

have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: *but be of good cheer*; I have overcome the world."

What a blessed and perfect Master is He! May we seek grace to follow Him more closely, as Paul did, for "the little while" He leaves us here.

S. M. A.

## A LETTER ON THE RELATION OF THE EVANGELIST TO THE ASSEMBLY.\*

*To the Editor of the "Christian Friend."*

DEAR BROTHER IN THE LORD,

There has lately been much helpful teaching as to the relationship of the evangelist to the assembly, and his responsibility towards it. I am sure many will be thankful that this truth has come to the front, as the fact of the Lord's servants going out from His assembly, according to Acts xiii. 3, and coming back to it, as in Acts xiv. 26, 27, to give account of all that God had done with them, is full of significance and instruction.

But in proportion as we feel the fitness of this procedure we need to keep in view the converse of it, lest one consideration should obscure the other, and the balance of truth be lost in our souls, and, consequently, some want of harmony be found in our practice. I venture to anticipate a most important advance if, in addition to recognizing the evangelist's responsibility to the assembly, we become more deeply sensible of

\* This letter is gladly printed, not as necessarily endorsing all that it contains, but as giving the opportunity for the discussion of an important subject. Further communications would be welcomed. For example, it might be profitably considered whether the fellowship of the assembly should not be sought before going out on service. — Ed.

the assembly's responsibility towards the evangelist. The Word is a two-edged sword, and cuts both ways.

I would say at once that I do not propose to discuss fellowship in this temporal, which, so far as I know, is only once presented as an assembly matter. (Phil. iv. 15.)

I believe it is felt that there is a tendency towards independence on the part of the Lord's servants, and to action apart from, and perhaps in spite of, the exercised conscience of local gatherings. I am not called upon to apologize for such a regrettable state of things, but would offer some considerations that may account for it, seeing that to remove an effect we must discover its cause.

Is it not the case that those labouring in the gospel have been very much *left to themselves* as to every detail of their service? Have local gatherings concerned themselves corporately about those in their midst who addict themselves to this ministry? Have there been united prayer and conference about the spiritual needs of the locality, either in the interest of the gospel, or the seeking after scattered sheep? If those who are specially sensible of their responsible position came together now as in Acts xiii. 2, and, ministering to the Lord, were exercised about His interests here, would that not be as agreeable to Him as at the beginning, and might He not manifest His mind in connection with the assembly as well as independently of it? Surely we must not think that "the edifying of itself" is to be the assembly's only concern, but rather that it is corporately interested in the defence and confirmation of the gospel. (Phil. i. 7.)

Those in active service have sometimes a deep sense

of *responsibility* in connection with their work ; but one fears that the feeling of the bulk of their brethren does not go beyond a voluntary *sympathy* with them, which hardly rises to the height of genuine fellowship, or partnership, in which all the parties feel equally concerned. Whether our connection with the service be at the lower end, in touch with the need, or at the higher, in fellowship with God about it, we should all be equally exercised, feeling jointly responsible ; and *then* workers would no longer serve as units, but in unity with the hearts and consciences of their brethren.

The hand cannot say to the arm, I have no need of thee ; nor the arm to the hand, Your service is no affair of mine. The scripture figure of the body helps us to understand by analogy that if there is communion in suffering there cannot be independence in service.

To give a practical character to these considerations, one might suggest that on the Saturday evening those who have some service in view for the following week should meet together, and, *with all those who feel their partnership in the work*, speak to one another and pray together about the service of each. Such an occasion would be most suitable for presenting local, and other than local, needs ; and, the open map of the harvest-fields being spread before the Lord, earnest prayer might be made that He would send forth labourers.

What blessed and far-reaching consequences might follow, one cannot venture to prophesy, but it is felt that only in some such way is there any prospect of the need being overtaken.

There may be a significance in the fact that it was *from amongst thems* : that the Spirit sent out the Antioch prophets and teachers, and should He do the

same to-day it could hardly surprise us. So that each local gathering might not only lighten its neighbourhood, but minister, according to its measure, to the great world beyond.

Yours in Christian fellowship,

S. E. McN.

## "THE OLD MAN," "THE FLESH," AND "SIN."

THERE are certain scripture terms in common use amongst us with which most are very familiar, but to which we should, if challenged, find it perhaps difficult to attach any very distinct or definite meaning, or to clearly distinguish one from another. Such are "the old man," "sin," and "the flesh," the intimate connection between which must be evident enough to all.

I propose to enlarge on the terms a little, in the hope that the moral force of each may be more clearly apprehended. I may say, at the outset, that I am unable to realize much difference between the old man and the flesh. "Old man" may perhaps present a more complete idea than "flesh." "Old man" describes a certain order of man which can now be designated as old, because the new has appeared on the scene. I am not aware that the expressions "old" and "new man" are found save in Ephesians and Colossians, in both of which the thought of creation is introduced in connection with the new man. We find there the old and new man set strongly in contrast—the one after or according to the lusts of deceit, the other created after or according to God.

I judge that the term "man" speaks of an order of intelligence being set in certain relationships, and