not of God, will be in their sphere and measure what the Church would have been as God's witness and channel of blessing to men, had she remained separate from the world and in fellowship with her glorified Head in heaven, from whence all fulness flows. To grasp this Divine principle in personal faith, to possess its power in the soul, to lay hold on the living Lord continually, drawing from His fulness, first for reviving and continuous refreshing and strength, thus maintaining spiritual life in its freshness and fulness in the soul, and next for the Divine fulness to send forth in living streams of ministry to others, is assuredly God's way of reviving and refreshing for His people "all the days" until the Lord shall come. The custom of the time is to begin at the wrong end altogether, to give much attention to the discussion of "methods," leaving souls dry and barren.

Man's Sin :

AS KNOWN TO AND DESCRIBED BY GOD.

SECOND PAPER. BY THE EDITOR.

THE terms made use of by God in the original Scriptures to describe sin, are translated in the English Versions by a number of different words. These, as Trench remarks, are "a wonderfully numerous group," for "sin may be regarded under an infinite number of aspects." And nowhere but in the Word of God "are we likely to find it looked at from so many sides, or set forth under such various images." The word *Sin* (*Hamartai*) is found 169 times in the New Testament. It means "a missing of the mark," which is to glorify God, the true end of man's life. *Trespass*—a falling where one should have stood. *Transgression*—the overstepping of a line. *Lawlessness*—usually translated "iniquity"—is a word which reveals the root of all the other forms of sin. It is not the condition of being "*without law*" or "*under law*" (I Cor. ix. 21), but in revolt AGAINST law. Sin is thus in its essence described. In the words of I John iii. 4, R.V.—"sin is lawlessness—*Selfwill*. In the case of man, it is treason against the throne of God, determined resistance of the Divine will, rebellion against His authority, and hostility against Himself. And this not by accident or misadventure; it is the law of his mind, for "the carnal mind is *enmity* against God, it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. viii. 7). And this is the same in all: "there is no distinction, for *all* have

sinned and have come short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 22-23, R.V.). An old English writer says: "'Tis the thought of the heart which makes the treason—the overt act is but the evidence of it." Human law cannot bring a criminal to justice, because of what he may be planning in his mind, it can only deal with his "overt acts." But God is not thus limited, for He "searcheth the heart" (Jer. xvii. 10). And in the day of judgment, sin will be reckoned according to what the sinner *was*, as well as in what he has done. The sin of Adam and Eve in Eden was of the nature of lawlessness—it was high treason against God their Creator, to whom their subjection was due. They took their own way, did their own will, believing the devil's lie, and disowning God's uttered Word of truth. The same is now going on now: and will so continue, until the Man of Sin—the Lawless One—in whom sin and rebellion against God and His Christ will become personified, a man from hell, energised by Satan on earth (Rev. xiii. 6-8), utterly regardless alike of God and man appears, assuming Divine prerogatives, and claiming from man what belongs to God alone.

THE PUNISHMENT OF SIN.—With shallow views of sin, and unscriptural estimates of man's condition, expressed in such popular phraseology as "the Ascent of Man"—"the Solidarity of Humanity"—"the Divine in Man," with the continual weekly output from pulpit, platform, and press, of the advance of all that goes to glorify man and help him to forget his sin, it is little wonder that there has come to be an open revolt against the

doctrine of the punishment of sin, here and hereafter. And in this revolt against the solemnly declared utterances of the Righteous Judge, not only avowed infidels and others who refuse to acknowledge the Bible as a Divine revelation are in rank, but men who profess to be ministers of the Gospel, and who are pledged under the most solemn vows to teach and defend the faith of the churches, whose ministers they are. These are the chief exponents of the "no hell" doctrines. There are few pulpits now from which a faithful testimony to "the judgment of God" (Rom. ii. 3), against sin goes forth. The greater number of present day preachers neither believe it, nor want their hearers to know of it. And this silence has had its effect on true Christian men, who fear to be branded as "behind the times" if they speak of such things, with the dreaded result of "losing caste" in the circles in which they move. But the true witness—whose object is to bring souls to God, rather than members to a church, or money to his coffers—will lift up his voice and say: "Behold ye have sinned against the Lord, and be sure your sins will find you out" (Numb. xxvii. 23). And in full view of that day when he shall have to give account to God, he will warn sinners that there is "tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil" (Rom. ii. 9); while he points them to the One who came to seek and to save the lost. The growing indifference to the Gospel, the levity expressed against Divine things, and the utter godlessness of men in high places, is largely due to false views of sin.

Balaam and His Parables.

Read Numbers, Chapters xxiii. to xxv.

W. J. McCLURE, CALIFORNIA.

SECOND PAPER.

BEFORE we look at some of the things in Balaam's parables, I would make a remark on the expression found in Rev. ii. 14: "The doctrine of Balaam." It is one of the many proofs of the inspiration of the Word of God, and that our precious Bible is *one* book—not as some modern teachers would have us believe, a collection of books, having little or no connection with each other. This word in Rev. ii. 14 supplies a most important bit of information as to the sin of Numbers xxv., which brought the hand of God in judgment upon Israel.

When Balaam found that he could not work enchantments against Israel, with Satanic subtlety, he instructed Balak to have the "daughters of Moab" ensnare the men of Israel. This succeeded where warfare and witchcraft had failed. And this sin is named here as the type of what was being done in the Church of Pergamos. Some there were leading the people of God into alliance with the world, and getting them out of the path of the pilgrim. This thing, whether now or back in the early days of the Church, God calls "the doctrine of Balaam."

BALAAM'S PARABLES.—We get his seven parables in the following verses:—1st, chap. xxiii. 7-10; 2nd, 18-24; 3rd, chap. xxiv. 3-9; 4th, 15-19; 5th, 20; 6th, 21; 7th, 23-24. We will notice seven great truths in these parables, which have their application to all the people of God.

First: The *Separation* of the Church from the world, as illustrated in Israel. "Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations" (chap. xxiii. 9). In this we have what should be true of all the people of God now. It is in fact, and it ought to be in experience. Israel was brought by God out of Egypt, that they might be a witness to Himself in the midst of the earth, which had become wholly idolatrous. This they could only be by standing apart from all, and His own presence in their midst was meant to accomplish this. So we read: "For wherein shall it be known here that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight? is it not in that THOU GOEST WITH US? so shall we be separated, I and Thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth" (Exod. xxxiii. 16).

Israel had no need to enter into any alliances with the nations in order to be safe, for in Deut. xxxiii 28 we read: "Israel then shall dwell in safety *alone*." This was indeed "splendid isolation." But the days came when this aloofness from and unlikeness to the nations became very irksome, and they tell Samuel to make them a king, that they might be "like the nations." This was the thing that God did not desire, for as soon as they became like the nations, they ceased to be a testimony for Him.

There is something sadly solemn in the words of God to Samuel: "They have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them" (1 Samuel viii. 7). And at the bottom of the departure of the Church from the place of separation in the early

days, and of all departure in the present, lies this very thing—insubjection to the authority of Christ as Lord. This is responsible for the mixing up of the Church and the world. So that the word Church, which means a "called-out" company, has become a witness to its terrible departure from what is really is.

Second: The *Justification* of the Church. "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel" (Numbers xxiii. 31). This is a most remarkable statement, in view of their history. Contrast these words with what He had to tell them in Deut. ix. 24 through Moses: "Ye have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you." It would seem as if these two verses could not both be true. But they are. We have Israel's Divine standing described in the first, their walk and conduct in the second. And most significant it surely is, that it is the enemy that is made to so speak of Israel as God beheld them, standing before Him justified and accepted. He would hide from that enemy the failures of His people, while he must expose them to themselves. And this is a principle that should ever be borne in mind, when speaking of and to the people of God in the presence of the unsaved.

But how can God speak of Israel, as He does through the lips of this man Balaam? Wholly on the ground of sacrifice. And of *all* His own God can say: "Thou art all fair, there is no spot in thee." For all are "in Christ Jesus," and all are "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. i. 6).

The Church, as a Nursery.

THE local church or assembly of Christians into which young converts are brought is, in one of its aspects like to a nursery into which God's new-born babes are brought to be tenderly nursed, suitably fed, and well brought-up for Him. As one by one they are "received"—which receiving should be a joyful welcome—the words of Pharaoh's daughter concerning the babe Moses, may well express what God expects from those to whose care He commits His spiritual infants—"Take this child and nurse it for Me and I will give thee thy wages" (Ex. ii. 9). The character of the nursing and feeding given to God's new-born babes has very much to do with their after life. Moses was well nursed by his mother and grew up a goodly child. He became a youth of noble decision, a leader of great endurance, and ended his course with undimmed eye and undiminished strength (Deut. xxxiv. 7). As the child is nursed, brought up and trained, so the man will be (Prov. xxii. 6). The awful waste brought to light through "Infant mortality," has aroused the nations to action for the preservation of child life, through more careful nursing, healthier surroundings and more suitable food. Would to God that His churches were similarly awakened to see the weakness, and learn the waste which comes upon them through lack of godly care and seasonable ministry toward those who are given them as fruit of their Gospel ministry, or brought into their midst by means of the labours of others. We have a lovely picture of a true spiritual

nursery in the Church at Thessalonica, as described in chap. ii. 7, of the first Epistle. Paul and Silas had been instrumental in their conversion: they had "begotten them through the Gospel," as he elsewhere speaks (1 Cor. iv. 15). But he did not leave them as the ostrich leaves her eggs, where she drops them, exposed to every danger (Job xxxiv. 14), as some modern evangelists are wont to do with their converts, leaving them to "go anywhere they like." They set themselves to the nursing of these spiritual babes of Christ, and the feeding of them with "food convenient" to them. How devotedly this service was pursued is well described in the words, "We were gentle in the midst of you as when a nurse—literally a nursing-mother, not a hired milk nurse—cherisheth her own children," ready to impart not only the Gospel in its fulness and the pure milk of the Word in its abundance, for their growth, but their "own souls" also. As a nursing mother gives her very life with the food she imparts to her infant, so these men of God gave those babes their "own souls" because they were "very dear" to them. Of all the ministries in the midst of God's churches, this is by far and away the most important. Yet it is the least in exercise. Young believers as a rule are not so cared for. They are not fed as they ought to be. In many cases they get no suitable food or tender care whatever. The preaching is not according to their capacities. Much of it is too far "advanced:" it goes over their heads. The "milk" if they get it, is often "cold." Need we wonder, if few spiritual babes are entrusted to us?

The Coming of the Lord.

AND THE EVENTS WHICH WILL FOLLOW.

WITH SOME NOTES ON THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

BY THE LATE W. H. HUNTER.

IN the eleventh chapter of Daniel the third kingdom of the four which arose after Alexander's death—the Ptolemy kingdom of Egypt—is described as “the king of the south,” while the fourth kingdom, that which the Seleucidæ established in Northern Asia, is termed “the king of the north;” and the chapter is illustrated by the first book of the Maccabees, which may be read in connection with it, and lends colour to the inference that the “little horn” of Dan. viii. 9, represents the false prophet for whose origin we are looking, and who will spring from what was once the realm of the Seleucidæ. That false prophet will become a great Mohammedan chief, who will spring into power and notoriety at the time of the “false Christs and false prophets” of Matth. xxiv. 24, who will ultimately accept Antichrist as one indeed risen from the dead, and who will, after noting his recovery from his deadly wound, make overtures to the beast, and will own him as the Christ for whom the Mohammedan world is now waiting. He will bring in his train hundreds of millions of Asiatic and African Moslems, believers and worshippers who will bow at the feet of the beast, will swell his hosts of fighting men, and will present the old Islamic choice, “Believe, or be slain,” until the earth shall be filled with Antichrist's praise and the world with his glory.

The welcome which will be afforded to

the great Caliph, the true successor of Mohammed, by Antichrist, will be equivalent to his value; the position bestowed upon him will be worthy of his great estate; thenceforth he shall be the third in the trinity of evil—the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet: and the miracle-working power which will be developed in that triarchy will challenge the omnipotence of God. The false prophet will be the administrative power in the three: it is he who will claim his mastery over heaven by bringing fire down therefrom in the sight of men; it is he who will press all the handicraft and artistic skill of the earth into the delightful service of making an image of the beast which shall be beyond the powers of human description, an image to which he for his part shall give life and speech, and shall cause that all those who will refuse worship to the image shall be killed.

Further, he will shew himself to be worthy of his ancestry, and of his Seleucid descent, for in two particulars he will imitate their ways and will revive their works: the one being the infamous system of universal boycott which he will institute, under which no man may even buy or sell unless he bears the mark of the beast in hand or brow; and the other, in which he will induce the beast to break the solemn covenant which he made with the Jews, for the establishment of their daily sacrifice, and instead thereof to defile and to pollute their temple, and thus to goad the Jews, always hated by Mohammedans, into an outbreak of insensate fury, through which he will hope to destroy them root and branch.

Departure from the Truth.

THE DANGER OF ITS SMALL BEGINNINGS.

ALL the errors which are abroad, opposing the Gospel of Christ and its workings in the world, and all the heresies and divisions which are robbing the true people of God of spiritual power and freshness, have had small beginnings. But these beginnings were allowed by those whose responsibility it was to check them, until evil came in like a flood and bore everything before it. It was with this danger full in view, that the apostolic writers—especially those whose Epistles make special provision for days of decline and departure from the truth,—give so many warnings of allowing evil to proceed unopposed and those that bring it unchallenged. It is the beginnings of departure that need spiritual discernment to see them, and godly decision to deal with them. Anybody may see full blossomed declension and apostasy, but if the bitter fruits of departure from God and His Word are to be spared us, they must be firmly nipped in the bud. The following lines from an old writer on this subject are full of interest and profit to all:—"Let us suppose," he says, "Christians living in the first age of the Church—would to God there had been such!—who denounced the abandonment of apostolic order, who attacked the old pagan spirit which was gaining ground; who had foreseen in the near future the magic action of sacraments, the inroads of tradition, then of human authority, soon of a hierarchy, then of a sacerdotal class; the

wise and prudent would have mocked at such, for the *greatness* of small deviations is known to few. They say: 'Leave alone these narrow-minded, fault-finding men, who are always picking out small errors.' Yes, small deviations; but the larger follow, and at the bottom of each one we discover an excellent, pious man! Such were the apostolic fathers—they lived by faith, and they ruined the faith. They gave their lives for the Gospel, and they were the authors of all the evils which for ages was to oppose the Gospel.

"Let us look at the beginning of the great deviation of which Rome presents the most perfect type. We shall find it in the inoffensive tendencies of the early fathers—tendencies which developed in an interrupted course through the centuries that followed. First, we find the truth of justification by faith, then little by little, justification by sacraments, and by works. First, the Saviour—the one Saviour—then by degrees other intercessors, other merits. First, the new birth, then as time went on adhesion to a church, acceptance of a form, performance of a ceremony. First, the Church of God, then by degrees a hereditary and national religion. First, baptism, the expression of a saving faith, then by degrees baptism apart from faith and salvation by baptism. First, the infallible Scriptures open to all, then decrees and councils. First, the universal priesthood of believers; then, little by little, a separate class of clergy." Thus it is that error allowed and departure from the Word of God, in what men reckon to be secondary matters, prepares the way for deeper declension. C. D.

The Church and the World.

THE Christianity of the middle ages had a theory of separation between the Church and the world; but by the Church, men did not mean those who were born again, converted to God, but those who were separated by outward ordinances from the heathen, often themselves the most abominable in heart and life.

The Christianity of to-day makes the world and the Church to be one. It is regarded as uncharitable to raise the question, whether those who profess it have believed to the saving of their souls. God is said to be the Father of all alike, equally to be recognised as His children if they are worshipping Him in the Spirit and in Truth, or reciting prayers to the Virgin and the saints, or dancing in a ballroom, or betting on a racecourse, teaching His Word with earnest prayer for the teaching of the Spirit, or treating it as the work of the ignorant and foolish mind of men: loving God and His people or following the god of this world, and walking in "the counsel of the ungodly."

How many there are who, regarding a church built with hands as the House of God, would therefore rightly shrink from dancing in it, whilst though professing to be Christians they would consider themselves well employed in dancing in a ballroom! A Christian, however, is, if truly a Christian, the true House of God, which a stone building cannot be. It is therefore more inconsistent to take the true House of God to a ballroom, than to make a ballroom of that which is but a house made with hands. The Church has

become so like the world, and the world so mixed with those who are in truth the Church, the habitation of God, that no man can tell where those who form His living temple may not be found. But the call of the Lord to all His own who hear His voice is: "What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God. . . Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord" (2 Cor. vi. 16, 17). Had the Church maintained its separation from the world, walking in the path marked out in the Word, the unconverted would have learned their true condition, and given a hearing ear to the Gospel; but, having been taught that they became Christians in their baptism, and that they are already in the Church, it is not to be wondered at if they refuse to take to themselves that which is spoken to the world of the unregenerate. F.B.

Light for One Step More.

"Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness" (Psa. cxii. 4).

WHAT though before me all is dark,
Too dark for me to see;
I ask but light for one step more,
'Tis quite enough for me.

For as with God each step I take,
The gloom clears from the next,
And though beyond all else is dark,
I am not sore perplexed.

I do not wish to see afar,
My journey or its length,
I know that in a Father's love
Each step will bring its strength.

Thus day by day I onward go,
Not looking far before,
But seeking from my faithful Guide,
Light for just "one step more."

The Preacher's Column.

OUTLINES OF EVANGELISTIC SUBJECTS.

WHAT IS TRUE CONVERSION?

- Repentance *toward* God (Acts xx. 31).
 Returning *to* God (Psa. cxix. 15).
 Receiving *from* God (Acts x. 43).
 Regenerated *by* God (1 John v. 1).

CHRIST OUR PASSOVER.

(Exod. xii. 1-23; Heb. xi. 28).

- SLAIN by the command of Jehovah (ver. 6).
 SHELTERED under the Blood sprinkled (ver. 13).
 ASSURED by the Word spoken (ver. 23).
 STRENGTHENED by feeding on the Person (ver. 8-10).
 1. The Lamb of God sacrificed (1 Cor. v. 7).
 2. The Death of Christ appropriated (Gal. ii. 20).
 3. The Word of God believed (1 John v. 13).
 4. The Person of Christ enjoyed (John vi. 37).

BIBLE STUDIES AND OUTLINES.

THE WORD OF GOD.

- The Engrafted Word—(James i. 21)—Receive it.
 The Faithful Word—(Tit. i. 9)—Hold it fast.
 The Word of Life—(Phil. ii. 16)—Hold it forth.
 The Word of Faith—(Rom. x. 8)—Preach it.

THE SPIRIT OF GOD

In His Relation to Believers.

- He is a Seal *on* them (Eph. i. 13).
 He is a Witness *in* them (Rom. viii. 1).
 He is a Teacher *to* them (John xiv. 26).
 He is an Intercessor *with* them (Rom. viii. 26).

The Young Believer's Question Box.

I desire help from the Word to enable me to act as a Christian should in the following circumstances: My father, who was in partnership with another Christian man, died some years ago, leaving me his interest in the business, in which I continued happily for some time, until my partner died, leaving his son who is unconverted to succeed him. I find myself now in partnership with a man of the world, through circumstances over which I had no control. I would have no hesitation in severing my connection—as I believe the Word bids me—had I only my own interests to consult, but there are others who derive certain benefits through me who would suffer, and they do not see things as I see them in regard to the unequal yoke.

The position in which you are placed is confessedly one of difficulty, in which much waiting upon God for light and wisdom is required. An unequal yoke in business with a man of the world is clearly forbidden in 2 Cor. vi. 14, and the words that follow in verse 17, leave no doubt whatever that such a connection should be severed, but it has to be done in a way that will cast no cloud or stigma on your Christian character and involve no loss to those whose interests you hold in trust. Yours is by no means an uncommon case. Christian fathers, who saw and taught the evil of the unequal yoke in business, have in many cases left the same legacy of trouble to their successors, by permitting their partners to bring in unconverted relatives, possibly in the hope that they may become true Christians before the original co-partners die. But this is an unscriptural way of acting, and according to the same fallacious system of reasoning that brings unsaved members into the Church, in the hope that they may be converted there. We can never depart a hair's breadth from God's Word and God's way without becoming losers and sufferers as a result, sooner or later. But inasmuch as you had no part and no voice in creating the conditions in which you find yourself, you may, we believe, carry the whole matter to God, and stating your desire to obey His Word ask His deliverance, which we are assured by some means and in His own way He will give. We commend to you the precious words of Isa. i. 10, which have been a help to many in similar circumstances. And our counsel would be, that when light is given and the way made clear, you act with promptitude and decision, even should you be a loser. Remember the Word: "Them that honour Me, I will honour" (1 Sam. ii. 30), and act in the full confidence that God will ultimately be no man's debtor even in temporal things, to those who obey His Word.

Answers to Correspondents.

SERVANT.—A true servant will not surrender his work however trivial it may appear to man, or however much he is opposed in it by plotters, if he has the consciousness that the Lord has appointed him to it. Therefore do not be tempted to give up that which you are doing.

D.N., MIDLOTHIAN.—Appointment to a sphere of spiritual ministry does not and cannot impart gift or grace to use it. But where gift is recognised as being imparted by the living Lord, and grace is

manifested in the exercise of it, this should be owned by fellowsaints and full opportunity given for its use in preaching the Gospel and ministry of the Word. Should this be denied in the assembly where he is—as from carnality or jealousy it may—the Lord's servant must not *force* his ministry on an unwilling people, but wait upon his Master who will soon find him other spheres for its exercise.

J. E., GLASGOW.—If you preach from a show-man's platform in a fair, or from the footlights of a theatre rented for the purpose, *nobody* identifies you or your message with the show or the theatre. But if you preach from the pulpit of a denomination or from the platform of a mission, *everybody* looks upon you as appearing under the auspices of that sect, and for the occasion its minister or agent, filling the place of the man who carries it on. It is mere trifling to say you have no responsibility for what is taught or practiced there at other times, or that you have no fellowship therewith. With as much reason Jehoshaphat might have argued that he had no fellowship with Ahab when he went to the battle of Ramoth alongside of him, and that his presence there did not imply that he patronised Ahab's evil deeds. But the Lord's message to Judah's king, by the mouth of Hanani's son, dispels all doubt as to how the Lord regarded the affinity, for his words to the man who had left the path of separation in which he had been blessed and honoured by God were: "Shouldest thou *help* the ungodly and *love* them that hate the Lord" (2 Chron. xix. 2). To make common cause with any man or system is therefore according to God's reckoning, to love, to give help to, and to be identified with the same.

Practical Points in Gospel Work.

Individual Effort in speaking to relatives, neighbours, and fellow-workers has led more sinners to the Saviour than public preaching. It has fallen greatly into disuse, and should be more encouraged than it is in the ministry of the Word, and by the example of its preachers.

Open-Air Work is unquestionably one of the best ways of reaching thousands who never hear the Gospel or their need of it. But everybody is not gifted or fitted to preach Christ and hold an audience on the street. Let those who are, have the opportunity, whilst the rest rally round, giving their prayerful and practical fellowship.

Indoor Gospel Meetings need a complete revision in very many places, otherwise they will die a natural death, or be carried on as a mere form, devoid of all spiritual power or blessing. Where those who have neither fitness or grace have to get "their turn" in occupying the platform, as a premium for their attendance, it is hopeless to get intelligent people to come, or if they do once, they will never be induced to return. Religious Socialism has invaded the Gospel platform to such an extent, that in some places it has become a sort of "exercising ground" for the display of talent (?) of doubtful character, rather than a place where God's messenger stands to speak God's message, with the one object of bringing the hearers into God's presence, to hear His Word concerning their sin and His salvation, with a judgment to come.

Fellow-Helpers have never been lacking where one or more who have gift, with grace to use it, preach the Word, and get a grip of the people, are allowed to go on as long as they have the manifest blessing of God on their ministry, and are free to do so. But when such a preacher has to cease because his time is up, and another whose "turn" has come must take his place, spiritual people who see the fallacy of such doings, which often cause the work of God to cease, give up all hope of seeing any real Gospel work done under such conditions, and either cease their efforts, or find a sphere where they can serve the Lord without human domination. Some who have learned that God and not man makes ministers, have still to learn that God, and not man, is to control those whom He has made and given. But this knowledge comes very slowly to some, and others perhaps do not specially seek it.

Continuous Blessing.—While no flourish of trumpets is made about it, and no advertising of it is encouraged, there is a continuous work of awakening and conversion, followed by baptism and adding to the assembly, in not a few places well known to us, in which personal and collective Gospel work is continued on old lines all the year round, indoors and outside, by the wayside and at the fireside, where "prayer is made without ceasing" for the Spirit's power to make the Gospel effective, and where room is left for Him to do so. And this is of far more permanent value than "flare up" efforts, which often leave nothing but a legacy of trouble behind them in a mass of empty profession.

The Whole World Becoming Involved in War.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF CHRISTIANS IN THE CRISIS.

Month after month, the conflagration which began in the north-western part of Europe in August, 1914, has spread, involving nation after nation, until almost all nations and peoples, civilised and barbarian, Christian in profession and heathen alike have, in some measure and manner, been now drawn or dragged into the awful conflict, in which it is estimated that *twenty-five millions* of our fellow-men in all armies, are actively engaged on fields of war. It is estimated that some *eight millions* have already fallen, and probably twice that number have been maimed, or crippled and broken for life. When one tries to think of the sorrows, the bereavements, the tears, the broken hearts, and the lifelong distresses all this must bring for the present life, with the awful issues for eternity, the heart sickens, and the cry ascends to heaven, "O Lord, how long, how long?"

It does not belong to us to discuss the political or national results of this great cataclysm, or to divine when or how its end may come. We firmly believe that the living and mighty God has the whole matter, with all its underlying causes, under His eye and in His control, and that He will use it as He has hitherto used the devil's worst inventions and man's greatest crimes, to work out His purposes and to accomplish His ends. Here we leave it, assured that what we know not now, we shall learn and know hereafter. It is no part of the business of the Christian or of the Church, to enter on the castigation of the nations for their sins, or to occupy their time in defaming their rulers and governments for their doings. God will see to this in His own time and way. Of this we may be sure, and therefore we may not forestall His hand. But there are other responsibilities, and there is work which the people of God in all the war-swept nations are called to engage in, which it will be to their shame and loss if they neglect—responsibilities and work which none but those who are in relation to God as His children, and to the Lord Jesus Christ as His servants can share—toward their fellow-saints and among the sons of men. It is to this responsibility—or parts of it—that we would call our own and our brethren's consciences into exercise before the Lord. "First of all," as the Scripture puts it 1 Tim. ii. 1, let "*Supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings be made for all.*" This will bring us into touch

with them at the only point where junction is possible, in the presence of that God, who "hath made of one, every nation of men," and also "appointed the bounds of their habitation" (Acts xvii. 26). We shall see them, think of them, pray for them then, not as enemies, antagonists, fit only to be fuel for guns and sword, but as that "so loved" world for which God "gave His only begotten Son" to save and bring them reconciled unto Himself and to each other. And for "all saints" among them we shall then pray (Eph. vi. 18), and seek grace to love (Col. i. 4)—not as Germans, Austrians, Italians, or Britons, but as those who are "in Christ," where there is neither Barbarian, Scythian, bond or free, but where "Christ is all and IN all" (Col. iii. 11). This is not what the religious world is calling for as Patriotism, nor what most of its ministers are preaching as Christianity, but it is what God asks from His people in plain and unmistakable terms in His Word, and what they will give if they are obedient thereto. It is a Christian duty, incumbent on all the people of God, to "Do good unto all, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. vi. 10), in comforting their sad hearts, relieving their distress, and seeking to do what the Lord would do if He were here among us as of old. Those who can, should, "visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction" (Jas. i. 27), and older Christians, who know the ways of the Lord, should give godly counsel to younger ones who, in many ways, are apt to be led astray. "Mothers in Israel" are in great demand to act a mother's part to Christian young women, in new and strange surroundings, with temptations all around, who need wise counsel such as a motherly heart alone can give. There is no lack of work for those who have a heart for God and His people, and for mankind in the depths of spiritual need, to spend and be spent in these times of dire distress everywhere. And let it not be forgotten that in order to enter on such service, and continue in it for God, a right condition of soul has to be maintained, and this is only possible when God is often sought in secret, His Word meditated on for strength, and consulted for guidance. The spirit of the age, and the war fever of the time, are, when nursed within, destructive of spiritual life and blinding to spiritual vision, for it is only as the soul abides in the light of God that it sees men and things in their true relation to Him. When this is lost, we soon come to see this war and its issues only "as men" (1 Cor. iii. 3).

Confidence in God:

THE SECRET OF PEACE IN TIME OF TRIAL.

TO confide in the love and faithfulness of God in the time of faith's trial, brings peace and strength to the soul. "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength" (Isa. xxx. 15), was the Word of the Lord through His prophet to a people who were being fed with "the bread of adversity and the water of affliction" (ver. 20), and in danger of losing confidence in God in the day of their testing. It has always been so among the people of God. To trust in God when all is fair and pleasant is easy, but in the hour of trial, when the sky is overcast and the thick clouds gather, then it is that faith has its proving time, as an apostle tells us (1 Pet. i. 7). It is surely for our warning, that God has caused it to be put on record how some, whose names are held in honour in the Sacred page, lost confidence in God for a time under trial, while they viewed things after the manner of men and walked for a season without consulting God. *Abraham*, "strong in faith" at other times, when confronted with "a famine" in the land into which God had guided him (Gen. xii. 10), turned aside and "went down into Egypt" to avoid the trial. His eye for the time had been taken off God, and his confidence in His power to provide for him and his, failed. And this cost him something, not only in material loss, but in his soul's experience and in his broken testimony for God.

David's faith failed in that dark hour when he said, "I shall one day perish by

the hand of Saul" (1 Sam. xxvii. 1), and went into the land of the Philistines to join the armies of the uncircumcised. This was the same David who, in the earlier and livelier days of his faith, met and conquered the Philistine of Gath in the name of the living God in whom he trusted. Now the king of Gath becomes his master, and the uncircumcised Philistines his allies. But God deals in chastisement with David in Gath as He had dealt with Abraham in Egypt. He is not held in honour among the officers of Achish, any more than Abraham was in the house of Pharaoh. For when a saint gets away from God, he does such things that the world suspects him, and finally sends him about his business. So it was with David. And then he finds Ziklag in ruins and his family in captivity. But while God in government must chastise, in grace He will restore. And thus it is that we read, "But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God" (chap. xxx. 6). And when his confidence in God was restored, the victory was his, as in days of old. He recovers all his loss. We live in a day of fuller revelation, for God, having already given His Son, how can He withhold anything that is good for His people (Rom. viii. 32)? It is ours to confide in Him, to trust His heart even when we cannot trace His hand, assured that He can only do, or allow to be done for His people that which is best, and that which will ultimately prove to be for their eternal good. It is in this confidence that the saint under trial, is able to say like Job, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" (Job xiii. 15). J. R.

Baptism :

IN ITS PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE.

W. R. LEWIS.

THERE is a baptism in the effects of which every believer shares on believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is baptism in the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is a Divine Person, and yet He is spoken of in this connection as if He were an Element. The Baptiser is the Lord Jesus Christ, "I indeed," said John the Baptist, "baptise you in water unto repentance: but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear, He shall baptise you in (*en*) the Holy Spirit and fire; whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly cleanse His threshing-floor, and He will gather His wheat into the garner, but the chaff He will burn up with unquenchable fire" (Matt. iii. 11, 12, R.V.). John thus, like the prophets before him, speaks in one breath of the first and second Advents of Christ. The baptism of the "wheat" in the Spirit would indeed be associated with both Advents, first at Pentecost, and then upon "all flesh," consequent upon the repentance of Israel (Joel ii. 27, 28); but the baptism of the "chaff" in fire is reserved, as we know from other Scriptures, for the second Advent alone (Mal. iv. 1; Matt. xiii. 30; 2 Thess. i. 8; Psa. xxi. 9). Yet for this too His first Advent was necessary to bring all to an issue. He came to send fire on the earth (Luke xii. 49), and in view of this He pressed the need of repentance (ver. 54; xiii. 9). But a further respite was given (Acts

iii. 17-19), and hence we find that when the Lord, now risen from the dead, refers to this prophecy of John's as being about to be fulfilled, He does not mention the "fire," but confirms the prophecy in these words, "Ye shall be baptised in the Holy Spirit not many days hence" (Acts i. 5).

This promise was fulfilled ten days later, at Pentecost (Acts ii. 1). Its fulfilment depended upon His Ascension, for before His death He had told His disciples that if He did not go away, the Comforter would not come to them; but if He departed He would send Him to them from the Father (John xiv. 26; xv. 26). And the Apostle John, commenting upon His words at an earlier visit to Jerusalem, wrote, "This spake He of the Spirit which they that believed on Him were about to receive, for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (John vii. 39). He must not only die for their sins, He must not only be raised from the dead in token of God's acceptance of His atoning work, but He must take His place at God's right hand, ere He could baptise His own in the Holy Spirit. This baptism is the fruit of His own work. The oil may go wherever the blood has been (Lev. xiv. 14, 17). The Spirit comes as the Witness of God's estimate of the Person and Work of Christ.

In the early transition days of this dispensation, there was often a considerable interval between faith in Christ and the reception of the Spirit. The first disciples had, for example, to wait for Pentecost. The Jews who were converted

through Peter's ministry that day, had to be baptised in water first, for those who had been foremost in rejecting Christ must openly own their guilt and take their place among the followers of the Crucified. The Samaritans again had not only to be baptised, but the apostles from Jerusalem must also lay their hands upon them (Acts viii. 16, 17), for they had to bow to the fact that "Salvation is of the Jews," and to acknowledge their guilt in their long-standing schismatic denial of Jerusalem. In the case of the Gentile Cornelius, it would seem that he had life before he heard the full Gospel at the lips of Peter, but was delivered and received the Spirit on believing. But we must not argue from this transition state, that there is any necessary interval now between faith in the Gospel message and the gift of the Spirit, for apart from baptism in water and laying on of hands, all are on believing, sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (Eph. i. 13). There must indeed be life first. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit into your hearts" (Gal. iv. 6; 1 Cor. xii. 13). And life can only be the result of the Spirit's work within. But it is not any personal fitness or any light or intelligence on the part of the recipient of the Spirit, that attracts such a Gift as this. It is the blood that attracts the oil. And so the Spirit is received by the believer now in virtue of simple faith in Christ, and solely on the ground of what Christ has done.

Our Holy Father and our God!
Praise be for ever Thine
For this rich gift, through Thy dear Son,
The Holy Ghost divine.

Baalam and His Parables,

AND THEIR MESSAGE TO US TO-DAY.

Read Numbers, Chapters xxii. to xxv.

THIRD PAPER. W. J. McCLURE, CALIFORNIA.

THE false prophet is next made to tell forth in language full of spiritual meaning of the *Beauty* of the Church. "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters" (chap. xxiv. 5-6).

The sight upon which the gaze of Baalam rested must have been very attractive indeed. As he surveys it, he bursts forth in grand poetic language, drawing upon the beautiful in nature to describe the wondrous scene.

There, in the midst, is the Tabernacle as a Centre. Around it in order, as prescribed by God, are the tents of the twelve tribes, each pitched by the standard of the house of their fathers according to His commandment. All is in beauty and in order, so utterly unlike the encampments of the tribes of the desert. And what a picture is this of God's assembly of saints as now gathered with the Lord Jesus "in the midst" (Matt. xviii. 28). When the Tabernacle, which is a type of Him, got its true place, then at once each tribe knew exactly where its ordered place was, and took it. There was no confusion. It was that Divine Centre, in which the presence of the God of Israel was enshrined, which prevented the camp from becoming a mere collection of tents.

So it is the fact of the Lord Jesus Christ "in the midst" of His own, that makes any company of them His *assembly*. Without Him there as Centre, they would only be a *congregation*. Such godly order is well pleasing to God. The apostle, writing to the Colossians (chap. ii. 5), says, "For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your *order*, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ." We may be sure that what gladdened his heart delighted that of his Lord, and still does. For there is nothing on this earth more beautiful in His eyes, than a company of His saints, few or many, gathered around Himself, subject to the leading of the Holy Spirit in their worship and service, "Joying and beholding *your order*:" it was God's "order," carried out by His saints. And it were better, if it must be so, to fail in the carrying out of that order, than to adopt human order, as is done in all sects, even though it may proceed like clockwork.

The *Blessing* of the Church comes next. "He shall pour water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters" (chap. xxiv. 7). What God said to Abraham should have been true of Israel, "I will bless thee and thou shalt be a blessing." Here is a fine picture of dispensing blessing. "He shall pour water out of his buckets." And surely in every company of believers, gathered to the precious Name of the Lord Jesus, their assemblings should be times of "pouring water out of their buckets." The Gospel of God as made known by them ought to be like as water of life to

thirsty sinners, and the truth to God's people like streams of true refreshing to their thirsty souls. "His seed shall be in many waters:" that is, his offspring shall be in many countries, and among many peoples. This suggests fruitfulness. It is most cheering to think how widely spread has been the blessing which has flowed from the testimony of God's assemblies in the British Isles. Many who were led to Christ and taught the ways of God there, have gone to other parts of the earth—North and South America, Africa, New Zealand, and Australia, to become as a seed of blessing in those places. Their fruit has multiplied wonderfully. Next, we hear of

The *Strength* of the Church. "God brought him forth out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn." It looks strange at first sight to speak of the *strength* of Israel, and typically of the Church. In Israel we have a paradox in this respect. They were the strongest and yet the weakest of peoples. When right with God they were both invincible and invulnerable, for God was their might. Then it was that "one should chase a thousand, and two put then thousand to flight" (Lev. xxvi. 8; Deut. xxxii. 30). But departure from God reversed this (Deut. xxviii. 25), and the meanest of their enemies prevailed over them, for they had forsaken the "Strength of Israel." This is a solemn warning to us all. To go on with God may appear as weakness in the eyes of men, but in this alone there is true spiritual power and blessing. And herein also is the way of true fruitfulness.

“Christian Socialism.”

ALTHOUGH Socialism as a system of ethics repudiates the Bible and denies Christianity, yet it finds it convenient at times to quote Scripture precedent and example to give weight to its claims. This is intended for the benefit of those in its ranks who call themselves “Christian Socialists,” and to gain others of a religious mind who are more likely to be “caught” by Biblical quotations and religious phraseology than by atheistic deliverances. The Pentecostal Church, “having all things common,” is supposed to be an example of Socialism. Writing on this the late J. Keir Hardie says, “Communism in goods was practised by Christians for at least three hundred years after the death of Christ.” We do not know where he learned this. Neither Scripture teaching nor Church History give the least hint that such was the case. “The church which was at Jerusalem,” composed of those who had been convicted of their sin in crucifying their Messiah, and converted to confess Him as their Lord, did, we are told, in the exuberance of their first love, sell their possessions and lay the proceeds thereof at the apostles’ feet. No man among those who comprised that first community of saints on earth, “*said* that any of the things he possessed were his own (although this they certainly were), they had all things common.” And this we are told is true “Christian Socialism”—and what the Church should have continued to practise. And this is what “Christian Socialism” of our time is aiming at. Is

this so? Let us see. The liberality of these few early Christians toward the larger number of their poorer brethren was entirely of their own goodwill. Nobody asked them to part with their possessions. No claim was then made, such as Socialists now make, that all ought to be on “equality.” On the contrary, when Peter charged Ananias—who was one of those who had sold his possessions—with deception and falsehood in the disposal of the proceeds thereof, he distinctly affirmed the personal right to private property in the words, “While it remained, did it not remain thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?” (Acts v. 4). The Pentecostal liberality was not even in obedience to a Divine commandment—for no such command had been given then, or has it since—but a spontaneous outburst of the new life which had come into these “born again” people, and of the love which by the Spirit of God had been shed abroad in their hearts (Rom. v. 3) toward those who from their confession of Jesus Christ as the Lord, had become outcasts from their people. It was, moreover, a temporary form of liberality to meet conditions which then existed, never repeated. Remembrance of “the poor” was one of the chief traits of apostolic ministry (Gal. ii. 10), but according to Socialism there should be no “poor.” A collection made by churches of Gentile lands some years after for “the poor saints at Jerusalem” (Rom. xv. 26), clearly proves that there could have been no such “Communism” practised, as Socialists assert. Nor does the Word of

God anywhere hint that Christianity demands a common purse. It tells the rich not to "trust in uncertain riches" (1 Tim. v. 17), and the poor to "be content with such things as they have" (Heb. xiii. 5), and it exhorts those who "have this world's goods"—not in a common "pool" or purse—but in personal possession under their own control—to give to the brother having "need" (1 John iii. 16, 17), which he would not, had there been a commune of goods—not on the ground of a common right, but constrained by the Divine love, which is first toward God and then to his brother (1 John v. 1). This is the true motive power of Christianity according to God, of which Socialism is a base counterfeit. Yet some who bear the Christian name are in league with this delusion, and use their powers to lead others into the snare. There is a general revolt abroad at present against authority of all kinds—national, commercial, and domestic—and the spirit of lawlessness is unbridled. So far as the world is concerned, this will continue and increase. But among the people of God there ought to be none of it, nor any fellowship with those that practice it. Socialism is an enemy of God,^f an unequal yoke in its very worst form, and for His people a well-baited snare of the devil, in which many a once-bright witness for God and His truth has found his grave, so far as real testimony is concerned.

The saints of God have real partnership in all that God has given them, and where true love is ruling in the heart, there will be no lack in giving help to those who

need it,^g or in sharing in "carnal things" (1 Cor. ix. 11) with those who serve, and with those who are in poverty. But this is not the principle of Socialism, which claims as its "right" an "equal divide" of personal [possessions, and a common purse.^h It is bad enough to assert such a claim, but when the name of Christianity, and a perverted use of Scripture is used to establish it, this is adding hypocrisy to sin.

Assured Guidance.

"In *all* thy ways acknowledge Him and He SHALL direct thy paths" (Prov. iii. 6).

I OFT was sorely vexed to know
The way I ought to go.
So many paths lay open,
The right I did not know.
I had an old Acquaintance
Who knew the turnings well,
I thought that I might ask Him,
Believing He could tell.

He said that He would guide me—
But made one small request ;
Then He would surely lead me
The right way and the best :
His wisdom would direct me
Should days be bright or dim,
If constantly in *all* my ways
I would "acknowledge Him."

I grasped His precious promise,
Confiding in His love,
And find my paths directed now
By light from heaven above.
I prove His daily guidance
Along life's thorny road,
And walk in happy confidence
In fellowship with God.

O ye who walk in darkness,
Uncertain of the end,
Turn to the One who seeks your trust,
And claim Him as your Friend :
His wisdom never faileth,
His sight is never dim,
He knows the way He taketh,
And you "acknowledge Him."

Paganism and Christianity.

WHAT is it that reigned in the world before the coming of Jesus Christ? The Pagan Religions. It was more than that—it was the eternal Paganism, the root of all Paganism, the principle which we find at the bottom of all revolts against God—the *Pagan Principle*. Let us seek to define it. If I would characterise it in one word, I would say it is the attempt to do *without God*.

Nothing so alarms our evil heart—and we all know this by experience, do we not?—as to find ourselves alone in the presence of God. A man will do anything and everything to avoid this direct and individual contact. He will invent for this purpose religions, in order to avoid God. Give him the Pantheism which covered and still covers the Eastern world, the pagan principle is not alarmed; there is no personal God in presence of whom the conscience need be afraid. Give him the Polytheism of ancient Egypt and Syria, natural forces transformed into God, the pagan principle will adopt itself marvellously to this also. Give him the Greek and Roman Polytheism, the deification of man, the pagan principle will remain at ease. A deified man is after all a man. One may accept these religions and do without God. I go further. We may accept true religion, and remain profoundly pagan. Take that Pharisee: he admits many true doctrines with regard to God, but he has built up between God and his soul an impenetrable rampart—his formalism and his religious pride. Take that Rationalist: he retains

more than one idea borrowed from Christian revelation, but he constitutes himself the judge of it, taking that which pleases him, rejecting that which he does not approve. He has installed human reason in the place where God should be. Let us go a step further. The indestructible paganism of our hearts has invented a surer way of satisfying them. The grand method for doing without God is to make of religion not a matter of the soul, of each individual soul, but a *national* matter. Admit this, and the pagan principle will take alarm at no belief, not even at Christianity, the most complete and the most orthodox. What does it matter? This Christianity is not mine, nor yours: it is that of our country, of our family, of our ancestors. It is no longer a question of conversion, of faith; it is a custom and heredity. Individualism is at the base of all that is good, as on the other hand the doctrine of collective beliefs is at the root of all that is evil. That which has produced, in the first case, the universal priesthood of believers, the true idea of morality, the free surrender of the heart, is the Christian principle. That which has produced a sacerdotal class, convents, Roman Catholicism, the servitude of souls, is the pagan principle. The former is individual, the latter is collective.

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SETTLED IN HIS LOVE.—God would have you to be as sure of and as settled in His love, as His putting His own Son upon the throne entitles you to be. His people are loved as He is loved, and His position, His acceptance before God, is theirs.—*William Lincoln*.

Separations Among Saints.

NOTES OF A BIBLE READING GIVEN IN 1856.

BY J. G. BELLETT.

SEPARATIONS among the saints of God, as they appear on the pages of Scripture, are painful and humbling to look upon. Yet they surely bear their message of instruction and word of warning to us all. Such separations do not usually arise from different measures of knowledge or of faith, there is something of moral character in each of them.

The separation of Abraham and Lot was surely of this character: it had its roots, as we may say, in this soil. It was love of the world that caused it. Lot eyed the watered plains of Sodom for personal advantage, and chose them as his portion, and ere long he dwelt among a people who were sinners before the Lord exceedingly, to whom he speaks as "brethren" (Gen. xix. 7), while Abraham was sojourning as a stranger by the side of his altar, testifying of his relation toward God, his moving tent expressing his relation to earth as a stranger there. There was great moral distance between these two men. Both had a link with God it is true, but the object of the heart was different, and this resulted in course of time in their parting company. And the breach thus made, was never healed in this world. The man who at first allowed his eyes to be captivated with Sodom's plains, is seen to sink at last behind the still more distant mountains of Moab ingloriously, leaving a warning to us all.

It was much the same in the case of Elijah and Obadiah, two saints of God who were contemporaries in the dark

times of Jezebel and Ahab. There was moral distance between them also. There could be little in common between the saint who had denounced and left the kingdom over which Ahab ruled and the man who was in a place of honour there. How could there be? The world had already separated these two saints of God in spirit, they were morally apart, and nothing short of the victory of that faith which overcometh the world could put them together again. On one striking and solemn occasion they did meet, but how little there was of the true fellowship of saints in that meeting (1 Kings xviii. 7-16)! There was much reserve on the part of Elijah, and manifest uneasiness in the language of Obadiah. They were both saints, but one was walking in the counsels of God apart, while he witnessed against the house of Ahab in which Obadiah held a place of honour. There was great moral distance between these two saints, and their spirits feel it when they meet. Obadiah seeks to make up to Elijah, and recounts his service to the Lord's prophets when he hid them from Ahab's rage in a cave, and fed them. But this will not do, and Elijah resents it. He reminds him that his true master and "lord" is Ahab (ver. 8), before whom he ought to declare his faith and confess his relation to the Lord's witness whose life he seeks. The "fellowship of saints" cannot be forced; it is a plant of heavenly birth, and must grow in its native air. If we traffic with the world and walk in the counsels of the ungodly, it is impossible to maintain true fellowship with those that walk in God's ways.

“O no, I am not Desolate.”

THE STORY OF A FAVOURITE HYMN.

JOHN DICKIE, the author of a volume of Letters and Meditations entitled *Words of Faith, Hope, and Love*, which has been a means of blessing to many, and of a smaller book of rich and refreshing poetry entitled *Songs of Faith, Hope, and Love*, was for many years an invalid and a sufferer. During the time that he lived in Kilmarnock, he was for a season deprived of the faculty of speech, and while still able to go out and in, he used a slate which he carried with him as a means of communication with those whom he met. One day, while walking slowly along the street, he was met by an old acquaintance who was deeply affected by the sight of the silent man, whose lips had ministered the Word of life to many. After expressing her deep sympathy with Mr. Dickie in his affliction, the Christian woman remarked, “I do hope you will shortly be able to speak to us Mr. Dickie, for I thought when I saw you coming along the street, you were so desolate and solitary like.” The man of God smiled, shook his head as if he did not share her estimate of his condition, and passed on. That evening it is said he wrote the words of the precious hymn which has been as a cordial to many a tried and downcast saint and a restorative to some who, while passing through the “valley of Baca,” had begun to think themselves forsaken of God and desolate. We give the words as they flowed from the pen of the Lord’s afflicted yet rejoicing servant, in the hope that they may prove a word

of goodly cheer in this time of general depression and of faith’s trial to many of the children of God who are bereaved, and so far as the present world and its hopes are concerned, left lonely and “desolate, yet not forsaken,” to prove the loving-kindness of the Lord.

O no, I am not desolate—
No orphan lone am I ;
The mighty God my Father is,
His heaven my home on high !

No earthly mother, whose first-born
Lies nestling on her knee,
Bends o’er her babe so yearningly
As yearns my God o’er me.

Add heavens to heavens in endless host,
All these but cost His breath ;
But I cost tears—yea, blood divine,
And live through Jesus’ death !

A wretched brand on hell’s dread brink,
Just kindling there I stood ;
While nought my endless flame could quench,
Save Jesus’ dying blood.

And, oh ! that precious blood was shed,
God’s richest ransom given ;
Now, raised from death, He leads me on,
To share His bliss in heaven.

He leads me on through mercies more
Than sands that gird the sea,
There’s not a moment wings its flight,
But bears love-gifts for me.

He ne’er repents His grace, though I
His patience hourly test ;
But singing in His heart’s deep joy,
He in His love doth rest.

Is aught too hard for Him to do,
Who built the earth and sky ?
Or aught too good for Him to give,
Who gave His Son to die ?

Then never deem me desolate,
Nor think I friendless roam ;
The mighty One, unseen me leads
To His eternal Home !

The Preacher's Column.

OUTLINES OF EVANGELISTIC SUBJECTS.

THREE BIBLE CUPS.

- A Cup of Sorrow for the Saviour (Luke xxii. 42).
 A Cup of Salvation for the Sinner (Psa. cxvi. 13).
 A Cup of Blessing for the Saved (1 Cor. x. 16).

THE WORDS OF ETERNAL LIFE.

(John vi. 59.)

- The Preacher speaks them to the Ear (Acts v. 20).
 Christ speaks them to the Soul (John vi. 63).
 Faith receives them unto Salvation (John xvii. 8).
 The Spirit uses them in the New Birth (1 Pet. i. 23).

"GOD OUR SAVIOUR,"

As revealed in the Epistle to Titus.

- His Kindness Manifested (chap. iii. 4)—At the Cross.
 His Word Proclaimed (chap. i. 3)—In the Gospel.
 His Glory Displayed (chap. ii. 14)—By the Advent.

NOTES OF BIBLE STUDIES AND READINGS.

CHRIST OUR KEEPER AND PRESERVER.

- His People's Faithful Keeper (Psa. cxxi. 5).
 He Keeps the Feet of His Saints (1 Sam. ii. 9).
 They are Kept in Perfect Peace (Isa. xxvi. 3).
 Preserved from all Evil (Psa. cxxi. 7).
 Preserved unto the Kingdom (2 Tim. iv. 18).

THE LORD'S COMING AGAIN.

- For His People (John xiv. 3)—Hope.
 With His People (Col. iii. 3)—Manifestation.
 To Review His Servants (Rev. xxii. 12)—Reward.
 To Punish Sinners (2 Thess. ii. 7, 8)—Retribution.
 To Judge the World (Rev. xix. 11)—Righteousness.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

I am engaged in a factory where work is carried on seven days in the week at present, the reason given being urgency for work of national importance. There are a number of Christians engaged, who say that, while they do not like to work on the "Christian Sabbath," they do it because Rom. xiii. bids us be subject to the "higher powers." Is this sufficient authority to warrant me working on the Lord's Day?

Subjection to "higher powers" in all matters to which their authority reaches, is an obligation laid upon the Christian, but where they go beyond their sphere and demand obedience to what God forbids, or claim what belongs to Him alone, their claim has to be resisted. This is clearly established in the apostles' answer to the Jerusalem religious rulers, to whose demand that they should cease

teaching in the Lord's Name, was, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts v. 29). And the same principle is finely illustrated in the refusal of the three Hebrew captive princes in Babylon to bow to the golden image on the plain of Dura at the king's command (Dan. iii. 4-18). We do not call the Lord's Day "the Christian Sabbath"—because it is nowhere in Scripture so named—but we own and honour "the first day of the week" (Matt. xxviii. 1; John xx. 1; Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xvi. 2), which is named "The Lord's Day" (Rev. i. 10), as the appointed memorial of His resurrection and of the descent of the Spirit, who represents Him during His absence from earth. The early Christians observed it loyally in gathering together to "break bread," and in united worship and service. Government, as in Rom. xiii. 1; 1 Pet. iii. 13, 14, is in the world, not the Church: the living Lord and the written Word exercise authority there and over the Christian in all his ways. We believe it to be a dishonour to the Lord for any who are His, to desecrate the Lord's Day in making it a day for work by contract for wages, as is being done at present by many. If there is true exercise of heart before Him, and a desire to do His will, there will be a "way out" (1 Cor. x. 13), as many have proved. But if not, it is surely better to suffer loss than deny the faith. It is easy to plead necessity, but if there were no remuneration—and that on a larger scale for Lord's Day labour than on other days—would there be as many "Christian patriots" working in munition works and shipyards as there are to-day?

Answers to Correspondents.

STUDENT.—The words of Acts viii. 33 are somewhat different from the original of Isa. liii. 7-8, from which they are quoted, probably because the version read by the Ethiopian as he sat in his chariot was the Septuagint or Greek Version of the Old Testament Scriptures, and as in all translations certain words differ. That this version is reliable is assured by the frequent use made of it by the Lord and His apostles, and the numerous quotations they give from it.

NEMO.—While all error taught in Divine things is a dishonour to God and His truth, we should distinguish between misapprehensions of the Scriptures and fundamental error taught therefrom. Fixing of dates regarding future events to follow the Lord's coming is more of the former character than the latter.

VERITAS.—To you as a Christian, the commandment of the Lord in His Word is final. "Render to no man evil for evil, overcome evil with good" (Rom. xii. 17, 21), are God's statutes to His people for all this age of grace. Whoever disregards them and gives "reprisals" takes his cause out of God's hand, and if he is then allowed to fight his own battle, he need not complain.

F. G., WESTMORELAND.—The Word of God ministered in grace and to the need of the saints, is the appointed means for correction as well as for "instruction" (see 2 Tim. iii. 16-17). Under such a ministry, much that once was crooked is made straight, and what had declined is revived and restored. But there is little hope of either being accomplished by a ministry of scraps and tit-bits, which is easily provided, or cheaply collected to tickle and please rather than profit the hearers.

A. Y., GLASGOW.—Teach the young believers who have been so happily added to the assembly in which you have a share of godly shepherding, their place outside the camp with Christ, and their privileges as worshippers, witnesses, and workers. If the truth of God gets its place in them, it will keep them from the evil attractiveness of worldly religion and unholy alliances so common to-day.

D. N., BELFAST.—Any system of "management" that comes between the Lord's servant and his Master, either in controlling his service or guaranteeing his income, wherever accepted, must in less or greater degree take the eyes of the worker off God, and hinder him from doing the will of the living Lord as His free servant. There are many going back to this form of spiritual bondage, and wealthy man's patronage, who choose to bear it, rather than be wholly dependent upon God for everything.

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Topics of Interest for Testing Times.

Testing times are upon the people of God as surely as among the nations, and their results are evident in many ways. Some have been brought to a deeper knowledge of God by means of the testings through which they have passed, to walk in a closer confidence, leaning on His faithful Word. Other have proved by their words and ways that they never learned from God or held in faith, truths uttered by their lips, in much assurance.

Prayer is of the greatest value, first to the soul of him who offers it, and in its results to those who are its subjects. But it must be true prayer,

begotten of the Spirit and according to the Word. Political prayers, telling God how He ought to govern His world, and patriotic prayers informing God what He ought to do for "our nation" and "our cause," are of no avail in heaven, and must be as sad discord coming from Christians on earth who sing and say they are "not of the world," but "citizens of heaven." And real prayer is not a recitation of doctrines, but a making known of our requests to God (Phil. iv. 7), in the faith that what we ask He will give (Mark xi. 24).

War can never be anything but brutal, and its effects disastrous, as its origin is diabolical. Yet how natural it becomes to glory in its success, to defend it as a necessity, and to entirely forget its awful issues for time and especially for eternity. To cherish the world's war spirit is dishonouring to the meek and lowly One whose disciple the Christian professes to be, grieving to the Spirit of God indwelling the heart, and destructive of His fruits in the character and life of the saints of God. If any do not know this, the more is the pity, for their insensibility tells how far they have departed from "the mind of Christ."

Suffering has come upon many, who do not tell their sorrows or complain of their hardships to their fellows. It is God-like for fellow-saints to seek out and comfort such, and, where there is need, to minister to them in temporal things as well as in spiritual. A sympathetic heart and an open hand go well together.

Forecasting the future is no part of the Christian's business here. He has the assurance from the lips of the living Lord, that "Times and seasons" are "set"—or appointed—by the Father "within His own authority" (Acts i. 7), and beyond what is plainly declared of these in God's written Word he knows nothing of them, and should be content to leave them there. Yet how much there is at present of foretelling and forecasting what will happen as the issues of the great conflict among the nations, connecting dates and events of Scripture with present events, and of so-called "proving" of the truth of the Bible by them. All this must be mere conjecture, and can only tend to deeper unbelief and greater confusion. "Secret things belong to the Lord:" it is not within our province to deal with or forecast them, but to hold firm in faith, and practice in obedience "those that are revealed to us" (Deut. xxix. 29) in the Word of God. And there is surely enough in these to fully occupy us "all the days" of our sojourn here.

National Sins and Divine Retribution.

The final judgment of men for their sins, and of those who have heard but rejected the Gospel, awaits a coming day. Of this the Word of God fully informs us (2 Pet. ii. 9; 2 Thess. i. 7-9; Rom. ii. 16). But even now, sinners often reap as they sow, and for flagrant breaches of the laws of humanity "receive the due reward of their deeds" (Luke xxiv. 41) in the present life. No law is more certain in its fulfilment than "With what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Matt. vii. 2). If Jacob will cheat Esau of his birthright, Laban will deprive Jacob of his wages, and so it always is. Though the ungodly often prosper and increase in riches (Psa. lxxiii. 12), such riches are apt to make themselves wings and fly away (Prov. xxiii. 3), and where they remain, there is little true happiness derived from them. The law of God's government for earth is, that integrity and righteousness reap their reward, and wrongdoing, unjudged and unrepented of, brings its present chastisement. And as it is with men so is it also with nations. "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. xiv. 34). This is not righteousness as before God, for in this aspect "there is none righteous" (Rom. iii. 10). But there is set forth in Scripture a code of righteousness as between man and man, and between nation and nation, which involves the consideration of all relationships and the fulfilment of all obligations which God has appointed. The king is not to oppress his subjects, but to rule righteously in the fear of God; and the subject is to "fear God" and "honour the king" (1 Pet. iii. 17). Legislators and rulers are not to frame oppressive laws and impose them on those whom they govern, obedience to which would necessitate disobedience to the higher claims of God. Yet this has often been done. We have a striking and solemn instance of it in the case of Nebuchadnezzar, the first great Gentile monarch, who used the power committed to him by God in raising a golden image on the plain of Dura, and demanding that all his subjects should worship it (Dan. iii. 1). But the great king had to learn that the Most High God was greater than he, and he received at His hand quick retribution in being degraded and driven to company with the beasts of the field (Dan. iv. 25) until he was made to know and own that "the heavens do rule." And so has it been with other great rulers of the past, who oppressed the peoples under their yoke, administering judgment in unrighteousness.

PHARAOH, of Egypt, ill-treated the people of Israel who were in his land, "dealing proudly" against them (Neh. ix. 10). But God saw and heard the cry of the oppressed (Exod. ii. 24, 25), and brought His swift judgment upon the oppressor.

AMALEK dared to defy the God of Israel who was leading His people through the wilderness, and came forth to oppose (Exod. xvii. 8), but the Lord, who had espoused His people's cause, utterly discomfited their enemy, and decreed perpetual war against that people (ver. 16) for their outrage.

The AMORITE nations had utterly corrupted themselves, and filled up the cup of their iniquity for ages (Gen. xv. 14, 15), until Divine retribution came upon them by the sword (Num. xxxiii. 52).

The great GENTILE EMPIRES of Babylonia, Persia, Greece, and Rome, mighty in power and rich in learning, perished in their own corruption but by the decree of God, because of their unrighteousness and oppression of His people.

And this law of God's moral government has not ceased to operate in this age of grace. True it is, He is long-suffering and bears long, but He is righteous as well as merciful, and He never fails to recompense in this world, great rulers and nations who set themselves against Him, casting off His fear, and wilfully despising His Word. He must be ill-instructed in the ways of God who does not see in the great calamity which has come on the nations of Europe, the hand of God in retribution for their unrighteousness. Who can read the history of these nations for the last half-century without seeing, that the God whose Name and Word their fathers owned, has been dishonoured and cast off more and more. And to stay this apostasy and give time for repentance, His restraining hand—long exercised on their behalf—has been withdrawn for a season, in order that those who have lightly esteemed and in many instances have opposed the truth of His Gospel, may learn through righteous retribution the error of their ways, as it is written, "When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will LEARN righteousness" (Isa. xxvi. 9). It is not to be expected that the proud, unrepentant hearts of great men, who think themselves answerable to none, will consider these operations of the hand of God and bow under them. But there are still those to be found in all these nations who fear God and reverence His Word, and who sigh and cry over the unrighteousness that reigns around them. It is surely with them to own the dishonour done to God, and supplicate His mercy.

The Consolations of God

TOWARDS HIS SORROWING PEOPLE.

TO the sad and sorrowing saint, God reveals Himself as "the God of consolation" (Rom. xv. 5) and "the God of all comfort" (2 Cor. i. 3). In the exquisite language of Isaiah lxvi. 13 He draws near in the day of sore affliction and bereavement to minister to console and cheer the downcast soul, "as one whom his mother comforteth." He has a father's pity (Psa. cxiii. 13) and a mother's tender love, and He knows, as no one else can, how to "speak comfortably" (Hos. ii. 11) to the crushed and broken heart. In the risen and glorified Man of Sorrows who, "in the days of His flesh" on earth, passed through the varied forms of suffering to which His people are subject here, they have one who can fully sympathise with them (Heb. iv. 15), and is able to succour them (Heb. ii. 18) in the day of their distress. And in the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, the Divine Paraclete, who is with and in them, they have one "called to their aid,"—as His Name denotes—who so fully enters into the depths of their sorrow, as to groan in unutterable sympathy and intercession with their sighing spirits. Surely, then, the sorrowing saint who uses what God has thus provided, is not left to say, "I looked for comforters, but found none" (Psa. lxxix. 20), but rather may, with the Psalmist of ancient time exclaim, "In the multitude of my thoughts within me, Thy comforts delight my soul" (Psa. xciv. 19), and with the suffering apostle who lived in the fuller revelation of the

present age of "exceeding" grace say, "Our consolation also aboundeth by Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. i. 5). The words used by the Spirit of God in the Hebrew Scriptures to express these consolations of our God, tell out how varied His consolations are. One word means to "give forth sighs with" (Job iii. 11), another "to console in affliction" (Psa. cxix. 40), a third "to speak to the heart" (Hos. ii. 14), a fourth "to brighten up" (Job ix. 27, R.V., marg.). In the language of the New Testament the words generally used mean, to "give solace" (Phil. ii. 1) and "to refresh" (Phil. 9). They express the result of hearing the words, and receiving the consolation of the Paraclete called to our help. With such a ministry of Divine consolation and heavenly comforts coming direct from the Triune God to the saints, over whose course the ever waking Eye watches continually (Psa. cxxi. 3), there is no cause for the man of earth who looks on the bereft and sorrow-crushed soul in its agony, having to say as Eliphaz, the Temanite said to Job scornfully in the day of his dire distress, while his spirit was "turned against God," and his soul misread the Divine dealings with him, "Are the consolations of God too small for thee" (Job xv. 11-13, R.V.)? This they surely are not, but they have to be received in order to be enjoyed. And the soul living in the experience of them will stand in the midst of human woe a witness to the reality of these Divine consolations, speaking of "the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulations, that we may be able to comfort them who are in any trouble."

Intercourse with God.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS TO PREACHERS.

BY DR. A. T. PIERSON.

I DO not usually refer to my own experience in public speaking. I never do so without some misgiving. There is always an element of danger in it. But I will say here and now, for the sake of others who are seeking to serve the same Lord in the ministry of His Word, that I have never known anything in my life that has been the channel of so much real blessing to me, as the habit of withdrawing myself from public duties and even from intercourse with fellow-servants of Christ, and retiring for a season to be alone with God. And this has been especially so at times when I have felt that my ministry lacked freshness and power from lack of conscious contact with God. I have been asked to take services and fulfil engagements that crowded so close upon one another, that I had no opportunity for retiring to renew my acquaintance with God and receive fresh strength from Him for my service. I have found that when this renewal of intercourse with God was lacking, there was a corresponding lack of freshness and power, even when the time was spent in ministering the Word to others, in spiritual associations. There is danger even in speaking on spiritual subjects, that self may creep in and show itself at the front, and it needs the soul's personal contact with God to curb that danger. And there are influences always ready to exert themselves which are hostile to spiritual life. Sometimes Christian people

make remarks that, falling on the ear, are damaging to spiritual life. They tend to exalt one's estimate of self. They extol the servant rather than the Master. Compliments are passed along about what you have said and how well you said it, which tend to obscure the singleness of your aim to please God alone in your service. Loud applause, common enough even in great gatherings where the Word of God is being spoken, is, in my judgment, wholly abhorrent to God. If a servant of the Lord is speaking to an assembly of His people, in the Name of God, he does not want to know what his hearers like, or what they do not like. It may be, that what they do not like they most need, and God likes most; and that what they do like and applaud, is what is least suited to their condition, and what has little in it for God at all. Such things, even among children of God, tend to dissipate singleness of purpose, and affect the quality of our service for Him. Hence the need of a constant renewal of the soul's intercourse with God, of getting alone with Him and back into that light in which things can be seen in their true character. If it be our habit to so converse with God and to wait in prayer before Him, we shall prove in larger measure the power of God in our ministry. And we should be careful not to allow anything to come into our personal, or social, or family life, which would prevent such intercourse with God, or to cultivate the companionship of any who would draw us away from the secret of His counsel, or deprive us of the consciousness of His presence.

Worship, According to God.

WORSHIP, as it is presented in the Bible, is the overflowing of a believer's heart to God, whose grace and love he has come to know, and to the Lord Jesus Christ, whose Person and Work he has learned to value and to trust. Worship is not *prayer*, for in prayer we are occupied with our wants and with a God who can meet them with His fulness. And where God's people know their need, and lay hold on God together, this is a prayer meeting as described in Acts xii. 6. Worship is not *praise*, for in praise we are occupied with our mercies and with the blessings God has bestowed, and so, like the priests of old, we make "one sound in praising and thanking the Lord" (2 Chron. v. 13). This would be a praise or thanksgiving meeting. Of such there are far too few. In *worship* a redeemed and regenerated people express their homage and devotion to God for what He is in Himself as revealed in His Son, and to their hearts by His Spirit. When the saints of God "come together in one place" (1 Cor. xi. 21), led by the Spirit in subjection to the Lord, to "worship the Father," this is the highest form of assembling, and the nearest to what will be the occupation of the redeemed in heaven. The saints of God do not come together then to *get*, but to *GIVE*. They bring their baskets of first-fruits (Deut. xxvi.), gathered and arranged, as before the Lord in their private and family devotions, to present to Him in concord with fellow-worshippers. And none should appear before the Lord

on such occasions "empty." The soul having satiated itself in God, fed on Christ, meditating in the Word, where both are revealed, under the Spirit's guidance, would have the wherewithal for worship when "the hour has come," for the living Lord to take His place in the midst to gather the spices of the orchard (Song chap. iii.), which He has cultivated and dressed, so to speak.

But is it always so? Is it not a fact that most of those who assemble as worshippers come to get a crumb for their hungered souls, rather than with an overflowing basket of first-fruits to offer to their God? And many have had a scramble to get there in time, worried and careworn, more in need of a handful of fresh manna *from* God, than in readiness to share in the flow of worship to God. Well, He is full of compassion, and as of old the Lord fed the fainting multitude, so He still meets His people as they are. But it lowers the character of that unique assembling of the saints to worship God, when almost every string has to be tuned, before the Spirit can bring worship from the harp, and when the ministry of the Word has to provide that necessary condition in which united worship is possible. It is a sin that should be judged, repented of, confessed, and put away. It is a robbing of God of that which is His due. The praying and the feeding, the meditation and the gathering of the first-fruits should not be crushed into the last few minutes before leaving for the assembly of the saints, but be going on all the time. This, and this alone, insures a continuous flow of worship. J. G.

"In Christ."

A THREEFOLD VIEW OF THIS TRUTH.

BY JAMES FORBES.

THE expression "IN CHRIST" is found throughout the New Testament Epistles. It is particularly used by Paul. There are three views of being "IN CHRIST" presented to us in Paul's Epistles.

"IN CHRIST"—in the *Past*. In the purpose of God, concerning Adam and his wife, before she was formed, we see in figure what God has counselled for Christ and the Church. The eternal counsel was, that He who was the Son in the eternal Godhead, should become Man. And it was the eternal purpose that in the form of Man, all blessing and divine honour would be given to Him (Phil. ii. 6). Just as God blessed Eve ere she was formed, and God saw Eve before she came into being, so God saw the members of the body of Christ, and blessed them ere they had done either good or evil (Eph. i. 3, 4). This most glorious revelation was given to Paul to communicate. We do well to ponder a theme so divine. It is deep waters to swim in (Ezek. xlvi. 5), far beyond the human mind to fathom. What infinite delight must have filled the heart of God, in the design of such a glorious work! Millions of beings, fore-known before they had a being, and predestined to a place of blessing independent of any merit on their part! This, surely, is a display of divine grace. In Psa. cxxxix. 16 we read, "Thine eyes did see My substance, yet being imperfect, and in Thy book all My members were written, which in continuance were fashioned,

when as yet there was none of them." This is beyond our power to measure, but it is revealed to faith, and we receive it and adore. Faith can say, "God has fore-known me and predestined me for a measure of blessing, which eye hath not seen nor ear heard."

IN CHRIST—in the *Present*. Look at Rom. xvi. 7. Here is the same writer who, in the magnificent apprehension of divine grace, has been ministering to our souls of the eternal counsels of God. Here he speaks of being "IN CHRIST" in another way. It is the manward view. Here there is a beginning. In Eph. it is before time began. Here we see it is *in time*. How do we reach the place of being IN CHRIST in time. It is illustrated for us in the language of 1 Cor. xv. 22. All who are born of the human race are "in Adam." It is not by our doings that we are in this state. We are born into it. And born into the Adamic race, we become children of the first man, with all that this entails. This is an illustration of what Paul says here of some who were "IN CHRIST before him." To be in Christ is no more than attainment than being in Adam. We are identified with the first Adam's race by natural generation. We become identified with the race of the last Adam by spiritual regeneration. This entails a great deal, Godward and manward. On God's side it involves the whole pathway of humiliation of the Son of God, the atonement He made for sin, His rising again and ascent on high. All this was preparatory to our being brought into Christ. This was God's side. But there is man's side, and this we will consider next.

The Unchanging Word,

AND ITS VALUE TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

OF only one Book can it be said, that it is "the Word of God which *liveth* and *abideth* for ever" (1 Pet. i. 23)—or, as it may be rendered—"God's ever-living and enduring Word." The reason for this is, the Bible is God's own Book. Its words came originally from Him; they are "God-breathed" (2 Tim. iii. 16). And these words of God are as much alive to-day as when they were first uttered. They throb with living energy and power, when they speak to the soul. The Book as a whole and in its every detail is a message from God to us to-day. It is by means of this living Word that men are "born again" (1 Pet. i. 23). The new life in them is fed also by this "Word-milk," and unto it the spiritual life seeks as a healthy newborn infant to its mother's breasts. As Bengel says, "It is their only occupation, so strong is their desire for it." By its means the living Lord "nourishes" (Eph. v. 26) His own. It is a "living Word" (Heb. iv. 12), and makes its voice to be heard. It is "powerful"—energising—and it infuses its energy into those who habitually use it. If any neglect the use of this living Word as their daily food, they soon decline in spiritual life and energy, and become like unto men who, "fasting, faint in the way" (Matt. xv. 32). No Christian can maintain spiritual health and vigour who fails to use this living Word of God for daily food and daily cleansing (Eph. v. 26, with Psa. cxix. 9). It is God's appointed means of strength and sanctification, of

renewal and cleansing. Its ministry in fresh and living power through the lips of God's servants, has a wide and wonderful scope, as 2 Tim. iii. 16-17 informs us. It profits in "teaching," for it is the voice of the Spirit (1 Cor. ii. 13) to the soul. It is needed for "reproof"—that is conviction; it grips the conscience, bringing home sin. It says, "Thou art the man." Soft and delectable things are not always in season, a well-balanced ministry has in it reproof as well as consolation. And it is for "correction"—that is putting straight what has gone wrong, setting up what has fallen into disuse or decay, in the soul and in the life, in the family and in the church. The ever-living Word in the hands of the fully-furnished minister, in whose heart the Word of Christ dwells as a rich treasure (Col. iii. 16), is thus the appointed instrument and means for reclamation, restoration, edification, and equipment, for all time and under all conditions, for it "abideth for ever," never losing its virtue, never slackening its grip, never becoming obsolete or out of date. There generally has been, and there is now in alarming measure, neglect of the use of this ever-living, ever-abiding Word of God, among the saints. Full and free use of it has always marked revival and extension among God's people, while neglect of and trifling with the living Word are sure symptoms of decline and backsliding. Let us be honest with ourselves before God in this matter. It is vital. For, as God through Moses said to Israel, concerning its use, "It is not a vain thing for you, because it is your *life*" (Deut. xxxii. 47).

J. R.

Baptism in the Spirit.

W. R. LEWIS.

IT is no new thing for the Spirit to operate in the souls of men, quickening, begetting anew (John iii. 8), and qualifying for ministry (Exod. xxxi. 3; Num. xxvii. 18). He has from the beginning wrought in these ways, not to speak of His work in Creation (Psa. civ. 30), and in Divine government (Isa. iv. 4; lix. 19; Ezek. i. 12). But what is new is the baptism of believers by Christ in one Spirit into one body collectively, and to have the Spirit dwelling and abiding within each individually. This is something peculiar to this age. When we read that saints were "baptised" in the Spirit, or that He was "poured forth" upon them, or that He had "fallen upon" them, all these expressions are equivalent terms, and are each to be interpreted as the simple *reception* of the Spirit by faith (see Acts ii. 33; x. 45; viii. 16; x. 44; xi. 15, 17). The Body of Christ was formed by this baptism on the day of Pentecost, and now we share in the effects of that baptism and gift of the Spirit as an individual experience when we receive Him, and we receive Him, when we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (Gal. iii. 14; Tit. iii. 6). We become thereby members of the Body of Christ.

In the beginning, evident signs often accompanied the Gift and the reception of the Spirit. But such outward expressions of His power, which may or may not accompany the presence of the Spirit, must be distinguished from the Gift of the Spirit Himself. The gifts (*charismata*)

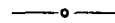
received for testimony were quite distinct from the Gift (*dorea*) of the Spirit. He is the *Father's* Gift through Christ: whereas the gifts for testimony were the *Spirit's* gifts. The best evidence that we have shared in the effects of this baptism is not by the presence of such outward signs, but by the manifestation to others of His goodly fruit in character and life (Gal. v. 22), and the conscious knowledge in ourselves of the possession of a living faith in the Saviour, and of our relationship to God as children. We can confidently call Him Father (Rom. viii. 15). We are also consciously united to Christ and to one another. We find a closer tie between fellow-children of God than any natural tie. "If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it: or one member be honoured all the members rejoice with it" (1 Cor. xii. 16). It is only because we have been baptised in one Spirit into one body that we can know anything of this, and if we do, then we have received the Spirit, we have been baptised in Him, we are indwelt by Him, we are members of the Body of Christ.

All this is now the common portion and privilege of *all* believers (1 Cor. xii. 13; Gal. iii. 2; Rom. v. 5; 1 Cor. ii. 12; 1 Thess. iv. 8; James iv. 5; 1 John iii. 24; Jude 19; Rom. viii. 9). The gifts of the Spirit may be withdrawn, but not the Gift of the Spirit, for He abides with us for ever (John xiv. 16). What He is then as the Father's Gift to us through the Son, is of incomparably greater value than any gifts He may divide amongst us as He wills (1 Cor. xii. 11). Some of these, given at the

first to vouch for His novel presence on earth, may be no longer needed. But *His* presence, as the Witness of the perfect purgation of our sins (Heb. x. 15); the seal of our present redemption (Eph. i. 13; iv. 30), the Earnest of our future glory (2 Cor. i. 22; v. 5; Eph. i. 13, 14), the Unction whereby we are taught to abide in Christ (2 Cor. i. 21; 1 John ii. 20, 27); the One by whom the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts (Rom. v. 5), and the things that are freely given to us of God are known (1 Cor. ii. 12); who takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto us, and guides us into all truth (John xiv. 13, 15); who as the Spirit of the Son of God enables us to cry "Abba, Father" (Gal. iv. 6), and as the Spirit of Christ produces in us moral likeness to Christ (Rom. viii. 9, 10), and finally whose presence within us is the ground of our ultimate resurrection and full conformity to Christ (Rom. viii. 11, κ.v., marg.)—His presence is indispensable. We shall honour Him therefore not by praying for a "baptism" as if we had never received Him, or for a fresh "outpouring" as if He had gone away, unfaithful to His trust, but remembering that our very bodies are His temple (1 Cor. vi. 19), we shall honour Him by separating from everything that would grieve Him, and yielding ourselves in unreserved obedience to the Word of God, count upon His assured presence with us according to the Saviour's promise.

Little did men think on that momentous day of Pentecost, that a Person in the Godhead had come down to earth to dwell. The outward effects of His coming

were seen and heard by a few, but they did not know, nor did those who were then baptised in Him fully learn for some time to come, that on that day the Church was born and the body of Christ came into being. Some of the results were manifest, but the fact of the baptism itself was unseen by men, for "The world seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him, but YE know Him, for He dwelleth *with* you, and shall be *in* you" (John xiv. 17).



Dependence Upon God.

THERE is nothing in all this world more deeply blessed than to lead a life of habitual dependence upon God; to hang upon Him moment by moment, to wait upon Him, and cling to Him for everything, to have all our springs in Him; it is the true secret of peace and of holy independence of the creature. The soul that can really say, "*All* my springs are in Thee," is lifted above all creature confidences, human hopes, and earthly expectations. It is not that God does not use the creature in a thousand ways to minister to us: we do not at all mean this. He does use the creature, but if we *lean* upon the creature, instead of leaning upon Him, we shall very speedily get leanness and barrenness into our souls. We imagine, oftentimes, that we are leaning upon and looking to God, when in reality, if we would look honestly at the root of things, and judge ourselves in the immediate presence of God, we should find an appalling amount of the leaven of creature confidence.—*C. H. Mackintosh.*

Baalam and His Parables,

WITH THEIR MESSAGE TO US TO-DAY.

Read Numbers, Chapters xxiii. to xxv.

FOURTH PAPER. W. J. McCLURE, CALIFORNIA.

ISRAEL'S strength was not in numbers, for they were "the fewest of all people" (Deut. vii. 7). "The strength of Israel" (1 Sam. xv. 29) was the Lord in their midst. Our minds turn to what is said to the church of Philadelphia (Rev. iii. 8), "Thou hast a little strength." A little strength is weakness. But see the might that was theirs! Christ presents Himself to them as "He that hath the key of David, He that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth." It is true, numbers and gift do not characterise Philadelphia, but the feeble few are gathered unto the One who has all power and authority, and in His might they prevail. Philadelphia surely reminds us of what we read at the return from Babylon. A small remnant in great weakness, seek to set up God's order in Jerusalem once more. It is possible that some among them may have been cast down because they had not the "glory" in their midst, as once had been the case, ere Israel had been carried away for their sin. And it would have been easy enough for one whose heart was not right, to make comparisons between what was true then and what was their present condition, and hold back from going heartily with those who were there. But God's Word to that feeble company, seeking to go according to His Word, was, "I am with you, saith the *Lord of Hosts*," and again, "My *Spirit* remaineth among you, fear ye not" (Hag. ii. 4, 5).

Here, then, is real weakness; but it is matched by Almighty power! And how considerate it is of God, to bring in His title, "*Lord of Hosts*," in connection with this feeble company of His people, who are thus seeking to please Him.

The *Hope* of the Church next fills the prophet's vision. "There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel" (chap. xxiv. 17. "A *Star*" and "a *Sceptre*"" How accurately these two similies foretell the coming of Christ, first to the air *for* His people, and next His coming to the earth *with* them, to reign. He speaks of Himself at the close of the Seven Epistles (Rev. ii. 28), and then at the close of the Book (chap. xxii. 16), as "The Morning Star." The morning star is not seen by everybody, and when the Lord comes to the air, only those who are saved will see Him. The last sight the world got of Christ was, as His blessed body was being borne to Joseph's new tomb. And their next sight will be when He comes to judge this guilty scene, and to set up His throne. But His own saw Him often between His resurrection and ascension, and they will see Him, and be with Him, before He comes to reign. It is a most unscriptural theory, that only some of the redeemed will be taken when the Lord comes. This would make our salvation, which at His coming is completed (see Phil. iii. 20; Rom. xiii. 11), dependent on ourselves, which it is not. It is all of grace from first to last. "They that are Christ's at His coming" (1 Cor. xv. 23) leaves no doubt that all who belong to Him, dead and living, will be taken to heaven when He comes.

God's Earthly People,

AND THE EVENTS OF MATTHEW XXIV.

WILLIAM HOSTE, B.A.

WHO are the people in view in Matt. xxiv.? Some believe that our Lord is speaking here of His Church, and infer that she must pass through "the Great Tribulation." They try to differentiate between this and the "time of Jacob's trouble," which most believe are identical. It is quite true that believers of the present time must through "much tribulation enter the kingdom of God" (Acts xiv. 22). But such "tribulation" is not the same as "THE Great Tribulation." Before that terrible period arrives, the Lord will have come, and taken the Church from this scene, as Enoch was taken before the flood. It is the remnant of Israel that is here in view (represented in the disciples) who, like Noah, will be preserved through it. When we read a chapter like Matt. xxiv., we must be very careful to note who are in view throughout. The Church and Israel cannot be recognised by God as on earth at the same time, in the place of testimony. Israel had to be set aside before the Church could be revealed, and the Church will be taken "away from the evil to come" before Israel can be grafted in again to her own olive tree. If, then, the Church is in view in Matt. xxiv., Israel cannot be, and *vice versa*. What do we see then? Who are these people living at Jerusalem and in Judea, in a day when the temple will have been rebuilt, and there will be once more "a holy place" on earth? Are they the

Church? No, they are clearly of Israel. The key to the chapter is, I believe, found in verse 15, "When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place—(whoso readeth let him understand)." Do not these last words, added by our Lord to Daniel's statement, serve to emphasise its importance? We naturally turn to the ninth of Daniel to see what is meant. Clearly the people who are spoken of there, are the same whom the Lord has in mind in Matt. xxiv. Is then Gabriel speaking to Daniel of the Church? No. He is speaking to him of his *own people*, the nation of Israel. "Seventy weeks are determined upon *thy people* (the Jews) and upon thy holy city (Jerusalem) to finish transgression." How can Israel in Daniel ix. suddenly become the Church in Matthew xxiv.? Impossible. When this sacrilegious portent is seen, let them that dwell in Judæa "flee to the mountains," and let their flight be in electric haste, for not an instant is to be lost. Here is Satan's opportunity at last. Hitherto he has been checked and hindered. Now at length he can give full vent to his diabolical fury against God and His Christ. The storm will fall "like a bolt from the blue." Let them pray that their flight be not aggravated by the rigours of Winter, nor curtailed by the exigencies of the Sabbath. Can these persons living in Jerusalem close to the holy place; these dwellers in Judæa under sabbatical law, be the Church? Surely no unprejudiced person can hesitate to answer, NO, THEY ARE JEWS, who will be God's witnesses then.

The Preacher's Column.

OUTLINES OF EVANGELISTIC SUBJECTS.

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 xx. 21).
Submission Secured (ver. 11, with Acts xi. 21).
Retribution Effectuated (ver. 12, with 2 Thess. i. 7-9).

CHRIST OUR ROCK.

As a Foundation to Build on (1 Pet. ii. 4).
As a Cleft to Hide in (Song ii. 14).
As Shadow to Shelter under (Psa. xxxii. 2).
As Fortress to Defend (Psa. xxxi. 3).

NOTES ON SCRIPTURE STUDIES.

CHRIST IS ALL TO THE CHRISTIAN.

A Study in the Philippian Epistle.

In Christ (Phil. iii. 9) is his Position.
To Live Christ (Phil. i. 21) his Purpose.
To Win Christ (Phil. iii. 8) his Prize.
To be with Christ (Phil i. 23) his Prospect.

THE CHRISTIAN'S OUTFIT.

CLOTHED to Sit (Luke xv. 22, with Isa. lxi. 10).
SHOD to Walk (Deut. xxxiii. 25, with Eph. vi. 15).
GIRDLED to Serve (Psa. xviii. 32, with John xiii. 4).
ARMED to Fight (Eph. vi. 10, with 1 Tim. vi. 12).

CHRIST IN THE PSALMS

(Psalms xxii., xxiii., xxiv).

Christ our Surety on the Cross—Dying.
Christ our Shepherd in Heaven—Living.
Christ as King on the Throne—Reigning.

1. The Sacrifice, Substitute, Saviour.
2. The Shepherd, Guide, Restorer, Host.
3. The Princely Leader, Victor, Ruler.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

FIXING DATES FOR THE LORD'S RETURN.

Soon after I was converted, I learned as I believe from God's Word, that the coming of the Lord from heaven, to take His living saints out of the world, and to raise those who have fallen asleep, waits on no prophecy to be fulfilled, and is not governed by any date named in the Word for the fulfilment of events on earth. But recently it has been taught, and is widely propagated in booklets, that the day of the year for the Lord's return is made

known in the typical teaching of Lev. xxiii., and ought to be expected on the first day of the seventh month. Is this according to the Word?

The fixing of dates for the advent of the Lord and the end of the Times of the Gentiles, is an ancient figment, which appears now and again in a new setting, each writer claiming to have received "fresh light" on certain dates that appear in the Books of Daniel and the Revelation. We believe all such teaching to be the result of mixing things that differ. The distinct calling, character and hope of the Church, was "a mystery hid in God," and "not made known unto the sons of men" (Eph. iii. 5, 9) until it was revealed to Paul, who was its chief "minister." Whatever of it is foreshadowed in the types, such as Gen. ii. 18-24, with Eph. v. 30-32; Gen. xxiv., with 2 Cor. xi. 2; Lev. xxiii. 15-17, with Acts ii. 1, was enfolded and unknown until the full time came for its revelation, and it is only in the light of this revelation in the New Testament Epistles, that we see the beauty of the foreshadowing type. Concerning the manner and details of the Lord's coming for His people,—which event marks the consummation of the Church,—the apostle tells us this also was "a mystery" (1 Cor. xv. 5)—that is something which could not be known until the time for its revelation had come. And he further informs us in 1 Thess. iv. 15 that this came to him "by the Word of the Lord." Yet not a single hint is given concerning the year or month or day, in which it would be fulfilled. Nor is there reference to any date or type of Old Testament time, as there clearly is to Lev. xxiii. 15, in the record of the Church's birthday, in Acts ii. 1. The length of the period of the Church's formation and continuance on earth is nowhere named in the Word, and it cannot be discovered by any calculation based on dates given regarding the duration of the Times of the Gentiles, or the sequence of events on earth concerning which such dates are given in the Word. The day of consummation of the present work of God in "taking out a people from the Gentiles for His Name" (Acts xv. 14), is not to be reckoned by any reference to "the Times of the Gentiles" being "fulfilled" (Luke xxi. 24). The former is an event from the heavens, and its results wholly toward a people for these heavens, and is not affected one way or another by what is transpiring among the nations. And while it may be freely admitted that unwarrantable expressions have been used in speaking of the imminence of the Lord's coming, nothing can be allowed that

postpones it for an hour, so as to vitiate its power as the proper hope of the Christian and the Church. To "wait for the Son from heaven" (1 Thess. i. 10), to be "looking for that blessed hope" (Phil. iii. 20), cannot be construed to mean that the Lord must come on the first day of September, or any other date. The evil effects of all such fixing of dates are well known to most of us; they have made shipwreck of the faith of some who adopted them, filled the scoffer's mouth with scorn, and cast discredit on the testimony of those who "love His appearing." "Times and seasons," we are told, have been set by the Father "within His own authority" (Acts i. 7), and it is not for us to know them. They have no bearing whatever on the heavenly hope and destiny of the saints of God, therefore the apostle says there was "no need that aught be written" (1 Thess. v. 1, R.V.) concerning them in connection with the hope of the saints. For these "times and seasons" are without exception—as are all the dates of the prophetic Scriptures,—connected with the earth and God's earthly people, who will find in them comfort and guidance amid the awful experiences which await them after the Lord comes FOR His saints, and before He returns with them in manifested power and glory, to punish His foes and deliver His earthly people from the hand of their destroyers.

Answers to Correspondents.

ZENA.—Your paper is too political for our pages. We do not intermeddle in these matters. Other magazines that do, may insert it.

NEMO.—There is nothing in the Scriptures to warrant the statement that a Christian is "free from the laws of the country" in which he sojourns. Rom. xiii. 1-6, 1 Pet. iii. 13-17 very clearly teach his subjection thereto. And this, in all circumstances, should be readily given, except where their demands necessitate open disobedience to the higher claims of God (Acts v. 29).

H. L., ONTARIO.—The times call for decision and a clear testimony to the truth of gathering of saints unto the Name of the Lord, in subjection to His Word alone. It has become quite fashionable within recent years, to discard sectarian names, and to meet "simply as Christians," receiving everybody and accepting everything that bears that name. But this is not what the Word demands, or what it designates as being "gathered UNTO" and acting IN "the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. v. 4).

M. M., ROMFORD.—Divine judgment in wrath came upon the Jewish people "to the uttermost" (1 Thess. ii. 16), during what is known as the present "age of grace." And there is nothing in the Word to warrant the thought, less still to sustain the doctrine, that God is not so dealing in retribution for sins committed but unrepented of by individuals and nations now. He used the sword of Titus and his Roman armies to inflict His wrath upon Jerusalem and the Jews in A.D. 70, and He may use the ambitions of haughty emperors and military leaders to inflict His judgment on peoples for their wrongdoing now, without either thereby sanctioning their hostility or approving of their deeds. Indeed, having served the Divine purpose, they in turn, like Nebuchadnezzar and Nero, may become themselves the subjects of God's judgment.

G. R., EXETER.—The coming of the Lord for His saints, and His appearing with them, are regarded as one event by those who teach that the Church—or that part of it on earth at His coming—will go through the tribulation. And they do not generally admit the distinction claimed by the apostle for the Church in Eph. iii. 3-6, but insist that all saints from Adam are included in the term. That there will be saints on earth during the tribulation, Matt. xxiv. 21, 22, and Rev. xii. 14, tell us, but that they form any part of the Church, the body of Christ, which is complete at His coming and our gathering unto Him (2 Thess. ii. 1), we deny.

J. L., AYR.—The words of 1 Thess. v. 12, evidently addressed to the rank and file of the Thessalonian assembly, set fully before them their responsibility toward those brethren who were labouring among them, and standing before them as guides and leaders. It is clear from this, that such brethren had neither been "chosen by vote" for that position, nor officially "appointed" to fill it. To "know" (ver. 12) that is to recognise and acknowledge them as doing the work, and to "esteem them in love very highly," in a service in which there is much to grieve and for which there is no present reward, are conditions only possible to a people in whose midst such service is rendered, and who are able to discern what true spiritual oversight is. And there must be freedom from prejudice, partisan feeling, and personal affinity, otherwise men who have neither call or fitness for such work will be foisted into and maintained in a false position, while those with heart and fitness are excluded. The varied "voting" and "appointing" theories, do away with all need for such discernment, and are simply

man's inventions, and clerical assumptions, quite easily introduced, but not so easily uprooted where they get a hold.

A. M'K., LOTHIAN.—If the assembly in which you are, does not carry on its Gospel work on lines that are, as you judge, according to Scripture, you should seek opportunity to instruct them what is the right way. If they do not wish to alter their way or allow you to share with them in the work, on such lines as you approve, your responsibility is fulfilled; for you must not force your view upon them, or seek to coerce them into what you believe to be the Lord's way, least of all to incite division. There is plenty of scope for Gospel effort by individuals, and if you are willing to take up what God gives you, you will not long want a job, or fail to find a sphere of labour.

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Answers to Special Questions.

What was the character of the disorder, and what the measure of discipline meted out to those charged with it in 2 Thess. iii. 6, 7? Were they still of those "within" (c/f 1 Cor. v. 12) the assembly at Thessalonica, and, if so, what do the words "withdraw yourselves," imply?

ANSWER A.—The words of 2 Thess. iii. 11 show, that some of these disorderly workers were persistent idlers, refusing to work for their daily bread. In the light of the verses that follow, we learn that some of them, while not busy in their own legitimate business, were overbusy interfering with the affairs of others. To "withdraw" individually from such is God's plan to bring them to consider their ways, that they may be "ashamed" (ver. 14), and as a result, judge themselves and break off their unseemly conduct. There is no thought of excommunication; it is discipline within the assembly, never easy because of personal affinities and friendships, but when carried out in God's way often prevents the necessity for harder measures. J. S.

ANSWER B.—There are many disorders in walk among Christians which, although not so serious as to incur assembly discipline, call for personal admonition (1 Thess. v. 12), and if of a graver character and persisted in, for public rebuke (1 Tim. v. 20), the object always being conviction and recovery. If there were more of such gracious and yet faithful shepherding and dealing, many sad scandals which bring dishonour on the Lord's Name would be cut short and evil prevented. It needs

more grace and wisdom to do such work than most of us possess, hence the scarcity of it. Harder measures are easier, and too often resorted to because they get rid of a troubler whose ways cast discredit on us, with little consideration of how God has to bear with ourselves. G. W.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—The term, "the disorderly," occurs first in 1 Thess. v. 14, and means those who "do not keep rank," because of insubordination to rule; self-pleasing and high-minded persons who have a way of their own. At this stage, it is the duty of those shepherding and overseeing the flock to "admonish" (ver. 12) such. This includes (a) instruction, where ignorance may be the cause, and (b) warning, where wilfulness is manifest. If this mild measure fails to restore, and "walking disorderly" becomes habitual, the apostle then uses his authority and "commands," in "the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ," that the whole assembly "withdraw"—a word which implies gradual but definite refusal to have free intercourse with such while in their lawless condition, but there is no harder measure contemplated, certainly not expulsion. This is a case of internal discipline, and its object is to cause the offending one to feel he is not right with God, or consistent in his conduct before men. To have due effect, it must be shared by all—the word "yourselves" including the whole assembly acting under the counsel of its guides, with a view to the man's ultimate good, for if even one gives him carnal sympathy in his wrongdoing, and makes him think he is being martyred, he is almost sure to be hardened in his sin and true restoration hindered. There are some who go where they will, and do as they please, without the least consideration of how their conduct stumbles others and weakens the testimony of the assembly, of which they form part, who need and ought to have such isolation as these words command. For if they are allowed to go on unchallenged, others will follow. On the other hand, undue severity, with a graceless attitude toward one who may be more in need of instruction and a helping hand, than we know, is liable to drive from the circle altogether, and into associations where there is little hope of any real restoration of soul or recovery from unlovely ways. Were there more watchfulness and timely help given in such cases, there would be fewer against whose names on the register the sad word "left" is often lightly recorded, and nothing further done to restore their souls to God and recover them to their place in the assembly.

Daily Converse with the Lord.

AN aged saint of blessed memory, whose call was to in walk lowly paths, was wont to say, that of all the privileges of his Christian life the greatest was, to "daily converse with the Lord about everything." He had his full measure of earth's griefs and sorrows, with many and sore bereavements, yet "the peace of God" was in his life guarding heart and mind, in a measure I have never seen it in any other. To "converse with the Lord about everything" is the common privilege of all His people. It is the life to which they are called, and upon which they enter at their new and heavenly birth. They are called into "fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John i. 3). The new nature in them desires this fellowship, and the indwelling Spirit of the Son (Gal. iv. 6) gives them the competency for it. And fellowship is just having things in common and "conversing" about them all the time. Yet, alas! how few seem to know much of this in actual daily experience among the ordinary things of life! It is easy enough to first neglect and then to lose this holy habit of "conversing with the Lord about everything." And where this is so, the light of heaven soon goes out of the Christian's life. Then he begins to shift for himself, and to imitate the world's way of getting along on his own resources, with little recognition of God.

This habit of "converse with the Lord" needs cultivation. It cannot be summoned and expected to come into operation in a moment, if neglected at other

times. It should be the daily habit of the saint, to tell the Lord and to consult Him about everything. "In *all* thy ways acknowledge Him" (Prov. iv. 6), and "In *everything* by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known" (Phil. iv. 6), are two of the simple "laws" that govern and guide this life of daily "converse with the Lord." And another is finely expressed in the desire of the Psalmist, "Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk, for I lift up my soul unto Thee" (Psa. cxliii. 8). To listen to the Lord while He speaks to us through His Word, to have the ear opened morning by morning to hear (Isa. l. 4), and to be willing "to *do* His will" (John vii. 17, R.V.), are essential conditions to a life of daily "converse with the Lord about everything." You cannot expect God to hear you when you call upon Him, if you turn a careless ear to His voice to you. It is those in whom His Word abides (John xv. 7) who receive what they ask of Him. And it is in this confidence that they make known their desires unto Him (1 John v. 14). It is a life like this spent in daily converse with the Living Lord, who is for and with His people, that counts. There is no other life worth living. In days of trial and severe testing, nothing less can sustain. In times of sorrow and of loss it is the true solace. To bring in CHRIST makes the bitter sweet. To have His enjoyed sympathy in trial, His Divine consolation in sorrow, His abounding grace and His imparted strength in time of need, is "life indeed," even in the dark and weary days through which we pass. J.R.

Future Events :

AS THEY ARE FORETOLD IN THE WORD.

TO be saved by grace, and rejoicing in hope of glory (Rom. v. 2), is the happy portion of the people of God. While death and judgment loom before men of the world (Heb. ix. 27), for the saints, death is abolished and judgment past. In the blissful knowledge of present acceptance with God, and possession of His great salvation, they are able to look into the future without fear. And it has been given them by the Spirit to know "things to come" (John xvi. 13), so far as God has been pleased to reveal them. Not as mere matters of information, but to operate powerfully in their hearts, and to mould and fashion their lives while here on earth. To be "looking for that blessed hope" (Phil. iii. 20), and waiting "for the Son from heaven" (1 Thess. i. 9), was the attitude of the early saints, and in the power of this hope they "purified" (1 John iii. 3) themselves, so as to be found of Him "without spot and blameless" (2 Pet. iii. 14). But the mists of tradition arose, and the bright and blessed hope of the Lord's personal return to the air, to raise His dead and change His living saints, and to gather them out from the world around and unto Himself in the heavens (2 Thess. ii. 1), was quickly lost. And then the Church joined hands with the world, and began to make it as comfortable and happy a place to live in as possible, congratulating itself often on its success, and expecting to at length achieve its purpose and see a "universal kingdom of Christ" extending from shore

to shore, with the knowledge of His Name over all the earth "as the waters cover the sea." While events proceeded along their ordinary course, this was the doctrine taught from most of the pulpits of Christendom, and generally received by unthinking people without question. But since the outbreak of hostilities among those nations whose boast had been the loudest of their rapid progress toward this consummation, and their return to barbarities and crimes which would make "the heathen" blush, some have been led to think, and in their thinking to turn to God and His Word for light regarding their present distress and their future prospects. And there are thousands of sad and sorrowing hearts whose earthly hopes have been blasted, who need the word of goodly comfort and holy cheer, which a right understanding of future events, as they are revealed in the Sacred Word, is well calculated to impart. With this in view, it seems seasonable to make a restatement of truths "most surely believed"—"which have been fully established (R.V. marg.) among us" (Luke i. 1.) regarding the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the events which will transpire in the heavens and on the earth connected with His coming, as these are set forth in the Scriptures. In order to do this as simply and concisely as possible, in the hope it may lead to personal and prayerful searching of and meditation in the Word of God, we shall here present the subject in its order: first, the personal return of the Son of God to the air *for* His people; next, His appearing as Son of Man to the earth *with* His

people, and the chief events which fill up the interval between. The following twelve brief papers by twelve accredited writers of the past and present, deal with the coming of the Lord *for* His people, to be followed next month by twelve papers on His appearing *with* His people in manifested power and glory. May it please the Lord to make this ministry a message of help to all His believing people.

OUTLINES OF FUTURE EVENTS.

W. H. Hunter.

A stranger in a great city, who desires to gain some knowledge of its system and streets, does wisely, if he confines his first investigations to the main thoroughfares, leaving to a time of more familiarity the minor details thereof. So he who would inquire in the Word of God as to the scope and course of future events, as they are therein made known, does well if he first seeks to gain some acquaintance with the leading lines, the principal landmarks, and the main distinctions of the one great plan. Failure to distinguish "things that differ," although yet connected, leads to misunderstanding and confusion.

Regarding the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ and the events connected therewith, it is needful to distinguish between the following: First, the Lord's coming to the *air*, and His coming to the *earth*. Second, that which is His *promise* and that which is *prediction*. Third, that which characterises "the things which are," *i.e.*, of this present era: that the Son is set down with the Father on His throne (Rev. iii. 21; Heb. i. 4, &c.), and that throne is a throne of grace. "Grace triumphant reigns." But when "the

things which shall be *after these*"—*i.e.*, after the present work of God in the out-calling of a people for His Name (Acts xv. 14) is completed, and their calling up to heaven (Rev. iv. 1) has become fact, the throne beheld by the seer set in heaven, is a throne of judgment, and has One seated upon it who is not the Son but the Father. And this change ushers in "the day of the Lord," which is a day not of grace, but of judgment.

When as SON OF GOD (1 Thess. i. 9) and LORD (1 Thess. iv. 19) He comes to the air to receive His own unto Himself, there will be no public accompaniment of angelic hosts or of power and glory which the world can see. As His going was from the midst of and only known to His own, in the act of blessing them (Luke xxix. 50), so shall His coming to them be. No dweller in the city of Jerusalem knew that on day what was transpiring within view of their city; no eye—save those of that little group—saw that great sight of the living Christ's ascent into heaven. When He comes, His own will hear His voice and see His face, but the world will know no more than Jerusalem did when He went. In sharp contrast to this in every detail, will be His appearing as SON OF MAN—a title borne by Christ in the flesh, often recorded in the Gospels, but never in the Epistles—to the earth accompanied by power and great glory (Matt xxiv. 27-30; Luke xxi. 25), heralded by signs in heaven and earth and sea, "and every eye shall see Him" (Rev. i. 7) then. The first event of the great future will be, when at the time appointed by the Father and known

to Him alone, He will rise from His present place on the throne, on which the Son is now seated with Him, and will "lead" (rather than bring), "with Jesus" all those who have been put to sleep by Jesus—that is the disembodied spirits of those who, like Stephen, have fallen asleep pending His coming—to the heaven of Rev. iv. 2. From thence He will descend with a shout, which all the dead in Christ will understand and respond to—as Lazarus alone of all the Bethany dead did at the "loud voice" of the Lord. Thus shall they be brought back to the company of those who "are alive and remain" in mortal bodies, who in the same moment will be changed and for ever done with earth. Then the Archangel's voice will summon those over whom he is chief, to attend these glorious "heirs of salvation" (Heb. i. 14), in their ascent to "meet the Lord in the air," where they are "gathered together unto Him" (2 Thess. ii. 1). Then "the trump of God"—that last trump (1 Cor. xv. 52), which will be as a voice talking, saying, "Come up hither" (Rev. iv. 1), sounds, and in a moment the whole of the ransomed throng will be "caught up together," glorified in His image, and "so shall they ever be with the Lord."

CHRIST'S "COMING" AND "APPEARING."

Wm. Hoste, B.A.

The coming of the Lord is His literal personal return from heaven. And this will be in two distinct stages, which it is very important to distinguish. He will first come *for* His people, and receive them to Himself in heaven. Then, after an interval of unrevealed duration, He

will return *with* them to Israel and the world. The one is usually named His *Parousia*, or coming. The latter His *Epiphany*, or appearing. The message to the little band of disciples who witnessed our Lord's ascension to heaven was, "This same Jesus, who is taken from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts i. 11). This promise must be taken strictly to refer to that stage of the Lord's return when "His feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives" (Zech. xiv. 4), to deliver Israel and judge His enemies. This is *generally*, though not exclusively, the aspect of His coming presented in the four Gospels, and always where He is presented as the returning Son of Man. Great confusion has arisen from seeking to interpret the great prophetic words of our Lord in Matthew xxiv., Mark xiii., and Luke xxi., as referring to the hope of the Church, the coming of the Son of God to the *air*, instead of to His coming as Son of Man to the *earth*. The title "Son of Man" very distinctly links the prophetic utterances of the Lord in these chapters, with previous prophecies of the Old Testament (*e.g.*, Daniel vii. 13) connected with the latter days of Israel's testimony, but never with the Church. The first stage is the Church's hope, the latter is the hope of Israel.

THE PROMISE AND THE HOPE.

Thomas Newberry.

The hope of the Church, is the fulfilment of the Lord's own promise in John xiv. 3, "I come (there is no 'will') again and will receive you unto Myself." The Lord puts no interval between. He would not

have anything between the heart of His people and His own coming. He would have the brightness of the hope before the eye undimmed. When the Thessalonians turned to God from idols, it was "to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven" (1 Thess. i. 9, 10). There was nothing between. But when lifeless professors multiplied in the church, and the church became united with the world, the hope was lost, and so it continued for many centuries. But in the Lord's mercy to His people, this hope has been revived and restored, and again a people are found on earth waiting "for the Son from heaven," "looking for that blessed hope" (Tit. ii. 13). This hope is the personal return of the Son of God to the air, to raise His dead saints, to change the living, and to gather both around Himself (2 Thess. ii. 1). It is for this we wait; not for the manifestation of Antichrist, not for the Great Tribulation, not for the fulfilment of a year-day theory which fixes the date of Christ's return. All these deflect the eye of hope from the Lord's own promise, and end in disappointment. His promise is, "Surely I come quickly." May our hearts respond, "Even so. Come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. xxii. 16, 20).

OUR CALLING AND OUR HOPE.

Dr. Thomas Neatby.

Our calling is to a heavenly inheritance, and our hope is the coming of a heavenly Saviour. Both are expressed in Phil. iii. 20, 21. Christians are a people that belong to heaven; their citizenship—their commonwealth—is there. And it is from heaven that they look for the One who is

to bring them there. The hope is the grand consummation of the calling. It is no part of prophecy, for prophecy refers to the earth and events to transpire thereon. But we look for the Saviour from heaven. It was this promise of His return that He left us, before He went away. Some find great difficulty in arranging things of the future, and fitting them into their places. Here, there is no such difficulty. The Lord says, "I am going away," and we know how He went (Luke xxiv. 51). "I go to prepare a place for you." His presence in the Father's House is, the taking possession of that place in the name of all the children of God's family of which He is the Firstborn among "many brethren" (Rom. viii. 29), God's "many sons," whom He is bringing to glory (Heb. ii. 10). And the day of their home-bringing will be the day of Christ's coming. It will be a day of inexpressible triumph over death and the grave, and not one saint will be left in their power. It will be a day of the display of infinite power, and the bodies of the living saints will be changed in a moment and fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body. Surely this is a "blessed hope." He is coming, coming so as we can look for Him, and coming speedily.

IS CHRIST'S COMING IMMINENT!

Alfred J. Holiday.

Do the Scriptures set anything before us, that *must* be fulfilled before Christ comes FOR His people? In other words, are we warranted in looking for the Lord Jesus to come at any moment to fulfil the inspired words of 1 Thess. iv. 15-17? We do not hesitate to express our firm

conviction, gained from a careful study of all the passages relating to this great event in the Word of God, that we are thus warranted to look for and expect the personal return of our blessed Lord to the air, to awake His sleeping saints, to change those who are alive in mortal flesh on earth, and to gather all around Himself in heaven, day by day. And we would say, further, that any system of Scripture interpretation which puts anything at all between the saint and the expectation of Christ's coming, must needs take largely away from the power that this hope is intended to exercise over our lives (1 John iii. 3).

THE NEARNESS OF HIS COMING.

J. Denham Smith.

Daily, hourly, let us think the Lord may come. There is only one thing first to happen—the simple “Shout.” We are like Israel, near the land. Three days they lodged on the very environs: only Jordan dividing them from Canaan. Across the stream, they saw the land which flowed with milk and honey. Secretly, the ark was to penetrate that stream; the nations being ignorant of it. Covertly, the people would cross over. Thus, now, there is only a sound dividing us from the Lord. That sound once heard, then resurrection follows immediately, and transfiguration of the living. As the ark secretly accomplished the distance between the wilderness and Canaan, so the Lord will penetrate the heavens, and in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, we shall be changed. Beloved, are we living as those who are thus on the environs of the glory?

LOOKING FOR THE LORD.

W. H. Bennet.

Those whose “citizenship is in heaven” are possessors of a heavenly hope which is expressed in the words, “From whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Phil. iii. 20). This bright hope, which the church so cherished in early days, was soon obscured, and then lost sight of. In the present century, it has been greatly revived amongst some of the Lord's people; but the question as to how much we know of its purifying power may well exercise our hearts. The word rendered “we look for,” denotes a prolonged, stedfast, earnest gaze of expectation. It is not a feverish excitement such as led some at Thessalonica to give up their daily occupation, but a calm, settled attitude of heart towards the Lord, that would lead us, however occupied here, to be always ready to welcome Him.

WATCHING AND SLUMBERING SAINTS.

William J. McClure.

The parable of the Ten Virgins, in Matthew chap. xxv., has been made by some to teach, that only watchful Christians, who are on this earth when the Lord Jesus comes, will be “caught up” to meet Him in the air, and that the unwatchful, like the five foolish virgins, will be left to endure “tribulation” because of their unfaithfulness. But the Lord distinctly says of these, “I know you not” (Matt. xxv. 12). They were none of His, for He says of all His own, “I know My sheep” (John x. 14). There will indeed be rewards for those that “love His appearing” (2 Tim. iv. 8), and

are faithful to the trust and service given them (1 Cor. iv. 2), while those who neglect or spoil their work will suffer loss (1 Cor. iii. 14, 15), but ALL who are Christ's will be "glorified" as surely as they are already "justified" (Rom. viii. 30). The teaching of this parable is not to differentiate between believers who watch, and others who slumber, but between mere professors and those who are Christ's. "They that are Christ's at His coming" (1 Cor. xv. 23)—not a part of them—will be taken when He comes, And this includes the slumbering as well as the waking saints, as 1 Thess. v. 10 tells us: "For God hath appointed us not unto wrath, but unto the obtaining of salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. Who died for us, that whether we watch or sleep we should live together with Him" (R.V.). The word for "sleep" here, is not the same as that of chap. iv. 14, 15, which means death, but a word which means to slumber in contrast to those that watch. But both are to go when the Lord comes.

THE LORD'S COMING AND PROPHECY.

Sir Robert Anderson, K.C.B.

The coming of Christ is the ultimate hope of His people in every age. What specially characterises this Christian age is, that no event of prophecy bars the immediate fulfilment of the hope. To quote Dean Alford's words, "The apostolic age maintained constant expectation of the Lord's return." And this was taught with increasing definiteness as the apostle Paul's ministry drew to a close. "We are looking for the Saviour," he wrote from his Roman prison to the

Philippian saints, using a word that signifies "to thrust forward the head and neck, as in anxious expectation of something believed to be imminent" (Bloomfield). And he employs a kindred word in Titus ii. 13, written probably in the very year of his martyrdom. But, in marked contrast with this, the Lord warns His people of the future "kingdom" age, not to expect His coming until after the revelation of the Man of Sin and the awful "Tribulation" of Messianic prophecy. To confound the coming foretold in Matthew xxiv. with the coming which is our hope, or as Bengel designates it, "the hope of the church," betrays sheer ignorance of Christian truth. And it is specially inexcusable, because 2 Thessalonians was designed to correct the error. Here, it behoves us to remember the Lord's last message to His people, "Surely I come *quickly*"—words three times repeated on the closing page of Holy Scripture (Rev. xxii. 7, 12, 20). The suggestion is almost profane, that He who is THE TRUTH would bid us thus to live in "constant expectation of His return," if the drama of horrors foretold in Matthew xxix. 4-22 must precede the fulfilment of the hope.

THE MORNING STAR AND RISING SUN.

George Adam.

The more I examine the Scriptures, I am the more convinced that the Lord Jesus will descend from heaven to raise the sleeping saints, and change those who are alive on earth (1 Thess. iv. 15-17), taking both "together" to the "Father's House" before He takes the Book of Judgment from the hand of Him who sits

on the throne (Rev. v.), and before He begins to deal with the world in judgment, or with His covenant people of Israel for their restoration, and before He will arise as the "Sun of Righteousness" (Mal. iv. 4) to reign over the earth. There must be many events, of which the prophetic Scriptures speak, fulfilled before the Lord appears in His glory to the world when "every eye shall see Him" (Rev. i. 7), but the clouds may part at any moment to reveal Him as "the Bright and Morning Star" (Rev. xxii. 17), which is the title He gives to Himself in the closing words of the Sacred volume, when He is setting Himself before His heavenly people as their hope.

DATES & THE PRESENT DISPENSATION.

F. Christopher Bland.

The nation of Israel, God's earthly covenant people, had and will have much to learn from the dates given in Scripture for their guidance. The great prophecy of the seventy weeks given to Daniel (chap. ix.) were, as he was told, "determined" on his people, as the period in which God would accomplish His purposes with them. To use these dates in reckoning events among the Gentiles or in the church, can only lead to confusion. The word "weeks" is misleading, for these periods do not mean seven literal days. The word "heptad" or "hebdomad," designates a measure of seven of anything, and here it clearly is of years, so that the "seventy heptads" indicate a period of 480 years. And these are divided into three periods of 7, 62, and 1. The first seven weeks, or 49 years, extended from Nehemiah's decree to build

Jerusalem to the close of God's testimony to Israel in Malachi, when all prophecy ceased. The second period of 62 heptads extends from the close of Old Testament history to the coming of Messiah the Prince, according to Zech. ix. 9, and recorded in Matt. xxi. 5—not His birth, but His presentation to Israel as King, only to be rejected and "cut off." The 70th, or last heptad, remains to be fulfilled, and it cannot *begin* until God resumes His national dealings with Israel in their land. The whole of the present dispensation, during which the church is being called forth from Jew and Gentile, is a *timeless gap*, coming in between the 69th and 70th heptad, and has already lasted nearly 1900 years. This long period is not the subject of prophecy. There are none of the dates recorded in Daniel and Revelation or elsewhere in the prophetic Word, applicable to it. "Times and seasons" (Acts i. 9) have nothing to do with the church, or the period of its sojourn on earth. If we introduce them, in order to find how long the present age will last, or when the Lord will come, it will lead to confusion and error. Let me use a simple illustration. Suppose a godly Jew had been in Jerusalem at the time it was taken by the Romans, and that he had read the Lord's words in Luke xxi. 24 about the Jewish people being carried captive into all nations, and the city being trodden down by the Gentiles "until the Times of the Gentiles" are fulfilled. Had he fallen asleep then and slept throughout the whole of the present dispensation, awaking at its close, when God has again

begun to reckon time and fulfil prophecy, he would not have missed a single event that is predicted in the Scripture concerning the future of his people. The whole of the present age of the outcalling and glorification of the church would have passed, and he would find himself amid the fulfilment of the "signs" of the following verse. For between, verses 24 and 25, the whole of the present period comes in.

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST.

William Lincoln.

The period between the rapture of the saints to the Father's House in heaven, and their appearing with the Lord in His descent to earth, is described in the Book of Revelation (chap. iv. to xix). Up in the heavens, the glorified saints having been first received by the Lord Himself in the air, and conducted to the Father's House (John xiv. 2)—which precedes, in point of time, the judgment seat of Christ and the marriage of the Lamb—are first seen seated as enthroned worshippers in chap. iv., in the presence of God, and last, in chap. xix. 7, as the Bride of the Lamb. The false church having fully manifested her corruption and been disowned, the true spouse is here at length acknowledged and presented in her beauty before all heaven, before her manifestation to the world. Down in that world below, where Christ had been rejected and His followers persecuted, things have now reached their crisis. The enemies of God are seen here in organised and open revolt against Him. Already have the ten elected kings of the Roman world yielded themselves to the Beast in full

allegiance, and pledged themselves to obey his commands. His ambitions are unlimited, he can brook no superior; he means to extirpate the Name of God, and sit in His temple, the sole personification of God Himself. In Palestine, there is a people whom he had assisted to return to the land of their fathers, in order that they might receive and own him as their Messiah (John v. 43). The mass of them have accepted the worship he has prescribed (Matt. xii. 43-45), but when his image is set up in their rebuilt temple, some refuse to worship it. Then the trouble begins, and the fires of persecution burn. Here the climax is reached. The armies of the Roman world, the whole chivalry of Europe, led by the emperor in person, are in Palestine. Jerusalem is their great objective, for there it has been said, some Divine deliverance will reach the persecuted people whose hope is in the Lord. Already part of the city has been taken, and the people led forth as captives (Zech. xiv. 2). The triumph of the Beast seems complete. It is the hour of his last proud boast against God, "Let us break their bands asunder and cast their cords from us" (Psa. ii. 3). But "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh." The hour of His intervention has at length come. God is now to speak to them "in His wrath" (ver. 5). So the blue heavens are cleft asunder, and in a moment the victorious LORD comes forth, accompanied by His armies, those glorified companions of His, who now appear with Him in glory (Col. iii. 4). The overthrow of the enemies of God and His people is complete, and they perish at His glance.

The Preacher's Column.

OUTLINES OF EVANGELISTIC ADDRESSES.

THE GOSPEL.

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

GOSPEL INVITATIONS.

To the Guilty (Isa. i. 18)—Come and Reason.
To the Weary (Matt. xi. 28)—Come and Rest.
To the Thirsty (Isa. lv. 1)—Come and Drink.
To the Hungry (Luke xiv. 17)—Come and Eat.

OUTLINES OF BIBLE STUDIES.

THE POWER OF THE WORD OF GOD.

It Penetrates and Searches (Heb. iv. 12).
It Converts and Makes Wise (Psa. xix. 7).
It Regenerates and Purifies (1 Pet. i. 22, 23).
It Sanctifies and Cleanses (Eph. v. 26).
It Nourishes and Edifies (1 Pet. ii. 2; Col. iii. 16).

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The Young Believer's Question Box.

SHARING IN WAR TIME ENTERTAINMENTS, &c.

There are very many calls at present upon Christian young women to take part in work of a national and benevolent character, which are so mixed up with worldly amusements, dress entertainments, and other things unbecoming and forbidden to a child of God, that I cannot with a good conscience take any part in them. Because of this, I am branded as Pharisaic, disloyal, and lacking in patriotism. And some who profess to be the Lord's are the foremost in condemning me for not taking part in the work they are doing. Am I justified in keeping myself thus apart, while seeking to do what I can personally and in association with others of the same mind, in aiding the suffering and helping the needy in this time of war distress?

No doubt there are many exercised before God in the same way, upon whom similar demands are being made. In a time of distress like the present, those who "belong to Christ" cannot stand in idle indifference to the suffering and distress around them. Each and all must do their part, not only from humanitarian but higher motives, to minister to the need around them. In this they have the example of their Lord, who went about "doing good" (Acts x. 38), and ministering to human need

wherever He found it. There are thousands of Christian young women nursing and tending the wounded and ministering to the needy, some in public and others in private. As to what you do, and how or where you do it, you have a perfect right to choose as guided by the Lord, "Whose you are and Whom you serve." And if you have the assurance that you are doing that which is pleasing to Him, you can well afford to bear whatever criticisms are passed or innuendos hurled by those who find an outlet for their hatred of Christianity in vilifying all who do not follow where and as they would lead. The prevailing influences of the time are leading many Christians into open association with worldliness, unequal yokes with the ungodly, and companionships with those who are leading them into places and paths which are exerting a withering effect on their spiritual life and having a blighting effect on their Christian testimony. Anyone who does not go the whole length of sharing in dress parades, attending fetes, sharing in concerts, &c., is held up to ridicule. Very well, we have counted the cost, and it does not alarm us; so let it be. It is the price that has ever had to be paid for being a follower of a rejected Christ, for whom the world has no more place now than it had when its leaders led Him to Golgotha. It is an honour, and ought to be a joy (see 1 Pet. iv. 13), to bear or suffer anything for His Name, always making sure that it is not for any failing of your own (1 Pet. iv. 15-16) that you are "evil spoken of." Moses in Egypt, Daniel in Babylon, Esther in Shushan, and others who in days of great strain, stress and sorrow among their people, stood true to God, doing His will, were true "patriots" of their time, serving their suffering kinsfolk and others with a zeal unknown to the great world without, but rightly estimated in heaven, and recorded in the Book for our guidance and encouragement, to-day, "upon whom the ends of the ages are come."

Answers to Correspondents.

BREPHOS.—A young believer is surely at liberty to take part in any exercise of the Christian assembly for which grace has fitted him. There are few in which it would not be welcomed. But he must watch not to exceed his measure. A "five words" ministry (1 Cor. xiv. 19) is not much in evidence.

QUERIST.—The "mystery" of 1 Cor. xv. 51—*i.e.*, something that had been kept secret until the

full time for its revelation had come—was not resurrection: that had been known long before (Job xix. 25, 26), but the "change" to be wrought on those who are "alive and remain" unto the coming of the Lord (1 Thess. iv. 17). The word "changed" is the same as is used concerning the heavens in Heb. i. 12, and implies a complete change such as that which will be wrought on the dead by resurrection (see also Phil. iii. 20 and 1 Cor. xv. 53). The mortal are to put on immortality; the dead in corruption.

D. W.—If in an assembly of two or three hundred, only four or five—and they invariably the same—take part in leading the worship, there must be something sadly wrong with that assembly. They either need definite teaching as to their privileges and responsibility as to the character of Spirit-led worship, or they are in an indolent and very unspiritual state, out from which they need to be aroused. On the other hand, some are so obsessed as to the importance of their activities, that they occupy so much of the time as to leave little opportunity for others, who could and would share in expressing the assembly's worship if they had opportunity. The clerical spirit is strong in some, and those in whom it is, always keep themselves well to the front. A real revival in spiritual life and power, with a return to ways of the Book, is the only real remedy for this and much else.

Current Topics and Teachings.

Fixing Dates for the return of the Lord and the end of the present age of grace is an ancient custom. The year A.D. 1000 was first named as the time of Christ's return, and was named "the Year of Terror." A general panic ensued. Lands were untilled, estates were sold, thousands took refuge in caves and dens, and there was general chaos throughout Europe. But the last day of the year passed, and things resumed their former course. But saints had their faith shaken in the truth of the Lord's coming, and sinners became scoffers against it. Cumming, Baxter, and many others have given the year and others the day on which the Lord would come, the Times of the Gentiles' end, and the millennium begin, but each in turn has been discredited. And so must all that exist to-day or arise to-morrow. The heavenly Hope of the Church, which is her Lord's return to the air, is an event that can never be reckoned or tabulated

on earth's calendar. It is the closing act of a period concerning which God has given no time record, and concerning which no dates are fixed. All attempts, therefore, to even approximately guess when it will happen, are futile, and must end in confusion. The Lord's own word, "Surely, I come quickly" (Rev. xxii. 17) is the very latest information we possess, and the next will be His "shout" in the heavens, to gather His own from earth, around Himself in these heavens.

Christian Evidences found in history, scientific discovery, and other fields, may be of interest and value to those who are able to investigate and understand them. But to the ordinary rank and file of God's people, what Dr. Chalmers called "the portable evidences" of Christianity are the best. These are in the Book itself, within faith's reach at all times. A Christian widow is in sore straits: her rent is due, her only son is abroad, and she has no other near relative or friend in the world. Reading her evening Psalm before retiring, she comes on Psa. l. 15, "Call upon ME in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify Me." She kneels on the earthen floor, "pours out her soul," Hannah-like, before the Lord (1 Sam. i. 15), telling Him her trouble and casting her care upon Him (1 Pet. v. 7) for His disposal. She lays her head on her pillow in "perfect peace," with her trust fixed on the living Lord (Isa. xxvi. 3), and sleeps without anxious care disturbing her repose. Next morning the postman brings a letter, in which is a money order for the exact sum she requires to meet her obligations, sent by one she never heard of, the letter posted at the very hour she was calling on the Lord for His deliverance. It will be hard to convince that aged saint in her cot in the Highland glen that God is not worth trusting, that His Word is not to be relied on, and that "the age of miracles" is past. She has the best of "evidences" within.

Reprisals.—Vicious and barbarian deeds, by which human life is sacrificed without concern, arouse the desire for revenge, and raise the cry for reprisals. It is a natural course, but nature perverted from its original poise, is not God. To the Christian, the man who has tasted of the grace of God—in forgiving sins which would have made him amenable to Divine judgment, and bestowing upon him gifts which he neither deserved or desired—will be slow to call for vengeance, even where it is due. Not because he thinks lightly of the guilt of evildoers, but because he knows that crimes which now escape their due, will yet meet it at the hand

of Him who says, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, saith the Lord" (Heb. x. 30). And while God does not always pay His debts the day they are due—but gives time for repentance—we may safely leave His own work to Him, and not forestall His time and very likely cause those who had neither part or lot in the evil, to suffer with or instead of the guilty. And for a follower of the meek and lowly Nazarene to demand "an eye for an eye," is surely to forget what he owes to grace, and what of such grace is expected from him.

Friendly Words of Exhortation.

BY A SEPTUAGENARIAN.

Looking across the wide world-field in which many of my beloved brethren and sisters in Christ are passing through times of fiery trial, and having their confidence in God and in that Word on which they have been accustomed to hope, put to the test, in many ways and from varied sources, I would, as "an old disciple" (Acts xxi. 16)—now beyond the threescore years and ten, and in Christ for over fifty years, make a few brief remarks for their consideration and, if found to be according to God, for their acceptance, on some practical matters which have come within the range of one's own experience in the passing years of Christian life.

Truths learned from God, through the reading of His Word, and appropriated by personal faith to nourish the soul and rule the life, are what sustain and uphold the Christian in time of trial. Things learned second hand, or picked up cheaply, are easily wrested from us, or if retained, do not exert their power in and over us. While always ready to learn through our fellow-saints, who minister to us by word and pen, we must not learn from them, or simply receive certain things because they teach them. When God "sends forth His light and His truth," and we receive the Word as His and from Him, then it leads us to Himself to find—not only in the Word but in Himself—our "chiefest joy" (Psa. xliii. 3, 4). And we do not give up or lightly esteem what we find to be the "joy and rejoicing of the heart" (Jer. xv. 16) in retaining it.

Testing is sure to come sooner or later on us all, and it is well to be prepared for it. A ship putting out to sea with her sails set, and the gentle breeze filling them, is a pretty sight. So is a young Christian setting forth on the voyage of life. But it is the ship well prepared for storms that outrides the gale, and it is the Christian in whose heart the

words of God are well laid up, (Deut. vi. 6; Psa. cxix. 11), that stands firm, like Daniel in the time of testing. Teach and expound the Word simply and apply it practically on every suitable occasion, not on salvation and Christian privileges only, but on all that concerns daily life and walk, separation from the world, giving the Lord His due in worship and obedience, for all truth wisely taught sanctifies and strengthens the Lord's people. And always remember, it is by use of the Word laid up in the memory and the heart, that the Spirit in the hour of conflict gives it for use as a sword (Eph. vi. 17).

The Word.—The Christian warrior's sword is not his Bible in his pocket, or under his arm, or in his hand, but just as much of it as he has in himself. The boy's answer to the priest was the right one. When the priest asked, "Where is that Bible you have been reading every night?" Pat, laying his hand on his heart, simply answered, "Here." If the Word gets no further in than the outer framework of the ear, it will be lost in the day of testing.

Some who meet as their parents do, and go where their relatives go, having a kind of "family religion," are the first usually to let God's Word drop when trouble comes. It must be a personal possession of the soul, as a very fire glowing in the bones (Jer. xx. 9), if it is to carry us through the storms of life, and if we are to hold it fast in the hour in which our faith in it is put to the test, either by threats or wiles.

Consistency.—Some who had much to say and sing about the "heavenly calling" of the saint, were the first to join the ranks of combatants of their own choice, or to encourage others to do so. The present trials, losses, bereavements, sorrows which we are sharing may be—and in the judgment of many godly men are—for Divine corrections of our ways, which have been sadly unlike our profession of being a heavenly, holy, separate, and pilgrim people. When we "hear the rod," judge ourselves, confess our departures, returning with all our heart (1 Sam. vii. 3) to the Lord, and coming back to the Word as in the days of our spiritual youth, the sooner will the Lord show His hand in our deliverance from a common share of the calamities He is allowing to come upon those nations which have misused the light He has given them, with which we His people have too much allied ourselves, as of the Cross had not severed us from them, and the call of God brought us out unto Himself as "a people for His own possession." These are solemn truths, little heard or heeded, I fear, among us.

The Future of the World

AS DESCRIBED IN THE WORD OF GOD.

WHEN the Lord comes to "the air," and gathers up all His own unto Himself from the world, there will not be left a living saint on the earth, or a sleeping saint in the grave. All will have gone "in a moment" to their own country, their Fatherland, the place and the company for which they looked and longed. The light gone from the world, the salt from the earth, darkness will reign, and corruption unrestrained, will advance with amazing rapidity. While the glorified saints are led on by their heavenly Lord, whom they now see "as He is" in unveiled glory, from stage to stage, "from glory to glory" in that wondrous upward path of light set forth in the pages of the Word, first, as beloved children into the Father's house (John xiv. 2), as worshipping priests around the throne (Rev. iv. 4), as stewards before the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor. v. 10), and corporately as the Bride of the Lamb (Rev. xix. 5-9), events of another order are transpiring on the earth below, especially in that part of it which still bears the name of Christ, but whose peoples have rejected Him, as their presence on earth after the true saints are in heaven, makes at last quite plain. Christendom without Christ, and without a saint in it, will then speedily go to utter corruption.

OUR IMMEDIATE HOPE.

J. G. BELLETT.

Our immediate hope which is that of meeting the Lord in the air, does not

necessarily wait for any fulfilment of prophecy. His coming to the earth, I surely know must wait for much. There will be "distress of nations" and strange and awful events such as never have been. But the rising of the saints to meet their descending Lord, is not the subject of such signs and tokens. The hour of it is the Father's secret, of which no movement among the nations is a sign or harbinger. It waits for nothing necessarily, save the fulfilment of the Father's pleasure touching His heavenly family. It does not wait for the full manifestation, much less for the destruction of that last form of evil, which when it has fully ripened will bring the Lord in judgment to this earth. Something is to let or hinder this manifestation as 2 Thess. ii. 17 tells us, and it has often been an inquiry among the saints what this let or hindrance is. Were I to speak particularly of this I should say, that we have to judge of the nature of that which hinders, by the nature of that which is hindered. It was the presence of an "accursed thing" in the camp of Israel of old that hindered the display of the Divine power, until it was removed (Josh. viii.), as it was the presence of Judas the traitor among the twelve, that let or hindered the Lord's expression of His own glory and the glory of His own. But when the hinderer had "gone out" that glory was declared. According to this principle, it is the presence of something *good*, something that is of God, that is now hindering the full manifestation of evil and of Satan's power here. And until this is removed, it cannot

be displayed in full. For it is not the way of evil to restrain evil, or of good to hinder the progress of good; each nourishes its own likeness while it hinders the full operation of its opposite. It must therefore, I judge be something that God can own, which is the letting thing here. I say no more. It may be the mind of the Spirit to leave this restraining thing a secret, and advisedly undefined. And if that which is to hinder the revelation of the "Man of Sin" is not now to be known by the saints, surely they may know even from this, that their ascent to meet the Lord, is not dependent on such a revelation.

THE GLORIFIED SAINTS IN HEAVEN.

GEORGE F. TRENCH.

Having received His people unto Himself in fulfilment of His own promise in John xiv. 3, the Lord Jesus will bring them to the Father's House, where He will introduce them to the principalities and powers of heaven in the words, "Behold I, and the children which God has given Me" (Heb. ii. 13). What a scene of glory that will be! Sinners from the lowest depths, taken up, cleansed and made fit for the highest heaven, introduced to angelic hosts as children of God, His "many sons" given to Christ to bring safely home. And the next of the great pageantries will be, when He will present unto Himself the "Church glorious," without spot or wrinkle or any such thing (Eph. v. 27), gathered throughout all the centuries since the Spirit came down to incorporate all saints into one body. What a scene that will be! Who can

conceive it! We have no song, no poetry to describe it. It is love's own triumph. But there is something further still. "I will declare Thy Name unto My brethren, in the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto Thee" (Heb. ii. 12). Then shall we know in a measure we do not now, the great purpose for which we have been redeemed and made "priests unto God," to sing His praise, led by Him who is "in the midst." Here again is a scene of unrivalled glory, around the throne in heaven (Rev. chap. iv.).

THE APOSTASY OF CHRISTENDOM.

E. H. BENNETT.

Before the apostles had ended their labours, the fine gold of Christianity had begun to grow dim, and the Church, as God's testimony in the world, had ceased to be a light-bearer as it was at first. Love waxing cold (Rev. ii. 4), Christians sought their own (Phil. ii. 21), and became unwatchful (Matt. xiii. 25); false professors crept in (Jude 4), and soon gained ascendancy as leaders in the churches (Acts xx. 29), corrupting the Word of God (2 Cor. ii. 17), and leading God's people into alliance with the world (Rev. ii. 14). Through centuries this increased, until the fallen church became ruler of the world, and the light of the Word was all but extinguished. Then God gave a reformation and a recovery of the Book, placing it in the hands of the common people. Truths long lost were brought from under heaps of tradition, and great blessing followed. Many returned to the Lord, and took His Word as their guide in everything. But there is no safeguard

against backsliding save abiding in Christ, continuing in His love, and cleaving to His Word. Indifference to what is due to Him is making fearful progress among true Christians, and under the name of liberality and large-heartedness is letting go truths won by a past generation. Unconverted preachers are giving up the Bible, and lifeless professors are apostasizing from the faith they once confessed. From such apostasy there will be no recovery (Heb. vi. 6, 8) of the mass; things will wax worse and worse as the end draws near (2 Tim. iii. 13), until the Lord rejects the whole with loathing, spueing it from His mouth (Rev. iii. 16). All who are truly His, will be caught up at His coming, and the rest will be left to go on with their Christless religion for a while, until they cast off all profession of Christ's Name and go over openly to Antichrist, who denies both the Father and the Son (1 John ii. 22), claiming Divine honours for himself (2 Thess. ii. 4). Such is the way and end of man's religion as depicted in the Word. Laodicean conditions are already with us, and "Great Babylon" will be the full end. Let God's people beware of its evil influences and keep themselves separate from its spirit now.

ANARCHY IN THE WORLD.

J. W. WILSON

In the king's vision of Daniel chap. ii. and the prophet's interpretation of it, we learn that governmental power as symbolised in the great image, will deteriorate from gold to iron mingled with clay. This last form of government is that

which we see in existence at the present time in most civilised countries. In the "iron" there is the survival of kingly rule, while in the "clay" the will of the people is represented. The attempt to mingle these together is failure, for as the Scripture foretold, "they will not cleave one to another." Authority which is held as delegated from God, and power which has its origin in the election of the people, cannot combine. Where government is dependent on the will of those governed, it is powerless to act, except it can carry with it the sympathy of a majority of those by whose votes it stands. And this is what we have around us to-day, and what will increase as the end draws nearer. Power increasingly passes into the hands of the people, and no government can long survive that crosses the will or fails to meet the demands of the "voice of the people," no matter how far from right that may be. Socialism has made rapid strides within the last decade, and men are now set in high places who not long ago were regarded, and in some cases treated as criminals. In France and Russia, the leaders of disorder are filling the chief places of government. All this will ultimately lead to anarchy, with a total collapse of all government, such as is described in Rev. chap. vi. 12-17 at the opening of the sixth seal. There, a revolution of such widespread and far-reaching effects is seen, that kings and military men, with serfs and slaves, in terror imagine the day of the Lamb's wrath has come. The principles are now at work and rapidly advanc-

ing toward the crisis out from which this disruption of government will spring. There is at present a restraining force (2 Thess. ii. 4), which prevents it reaching its full development, but when this is withdrawn, and all who belong to God are taken from the earth, it will burst its bonds and overflow, carrying all before it. The events of Matt. xxiv. 1-10, and the opening of the seals in Rev. vi. 1-17, belong to the period after the Lord comes for His people, and before His return with them. Then the world will learn its inability to rule itself, and this will prepare the way for the coming Man, who will be welcomed throughout the Roman earth as its last great monarch, and the head of Christendom's apostate religion.

THE RETURN OF THE JEWS.

WILLIAM TROTTER.

Israel's captivity and dispersion having taken place at two different times, and on two distinct grounds, there will be corresponding differences in the order of their restoration. The ten tribes, who were for their idolatry, carried away by the Assyrians, will be restored in one way. The Jews who, first having been carried captive to Babylon and restored to their land at the end of seventy years, were a second time dispersed by the Romans, for the awful sin of crucifying their Messiah, will be restored in a different way. Scripture clearly evinces that a considerable number of the Jews will return to their land in unbelief. There, they will be associated with the imperial power of the earth in its last Satanic form. Prophecy tells of a "covenant

with death," an "agreement with hell," to be made by the rulers of the Jewish people at Jerusalem. They will seek the shelter of the great head of the Gentile power, and between him (or probably his representative the second beast of Rev. xiii. or false prophet of Rev. xix.) and the Jews, an alliance or covenant will be formed. This covenant, which permits to the Jews the exercise of their national worship, will be treacherously broken by "the prince" in whom they have trusted, instead of trusting in their God, and in the true Messiah, their Prince. Their worship will be interdicted, and "the idols of the desolator"—the "abomination of desolation"—will be set up in the holy place. Too many, alas! of the returned Jews will submit to this last degradation practised on them by Satan. Having refused the Blessed One who came in His Father's Name, they will receive the apostate usurper of Divine rights and honours which he claims as his own. Such as do so, whether Jews or Gentiles, will be involved in the destruction by which this man of pride will be smitten, when the lowly and long-rejected Christ of God comes forth from heaven accompanied by His glorified saints.

ANTICHRIST'S RISE AND DOOM.

COLONEL W. BEERS.

In the apostles' time there were "many antichrists" (1 John ii. 18), all of them acting in their measure against Christ. Some of them by means of a false profession had found a place among God's people for a time, until they manifested their true character; then as the apostle

says, "They went out from us, but they were not of us" (ver. 19). But "THE Antichrist" has yet to come. And 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4, tells us that he will not be revealed until after "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto Him" (ver. 1). When He appears, it will be as a deceiver of those who have rejected Christ, upon whom God will send a "strong delusion." By means of his craft and cunning, he will gain the confidence of the Jewish people who have then returned to their land in unbelief. They will receive him as their Messiah (John v. 43), and enter into a covenant with him, which he breaks and becomes the persecutor of all who refuse to yield him their worship as God, which he claims (2 Thess. ii. 4). This will bring in "the great tribulation" the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer. xxx. 7), in which those Jews whose hearts have been turned to God, will experience much that is written in the Psalms (see Psa. lxxix., cix.), and pray for vengeance on their persecutors, knowing that it is through judgment that their deliverance cometh. In relation to the world, he will be the devil's representative, armed with his authority (Rev. xiii. 4), blaspheming God and seeking to blot out His Name on earth. But his judgment will be quick, and his doom at the hand of the Lord will be eternal (2 Thess. ii. 8).

THE EMPIRE OF THE BEAST.

HENRY GROVES.

The present world is the palace and seat of the great adversary. As the dragon, "that old serpent called the Devil and

Satan," he wears its diadems (Rev. xii. 3). These diadems are the emblems of a regal authority over the world. Although his authority and claims over all who belong to Christ, have been set aside by the Cross, he holds a real authority over all his own. As a strong man armed he "keepeth his palace, and his goods are in peace" (Luke xi. 21). Individuals innumerable are being delivered from His authority and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. i. 13), but his regal authority over the world remains. And, as he claimed in his offer of it to the Lord (Luke iv. 6), he can give it to whomsoever he will. There is a time coming, when the Dragon will give the Beast—the final head and emperor of the Roman world—"his power and seat (or throne) and great authority" (Rev. xiii. 2). All these he will use against God and His people, to deceive and lead men on to eternal ruin. His power will be "over all kindreds and tongues and nations" (Rev. xiv. 7), and those who refuse to yield him worship will be killed. This is the kind of dominion the world is to have when the man of its choice comes to the place of power. Earth's rightful King was rejected and crucified. And after His resurrection and glorification the insulting message was sent after Him, "We will not have this Man to reign over us" (Luke xix. 14). "All authority" in heaven and on earth (Matt. xxviii. 18) has been given into His hand, and when the time comes for Him to "take" His great power and reign, then the usurper will fall, and "the kingdoms of this world

will become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ" (Rev. xi. 15). The end and doom of the dragon, the beast, and his chief minister—the trinity of hell—is seen in Rev. xix. 20; xx. 10, and may well remind us of the fulfilment of the words of the first great Gentile monarch, "Them that walk in pride, He is able to abase" (Dan. iv. 37).

THE LORD'S RETURN TO EARTH.

WALTER SCOTT.

He comes a second time. Jesus who lived, loved, died, and rose, is personally coming to reign (Acts i. 11). He comes in the sight of all, and amid the wailings of many (Rev. i. 7). It will be a grand triumphal entry into the scene wrested from the grasp of Satan (Rev. xix. 11-16). His heavenly saints and all the angelic host take their part in the grand procession (Jude 14; Col. iii. 4; Matt. xxv. 31; Heb. i. 6). Unexpectedly, suddenly, He sweeps down upon a mad and rebellious world, in irresistible might. It will be a night of awful surprise to the guilty world, then wrapped in sleep and moral darkness (1 Thess. v. 2-4; 2 Pet. iii. 10; Dan. ii. 34, 44, 45). He cometh with aerial clouds (Rev. i. 7), these attest His Divine majesty and mission to the world. Again, the clouds of heaven form His chariot, and His royal seat the right hand of power (Matt. xxvi. 64, R.V.). Yet once more we read, "Then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (Luke xxi. 27). His actual personal presence is thus intimated. His victorious coming, His assured triumphs and victories are attested

by the white horse which bears Him to the scene of His conquests (Rev. xix. 11).

THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL.

ALEXANDER STEWART.

The Jew is the monumental nation, as monumental as that great pillar of salt that was once Lot's wife. Are they always going to be so, always to be "tribes of the wandering foot and weary breast?" Here is a passage often sounded in our ears. Let us repeat it again—"He that scattered Israel will gather him" (Jer. xxxi. 10). They are scattered, and the same hand that scattered will gather them again. Like every great doctrine of the Scriptures, this connects itself with the Trinity, with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Those whom God takes up He never gives up. "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. xi. 29) on His part. He does not change His mind about the future of Israel, and He does not go back from His purpose concerning it. But for the restoration of Israel there must be a righteous ground. In John xi. you hear from the lips of Caiaphas, the high priest, that our Lord Jesus should "die for that nation." And you read in Isa. liii. 8, "For the transgression of My people was He stricken." Therefore, on the ground of the precious blood shed on the Cross, the great arm of God will sweep them in. And the future blessing of Israel is to be effectuated by the power of the Holy Ghost, as Ezekiel chapters xxxvi. and xxxvii. shew. They are to be brought back from among the heathen, and gathered to their own land, cleansed from all their filthiness and

idolatry, their iniquities pardoned, a new life imparted in which to walk and please God, the Spirit in them causing them to keep God's statutes, to dwell in the land, and never again leave it, a nationally restored and a spiritually renovated people. Then in Jer. xxxii. 37, the permanency of all their blessing is assured. They are to be "planted" in the land for ever, an everlasting covenant is to be made with them, and as verse 40 says, God "will never again turn away from them," nor shall they "depart from Him." And when they are settled in the land in that restored condition, with the Lord Jesus reigning over them, they will have a power of attraction, and "all nations shall flow" to the house and the people in whose midst God is dwelling. There will be an attractive power there, felt to the ends of the earth.

THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

J. R. CALDWELL.

A common doctrine, taught for generations and accepted by most is, that the kingdom of Christ, His universal dominion over all, is to be accomplished by means of the preaching of the Gospel. It is said that as in the parable, the leaven hid in the meal (Matt. xiii. 33), silently permeated and leavened it, so the Gospel is to spread among all nations, establishing Christ's kingdom in the hearts of men. This is a very pleasing thought, but I do not find in Scripture any warrant for it. On the contrary, Dan. ii. 35, 45, very clearly shows, that it is not by a gradual diffusion of grace, but by an unparalleled act of judgment, which will destroy all

false rule and purge the earth from its corruptions, that the kingdom is to be introduced. It is by the Lord "smiting the earth with the rod of mouth and with the breath of His lips, slaying the wicked," that the glory and blessedness of the kingdom is to be established (Isa. xi. 4-9). Judgment having cleared the scene, glory will then be revealed. The earthly Jerusalem will then be the metropolis of the world and its name Jehovah-Shammah—the Lord is there (Ezek. xxxviii. 28). The temple rebuilt, will have the Shekinah glory again in its midst, filling the house (Ezek. xliii. 2-5), and over Mount Zion, the glory will spread as a canopy and a defence (Isa. iv. 5). Above the earthly city upon which the glory of the Lord has again risen (Isa. lx. 1), the heavenly city, New Jerusalem, the home of Christ and His glorified saints, is seen resplendent with the glory of God, the nations walking in its light. Satan bound (Rev. xx. 1-3), no longer deceives the nations. Wars no longer devastate the earth; swords are beat into ploughshares, and the earth no longer under the curse, yields its fruit, giving fulness to man and beast (Amos ix. 13). Creation, delivered from its bondage, will cease its groan (Rom. viii. 19-23), and the wild beasts will devour no more (Isa. xi. 6-7). All this will be due to the fact that the Lord Jesus will have at last received His rightful place as King, and His righteous rule will extend to the ends of the earth, all nations owning it and calling Him blessed (Psa. lxxii. 17-19). "The glory of the terrestrial" will be excelled in

“the glory of the celestial,” where the saints of the heavenly calling, who reign with Him, “see His face” (Rev. xxii. 4), and share His love without a veil or a shadow between.

SONGS OF THE MILLENNIAL REIGN.

SIR EDWARD DENNY.

THE CHURCH.

Break forth, O earth, in praises!
Dwell on His wondrous story;
The Saviour's Name and love proclaim—
The King who reigns in glory—
See on the throne beside Him,
O'er all her foes victorious,
His Royal Bride, for whom He died,
Like Him for ever glorious.

ISRAEL.

Ye of the seed of Jacob!
Behold the royal Lion
Of Judah's line, in glory shine,
And fill His throne in Zion.
Blest with Messiah's favour,
A ransom'd holy nation,
Your offerings bring to Christ your King,
The God of your salvation.

THE GENTILE.

Come, ye kings! ye nations!
With songs of gladness hail Him,
Ye Gentiles all, before Him fall,
The Royal Priest in Salem.
O'er hell and death triumphant,
Your conquering Lord hath risen;
His praises sound, whose power hath bound,
Your ruthless foe in prison.

Hail to the King of Glory!
Head of the new creation—
Thy ways of grace we love to trace,
And praise Thy great salvation.
Thy heart was press'd with sorrow,
The bonds of death to sever,
To make us free, that we might be
Thy crown of joy for ever.

MAN'S LAST GREAT REVOLT.

T. D. W. MUIR.

Surely after one thousand years of

freedom from Satan's power and deceivings, every one will be converted and have hearts loyal to God and His Christ! That such will not be, the following words make clear, “And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations, which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they . . . compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them” (Rev. xx. 7-9). Where does the devil get these armies? During the millennium, “a King shall reign in RIGHTEOUSNESS” (Isa. xxxii. 1). The expression speaks of the authority which is used over lawless subjects. And so it will be; for while the tempter will be in the pit, and righteousness on the throne, yet sin being in the warp and woof of man's being, nothing but the grace of God can change the heart. Many will, under the presence of His power, “yield feigned obedience to Him” (Psa. lxvi., margin). At heart they will still be His enemies, and only need a leader to make them rise and prove it! This will be man's last revolt, and the final proof that men need to be “born again” (John iii. 3, 5) if they are to see, enter into, and enjoy the kingdom of God. Not even manifested glory will serve as a substitute for regeneration. Satan loosed for a season, finds willing followers to go up against God, His city, and His people. But the Divine judgment is swift and

final. Fire from God out of heaven devours the adversaries swiftly, and none escape.

THE FINAL TRIUMPH OF CHRIST.

The Book of God had opened with a view of the first Adam and his bride amid the beauties and blessings of an earthly Eden, with flowing river and fruitful trees. But the serpent lurked amid that scene of primal bliss, and soon it fell with its head and lord, from its first estate. The Book of God closes with a view of the last Adam and His glorified Bride amid the immortal glories of new heavens and a new earth, to which no usurper will ever find access, and from which all traces of sin and sorrow have been done away. The story of redemption, restoration, and renewal, fills up the long interval between. "The triumph of Christ" has been complete in all its stages. In life He obeyed perfectly. In death He triumphed gloriously. In resurrection He waited patiently. In the kingdom He rules righteously. He alone, of all who ever stood on this earth finishes, completes, and fulfils all that had been entrusted to His hand. Others had obeyed in part, but He "always" did that which pleased the Father. Never shirking, never halting, He pursued the path that led on to the Cross, where, through death, He destroyed him who had the power of death, stripping him of his usurped authority for ever. In the present interval—the time of His patience and of the outgathering of His heavenly people—He waits the hour of the Father's choice, Then He will descend to receive

and lead home all His own, to the secret joys of the Father's house (John xiv. 3), and thence to the public glories of the kingdom. When the thousand years of His righteous, yet benign rule have run their course, and all things have been subdued to God, He will "deliver up" the kingdom, perfected and in Divine order to the Father—the only Ruler who ever fulfilled his stewardship perfectly. Then at last, beyond all judgment scenes, after all enemies have been vanquished, all classes of men and angels judged, the final triumph of Christ is witnessed in His place on the eternal throne, which bears the name of the "throne of God and of the Lamb." The New Jerusalem in her bridal glory, symbolising the heavenly saints, shines forth as a newly-created sun, and the Lamb is the light of that fair city. No cloud will ever cross its sky. No jarring sound will ever bring discord in its music. No decay will ever mar its beauty. All is firmly established and eternally secured by virtue of the great redemption of Calvary. The triumph of the Cross will be celebrated for ever in the realms of glory, and the centre of that glory will for ever be the Lamb on the throne. To Him all eyes are turned. To Him all knees are bending. Of Him, every voice is swelling, "Worthy is the Lamb," is the universal song. His was the toil, and His too is the triumph. "The Lamb is all the glory of Immanuel's Land."

"The charms that woo the senses
Shall be as pure as fair,
And all, while stealing o'er us,
Shall tell of Jesus there."

J. R.

The Preacher's Column.

OUTLINES OF EVANGELISTIC ADDRESSES.

CHRIST ALL-SUFFICIENT.

- The Work of Christ (Col. i. 20)—The Ground of Peace.
- The Word of Christ (John v. 24)—The Cause of Certainty.
- The Person of Christ (Phil. iv. 13)—The Source of Strength.

THREEFOLD REDEMPTION.

- By Christ's Blood (Col. i. 14)—From Sin's Penalty.
- By Christ's Power (Tit. ii. 1)—From Sin's Practice.
- By Christ's Coming (Rom. viii. 23)—From Sin's Presence.

PETER'S FOUR EXPERIENCES.

- His Conversion (John i. 41, 42).
- His Call (Luke v. 8-11).
- His Confession (Matt. xvi. 13-18).
- His Restoration (Luke xxii. 32, 61).

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE READINGS.

THREE GREAT MERCIES

In Psalm xxxii.

- Forgiveness, for the Past (vers. 1-5).
- Security, for the Present (vers. 6-7).
- Guidance, for the Future (vers. 8-9).

COMING GLORIES OF BELIEVERS.

- They will be "received" by Christ (John xiv. 3).
- They shall "see Him" as He is (1 John iii. 2).
- They shall be "made" like Him (1 John iii. 2).
- They will be ever "with Him" (1 Thess. iv. 18).

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The Young Believer's Question Box.

DID THE APOSTLE PAUL RECENT HIS TEACHING ?

A prominent and popular minister, whose teaching is received with unquestioning confidence by his hearers, has lately taught that while the Apostle Paul wrote in his earlier Epistles (1 Thess. iv. 15) that he expected the Lord might come during his lifetime, he corrected this in his later writings, in which he speaks of death as his expectation (2 Cor. v. 1; Phil. i. 2-3; 2 Tim. iv. 8-10). Can this be accepted as the teaching of the Pauline Epistles? And does any later revelation set aside the attitude expressed in 1 Thess. i. 9? Is it to be regarded as being ours to-day?

The information that the apostle imparts in 1 Thess. iv. 15-17 regarding the coming of the Lord, the resurrection of the dead in Christ, and the change of the living saints, he tells us was "by—

or on the authority of—the Word of the Lord;" That is, it was not gathered from some previous utterance of Christ while here on earth, such as Matt. xxiv. or John xiv. 1-3, but by a revelation given directly from the living Lord in heaven to himself, probably to meet the difficulty that had arisen among the Thessalonian saints respecting those of their number who had died, about whose part in the hope of the Lord's coming they stood in doubt. There were two classes then as now, the living and the dead. In ver. 15, Paul, when he writes, "we that are alive," includes himself amongst the living; while in 2 Cor. v. 1-6, he confesses his confidence in the prospect of death, and in Phil. i. 23, his desire for his departure from earth by its means. There is not a word in either of his later Epistles to support the assertion that he had ceased to expect the Lord to come in his lifetime, and had become resigned to die. On the contrary, in the very Epistle in which he expresses his desire to depart and be with Christ (Phil. i. 23), he repeats the true Christian hope and his own share in it, in the words "heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour" (Phil. iii. 20). And in Titus ii. 13, written yet later, he states that the grace that brings salvation to all, instructs the saved to live here "soberly, righteously, and godly, looking for that blessed hope;" while in his very last letter, and near its close, he holds forth the promise of the Lord's bright reward to all "who love His appearing" (2 Tim. iv. 8). Those who charge inspired writers with making "mistakes," and represent their writings as requiring "revision and correction," had better examine their own relation to God and to His Word. For no man that knows God, and holds the Bible to be His Word, will speak or write with such irreverence about either. The apostles did not "change their minds" or shift about in their doctrine as certain modern preachers do, believing this to-day and something different to-morrow. They had "received from the Lord" what they taught as the unchanging Word that abideth for ever. Paul, in 1 Thess. iv. 15 and 2 Cor. v. 6-8, expresses his attitude toward the two possibilities, either of which would end his course here. And the same is ours to-day. No one can say he WILL NOT die, nor should any Christian say he MUST. We are still entitled to say "we that are alive" and "THEY which have fallen asleep" (1 Cor. xv. 18), and to be waiting in the ardent hope that we be of those who will "go without dying."

Answers to Correspondents.

PERPLEXED.—We have in recent issues of "The Believer's Magazine," given that which we believe answers the folly of fixing dates and days for the Lord's coming. And we hope to give in our next issue a paper from the pen of Sir Robert Anderson, dealing with some recent teachings on this subject, which very clearly exposes their fallacy.

E. G.—The word "temperance" in 2 Pet. i. 6 includes much more than "moderation in eating and drinking," and includes control of tongue and temper, having one's whole self well in hand. Many who are strict enough in their abstinence from strong drink, are woefully deficient in the reining in of other forms of fleshly desire, which, although not regarded in the world as anything off the straight, are traced by the all-searching Word of God (Matt. xv. 18, 19) to the same source as murders and adulterers.

D. M., EAST LOTHIAN.—A company of Christians to which any who say they are believers in Christ have free access, when and as they choose, returning to sects and sharing in all-denominational meetings at will, is not an assembly after the Scripture pattern. Godly order and rule, as set forth in the Word, would be impossible under such conditions. And as too many flagrant examples prove, such meetings either fall to pieces from lack of cohesion, or end in utter confusion through "divers and strange doctrines" and practices being permitted in them without restraint. God, who knows what man is and what He is capable of doing, has legislated as to how His churches are to be ordered, and it is our wisdom to abide by His statutes, and refuse to own the interference of men in their abrogation or vitiation.

G. W., ROTHESAY.—The Gospel in its fulness, preached in the power of the Spirit, is the only means known to us, to bring into light and liberty those in the condition you name. Yes, there were far more of this class reached and blessed in the years you speak of, but then there were no solos, no organs, no fancy subjects advertised to tickle, and few "up-to-date" preachers with their dry essays then. The living stream outflowing through one who is in touch with the Source of all spiritual power, will never fail in its results. Let this always be the chief care of the preacher, and God will see to the results.

J. M'K., ONTARIO.—Conscription to bear arms, accompanied by threats of imprisonment if any refuse, has brought many who thought they were well able to stand firm to what they had learned of the truth and, if need be, to "buy it" at some personal cost, to face the situation before God. A testing time always brings out the real spiritual condition of those so put to the proof, and shows what hold the Word of God really has on the conscience and in control of the life. Divided counsels among those to whom we are accustomed to look for guidance in such matters, cannot free the individual Christian from that allegiance he owes to the living Lord in heaven, or from his responsibility to act according to the Word which he has accepted as his guide and counsellor. On the other hand, he has to be careful not to share in resistance which brings him into common cause with the lawless, or into league with that class of "conscientious objectors" who recognise no government, and have no "conscience toward God" about anything. We know of many cases in which God has wrought "great deliverances" for those who fear Him, and who have committed their cause to His hands. And it is in this that your safety lies. "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths" (Prov. iii. 6), is a word of precious promise and present counsel, which very many are resting on and proving as they never did before.

The War Spirit among Christians: And Its Dangers to Spiritual Life.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE BELIEVER'S MAGAZINE."

In our distant Colony, we have been greatly helped in this time of crisis, by the plain and wholesome teaching which has appeared in "The Believer's Magazine" since the outbreak of war. It has been our habit as it came in, to sit down and read it through Bible in hand, turning up all the Scriptures given, and in this way having the Word of God as our authority for what we received as the truth. This, as we are told in Acts xvii. 13, is what the Bereans of olden time did, and I am quite sure it is the right way for us now. To receive and hold what is advanced by man, brings no power to the soul, but to have and hold what we receive as from God gives it authority, and causes it to "work effectually" in us, as 1 Thess. ii. 13 tells us.

The sudden outbreak of war and the call of our younger men to arms, found us in large measure unprepared to act in the full knowledge of what God's will is in this matter. We had been living at ease, in a kind of self-secure spirit, believing we held and practised separation from the world (John xvii. 16) and subjection to rulers (Rom. xiii. 1) as the Word commanded, without knowing much of what either of these really meant. Many of those who professed to be the Lord's, made a quick decision, with little of God's counsel asked, to join in the conflict, and, alas! a number of them will never return. The general effect on spiritual life among those of us that remain, has been declension. The war spirit has got a hold that it will not be easy to shake ourselves free from, and has done its evil work in the soul to an extent we will see when we get into the light of God's presence and examine ourselves there. I believe that as Christians, lovers and followers of Christ, we cannot stand aside callous and indifferent, to the awful events transpiring on the battlefields of Europe, Africa, and Asia. I am sure our Lord and Master would not have done so. But neither would He have entered into the strife as a combatant, or taken sides actively with either of the conflicting nations. He refused to be an arbitrator in national or civil disputes, and in Luke xx. 22; xii. 13, 14, He clearly taught His followers that neither in retribution for wrongs inflicted (Matt. xxvi. 52), nor in loyalty to Him (John xviii. 11), were they to use the sword. In fact, the whole tenor of His teaching (Matt. v. 44-48), and that of the apostles in their epistles given for our instruction (Rom. xii. 19-21; Eph. iv. 26, 27) is, that the place of the Christian in the world, during this age of Christ's rejection by it, is that of an ambassador bearing the message of reconciliation (2 Cor. v. 19, 21) and a lightbearer (Phil. ii. 15), holding forth the Word of Life to men of all nations; but neither meddling in their strifes, or making common cause with them in their invasion or defence. For those Christian men who have gone to fight their country's battles, believing they are showing their patriotism in so doing, we have genuine respect; but in that position they are imperilling their spiritual life far more than their national, and losing what they may never regain, of fellowship with God and Christ. To those who remain at home, there are dangers to spiritual life which come in other ways. Absorption with the daily newspaper, to the neglect of the

Book of God, soon tells on spiritual condition, and affinity with the ungodly in discussing war conditions, approving of this and condemning that, soon brings the child of God to the common level of the world in his talk and testimony. To glory in "victories" which cost thousand of precious lives, and hurry those without Christ into the eternal world, soon blinds the vision to eternal realities, and blunts the spiritual sense to what is involved in the loss of the soul. To "walk as men" (1 Cor. iii. 3), seeing only the outward strife of proud rulers, bent on conquest, and those opposing them to gain, as they say, for themselves and others liberty, without recognising that God is permitting the awful tragedy of slaughtered millions in judgment for sins unrepented of and gloried in, is to miss the lesson He would teach us. If we fail to see in it chastisement upon His people in these nations for their unfaithfulness to the stewardship He has committed to them, which in great measure they have neglected in their race for riches, and the wish to be "somebody" in a godless world, it is little wonder that there is a growing apathy in spiritual service, a neglect of spiritual worship, and a decline in spiritual life among us. To justify absenting ourselves from the worship of God, to desecrate the Lord's day, to give up service once regarded as given by God for secular and military service, is to make God of less importance than the nation in which one lives, and give the world the notion that God and His claims may be dispensed with at will, and others supersede them. All this and much more too well known to require naming, go to prove how far we have fallen from the place God has set His people in as His witnesses on earth. The reasonings of worldly men, and the counsels of those that know not God, have prevailed to an extent we are little aware of, and will not likely be, until by God's grace repentance is wrought in us and restoration to God is granted us. Then we will wonder how we could have gone so far in the way of the world, and had our spiritual life so blighted by indulging that war spirit which is carrying men and nations to revolution, disaster, and destruction. May God awake us all to the perils around us, and give grace to walk apart with Him who was a Stranger here, willing to be misunderstood, reviled, and rejected for His Name and His truth's sake, assured that to hold with Christ is the path of honour here, as it will be of heavenly reward hereafter.

Quietness and Confidence,

IN TIMES OF DISTRESS AND DANGER.

IT was to a people threatened with danger and liable to be led away from their God, to "strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt," to their "confusion," that the message was sent to them from "the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel," through the prophet: "In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength" (Isa. xxx. 15). To us of this war-swept time these words from God have a peculiar fitness, and ought to be to our hearts a message of assurance and of peace. That dangers are all around, we surely know. Some of them are visible and physical, endangering life and limb; most of them moral and spiritual, disturbing the soul's relation to and fellowship with the God whom we know as Father and the Christ whom we confess as Lord. The great adversary employs his servants and casts forth his snares to entrap and entice the tempted and tried, to lead them away from that posture of confidence in God so finely expressed in the glowing words of the Psalmist, "God is our Refuge and Strength, a very present Help in trouble" (Psa. xlvi. 1). When faith fails in a day of trial, some "arm of flesh" is sought unto to lean upon, and the sheltering shadow of some visible power to protect. But all this, as the prophet tells us, is to "no profit:" it only leads to "shame and a reproach" (ver. 5). For the true Protector and Provider for His redeemed is

the living Lord Himself, who never forsakes and will never fail them. Hence it is that the word to them is, "In *quietness* and in *confidence* shall be your strength." There is the word of promise, "Thou wilt keep him in PERFECT PEACE whose mind is *stayed* on Thee, because He trusteth in Thee" (Isa. xxvi. 3), even though seas of trouble roll and storms of danger rage around. And there is the assuring promise to those who "in everything by prayer and supplication" make known their requests unto God, that the very "peace of God" shall "keep their hearts and minds IN Jesus Christ"—keep them as a garrison of soldiers keeps the citadel from invasion by the strong or crafty foe. It is in such "quietness and confidence" that the child of God is to "possess his soul" in the midst of the dangers and distresses of the hour through which he is passing. By this also "the man of God" is to have his "strength" renewed for service or for suffering, as the Lord may appoint. While the hearts of men of the world—even the boldest of them—are "failing them for fear" (Luke xxi. 26), it is the privilege of the saints of God to joyfully own, while in calm confidence they rest on the Words of the One whose faithfulness they have long proved, even in times when perils and dangers hung thick around: that they "fear no evil" because "THOU art with me" (Psa. xxiii. 4). In the quiet confidence of faith, the trusting soul reposing on God's faithfulness is able to say—"I will both lay me down in peace and sleep: for THOU LORD, makest me to dwell in safety" (Psa. iv. 8).

The Priesthood and Advocacy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

PART I. ALEXANDER STEWART, GLASGOW.

OUR Lord Jesus Christ did not die to sin that we might live in it, but that we might live out of it and above it. But we must distinguish. To say of a Christian walking in the Spirit that he is living in sin, is to say what is not true. It would be just as far from truth to say that he has no sin.

BORN OF GOD.

With regard to the question of sin in the believer, two passages of Scripture, both occurring in the first Epistle of John, may be considered.

First, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John i. 8).

Secondly, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for His seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 John iii. 9).

In order to understand the latter of these passages, we must apprehend the manner of the Apostle John in this Epistle, which is to speak of the things he treats of according to their nature and essence. There is with him no shading between white and black, no mingling of light and dark. You are either a child of God, or a child of the devil; in the light, or in the darkness; a sinner, or a person who does not commit sin. When he speaks, for example, of darkness, he does not mean the clouded experience of a believer, but the absolute darkness of moral night to which Satan and sinners belong. God

is in the light; He dwells in it; His children are with Him there; but "he that hateth his brother is in darkness even until now"; he is as Cain, who was "of that wicked one;" he is a "murderer," and "abideth in death."

Regarding in this absolute way the man who is born of God, he says of him not only that he does not commit sin, but that he *cannot* do so. In the principle of his new being he sins not. As we should say of an apple tree, that it produces apples, and can produce nothing else; it bears according to its nature only.

The nature corresponds to its origin. As is the source, so is the stream. When we read, "Whosoever is born of God sinneth not," we are looking at the stream flowing *from* its source. When we read, "Everyone that doeth righteousness is born of Him," we trace the stream *to* its source. Is the man born of God? he sinneth not. Is the course of his life righteousness and love? he is born of God.

Observe that these statements are not only absolute, but universal. They are without qualification, and they apply to all Christians. The words "whosoever" and "every one" give the scope of their application. They do not refer to a class among believers, but to the regenerate as such, and without limitation.

There are differences among Christians. We read elsewhere (1 Cor iii. 1) of the "carnal" and of the "spiritual." And there are degrees of maturity among the spiritual. There are, as this Epistle teaches us, "children," "young men," and "fathers." But such distinctions

are not in view in the passages we have been considering. In these, John is looking into the essence of the things of which he writes.

LIABLE TO SIN.

But regarding the regenerate in their actual condition he speaks otherwise, and as plainly says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." For, as a matter of fact, there is sin in man's nature, even though he be born of God, and he is liable to commit sin.

Besides this, the believer is subject to infirmities which are not in themselves sinful, which may indeed be occasions of sin, but which may also be so borne as to bring to him fresh accessions of the grace of God.

TWO OFFICES OF THE LORD JESUS.

For the believer thus liable to sin and subject to infirmity, there is a twofold provision of grace—the Priesthood and the Advocacy of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Priesthood applies to his state as subject to infirmity, the Advocacy to his condition of liability to sin.

These offices of our Lord Jesus Christ do not apply to the Christian, viewed simply as the possessor of new life from Christ and in Christ. You could not, I suppose, from the Epistles to the Ephesians or Colossians, where he is thus regarded, tell that Christ was exercising for believers the office of a Priest at all. It is in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where we are looked at in our state of actual weakness, compassed with infirmity, that the Lord is shown to us in

the blessed ministry which meets such a condition.

Moreover, our Lord's Priesthood and advocacy are exercised subsequently to accomplished atonement. The Lord Jesus is not now expiating sin. He did so when He died on the Cross, and those for whom He intercedes have already, by the blood which He shed, been cleansed from all sin. They are "justified from all things" and "accepted in the Beloved." We must entertain no thought that would detract from the completeness of the work which was finished on the Cross, or for a moment suppose that aught else was needed for our reconciliation to God.

Satisfied.

I AM satisfied with Jesus,
Fully satisfied with Him ;
What though earthly hopes may perish,
What though earthly lights grow dim !
I am satisfied with Jesus,
What a mighty Friend is He !
Once in Love, surpassing knowledge,
He laid down His life for me.

Yes, He left His home in glory,
Kingly vesture laid aside ;
As a Man he toiled, He suffered,
Wept and sorrowed, bled and died.
I am satisfied with Jesus,
With the shining of His face,
Lighting up the desert pathway,
Filling all my soul with praise.

Though the tempest clouds do gather,
And the tears be falling fast,
He will hide me in His bosom
Till the night of grief is past.
Then, in glory, I shall see Him—
What a rapt'rous joy 'twill be !
Satisfied, to gaze upon Him
Throughout all Eternity.

Separation not Sectarianism.

COLONEL BEERS, GREYSTONES.

IN these days, when the truth of separation to God and from the world, is being largely lost in practice, and even ridiculed in doctrine by many, it is refreshing to the soul, to read what servants of Christ of earlier years found in the Word, and taught the saints with much freshness and power. The following extract, which lately came under my notice, written over sixty years ago, has its message to us who are living to-day.

“Pharisaism and divine sanctification are two very different things: and yet they are often confounded. Those who contend for the maintenance of that place of separation which belongs to the people of God, are constantly accused of setting themselves up above their fellow-men, and of laying claim to a higher degree of personal sanctity than is ordinarily possessed. This accusation arises from not attending to the distinction just referred to. When God calls upon men to be separate, it is on the ground of what He has done for them upon the Cross, and where He has set them, in eternal association with Himself, in the Person of Christ. But if I separate myself on the ground of what I am in myself, it is the most senseless and vapid assumption, which will sooner or later be made manifest. God commands His people to be holy on the ground of what He is: “Be ye holy, for I am holy.” This is evidently a very different thing from “stand by thyself, I am holier than thou.” If God brings

people into association with Himself, He has a right to prescribe what their moral character ought to be, and they are responsible to answer thereto. Thus we see that the most profound humility lies at the bottom of a saint's separation. There is nothing so calculated to put one in the dust as the understanding of the real nature of divine holiness. It is an utterly false humility which springs from looking at ourselves—yea, it is, in reality, based upon pride, which has never yet seen to the bottom of its own perfect worthlessness. Some imagine that they can reach the truest and deepest humility by looking at self, whereas it can only be reached by looking at Christ.

“The more Thy glories strike mine eye,
The humbler I shall be.”

This is a just sentiment, founded upon divine principle. The soul that loses itself in the blaze of Christ's moral glory, is truly humble, and none other. No doubt, we have a right to be humble when we think of what poor creatures we are; but it only needs a moment's just reflection to see the fallacy of seeking to produce any practical result by looking at self. It is only when we find ourselves in the presence of infinite excellency, that we are really humble.

Hence, therefore, a child of God should refuse to be yoked with an unbeliever, whether for a domestic, a commercial, or a religious object, simply because God tells him to be separate, and not because of his own personal holiness. The carrying out of this principle, in matters of religion, will necessarily involve much trial and

sorrow ; it will be termed intolerance, bigotry, narrow-mindedness, exclusiveness, and such like ; but we cannot help all this. Provided we keep ourselves separate upon a right principle and in a right spirit, we may safely leave all results with God. No doubt, the remnant, in the days of Ezra, must have appeared excessively intolerant in refusing the co-operation of the surrounding people in building the house of God ; but they acted upon divine principle in the refusal. "Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the children of the captivity builded the temple unto the Lord God of Israel, then they came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them : Let us build with you ; for we seek your God as ye do ; and we do sacrifice unto Him, since the days of Esar-haddon, king of Assur, which brought us up hither." This might seem a very attractive proposal—a proposal evidencing a very decided leaning toward the God of Israel ; yet the remnant refused, because the people, notwithstanding their fair profession, were, at heart, uncircumcised and hostile. "But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them : Ye have nothing to do *with us* to build an house unto *our* God ; but *we ourselves together* will build unto the Lord God of Israel" (Ezra iv. 1-3). They would not yoke themselves with the uncircumcised—they would not "plough with an ox and ass"—they would not "sow their field with mingled seed"—they kept themselves separate, even

though, by so doing, they exposed themselves to the charge of being a bigoted, narrow-minded, illiberal, uncharitable set of people.

So also, in Nehemiah, we read, "And the seed of Israel *separated themselves* from all strangers, and stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers" (chap. ix. 2). This was not sectarianism, but positive obedience. Their separation was essential to their existence as a people. They could not have enjoyed the Divine presence on any other ground. Thus it must ever be with God's people on the earth. They must be separate, or else they are not only useless, but mischievous. God cannot own or accompany them if they yoke themselves with unbelievers, upon any ground, or for any object whatsoever. The great difficulty is to combine a spirit of intense separation with a spirit of grace, gentleness, and forbearance ; or, as another has said, "to maintain a *narrow circle* with a *wide heart*." This is really a difficulty. As the strict and uncompromising maintenance of *truth* tends to narrow the circle around us, we shall need the expansive power of *grace* to keep the heart wide, and the affections warm. If we contend for *truth* otherwise than in *grace*, we shall only yield a one-sided and most unattractive testimony. And, on the other hand, if we try to exhibit grace at the expense of truth, it will prove, in the end, to be only the manifestation of a popular liberality at God's expense—a most worthless thing." May these sound and practical words find a true response in our hearts.

Christian Baptism,

AND ITS PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE.

W. R. LEWIS, BATH.

THIS is an ordinance which chiefly has to do with what is external and visible, and with our public position before men. It supposes already the possession of life and salvation, and that we have been baptised in the Holy Spirit. It constitutes the starting point of Christian profession. Others have dealt exhaustively with its subjects and mode, and have shown that no unsophisticated reader of Holy Scripture would ever gather that its subjects were other than believers, or that the rite should be observed in any other way than by immersion. The Scriptures we are about to consider seem to be robbed of all their meaning, where either unconscious infants or other unrenewed members of a household are considered fit subjects for this solemn ordinance. We leave, therefore, the subjects and the mode, and would rather consider now something of its meaning. And in doing so perhaps we cannot do better than look at the Scriptures referring to this ordinance, in the order in which we find them in the Acts and Epistles.

I. IT IS A PUBLIC EXPRESSION OF REPENTANCE TOWARD GOD AND FAITH IN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.—“And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptised every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins” (Acts ii. 38, R.V.). Forgiveness was conditional on that repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, of

which the ordinance is a public expression. Man in innocency would have had need of the constant exercise of faith, but he would have had no need for repentance. It is because we are sinners, that we need to repent (Luke v. 32). We have to change our mind Godwards, for it is against Him we have sinned. This leads to a judgment of one's self and ways. Then there will be confession of sin (Matt. iii. 6). Not only does God's goodness lead to this (Rom. ii. 4), but also the thought of coming judgment (Acts xvii. 31), brought home in power by the Spirit to our souls. As the claims of a holy God and the provisions of His grace are brought before us, we are awakened to a sense of our lost condition, and where the work is real, it will no doubt be accompanied with some measure of sorrow as the guilty past is remembered, and the burden of sin is felt. Yet, sorrow for sin is not itself repentance, though, if godly sorrow, it will develop it (2 Cor. vii. 10). Nor is repentance merely a change of mind. It is rather such a change of mind as leads us to take part with God against ourselves, and thus with a sense of the heinousness of sin in His sight, to justify God and to condemn ourselves. Such a sense of sin may be very feeble, and self-judgment may be very imperfect, but they will deepen in every child of God as he lives in communion with God. Apart from faith, there can be no real work of the Spirit in the conscience. On the other hand, without a genuine work of the Spirit in the conscience producing repentance, there cannot be faith according to God. Faith and

repentance are therefore inseparable. In repentance we are brought into a right state of soul before God; while by faith the soul identifies itself with all the value of the work of Christ. And in our baptism we publicly confess this.

II. IT IS A BADGE OF DISCIPLESHIP.—We take by means of it a position of professed allegiance to the Lord. Every instance of baptism recorded for us in the Acts is this, but we may take the case of the eunuch as an illustration (Acts viii. 26-40). We remember the circumstances. He was reading the 53rd of Isaiah, and when Philip interpreted the Word to him and he heard of Jesus and how His life was taken from the earth, he believed the Gospel, and expressed in his baptism his readiness to follow. Just as Israel was baptised unto (*en*) Moses their leader, in the cloud and in the sea (1 Cor. x. 2; Acts xix. 3, 4), so we in our baptism acknowledge Christ as our Leader and Lord, and that we are His disciples indeed. We are baptised by His servants “in (*en*) the Name of Jesus Christ” (Acts x. 48). They carry out therein His will. They act as His representatives and by His authority. It is an ordinance He has commanded, and if converts are rightly instructed, they will recognise this (Matt. xxviii. 20; Acts ii. 41, 42). When we do a thing in the name of another, we profess to have his authority to use it. We profess to know his mind, and to be doing what He would do if He were present. So in our baptism, we acknowledge His authority over us as well as over His servants who baptise.

“In Christ.”

SECOND PAPER. BY JAMES FORBES.

NO man is found “IN Christ” according to nature. His place and portion there is of grace alone. This involves the coming and operations of the Holy Spirit *in* him as well as the work of Christ *for* him. Man being a child of wrath by nature, must be born again. And God’s way of bringing this about is through faith in the crucified and risen Saviour. The sinner has to be awakened. He has to be convicted. He has to receive the Word of God, and this implies hearing and believing. So these men of Rom. xvi. 7, had heard God and believed in Christ, before Paul heard and believed, and thus they were brought out of death into life, and so were “IN CHRIST” before Paul.

The saints addressed in the Epistles are said to be “IN CHRIST.” This implies that they had heard and believed, and had been born again. “If any man be in Christ he is a new creation” (2 Cor. v. 17). All the exhortations which are enjoined upon the people of God regarding their walk in the world, are based on this great truth of being “IN CHRIST” now. Having been separated from the old creation by the Cross, renewed by the power of the Spirit, they are “in Him” and are new creatures—a new creation. All this is true of all believers *now*.

IN CHRIST in the *Future*. In 1 Thess. iv. 16 we read that “The dead IN CHRIST shall rise first.” Here we have resurrection assured. Their bodies will be raised in glory. “When we see Him, we shall be

like Him." This is the glorified state. All will be conformed to the image of the Son of God then. Every taint of sin will be removed. As in our Adam condition we bore the image of the first man, so in Christ we shall bear the image of the heavenly. That image in which we resembled the first man was not merely physical—it was moral. And this is our glorious prospect; then every aspiration of the new nature shall be gratified when this future phase of being "IN CHRIST" is realised. In measure, as we know Christ now, so shall we appreciate what this consummation will be. After Adam's "deep sleep," God took a bone out of his side and builded a woman which He brought to Adam, causing him to say, "This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh." The day is coming when Christ shall present to Himself "a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle." Then will be seen by all created intelligences, the wealth of that purpose which in the past eternity was counselled in Christ; which in the fulness of time was developed and wrought out in grace, and which at the appointed time will be consummated by our gathering "unto Him" in glory. These great truths of the Word, received by faith to the soul and allowed to "work effectually" in all that believe, give strength to the Christian's life and character to the Christian's walk and testimony here among men. For it is in the measure that we know and realise what it means to be "in Christ" that we are able in any measure to say "For to me to live is Christ" (Phil. i. 21).

Miracles :

THEIR CHARACTER AND THE PURPOSE.

BY THE EDITOR.

MIRACLES have been described as "wonders due to the special action of Divine Power,"* and in the language of another: "A miracle is such an interference with the course of Nature, as is beyond our own power."† Paley claims that their purpose was to "accredit revelation," and that its value is determined by these miracles; while Bishop Butler avers that Christianity was "professed to be received into the world, upon the belief of miracles," and that "the first converts would have given this as their reason for embracing it." And yet we are told by the inspired evangelist, that while the Lord Jesus was in the city of Jerusalem, during a passover week, and "many believed in His Name when they saw the miracles which He did," instead of recognising these men as His true disciples by their faith in Him as a miracle worker, we read: "But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them"—in other words, He did not believe in them—because He knew all" (John ii. 24).

WHAT IS A MIRACLE ?

There are three words used in the New Testament, of what we call a "miracle." They are all found in Acts ii. 22, in reference to the Lord Jesus and His service in the midst of the Jewish people: "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by *miracles*—(powers, R.V. margin)—and *wonders* and *signs*, which

*Arthur J. Balfour.

†Sir Robert Anderson.

God did by Him in the midst of you." Paul, writing of his own ministry to the Christians at Corinth, says: "The signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in *signs*, and *wonders*, and *mighty deeds*" (2 Cor. xii. 12). And he tells us in 2 Thess. ii. 9, that when the Antichrist appears on earth, energised by the devil, he will successfully commend his deceivings to the ungodly, with the counterfeit credentials of "*powers*, and *signs*, and lying *wonders*." These "miracles" are described in Rev. xiii. 12-15, and are for the purpose of "deceiving them that dwell on the earth." The three words used are not intended to describe different kinds of miracles, but rather to view the same act from varied standpoints. "Powers" tell the cause that produces them, and direct the mind to that which is beyond man's vision. "Signs"—which is the word always used in John's Gospel—tell the object for which they were wrought, and call the human understanding into exercise, while "Wonders" describe their effect on those who behold them. The Lord appeals to those who heard His doctrine by saying: "The same works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me" (John v. 36), and "if I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not" (John x. 37). It was by these works that Jesus was "approved of God," and marked out to the people of Israel as their promised Messiah (Acts ii. 22). Thus they had before their eyes the evidences of their own prophetic Scriptures fulfilled in His ministry (see Isa. lxi. 1-2, with Luke iv. 18-21). But it

required a Divine revelation of Christ to the soul (Matt. xvi. 17), to give the knowledge of Him as a personal Saviour. Thus it is, that the faith of the saved sinner does not stand in what his eyes behold, but in the Word of God, received in faith, through which he is "born again" (1 Pet. i. 23). And so sure is he that the Gospel he has received is the very Word of God, that if even an angel from heaven came with a "different Gospel" (Gal. i. 6-8), he would utterly reject it. Miracles were God's testimony to His earthly people, "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. x. 7, 8), and when the ministry of the Lord, and of the Apostles toward them closed, miracles became fewer, and eventually ceased. The instrument which God uses now to reach the conscience and the heart of man, is the Gospel, in the power of the Spirit (1 Thess. i. 4-6), and should "miracles" or "signs," or "tongues" appear—as it is alleged by some they have—we must test them by the written Word (see Deut. xiii. 1-5), and not be led into paths of error by means of them. The "healings" of "Christian Science," Mormonism, and kindred systems of fundamental error, have proved themselves to be the work of the devil, and their purpose is to decoy the simple into his snare.

(To be continued.)

Affliction's Use.

Afflictions, though they seem severe,
In mercy oft are sent,
They stop the prodigal's career,
And cause him to repent.

The Preacher's Column.

OUTLINES OF EVANGELISTIC SUBJECTS.

GREAT GOSPEL TRUTHS IN ROMANS.

- The Wrath of God revealed against Sin (chap. i. 18).
 The Righteousness of God manifested at the Cross (chap. iii. 21, 22).
 The Forbearance of God justified (chap. iii. 25).
 The Love of God commended to sinners (chap. v. 8).
 The Grace of God in salvation bestowed (chap. v. 15).

THREEFOLD ASSURANCE.

- Assurance of Faith (Heb. x. 22)—Looks *unto* the Saviour.
 Assurance of Understanding (Col. ii. 2)—Looks *into* His Word.
 Assurance of Hope (Heb. vi. 11)—Looks *for* His Appearing.

BRIEF BIBLE STUDIES FOR YOUNG BELIEVERS.

THINGS EVERLASTING.

- Everlasting Love has drawn me (Jer. xxxi. 3; John iii. 16).
 Everlasting Life has been given me (John iii. 15; 1 John v. 11).
 Everlasting Righteousness covers me (Psa. cxix. 42; Isa. lxi. 10).
 Everlasting Strength supports me (Isa. xxvi. 4; Eph. vi. 10).
 Everlasting Joy awaits me (Isa. xxxv. 10; Jude 24).

BIBLE REMEDIES FOR SPIRITUAL MALADIES.

- Cold-Heartedness (Jude 21; 1 John v. 16; Luke xxiv. 32).
 Soul Sickness (Isa. lviii. 6-8; Psa. ciii. 3; Song ii. 3).
 Religious Melancholy (Phil. ii. 4; 1 Thess. v. 18; Psa. xxxiv. 1).
 Over Carefulness (Phil. iv. 6, 7; Matt. vi. 34; 1 Pet. v. 7).

NEW TESTAMENT WORDS AND SYNONYMS.

WORDS USED IN RELATION TO THE LORD'S COMING.

Parousia—1 Cor. xv. 23; 1 Thess. ii. 19; iv. 15; 2 Thess. ii. 1, 8; 1 John ii. 28.—The word signifies "presence." It is used of one's arrival (1 Cor. xvi. 17), and continued presence, in contrast with his absence (Phil. ii. 12). It is generally used in the New Testament of the personal return of the Lord FOR His people, and includes the period during which He, with His glorified saints, is hid

within the heavens before His manifestation WITH them to the world.

Apokalupsis—2 Thess. i. 7; 1 Pet. i. 7, 13, and elsewhere. It means "appearing," "manifestation," "unveiling," "revelation," and is commonly used of the Lord's coming WITH His saints in power and glory to this earth.

Epiphaneia—2 Thess. ii 8; 2 Tim i. 10; Titus ii. 13—signifies "forthshining," "appearing," and in its verb form *phaneero*, "to appear" in Col. iii. 4; 1 John iii. 2.

These words connect themselves with different aspects and stages of the Lord's coming, which it is important to distinguish, in order to have a right understanding of this great truth as revealed in the Word.

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The Young Believer's Question Box.

Is there any Scripture warrant for the statement, so often made, that "the Lord may come at any moment," or for the thought that when seated at the Lord's table it may be "for the last time" before His coming?

It is always necessary to distinguish between truths revealed by God and recorded in the Word, and man's deductions therefrom. The former are God's unalterable Word, true and abiding; the latter man's inferences, which may be right or wrong. To cite an instance of this difference, we turn to the incident recorded in John xxi. 20-23, where, in answer to Peter's question regarding John, the Lord said, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou Me," from which statement the disciples drew the "inference" that that disciple should not die. But the Lord did not say this, they only inferred it to be the meaning of His words. Around the truth of the Lord's coming many such "opinions" have gathered throughout the years. And some of them are accepted and repeated with little consideration, as if they were part of His revelation. Those who have learned from Scripture the imminence and nearness of "the blessed hope," require to think and speak of it in the terms of the Divine words through which God has made it known, not in the language of tradition. Of these words the following are samples—(1) that Christians should "live . . . *looking* for that blessed hope" (Tit. ii. 13), and (2) that "we *wait* for the Saviour" (Phil. iii. 20), or, as it may be rendered, "We are *expecting* the Saviour." Surely if these

words are taken in their simplicity, and held in faith with integrity, it cannot be wrong to say, "We may expect the Lord to come at any moment." And there is abundant warrant for that expectation in the words of THE promise first made by our Lord of the great event, "I come again" (John xiv. 3, R.V.), and repeated in the last words from heaven, "I come quickly" (Rev. xxii. 20). Only those who would place signs, a tribulation and other events connected with but preceding the coming of the Son of Man to earth, between the coming Lord and His waiting people, and such as think they have discovered a date and day on the calendar in which the Lord will come, can object to any confession of the lips which implies the immediate return of the Lord to change the living and raise the sleeping saints. And this is the Christian's proper hope. The second objection may be dismissed by a reference to the words which form part of the special revelation given to Paul in connection with the Lord's Supper—words not found in the record of its original institution by the Lord—"Ye do shew the Lord's death *until* He come" (1 Cor. xi. 27). Surely in partaking of the memorial feast in which there is a weekly renewal to the heart of the Lord's own promise, it cannot be wrong to cherish the hope of its near fulfilment, although this need not be always expressed, especially in hackneyed terms, with little heart or soul in them. But the "bright and blessed hope" is not to be obscured or postponed by interjecting something between, or because some have erred in fixing day and date for its realisation.

Answers to Correspondents.

X.—The time is possibly near, when Jerusalem will resume her place as a city of the Jews, and when their nationality will be recognised by the great powers.

REX.—Christianity is not Socialism. While confessing there is equality of all who believe, "in Christ" (Eph. i. 1), it recognises and enforces the distinction which God has established on earth, in the family and the nation (see Eph. vi. 1-7).

J. W.—DEVON.—Worldly devices for raising funds to carry on what is called "the work of the Lord," and begging appeals made to individuals who are believed to have money, all negate the profession of faith in God. For where God is really

trusted, there will be no need to turn from Him to man, as if He had failed. One of the saddest inconsistencies of our time is, that of men professedly trusting God for daily bread, yet constantly writing letters telling how badly they need human help.

W. B., EDINBURGH.—The simple and only ground of reception to the local assembly of saints, as set forth in the Word is, that one belongs to Christ, owns His Lordship, and desires to obey His Word. But this must be well attested, not by the applicant's words merely, but by those competent to discern and bear witness, who see his life. In the case of one newly converted, the evidence of life in possession, with the desire to learn and do the Lord's will, would suffice. But if one has been in one of the many denominations—scarce one of which is now free from fundamental error, taught from the pulpit in some and regarded with indifference by others—it would be necessary to find out how the applicant stands in his faith, as well as his reasons for leaving where he has hitherto been in the habit of worshipping. To claim that you meet "simply as Christians," outside of all sects, yet holding open door to all denominations, to come and go with you at pleasure, is a denial of gathering in the One Name, and is quite untenable. A look round at the course pursued and the position now reached as half or full-fledged sectarian "pastors," bearing clerical titles, by some who have for years been advocating and practising this line of things, ought surely to cause others who are venturing on the same path, to pause and consider their ways. And its dangers to young and untaught believers should surely call forth such ministry of the Word in the assemblies, as will instruct and warn them against it.

The Coming of the Lord,

AND THE FIXING OF DAYS AND DATES.

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

MY attention has lately been called to an American pamphlet on this subject.*

Though it contains much that is true and useful, its distinctive teaching is erroneous and harmful. By reference to the Jewish Calendar and "The Times of the Gentiles" (which, according to his reckoning, expire in or about this present year), he claims to establish that the Coming of the Lord

* "The Coming of the Lord Draweth Nigh." by C. J. B., Kansas City.

is now due. As regards the precise year, there may possibly be some room for doubt, but not as to the month date. "For (he says) the Scriptures definitely teach and prove that it (the Coming) takes place at the Feast of Trumpets and Jewish New Year's Day." "Therefore we can dogmatise on this being the time of the rapture;" and if, as is very probable, it occurs in 1917, it will be on the 17th September. And seven years later, the Lord will return for Israel's deliverance.†

This scheme, of course, entirely discredits the apostolic teaching which led the early saints "to live...looking for" the coming as a present hope. And it flouts the Lord's own teaching, as recorded in Matthew xxiv. 33-42, for the guidance of His Jewish saints in a future dispensation. For His language is explicit that, during the waiting period that will succeed the fulfilment of verses 15-29, His coming may be expected on any day and at any hour (verses 36, 42). And yet, according to this writer, as each New Year's Day goes by, they will know that He cannot come for another twelve month! But even this understates the case. For as, *ex. hyp.*, the Coming, which is their hope, is to occur in the seventh year after "the Rapture," they can enter the date of it in their calendars, and then dismiss the subject from their thoughts!

The teaching of Matthew xxiv. is definite and plain. The Lord first warns His Jewish disciples not to expect His return until *after* the coming of Antichrist, the Great Tribulation, and the terrors "of the day of the Lord" (v. 29, *cf.* Isaiah xiii. 6, 9, 10, and Rev. vi. 12-17). And then He speaks of a waiting period, so prolonged that the world will forget the preceding terrors, and His own people will need exhortation to continuous watchfulness. The latter part of the chapter, and also the parable of the Ten Virgins, relate to that period. And yet this writer ignores it altogether. For he limits to seven years the entire interval between "the Rapture" and the Coming to Israel.

His pamphlet is, indeed, a signal specimen of "nightmare exegesis" of Scripture. And my main object in noticing it is, to offer a protest and a warning against these chronological forecasts which are so popular just now. Christians need to be reminded that "it is not in our time only that the end of the world has been predicted. It was

† See pp. 23, 24, 26, 27, 29. And on p. 47 of the Fourth Ed. he says, "There is a strong probability that the Parable of the Ten Virgins may have its literal fulfilment this year."

looked for far more confidently at the beginning of the sixth century. All Europe rang with it in the days of Pope Gregory the Great. And at the end of the tenth century the apprehension of it amounted to a general panic. It was then frequently preached on, and listened to by breathless crowds; the subject of everyone's thoughts, everyone's conversation.*

What specially concerns us here is the sad fact that, with Christians generally, the Lord's Coming is a forgotten truth, merged and lost in the "Second Advent" of theology—His coming to judgment in a vastly remote future age. And many who "believe in the pre-millennial advent" are not really looking for Christ, but for Antichrist and "the Great Tribulation." This heresy, like that of C.J.B.'s pamphlet, springs from failing to distinguish between Messianic prophecy and *Christian* truth as revealed in the Epistles.

All these heresies and chronological forecasts tend so to becloud and embarrass faith in the truth of the Lord's Coming, that it is not the many, but only the few, who intelligently believe and cherish the Saviour's promise, "Surely I am coming quickly." Is it strange, then, that the fulfilment of that promise is still deferred?

Space limits preclude my noticing the numerous incidental errors of the pamphlet. I may briefly allude to two—his misreading of 2 Thess. ii. 3, and his wonderful "discovery," based on Jer. xxvii. 6, that the times of the Gentiles began with Jehoiachin's captivity. The "that day" referred to by the Apostle is, of course, "the day of the Lord" of verse 2 (see R.V.), and not the day of the Coming, which will precede it by many years. And the great crisis which inaugurated "the Times of the Gentiles," was, of course, Israel's subjection to Gentile suzerainty, when Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem in the third year of Jehoiakim. The "Captivity" was a second and altogether secondary punishment, inflicted on the nation because of their obdurate refusal to submit to the judgment of the "Servitude." As verse 1 expressly states, the prophecy of Jer. xxvii. was given in the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign, and the latter verses record its communication to Zedekiah. These, and various other points briefly touched on in these pages, are fully dealt with in my book, "The Coming Prince; or, The Seventy Weeks of Daniel," quoted on pages 10 and 31 of C. I. B.'s pamphlet.

* "The Coming Prince," Intro. Chapter.

God's Discipline of His Own.

AND HOW IT IS RECEIVED.

THE sore discipline through which the children of God are passing in this solemn time of testing and purging, will fail in its purposes of mercy, if no more is seen in it than the common loss as among men and nations. Men of the world speak of their gains and losses, and of the rise and fall of empires as "luck" and "chance," as if the hand of God had no part in these things at all. If we see no more in the events transpiring on all sides, and among all classes and conditions of men than "mishaps" which greater wisdom and earlier preparation could have avoided, is to "talk infidelity," and shut out God from human life altogether. And this is what the leaders of men and nations are conspiring to accomplish. That they will succeed ultimately in this their devious work, the Word leaves us in no manner of doubt. The same spirit is abroad that filled the proud heart of the first monarch who refused to own God's claims, and defied Him to His face in the haughty words, "Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice? I know not the Lord" (Exod. v. 2). And it will yet culminate in the kings and rulers of earth standing together in full, open revolt against God and His Christ, with the profane boast on their lips, "Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us" (Psa. ii. 2-4). When this condition is reached, their judgment follows: "THEN shall He speak to them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore

displeasure." Let the people of God beware, lest they by assimilating the world's spirit, fall into its way and share its woe; not in eternity, but in time. "Despise not thou the chastening of the Lord" (Heb. xii. 5), is a word in season for all God's sons, and never were they more in need of it than now. For the tendency and spirit of the time, even among God's own, is to be negligent of His corrections, or to make light of them, and despise them. Not in open revolt, but in failing to be duly "exercised" by it. For it is through deep exercise of soul before God, and heart-searching in His presence, that true blessing comes. "Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest out of Thy law" (Psa. xciv. 12), but this blessedness comes; rough learning the lesson He would teach, not in replying against Him or despising it. "Happy is the man whom God correcteth" (Job v. 17), but this happiness is reached by yielding under His hand, not in resisting it. "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, and He will exalt you in due time" (1 Pet. v. 4), is a word of great worth to us who are called to live and learn what God would teach us in His school, by means of the experiences through which we are passing. And if its lessons are learned well, the soul will be chastened and exercised before God, purged of its natural pride, and through loss and blighted hopes of earthly good and gain, brought to cleave more closely to the Lord, and to walk more humbly with Him, in more true devotion of heart.

The Priesthood and Advocacy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

PART II. ALEXANDER STEWART, Glasgow.

IN Heb. iii. 1 we are bidden to consider "the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." As the Apostle He came from God among men, teaching us what we needed to know about God; as the High Priest He went from among men to God, in order that He might represent us in His presence, and exercise for us the ministry which our condition required.

That condition is one of weakness and infirmity, of liability to temptation, a condition that needs "mercy." In our Lord Jesus Christ "we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." It is these "infirmities" that call forth the grace of His priestly intercession.

And it is these infirmities that bring to our aid also that other Intercessor whom God has given us, as we read—"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered." Our times of weakness are the occasions alike of the High Priestly ministry of the Lord Jesus and the gracious intercession of the Holy Ghost, and it is at such times that we may expect the flow to usward of mercy and grace, and the forthputting within us

and on our behalf, of the power of the Spirit of God.

Paul well knew how to regard infirmities. In 2 Cor. xii. he relates his experience how, whether in the body or out of the body he could not tell, he was caught up to the third heaven and heard words that it was not possible for a man to utter; but so far from this exalted experience delivering him from liability to sin, the very greatness of the revelations was likely to be a snare to him. He was in danger of being proud of them, and "lest he should be exalted above measure"—words which are twice used in verse 7—there was given to him a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him. The word which, in the A.V., is translated "thorn," is in the Revised Version alternatively rendered "stake," and may signify an affliction comparable not to a thorn in a man's hand, which pricks and irritates, but to a stake through his body, which pins him down, and renders his struggles ineffectual.

For this thing he besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from him, but the relief he asked for was denied. The Lord did not remove the affliction, but gave him grace to endure it, saying, "My grace is sufficient for thee; My strength is made perfect in weakness." And the conclusion which the Apostle draws is this:—"Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me." Revelations might have made him proud; infirmities brought upon him the power of Christ, therefore he boasted in infirmities. He did not murmur because of

them ; he was not merely resigned under them ; he gloried in them, because of the grace which they brought.

AN ADVOCATE WITH THE FATHER.

But the believer is not only compassed with infirmity ; he is also liable to sin. Though perfectly cleansed by the blood of Jesus—"clean every whit"—having the standing of a clean person in God's sight, he may sin and become defiled. It is to his condition as thus considered, that the Advocacy of our Lord Jesus Christ refers. What John had written in the first chapter of his Epistle was intended to be a deterrent from sin. "These things," he says, "write I unto you that ye sin not," but, he adds, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous."

How that Advocacy is exercised we may learn from Luke xxii. 31, 32. In view of the trial of faith, through which His disciples were about to pass, the Lord said to Simon Peter—"Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not, and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

The Lord foresaw the attempt which Satan was about to make upon His disciples. He singled out Peter, and before ever the time of sifting arrived, He prayed for him that his faith might not fail. Peter fell, but not finally. He was turned again into the right way from which, under temptation, he had departed, and he lived to be an honoured witness to the Lord whom, under temptation, he

denied. We know but little how much we are daily indebted to that Advocacy of our Lord Jesus Christ, which anticipates even our temptations to sin.

Faith uses Christ in His offices. "I have gone astray like a lost sheep," says the Psalmist, and then in simplicity adds, "Seek Thy servant" (Psa. cxix. 176). To go astray is our tendency : to restore our souls is what the grace of our Lord Jesus charges itself with. And heavenly-wise is he who having erred, makes immediate honest confession of his wrongdoing, and in simple faith looks to the Shepherd and Bishop of his soul to restore him.

We have a great High Priest, Who is also our Advocate with the Father. Our wisdom, when we are conscious of weakness or of sin is, to make our immediate believing appeal to Him. He can never fail to be true to the offices which He bears.

To-morrow's Care.

DOES each day upon its wing
Its allotted burden bring ?
Load it not beside with sorrow,
Which belongeth to to-morrow.

Strength is promised, grace is given
To the heart by sorrow riven ;
But if one fore-date the woe,
Weak and sad that saint must go.

Leave thy burden in His hand,
He has power at His command.
Nothing left with God can fail,
And no foe 'gainst Him prevail.

Only one thing claims thy care—
Take it to the Lord in prayer :
He will give thee sweet release,
Fill thy heart with heavenly peace.

Separation in Service.

W. J. M'CLURE, CALIFORNIA;

TO His earthly people Israel, the commandment of the Lord was, "Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together" (Deut. xxii. 10). To His heavenly people of the present time the New Testament equivalent is found in 2 Cor. vi. 14, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." The ox was a clean animal fit for Jehovah's altar, and might be offered to Him in sacrifice. The ass was unclean according to the law, and had either to be redeemed or condemned (Exod. xiii. 13). These animals were not to be put under a common yoke in service. They are typical of the saved and unsaved. God will have no linking of these whatever in His work. If this plain and definite commandment of the Lord had power over the lives of God's people, it would separate them from every voluntary association with the unsaved at any cost. That it does not do so, is the believer's shame.

While the passage prohibits all "yoking" with the world, it has special reference to service, as the words "plow" in Deuteronomy and "yoke" in Corinthians clearly indicate. This, surely, is what the Lord saw needful to warn against, for as we know it is in what is called "the work of the Lord" that so many of God's own people are in forbidden alliance with the unconverted. Take for example Sunday School teaching, temperance work, and many schemes of world reformation and philanthropic work. How many are now

found under a common yoke with the unconverted while engaged in these. And when their attention is called to the unscriptural position they occupy, they fall back on the plea that these are "good works," and that "the end justifies the means." But "plowing" was surely a good work, a work that God had said was to be done. But He would have it done in His appointed way, and not just as His people might devise. He will not accept any service done in a wrong way, in rejection of His expressed commandment. It an Israelite had put the yoke on an ox and an ass for the plowing of his fields, he would surely have brought upon himself the judgment of God for disobedience. It is not for the believer to raise questions why this or that should be, or what the results may be if he were to cease doing the work he is engaged in, because he finds his position contrary to the Word of God. It is his to obey and leave results with God. No real work for God ever suffered by those engaged in it obeying His Word, and doing God's work in His own appointed way. There never can be true success as God reckons, if there is disobedience to that which He has commanded. His commandment regarding the unequal yoke in service here is very plain. Yet how often it is frittered away and rendered powerless in the practices of many of God's people. And what a loss in spiritual strength and power for service these unequal yokings with the unconverted, bring to the people of God. For no believer can be under the yoke with an unbeliever without being contaminated,

The Stewardship of Money.

THE parable of the steward who was accused of wasting his master's goods (Luke xvi. 1-12), and who received notice of dismissal for his carelessness and unfaithfulness in the trust committed to him—was not uttered by the Lord to teach that roguery is justifiable, or that dishonesty can be condoned by coquetting with the reseters. The point of the parable is, that when God entrusts His people with any of this world's goods—any of what is here called "unrighteous mammon" in contrast with "the true riches"—they are not to hold it as if they were its owners, but as stewards who hold and dispense faithfully what is placed by another in their care, and only for the purposes to which its true owner has assigned it. And if through indolence—as was evidently the case with the steward in the parable—they become "unfaithful in that which is another's," they may be dismissed from their stewardship, and even that which is "their own" withheld from their hand. With the Christian, money is a stewardship committed to his trust by God, to be used in His service, and laid out on His work to the best advantage. It is neither to be hoarded nor wasted, but used, to obtain gain for its true owner (see Luke xix. 13, 23). If the Christian steward waste it by hoarding it, or using it for his own enjoyment, or in dispensing it for purposes which bring no gain to his Master, he is unfaithful and will hear about this fully in the day of Christ's judgment seat (1 Cor. iv. 1-5),

when all such service will be reviewed and the Lord's verdict given upon it. But here and now, unfaithfulness in the use of money or goods entrusted to a Christian, may deprive him of the spiritual enjoyment of "that which is his own"—the true riches, that wonderful sum of "spiritual blessings" with which God has already blessed him (Eph. i. 3) in Christ. For how could God entrust one with a full measure of the enjoyment and disbursement of these, who is unfaithful in the matter of pounds, shillings, and pence? Did you ever meet a niggardly, grasping, covetous man, who had much to enjoy or to dispense of the things of God and Christ? Or did you ever find your spiritual life enriched or your soul brought into contact with God and heaven, through the ministry of one who "wastes" the money entrusted to him as God's Almoner, on expensive, unnecessary, and worldly dress, for himself, his wife, or family, or in superfluous furnishings or "style" unbecoming a "pilgrim" heavenwards? It is painfully evident that much of the money which should go into God's Treasury for the carrying on of His work, and the relief of need among His poor and suffering saints, is sacrificed on the altars of fashion, and wasted on self and its fleshly desires. And God allows the covetous man, who does not spend but hoards—which is just another form of "waste" (see Luke xix. 21)—to put his money into "bags with holes" (Hag. i. 6), through which it falls into the hands of others, often ungodly descendants who make it go like thistledown. J. R.

The Fellowship of God's Son.

NOTES OF THE MINISTRY OF DONALD MUNRO

THE First Epistle to the Corinthian Church is addressed to "the church of God which is at Corinth," but not to that church only, for it is immediately added, "to all that in every place call on the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord." So that its teaching is for us who are here to-day.

In chap. i. 9, we read, "God is faithful by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." In the midst of all man's failure and unfaithfulness, "God is faithful," and He is able to maintain His people whom He calls out of darkness into light, and out from the world into partnership with His Son, in the practical manifestation of this separation unto Himself and in the enjoyment of this fellowship of His Son. What is involved in this fellowship? For an illustration of the meaning of the word, look at Luke v. 10. Here we see that these men, Peter and Andrew, James and John, were "partners" in the fishing business. They had the boats and nets in common; they were in fellowship in that business. Then, again, we read in Acts ii. 45; iv. 24, that the saints of early times "had all things in common." That was fellowship. And we have been called into fellowship with God's Son. He is the Head of the great co-partnership of which all who are in Him share. This is surely wonderful. It involves not only our personal salvation, but that the interests of all who are in the co-partnership are His

interests, and, further, that their interests are my interests. We hold all things in common. It is in the carrying out of this in practice that we fail. And it is to instruct us in the will of God concerning the practice of this fellowship that "God is faithful." He will not fail us, if we take His counsel and do His will. When God saved us, He brought us out from the world, and its fellowship—in which, as sinners, children of fallen Adam, we had our part—unto Himself. There was a full break with the ungodly, and a complete separation from them, and all their interests, to walk with God and share with Christ. Separation from the world, its politics, its moneymaking, and its religion, will appear in practice if we are really living in fellowship with the Lord, and holding no separate interests of our own apart from His. But it will not do to have partnership with the world all the week, and then seek to enjoy fellowship with God and His people on the Lord's Day. For this partnership into which we have been called is a seven days a week one, and extends to everything in our lives. If there is anything you have or that you do, any personal interests outside the co-partnership into which God has brought you, in which God can have no share, it will be so much "loss" to your account in that day when the full results of all that has been done will be declared. "The commandments of the Lord" (chap. xiv. 37), given in the Epistle, are for the guidance of all who are in the co-partnership. And they are to be obeyed by us to-day. There is nothing to be changed.

Miracles :

THEIR NATURE AND THEIR PURPOSE.

SECOND PAPER. BY THE EDITOR.

THE Lord's miracles were redemptive acts, working deliverance from the ruin that sin and Satan had brought upon men. They were revelations of the compassion of God, for it was the Father that wrought through the Son (John xiv. 10), these works of power. He "went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil" (Acts x. 38), whose works He came to destroy (1 John iii. 8). The "signs" wrought by Moses and Aaron in Egypt, were for judgment, but the Lord's signs were in grace. When judgment had to be executed, it was a barren tree, not a human being, which became the subjects of His power (Matt. xxi. 19). Some were displays of His creative might, as the turning of water into wine (John ii. 11); and the multiplication of the loaves (John vi. 13); others manifested His compassion, as the raising of the widow's son (Luke vii. 15), and the healing of Malchus' ear (Luke xxi. 52). No miracle was wrought apart from a definite purpose, none for selfish interests; all were for God, and all for instruction as well as relief. "Other signs" (John xx. 30) were wrought by the Lord besides those recorded in the Gospels. Only such as are in harmony with the message of each of the four Evangelists being given, and grouped according to their purpose. These "signs" were the credentials of the Lord's Messiahship to the

people of Israel, and they, having their "countersigns" in the Scriptures of the prophets, should have accepted them as His credentials. Some truly did (see John vii. 31), but the mass of the nation was blinded by prejudice, and hardened in unbelief. The miracles wrought by the apostles, as recorded in the early chapters of Acts (see chapter iii. 12; iv. 9, 10; v. 12-16), first among the Jews, were God's witnesses to them as being sent from Him with their message (Heb. ii. 4). Some had the effect of turning whole towns to the Lord (Acts ix. 45, 42), others aroused the fierce anger of the religious leaders (Acts iv. 5, 16). But when the Jewish people finally rejected the Gospel, and wrath came upon them then, to the uttermost (1 Thess. ii. 16), miracles in their midst ceased. Those wrought among the heathen (Acts xiv. 3-15, 19), called attention to the message, but did not always ensure its acceptance. And when the Word of God was completed, and the Church, indwelt by the Spirit, appeared as God's witness to His truth on earth (1 Tim. iii. 15), they gradually ceased, having served their purpose. Their absence in the Church now, is not due wholly to its failure, as some aver, nor would a revived and restored condition bring them back again. The greatest "sign" that God can work, and does work in this time of His grace among men, is in the bringing of a sinner from the power of Satan and the dominion of sin, to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to adorn the doctrine of the Gospel by a life of godliness and consistency with it.

NO USELESS MIRACLES.

While the Christian holds fast the truth that "with God all things are possible" (Matt. xix. 26), and that none can stay His hand or say unto Him, "What doest Thou?" (Dan. iv. 35), he does not expect God to work miraculous deliverances for those who trespass the laws by which man's being is governed. He knows that God conserves His might, and never wastes it in useless displays to cause wonder, or to save watchfulness. He knows that physical and spiritual health are maintained by their observance. He eats his daily bread for nourishment, although he knows that God sustained Elijah without food for many days. He keeps out of the way of lions, although he believes that God shut their mouths so that they could not hurt his servant, Daniel, when in their den. He uses means, such as Hezekiah did, when in His sickness (Isa. xxxviii. 21), for his recovery, yet expects an answer to prayer (ver. 5). He takes advantage of the skill of a physician in his sickness, without giving up his faith in God. And let it be remembered that God has not promised, in all cases, to either remove disease (2 Cor. xii. 7-9), or to restore health to those who lack it. Paul was often in "painfulness" (2 Cor. xi. 20); Timothy had his "often infirmities" (1 Tim. v. 23), and while Paul at times had power to shake a viper from his own hand, without harm, and to heal a heathen chief (Acts xxviii. 5, 8), at other times he had to leave a fellow-labourer behind him "sick" (2 Tim. iv. 20). God never changes, but His way may.

Christian Baptism,

AND ITS PRACTICAL TEACHING.

SECOND PAPER. W. R. LEWIS, BATH.

BAPTISM does not introduce us into the family of God. We do not therein become children of God. We are introduced into a family by birth, and into God's family by new birth. Nor does baptism introduce us into the Church of God. It is not by baptism in water, but by sharing in the effects of Pentecost, that we are brought into the Church of God. "In one Spirit were we all baptised into one body." And we individually share in this blessing on believing, for it is then we are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

But Baptism in water can be looked at as the public entrance into the "Kingdom of the heavens;" that is, heaven's rule over the earth, for we see how it is associated with the use of "the keys" in Acts ii. and x. (see Matt. xvi. 19). It is the acknowledgment of an authority in heaven over the earth and those on earth. The earth is not yet governed by heaven except in a Providential way. The will of God is not done on earth to-day as it is done in heaven. It will be, but such rule is not yet manifestly exercised. For the present, the Kingdom has taken a peculiar form consequent upon the King's rejection. It has taken a new character quite unknown to the Old Testament prophets. The King has been here, but He was cast out. They said, "We will not have this Man to reign over us," and now He has become the Sower, and He is extending

His kingdom, not by means of His power and glory, as He will do by and by, but by the preaching of the Word of God, the seed which He sows. He is working secretly in the hearts of men, and the Kingdom now comprises those on earth who, in the midst of a scene of rebellion and in a world governed by an usurper, receive His Word into their hearts and acknowledge the dominion of an absent and rejected King now in heaven. This King has many subjects on earth to-day, living as it were in a foreign land, acknowledging His supremacy in a land at war with Him. Once they were the subjects of the usurper. Once they, like the rest of men, were rejectors of the absent King. But they have been reconciled to Him, their enmity has been broken down, they have been delivered out of the authority of darkness, and have been translated into His Kingdom. They confess that "there is another King, one Jesus" (Acts xvii. 7), and they expect Him to yet take His rights and reign as Heir of all things.

Now, in our baptism, we publicly enter this Kingdom. We announce to the world that we renounce our former allegiance to the usurper, and we take as it were, before men, our oath of allegiance to the rightful King.

But how different from the qualifications for naturalisation in an earthly kingdom are those of the Kingdom of the heavens. To be savingly a subject of this Kingdom, repentance, faith, new birth and forgiveness of sins are essential. It is true that many profess to enter it who

have never been born again. Thousands to-day are being brought professedly into this Kingdom by baptism who have never experienced the new birth at all, most of them being unconscious infants. The administration of the Kingdom on earth has been left in the hands of men while the King is away, and through His servants' sloth and neglect, tares have been and are being introduced in this way by the Evil One. But only those who are born again, only those who have repentance and faith, only those who have been saved from their sins, will ever share the blessings of this Kingdom.

And then how wondrous is the thought, that in our baptism we publicly enter the Kingdom by the same way that the King Himself entered it (Matt. iii.). To Him, John the Baptist, as "the porter," opened the door. For us, others of His servants do the same office. We are baptised by them "in (*en*) the Name of Jesus Christ" (Acts x. 48). They carry out therein His will. They act as His representatives and by His authority. It is an ordinance He has commanded, and if converts are rightly instructed, they will recognise that all authority "has been given" unto Him in heaven and on earth (Matt. xxviii. 20). But why should it be necessary to enter the Kingdom by this figure of death? Does not the fact that the rightful King has been rejected show that man by nature is wholly unsuited to His reign? His rejection brought to a focus all the divergent lines of human sin. It revealed fully the state of man. There must be a new creation.

The Preacher's Column.

NOTES AND OUTLINES OF GOSPEL THEMES.

SALVATION.

- God provides it (Acts xxviii. 28).
 Grace bestows it (Tit. ii. 11).
 The Gospel declares it (Eph. i. 13).
 Faith receives it (Eph. ii. 8).
 Works manifest it (Phil. ii. 12).

CONVERSION, IN VARIOUS ASPECTS.

- The *Turning* of the Believer to God (1 Thess. i. 9).
 The *Return* of the Wanderer to Christ (1 Pet. ii. 25).
 The *Restoration* of one who has erred (Luke xxii. 32).
 1. Proof of Repentance and Faith (Acts iii. 19; xi. 21).
 2. Manifested in hearing and following Him (John x. 28).
 3. Proved real by godly sorrow and obedience (2 Cor. vii. 11; Psa. cxix. 59).

THE WRATH TO COME.

- It is already revealed from heaven (Rom. i. 18).
 It will come on all the disobedient (Col. iii. 6).
 It was borne by Christ as Surety (Psa. lxxxviii. 7).
 The believer is delivered out of it (1 Thess. i. 10).
 He will be saved from it (Rom. v. 8).
 It abideth on unbelievers (John iii. 36).

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE STUDY.

A CLUSTER OF GOSPEL BLESSINGS:

- In Rom. v. 1-11, which Believers now enjoy.
 Justification before God (ver. 1).
 Peace with God (ver. 1).
 Reconciliation to God (ver. 10).
 The Love of God (ver. 5).
 Joy in God (ver. 11).

THE BELIEVER'S NEW WALK.

- By Faith toward God (2 Cor. v. 4).
 In Newness of Life before men (Rom. vi. 4).
 In the Spirit's inward energy (Gal. v. 16).
 By the Word's outward guidance (Psa. cxix. 105).

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The Young Believer's Question Box.

Christians' Habitually Working on the Lord's Day.

As one not long in Christ, I seek help in the Word, on a matter which troubles me much, in which I desire to know and do the will of the Lord.

In the employment in which I am engaged, it has become necessary in the interests of the Government, for a certain number of the employees to work on the Lord's Day. At first it was by turn, and I was only required one day out of four. Then the demand was pressed for service on alternate Lord's Days, and lately each Lord's Day. Am I justified in thus absenting myself habitually from the worship of God, the remembrance of the Lord Jesus, and the little service I had in the Sunday School, in order to fulfil the demands made upon my service to my employers whose works are "controlled" by the Government?

Your position is one in which many at the present time find themselves, and in which individual responsibility to the Lord and obedience to what is known of His Word, must guide. We will not enter on the arguments commonly used to justify habitual labour on the Lord's Day, such as deprives the Lord's people from sharing the inestimable privilege of united worship, and showing forth the Lord's death, as the Word sets before the people of God. But we would remind you that God has the first claim on His people's obedience (Acts v. 29), that they are to "seek first" His kingdom (Matt. vi. 33), and yield obedience to His commands, and that threats, even unto "bonds and imprisonment," must not deter you from doing what you believe to be the will of God. While ready at all times to respect the wishes and render obedience to the commands of your "masters according to the flesh" (Eph. vi. 4), this has to be qualified by the words that follow, "as unto Christ." And this precludes setting aside the authority of His Word, even to fulfil the demands of an employer. There are times in which all have to fulfil certain duties, and perform necessary services on the Lord's Day, such as mothers, nurses, doctors, chemists, and such like—but it is another matter for one to commit himself to habitually engage in work on the Lord's Day which practically excludes him from fulfilling his responsibilities toward God as His worshipper, and toward the Lord Jesus as His servant. It is due to both, that their claims be owned and honoured. In many cases, prayer and exercise of heart Godward, has found "a way of escape," for where God sees a true and exercised heart, He often so orders events, as to give that heart its desire. But if, on the other hand, He sees it better to allow His child to suffer loss in the course of his obedience, working no open deliverance, it is his part still, to "obey God."

Answers to Correspondents.

QUARTUS.—The punishment that awaits those who obey not the Gospel (John iii. 16; 2 Thess. i. 8), is nowhere said to be temporary or remedial, but retributive (Rev. xx. 12-15) and eternal. And men's denials of this cannot alter God's Word.

ANON.—Elders are said to have been "appointed" by Titus, who was an apostle's delegate, having his authority (Tit. i. 5). But we do not know any who have such authority now. We are to "know" those who assume the place, by their character (Tit. i. 7-9) and their work (1 Thess. v. 12, 13), rather than by official distinction.

W. G. BELFAST.—Paul's word, "*depart* to be with Christ" (Phil. i. 23), has no reference to the Lord's return, as those who deny the conscious existence of the Christian between death and resurrection would have us believe, but to his separation from the body and from the Philippians, as ver. 24 tells. Neither of these will be his experience at the Lord's return. For he will have his body then, and the saints will not be severed, but "all together" (1 Thess. iv. 17).

D. M., GLASGOW.—When wrongdoing is unjudged by the one who does it, and no discipline or rebuke is administered by the assembly (if the evil is of such a nature as calls for their action, see Matt. xviii. 15-17) it becomes a matter for the Lord to deal with Himself. And we are told in this connection that "He is an Avenger" (1 Thess. iv. 6) in all such matters. That many so suffer retributively, under the Divine chastisement, few will doubt.

G. R., THORNTON.—The beginning of an assembly of believers, while requiring no sanction from any central authority—as in the denominations a new "congregation" has to receive from its headquarters—should, nevertheless, seek the godly intercourse of assemblies in the locality, who will assuredly soon be brought into real responsibility in its recognition, by commending to and receiving from its fellowship. This principle is surely included in the Word—"Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor. xiv. 40), as it is exhibited in that lovely incident of fellowship in Acts viii. 14.

A. L., BOLTON.—The words, "Being crafty, I caught you with guile" (2 Cor. xii. 16), are not given by Paul approvingly, as if they described his manner of service—the very opposite, he says, was his habit (see 2 Cor. iv. 2), where the word "deceitfully"

implies craftiness—but are evidently what his traducers said about him. "Guile" is something to be "laid aside" (1 Pet. ii. 1) by the Christian, not a weapon to be used by him in the service of God.

A. W. L., CO. TYRONE.—The value of a "letter of commendation" (2 Cor. iii. 1) depends on the confidence you have in those from whom it comes. Where godly care is known to be used, even although the signatories are personally unknown, their commendation would be accepted without question, knowing that they have exercised the necessary care in receiving the one commended to your fellowship, that those to whom he is commended would if they had to deal with him as one seeking their association. But where it is known that no real godly care is exercised, but where all who profess to be believers—including those who have run from Scriptural discipline, and those who cause division are allowed to come and go at will—in the absence of personal knowledge of the applicant, or other testimony, it would be well to find out the antecedents of the newcomer, otherwise you may bring into your midst one who is by habit a maker of mischief, and not unlikely to be a cause of division. These are not matters of conjecture, but of fact, which many know in bitter experience.

The Christian's Responsibility to the State.

In these privileged lands, where Governments have so long been regarded as the protectors of our sacred and secular liberties, it is a new experience for Christians, who seek to order their lives by the teachings of the Word of God, to be confronted by imperative demands from the ruling powers to give themselves to active Military and Naval warfare in the service of the State, not as a matter of their own choice, but in response to a claim which it is assumed these ruling powers had a right to make upon whomsoever they will. This needs to be examined in the light of that Word which is to the Christian, the disciple and bond-servant of the Lord, the supreme authority in all things. The relation in which all who own Christ as their Lord stand toward God and the ruling authority, was simply and plainly expressed by the Lord Jesus in the words—"Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's" (Matt. xxii. 21). The word "Cæsar" stands for the Government, whether

imperial, monarchical, or democratic—the ruling authority of the time. To it the Christian is to yield subjection in all that concerns its sphere, paying tribute, custom, fear (Rom. xiii. 1-7) ungrudgingly. But this must always be governed by the words, “ And to God the things that are God’s.” What these are, we are not left to guess; the Word defines them. Should the State demand from a Christian that which belongs to God alone, he must courteously but firmly refuse to yield, for with him the Divine claim is paramount, it cannot be put aside, it must never be compromised. An apostle once answered, when the demand of the rulers of the city in which he and his fellows lived and witnessed was, to cease their testimony and surrender their service, “ Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than UNTO GOD, judge ye ” (Acts iv. 19). And so must ever be the principle of the Christian’s subjection to the State. God has the first claim, and to Him is obedience to be rendered. Should the State demand his worship—as it has done and will yet do (Dan. iii. 3-6; Rev. xiii. 11, 12)—his answer must be, “ Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve ” (Matt. iv. 10). Should the officials of the State ask him to do what the Word of the Lord forbids, he must, like Daniel, purpose in his heart (Dan. i. 8), that he will not defile himself, and leave it with God to make a way of escape for him (comp. Dan. i. 9 with 1 Cor. x. 13). If it be the will of God, that in pursuance of his obedience to the Word and inability to comply with the demands of the State, he is called to suffer, then, in the fiery furnace the living Lord Himself will be with him (Dan. iii. 25), and preserve him in the fires, as safe as if he were out of them (Isa. xliii. 2). The martyrs of our own country were burnt at the stake, because they refused to surrender to the State that which belonged to God, and they are held in honour for it. The Scottish Covenanters were hunted like partidges on the hills, because they refused to regulate their worship according to the will of the State, and their monuments stand as witnesses of their faith, in the eyes of their children. “ Why should it be regarded as a crime, if men, from conscience toward God,” refuse to raise the sword against their fellows, many of whom are now their “ enemy,” because they are compelled and have no choice? Yet there are thousands against whom no charge of insubjection to law can be made; men who have been the benefactors of their fellows, whose names are held in

respect among those who know them best, whose only crime is, that they dare not disregard what they firmly believe to be the will of God, who have been handed over to the military, tried summarily by court martial without no defence allowed, cast into prison, and herded with malefactors of the worst kind. Does any man who has read his Bible think, that God will allow injustice like this to pass unavenged? Why does the deliverance, the end of the conflict, tarry? Has God no hand in this? He is a God who avenges wrongdoing towards His own, and the day may not be far off, when He will make this known in a way none can mistake it. A clause in the Military Service Acts, passed by the Legislature and bearing the King’s Name, provides that those who from conscientious convictions are unable to take up arms, shall be exempted from military service. This we firmly believe was direct in answer to the prayers of tens of thousands of God’s people. But this provision has been disregarded by many local tribunals, and those who sought its benefits treated with scorn. Yielding to the clamour of those who neither fear God nor regard man, injustice has been done, and many have unrighteously suffered. The Lord of heaven has seen all this, and the end will show that He has not been silent. We do not teach insubjection to rulers, but we urge the supreme claims of God and His Word upon all His people. We own the claims of Cæsar’s, but they must take second place to the claims of God. To the Christian, these claims are sacred, and he who is a debtor to God’s abounding grace cannot lightly set them aside at the demand of men. But in seeking to give this testimony to his faith before men, much will depend on the spirit and manner in which it is given. No Christian should court opposition, his aim should ever be to speak and act in the spirit of Christ.

For the Coming Year.

We have in hand for “ **The Believer’s Magazine**,” a good supply of Fresh and Seasonable Papers, by accredited and acceptable writers, dealing with Vital Truths of the Faith, Devotional Subjects for the Heart, Paths of Righteousness for the Feet, and Light for the Homeward Way. A full, descriptive list of these will be given (God willing) next month. And a packet of specimen copies will be cheerfully sent to all who desire to further its circulation.

“Remember all the Way,”

A MEDITATION FOR THE CLOSING YEAR.

TO God's pilgrim people of olden time, standing on the last stage of their wilderness journey, with the goodly land in view, the word of the Lord comes, “Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness.” It was a fitting word, to a people who had been the objects of Jehovah's tender and unwearied care throughout that long and eventful journey through the waste, howling wilderness, “a land that was not sown” (Jer. ii. 2), in which they were dependant upon God for their daily bread, and for protection and defence from great and strong enemies who were ready to swallow them up. Throughout all that long and perilous journey God had been with and for them, “their guide, their glory, and defence,” and not one good thing of all that He had promised had failed. There they stood, led on safely (Psa. lxxviii. 53) at every step, fed by His daily manna, slaked by water from the rock, “carried all the days” (Isa. lxii. 9), sustained throughout the wilderness (Neh. ix. 21), and brought as on eagle's wings to the journey's end. They were to “consider,” as well as “remember,” the manner of the Divine dealings with them, “Thou shalt consider in thine heart, that as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee” (ver. 5). The humbling, the proving, and the chastening were all for the purpose of leading them to live by the Word that proceedeth out of the mouth

of the Lord, to keep the commandments of the Lord their God, to “walk in His ways and to fear Him” (ver. 6). This is ever God's way. His humblings, His testings, and His chastenings have ever as their object the sanctification and spiritual progress of His people, the production in them of “the peaceable fruit of righteousness,” and the practical manifestation in their lives of “His holiness” (Heb. xii. 10, 11). The present experiences through which so many of God's dear people are passing, are the school in which He has placed them to learn what is in their own hearts, the uncertainty of everything in the world through which they are passing, and that the only thing worth living for on earth is, to please God, to obey His Word, and to confide in His faithfulness and His love. Our vagrant hearts are ever ready to depart from Him, to doubt His love, and to lightly esteem His truth. Hence His call to “remember” His dealings, and to “consider” their purpose. Surely, then, it was a fitting exercise that they should “remember all the way” that the Lord their God had led them. And to us of this time, who have been brought through a year of events unequalled in the world's long history, a year of unparalleled dangers and threatened disasters, of abounding mercies and Divine deliverances, it is due to our God, that we sit down quietly in His presence and “count our blessings,” as they have come to us day by day from His hand, during the months of the closing year. The exercise will be good for our souls, and if the “remembrance” leads

the heart to God, the result cannot but be for lasting blessing. It will cause us to raise our "Ebenezer" and sing our "Hallelujah" to "the faithful God" who has led us by a way that we knew not, and in paths that we had not seen. In Israel's case, the Divine dealings had as their purpose to "humble," to "prove" and to cause them to "know" what was in their hearts (ver. 2), a path of Divine instruction. And so it has been with us. So here we stand by another milestone on the heavenward road, with "garments fresh and feet unwearied," able to speak of His loving care, His sure defence, His faithful guidance. Even when the heart has been wrung with sorrow, when the tears have flowed, when the light of the eyes has seemed to leave us, the Marah waters have been sweetened by the Divine consolations, and "the dawn of heaven" has been brighter and nearer than ever, amid the bereavements and disappointments of earth. And thus, "with mercy and with judgment," the web of life is being woven, and the Divine hand is leading us safely and steadily on to the land that we call our own, the inheritance reserved, and the home provided, in which, when wilderness days are over, we shall surely stand with long loved ones gone before, and with Him whose precious blood we gladly own as their and our inalienable title to that blest abode. And so we raise the voice of song, at this our halting place.

" Goodness and mercy all my life
 Shall surely follow me,
 And in God's house for evermore
 My dwelling-place shall be."

Christ, Our Hope.

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

THE Hope of Creation, Israel, and the Church of God, is the Lord Jesus Christ. The entrance of sin into the world not only meant the ruin of mankind, spiritually, in that he became alienated from God in his mind, and by wicked works, but it brought into ruin God's fair creation, for "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Rom. viii. 22). And that groan will never cease, until Creation's rightful Lord and Master gets His place, when He shall deliver it "from the bondage of corruption" (Rom. viii. 21). For, "A King shall reign in righteousness" (Isa. xxxii. 1), and then "the wilderness, and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose" (Isa. xxxv.). Such is the *Hope of Creation*—and its wrongs will never be set right, until the Lord Jesus by whom, and for whom all things were created, shall dispossess the usurper—Satan—and be proclaimed "King of kings and Lord of lords."

THE HOPE OF ISRAEL

is, in a sense, linked up with that of creation. For they look for Him of whom their prophets spake, and Psalmists sang, as "The Messiah"—the "Son of Abraham"—heir to all the promises made to the "fathers," and "Son of David"—heir to the throne of David. Yet when "He came to His own, His own received Him not" (John i. 11); but betrayed

Him who was the Anointed of Jehovah, into the hands of Gentiles, who crucified Him. He was buried, but God raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His own right hand, saying: "Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thy foes Thy footstool" (Acts ii. 34-45). God then sent down the Holy Spirit, who is, by the power of the Gospel, gathering out a people to the Name of the Lord, from among the nations of the earth (see Acts xv. 14). Meanwhile, the hope of Israel is in abeyance, but "After this" He "will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down, and will build again the ruins thereof, and will set it up." Then, and not till then, will the true Hope of Israel be fulfilled according to the purpose of God. Men may succeed in getting the Jews back to Palestine, and even establish them as a nation, but God will "overturn, overturn, overturn . . . until He come whose right it is; and will give it unto Him" (Ezek. xxi. 27).

THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH, however, takes precedence of both these "hopes." They are more or less dependent on the fulfilment of prophecies connected with the earth. Our hope is not. In John xiv. 3, we have two events placed side by side, the latter as dependent on the former—with nothing between. The Lord Jesus says to His own, "If I go . . . I will come again." He has "gone," and, hence, the next event on the programme is, "He will come again." True, it is nearly 2000 years since He went—when, after His death and resurrection that

little band of true disciples stood on the Mount of Olives, and saw the cloud receive Him out of their sight (Acts i.)—but the words of the heavenly messengers who stood by them, as they continued looking up to the spot where they last had seen Him, are true. Said they, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven; this same Jesus . . . shall so come again in like manner, as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts i. 10-11).

The Hope of the Church is not dependent on the conversion of the world, the return of the Jews, the diffusion of Christianity, or the Gospel, the war in Europe, the dismemberment of Turkey, the defeat of militarism, or any of these extraneous things. The present age or dispensation, is for the gathering out of the nations and of Israel, a people—not for an earthly, but for a heavenly inheritance, a "purchased possession," to be to the praise and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ—the Church, the Bride of the Lamb. When this is completed, He will come for her, and associate her with Himself for ever, and then this dispensation will close. It will then make room for another, when the earth and Israel will once more come into remembrance, and through tribulation shall they be made to long for God's promised Deliverer. Meanwhile, let us seek to carry the Gospel to "every creature," let us stand behind every true effort to reach the benighted sons of men with the good news that "Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. vi. 5). But do not let us be deluded by the idea that He will not come for long.

Christ's Delight in being Used.

FROM THE MINISTRY OF J. G. BELLETT.

Taken and Preserved by an Aged Pilgrim.

THE way of the Lord Jesus in meeting human need—in forgiving sin, healing disease, and feeding the hungry, is much to be observed. The God of Israel had done all this in olden time, but it was after another manner. There was reserve and there was distance in His manner. For while He was gracious to the sinner, He abode on His mercy-seat apart, and at a distance. When a poor leper was cleansed and healed, it was after he had been separated to a place without the camp. And while He fed the camp in the wilderness with daily manna, He remained in His holy heaven and sent it to them morning by morning. All this bespoke distance and reserve in the manner of His dealing with the sons of men. But when the Lord Jesus stood in this world, displaying His works of love and power, there was no reserve. He stands face to face with the sinner saying, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." And when He heals, He puts forth His hand and touches the diseased, the halt, and the blind. He goes in and out among the needy, letting them know that all the virtues in Him are at their disposal, and that they are to be used without reserve. All this is truly blessed. It tells us that He came into our world to be used by the faith that owns Him. The little group of men who broke through the roof of the house in order to let the palsied man into His presence well understood this. They

knew the virtues that dwelt in the Son of God, and the need of the man whose healing they sought. And the Lord, "seeing *their* faith," owned and honoured it. Happy it is when faith thus confidently approaches the Lord, and uses the blessings He has brought to our very door, to be accepted and enjoyed by us. But the Pharisees did not like this: it interfered with their religion. It threatened to disown their place as the channels through which God, as they reckoned, should dispense His blessings. Their interest was to keep God at a distance and the people apart, in order that they might have their credit maintained and themselves venerated. And this principle is dominant in man's religion still. It is man's attempt, under cover of carnal ordinances and rites, to obscure the grace of God as it is proclaimed in the Gospel. It is an attempt made according to man's devices, and with the devil's subtlety, to keep the sinner at a distance from God. Whereas it is His way in grace, to go forth to meet him, as the returning prodigal, with His abundant pardon, to fall on his neck and kiss him, then to bring him, clad in the best robe, into the place of intimacy as a son. This is the way of God our Saviour. And all that grace thus brings, faith appropriates and gladly uses, without fear. It magnifies His grace, and enjoys it, in great gladness of heart

"Join then my soul, for thou canst tell
How sovereign grace broke up thy cell,
And burst thy native chains—
And from that dear and blessed day
How oft art thou constrained to say,
'That grace triumphant reigns.'"

The Fold and the Flock.

W. J. M'CLURE, CALIFORNIA.

IN the age that is past, God had a nation and a "fold," and in that nation there was a "place" in which He placed His Name (Deut. xii. 11). In the present age, God has a church, a people "called out" from all nations, who are His "flock," and they assemble to a Person who is their living Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ. A "fold" is an enclosure, a place in which the sheep are penned for a time, and supposes a locality; while a "flock," with a shepherd in their midst and over them as protector, guide, and ruler, emphasises a person rather than a place. The religion of Christendom has more the character of the "fold" of Judaism than of the "flock" of Christianity with a present Lord as its Centre of attraction and the Source of its supply. Although God has set aside the Jewish religion with its "fold," and set up Christ as the Centre and Great Shepherd of His flock—"the flock of God" (1 Pet. v. 2), whose sheep are characterised by hearing the Shepherd's voice (John x. 27 and following Him (John x. 27), man is ever ready to go back to the "fold" way of things. Great temples built as "places of worship," houses consecrated to God's service, and priests at altars clad in vestments modelled after the Jewish pattern, are all attempts to restore or continue the "fold" character of worship and service which God has set aside. All this is pleasing to the unconverted, in whom the life of God is not, and it can be carried on

indefinitely, apart from a right spiritual condition and without the power of God. All denominations partake of this "fold" character, and must have their "minister" to carry on the worship and do all the preaching. Without him, the thing could not go on. If "the minister" goes, another has to be got to take his place. It is *his* flock, *his* church, he is *the* minister. Others, however spiritual, however gifted, have no share in ministering to fellow-saints, all must come through the one channel, the one man who may be less spiritually fitted than others there. Such is man's order and man's way, but it has no place in the Word; it is man's, not God's way, of worship and ministry. A company of living Christians gathered unto the Lord's Name (Matt. xviii. 20), with Himself to look to, Himself to trust in for all that they need, not only individually as His sheep whom He preserves (John x. 28), but as His flock over which He presides, is not dependant on man in any way, for they have the living Lord Himself to look to, and they have liberty in their midst for the Lord to minister to them through whomsoever He will. Even if none among them is specially gifted, yet they are held together and increase. This is something more potent than all the devices of Christendom. It characterises "the flock" in true dependence on the Shepherd, listening to His voice and cared for directly by Him. But this can only exist and be enjoyed where faith is in exercise, when the Word is taken as guide, and where Christ is all and in all. Man's natural ability cannot do it.

The Lord as an Avenger

IN magnifying the grace of God in the sinner's salvation, and the love of Christ in the saints' preservation, this must never be at the cost of losing sight of other aspects of the Divine character, as these are made known to us in the Word. The withholding of that aspect of God's character, in which He is shown to be not only a God "merciful and gracious," but also a "Just God," whose wrath is revealed from heaven against all "ungodliness and unrighteousness of men," and of whom it is written "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, saith the Lord" (Rom. xii. 19), is largely responsible for the ready reception found among the ungodly in the denial of the punishment of sin, so widely preached. It is because this truth is kept back in popular preaching, that the great bulk of those who profess the Christian name no longer believe in the Divine punishment of sin, and the wrath of God "upon the children of disobedience" (Col. iii. 6). And the living Lord, who ever loves and lives to serve His own, is not only "a Great High Priest" with God to succour (Heb. iv. 18) and sustain them in their weakness, and "an Advocate with the Father" to restore them when they fail (1 John ii. 2), but He is also a present Judge of unrepented evil among His own (1 Cor. xi. 31, 32), and He is "an Avenger" (1 Thess. iv. 6) of all present wrongdoing among His people, one toward another. A Judge and an Avenger! This is solemn, and ought to be heart-searching to the

redeemed of the Lord here on earth. That to them there is "no condemnation" (Rom. viii. 1) is blessedly true, and so is that against them "no charge" (Rom. viii. 33) is valid by an accuser before God. But if in their lives they indulge the flesh and live according to it, instead of denying its desires and "mortifying its deeds" (Rom. viii. 13), failing to judge themselves, the Lord will assume the character of Judge and chasten them for their evil-doing. For He will not suffer sin to remain unjudged upon those who are sanctified unto Him, and who in their ways He calls to be holy because He is holy (1 Pet. i. 16). There is almost total ignorance or guilty neglect of this solemn truth as a present ministry of the living Lord, and the results are not regarded or rightly read among us even when they are visible to all. Let it be remembered and laid to heart, that not only is there a coming judgment-seat from which the Lord will recompense His faithful servants, but also a present return for false and faithless dealing as well as for unrepented and cherished sin. And for wrongdoing against fellow-believers—not alone of that specific kind named in 1 Thess. iv. 5, 6—but of all unfair and unrighteous dealing, and for the too common backbiting, misrepresentation, and habitual railing which are allowed to fester unjudged in the soul, and to go unreprieved by the church, as it surely ought to be (1 Tim. v. 20), the Lord will be an "Avenger." Divine law is more certain in its fulfilment than "*whatsoever* a man soweth, THAT shall he also reap." (Gal. vi. 7).

M. J. G.

“God is our Refuge.”

Psalm xlvi. 1.-11.

FRANKLIN FERGUSON, NEW ZEALAND.

THE present is a day of trouble, there being nothing like it since the foundation of the world; but not worse than what is yet to come. The most stable things, likened to earth and mountains, are moved and carried, as it were, into “the midst of the sea.” The nations of Europe rage, and the roar and tumult of their strife is heard afar off, even to the ends of the earth, and all nations are moved with “the swelling thereof.” The basest passions of men are let loose, and the thin veneer of civilisation, culture, and even Christianity, is painfully evident to all. Colossal destruction stalks abroad, and inconceivable misery follows its steps. Human blood flows in unheard of measure, and the wail of the bereaved, the wounded, and the dying rises to heaven in ever-increasing volume. What desolations are made in the earth, and what multitudes are drinking a cup of wormwood and gall! And the end may not be yet.

What should be the present language of our hearts? “God is our refuge and strength, a *very present help* in trouble. Therefore will not we fear.” “The Lord of hosts is with us.” God alone can be our confidence and He only can now, as ever make “wars to cease.” He has His “way in the sea and His path in the mighty waters” (Isa. xliii. 16). Wars and tumults but do His bidding; for He chastens the nations, even as He does the individual soul. “Be still and know that

I am God,” are words to calm our spirit; therefore we may rest assured of the accomplishment of His purposes in this gigantic upheaval, purposes of mercy and grace, as well as of judgment. The heart finding repose in Him shall “not be moved,” and the streams from the river of God shall make the heart glad.

The 46th Psalm is clearly a millennial psalm; and the exaltation of Christ, as God of the whole earth, is its theme. “The works of Jehovah,” and their decisive results in the desolation of human pride, and the quelling of the anger of the nations by the majesty of His power, are in view. Israel’s deliverance from all their enemies will then be consummated, and a new era of peace and blessing upon the earth will be brought in. The church, previously caught up and glorified, will then reign with Christ. But the Psalm has a *present* application to all who have found a refuge in Him who in His appointed time will fully bring to pass all that it foreshadows. May our hearts find their rest in God amid the changing scenes and upheavals of this our day, so that we may truthfully say, “The God of Jacob is *our* refuge.”

The Eternal Day.

“There shall be no night there.”

In the happy courts of Heaven
 We shall spend that Day;
 Shades of night shall never sadden,
 Jesus’ love our souls shall gladden—
 Loved ones back to us be given
 (Saved by blood were they);
 With our Saviour God in Heaven
 We shall spend that Day.

Miracles, and their Denials.

THIRD PAPER. BY THE EDITOR.

DAVID HUME, who was a Deist, denied miracles. His chief argument is, that as "Nature's laws are uniform: miracles imply a violation of that uniformity." They are therefore a "natural impossibility." But this has not been proved. It is a mere assertion. Nature is governed by a living and Almighty Creator, who is able to do much that the human mind is unable to fathom, for it is only finite, while God is infinite. This is just where the sceptic fails in all his reasonings. He knows no God, or if he owns one, he thinks that He must be altogether such as himself (Psa. l. 21). Suppose a savage from the wilds of Central Africa. He has never seen a railway train drawn by a powerful steam engine, and refuses to believe such a thing to be possible when a trader tells the story. But one day he reaches the coast, sees the whole thing, and stands gazing in wonder. Somebody tells him that the train flies on along the track, according to a fixed law, but that it cannot turn or change its course like a man. Presently he sees the same train returning, speeding along the opposite way, and his wonder is increased. Has the natural law of its motion been violated? Not at all. The African is then shown the engine in its mechanism; he meets the engineer whose mind and hand guide the engine, and who by the simple act of reversing a lever, causes it to halt, back, or return in another direction at his will. Yet no

"law" is violated. It is only obeying a new set of "laws," brought into action by the intelligence of the man whose hand controls its workings. And is God, the Creator and Sustainer of all things, to be denied the right to control the work of His own hands in that universe of which He is the Architect and Maker? You own a watch. When wound, it continues its course in one direction. This is the "law" of its mechanism. But you find one day it is going too fast, and you simply move its minute hand slightly backward, which neither interrupts its movement nor alters its mechanism. Its maker has made provision for this, and yet, but for the touch of its owner's hand, no such reversal would have taken place. Is God to be denied the right to suspend or reverse the hands on the dial of the heavens, which His hands has created? That He is quite able to do it without involving disaster—or a "universal upheaval" as Humboldt predicts—we know. He did it in the day of Joshua's victory (Josh. x. 12-14), by causing the sun to "slow down" in the afternoon of that great day, to enable the host of His executors of judgment to pursue their fleeing foes twenty-seven miles, and finish their work that day. But to admit this, brings GOD into the scene, and of course this must never be allowed by an unbeliever. And what God did of old He surely can do to-day, if His will and work require it. There is no lack of miracles to those who have eyes to see them. God is working in the spiritual kingdom by the hand of His power.

Sinners are being saved by grace, transformed into disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, and enabled so to live as to commend the Gospel and adorn the doctrine of the Lord. Is there no "miracle" in that? And when the need arises for "mighty acts" of God's power to demonstrate to an unbelieving world that He still lives, the need will be met in God's own time and way. To the Christian, a present God, "great in power," "wonderful in counsel," and "excellent in working" (Isa. xxviii. 29), is a reality, and he knows that with the threads of his life in the hands of such a God, who is His Father, "all must be well."

The Final Shout of Triumph.

THE Epistle of Jude, dark with man's departure and apostasy from God, and with the failures of His own to hold fast and contend for the faith, does not end in a groan, but with a shout of triumph. God has not been disappointed, the powers of evil have not overcome the saints, nor has the devil succeeded in snatching one of them from the Divine hand that preserves. The writer ends with the glowing words, "Now unto Him that is able to guard you from stumbling" (R.V.), all the days, however few or many, and all the way, however rough and thorny, right on to the journey's end. God is able to do it. And as to the future, "to present you faultless—to set you without blemish—before the presence of His glory in exceeding joy," fully conformed to the image of Christ, not a spot

unpurged, not a blemish to be found, all as God Himself had predestined, all as His grace has wrought, in spite of human sin and Satanic hate. Yes, blessed be His Name! the struggle may be fierce, but God is going to be victorious at last. "The Lord Himself will descend with a shout"—a shout of triumph it will surely be. And the saints who hear it will know its meaning, for the dead who rise from their graves at His call will respond, "O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. xv. 58). Both are gone, triumphed over by the living Lord, their Conqueror, whose victory the saints all together and all in His likeness will thus celebrate ere they leave for ever the scene of their conflicts. And while their joy in that moment will be "full," the Lord's will be "exceeding joy." For then shall He see of the travail of His soul in death, and witness the reward of His service in resurrection. Let us cherish the thought in our hearts, and allow it to nerve us in our conflicts here, that God is to conquer at last, that the shout of the returning Christ is to be a shout of triumph, and our response to that shout, a song of victory.

At Home with God.

Within the house of the ancient place,
In the Home of my Father dwelling,
Should ever the song of my gladness cease
The joy of His presence telling?

At home with my God, while the feet still tread
For a while the path of sorrow,
Each day by His manna unfailling fed,
As I wait the glad To-morrow.

The Preacher's Column.

OUTLINES OF GOSPEL SUBJECTS.

GREAT THINGS FROM GOD.

- LIGHT from God's Eye (Prov. v. 21)—Awakens.
 LOVE from God's Heart (Jer. xxxi. 3)—Draws.
 LIFE from God's Hand (Rom. vi. 23)—Energises.
 LIBERTY by God's Word (John viii. 32)—Liberates

GREAT GOSPEL TRUTHS.

- Repentance (Acts xx. 21)—A New Mind.
 Reconciliation (Rom. v. 10)—A New Relationship.
 Regeneration (John v. 1)—A New Life.
 Restitution (Luke xix. 8)—A New Behaviour.

THE BELIEVER'S REJOICING.

- In Salvation (Psa. ix. 14)—As Bestowed by God.
 In Christ Jesus (Phil. iii. 3)—As Accepted in Him.
 In the Lord (Phil. iv. 4, 10)—In Subjection to Him.
 In Hope of Glory (Rom. v. 2)—A Happy Prospect.

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The Young Believer's Question Box.

Departure from the Divine Pattern in an Assembly.

I seek light and counsel from the Word, on a matter regarding which I feel a personal responsibility. In the assembly of Christians where I have been for some years, there seems to be a gradual giving up of truths, which I regard as being vital to the character and wellbeing of an assembly of God's people. When first I was received to its fellowship, the worship was simple, spiritual, and I believe in a large measure Spirit led. Ministry was shared by many, and to me at least it was very profitable. The Gospel was earnestly and faithfully preached by various brethren, who had a goodly measure of gift, and God gave blessing. By and by, through the activities of some who came from other places, in which, evidently, other ways prevailed, things began to change. The Lord's Day morning meeting was largely taken up with teaching on various subjects, the time for worship became less, and the breaking of bread was hurriedly got through, usually at the very close. This shortly developed a further departure, in which a regular, and evidently a "prepared" address occupied half or more of the time in the morning meeting, and it has been more than hinted at, that the speakers named should be advertised and the public invited to come and hear. What I desire to know is this—

(1) Do changes like these so alter the constitution and character of the meeting, that it ceases to be an

assembly according to the Divine pattern given in the Word? (2) Am I right in remaining in association with such a company, in which those who have pushed their way to leadership, will neither hear or heed any remonstrance from the Word, bearing on these matters? I am much exercised over this, so are others, and we shall be most grateful to have help from the Word to guide us.

ANSWER.—We would say at once and that very definitely, that we know of no Scripture warrant for seceding from an assembly of Christians, constituted according to the Scriptural pattern, because of existing irregularities from lack of knowledge of God's Word, or even disorders in its midst contrary to it, while there is yet room for the ministry of the truth "for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction" (2 Tim. iii. 16, R.V.). We have proved again and again that wise and seasonable ministry, even where things had gone far wrong, has powers of restoration and recuperation in it to a wonderful degree, and that while acting on the consciences of the Lord's people, who had been letting things drift, in stirring them up to their responsibility, it at the same time shows up the unscriptural conduct of those who are leading their fellow-saints into the bondage of incipient clerisy, and away from the spiritual simplicity of the ways of the Book of God, thus depriving them of their prestige, and delivering the simple from their power. But where things have fallen so fully under the authority of men who either do not know and will not learn the truth, or who, once knowing it, have cast it away, and are now seeking to keep others from giving it effect in their assembly life, the case is entirely different. Should there be hostility manifested toward all godly attempts to bring the Word to bear on these perversities, and a determination by those who have forced their way into the place of domination not to heed remonstrance from any, or to hear the Word through those able to minister it, then it is clear that they and not the living Lord and His Word are in authority there, that if not already, that such a company will shortly cease to have the character of God's assembly, and become a denomination with or without a name, in which man's will and way predominate, and from which all who fear the Lord and own His authority over His own household will eventually have to separate themselves, in order to do that which they find in the Word of God (see Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xi. 2; xiv. 26, 37). All this is very sad, as it is solemn.

And the moral we may surely draw from it is, not to indolently let things drift from the way of the Word, until they reach a condition in which no recovery seems possible, because the self-will of perverse men in authority, prevents it.

Answers to Correspondents.

QUERIST.—We do not know of any remedy for lack of interest in the assembly's weekly Bible Reading, other than a restored and revived condition of soul among God's people. When this is reached, interest in the Word will not be wanting.

ANON.—The lack of real worship hymns in our hymn books is widely felt. Neither rehearsing our experiences, nor expressing our requests in song, is worship. Yet, as you truly say, "three-fourths of what are commonly known as worship hymns, are of this character." This is a serious drawback to true spiritual worship and is so felt by many.

ELDER.—It is a relic of clerisy to claim and teach, that only those who are "in oversight" should receive to and, if need be, put away from the assembly. The Word lays the responsibility for these acts upon ALL. The "ye" in Rom. xiv. 1; xvi. 1, as in I Cor. v. 4, is the whole company—the local assembly. The leaders will doubtless guide and act with, but never *for* and certainly not against the assembly.

A Last Look Around, for the Year.

The present year opened with the dark clouds of war hovering over the nations, with millions of the flower of their manhood engaged in mortal strife. As the months rolled on, the combatants increased in number, and the awful sacrifice of human life mounted up, bringing sadness and sorrow to thousands upon thousands of loving hearts, and desolation to as many homes. And the end is not yet. None can tell when or how the fearful carnage will end, or whether greater sacrifices and deeper sorrows may yet be in store for the war-swept lands and the war-weary nations. But our confidence and our solace is, that all is known to God, who holds the government in His hands. For, while He permits great rulers and mighty nations to spend their strength and substance in the furtherance of their ambitions, and in the working out of their plans of conquest and defence, He assures us that "He

ruleth over all," and that He "the Most High who ruleth in the kingdom of men" (Dan. iv. 25), though apparently silent, is not uninterested in the awful happenings of the time. It is in this confidence that the Christian approaches the throne in the heavens, and makes his supplication unto God; that He will "shorten the days," and restore peace to the nations groaning under the burden of their sins and sorrows. And in this lies the only sphere of true "influence" that the believer and the church can exercise in this awful calamity which has come upon the world. There is no hope of proud men and nations being humbled under God's hand, unto repentance, or in confession of their sin and shame in entering in the spirit of barbarism and hatred on this unheard of conflict; none whatever. For as nations, none acknowledge God, or regard His claims over them. But the true children of God, wherever found, are, or ought to be, in His counsel, and it lies with them to be His "remembrancers," and to deal with Him directly and daily, regarding the war and all its issues. For God delights to hear His people's confessions, to witness their searchings of heart, to record their tears, and in His own time and way to send an answer of peace. And we are sure of this, as sure as the Word can make us, that it is along these lines that the longed-for dove of peace will return to these lands. O that we may be all stirred and quickened to increasing earnest prayer and supplication, pleading the Divine mercy, the atoning death, and the all-prevailing Name of Jesus Christ, unto this end. The appointment of a day of prayer and supplication by His Majesty the King and the President of the United States, will afford a suitable opportunity to Christians on both sides of the Atlantic and in the Colonies for assembling in groups, as Assemblies and in united gatherings at suitable centres, for heartsearching before God, for confession of sin, and in agonising prayer for ourselves, for fellow-saints, for the bereaved, the sorrowing, and the distressed, for all in authority, and for those who are our enemies, that the Divine hand may be outstretched for deliverance, in such a manner that all may have to own, like Nebuchadnezzar of old, that "He delivereth and rescueth and worketh signs and wonders in heaven and on earth" (Dan. vi. 27). There is nothing too great for God to do, and nothing beyond the reach of the importunate and believing prayers of His redeemed people who have always access to His heart and hand.

OUR OUTLOOK FOR THE COMING YEAR.

With Forecast of Writers and Papers in "The Believer's Magazine."

Twenty-eight Years ago, when we planned the first number of "The Believer's Magazine" and in due time issued it, it was with the desire to hold its pages open to all sound ministry of the Word, exalting the Person of the Lord Jesus, true to the Foundation Truths of the Faith, and giving place to Distinctive Truths connected with the Christian's definite separation from the world's religion, and the church's assembling to the Name of the Lord, owning only the authority of the Word in its worship and service—truths which most magazines did not teach with any measure of definiteness, or would not insert in their columns. We believed then, and we believe now, that these truths need to be rung out with decision and definiteness in these last days. During the progress of the twenty-seven years in which **The Believer's Magazine** has been in existence, it has become increasingly manifest that these and kindred truths are being let slip in practice by many who once professed to hold and teach them.

A SYNOPSIS OF SUPPLIES FOR 1918.

We have in hands or in promise for the coming year, the following, with other papers, and shall welcome other papers for general profit:—

Ebenezer; a New Year Message. Wm. Hoste.
God's Earthly and Heavenly People. Alex. Stewart.
Receiving Christ Jesus as Lord. Sir. R. Anderson.
Holiness and Righteousness. F. Bevan.
Forfeiting the Sanctuary. James Forbes.
Worship, according to the Word. Thomas Baird.
Christ and the Scriptures. E. Adam.
The Godly Way of Giving. Col. Beers.

VITAL TRUTHS RESTATED.

Symposiums by Six Writers.

This form of ministry having been much enjoyed in a series of Papers during the present year, the following will appear during 1918:—

The Glorious Person of the Lord Himself.
The Excellency of His One Great Sacrifice.
The Outcalling and Character of the Church.
The Person and Operations of the Spirit.

All dealt with simply and practically.

GLANCES AT GOD'S CHURCH.

The Church, in its Early Simplicity.
The Church, in its United Worship.
The Church, and its True Edification.
The Church, in Gospel Testimony.

By the Editor. Especially for Young Believers.

And the results are apparent to all who have eyes to see, in waning spiritual power in worship, barren results of great efforts in service, and the return by a steady gradient to the very trammels and systems from which the Word of God led a past generation out, and into that "large and wealthy place" in which God so wondrously owned and blessed them. We believe there are very many who long and desire to walk in these "old paths" still. And there is a new generation coming on, who scarcely know them, for there is little said about them in public ministry and less in what appears in print. But the whole Word of God is needed, and it cannot be without spiritual loss, that any part of it is neglected. We therefore continue to hold these pages open to the wise and gracious ministry of truths which are not popular with those who fraternise with the world's religion, and whose personal friendships with and personal interests in it, arouse their opposition to all that line of ministry which severs and keep from it.

PRECIOUS PORTIONS.

Supplied in Notes personally, gathered from the Ministry of Departed Servants of Christ and early Pioneers of the Present Truth.

The Opened Heavens. J. G. Bellett.
A Dwelling-Place for God. William Yapp.
A Life of Faith in God. Anthony Groves.
Grace Triumphant. R. C. Chapman.
The Value of the Word. J. N. Darby.
That Blessed Hope. Thos. Newberry.

And other Papers by well known writers.

Poetic Pieces for Comfort and Cheer, by J. E. Hughson, Frances Bevan, and others.

Questions and Answers on Biblical Truths.
Original Outlines for Preachers and Teachers.
Correspondence on Points of Doctrine.
Question Box for Young Believers' Difficulties.
Battlefield Experiences among Soldiers.
Reports of Work and Workers at Home and Abroad.

TO ALL WILLING HELPERS

who desire to hand out at New Year Conferences, to give to those recently added to their company, to post to fellow-believers who do not now read the magazine, we shall gladly send as many Free Copies as they desire, for the purpose of introducing. Simply say how many you can use. And let all unite to pray that the blessing of God may be richly on these pages for the year to come.