
THE

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A MONTHLY JOURNAL

OF

BIBLICAL EXPOSITION, SCRIPTURE STUDIES, AND
MINISTRY OF THE WORD.

WITH QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON BIBLE SUBJECTS.

EDITED BY

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TIME AND ETERNITY.

WE pass to-day another milestone on the road of Time, and enter on a further stage of the pilgrim pathway leading up to the Eternal City, the Home of God and His redeemed. Earthly life with all its joys and sorrows, its golden privileges, its immense possibilities, and solemn responsibilities, will soon be over, but the results and the reaping thereof, will abide for ever, alike to saints and to sinners. As children of God, there will be a common welcome to the Father's House (John xiv. 2), and as members of Christ a common share in that glory, in which He will present to Himself His church without spot or wrinkle (Eph. v. 27), but as stewards of God, and servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, the measure of faithfulness in that which has been entrusted to the saints, and the manner of their life on earth, will have their corresponding result in gain or loss, at the judgment seat of Christ, where "the Righteous Judge" will surely "render to each man according as his work is" (Rev. xxii. 12, R.V.). And His rewards will not be for a passing hour of honour, but borne as they shall be, into "the everlasting kingdom" (2 Pet. i. 11), they will endure eternally. This makes life's short years, of eternal interest to the believer in Christ. He is, or ought to be, a man of eternity. Eternal things and eternal issues, should occupy his thoughts, and govern his reckonings here below.

In the measure that they do, he will be a "wonder" to the many, for men of the world and worldly-minded Christians will not understand him. He will be misjudged, misrepresented, and maligned, but under the power of "things unseen and eternal" upon which he "looks" (2 Cor. iv. 18) with faith's far-seeing eye, he will hold on his way, living for God and eternity, content to leave his character and his conduct in the hands of Him who "judgeth righteously." God grant that as we enter the untrodden road of 1906, it may be with the deep, inwrought desire, to live for God and eternity. It can be done, and God is able to give grace and power to do it, but it will cost the doer something, and is certain to bring him under the ban of time-serving, self-pleasing professors, whose chief business is to gain a name and a reputation here, sowing to the flesh, only to reap "corruption."

The spirit of the times is easy-going. A Christianity which embraces all religions, recognises all beliefs, and bestows its smiles and encomiums on friends and enemies of the Truth alike, is the thing that pleases. To be sociable and broad-minded, irrespective of whether those with whom you fraternize, honour God's truth or corrupt it, is the type of Christianity that is in demand. To be "all things to all men" to gain their flattery, is the popular creed. But the question arises, how will it fare with those who adopt it, in the judgment?

THE CHRISTIAN'S STEWARDSHIP.

PART I. BY DR. J. NORMAN CASE.

THE subject we desire to here briefly trace through the Scriptures, is one of personal interest and practical importance to all the Lord's people. Yet how seldom is the Word ministered, fully, clearly, and definitely, bearing on it, with the result that many are unexercised and lose the blessing God has in store for those who keep His way? Soon the word will go forth—"Give an account of thy stewardship." May we be so stirred up to do the will of God, that when it comes, we may be able to do so with joy and not with shame. The doctrine of stewardship is recognised and has become a truism of theory among Christ's disciples, though the carrying of it out is far from a commonplace of practice. The subject is a wide one. We will here, however, consider only one branch of it, namely, "*The Christian's Stewardship of Money.*"

There are certain principles and actings of God, which are the same in all dispensations. May we not read Proverbs iii. 9, 10, as giving us one such principle?—especially when we compare it with 1 Timothy iv. 8. "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase. So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." In whatever any person honours God, he is usually repaid in kind (see, for example of this, Exodus i. 21). Probably it is this fact which has given rise to the saying: "*God will be no man's debtor.*"

During the past century, scores of godly

business men, have publicly borne witness to the truth of Proverbs iii. 9, 10, and kindred Scriptures. And the more thoroughly such testimony is examined, the more difficult it becomes to cast a doubt upon it. From the reports for the past fifty years of the Ashley Down Orphanages and other Christian institutions, a small volume of such testimonies could be gathered; and such a book would doubtless be most useful in stirring up Christians to a clearer apprehension of the pleasure and profit of liberal giving.

But in dealing with this subject, many will feel safer on New Testament ground; so to that portion we now turn, and at the outset we will consider

THE RULE AND MANNER OF GIVING.

1. Among Christians the grace of giving should be GENERAL. "Upon the first day of the week," we read, let "*every one* lay by him in store," &c. The vast majority in the Church at Corinth were the poor of this world, many of them being slaves, yet the above indicates that *all* were expected to enjoy the privilege of giving. And in the present day there are, we believe, few so poor that they cannot spare something, for the temporal or spiritual needs of others.

It is of this very matter that the principle of 2 Cor. viii. 12 is laid down; "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." Yes, we may be certain that no mistake was made when the apostle wrote: "Let *every one* of you lay by him in store."

2. It should be SYSTEMATIC—"Upon *the first day of the week,*" &c. Even many

intelligent and spiritual Christians fail at this point. Yet, since so many are paid a weekly wage, it would be easy for them to carry out literally this injunction. But we must look upon it as a principle, and to some it will mean once a month, quarter, half-year, or year, depending upon when their salary or income is received or ascertained. The words teach us the necessity for definite, business-like giving.

We may not take this to mean that every first day of the week a Christian working man should put into the box or plate at the meeting, all that he has to give from his last week's earnings. It is said: "Let everyone lay by him in store," &c. Some of it certainly should go to the ordinary expenses of keeping up the meeting-place; that may be looked upon as a matter of *debt*. Some of it may be put in boxes provided for special offerings, such as Gospel Work at home and abroad, poor saints, &c. But though laid aside on the first day of the week, it is not necessarily all given then. There the question of stewardship again comes in, and each one should act before the Lord in the matter.

As a rule, there is not enough exercise of mind in bestowing gifts. Many, from mere *impulse*, give to the first "cause" that seeks assistance. This is a mistake. Many of the most plausibly presented causes are so managed, that they are not worthy of help. One must satisfy himself that on the whole the work is of God, and conducted in a righteous, business-like way. In a word, a Christian must give with his head, as well as with his heart.

Others give from *custom*. They began, we will say, some twenty years ago, to put a shilling a week into the box, and though their circumstances have greatly improved—they live in a better house, wear more costly clothes, and spend more on food—yet they still give the shilling weekly, and consider themselves pattern Christians. "Will a man rob God?" Yea, verily, such have been robbing Him for years.

3. It should be PROPORTIONATE. "As God hath prospered him." is the Apostolic injunction. Not a few either do not understand this, or they wilfully ignore it. The proportion that one should give is nowhere stated in the New Testament. In Old Testament times, even before the giving of the law, a *tenth* was looked upon as a fair proportion (Gen. xxviii. 20-22), and under the law this amount was most emphatically enjoined. Not that this was all that an Israelite gave. Special sacrifices were at times called for, and freewill offerings were often presented.

Without laying down a rule, it seems to us that "a tenth" is the minimum of his income that a Christian should set apart for God, and as his income increases, God's proportion should increase accordingly. There are religious systems which call for a tenth from each member of the organisation, and by this means tens of thousands of pounds are annually raised for the propagation of false and soul-destroying errors. Would that Christians were equally earnest and business-like on this point!

However, we would not knowingly write a word that would put any soul in

bondage. Some can more easily give nine-tenths of their income than others can give one-tenth. Let each Christian remember that he is a steward, and act before God in the matter. What we are now urging is *proportionate* giving. Settle what you should give, no matter whether it is a sixth, eighth, tenth, fifteenth, or twentieth of your income. To begin with, for an honest soul, the exact amount is of secondary importance. But whatever is decided on, carry out to the full; let that be the *minimum* of your offerings. And experience proves that usually one who begins by giving a sixteenth, soon finds himself giving a tenth or an eighth. And it should be done *cheerfully*, for a cheerful giver is specially well-pleasing to God. And after the amount is fixed do not go back on the Lord; do not *grudge* the amount or think it too much (2 Cor. ix. 7). Some have done this to their regret.

Learn to give in a quiet, *unobtrusive* manner. That, surely, was one object aimed at in 1 Cor. xvi. 2. It was to be done in this way that there might be no gatherings when the apostle reached them. How different from the methods generally prevailing to-day! And our Lord's teaching on this point is most emphatic in Matt. vi. 2-4.

—o—
HE KNOWS.

"The Lord knoweth HOW to deliver" (2 Pet. ii. 9).

Say not my soul: "From whence
Can God relieve thy care?"
Remember that Omnipotence
Has servants everywhere.
His wisdom is sublime,
His heart profoundly kind;
God never is before His time,
And never is behind.

FAITHFULNESS AND ITS REWARD.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS AT ABERDEEN CONFERENCE.

By H. B. THOMPSON.

Read 2 Sam. xv. 15-16, 19-21; Ezek. xlv. 6-16.

WITH a view to follow up and to confirm the message we have had on 2 Thess. ii. 15—"Therefore, brethren, *stand firm* and *hold fast* the traditions which ye have been taught," I have read these two passages. We who are the Lord's children are stewards, and the particular point in stewardship is *fidelity*. "Moreover it is required in stewards that a man be found *faithful*" (1 Cor. iv. 2), and a faithful steward will be far more careful of that which has been committed to his trust, than he will be even of that which belongs to himself. The property committed to the steward does not belong to him, and there will be a day of reckoning, when he must deliver an account of how he has guarded and how he has used his trust. We are living in days when we are prone to forget this; but it is more than ever important to hold the truth and practise it. The line of demarcation which God meant should ever exist between His church and the world, is getting more and more obliterated.

The passage which we have read in 2 Sam. xv. gives a picture of faithfulness being tested, that will well bear a careful examination. We find how Absalom, the handsome son of King David, came in by flattery and stole away the hearts of the people of Israel. Side by side with this, we think of a scene described in Acts xx., where the apostle gathered together the Ephesian elders at Miletum and told them—"For I know this, that after my

departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock." The wolves would enter in for want of watchfulness. At the Temple gates there were porters, whose office was to see that no one uncircumcised, or guilty of any ceremonial defilement should enter (2 Chron. xxiii. 19). Those of us who have the care of the assemblies of God, have a most solemn responsibility to see that those who come in, have really been broken down before God, under a sense of their sin, and have truly been accepted in Christ through the revelation of the Spirit of God. The kind of converts we want for fellowship is, that class upon whom we can lay our hand and say, "This is God's workmanship." In the later Epistles we are told of ungodly men who "*crept* in unawares." In Lev. xi. every *creeping* thing is unclean—absolutely unclean. The very manner in which these people came into the assemblies, designated them at once as being unclean—those who had never been regenerated. But there was an internal as well as an external danger—"Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them." In the English version of the New Testament, that remarkable word "pre-eminence" occurs only twice: first, in that it pleased the Father that in all things His well-beloved Son should have the pre-eminence (Col. i. 18); and second, in reference to a certain man who loved to have the "pre-eminence" in the church, or in other words had risen up to take the place which God designed that the Lord Jesus Christ alone should have (3 John 9). That is exactly what we have in Absalom

who rose up against God's appointed authority, which was vested in King David. He stole the hearts of the people, and soon two hundred men followed him "in their simplicity;" *i.e.*, without knowing what they were doing. They ought to have known better, but, alas, they did not. Absalom was a crafty man, and able to wheedle and hoodwink his followers.

Do *we* know what *we* are doing? If we are men and women who read the Word of God carefully, we shall not easily be imposed upon. We shall be careful to see the place God has given His beloved Son, and that anything which would detract from that honour can never be of God.

David had to flee out of Jerusalem barefooted, and with the tears streaming down his face. God was dealing governmentally with His child, and David was yielding to the chastisement. Ittai follows him with a number of men who came up with David from Gath, and David turns round to Ittai and says—"Don't come with me: go back to the king and abide with him; you are a stranger and an exile who came only a few days ago; why should you follow me now? You were near to me in the kingdom when everything was right and prosperous, but now things are turned upside down; a usurper fills the throne, and I am no longer king over Israel; go back and be to Absalom what you were to me in days gone by." What was the answer of this noble man, whose faithfulness to King David was thus tested?—"As Jehovah liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy

servant be." Noble Ittai! His *faithfulness* stood the test.

I have not the least doubt that the assemblies with which we are associated, gather now in the same way and for the same purpose as the early churches at Thessalonica, at Colosse, and elsewhere. Do I speak to a young believer who has never yet obeyed the Lord's two commands—"This do in the remembrance of Me," and the command He gave to His disciples before His ascension to the Father's right hand, to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, baptising those who received Him as their Saviour? To such I would say, come to the Word of God with a willing heart, putting to the one side what men think about the matter, and you will soon understand what the will of your Lord is. When Ittai stuck to David his king, it was in the hour of adversity. I speak to many who are in isolated country meetings. It is one thing to be associated with a hearty, Gospel-loving assembly, in a large city, with happy meetings for prayer, and memorable seasons at the Lord's Table on the Lord's Day morning. But it is another thing to be identified in a country district with a few despised or weak ones without much gift; and there to hold fast these divine principles. I would say to you, "Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward" (Heb. x. 35); be assured you are doing something the Lord Jesus Christ prizes, and that you have His presence with you, "For where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them"

(Matt. xviii. 20); and if His presence is realised, the meeting will be a very happy one though small. "I sat down under His shadow with *great delight*, and His fruit was *sweet* to my taste" (Song of Solomon ii. 3) will be the happy experience of the one who, with a self-judged spirit, finds himself at the Table of the Lord Jesus Christ. You may be tempted to give it all up as a losing cause, because numbers are few, but remember you are doing what is pleasing to the Lord Jesus Christ. Ittai followed David in the hour of his *rejection*.

(To be Continued.)

A MINISTRY NOT WANTED.

WHEN an assembly of God's people are in a spiritual and healthy condition, they are always ready to welcome sound and healthy ministry, even if it search and humble them. But when the condition is carnal and the conduct unscriptural, they will close their doors against any faithful word by which their nakedness would be discovered, and find those to minister to them who will speak only smooth things, under which their sleeping consciences will not be disturbed, or their sins laid bare before them. But God has always something to say to such a people, and sooner or later they must listen to Him, whether they will or not. He sends, or allows such things to come into their midst, that they have to call a halt and "Consider their ways." But they usually find this to be a much more costly method of correction, than the milder way of yielding to the uttered Word of truth.

BABEL:

OR, MAN'S FIRST GREAT COMBINE.

ANCIENT history records it as a marvellous proof of early power. The dimensions are fully given by Herodotus the historian. Strabo also records its altitude. Eusebius quotes Abydenus in regard to it; and Alexander Polyhistor also mentions it, quoting Eupolemus: Josephus also records the confusion of languages, and the mighty wind that overthrew it. There appears to be no doubt that the city of Babylon arose out of its ruins, and it is *more* than probable that the houses built at its base to receive the labourers, formed the first nucleus of Babylon. And the vast tower built as a mountain to protect against a second Deluge probably gave also to the Babylonians their vast conceptions. They were giant architects that laid out a city with a wall sixty miles in circumference, and huge artificial gardens reared upon a wall hundreds of feet high.

Let us give full credit to the great carnal men—the energetic race that dared to do great things in these early days. They foresaw future misery; they knew that their CREDIT account with God had run out again, even as it produced spiritual bankruptcy before the Flood. And behold now the first great commercial company ever seen, gathered at the border of a mighty river to prove the POWER of COMBINATION, and MAN'S power in defeating God's judgments. Their mountain of burned brick was only a mountain of dust; their combination was a childish conspiracy, and their concentration in

one spot a ruinous procedure, calculated to impoverish all the race. Mark its egotism, the vanity and conceit of man, and the determination that God should have NO share in it.

“Let us make brick.” “Let us build us a city.” “And a TOWER which points [*not reaches*] to heaven.” “Let us make us a NAME.” “Lest WE be scattered abroad.”

“So the Lord *scattered* them abroad.” They sowed to the wind, and they reaped the whirlwind; they built and combined, and the Lord broke it all up. Commerce that ignores God and despises His plans can only collapse. Their wisdom was stored up in a bag with holes; their purse was deep, but God cut it out. Commerce and worldly wisdom that throw God's way aside must expect soon to RECKON with God. Mighty builders and mighty merchants have ruin and death as their daily companions. It is only a *question of time*: the tide of their life is ebbing every day—slowly, slowly sometimes, because God is long-suffering and gracious, not willing to send the *last* wave, but the *very* last wave is often at their door, or in the very chamber they rest in, BEFORE they know.

GOD'S TOWER IS GRAND and old; it REARED its head first in Genesis 12th, we may say.

“I will show thee.” “I will make of thee.” “I will bless thee.” “And I will bless them that bless thee.” “And IN THEE shall all FAMILIES be blessed.” That tower has been going on ever since; and the foundation Stone of all blessing, even the “SEED” to come, has been the

joy of all God's people, and soon the Chief Corner Stone of that great tower will come with SHOUTINGS and rejoicings.

God's tower was not a carnal, earthly tower of dust, not an old crumbled cathedral, not a heathen earthly temple of dead dust and dead men's works; but a glorious LIVING foundation STONE, raised upon rich and eternal pillars of promise. Every builder ascends to the heavenly Jerusalem; no DEAD men go there. Every stone is a LIVING STONE, and every builder increases in power as he labours. True, the foundation stone is laid HERE, but the foot MUST travel upward step by step, until it passes through the gates into glory. G. F.

—o—

GODLY RULES FOR DAILY LIFE.

BEGIN THE DAY WITH GOD (Psa. cxliii. 8). Seek to see His face and have intercourse with Him, before you see the face of man or mingle with the crowd. Speak to Him in prayer in the morning (Psa. v. 3), and listen while He speaks to you through His Word (Isa. 1. 4). Never venture out into the world without first having had dealings with God, and the inner man renewed (2 Cor. iv. 16).

ACKNOWLEDGE THE LORD in all your ways (Prov. iii. 6). Seek His guidance (Psa. xxvii. 11), and own His Word in every path of life (Prov. iii. 21-24). Set the Lord always before you (Psa. xvi. 8), and make it your aim to be well pleasing unto Him (2 Cor. v. 9, R.V.) in all that you do and say. Do not fear to do that which is right, because of the sneers or opposition of the world. "When a man's ways

please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Prov. xvi. 7).

IN ALL YOUR BUSINESS transactions, and dealings with the world, let integrity and honesty prevail (1 Thess. iv. 12), adorning the doctrine of the Lord (Titus ii. 10) by a life of peace, godliness, and honesty (1 Tim. ii. 2). Let God's standard of morality and conduct be your rule (Matt. v. 38-48; Rom. xii. 9-24), not the world's. What ungodly men do is no pattern for you.

CONSULT GOD about everything (Phil. iv. 6). He is wiser than men, and knows all things. He bids you "unload" all your care upon Him (1 Pet. v. 7), and delights to carry both it and you (Psa. lv. 22). If there is anything you cannot ask Him to share with you, be done with it at once. Avoid all questionable company, actions, and transactions; seek not to be rich, but be content with what God gives you (Heb. xiii. 5). He always gives the best (Psa. lxxxiv. 11), to those who walk uprightly.

SERVE THE LORD in everything. In your daily life, in the home, at the business, on the farm, do all "to the glory of God" (1 Cor. x. 31). The Christian's life is not partly secular and partly sacred, but all for God, body (1 Cor. vi. 19) as well as soul, and all he does is to be in the Name of the Lord Jesus (Col. iii. 17). Anything you cannot do in His Name, renounce altogether. No shady transaction can be done in that Name.

CLOSE THE DAY WITH GOD (Psa. cxli. 2). Review its hours, confess its failures, count its blessings, praise God for its

mercies, have a portion from the Word (Deut. vi. 7), and lie down in peace (Psa. iv. 8), under the sleepless eye of the Lord (Psa. cxxi. 4).

Issued on neat Card, Envelope size, in Coloured Border. 1s per 100.—J. Ritchie, Publisher, Kilmarnock.

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MAN EXPOSES, GOD CONVICTS.

IT is not difficult to expose the weaknesses and follies into which true, as well as nominal Christians, fall. This may be done, and often is done, by clear-sighted men of the world, who are shrewd enough to see the inconsistencies of those who profess the Christian name, and hold them up to ridicule. Such ridicule suits the temper of the times, and gives the ungodly great satisfaction. But such critics can only point out defects; their object is to destroy. They have no remedy to prescribe, nothing to offer in the place of that which they expose. They do not turn to the Divine standard of the Truth, and magnify that which ought to be. They are simply the agents of infidelity, smoothing the way for its chariot to roll along. The faithful ministry of God's Word, no less lays bare the evil, but it does more, it gives correction, points out the way of restoration and recovery (2 Tim. iii. 16). It not only wounds, but heals (Psa. cvii. 20). This is the sure result of a sound and godly ministry.

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JESUS, THE LOWLY STRANGER.

"Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor" (2 Cor. viii. 9).

I HAVE heard and read of a lowly Man,
With nowhere to lay His head;
E'en the fox had his lair, and the bird her nest,
But His was the stranger's bed.

Betimes He found rest at loved Bethany's home:
Anon on the stormy deep,
On a cushion* prepared by fishermen's hands,
He would lay Him down to sleep.

A humble dwelling, when evening came on,
Oft was His homely retreat:
Thrice blest the abode where that Stranger would
come,
Where rested His weary feet.

But Galilee's mountains and Olivet's slopes,
Where night winds would round Him sweep,
Were often His couch, when the day's work was
o'er,
And sweet was that Labourer's sleep.

Yet this lowly Man was the Lord of all—
Of heaven and earth and sea;
Yon myriad orbs were the work of His hand,
Beyond what the eye can see.

But He who was rich, for a time became poor,
That sinners enriched might be:
The "Heir of all things" stooped to penury here,
Oh what wondrous mystery!

The Highest above, took our lowly estate,
Yea, stooped to death's abyss!
The penalty bore of our numberless sins,
To raise us to heaven's bliss!

The Father's embosomed and well-beloved Son,
Forsaken, was left to die;
To glory to bring the "many sons,"
To His heavenly home on high.

Yet never was He more beloved than then—
More dear to the Father's heart,
Than when He became the sin-offering for men,
And bore the transgressor's smart.

Praise God! 'twas for us that that lowly Man
Had nowhere to lay His head:
For us He chose shame and rejection and pain,
And was numbered with the dead!

But now He is raised and exalted on high,
All thrones and all names above,
And soon we shall see Him descending again—
The Man whom we know and love.

He is coming to take His redeemed away,
To the mansions bright and fair;
Then swift as the quiver of lightning flash,
We shall meet Him in the air.

But shall we forget 'mid the splendour and bliss,
What it cost to bring us there?
No! we'll sing to His praise Who thus became
poor,
That we might His riches share.

THE LATE A. W. P. STRONG.

*Mark iv. 38, &c.

Editorial.

A New Year brings afresh to exercised souls the solemn message that "the time is short," and begets fresh desires after God, with purpose of heart to live for Him.

* * * * *

As years go by, decay of vital godliness becomes more apparent, and departure from God's truth more pronounced. Worldliness, like a viper, is coiling itself around the people of God, eating away the vitals of spiritual life, leaving no time for meditation on the Word, which is the staff of life and strength, to all who are born of God.

* * * * *

Shallow preaching and light bread find acceptance with the many. As the heart gets away from God, healthful ministry becomes unpalatable. Preachers of smooth things, and of empty words, have their day of popularity then, and appear at the front on every occasion, who, in godlier and healthier times, would not have been given a hearing.

* * * * *

The approaching General Election will no doubt be a testing time to many of God's people. Nothing pleases the devil better, than to get a saint to leave the place of strangership here, into which the Cross of Christ has brought him, to mingle with the world in its Politics and Parliamentary strife. Nothing will preserve and prevent, save the truth, holding its place in the heart, and its grip of the conscience. Reasonings and sophistries of world-reformers will fall without effect there. The general lack of definite teaching on such subjects, augurs ill for the result with many in times of temptation.

* * * * *

Mormons or "Latter Day Saints" are again very active in spreading their doctrines and well-gilded errors in this country. They send from their "New Jerusalem" in Salt Lake City every summer, batches of smart, up-to-date, stylish, and glib-tongued young men, who spread themselves out in pairs, and endeavour to gain the ears of the untaught and unwary, especially of the weaker sex. In answer to many requests, we hope to give one or two papers in this Magazine dealing with "Mormonism: and its Doctrines." Young believers need to be warned against these and other prevalent errors.

The Bible Annotator.

OUTLINES OF GOSPEL SUBJECTS.

IN JESUS' NAME.

REMISSION in His Name (Acts x. 43)—Proclaimed.
LIFE through His Name (John xx. 31)—Imparted.
SALVATION in His Name (Acts iv. 22)—Enjoyed.

THREE APPOINTMENTS.

To Death (Heb. ix. 27)—Sin's Wages.
To Judgment (Acts xvii. 31)—Sin's Doom.
To Salvation (1 Thess. v. 9)—Sin's Removal.

FOUR GOSPEL "NO MORES."

No more Offering for Sin (Heb. x. 18)—Christ's Perfect Work.
No more Remembrance of Sin (Heb. x. 17)—God's Perfect Forgiveness.
No more Conscience of Sin (Heb. x. 2)—The Sinner's complete Cleansing.
No more Continuance in Sin (John v. 14)—The Saint's Daily Practice.

BIBLE STUDIES AND MEDITATIONS.

SEEING JESUS.

"We would see Jesus" (John xii. 21)—An Earnest Desire.
"We do see Jesus" (Heb. ii. 9)—An Open Vision.
"We shall see Jesus" (1 John iii. 2)—A Bright Prospect.

THE CHRISTIAN CALLING.

In its Threefold Character.
A High Calling (Phil. iii. 14, with 1 Sam. i. 8).
A Heavenly Calling (Heb. iii. 1, with Eph. i. 3).
A Holy Calling (2 Tim. i. 9, with 1 Pet. i. 15 R.V.).

THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST.

Exalted as Lord (Acts ii. 36)—In Heaven.
Confessed as Lord (Rom. x. 9 R.V.)—In Conversion.
Sanctified as Lord (1 Pet. iii. 15 R.V.)—In the Heart.
Owned as Lord (Col. iii. 17)—In the Life.
Acknowledged Lord (1 Cor. xiv. 37)—In the Church.
Honoured as Lord (Phil. ii. 10)—In Eternity.

Misunderstood Texts Re-read.

"A peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus ii. 14)—not a quaint or antiquated people, peculiar in their dress, or marked out by some badge or diploma, but a "purchased" and consequently a people "dear" to their owner. The words are taken from the Septuagint Version of Exodus xix. 5 (see also Deut. vii. 6): "Ye shall be to Me a peculiar

people above all nations." Webster's Dictionary says our word "peculiar" is from the Roman "peculum," which being the possessor's own, was reckoned very dear. The R.V. has it "a people for God's own possession" (see also 1 Pet. ii. 9, R.V.), which gives the true meaning, and the object of the believer's redemption from all lawlessness, namely, that God may possess and dominate him as His very "own." Many have taken the credit to themselves of this distinctive name, who neither adorn it by a life of godliness, nor commend it by a life of obedience to the will of God.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

What is the meaning of the expression so frequently used in preaching, "Decide for Christ?" It is vague in meaning, and in relation to the Gospel utterly unscriptural. "Deciding," "coming out," "professing," and such like, are phrases coined by sentimental and shallow preachers, who work more on the feelings than the consciences of their hearers, and by means of which any number of spurious converts are enrolled. The Scripture speaks of receiving Christ Jesus the Lord" (Col. ii. 6), of confessing with the mouth "the Lord Jesus" (Rom. x. 9), of "believing on the Name of His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John iii. 23), all of which imply faith, reliance on His person and work, and acknowledgment of His claim, but the phraseology which is associated with "holding up hands," "signing" covenants, and "getting up to testify" is neither Scripture nor sense, but tends towards a caricature of true Divine conversion, which is of the Holy Ghost, wrought deep in the soul.

Answers to Correspondents

"INQUIRER" asks, "Can any one tell who is the author of a book entitled, "Things which Remain." circulated some thirty years ago, and if it can still be had?"

E. M., BRADFORD.—"Infirmities" are distinguished from "sins" in Scripture. They are doubtless the result of man's fall, and may become, indeed, occasions of sin, but are not in themselves so regarded. It is to help those who are compassed with infirmities that the Lord Jesus is great High Priest (Heb. iv.), and the liability to fall, calls forth His priestly intercession. And of the "other Comforter," given to indwell believers, the Holy

Spirit, we read—"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities." Thus it was that Paul was able to "glory" in his infirmities (which he never could have done in his sins) because of the "grace" and "strength," which was daily sent forth on account of them. While thus conscious of his weakness and liability to go wrong, the believer is kept dependent on Christ, and is safe. When he thinks himself "strong"—that is the opposite of infirm—then he soon becomes possessed of the "haughty spirit" which goes before a "fall."

W. M'Q.—It has been said that "the bitterest griefs the Lord had to endure, were at the hand of those whom He had served." So also it sometimes happens to His followers. But this will eventually be to His servants' profit. It is part of their discipline, and it may be of their education for higher service. Trial and suffering in the path of service, however hard they may be to endure, are infinitely safer for Christ's servants than flattery. If you are called to pass through such an experience, seek grace to endure it meekly. Blame no one; do not retaliate, or seek to defend yourself; leave that to God. When you have learned the lesson, and gained the "profit" God has designed for you in the trial, He will make "a way of escape" for you, and likewise deal with all who have, whether openly or secretly, been the instruments of inflicting it upon you. The danger is to forestall God, and take the matter into your own hands. "Blessed is he that endureth temptation" (or trial) (Jas. i. 12); and the word "endure" here means "to stand under" it, bearing the burden bravely, and meekly.

Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION I.—It is alleged that there are assemblies of Christians, gathered unto the Lord's Name, in which those who are known to hold and teach the non-eternal punishment of the wicked, are received or retained? Is this so?

ANSWER A.—The writer has been associated with such Assemblies for thirty-seven years, and has shared the fellowship of nearly all in the British Isles and many in the Colonies, but he does not know of one, in which one holding or teaching the doctrine of non-eternity of punishment, would be received or retained, after it became known.

J. S.

ANSWER B.—Such statements have been made again and again by those who have a certain ecclesiastical position to defend, and to justify division and separation from others gathering much in the same way as themselves. But when pressed for definite details, and to give the names of places and persons, they are invariably unable to do so. Slanderous reports of such a kind, should never be received or entertained for a moment, unless accompanied by the fullest and clearest evidence of their truthfulness.

W. J. B.

ANSWER C.—Some thirty-three years ago, a denial of such statements was issued, signed by a number of leading and ministering brethren of that time, which put those to silence who had been seeking to beguile young believers and others from the simple unsectarian way of gathering unto the Name of the Lord, which many at that time were led to see and act upon, apart from any organisation or defined circle of meetings. There is not a company of believers in my knowledge, who are, or would be recognised as an assembly, with whom intercommunion could be continued, who admit those who hold non-eternity in any of its forms, either Annihilation, Restitution, or Universalism. E.S.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—The alarming spread of non-eternity of punishment of the wicked, and its acceptance by many, who, from policy, are afraid to confess it fully, while others who are professedly 'sound' themselves, mingle freely with and appear on public platforms alongside of men, especially such as are of a philanthropic and humanitarian order, who are infected with the doctrines of Conditional Immortality, Annihilation, and "The Larger Hope," make it necessary to have a clear issue on this fundamental error. It is clearly the denial of one of the foundation truths of the faith (Heb. vi. 2), and must be dealt with accordingly. No one can hold it without teaching it, privately it may be for policy's sake, yet not the less disastrous in results. We believe that the first step in all discipline should be "correction" with the hope of recovery, but when this fails, for such error as this, expulsion is the only course left, and so far as we know, this has been firmly and faithfully carried out, wherever such error has been clearly found to exist. In a pamphlet, published for "Private Circulation"—which, however, in all cases soon becomes public—it was asserted by the writer, that in certain assemblies, (which the object of his pamphlet was to denounce in order to prevent his 'following' from associating with them), there were holders of

non-eternity received and retained. A Christian living in the same town went personally to him, and asked to have the name of the place and the person, to which reference was made in the pamphlet, with the result, that he was obliged to confess he had been misled, and signed a retraction of the charge. This is a typical case, and if the same plan were adopted by all who hear such reports, they would very soon cease.

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Questions Requiring Answers.

We acknowledge with gratitude, the help given in this department by esteemed brethren and servants of Christ during the past year, and would earnestly seek a fuller measure of fellowship in this deeply responsible and important ministry. There are many honest and inquiring children of God, who greatly value the help given in this way, and we have very many grateful testimonies to timely aid given in trying seasons, and in perplexing paths, received through these answers.

QUESTION II.—Would it be according to the spirit and principles of the Word, for a Christian tradesman to sue a debtor at law, for the recovery of his account.

QUESTION III.—What is the difference in character between the assembly gathered for worship on the Lord's Day morning, and say at a Conference on Monday. And what Scriptural principle of ministry is applicable to the latter?

QUESTION IV.—Is there any Scriptural, united method of recognising and welcoming a newly-formed assembly, or is this to be left to individual discernment?

QUESTION V.—Where it is feared that a number of unregenerate professors have been hurried into the fellowship of an assembly, and continue there, while manifesting no signs of spiritual life, what is the Scriptural way to deal with them?

QUESTION VI.—Should evangelists and others who move about preaching, take to do with assembly matters, especially difficulties, in places to which they go?

QUESTION VII.—Who is primarily responsible for the rent and expenses of halls in which assemblies of believers gather? Is it the individuals whose names are on the lease, or the assembly as a whole?

QUESTION VIII.—In matters in which a number of Assemblies, say in a city, are mutually interested, what is the Scriptural and proper way of arranging them? Ought representative brethren from all these Assemblies together do so, or a select few who represent nothing?

GOD'S PRINCIPLES OF SUCCESS.

BY THE EDITOR.

THE Book of Joshua contains the record of victory in the host of God's ancient warriors, as they took possession of the land of Canaan. The principles upon which these victories were given, are recorded in the opening chapter, in the Word spoken by the Lord to Joshua, as the leader of Israel, and the representative warrior of the Lord's host. "This Book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth: but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to *do* all that is written therein, for then thou shalt make thy way *prosperous*, and then thou shalt have good *success*" (Jos. i. 8). Here we have God's principles of blessing, the only true way of prosperity and success in the service and warfare of the Lord. Although times have changed, these principles of realised blessing remain the same. They are the same for the Lord's servants to-day as they were in the days of Joshua, the son of Nun. There need be no difficulty therefore among those who serve the Lord Christ, as to the way of prosperity and success in their service for Him. It has been made as clear and simple, as the way of salvation is to the sinner. Of course, we must remember that the prosperity and success here spoken of, is what these words represent in the Lord's estimation, not in the world's. The world's idea of prosperity is reckoned by other methods. "Success," as men view it, is generally connected with apparently great results; large numbers of people,

well-filled churches, satisfactory finances, and such like. Even among those who know and spread the Gospel, success is too often reckoned according to the passing effect produced upon the public mind, the size of meetings, and the number of professed converts. But this is not the method of reckoning in heaven. All these may exist without a particle of "prosperity" or "success" as seen by the eye of the Lord. It is necessary for the Lord's servants to remember this, otherwise they will be led astray by the world's way of success, and as a consequence, they will *adopt man's methods to obtain it*. When the servants of the Lord learn to reckon with Him, they readily perceive how fitting are the means which He has appointed to obtain these results. "The Book of the law" was to be to the front, in all the wars of the Lord. It was not to depart out of their mouth: their warfare was to be ordered according to its teachings. They were to "meditate therein day and night." God's Word was to be indwelling the heart, and exercising the conscience. Then last of all, they were to "observe to *do* according to *all* that is written therein." Obedience to *all* the Word of the Lord was the way of blessing. This is contrary to the cherished opinions of the religious world of our day. *Liberty* to do what you think best, and *liberality* toward those who do the opposite, is the popular creed. We do not wonder at the world adopting this as its watchword. The world is away from God, and its thoughts are exactly the opposite of His. But it ought not so to be with the Christian. He should take his "marching

orders" from the Book of God, doing neither his own will, nor the will of others, but at each step consulting the Word of His Lord, wherein he will find light for all his path, and counsel for every emergency in his warfare, walk, and testimony.

BOASTING.

ONE of the features predicted of the last days, is, that men should be "boasters" (2 Tim. iii. 2). This is true in the fullest sense, in the world of this day. Let any one who doubt it, take a look at the world's advertisements and mark their tone and spirit. But the region of "boastings" is not confined to the world: it has taken a firm hold on what professes to be "the church." Even among true believers, boasting is not excluded. When a little "reviving" has been given in grace among the Lord's people, what a piping and advertising of it there is, and while all this is going on, the blessing ceases. When the Lord gives a little fruit of His Gospel, and a few sinners are brought from death to life, how often the Spirit is grieved, and the work stopped, by the boastings of those who clamour for the credit of being the "means" of the Revival. What a "flourish of trumpets" there often is, over what ultimately turns out to be a very small affair, so far as abiding results are concerned. What a glorifying of man, in the "reports" of the religious world's movements! How little honour to God, His Spirit, and His Word! Need it be wondered, that permanent results are the exception? Our God hates boasting.

STUDIES IN THE "ACTS."

PART I.—THE MINISTRY OF PETER.

THE Book of "The Acts of the Apostles" is rather the book of the acts of Peter and Paul, the Apostle of the circumcision, and the Apostle of the Gentiles. In the events recorded in that part of it which gives us Peter's ministry (that is, chapters i.-xii.), I judge that we can discern such an order and meaning, as prepares us for the Lord's further purposes among the Gentiles by the subsequent ministry of Paul. I would thus briefly notice and interpret these events.

I.—While waiting, according to the commandment, for the promised power from on high, the disciples, under the leading of Peter (constituted chief in the Jewish ministry, Luke xxii. 32; John xxi. 16), commit it to the Lord to fill up the vacant bishopric of Judas. This was needful, as I shall observe more particularly by and by, that the Jewish order of twelve Apostles might stand full and complete; and that this was done with the full intelligence of the mind of God, appears further from this—that the Lord seems at once to undertake what His servants thus commit to Him, for He honours the lot (the Jewish form of discovering the Divine will in such matters, 1 Chron. xxiv. 5; Num. xxvi. 55; Jos. xix. 10), and Matthias is numbered with the eleven Apostles. And the Holy Ghost in the next chapter seems to adopt Matthias in his new office, by falling upon him equally with the rest, without any rebuke.

II.—VII.—The number being thus filled up, the Holy Ghost is given according to promise; and Peter again takes the lead, and preaches the risen Jesus to the Jews. The enmity of the Jews, however, sets in, and proceeds through these chapters, increasing gradually, just as it had done before against the Lord. The Apostles, however, like their Lord, go on with their testimony undismayed; great grace is upon all—holy discipline keeps them pure—and with great power the Apostles give the testimony to the resurrection. But as the enmity had worked against the Lord till they crucified him, so now does it work against the Apostles, till they run upon Stephen and stone him. And as the heavens had received the crucified One, so do the heavens open to His fellow-sufferer and witness. And in him the Church receives a living pledge that the heavenly glory was for her as well as for her Lord, for the world had now rejected both.

VIII.—This being so, Jerusalem could no longer receive the sanction of God, for it had fully declared its sin, and for a season must be cast out of His sight. The disciples are therefore now scattered from Jerusalem, and the Jewish order is disturbed: this chapter giving us the acts of one who had not been sent forth, either as from Jerusalem, or by the Apostles at all. Philip goes forth—and at first preaches Christ in Samaria, and is then sent down by the Spirit “to Gaza, which is desert,” to bring into the fold a lost sheep that was still straying there, but known to God before the foundation of the world. But immediately afterwards,

he is borne by the Spirit to Azotus (the place next to the desert where men and women could be found), that he might proclaim there, and in all other places, the grace which says, “Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life.” Thus by his mission to Gaza, and then by his rapture to Azotus, Philip’s ministry is made to signify the *sovereignty* and the *universality* of that grace which the Lord was to publish.

IX.—The channels for the life and power that is from the Son of God to flow in among the Gentiles were now fully opened; for the *Jews*, and the *Samaritans*, and the *Proselytes*, had been called. All was ready for the gathering of the first-fruits of the Gentiles. But before this was done, and present judgment upon Israel thus publicly sealed, the Lord gives, in the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, a sign of the future conversion of Israel (see 1 Tim. i. 16). A sample, no doubt it is, of that long-suffering that saves every sinner. But Israel is to be made the great final witness of that long-suffering, and is principally pointed at by this sign; and therefore all that accompanies this great event, is a foreshewing of the things that are hereafter to mark and accompany the repentance of Israel. Saul’s looking on Him whom he had pierced—his being shut up three days without sight, and neither eating nor drinking—the removal of this judgment, and his baptism, all shews us the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem looking on Him whom they pierced and mourning, every family apart, and their wives apart, and then proving the virtues of the cleansing

fountain opened for their sin and for their uncleanness. Jerusalem will then be the signal witness of sovereign grace, as Saul now is (Zech. xii., xiii.). And in further proof of this mystical character of Saul's conversion, we may observe that he tells us himself, that he obtained mercy *because he did it ignorantly in unbelief*; and this is the very ground of final mercy to Israel; as the Lord prayed for them, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (see also Acts iii. 17).

X. XI.—A pledge of Israel's future conversion being thus left them, proclamation of present judgment upon them is made by the call from among the Gentiles of a people for God. This is done by the ministry of the Apostle of the circumcision; and most fitly so. For he had received the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and was also the representative of Jerusalem, who is (however faithless, and as such divorced for a while) "the mother of us all." But Peter's title to this, as representing Jerusalem, being thus allowed, we find a Church of Gentiles gathered at Antioch by other hands, and Barnabas and Saul, rather than Peter, called to the help and comfort of it.

XII.—And now the Lord had only publicly to dismiss Jerusalem for a season. But as he had before pledged Israel's future *conversion*, so does he, as I judge, now pledge to them their future *restoration*.

J. G. B.

(To be continued).

Wounded vanity, ministerial jealousy, and self importance are the roots of most church troubles.

LONGINGS AFTER CHRIST.

THE Maiden on her mistress' hand,
Waits an approving smile to see;
So, Lord, before Thy face I stand,
So WAITS my soul on Thee.

The Mother strains her eager eye
Across that drear, far-stretching lea;
"O that I could my child descry!"
So LOOKS my soul for THEE.

The Watchman longs to see the ray
From which the midnight shadows flee,
Which ushers in the wished-for day—
So LONGS my soul for THEE.

The lonesome Bride in secret sighs,
Beneath (to her) yon mournful tree,
For one, the load-star of her eyes;
So SIGHS my soul for THEE.

The way-worn Pilgrim at the well,
Thriving to drink, on bended knee,
Of water's luscious draught can tell;
So THIRSTS my soul for THEE.

And, oh! how pants the stricken hind,
While straining every nerve to flee!
O could she but some well-spring find!
So PANTS my soul for THEE.

See how yon glorious orb above,
And that bright blooming flower agree;
As turns earth's day-star to her love,
So TURNS myself to THEE!

—o—
TEACHING AND EXHORTATION.—The teacher deals with the understanding, the exhorter with the conscience. It requires great grace to be a wise exhorter, and equally so to receive with profit to the soul the faithful word of exhortation.

THE PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS.

A BIBLE READING. BY D. MUNRO, TORONTO.

ISRAEL, as a nation, were saved by the grace and power of God, led on through the wilderness by grace, God fulfilling His Word to them in spite of all their murmuring and rebellion and unbelief. Encamped at Sinai (Exod. xix. 1-6), God told them what He would do for them. But they claim it on a new ground. It was to be dependent on obeying His law. God knew what was in them. He knew that they could not inherit blessing on that footing, but they did not know it, and it was necessary that they should learn it, and this was the only way they could learn what was in themselves. Thus they were put under law, so that they might be taught by experience how unable they were, how absolutely impossible it would be for them to inherit any blessing on this new footing. The whole nation was to be "a kingdom of priests" unto Jehovah if they obeyed. But they failed; they did not obey God's voice; they did not keep His covenant, and so they forfeited the blessing. They could not be a "kingdom of priests" on that ground, and they have never been that yet, but they will be on a future day, under a new covenant. Yet God gave them a priesthood, in Aaron and his house, chosen out of all the tribes, and set apart to minister in the priest's office. Exodus xxviii. 19, gives an account of their consecration and their dress. They stand thus as typical of the priesthood of Christ and His people in this dispensation of grace. Turn now to the

first Epistle of Peter. There are three prominent things in the first chapter. First, Election by God the Father (ver. 2). Second, Redemption by God the Son (ver. 19). Third, Regeneration by God the Spirit (ver. 23). Father, Son, and Holy Spirit all engaged in the salvation of sinners. And with what result? That all who are thus chosen, redeemed and regenerated, become a priesthood unto God (see chap. ii. 5). "A *holy* priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God," "A *royal* priesthood to shew forth the virtues of Him who hath called us," etc. (ver. 9). As a holy priesthood "to offer up spiritual sacrifices;" as a "royal priesthood" to proclaim abroad "the virtues of Him who had called them" out of darkness into His marvellous light. What a marvel of Divine grace, true of all who are saved now!

In the Old Testament, under the law, there was one man and his family called out of the whole nation to minister to Jehovah in the priesthood. Only one family. Anyone else coming near the altar, would have been put to death, Uzziah, the king, went in to offer sacrifices contrary to the Word of Jehovah, and God smote him, so he became a leper until the day of his death for his presumption. And the true priests of God took the smitten king and cast him out, saying, "It is not for thee to come into this place and offer sacrifices to the Lord." What a warning to all who presume to worship without being His priests, without being born of the Spirit. What an awful sight it is to see crowds of unconverted people going through a form of what they call

“worship,” who are enemies of God, and in their hearts hate Him. Only born again people are priests, able to worship God in the Spirit (Phil. iii. 3), and they all have been called to this holy privilege. Here is one way in which what is called “Christianity” has been utterly corrupted. There is not the slightest likeness between the popular Christianity of this day, and what we read in the Word of God. The popular Christianity of our time is not what is revealed in the New Testament, but a kind of an improved Judaism, instead of a contrast to it. It is a bit of Judaism, a bit of heathendom, and a bit of what the Scriptures teach, all mixed up together.

That one man chosen in Israel with his family, and set apart to the priesthood, is typical of Christ and His people, not of a human priesthood in the church. Yet this is what Romanism and Ritualism claim as authority for their priesthood now. You see a man with a certain cut of coat, clerical robes, and so on. They call him a “priest;” he is “in holy orders;” he only is to pray and preach. The sects have all their man. They may not call him a priest, but he is “the clergyman,” or “the minister,” supposed to be high above and nearer to God than the people, to present all the worship and administer “the sacraments” to the people. Where did they get that? From Israel. Did not Israel have a priesthood? Yes, but if we divide the Word of God aright, we see that Israel’s priesthood is but a type of the common priesthood of all God’s people. The whole nation of Israel was divided into three classes: the priests, the soldiers,

and the servants. The tribe of Levi was to minister to the Lord; they did not go out to war with the rest; they were not numbered among the fighting men. They took down the tabernacle, they carried it, they set it up. Their whole time was spent ministering to it, and after they came into the land and the temple was built, they ministered there. Then there was a family chosen out of that tribe, for Aaron must be a Levite, and he and his family were set apart to the priesthood. But instead of these three classes in Israel representing three different classes of Christians, the whole three are represented in every Christian on earth. Every child of God on earth is a priest to worship, a Levite to serve, and a soldier to fight. This is the threefold character of every true Christian. I was not long saved till I knew I had to fight, and the person who professes to be saved, and does not know what it is to fight, I would not give much for his conversion. All God’s people are called upon to serve Him in the Gospel, and to minister to each other, for all are servants as surely as all are priests.

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TRUE SEPARATION.—To be personally in the midst of a scene of worldliness, say a servant in a gay dress establishment in the West of London, where the world’s fashion is worshipped from morning till night, and yet to be above and outside it all morally, in heart and spirit with God, His will ruling supreme, His love the enjoyment of the soul, is true separation from, and nonconformity to, the world. Heart occupation with Christ, the Word dwelling richly in it, coupled with a prayerful watchfulness, can alone sustain such a life of separation to God.

THE CHRISTIAN'S STEWARDSHIP.

PART II.—THOSE TO BE SUPPORTED.

BY DR. J. NORMAN CASE.

NEEDED *Christians*. 2 Cor. viii. and ix. deal with this, for they were first of all written in view of an arranged collection among Gentile believers to assist their famine-stricken brethren in Judea, though the chapters contain teaching and principles applicable to all times. That children of God and members of Christ, when in want, should be assisted by their fellow-Christians is most natural and becoming. The poor of the household of faith have special claims upon us.

2. *The Poor generally should be helped.* This class was also provided for under the Mosaic economy. In a day when a "foreigner" was almost universally despised and ill-treated, in Israel's land, not only were they not oppressed, but in case of need provision was made for them to be cared for (Exodus xxiii. 9; Deut. xiv. 29). This was "advanced" legislation of the highest order; and, among Christians, doing good to all men has been made incumbent both by the acts and words of Christ and His apostles (Mark xiv. 7; Luke xiv. 13; Gal. vi. 10, &c.).

3. *Evangelists*, giving their whole time to the work, whether in our midst or at a distance, should be helped. The ideal would be for every servant of Christ to be self-supporting. At least, so we judge from some of the words and ways of the Apostle Paul. But from the very inception of Christianity, by the Founder thereof Himself, provision was made for

some, from among the whole company of disciples, to give themselves entirely to the work of preaching. It was the Lord Himself who laid down the rule that "*The labourer is worthy of his hire,*" and this was confirmed by the action of the apostles after the new dispensation had been fully inaugurated. The first half of 1 Cor. ix. might be quoted as bearing on the point under consideration. That portion should be carefully pondered by anyone not clear on the matter.

The Apostle Paul stedfastly and consistently refused to receive any help from the Church at Corinth. He goes so far as to say that he robbed other Churches, taking wages of them to do the Corinthians service. Therefore the "labouring with his hands" to supply his needs cannot be taken as an absolute rule of conduct for the apostles, much less may it be pressed as of universal application.

The same apostle, who would not receive from the Corinthians, thankfully accepted gifts from the Church at Philippi, and he writes that they had "well done" in so sending to him (see Phil. iv. 14-19).

4. *Teachers or Pastors* who entirely devote themselves to service among the Lord's people should also, when necessary, be supported. Few deny that God-sent evangelists or missionaries should be supported, yet some question whether pastors or teachers, as such, should receive monetary help. It seems to us, however, that the Word of God explicitly teaches that they should. Why should anyone desire to explain away the Scriptures bearing on this point?

The abuse of a thing does not always

constitute a sufficient reason for entirely abolishing it. Let it be put on a Scriptural basis. The idea of one man as *the* minister, pastor, or elder in a Church, monopolising all opportunities for teaching, exhortation, or preaching the Gospel, is wholly contrary to the New Testament ideal. Elders, bishops, or teachers in a local assembly are always referred to in the plural. While this should be strongly insisted on, it is a mistake and weakness to jump to the other extreme and say that none so labouring among believers should be assisted in things temporal.

To our mind there can only be one possible meaning to Galatians vi. 6. "Let him that is taught in the Word," writes the apostle, "communicate to him that teacheth in all good things." We are aware that by some this is said to refer only to the communicating of any new thought or idea by those who generally take the place of learners—to those who are their teachers. To us, such an interpretation is another evidence of how even good people will torture a Scripture, when it runs against some cherished theory.

The passage clearly means that any one who is instructed in the Word of God, should, when necessary, and according to his ability, minister to the teacher in things carnal.

1 Timothy v. 17, 18 is equally clear on the point. From verse 17, two things are seen: (1) That all elders do not, in this sense, labour in the Word and teaching; (2) That those doing so should be counted worthy of double honour. Had the subject ended with this we might have

been in doubt as to what the "double honour" referred to, but the next verse makes it plain. "For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth on the corn, and the labourer is worthy of his reward."

These two sayings, one from the Old Testament and the other from the oral teaching of Christ, were quoted by the same writer in 1 Cor. ix. to prove that the labourer in the Gospel had a claim on the Lord's people for support. The first expression is figurative. Standing alone, it might not establish the point we are considering. But when we call to mind the apostle's expansion and application of the passage (1 Cor. ix. 9-11), we cannot question its meaning here, viz., that the elder who also labours as a teacher should, if he is in need of it, receive temporal support. As to the second saying, who can possibly question its meaning when he remembers the connection in which the Lord first uttered it? (see Luke x. 7).

We deem it a solemn matter to try and explain away the force of these precepts, and, in view of them, we believe that a Christian steward will be doing right in using some of his means in helping men who are called of God to devote their time and strength to the shepherding or teaching of the flock of God.

NOTE.—The above, would only apply to servants of Christ, who, having gone forth at His bidding are guided by Him alone in their service, looking to Himself direct for the supply of their temporal needs. There are evangelists and others, who are supported and more or less located and controlled in their service, by those to whom they look as the channels of their supply. This, whatever its advantages, is a departure from the pattern of the Word. Those who seek to conform to that Word in their service, have a first claim upon the Lord's stewards and assemblies for support.—Ed.

NOT POLITICS, BUT CHRIST.

THERE are few things that wise men of all ages have laboured more zealously to discover, than some means of legislation which will bring happiness and prosperity to the families and nations of mankind. But when some had hoped that the secret of such good had been found, they have invariably learned by experience that they lacked the power to bring it into execution. Either their resources failed, or the resistance of opponents prevailed, or the chief promoters themselves broke down under the burden that was too heavy for them to bear. The result has been, that though much has been attempted for the alleviation of human wrong and the happiness of mankind, little has been accomplished by means of legislation. Thinking men are obliged to own, that the right regulation of the things of earth, require greater power and wisdom, than man is endowed with. The cause of all the world's sorrow is sin. Man's alienation from God is the root of all his troubles, and the only way back to blessing and prosperity is, by being reconciled and restored to God, his only rightful owner. Thus it will be when He, who is earth's rightful King, shall take His great power and reign (Rev. xi. 17). Then the long delegated authority which, in the hands of fallen men, has failed to bring blessing, will be entrusted to the Lord Jesus, who in His own person will become the "Governor among the nations." Under His righteous and all-wise rule, the longed-for sabbatic rest of earth will be enjoyed. Peace and prosperity will

flow like a river, and creation's groan will cease. "He shall judge the world with righteousness and the people with His truth" (Psa. xcvi. 13). God will have His glory and man His blessing then, but not till then. Governments, no matter what their politics or policy, must fail, until God is honoured and His chosen King and Truth accepted and obeyed. The world needs Christ. Till then, earth to the Christian is the place of his pilgrimage, through which, as a stranger, he passes on to His own country.

THE LORD'S WORK.

THIS expression is now applied to almost every kind of philanthropic and religious effort, and sometimes to things that do not even nominally pretend to seek the conversion of sinners at all. We do not believe that "the work of the Lord" as used in Holy Scripture (1 Cor. xv. 56), is of such a nature, as to include any kind of effort that men may be pleased to engage in, according to their own will.

"The work of the Lord" has a fixed and definite meaning. It not only implies that it is done *by* His authority, and that the work is done *for* the Lord, but in the way that He Himself has commanded. It means work which is *of* the Lord, He being the originator of it. It means work which is carried on by His power, He being the Sustainer of it; work begun and continued under His control, He being the Director of it. Hence, not every effort done with the Lord's name attached to it, by the Lord's people, is "the Lord's work," but that alone is, which is *of* Him, and *through* Him and *to* Him.

Editorial.

Although children of God are not called upon to share in the election of the Government of the country in which they live, they are not to be indifferent toward those who are placed in authority over them. Prayer for (1 Tim. ii. 1) all such, privately and in their assemblies, with subjection to "the higher powers" (Rom. xiii. 1) is the will of the Lord for His people. May it not be forgotten at this Election time.

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There is less being said about "Revival" than there was some time ago, but with many there is a true seeking after God, coupled with an earnest desire to be "quickened" according to His Word (Psa. cxix. 25), and led to a closer walk with Him in the path of obedience to His revealed will. This is the way of true reviving and refreshing, and the secret source of unfailling blessing. All else is evanescent.

* * * * *

The old-time Bible Readings, which proved such a means of blessing to the Lord's people in years gone by, but which in most cases have given place to something more attractive, are being revived in many places, little companies coming together in private houses and halls once a week to study the Word of God, counting on the teaching of the Comforter whose work it is to guide "into all the truth" (John xvi. 13, R.V.).

* * * * *

Gospel work carried on by an assembly of believers in a hearty and vigorous manner, those who can preach and have a fresh message from God being at liberty to exercise their ministry, loyally supported by the whole, is by far the most productive of real abiding fruit. Where spasmodic and "special" efforts are regarded as the staple part of Gospel work, you invariably find a very poor general Gospel testimony, little development of gift and energy, and an abnormal number of very questionable converts. An evangelist's visit, (when he is sent from God), gives things a fresh impetus, and reaches those who do not usually hear the Gospel. But an assembly that needs its weekly or monthly preacher, else Gospel Work would be *nil*, must be in a poor and pithless condition. In days gone by, when there was less of human skill and more dependence on God, there was no lack of Gospel preachers raised up from their midst with whom God wrought mightily.

The Bible Annotator.

BIBLE READINGS AND STUDIES.

OUR CALLING.

Called Sons of God (1 John iii. 1)—By the Father.

Called Christians (Acts xi. 26)—From the Son.

Called Saints (Rom. i. 7)—In the Spirit.

"TILL HE COME."

Show the Lord's Death (1 Cor. xi. 26)—Worshippers.

Hold Fast His Truth (Rev. ii. 25)—Warriors.

Occupy in His Service (Luke xix. 13)—Workers.

WALK, IN THREE ASPECTS.

"Before God" (Gen. xvii. 1)—In Reality.

"After God" (Deut. xiii. 4)—In Obedience.

"With God" (Gen. v. 22)—In Communion.

The Preacher's Bureau.

OUTLINES OF GOSPEL SUBJECTS.

TWO MEETING PLACES.

The Mercy Seat (Exod. xxv. 21, 22)—Grace.

The Great White Throne (Rev. xx. 11)—Judgment.

All must meet God, at the one or the other.

FOUR MIGHTY GOSPEL WORDS.

An INVITATION to the Weary (Matt. xi. 28).

A CALL to the Thirsty (John vii. 37).

A PROMISE to the Sinful (Isaiah i. 18).

A WARNING to the Careless (2 Pet. iii. 10).

THREE THINGS IN HELL.

Weeping (Matt. viii. 12)—Regret.

Wailing (Matt. xiii. 42)—Remorse.

Gnashing of Teeth (Luke xiii. 28)—Rebellion.

THE PREACHER'S MESSAGE.—The old Gospel in fresh power, is the message and the instrument to effect the conversion of sinners. God always owns and honours it. But it need not be the old text, the old illustrations, and the old sermon. The Gospeller has the whole Book of God to choose his subjects from, and it is usually evidence of spiritual torpor, if he only brings forth "things old and old."

SHAM CONVERSIONS.—There are two sorts of popular preachers whose "line" of things is chiefly instrumental in producing counterfeit conversions. First: the emotional preacher, who works on his hearers' feelings, by pathetic stories and wrought up excitement, calling for "decision" while under the passing spell. Second: the preacher who terrifies into a profession to escape the dread of impending doom. Neither of these classes deal with the conscience, or preach that which convicts of sin, consequently their converts have "no root," and soon "wither away."

Misinterpreted Texts.

Philippians ii. 10.—“That at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.” This passage is used by those who advocate the Universal salvation or Restitution of all men, to teach their doctrine, but it does not. The subject here is not reconciliation or salvation, but subjection; all created existence, celestial, terrestrial, and subterranean, bowing, each in their way, in acknowledgment of the supreme Lordship of Christ. Some in the adoration of worship, others by inflexible judgment. In the kindred passage, in Col. i. 20, where reconciliation is distinctly mentioned, the words “things under the earth” are omitted.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Would it be well-pleasing to God, for a Christian to join a Golf Club? That which is pleasing to God, is the doing of what His Word commands (see 1 Thess. iv. 1). “Clubs” of all kinds involve companionship, if not an unequal yoke, with the unconverted, which is forbidden in the Word. A Christian is a witness for Christ (Acts i. 8), a light-bearer for God, holding forth the Word of life (Phil. ii. 16), everywhere and always. He will not be wanted long in a Golf Club or any other worldly association, if he is faithful to his trust. The fact that any professing to be the Lord's are found congenial company for the unconverted at golf or anything else, tells too plainly what their spiritual condition is.

Answers to Correspondents

“THEOPHILUS.”—The book you inquire about is still extant. Its author was the late Dean of Canterbury, who denied the authenticity of the Book of Daniel, and advocated the “Wider Hope.” You will know what measure of confidence to place in such an author's views.

BIBLE STUDENT.—An Interlinear Greek and English Testament, published by Bagster at 10s, is the most suitable book we can think of for your purpose. It gives a literal rendering of the Greek Text, word for word, with the Authorised Version alongside.

J. C. B., SOUTH WALES.—The hymn beginning “I'm waiting for Thee, Lord,” was, we believe,

written by the late Dr. W. P. Mackay, of Hull, and its proper tune, as found in “The Praise Book,” is the Scotch air, “The Land of the Leal.” No other suits it half so well.

T. B., LANARKSHIRE.—An assembly of the Lord's people is certainly responsible to refuse the use of its meeting place to one whose preaching is not to edification, or whose practice tends to cause division. It would be dishonouring to God to do otherwise.

W. B., DUBLIN.—The personal and premillennial advent of the Lord Jesus is the hope of the believer and of the Church. “The day of the Lord” (2 Thess. ii. 3, R.V.) will be preceded by signs, and many prophetic Scriptures must be fulfilled before His “appearing” or epiphany “in glory” (Titus ii. 13). But we know of no event or prophecy which intervenes to delay the fulfilment of the Lord's own last promise, “I come quickly” (Rev. xxii. 20). The attitude of the saints is to be “Looking for that blessed hope”—not for certain events which are supposed to herald its approach.

W. L., SUFFOLK.—The case of one “overtaken in a fault,” as in Gal. vi. 1, is very different in character and is to be treated in an entirely different way, from one guilty of any of the sins enumerated in 1 Cor. v. 11. In the former case, there is no suggestion of continuance in, or repetition of the “fault” or trespass, and the word “overtaken” indicates no premeditation in falling into it. In the other, the man has practised his sin, evidently without conscience or fear, and is a public dishonour to the Lord, whose name he bears. Personal, private dealing by those whose spiritual discernment and condition enable them to restore the penitent and sorrowing believer, and reinstate him in communion with God, is all that is needed in the one case; while in the other, where the offender has become in practice a “wicked person,” excommunication from God's assembly and from all social intercourse, is the commandment of the Lord.

STUDENT.—There is nothing, absolutely nothing, in the precious and perfect Word of God, that you need to be ashamed or afraid to examine critically, as with microscopic care, God's Word is like His works, the more closely and minutely you examine it, the more firmly convinced you will be of its perfections. It is not those who have studied longest and know the Bible best, that deny its credibility or doubt its inspiration; but those who come to it with an animus, determined to find errors, or if not, to make them. Some of those who claim to be “Higher Critics” and learned men,

are so grossly ignorant of God's Book, that they cannot quote a text from it correctly. Yet, by their show of words, they "gull" untaught and shallow minds. We have never yet seen a single objection to the credibility of the Scriptures, advanced by so-called "Higher Critics," that will hold water, the book you name included. All the writer's arguments have been disposed of long ago, but he evidently has not the moral courage to own himself "beat" and recall his book. The Lord's advice to His disciples regarding such men was, "Let them alone." You will do well to heed it, and stick to your Bible, which your fathers loved, till the "critics" find you a better.

A. G., EDINBURGH.—"Love to all saints" (Eph. i. 5) does not mean that we must approve of all their ways, or accompany them in all their unscriptural associations and practices. Yet such a meaning is often read into the passage, whereby simple souls are led astray. The true test of love to fellow-believers is given in the Word—"By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments" (1 John v. 2). Abraham did not manifest his love to Lot, his "brother" (see Gen. xviii.) by going down to visit him in Sodom, whither he had wandered, but by remaining in his tent in Mamre, a separated pilgrim in communion with God, from whence, in the day of his brother's distress (for he with all his "influence" in Sodom, could not keep himself from being led a captive by Babel's power), went forth from his place of power with God, to rescue and set him free. This is true love, altogether different in its character and actions from the world's "charity," or that humanitarian sentiment which leaves God and His Word out of its reckoning, seeking only to please and be accounted pleasant.

Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION II.—Would it be according to the spirit and principles of the Word, for a Christian tradesman to sue a debtor at law, for the recovery of his account.

ANSWER A.—The law is for the "lawless" (1 Tim. i. 9), and must be used to bring pressure on those who would be dishonest, to make them render to all their dues. Should the debtor be a fellow-Christian, there is a more excellent way of reaching him (1 Cor. vi. 1, 3), which should be first tried. If he refuse to own the judgment of the saints, he must be regarded as a lawless man (Matt. xviii. 17).

E. B.

ANSWER B.—Paul appealed to Cæsar (Acts xxv. 11). Why should not a Christian sue for his lawful due? Every man has a right to ask for and obtain his own, and "The powers that be are for the punishment of them that do evil" (Rom. xiii. 1-8). Some confuse what is a righteous claim, with suffering "as a Christian" (1 Pet. iv. 16); but surely the dishonest act of one refusing to pay a debt, is in no sense connected with persecution for righteousness' sake. This much must be said: that Christian tradesmen should avoid a line of business which ends in the County Courts. J. L. S.

ANSWER C.—Debt is one of the darkest blots on the testimony of Christians, and the records of the Law Courts too plainly show that, both as pursuers and defenders, those who profess to be the Lord's are too frequently there. That there is something radically and lamentably wrong in such a condition of things is evident, and it clearly indicates the need for plain and definite teaching on the subject of debt and dishonest trading, alike as buyers and sellers. If the evil were dealt with at its roots, then there would be less need to resort to legal measures to recover debts.

W. J. M.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—Some, "rather suffer themselves to be defrauded" (1 Cor. vi. 7), and like the late Mr. Müller, of Bristol, accept it as God's will that they are to lose that which is their due, rather than go to law for its recovery. If they thus judge, and can afford to be without their money, still paying what they themselves owe, no one can question their course. But they must not make this a law for others. If it be—as it is with most traders—a necessity that they get in their money, in order to be able to conduct their own affairs in honesty, then if they allow themselves to be defrauded, they must in turn defraud others, which is clearly forbidden. Readiness to take the money by instalments, or some other such arrangement, would meet the case of an honest debtor, whose circumstances alone prevent him from paying at the proper time, and avoid the necessity for legal measures, but we fear nothing but the firm hand of law is available for the dishonest and unwilling debtor, who without conscience or concern, runs up accounts wherever he can get them. On the other hand, it is the duty of the seller to be careful not to encourage debt, or to unduly press his goods upon those who are known to be in debt, or unlikely to be able to promptly pay for them, as is too commonly done by many now a days, who trade on what is known as the "instalment" system.

THE TRIUNE GOD.

BIBLE READING GIVEN IN MARBLE HALL, GLASGOW.
BY THE EDITOR.

IN a day when the foundations of our most holy faith are being attacked on all sides, and errors destructive of the very fundamentals of Christianity boldly proclaimed, it becomes all who love the Lord and reverence His Word, to be diligently "building themselves up" and so assuring themselves of the "things which they have learned," as to "continue in them" (2 Tim. iii. 14), and be able to lend a helping hand to others, in danger of being led astray with "the error of the wicked" (2 Pet. iii. 17). Second-hand knowledge is of little value in the day of stress. The enemy can easily wrest from us any truth held on traditional authority; only that which we have learned from God, and hold in faith and love, by the communion of the Holy Ghost (2 Tim. i. 13, 14) strengthens the inner man, and becomes shield and sword (Eph. vi. 16, 17) to the warrior, in the day of battle.

"The fool hath said in his heart there is *no God*" (Psa. xiv. 1). *Atheism* denies His existence. *Deism* admits an original Cause, but denies His Sovereignty. *Agnosticism* says He is unknown and unknowable. *Pantheism* makes God part of existing things, as in Brahmanism and other idolatrous systems. *Revelation* makes known a Living and True God, His character, His works, and His ways, and "the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple" (Psa. xix. 7). To it let us reverently turn.

ONE TRUE GOD ONLY.

"There is one God" (1 Tim. ii. 4), and "there is none other but He" (Mark xii. 32). His glory He "will not give unto another" (Isa. xlii. 8). The Creator and Cause of all existence, material and spiritual, formed for Himself and His pleasure (Rev. iv. 11), He requires and claims its allegiance. Eternal, Infinite, Omnipotent, Omniscient; God of Light and Love. In Him "we live and move and have our being" (Acts xvii. 28), yet is He unknown and unknowable, alike in His mode of existence, His character, and His ways, save as He is pleased to reveal Himself to man. Concerning Him, the question may still be asked as of old, "Canst thou by searching find out God?" (Job xi. 7). "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork" (Psa. xix. 1), but it is in His Son (John i. 18) and through His Word, that God has been pleased to reveal Himself. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent" (John xvii. 3).

ONE GOD IN THREE PERSONS.

God is revealed in the Scriptures, as one God in three Persons, each Divine, equally God, eternally one in Being; not three Gods, but three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Triune God whose nature and whose name is Love. This great truth was well expressed by Athanasius, a noble witness for God and the faith in the early church, at a time when the Arian and Sabellian errors were turning many away from the truth. "There is one God in Trinity, and

Trinity in unity. Neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance, for there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one, the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal."

The English word "Trinity," which means "threefoldness," is not found in Scripture, yet it expresses more accurately than any other single English word, this great truth of three Persons yet one God, a truth which is announced and in part revealed in the Old Testament, but fully developed and demonstrated in the New, by the Incarnation, Death, and Glorification of the Son, and the advent and work of the Spirit. Far beyond man's finite reason to grasp, it belongs to the Infinite and Eternal, a stumbling-stone to the worldly-wise, while faith receives and learns its truth. "No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son" (Matt. xi. 27), and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him. What "flesh and blood" could never make known of the Son, the Father reveals to some (Matt. xvi. 17), and such knowledge is now imparted by the Spirit (1 Cor. ii. 10-13) through the Word (2 Cor. iii. 17-18). Scripture reveals all that God has seen good for us to know, in our present state, concerning this truth, and beyond that, we are wise not to pry.

Illustrations of this great truth may be seen in the sun's light which is white, but which, when passed through a prism divides itself into the three primary colours, blue, red, and yellow; in man,

formed in the image of God, composed of spirit, soul, and body, and other things, all of which, while bearing witness to the Triune God, their maker, need to be used with reverent care. When Patrick went to preach to the unlettered pagans in Ireland, he found great difficulty in making clear to them the truth of the Trinity. "Are there three Gods or one?" they asked. Perplexed, he looked on the ground, picked up a shamrock growing at his feet, and holding it up, said—"As there are three in one and one in three in this little plant, so is God." A very few steps in the quest of such knowledge, bring us to the verge of the Infinite and Unknowable, where, not in irreverent speculation or unholy scepticism, such as the baffled man of reason at this point becomes the victim of, but in adoring worship of the All-wise and All-good God, who thus reveals, yet hides Himself, the devout and longing soul exclaims, "Lo these are part of His ways; but how little a portion is heard of Him" (Job xxvi. 14).

TRINITY ACTING IN UNITY.

IN CREATION.—"In (the) beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. i. 1). The word "God" is *Elohim*, the plural of "Eloah," the object of worship—"created," brought into existence, out of nothing "the heaven and the earth." Thus in the eternal past, "in beginning," long before the clock of time was set agoing, the Eternal, Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit co-existed and acted in unity in the work of creation. Such is the first sentence of the Book of God: the truth it teaches, runs through it to the end.

In the Word the original creation is attributed alike to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (see Rev. iv. 11; John i. 3; Psa. civ. 30). It is *of* the Father, *through* the Son, *by* the Spirit. Originated with the Father, accomplished through the Son, effected by the Spirit, each acting unitedly and harmoniously. Thus the Divine purpose and way is perfect, as is its execution. In verse 3, where reconstruction of the ruined earth as an abode for man is in view, the Spirit personally is seen moving, (see Deut. xxxii. 11 for same word) or fluttering over the dark chaotic mass, foreshadowing His work of awakening, conviction, and regeneration in fallen man, while light and life are produced through the Word (2 Cor. iv. 6). Although not distinctively the subject of Old Testament Revelation, the Personality and operations of the Son (see Num. xxii. 32; Isa. lxiii. 9; Mal. iii. 1) and the Spirit are fully recognised (Isa. xlvi. 16; lxi. 1), while in the New Testament the full manifestations, inter-relations, harmonious actings and dispensational workings of Father, Son, and Spirit are clearly announced and distinguished.

In the Baptismal formula of Matt. xxviii. 19, "Baptising them in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost;" in the Apostolic benediction of 2 Cor. xiii. 14; and the Apocalyptic greeting of Revelation i. 4-6, the Triune God in all diversity, equality, and Deity is fully recognised, Divine honour and Deity being here, as elsewhere, ascribed to each (Rom. ix. 5; Heb. i. 8; Acts v. 3, 4). The Son claims equality and unity (John

x. 30) with the Father (John v. 20), and the Word proclaims (John i. 1) His eternity, equality, and Divine Personality. Yet, in relation, the Son is Filial, as well as Divine. Eternally the Son, before all worlds, co-existent with the Father (John xvii. 5, 24; with Prov. viii. 22-31), His "well beloved" (Mark xii. 6), in whom He was "well pleased" (Matt. iii. 17). He who did not "become," but eternally WAS the only begotten in the bosom of the Father (John i. 18), was "sent forth" (Gal. iv. 4) to do the Father's will (John iv. 34), not less Divine, yet subordinate to Him, doing nothing of Himself (John v. 19). In this respect alone is the Father said to be "greater" than the Son (John xiv. 28), and the Son "subject" to the Father (1 Cor. xv. 24, 28), not in essential, but in economic, filial, and dispensational relations.

IN INCARNATION, Trinity is seen again acting in unity. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" (John iii. 16), and He who ever was in "the form of God," of His own will, took upon Him the bondservant's form, saying, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God" (Heb. x. 9). In a body "prepared" by the Father, and by the Spirit formed (Luke i. 35), "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman" (Gal. iv. 4), in His Divine Personality, the Son of God, ever God and Man, two natures in one Person, always Divine, yet ever perfect Man.

IN SERVICE.—At His baptism at Jordan, the Son obeys, the Father speaks from the open heavens, and the Spirit in dove-like form descends (Matth. iii. 16-17),

while throughout His public ministry the Son ever had the Father with Him (John viii. 29), and did all His mighty works by the Spirit (Matth. xii. 28).

IN REDEMPTION.—God, the Father, is said to be the Originator of the scheme of redemption, the Giver and Sender of the Son; the Son accomplishes, as Sacrifice, Redeemer, Saviour, and the Spirit bears witness to (Heb. x. 17), the completeness of that work. The three persons of the Godhead in one sublime statement of the Sacred Word (Heb. ix. 14), are each mentioned as present at and sharing in the great work of Calvary, when “He (the Son) through the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God.”

IN SALVATION, the election, choice, and call of the saved, is ascribed to God the Father (Eph. i. 4; 1 Pet. i. 2; Rom. vii. 28); their redemption, justification, and peace, to the work of the Son (Eph. i. 7; Acts xiii. 39; Eph. ii. 13); their regeneration, sanctification, and transformation to the Holy Spirit (John iii. 5; 1 Pet. i. 2; 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18). The threefold parable of Luke xv., in which the shepherd goes after the wandering sheep, the woman searches for the lost silver, and the father welcomes the repentant and returning prodigal, may surely further tell of the activities of the Triune God in the sinner's salvation.

IN COMMUNION, access (Eph. ii. 18) and worship (Heb. x. 19-21; Phil. iii. 3, R.V.), the believer knows and proves the efficacy of the way opened, the ministry of the living High Priest, and the Spirit-given strength and competency to “draw near,” to abide in the light, and to walk through

life with God. Divine love manifested in the gift of the Father (1 John iv. 9), and the death of the Son (Gal. ii. 20) is “shed abroad” (Rom. v. 5), in the heart of the believer, by the Holy Ghost to be enjoyed experimentally by him.

IN THE CHURCH, as the House of God. (1 Tim. iii. 15), over which the Son is set (Heb. iii. 6, R.V.) and in which the Spirit dwells (Eph. ii. 22), all administration and operation for godly order and edification, is undertaken by and wrought out under the supreme control of the Three-one God (1 Cor. xii. 3-5) through men, but not of them, and where the Divine pattern is conformed to and room left for the Divine power to operate, now as of old, some will have to confess, “God is in you of a truth” (1 Cor. xiv. 25).

IN GLORY.—On the coming resurrection morning, the Spirit quickens (Rom. viii. 11), the Son receives the raised and transformed saints (John xiv. 3), and presents them to the Father with exceeding joy (Jude 24). In the Eternal state, God Himself shall be with His people (Rev. xxi. 3), they shall see the face of the Son, and serve Him (Rev. xxii. 3, 4), while from the throne of God and the Lamb, the water of life, like a river—emblem of the Spirit's fulness (see John vii. 38, 39) will flow on for ever.

All the Father's counsels claiming
 Equal honour to the Son;
 All the Son's effulgence beaming
 Makes the Father's glories known:
 By the Spirit all-pervading,
 Hosts unnumbered round the Lamb,
 Ceaseless love and praise unending
 Claiming for the great I AM:
 Father, Son, and Spirit known,
 Heaven's Eternal Three in One.

WORSHIP AND WORSHIPPERS.

A BIBLE READING. BY D. MUNRO, TORONTO.

NO unconverted sinner can worship God. Many like the woman of Samaria in John iv. think they can. They talk about their "church," their "religion," and their "place of worship" as she did, and remain ungodly all the time. The Lord Jesus, in the grace of His heart and in infinite wisdom, follows her from refuge to refuge, causing the light of His Word to shine in upon her, until at last her whole life is brought clean out into the light before Him. But she has one other refuge, it is her religion; the religion of her ancestors. "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain." How like sinners now! There was nothing in the heart of the woman of Samaria that is not in the heart of every unconverted sinner now. Like her, instead of desiring to come into the light of God, that all might be revealed as to their true condition, they shun the light, flee from one refuge to another, and usually land in their "church," the church of their fathers. The word of the Lord Jesus to this unconverted woman was, "Ye worship ye know not what." What a word that was! How it demolished the poor woman's last refuge! If left her completely without a religion. The Athenians had an altar with this inscription on it, "To the Unknown God." They were poor simple heathen, and with all their heathenism they were honest to acknowledge that there was a God about whom they knew nothing, and that was the God Paul preached to them. But here was a

religious woman professing to know God and worship God, and she knew just as little about Him as the heathen in Athens, only they confessed they knew nothing about Him, and this woman was deceived by making herself think she did. Of all who are unconverted it is true "Ye worship ye know not what." They need to know God, to know His grace, to know His Christ, to prove His saving power, before they can worship Him. All that a sinner does in religion, is only abomination to God, until he has been born again. Then he has the Spirit of God dwelling in him; then he is a true worshipper. Verse 23, "But the hour cometh and now is," etc. Neither at Jerusalem or *anywhere* else. "God is a spirit, and they that worship Him, *must* worship Him in Spirit and in truth." A man that has guilt on his conscience cannot worship God, it is an utter impossibility. How can man who, by nature, hates God, worship Him? This is the condition into which sin has brought every child of Adam. Sin is on their conscience, and fear of God, a fear that hath torment. There can be no drawing near to God, while in this condition. What is to be done? How is God going to have any to worship Him? He might have swept the whole race off the face of the earth, and created another race higher than man ever was, or could be, but he did not. He had a more wonderful purpose in His heart, and that purpose was, to make worshippers out of this fallen creation. How was it done? We read in John iii. 16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." The Lord Jesus said to

the woman of Samaria in chapter iv.—“If thou knewest the gift of God.” In the third chapter we read of the gift of God. When He speaks to Nicodemus, it is not worship He speaks of, it is eternal life. He speaks of the Son of Man being lifted up on the Cross of Calvary. The blood of bulls and animals under the law, could never purge a sinner's conscience, or bring a sinner into the presence of God with boldness, but the blood of Christ does both. Thus is the sinner who is at a distance brought nigh, the sinner that was afraid of God, gets boldness in His presence; the heart that was alienated from God, is at home abiding in His love. The believer is made a partaker of the divine nature, and in Him dwells the living Spirit of God. He has in Him a well of “living water!” That is something more than eternal life. He has eternal life, for all saved people have eternal life, from Abel downward. But Old Testament saints had not the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was not given until the Cross work was done, until the Rock was smitten, then came forth the living water. We never hear of any of the Old Testament saints calling God “Father;” they had not the Spirit of adoption, they did not have the Holy Ghost dwelling in them as a living fountain of water springing up. But every child of God now, and since the Cross, has that indwelling Spirit. There are some who tell us, that we do not receive the new birth by faith. God says we do (1 John v. 1), we are justified by faith, regenerated by faith, indwelt by the Holy Spirit by faith. There are some

who say that you may be regenerated and not saved, and you may be saved and yet not have the Holy Spirit. I do not find that in my Bible. I read there, that all believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise until the day of redemption (Eph. i. 13; iv. 30). They have the Holy Spirit in them, enabling them to mortify the deeds of the body, and it is a shame to hear of a child of God excusing himself for any of his evil habits, if he carries them on after he is saved. It is by the Spirit we pray; He makes intercession in us. It is by the Spirit we worship God (Phil. iii. 2). “God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth.” We are to have “no confidence” in fleshly religion, for you know, the religion of the flesh is just as abominable in God's sight as is the sin of the flesh. They are all put into one catalogue. So unconverted people going to their “places of worship,” and going through their forms of worship, what is it all in the sight of God? Just an abomination, as the first chapter of Isaiah tells us. The believer enters into the presence of God without any fear; he has boldness to enter in, his sins do not keep him out now, they are all gone. The blood of Christ has purged him, and he is fit to appear before God as a worshipper.

(To be Continued.)

OCCUPATION.—It is a depressing and soul-withering thing to be continually occupied with the faults of others, and if indulged long, it becomes chronic. The saint occupied with Christ, His Word and His Work, alone has power to triumph over evil.

STUDIES IN THE "ACTS."

PART II.—THE MINISTRY OF PETER.

XII.—To me, I confess, this chapter has great beauty and meaning, presenting both the sorrows and the deliverance of the remnant in the latter day, and the full ruinous overthrow of their enemies. James is slain with the sword, as hereafter at Jerusalem the complaint will be this, "their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem" (Psa. lxxix. 2, 3). Peter, also, the hope of the circumcision, is cast into prison, the enemy thus all but prevailing against the Israel of God.

But he was to go no further, for Peter is to appear to be the Lord's prisoner, rather than Herod's. He sleeps between his keepers. He lies there "a prisoner of hope." The enemy is strong and mighty, and the remnant have no relief but in God. But that is enough. They make prayer without ceasing for him, till at length this prisoner of the Lord is sent forth out of the pit, as Israel will be in the latter day (Zech. ix. 11, 12). At first, he was like one that dreamt, thinking that he saw a vision; and so were his company, saying, "It is his angel." But so will Israel be hereafter. They will sing, "when the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream." But in the sudden joy of their heart, they will have to add, "then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing;" as Peter, coming to himself, now says, "Now I know of a surety that the Lord hath sent His angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of

Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews."

All this is to me sweetly and strikingly significant. But the sign does not end here. In royal apparel, Herod sits upon his throne, having thought it well to be highly displeased, as though vengeance belonged to him. He makes an oration to the people, and they give a shout for him, saying, "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man." Thus he takes to himself the glory which was God's, and immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, "and he was eaten with worms, and gave up the ghost." So will the Lawless One magnify himself above all, and sit upon the mount of the congregation on the sides of the north, saying, "I will be like the Most High." He will do "according to his will;" but he shall come to his end, and none shall help him. "So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord; but let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might."

Thus is final mercy pledged to Israel. Under these signs of their *Conversion* and *Restoration*, and of the overthrow of their enemies, they are now left prisoners of hope. The Lord Himself gives them a sign, and then hides His face from them; goes His way for awhile, and leaves His sanctuary. All this prepares us for a ministry beyond the bounds of Israel; and accordingly, in the opening of the next chapter, we find the word sent forth to the Gentiles, Jerusalem as the source of grace and ministry forgotten, and the name of Jew and Gentile left without distinction.

HINTS REGARDING BEHAVIOUR IN THE ASSEMBLY OF THE SAINTS.*

WHEN you appear before God (Psa. xlii. 2) in the assembly of His saints (1 Cor. xi. 18), make it your aim to be there in a right condition of heart and soul, self-judged (1 Cor. xi. 31), and cleansed from all unrighteousness (1 John i. 9). In order to give time for this, "awake early" (Psa. lvii. 8), so as to have a season of meditation and prayer before going out.

Seek to preserve an undistracted mind on the way (Eccl. v. 1); share in no conversation (Prov. x. 19; Jas. iv. 11) that would grieve God's Spirit in you (Eph. iv. 30). Look upon no object, which would turn your thoughts to vanity (Psa. cxix. 137).

Be in your place rather before the time than after it, so as to have a few moments for silent prayer and quiet waiting on God (Psa. xxvii. 14; Isa. xl. 31). Late comers miss this privilege and disturb the peace of others, while they greatly dishonour the Lord, who, at the appointed hour, is in the midst of His gathered people (Luke xxii. 14).

As the exercises of the assembly proceed, under the Spirit's guidance (Phil. iii. 3, R.V.), seek to share in the upward flow of worship, offering up to God the sacrifice of praise (Heb. xiii. 15), as your heart is led out toward God, silently, or as expressed in the words of whoever leads the assembly's thanksgiving and worship. If God gives a word of ministry, be ready to receive and be edified by it (1 Cor. xiv. 12), no matter through whom it comes.

Avoid criticism and ungracious judgment of others in God's assembly: it is the temple of God (1 Cor. iii. 16), and holiness becometh His house for ever (Psa. xciii. 5). Gazing about, occupation with people's dress and such like, are unbecoming. While the Lord's Supper is being observed, seek to fix your thoughts on the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus, His agony, sufferings, and death (Psa. xxii., Isq. liii.); the excellencies and sufficiency of His sacrifice as meeting all God's claims and your need (Heb. ix. 14), looking upward to Christ on the throne (Heb. ii. 9), and onward to His coming again.

Worldly dress, showy jewelry, and whatever else would attract undue attention to your person, or occupy the thoughts of your fellow-worshippers, should never appear in the assembly of God. It is written: "God is greatly to be feared in the Assembly of His saints, and to be had in reverence of all who are about Him" (Psa. lxxxix. 7).

*Issued as a Bordered Card, Envelope Size, for Distribution among Christians, 1s per 100, from John Ritchie, Kilmarnock.

LIFE ABUNDANT.

A MEDITATION, TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN.

WHAT we most need is abundance of life (John x. 10)—life overflowing. Only then, do we become a blessing to others. What is life abundant? Not overflowing feelings, not overflowing joy, not overflowing words, but overflowing LIFE. It is Christ life—life in Christ, then life for Christ and life for others. For living and giving to together, like inhalation and exhalation. If we want to

understand what overflowing life is, we must gaze at the life of Jesus. When He gave His life on the Cross, it was to the last degree overflowing. From the day of His birth onward, His life brought blessing ; but it only brought life and salvation to others when He laid it down.

At Pentecost, the apostles received this abundant, overflowing life, and from that time they lived. Life and power they had before : they healed the sick, cast out devils, preached the Word ; but they lacked overflowing life. This they received at Pentecost. From that time on, they counted not even their life dear unto them. In this, primarily consisted the equipment of the Spirit.

Consider the men who have been a blessing to the world. Were they a blessing otherwise than in the path of self-sacrifice ?

ABRAHAM had overflowing life when he said to the king of Sodom, " Nothing for me ! " (Gen. xiv. 22-24). MOSES had overflowing life when he cried to heaven for his sister Miriam, who had sinned against him, " O God, heal her ! " LUTHER had overflowing life when, bound by the truth, he cried before the Diet of Worms, " Here I stand, I can do no other. " WESLEY had overflowing life, when, for himself and his persecuted brethren, he chose the motto, " If only GOD be with us ! "

What is this life abundant ? Christ living in us ! When Christ lives in us, He continues to live in us the life of serving, loving, sympathising as He once lived on earth. The apostle Paul could say, ' Christ liveth in me ! ' (Gal. ii. 20). This

was his source of power, in service and suffering. Practically speaking, " Christ liveth in me " means nothing else than Christ continues to live through His own ! Peter says, He has called us to " shew forth His praises, " or virtues (1 Pet. ii. 9). What a calling ! Just as every page in our Bibles exhibits a measure of God's glory ; is a revelation of God ; so should the lives of the saints be. Have we shown those around us the virtues of the Lord Jesus ? Or have we one and all left the path in which He trod ? Like the Bride in the Song, have we left our Lord to walk alone in the valley of humility, while we have stalked about in our greatness and worldly pride. We may extol Him as the Lamb led to the slaughter, but what does it count in men's ears, if we are stuck fast in selfishness and self-satisfaction (Cant. iv. 8). But the Bridegroom must have His bride at His side ; therefore He cries, " Come down. " He does not ascend to us ; we must come down to Him.

It is said of Him, " He emptied Himself " (Phil. ii. 7). And if we give ourselves to Him, He does the same for us. Thus we enjoy, and manifest overflowing life. It is in us, but it must have room and scope to overflow, to become abundant. It involves the denial of self, the renunciation of all that ministers to it. The gold ring, the glass of beer, the choice cigar, the worldly dress, must all go ; all that pampers, exalts, pleases the flesh, and is admired by the world. Then the life begins to overflow, and the image of Christ, who is that life appears,—the love, the meekness, the gentleness, and all the virtues of Christ are shown forth.

The Bible Annotator.

OUTLINES OF BIBLE READINGS.
FOR PERSONAL AND COLLECTIVE STUDY.

DIVINE FULLNESS.

Fulness of Grace (John i. 16)—Our Resource.
Fulness of Blessing (Rom. xv. 29)—Our Privilege.
Fulness of Joy (John xv. 11)—Our Portion.
Fulness of Power (Acts vi. 8)—Our Strength.
Fulness of God (Eph. iii. 19)—Our Consummation.

LIVING.

The Living God (1 Tim. iv. 10)—Our Trust.
The Living Christ (1 Pet. ii. 4)—Our Foundation.
The Living Spirit (John iv. 11)—Our Refreshment.
The Living Way (Heb. x. 20)—Our Access.
The Living Hope (1 Pet. i. 3)—Our Expectation.

SINS AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT.

He is Resisted (Acts vii. 51)—By the World.
He is Grieved (Eph. iv. 30)—By the Believer.
He is Quenched (1 Thess. v. 19)—In the Church.

MIXTURES.

Forbidden to God's saints in His Word.
Law and Grace (Acts xv. 1-24; Gal. iii. 2; v. 4).
Truth and Tradition (Mark vi. 8-13; 2 Tim. iv. 3).
Saints and Sinners (2 Cor. vi. 14; 2 Tim. ii. 21).

Jottings on Bible Texts.

"HIS CROSS" (Matt. x. 28). Not Christ's cross, but the believer's own. Not necessarily of martyrdom or imprisonment, but a share in the rejection of Christ somehow, entailing shame and dishonour in the eyes of men (see Gal. vi. 17).

"DESTROYED DEATH" (Heb. ii. 14). The word here is "Katargeo," which means to "loose," to "do away," to "render powerless." It is used in 1 Cor. xv. 26; and 2 Tim. i. 10 regarding death, and in 2 Thess. ii. 8 of the destruction of the Antichrist at the Lord's appearing. Although the believer may "die" (Phil. i. 21), to him it is but a "falling asleep" even if a violent death at man's hands, (Acts vii. 60). As has been well said—"For the believer death was 'destroyed' *de jure* at the Cross, and will be 'abolished' *de facto* in the glory."

"THIS IS MY BLOOD OF THE NEW COVENANT" (Matt. xxvi. 28), is the word to those who were of Israel, according to the flesh, while in 1 Cor. xi. 25 written to those who by nature were Gentiles and therefore "strangers from the covenants of promise" (Eph. ii. 12), it is written—"This is the New

Covenant in My blood," which, not by earthly call or hereditary promise, but in virtue of heavenly calling and union with Christ, all believers share the blessings of.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Is it according to Scripture to address the Lord in prayer in such language as "Blessed Jesus," "Dear Jesus," and such like. This is very prevalent where I live, and I wish to know if it ought to be regarded as expressive of devotedness to Him, or otherwise? There are no doubt many who truly love the Lord and adore Him, who use such, either from ignorance of that which is due to Him, or by using words which others—generally Romanists and Ritualists, as all who have read their hymns and Church Services know—have invented. The two distinctive truths which mark the present dispensation are, (1) that Jesus Christ is exalted to the place of supreme authority (Acts ii.) in which every tongue must own Him Lord (Phil. ii. 10, 11), and (2), that the Holy Spirit has come to give effect to this in the believer and the Church, and teaches all to call Him Lord (1 Cor. xii. 3). "Jesus" is His personal Name; it needs no qualifying prefix. "Lord and Christ" are His official titles. By these He is always addressed after His resurrection (see, for example, Acts vii. 59, 60; ix. 17), and one apostle who had seen Him in glory and knew Him better than most, found no more appropriate language in which to describe his heart longings after Him, than "the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord" (Phil. iii. 8), while another who was an eye-witness of "His majesty," delights to speak of Him as "our Lord Jesus Christ." "Mariolatry" among Romanists, and "Jesuolatry" among many sentimental Christians, are alike products of fleshly piety, whereas true godliness and spiritual worship are of the Holy Ghost, and always own Christ as and where He now is.

Answers to Correspondents

"NEMO."—Arthur Pridham's Expository Works are long out of print. You might be able to pick up a second-hand set.

J. B., VICTORIA.—The book you name, teaches that the Church, or part of it, passes through the Tribulation (Matt. xxiv. 29)—an old theory which caused endless controversies and divisions among Christians half a century ago, and which is again cropping up in certain places. In spite of all

attempts to harmonise or neutralize differences between it and the clear teaching of the Word, it virtually robs the believer of his hope, namely, the personal return of the Lord to the air for His people, at any hour. We warmly recommend a booklet, by the late Alfred J. Holiday, entitled "Maranatha," just issued, which deals simply and Scripturally with this subject.

E. L., BIRMINGHAM.—The service of Christ, especially the spread of His Gospel among all classes and conditions of men, seeking their salvation, is the Christian's business on earth; not the government of nations or the creation of their rulers as politicians say. Have you ever known a Christian who dabbles in politics, to have much "grit" in his separation from the world, or "grip" in his preaching to it? Let the world manage its own affairs; you "Seek first the kingdom of God" (Matt. vi. 33).

J. L., GLASGOW.—When such a crisis as you describe arises in any assembly of Christians, the only way open to those who fear God and desire to own and honour His truth is, to give their testimony clearly and faithfully against that which is being practised contrary to the Word, and leave room for God to act, as sooner or later He always does. The things of God cannot be carried by force, and ought not to be dealt with in a carnal or high-handed way. Better far, for the servant of Christ to efface himself, and suffer any measure of misrepresentation and reproach, rather than cause or allow division, because of personal wrong inflicted on himself, or rejection of his teaching or service. For fine examples of this spirit, see the conduct of Moses (Exod. xxxii. 30-32) and David (2 Sam. xxiv. 17) in a day of threatened disruption and judgment of the people of God. Neither of them ultimately lost anything by setting the Lord's honour and His people's welfare above their personal interests, nor will you. It is no doubt a great trial to one whose heart yearns over the flock, and bleeds to see it torn and scattered by worldly-minded men, to be deprived of the joy of serving it, but there is real blessing in being humbled under "the mighty hand of God" (1 Pet. v. 6), and thus the Lord often disciplines and qualifies His servants for further service for His Name.

A. N., BELFAST.—There is no half-way course possible in our day—if ever there was—between being in the sects, patronising by your presence in, and helping to build up by your service for, that denomination, or combination of all denominations

under whose banner you serve, and being outside of all sects, owning Christ as Lord, and His Word as your all-sufficient guide, which no sect on earth does in its constitution, else it would not be a sect. To defend the practice of going to this chapel and that mission, by saying you go there as "the Lord's servant," not as theirs, is simply "shelving" the matter, not settling it. Do you tell them so honestly when you consent to be their "minister" for the occasion? And do you think that any ordinary mortal who sees you filling the place of the hired and paid official, whose duty it is to build up and increase if he can the sect he serves, can distinguish between their "own minister" and the man doing duty for the time being in his stead? No, no; if you mean to be an all-sectarian, going anywhere and everywhere, irrespective of creed or conduct, say so, and honestly inscribe it on your banner, but do not attempt to harness together the two positions of being "outside" of all sects as a worshipper on the Lord's Day morning, and "inside" all sects as a worker the rest of the week. They are wholly incompatible, and as we have seen again and again, with such separation becomes a mere form, which eventually is dropped altogether, unless, as sometimes happens, they drag others into the same condition, who become partisans and supporters of them in it, violently opposing everybody who dares to bring God's Word to bear on their unscriptural ways and doings.

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Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION III.—What is the difference—if any—in character between the assembly gathered for worship on the Lord's Day morning, and say at a Conference on Monday. And what Scriptural principle of ministry is applicable to the latter?

ANSWER A.—When the assembly is gathered for worship and to "show the Lord's death" (1 Cor. xi. 26), that gathering is unique in character. Its object is different from all other assemblings (Acts xx. 7), and is of the highest order. All are there as worshippers, guided by the Spirit (1 Cor. xii. 7, 8) in all their exercises. To introduce human arrangement, or for those gifted to minister to occupy the time other than to help on toward the object for which saints are assembled, would be an intrusion, which, if continued, would ultimately cause it to lose its character.

J. H.

ANSWER B.—The first and chief coming together "in the church" or "in assembly" (1 Cor. xi. 18),

is undoubtedly on the Lord's Day, to celebrate the Lord's death. But there are other gatherings of the assembly as such, in contrast to say a meeting for the preaching of the Gospel, or at which a teacher ministers the Word. The exercises in 1 Cor. xiv. include praying, singing, speaking, teaching, and the object of all is "the edification of the church" (ver. 12). We have seen a large company of the Lord's people come together at a conference, according to this principle, waiting upon God to give the needed ministry through those whom He had fitted, with the result that all were brought into the presence of God, humbled, searched, refreshed, and blessed. No doubt, like much else, such a gathering may be taken advantage of by the flesh, and those unfit or unspiritual occupy time, not to profit. But the same is done often enough, when there is human arrangement and selected speakers and subjects. A Divine principle may not be set aside because open to abuse, but God sought unto and counted upon to constrain His chosen ministers for that occasion, and restrain others. W. J. B.

ANSWER C.—"For many years, Conferences in Canada and the States have been convened on the principle of waiting upon God for the ministry suited to His people's present need, and He has wonderfully helped. Ministry by many servants, with differing gifts, on all lines or truth, have been given, with manifest blessing to God's people, frequently flowing out to the world also. I have seen the ordered platform with chairman, chosen speakers, selected subjects and other expedients to ensure "order," but I look upon it as a departure from the Scripture pattern and a partial return to the world's way, which neither reckons nor leaves room for God to use whomsoever He will." W. M.

ANSWER D.—In large conferences and gatherings for ministry, it is a solemn thing for inexperienced, sometimes illiterate, and often unspiritual men, who have little ability to teach and no message from God, to occupy time, which ought to be used by those able to minister the Word, for the edification of saints gathered. "Open ministry" does not mean that any one may speak, but that those who are fitted of God have the freedom to do so, as the Spirit may guide them. And when others are there, consideration of the importance of their ministry will prevent one using too much time, or otherwise hindering the Spirit's action through others. J. S.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—This subject, which is of great importance, and is exercising the minds of many

at present, can scarcely be adequately dealt with in a brief answer to a question. We can only indicate for fuller personal study and consideration, principles of the Word which govern the matter. This, the above answers do, and we would only add, that there is rule according to God as well as liberty, which should be brought into exercise when required to conserve it, and hinder its abuse (see 1 Thess. v. 14), either when gathered "in assembly" as 1 Cor. xi. 20, or in a meeting for mutual edification and ministry as 1 Cor. xiv. 12-19. When a teacher invites saints together to hear the Word, he is responsible for that meeting, or if two or more servants of Christ ask saints to come together, as in Acts xiv. 27, the same principle obtains, and none object. The question then is: When a number of ministering brethren are present, either by invitation of saints of that place, or as they may judge, sent by the Lord, should they be controlled in their ministry by a chairman as to order, time, &c., or left free to speak when and as they discern fitting. The latter was for many years the practice, and while it sometimes may have been abused, as all God's principles are liable to be by the forwardness of men's flesh, under it, rivers of fresh and spiritual ministry flowed which made glad the people of God and carried life and health to thousands. The trend of the time is toward the chairman, the programme, and the appointed speaker, developing into the exclusion of everything other than the most commonplace subjects on which all are agreed, with a rigid care to allow no one to minister, who will utter a word to disturb existing practices, however away from God and His Word, or to exercise believers in worldly religious systems or sects, as to their position there. The servant of the Lord, while seeking to let his "yieldingness" in things concerning which God has not given commandment be known to all, and using forbearance toward those who may need and are ready to receive help in the truth, on such matters, yet must watch lest in seeking "things that make for peace" he does not lose the controlling power of God's truth on his conscience and his ways, and trifle with the light he has received, till it ceases to exercise and is withdrawn. This we are deeply convinced is the present danger, by means of which the enemy is getting all the great distinctive truths of the dispensation, especially such as constitute and govern the association of saints and keep them separate from the world, kept in the background, while a generation is arising who do not know them because they are not taught.

HELPS AND HINDRANCES TO GOSPEL WORK.—I.

THE words of the Lord Jesus to His disciples—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark xv. 15), are of abiding application to all the children of God, throughout this age of grace. As those who have been "put in trust with the Gospel" (1 Thess. ii. 4), it is their business to spread it abroad among those for whom it has been committed unto them. To all such they are "debtors" (Rom. i. 14). It is estimated that there are over nine hundred millions of the world's inhabitants who have never heard the Gospel. Of those who have in some sort of way, how many have heard "another Gospel," which has brought them no good tidings of a present, known, and enjoyed salvation, but rather deceived and misguided many to their eternal ruin.

The individual believer, "as much as in him is" (Rom. i. 15), according to the measure of his grace and opportunity, is called to "testify the Gospel of the grace of God" (Acts xx. 24), to be "instant in season, out of season" (2 Tim. iv. 2), in bringing eternal verities before the minds of men, making a free use of the Word of God, which is the chosen instrument used by the Spirit to arouse and convict men of sin, and bring their need of the Gospel home to them individually. It is chiefly by means of such efforts that the Gospel is to find its way among the masses, and be carried to the thousands of perishing sinners who never "go" to hear its sound. It is acknowledged by those who,

from long and wide experience, have the best means of knowing, that the vast majority of those who are led to Christ in our day, are reached by individual efforts. It was so in the Lord's own ministry. One by one (see John i. 42, 43, 47; iii. 1; iv. 7, &c.) He met and dealt with sinners according to their condition, convicting, warning, and winning them to Himself. There are tens of thousands of enlightened, intelligent, and otherwise consistent believers, who never seem to feel the responsibility or embrace the privilege of this honourable service. They go and come, listen to and appreciate what they hear, are regular in attendance, consider themselves "liberal" in giving of their substance when a collection is made for the spread of the Gospel, and take credit to themselves for being "large-hearted" in going to hear some talented preacher outside their own circle. But to "watch for souls" themselves, to go out into the highways and "compel them to come in" (Luke xiv. 23), or down into the lanes and courts, a stone throw from their own doors, to visit the "home heathen" there, who pass into the eternal world, generation after generation unevangelised, uninvited, unwarned, never enters their minds, or if it does, only to be got rid of as quickly as possible by the sophisms that they are "hardened," and "past hope," or perhaps that they are not elected to be saved, but are "reprobates." The latter theory is responsible for more of the lethargy that exists, than most of us are aware. That God loves all men (John iii. 16) and wills their salvation (1 Tim. ii. 4); that Christ gave Himself a

ransom for all (1 Tim. ii. 6), and thus made it possible for all to be saved (1 John ii. 2), and that the Gospel is sent unto all, proclaiming forgiveness of sins (Acts xiii. 38) and bringing salvation by grace (Titus ii. 11) unto and within reach of every sinner who hears it, is as sure and real as that God is God. No eternal decree, no latent theory of election, can obscure or make void the great and glorious fact, that God sends the glad tidings of salvation to all men, and means them to hear and believe in order to possess and enjoy it.

THE CHURCH, as a whole, dispensationally, and each local company of believers in their town or neighbourhood, ought to be like a lighthouse in its midst, "holding forth the word of life" (Phil. ii. 16), and like the Church of the Thessalonians "echoing forth the Word of the Lord" (1 Thess. i. 8) to the "regions beyond." Their privilege also is to have practical fellowship in prayer and substance (Eph. vi. 19; Phil. iv. 16) with those who being called to special and arduous evangelistic work in places where Christ is not named, or where no clear Gospel is proclaimed, give themselves wholly to it, taking nothing of the Gentiles (3 John 7). A vigorous, steady testimony in the Gospel is a chief part of the purpose for which any church exists, not simply to keep themselves in existence, and to have "good times," socially and ecclesiastically. another socially and ecclesiastically right. If an assembly fails in its Gospel testimony, or has to be dependent on extraneous help to keep it alive by spasmodic efforts, it is a clear indication

of the lack of vitality, and a sure sign of a low spiritual condition, notwithstanding great efforts to keep up a fair outward show, which sooner or later will expose its emptiness.

When an assembly is right with God, at unity within itself, walking in "fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost," it is "multiplied" from within (Acts xi. 11), every channel being clean, a vessel through which the Divine power operates and the living stream flows (John vii. 38) out to others. The greatest help toward a vigorous, continuous, and fruitful Gospel testimony therefore is, the maintenance of a right spiritual condition within. An assembly agitated in its own bosom with questions that gender strifes, torn by dissensions among its leaders, regarding doctrine or order, and practically in two opposing camps, watching one another with evil eye, is in no condition for Gospel testimony. It may be carried on as a form; zeal after a sort may be wrought up and exertion made to divert attention from their true condition, but if the Amalekite is in power in the house of God within, there can be no victory in the high places of the field without. If the Lord has a controversy with His people, if an unjudged Achan is in the camp, only defeat and disaster can be the result of any "forward movement" under such conditions, as has again and again been seen, although not always owned. Self-judgment, heart searching, confession, and restoration to God are the conditions necessary to true Gospel service, and always the precursors of success and victory.

THE DIVINITY OF THE LORD JESUS

A BIBLE READING GIVEN IN MARBLE HALL,
GLASGOW. BY THE EDITOR.

THE essential Deity and eternal Godhead of the Lord Jesus, is a fundamental truth of the faith. It cannot be rejected or tampered with, without destroying the very foundations of the Gospel. The person of the Lord Jesus gives value to His work. What He does, depends upon what He is; hence the need of having a firm and comprehensive grasp of the Dignity and Glory of His Peerless Person as set forth in the Holy Scriptures, where alone He is revealed. The written Word reveals the Living and Incarnate Word, and to its testimony faith unhesitatingly and adoringly bows. There is much there revealed and testified of concerning the Eternal Word, alike in the Divine glory of His Godhead and the perfection of His Manhood, which is beyond man's reason, very much at which his puny, finite understanding staggers, and hence rejects, but which faith, whose language ever is, "Let God be true," accepts, and proves to be the verities of God, who cannot lie. Never was there a time when the children of God more needed to be instructed in the great fundamentals truths of the Word and built up on their most holy faith, than the present, when the enemy, by specious and deceitful means, is assailing on all hands the adorable person and perfect work of the Son of God, seeking thus to make faith void and salvation impossible.

Unitarians deny the Godhead of the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They reject the

depravity of man, the atonement of Christ, the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures, and the eternal punishment of the wicked. Others, who do not adopt the name of Unitarians, some of them in positions of honour in the various churches and colleges, are more or less infected with this fundamental error, and become increasingly openly bold in teaching it, so that now a vast number who profess the Christian name, are *Socinians* or *Unitarians* in doctrine, and being so, have no Divine Saviour. A true Christian, one born of God, may by reason of false teaching be led into bypaths of error, as many, alas, are in this day, but we do not regard a man who denies the proper Deity, the true Godhead of the Son, as a child of God or a disciple of Jesus Christ at all. How can anyone be a Christian, who has no Divine Christ. He is not a Christian but an antichrist. To this the testimony of the Word is plain and clear. An attempt is sometimes made to take the edge off this, by adopting the Christian name. The notice board on a small chapel, with a dying cause, bears the dual name, "Unitarian Christian Church." This reminds us of the pirate ship whose captain carried two flags, and sailed under the one which best suited the occasion. But it will not do. "Whoso denieth the Son, the same *hath not* the Father" (1 John ii. 23). "Whoso transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, the same *hath not* God" (2 John 9). "He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son" (1 John ii. 22). This Unitarians and others who refuse to own the essential Godhead of the Son and His equality with

the Father do, and therefore are not Christians, but "against Christ."

Let us turn to the Word of God where this great truth of the Divinity of the Lord Jesus is fully set forth, and let us examine it reverently, and in the spirit of one who in ages past heard a voice speak, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (Exod. iii. 6), as he drew near to look upon God. The Scriptures which speak of this subject may, for simplicity, be grouped under the following heads:—

1. The *Eternity* of the Son, His pre-existence before all worlds.

2. His *Creator* Glory, as the One *through* whom and *for* whom all things were made.

3. His *Equality* with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

4. His *Titles*, and the Divine honours ascribed to Him, in humiliation and in glory.

5. His *Essential* Deity, the Son said to be God, before and after His Incarnation.

6. His *Work* as Sacrifice, High Priest, and King.

7. His *Eternal* Glory, Himself the object of worship on earth and in heaven.

1. HIS ETERNITY.—In the sublime statement with which the Gospel of John opens, we read—"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John i. 1). Here, the eternity of His being, the distinctness of His personality, and His essential Godhead are distinctly declared. In verse 4, the further testimony is given, "And the Word BECAME flesh" as the

Revised Version correctly has it. The Eternal Word, who ever was with God, and who was God, "became flesh," not ceasing to be God, but for ever ceasing to be *only* God, and becoming "Emmanuel, God with us" (Matt. i. 23). Born in Bethlehem, the Virgin's child, yet ever the Mighty God, "whose goings have been of old, from the days of eternity" (Micah v. 2, margin). In His prayer to the Father, the Lord Jesus asks that He may be glorified with "the glory which I had with Thee *before* the world was" (John xvii. 5), a statement which all who question the Eternal existence of the Son must deny. When He said to the Jews, "Before Abraham was I AM," He claimed to be the ever-existing One, to whom past, present, and future are one, an honour in which He is owned in Rev. i. 4, where the apostle speaks of Him as "Him which is and was and is to come." In Prov. viii. 22-31, Wisdom personified can refer to none other than the Lord Jesus, while the great Gospel charter of John iii. 16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," clearly proves His pre-existence, otherwise God would have had no Son to give.

2. CREATION is attributed to the Son. "All things were made *through* Him" (John i. 3, R.V.). "By Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him, and by Him all things consist," or hold together (Col. i. 16, 17). Not Himself a created being, as some infer, but before and above all

created beings and things, their Creator and upholder—"upholding all things by the Word of His power" (Heb. i. 2), and by "the same word" the heavens and the earth are "kept in store reserved unto fire" (2 Pet. iii. 5, 7. His mighty Word, which gave creation being, causes it to hold together, else in spite of what sceptics call "the law of nature," it would collapse and fall to pieces. Could a mere creature, a man do all this? Can the Creator and Upholder of all things, be less than a Divine person, God the Son?

3. EQUALITY WITH THE FATHER was claimed by Him while here on earth. He said, "I and My Father are one" (John x. 30). And as such He claimed equal honour with the Father. "That all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him" (John v. 23). And this equality is fully borne out by the very frequent linking of the name of the Son with the Father, in the sacred Word. Thus we read, "Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. i. 2); while in some cases the name of the Son precedes that of the Father, "Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, even our Father, who hath loved us . . . comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work" (2 Thess. ii. 16, 17), words, which if uttered of any created being in such a connection, would be profane. Surely then His equality with the Father, proclaims Him Divine.

4. The TITLES given Him throughout the Sacred Word, mark Him out as

essentially Divine. "Son of God," a title given to no one else, is given in a threefold sense to the Lord Jesus. (a) By Eternal Generation (John i. 18; Rev. i. 2); (b) by Incarnation (Luke i. 35); (c) by Resurrection (Rom. i. 4). "Only begotten" (John iii. 16) is used of Him as the eternal Son, the one who abode "alone" (John xii. 24). "First begotten" or "Firstborn of many brethren" (Rom. viii. 29), is a title given to Him in Resurrection (Rev. i. 5), in which the "many sons"—fruit of His atoning work—who are being brought to glory by Him, stand related to Him as His brethren. Titles, which in the *Old Testament* are predicated of the Father, are given to the Son in the *New*. Thus what is spoken of in Psalm cx. 1, concerning Jehovah, is claimed by the Lord Jesus in Matthew xxii. 42-44, and owned by the Father (Heb. i. 13), as being applicable to Him. The name JEHOVAH, never given to any created being, is His by right (see John xii. 41, with Isa. vi. 5), while the confession of Jesus Christ as LORD (Rom. x. 9; Phil. ii. 11) by all, clearly points to His Divine glory, apart from which such confession would be idolatry. Thomas, the doubting disciple, owned Him "my Lord and my God" (John xx. 28), while others *worshipped* Him (Matt. xxviii. 9; Luke xxiv. 52) ascribing to Him honours which belong to God alone.

5. OWNED AS GOD.—Unitarians and others who deny the Deity of the Son, ask "Where is Jesus ever said to be God?" They confess their ignorance of Holy Scripture by asking such a question. In Hebrews i. 7 we read, "To the Son He

saith, Thy throne, O GOD, is for ever and ever," while in 1 John v. 20, it is said concerning the Son, "This is the true God and eternal life." He is "God our Saviour" (Titus i. 3), "God over all, blessed for ever" (Rom. ix. 3). In respect of His advent, the Word declares it to be "the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus ii. 13, R.V.), words which may surely convince all who bow to the authority of the Scripture, that Godhead is most distinctly and fully ascribed to the Son.

6. HIS WORK as Sacrifice, Priest, and King, always and everywhere assumes His Godhead. "Who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, when He had by Himself purged our sins" (Heb. i. 23). He is "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29); His blood is "the PRECIOUS blood of Christ" (1 Pet. i. 19), the price of our redemption; it is the blood of Jesus Christ HIS SON," (1 John i. 7), hence its value and effacacy; it "cleanseth from all sin." Would the ransom have been of the same or any value, had it not been the Person of the God-Man who became the sacrifice, substitute, and surety? The "Man" who was smitten on the Cross, was Jehovah's "Fellow" (Zech. xiii. 7). As High Priest in Resurrection glory, He is "Jesus the Son of God" (Heb. iv. 17), able to succour in "the power of His might" as God, as surely as to sympathise because of His perfect manhood. In the coming Kingdom, the throne will be filled by the worthy One, of whom it has been said, "Thy throne of God is for ever and ever,

a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom" (Heb. i. 8).

7. IN ETERNAL GLORY, the Lamb in the midst of the throne, will be the object of heaven's adoring worship (Rev. v. 9), while "every creature which is in heaven and on the earth" ascribe "honour and glory and power" unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

Thus the Word of God, in all these varied ways, proclaims and affirms the true Deity of the Son of God. To receive and rely upon Him as such, is to have everlasting life (John v. 24), to reject Him is to perish under the abiding wrath of God (John iii. 36). Those who refuse to own the Lord Jesus as Divine, must consequently reject the Scriptures as the inspired and infallible Word of God, which they do, and thus the Living and the written Word stand or fall together. The Christ of the Socinian and the Unitarian is not the Christ of God, nōt the Christ presented in the Word, but a Christ of their own imagination, who, however extolled as the example to, and uplifter of humanity, is not the vicarious Sacrifice and Divine Almighty Saviour, by means of whose perfect work, accomplished once for all upon the Cross, and by whose mighty power exercised from the throne, believing sinners are saved and brought to God. It has been taught by some who claim the Christian Name, that in emptying Himself (Phil. ii-6 R.V), the Lord surrendered His Godhead, becoming simply and only man. This is a fundamental error, and deprives all who receive it of a Divine Saviour.

WORSHIP AND WORSHIPPERS.—Part II.

A BIBLE READING. BY D. MUNRO, TORONTO.

THERE is no way of teaching like teaching by pictures. God knew this, and therefore has given us a Book full of pictures. Turn to Deut. xxvi. 1. God brought the people into a beautiful land, a land flowing with milk and honey. This is a type of what the believer now possesses. God has "blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. i. 3). Israel's was an earthly calling, and they were blessed with all earthly blessings; ours is a heavenly calling, and we are blessed with all spiritual blessings. Here we see God's people bringing to Him of what God had blessed them with (verse 2). The first ripe fruits were given to their God. Carefully gathered and put into a basket, then presented to the God who had delivered them from hard bondage. God who brought them into and gave them that land, had His portion first. That beautiful basket heaped up and carefully carried, so that there was not a crushed grape in it, was handed to the priest, and the priest was to set it before the Lord on the altar; then the Israelite was to go over the touching story of what he had been, and what God had done for him. His father was a Syrian ready to perish, and the Lord did all the rest, and now here are the first fruits of the land for God. Then they were going to be joyful in all that the Lord had blessed them with. God gets His portion first, then they rejoice.

In 2 Sam. iv. 7, we have another picture of true worship. David had it in his

heart to build a house to the Lord, and he told it to Nathan, but God sent Nathan back to David to tell him what He was going to do. Then David went in and *sat before the Lord*. David is so overwhelmed with the grace of God, that he becomes a worshipper in God's presence. And hear what he says when there. And he said, "Who am I?" He was small in his own eyes, but God was magnified (verse 22). "Thou art great, O Lord God, for there is none like Thee, neither is there any God beside Thee." Here is worship.

"Let us go forth therefore unto Him" (Heb. xiii. 13). This is the place that the Lord has chosen to put His Name in. There is only one place—only one gathering centre which the worshipper is to go with his basket of first fruits. "By Him let us offer." "Is that where you are," says one? Yes, that is where I am, because God pointed it out to me over thirty years ago. It is His place, He has chosen it, He has appointed it. So I just stay there. I could not go anywhere else, never think of such a thing.

LUKEWARMNESS.—That is to say, a perfect jumble of sacred and worldly matters. The word here (Rev. iii. 16), does not, as is oft supposed, point chiefly to half-heartedness. But like as this lukewarmness would be produced by the pouring of hot and cold water both together into the same vessel, so intense worldliness will be varnished over by plausible and humanitarian and religious pretences.—*Wm. Lincoln.*

FAITHFULNESS AND ITS REWARD.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS AT ABERDEEN CONFERENCE.

BY H. B. THOMPSON.

Read 2 Sam. xv. 15-16, 19-21; Ezek. xlv. 6-16.

The portion read in Ezek. xlv. gives us a picture of the Judgment Seat of Christ. In the early part of Ezekiel (chaps. ix. and x.), the glory of God is seen departing from the Temple, on account of Israel's sin. Towards the end of the book (in chap. xliii.) the glory of God is seen coming back again. This latter portion of the book points to a time yet future, when Israel will be restored to their own land, reinstated in God's favour, and the Temple, with its ritual, will be established once more. In chap. xlv. 9-14, we have God speaking to Ezekiel regarding the class of who had first gone aside when Israel went astray. God brings before them in ver. 7 their sin: they had brought into God's sanctuary "strangers, uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh." We are sometimes told that it does not matter what a man holds, so long as he does not teach it. I do not find that in God's Word. To the church at Pergamos, the Lord Jesus Christ, with His eyes of flaming fire, said "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that *hold* the doctrine of Balaam." What was the outcome of that? To the next church, the same Lord said—"Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel . . . to *teach*, and to seduce my servants" (Rev. ii. 14 and 20). Give a place in the assembly of God to a man who holds false doctrine, and he will only wait for the opportunity

of *teaching* what he holds, and trouble will inevitably ensue. God says here, "You have in My sanctuary those who have no right there, and I put it against you." Then He tells them what their sin very specially was, in ver. 10—"The Levites that are gone away far from Me, when Israel went astray." During the defection of the people they did not stand firm; others "went away" and so also did the Levites, whereas if they had stood firm, they might have been the means of recovering some who were fleeing. He are reminded of that noble man Shammah, who took his stand upon the patch of lentiles. It was not much worth, but its whole value in Shammah's eyes consisted in its belonging to David, and Shammah was not going to allow the Philistines to wrest it from his royal master. Now that is the value of truth. All truth belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ, and of whatever we know or possess we are simply stewards, to hold it fast for Him. These Levites went aside when Israel went astray; they were time servers; not men of the stamp of godly, faithful Ittai. The result to them of this is seen in verses 11-13—"They shall bear their iniquity. And they shall not come near unto Me . . . but they shall bear their shame and their abominations which they have committed."

We speak of the Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, but do we understand what lies beyond that Coming? Beyond the Coming is the *testing* day; when we shall all be manifested before the Judgment Seat of Christ, and the motives for everything done from the day of conver-

sion, up to the last moment of the life upon earth, will pass in review. The Judgment Seat of Christ should occupy our attention more. We ought, day by day, to set it up in our hearts, and according to our capacity, judge the motives which actuate and prompt us to action and inaction throughout the day. Sometimes it is asked, "Will the sins which have been committed and really been confessed and forsaken, come up at the Judgment Seat of Christ?" I cannot see they will, if the sin only concerns myself. But suppose in some evil day—(O may God graciously forbid it!) I receive some false doctrine and others learn it from me and get ensnared. I may repent of that false doctrine, forsake it, and try by every means in my power to undo the wrong I had done when I held and practised it; but the one whom I led astray, and who repented not, will be deprived of the full reward God meant that one to have, and this will come out at the Judgment Seat. "They shall not come near unto Me." The Levites failed to get the nearness to Him they would have had, if they had remained faithful.

But there was another class, "the sons of Zadok," and these priests did not go astray with Israel. They stood firm for God. What is the result? "They shall come near unto Me to minister unto Me" (ver. 15). The other Levites will only minister unto the people, to Israel, but these sons of Zadok shall come into My holy place and minister unto Me; in other words they were going to have a full reward for their faithfulness, in a dark and cloudy day. This is the dark

and cloudy day of the Church's history when God gives us the privilege of *standing firm* and *holding fast* His truth.

It is well for us to understand that we have to appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, and there to give an account of how we have kept the charge. The testing day is coming, when we shall find that faithfulness to the Lord Jesus Christ will have its full reward. Unfaithfulness may have apparent success now, but that which is passed as success, at the expense of faithfulness to divine principles, will certainly not have the commendation of the Lord Jesus Christ in "that day." May He then help us to *stand firm* and to *hold fast* until He come, for His precious Name's sake.

NO COMPROMISE.—A gulf divides the men who own and honour the Bible as the Word of God, and those who, from whatever cause, deny its integrity and Divine inspiration. Human speculation, and acceptance of Divine revelation cannot abide together in harmony and peace. Compromise on a vital question like this there can be none. There can be no truce between those who confess Jesus Christ their Sovereign Lord, and men who say He was subject to the ignorance of His times, and accepted current traditions regarding the value of the Bible without knowing any better. If this were so, He might be equally mistaken about all else. With such a Christ-dishonouring doctrine, there must be no parley, no matter who its authors may be, or what position they occupy. Lack of decision in such a case, is dishonour to the Christ of God.

The Bible Annotator.

BIBLE STUDIES FOR QUIET HOURS.

THE CHRISTIAN A SOLDIER.

- His Captain (Heb. ii. 10; Josh. v. 14).
 His Comrades (Phil. ii. 26; Philem. 2).
 His Armour (Eph. vi. 11-18).
 His Enemy (1 Pet. v. 8; Eph. vi. 12).
 His Fight (1 Tim. vi. 12; i. 18).

HOW TO USE THE WORD OF GOD.

- Search it (John v. 39; 1 Pet. i. 10-11).
 Examine it (Acts xvii. 11; 1 Cor. ii. 10-13).
 Meditate in it (Psa. i. 2; cxix. 15).
 Delight in it (Psa. cxix. 47; Jer. xv. 17).
 Declare it (Psa. cxix. 13; Jer. xxiii. 28).

THREE DIVINE PROVISIONS,

For all the Lord's Redeemed People.

- The Will of the Lord (Jas. v. 14)—Their Guide.
 The Way of the Lord (Acts xviii. 25)—Their Path.
 The Work of the Lord (1 Cor. xv. 58)—Their Business.

PRAYER, PRAISE, WORSHIP.

- In Prayer we are occupied with our Needs (Mark x. 24).
 In Praise we are rejoicing in our Fulness (Psa. lii. 9).
 In Worship we are occupied with our God (John iv. 24).

Familiar Gospel Texts Re-read.

"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian" (Acts xxvi. 28). A text which has been used to "press home" on sinners the necessity of being definitely converted, and to warn against the danger of procrastination. So let it be. But the literal translation and obvious meaning of the text, scarcely bears this out. In the Revised Version it is given thus. In answer to his pointed appeal—"King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. And Agrippa said unto Paul, With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God that whether with little or with much, not thou only, but also all that hear me this day, might become such as I am."

"When I see the blood I will pass over you" (Exod. xii. 13). The commonly accepted meaning of these words is, that when on that dread night of judgment in Egypt, God passed through the land smiting the firstborn with death, when He came to the bloodstained doors of the people of Israel He

"passed them over." But there seems to be much more in the type than mere exemption from judgment. Sir Robert Anderson, in his recent book, "For us Men," remarks—"The verb 'pasach' which occurs in Exod. xii. verses 13, 23, and 27, is used in three other passages—1 Kings xviii. 21, 26, and Isaiah xxxi. 5. A complete study of these passages will confirm a first impression that the meaning usually given to the word is really foreign to it." He then shows how that the Word rendered "passed over" means to "halt," to "leap," to flutter as a bird over its nest (Deut. xxxii. 11), not by passing it by, but by protecting it. And so we read, "As birds flying, so will the Lord of Hosts protect Jerusalem. He will protect and deliver it. He will *pass over* and protect it" (Isa. xxxi. 5). And thus it was that He preserved His people under the shelter of the blood. When the destroyer passed through the land at that midnight hour of judgment (see ver. 23), the Lord Himself stood on guard at every blood-sprinkled door, defending and protecting those within. This imparts a fuller Gospel through the ancient type, than is usually read in it, or preached from it.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

What is meant by "the traditions" which the apostle said the Thessalonian Christians "were taught" had "received" (2 Thess. iii. 6), and were to "hold?" Was not "tradition" (Mark viii. 8) condemned by the Lord Jesus? The word "tradition" means "that which is handed on" (see Young's Analytical Concordance) whether orally or in writing, and is thus used of the apostolic writings (see 1 Cor. xi. 2, R.V.) and teachings. But there was in the Lord's day, the "tradition of the elders," and in the apostles' time the "tradition of men" (Col. ii. 8), which were both of an occult and evil nature, in opposition to and drawing away from the Divine commandments and the inspired Word, and find their company in "philosophy and vain deceit" and "the rudiments of the world," by means of which men "make a spoil" of those who give heed to them. Of these, God's people are to "Beware."

Answers to Correspondents

NEMO.—The hymn, "Lead kindly Light" was written by J. H. Newman, who afterwards became Cardinal Newman, when he was far on the way "amid the encircling gloom" to join the Church of

Rome. The name of Christ is not in it, which may account for its popularity among the class who most admire it.

YOUNG PREACHER.—If you desire to keep yourself clean and fresh for the honoured work of preaching the Gospel and winning souls, our advice is, keep yourself entirely free from controversies and disputes on religious and theological questions, such as you name. Others, who have nothing else particular to do, may be left to unravel them if they can, but the man who is called and gives himself to the Lord for the preaching of the Gospel, must keep himself in the spirit and warmth of his message, and spend his energies in making it known. If he turn aside, to occupy his thoughts with controversy, he will soon become withered in soul and barren in service as the heath in the desert. "As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord" (Psa. xlviii. 8).

A. B. G., GLASGOW.—Increase of numbers in a meeting of believers is not always a sign of spiritual health; it depends entirely on what sort they are. If those gathered are a true testimony for God, in separation from the world, holding forth the truth and manifesting its power in their walk and ways, their testimony will certainly be used of God to attract exercised and godly believers who are groaning over the corrupt and worldly condition of their denominations. As you know, very many have been so helped in years gone by, being led on in the knowledge of God and His Word by successive stages, until, in many cases at much personal cost, and amid the bitter reproaches of those who formerly flattered them, they identified themselves fully and happily with those who were outside the camp of the world's religion, seeking to own the Lord's Name as their gathering centre, and to be guided by His Word in their worship and service. Increase on these lines may have been slow, but it was steady, and those who were added to the assemblies were, in most cases, intelligently so, and became true "fellow helpers with the truth" (3 John 8). But when the attractions are of another character, such as flash preaching, up-to-date singing, with periodic attempts at getting up "Revivals," with their unsatisfactory results in "strange children," who are hurried in with little care, and no opportunity to test them, it is easy for numbers to run up. But, as many know, the spiritual tone, the godly testimony, the clear line of separation is sadly gone in such companies, and the end of their decline is not yet. Once on this road, it is only a matter of time,

until every distinctive truth by which believers are separated from the world is abandoned or rendered inoperative, in order to give free ingress, with liberty to go wherever and do whatever they like, to all who come amongst them. But it is worthy of observation, that such conglomerate companies usually melt away as quickly as they gather. God's truth freely taught, humbly held fast, and diligently practised in fellowship with God Himself, is the only instrument through which effectual and abiding work can be done, among either saints or sinners, as time will show and eternity declare.

H. B., MANCHESTER.—The words of Rom. ii. 5, 6, and Col. iii. 5, 6, leave no room for doubt, that sinners will be punished for their sins. It is a false Gospel, by which many are deceived, to tell sinners that they will not be punished for sin, but only for Christ rejection. The judgment of the Great White Throne will be according to another principle: "They were judged every man according to their works" (Rev. xx. 14). Throughout this day of grace, forgiveness is proclaimed (Acts xiii. 38), and all who believe "receive remission of sins" (Acts x. 42), but to the unbeliever, death in his sins (John viii. 24), and a "fearful looking for of judgment" because of them (Heb. x. 27) is the alternative.

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Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION IV.—Is there any Scriptural, united method of recognising and welcoming a newly-formed assembly, or is this to be left to individual discernment?

ANSWER A.—In the Acts, where the formation of new assemblies is most seen, it is clear that there was the utmost care used, so that there might be no isolation or division (see chap. viii. 14, 15; x. 23; xi. 11, 18) amongst the newly gathered churches. In the case of a new assembly formed by a number who already are well known as being godly helpers of the assembly where they are, there would be no need of any formal recognition, as the new company would simply be an offshoot from the other, and would naturally have its fellowship and care. This question would especially have in view a newly formed company, composed of those lately converted or who have been led on in the truth, and out of sectarianism, who are practically unknown to other assemblies. In most cases a little intercourse and mutual acquaintance among those who have godly care and spiritual discernment, acting wisely and unitedly, would give the necessary confidence,

which would be communicated by them to the assembly. J. S.

ANSWER B.—In the case of a new meeting formed as the result of a division, or by a few in selfwill, because they could not have their way in the assembly where they were, it would be certainly wrong for individuals to go and strengthen them in their position, or commend others to them. Those who cause and make "divisions contrary to the doctrine" are to be "marked," not for association, but to "avoid" them. The popular way out of the difficulty is to receive them as "individual Christians," without recognising their assembly character. But if the result of their wrongdoing is such that it cannot be recognised; how can the wrongdoers themselves be, until they have been disciplined and learned the error of their ways? Such matters surely come under the head of overseer or shepherd work, which includes "admonition" and "reproof" (1 Thess. v. 12; 1 Tim. v. 20, R.V.), as well as feeding and guiding of the flock.

W. J. M.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—In the early days, when "the churches increased in number daily" (Acts xvi. 5), they were mostly formed and cared for, either by the apostles, or by fellow-labourers, who were in close touch with them. As one of the above answers points out, there was diligent care that no independency or isolation should exist amongst the newly-formed assemblies, the apostles themselves visiting THROUGHOUT all districts where such existed (see Acts ix. 31; xv. 36), strengthening and confirming them in the faith. By this means, as well as by loving sympathy in time of need (Rom. xv. 26; 2 Cor. viii. 2, 19) unitedly expressed; by interchange of communications regarding persons (Acts xviii. 27) and difficulties (Acts xv. 22, 23), links of mutual confidence and fellowship were maintained. Where such is aimed at, even in a day of small things as the present is, regarding intercommunion, there is usually no difficulty in the matter of helping on and extending fellowship toward those who "hive off" to form a new assembly with the confidence and sympathy of the saints with whom they have been associated. It would surely be comely for them to let this be known to neighbouring assemblies, commending them to their loving interest, as also to intimate it more widely for the information of others visiting or coming to reside in the place. In the case of a number of believers coming out of denominationalism to gather in the Lord's Name alone, it certainly

would be much to their personal advantage, to be for a time associated with an assembly where they would have help in the truth, and godly intercourse with experienced brethren, before assuming the burden of caring for a new meeting. Where from distance or other causes, this is impracticable, the help in ministry and counsel of those in the nearest assemblies would be readily given, as it has been with the happiest results in many well known cases. Where there has been division, it is well to give time for God to manifest with whom His presence His blessing and His approval are, before hastening to "judge" or commend either. Uncomely zeal in flocking to "express fellowship" with division-makers has received some severe rebukes at the hand of God, which ought surely to warn others of the need of caution in such a line of things.

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Questions Requiring Answers.

We acknowledge with gratitude, the valued help given in this department by esteemed brethren and servants of the Lord and would most earnestly seek a yet fuller measure of fellowship in this deeply responsible and important ministry. There are many honest and inquiring children of God, who greatly value the help given in this way, and we have very many grateful testimonies to timely aid given in trying seasons, and in perplexing paths, received through these answers.

QUESTION V.—Where it is feared that a number of unregenerate professors have been hurried into the fellowship of an assembly, and continue there, while manifesting no signs of spiritual life, what is the Scriptural way to deal with them?

QUESTION VI.—Should evangelists and others who move about preaching, take to do with assembly matters, especially difficulties, in places to which they go?

QUESTION VII.—Who is primarily responsible for the rent and expenses of halls in which assemblies of believers gather? Is it the individuals whose names are on the lease, or the assembly as a whole?

QUESTION VIII.—In matters in which a number of Assemblies, say in a city, are mutually interested, what is the Scriptural and proper way of arranging them? Ought representative brethren from all these Assemblies together do so, or a select few who represent nothing?

QUESTION IX.—If an assembly becomes divided from some internal trouble, and one party goes out forming a new meeting in the same town, is it according to God that both be recognised and received from as assemblies of God?

THE HUMANITY OF THE LORD JESUS.

A BIBLE READING GIVEN IN THE MARBLE HALL,
GLASGOW. BY THE EDITOR.

THE incarnation of the Son of God, His true and proper Manhood, is fundamental to the Gospel and the Christian faith. The subject is so profound, in its fulness so far beyond human understanding, that it needs to be approached in a spirit of reverence, and accepted as revealed in the Word to faith, human reasoning and speculation being entirely disallowed. To inquire with lowly mind, in the spirit of adoring worship, what the Father has made known and the Spirit recorded in the Holy Scriptures concerning this "great mystery," will yield to the devout disciple, abiding profit, but to irreverently pry into that which the All-wise God has withheld from us, and reserved amongst His "secret things" (Deut. xxix. 29), can only bring Divine displeasure and judgment, such as the men of Bethshemesh brought upon themselves, when in unhallowed curiosity they lifted the lid of that mysterious ark of Shittim wood and gold—itsself a foreshadowing type of Him who, in His own person, is God and Man—and gazed upon that which the God of Israel had forbidden to mortal eyes. No subject has occasioned more controversy, or brought forth such successive crops of erroneous teachings, as the Incarnation of the Son of God. At a very early period of the Church's history this leaven began to vigorously work, producing the errors of Gnosticism, Manicheism, Nestorianism, and kindred cor-

ruptions of the truth, which spread so disastrously, that in the fourth century, the council of Nice, in 325, formulated a confession of their faith concerning the Incarnation, in which they declare—
"Since those who seek to spoil the proclamation of the Truth through their own wilful errors, have produced their idle utterances, some daring to undermine the Lord's Incarnation . . . we confess One and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and all with one voice teach that He is perfect in Godhead and also perfect in Manhood, in all things like unto us, without sin. Begotten of the Father before the ages as to the Godhead, but also in the end of days for us and our salvation born of Mary, the Virgin, as to the Manhood, confessed One and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only begotten, in two natures, without compound, without change, with division, without separation, the difference of the natures being in nowise removed because of the Union, but rather the property of each Nature being preserved and concurring in one Person."

Speculations and errors concerning the Humanity of our adorable Lord are not wanting in our own day, leading on the one hand toward Universalism, by asserting that in incarnation the Lord became one with every man, bringing the entire human race as such, apart from redemption and regeneration, into federal and vital relation with Himself, and on the other, so distorting His Divine personality, denying the perfections of His Manhood, limiting His knowledge, capacity, and authority, as to make Him other

than "the Holy One of God," ever and always, whatever the conditions of His humiliation, "the Mighty God" in whom full Godhead and perfect Manhood were always present in perfect harmony.

THE WORD BECAME FLESH.—"God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. iii. 15). "The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us" (John i. 14, R.V.). "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman" (Gal. iv. 4). Such are the words in which the mystery of the Incarnation is revealed and described in the sacred Scriptures. He who ever was and is God, became Man; complete Man, possessing spirit (Luke xxiii. 46), soul (Matt. xxvi. 38), and body (1 Pet. ii. 24), "made in the likeness of men" (Phil. ii. 7), "found in fashion as a man" (Phil. ii. 8), "appearing in the likeness of the flesh of sin" (Rom. viii. 3, R.V.), yet "without sin" (Heb. iv. 13), who "knew no sin" (2 Cor. v. 21), in whom is no sin (1 John iii. 5); ever the Holy One of God, whose flesh saw no corruption. The Divine purpose and promise concerning this great truth is first mentioned in Gen. iii. 15, where the coming Deliverer is spoken of as the "Seed of the woman," and again as of Abraham's seed (Gen. xxii. 18), and in David's line (Psa. cxxxii. 11, with Rom. i. 3). This was fulfilled, as seen in Matt. i. 1 and Luke iii. 21, where His genealogy is traced through the line of royalty and of promise to Adam. Thus He became our kinsman, in order that might have the right to redeem.

THE VIRGIN'S CHILD.—The manner of His "becoming" is announced, and the transcendent miracle through which it

was fulfilled made known, in the words of the angel to the virgin mother, as recorded in the Gospel of Luke (chap. i. 31, 35), which is distinctively the Gospel which reveals Him as Son of Man. Thus was fulfilled the words of the prophet, "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shalt call His Name Immanuel" (Isa. vii. 14), "which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matt. i. 23), yet "Himself Man, Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. ii. 5, R.V.). "Son of Man" is a title frequently used by the Lord concerning Himself in the Gospels, never by any of His followers—and points to His true dignity as Man, in contrast to the fallen and ruined condition of Adam's race.

HE EMPTIED HIMSELF.—In Phil. ii. 6, we read—"Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." The words "made Himself of no reputation" are given in the Revised Version, "He emptied Himself." A subtle error has been deduced from these words and widely shread abroad, first by German Neologists, and more recently by those who call themselves "Higher Critics," and claim to have brought to bear upon the Bible "the latest scholarship." With what result? That they assert from this passage that the Lord Jesus in so emptying Himself, became subject to such limitations in knowledge, that He knew no more about Divine things than His fellowmen, and "held the current Jewish notions respecting the Divine authority and revelation of the Old Testament."

If this were true, then His testimony to the Scriptures as the Divine and eternal "Word of God" (Mark vii. 13), by which man is to live, because it "proceedeth out of the mouth of God," (Mark iv. 4), would be of little value, for He might be mistaken, and if on this on anything else. Then where or in what would faith repose, or conscious need find that certainty in things eternal which a Spirit-awakened sinner seeks? But it is not true. The Lord's own declaration when He stood upon earth in His humiliation was, "The words that I speak, I speak not of Myself" (John xiv. 10), "but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things" (John viii. 28). And this included His reference to Jonah and the whale, as surely as His declaration of the love of God in John iii. 16. All was from God, all therefore was Divinely perfect. Of what, then, did the Lord empty Himself, or make Himself void? Not of His Godhead. He never did or could surrender His Divine nature, or cease to be God. Whether as a babe on His mother's breast, or a Victim on the shameful Cross, He was as truly "the Mighty God" as He was the Virgin's child and the "Man of Sorrows." But although ever subsisting in the form of God, He did not consider His equality with God as something to be grasped, like as a robber holds his prize, as if it were not His own, but of His own will took upon Himself the bondservant's form, ceasing for ever to be only God, taking human nature into His own Personality, "becoming in the likeness of men," "and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient

unto death" (Phil. ii. 8). That His manhood was perfectly natural is witnessed to by the fact, that as a babe He needed a mother's tender care (Luke ii. 7); He "grew" and "increased in wisdom and in stature" (Luke ii. 40, 52), that He was moved with compassion at human sorrow (Luke vii. 38), wept real tears of sympathy (John xi. 35), hungered (Matt. iv. 2), thirsted, was wearied (John iv. 6, 7), and slept on a pillow (Mark iv. 38) in the boat. But while perfect Man, He was at the same time, in His own Personality, God, two natures being ever present in perfect harmony in one Person. How this could be, it is beyond the present limits of our finite minds to grasp, but that it was and is, we know and believe, because God has said it.

(To be continued).

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MAKING LEAGUES.—When Israel made a league with the Canaanites, they ceased to be overcomers. So with us. When we leave the path of obedience to the truth and form alliance with the world, we become subject to it, instead of being victors over it.—*R. C. Chapman.*

THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE.—It behoves us to uphold the authority of holy Scripture, for this is our safeguard. If we have loose views on this point, we lay ourselves open to the attacks of Rome on the one hand, and of Rationalistic infidelity on the other. If we add our own thoughts to Scripture, then we do what Rome does with her traditions and her assumptions of Church authority.

Dr. S. P. Tregelles.

HELPS AND HINDRANCES TO GOSPEL WORK.

II.—THE EVANGELIST AND HIS WORK.

THE evangelist, as his name implies, is “a declarer of glad tidings.” He goes out into the world making known the Gospel of Chrst. His business is especially among the lost, as the work of the pastor and teacher is among the saved. He seeks the conversion of sinners, the pastor and teacher the health and edification of saints. If there were no evangelists going out after the lost, reaching forth into new fields where the Gospel in its simplicity and power is unheard, there would be no saints to feed, no churches to care for. It is by means of the preaching of the Gospel to sinners, that they become saints, and as such need the pastor’s care and the teacher’s instruction. And thus it is that the mention of “evangelists” precedes that of “pastors and teachers” in Eph. iv. 11, 12, and is said to be one of the agencies at work for the “building up of the body of Christ” (R.V.). Although the evangelist’s work is in the world rather than in the church, his work is linked here with other services, which are said to be for “the perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministering” (ver. 12, R.V.), inasmuch as he brings fresh materials out from the world to form part of the church, and is, or ought to be, an example and a stimulus to others in the grand work of making known the Gospel and winning souls to the Saviour. Wherever a godly evangelist has been at work, there you will not only find sinners converted through his ministry, but as a

further result of it, the saints who have come under its influence, fitted for, and actively engaged in the evangelising of sinners around them. If the evangelist fails to bring in fresh materials to the assembly, and to stir up and greatly increase the Gospel spirit amongst the saints, there is something sadly wrong. A true evangelist wins souls and warms saints wherever he goes.

He knows his work and sticks to it, keeping himself free from everything that would clog his spirit or divert his energies from the great work of preaching Christ and winning souls. You will never find a true evangelist whom God is using, in the arena of controversy, or dabbling in “church troubles,” or if he does, he soon loses his freshness in the Gospel, and becomes a religious controversialist or an ecclesiastical wrangler, whose ministry withers and leaves only barrenness and blight behind it. And this is just as true of the saints and the assembly as a whole. Wherever there is controversy, or the spirit of division, there Gospel energy and evangelistic zeal dries up, and all real aggressive work ceases. This has more to do with dearth of conversions and lack of Gospel energy, than most are willing to own. Although the evangelist is not the servant of any man or society, or of any church, but the servant of the Lord alone, sent by Him and looking to Him for his orders *where* to preach and *how long* to preach in any given place, he works or ought to work in fullest fellowship with the assembly out from which he goes and of which he forms an integral part. Philip, “the evangelist” (Acts xxi. 8)—the only

man in the Bible who is called by that name—was in and of “the church which was in Jerusalem” (Acts viii. 1), “one of the seven” chosen to look after the necessities of the widows (Acts vii. 5), but withal gifted by the Lord as an evangelist. Burning with love to souls, he goes forth at the Lord’s bidding to the unreached fields of Samaria, and preaches Christ to the people there (Acts viii. 6). Sinners are saved, believers are baptised, and from the church at Jerusalem, two apostles come along to manifest their fellowship with the worker and help on the work, preaching the Word. Then stirred up by what they had seen of the Lord’s doings through the lesser worker—who was no apostle, but only an evangelist—they themselves launch out, preaching the Gospel “in many villages of the Samaritans” (Acts vii. 25), which was part of the field given them by the Lord (chap. i. 8) to evangelise, but which they had been tardy in reaching. Such is ever the good effect of godly fellowship in the Lord’s work. The heart is enlarged in seeing what the Lord is doing through others; the Gospel spirit is revived, and the standard of the cross is carried further afield. When the evangelist is a “free lance,” claiming “liberty” to do what he likes and go where he thinks fit, without consideration of his brethren, and with no desire for their fellowship, he is the loser, while they are generally blamed for lack of interest, and banned for narrowness.

The relation of the evangelist to the assembly and to his service for Christ in the world, has been compared to a pair of compasses, with one leg fixed in the midst

of the assembly, and the other stretched out its full length, sweeping round the circle of “all the world.” If he has a gift from the ascended Lord, with grace to use it, he will be readily recognised and helped on his way by his brethren. But if he simply ceases to work for his daily bread, and starts off “to be an evangelist,” as if it were a “profession” or trade, to which a man gives himself as a means of livelihood, they may not feel called upon to regard him as one sent of God at all. There are counterfeits of every creation that is of God, and this is no exception. The true evangelist is not made so by himself or by his church; certainly he does not “become” an evangelist by “going out to preach” and ceasing to to work at his trade. There are many gifted and godly evangelists who yet earn their bread, as Paul did, when he made tents and preached Christ to the people of Corinth (Acts xviii. 3). If they should ever be called to go further afield, or into places where their entire time, all day and every day, is fully used in evangelising, precluding the possibility of supporting themselves and those dependent on them, then the Lord will see that their wants are supplied, through the bounty of His people (see Phil. iv. 15), without the necessity of making appeals, issuing reports of their work with the sums received for their maintenance, or becoming the agents of any church or combination of churches, or individuals, to whom they look as the channels of their supply, and who by arrangement or tacitly, fix the sphere of their operations and more or less control their movements.

GOD'S WORD AND MAN'S TRADITIONS.

A BIBLE READING. BY D. MUNRO. TORONTO.

GOD has given His Word to us, His people, containing all that we need to know for our instruction, all that we need for our edification, for our upbuilding, in the ways of the Lord. We have His will there, as to how He would have us live and walk and act, and it is of the greatest importance for God's people to so search His Word as "be filled with the knowledge of His will, that they might "walk worthy of God." Sinners need to have the Gospel preached to them, and God's people need to have His Word taught them, so that they may grow. So the apostle says—"As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the Word that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. ii. 2). The oftener we read it, the more pleased God is to open it up to us by His Spirit; thus it will abide with us, and will work effectually in us. We may get lots of things into our heads, but nothing is any good but what God Himself opens up to our hearts, and gives a place there.

The Epistles are written to saved people, all addressed as "saints" and "brethren;" not written to men and women in general, but to saints. Only such are addressed as brethren, and all saved people are brethren. What makes brothers or brethren in an earthly sense is, that they are all born into the same family. If there is a family of eight or ten born to the same parents, they are brethren, all brothers and sisters because of their birth. All God's people have two births. By natural birth we are sinners,

not saints; but by our second birth we enter God's family, become the children of God, and thus we are brethren. "All ye are brethren," all of one Father. It is well to know and remember this, as the teaching of God's Word. I have heard some say "I was saved 25 years ago," but I only "joined the Brethren" 15 years ago. It makes one sad to hear people so speak, and shows the darkness of their minds in regard to God's truth. I did not "join the brethren." God made me one of the brethren forty-six years ago, the night that I was saved, apart from any act of mine. I was a Congregationalist for a number of years after I was saved, but I left the Congregational Church because I could not find any such church in my Bible. I saw in my Bible that what God had for His people was, that they were to be all gathered together in the one blessed Name, the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that Name above every other name. If all God's dear people were gathered to that one blessed Name, there would not be a sect in the world to-day. We will be gathered unto that one Name by and by in heaven, and there will not be a sect there, not one. When I found that there was only "one body," the body of Christ, of which all saints are members, I saw that I had no right to belong to anything else. I left Congregationalism and gathered to the Name of the Lord alone, as Matt. xviii. 20, has it, with a few who gathered in His Name, and we were called by the world "The Brethren." It was truly blessed; just like a second conversion, to be thus found around the Lord. I did not "join

the brethren" when I came out from all sects to the Name of the Lord Jesus, but I met some of the brethren there, and I left a few of them behind me, where I came from. I was sorry to leave them, but I had come out from all human names to the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. I had to own Him, and to gather to Him according to this blessed Book, which says, "If I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." By and by He will descend into the air with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God, and at that shout, every saved one on earth, and the very dust scattered to the four winds of heaven of His martyred saints, will respond. They will all rise up and be gathered together unto Him then. And every living saint will hear that voice, and together with the dead, will gather unto Him (2 Thess. ii. 1). So shall we ever be with the Lord. And there will not be a name there but His. Why should we have any other name here? If His Name is to be enough for us up there and through all eternity, should it not be enough for us here? Shame on a child of God, that he should prefer or annex any other name to that one blessed Name, which God hath highly exalted. Some of you may have been reading your Bibles for a while, and yet you have not seen this truth. Yet there it is, and there is no other. I had to get the spectacles off my spiritual eyes, before I saw it. If you wear blue spectacles, everything looks blue. For years I had the "Congregational" spectacles on my eyes, and could not see God's truth apart from man's traditions.

A HEALTHY CHURCH.

PART I.—OF WHOM IT WAS FORMED.

QUITE a number of years ago, a little company of earnest Christian men and women, connected with their various denominations, were in the habit of meeting together once a week in a shoemaker's workshop, to read the Word of God and pray. They found nothing in the ministry or services of their churches, to feed their spiritual life, or keep them in communion with God, so they agreed to come together in this informal way to seek the Lord's blessing and receive spiritual help through His Word. They greatly enjoyed these seasons, and often spoke of their spiritual warmth and blessing, in contrast with the dead and formal services of their churches. As they searched the Word, seeking to learn the will of God, they became more and more convinced that the low spiritual condition of the churches, which they had so long mourned over, was not the result of some passing degeneracy or backsliding, which might be remedied by prayer and supplication, but that the root cause of their evil condition was, that their entire constitution, their membership, their worship, ministry, and means of support, were entirely away from the pattern given in the Word of God, and that if they were ever to enjoy the spiritual condition and blessing described in that Word as having been experienced by the early churches, there must be a return to the doctrines and practices which characterised those early churches. In other words, they clearly

saw from the Word of God, that in order to have the Divine presence and blessing, they must be in the place where God could own and work amongst them, and that human systems, in which man's will and man's arrangements were supreme, had no room in them for the operations of the Spirit of God to minister through channels of His own appointment, nor was there liberty there for God's people to obey what He was teaching them of His truth. It was a great crisis in the spiritual history of that handful of simple, godly men. They took no hasty step, but waited long for the light and leading of their God, hoping against hope that some mighty work of grace might revolutionise their churches, and some reviving from the Lord bring them into a better and more Scriptural position, and spiritual condition. But in this, their hopes were doomed to disappointment. Once and again a little reviving was given; God's people were blessed, and sinners were saved. This was wrought through what was called "irregular" instrumentality, outside the recognised official ministry, who either secretly opposed, or if from policy some gave a nominal patronage to the work, it was simply to secure its results for their congregations, and then to reduce things as quickly as possible to their former worldly condition. The world and its principles had the mastery there, and under the domination of the wealthy and the worldly, many of them living utterly godless lives, the few seekers after God had to yield and bow. Only one of two courses remained: either to submit to the world ruling the church.

and settle down in the midst of things as they were, seeking their spiritual subsistence apart from their ministers and their churches, while still remaining in nominal membership with them, or to come out from these systems altogether, as having no claim on them; they being chiefly composed of those who made no profession of being "born again," and whose lives marked them out as being "of the world." The sin of "causing division," of being "schismatics," and of "breaking up our churches," were very frequently the subjects of pulpit oratory and clerical censure, when it became known that such a course was under consideration among these godly men, but this only the more slackened the bonds that had bound them to man's traditions, and cast them upon "God and the Word of His grace" (Acts xx. 32), the all-availing resource of the saints, in all times of apostasy from God and His ways. Clear light soon arose on their path. The commandments of the Lord, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Cor. vi. 14), but "COME OUT from among them and be ye separate" (v. 17), and from such as "having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof"—"from these also TURN HWAY" (2 Tim. iii. 5, R.V.), long enshrouded in traditional mist, became clear as noonday—as the doctrine of the Lord always is, to any man who willeth to do His will (John vii. 17, R.V.). Then they saw that these worldly denominations, with their human creeds, unconverted members, and in many cases unregenerate and unspiritual preachers, had not only no godly claim on their con-

tinuance in them, but that the Word of God distinctly commanded separation from them, not in spirit only, but in person; not in some things, but in everything. They did not hesitate to obey, but like the pilgrim patriarch of old, they "went out" at the call of God, "not knowing whither they went" (Heb. xi. 8). And following thus the light they had received, God gave them—as He always does to those who obey Him—further light upon their path.

(To be continued.)

PLANTED AND FLOURISHING.

THE true secret of fruitfulness, is to have the soul abiding in Christ. Spiritual freshness and power come by drawing from His fulness. "Those that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God" (Psa. cxii. 13).

In temple language, to be planted in the "house," is the secret of flourishing in "the courts." The "house" was the dwelling place of Jehovah, the place of priestly communion and worship. The "court" was the place of outward service. Inside the house it was Jehovah Himself; outside in the courts, it was His work. As the servants of Christ, we have to do with both, for we are at once both Priests and Levites. Our place of communion is within, our place of service without. Surely we may gather from the thought of being "planted" in the house, that God desires our roots to be struck down into the depths of communion with Himself. Thus there will be freshness, flourish, and in due season, fruit.

WORD-FIGHTING ALWAYS EVIL.

WHEN the shepherds fall out, it usually fares ill with the lambs of the flock. Instead of having the tender and godly shepherd care, the feeding and the leading, which they ought to receive, they not infrequently have to listen to the "word fighting," and it may be the ungodly quarrelling of those who professedly are over them in the Lord, and whose words and ways ought to be ensamples to the flock. Need it be wondered if young believers become discouraged, if they become backsliders and wander from the Lord's path, under such conditions. Better, infinitely better, for those who have the honour of the Lord at heart, and whose desire is to see His saints fed in the green pastures, and led on in the paths of righteousness, to leave the fighting men alone, to manifest what is in them, than to continue an unseemly warfare even for right, which necessitates open debate among those who should be standing together before the saints of God. Sooner or later, God will manifest what is well pleasing unto Him, and with whom His truth is. Nothing is ever gained, but always much dishonour done to God, by Christian men, especially such as minister to God's saints, exposing their weaknesses, in fighting over "points" of difference, in presence of the feeble ones of the flock. If what is done be according to God, then it needs no defence. God will see to it. If wrong, no amount of argument can make it right before God. So that "word fighting," looked at from any point, is always wrong.

The Bible Annotator.

OUTLINES OF GOSPEL SUBJECTS.

THREE SALVATION TRUTHS, IN HEB. x.

The Will of God (ver. 7)—Its Source.
The Work of Christ (ver. 10)—Its Cause.
The Witness of the Spirit (ver. 15)—Its Seal.

THE WRATH OF GOD.

By Nature, children of wrath (Eph. ii. 3).
By Unbelief, subjects of wrath (John iii. 36).
In Eternity, endurers of wrath (Rev. xiv. 10, 11).
In Christ, delivered from wrath (1 Thess. i. 10).

FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

The Divine Author, God (Eph. iv. 32).
The Procuring Cause, The Blood of Christ (Eph. i. 7).
The Obtaining Means, Faith (Acts xiii. 39).
The Source of Assurance, God's Word (1 Jno. v. 13).
The Sure Result, Blessedness (Rom. iv. 7).

THREE GOSPEL "ALLS."

ALL gone astray (Isa. liii. 6)—Our Ruin.
Sin of ALL laid on Christ (Isa. liii. 6)—Our Ransom.
ALL believers justified (Acts xiii. 39)—Our Recovery.

Difficult Texts Examined.

Matthew xxiv, 34.—"This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled." These words have been interpreted to mean, that the Lord would come and the events which He said would herald His advent would be fulfilled, during the lifetime of those to whom He uttered the words, which we know was not so. The word "generation" has the meaning of a "family" or "race," and is so used in such passages as Matt. xxiii. 36. In Deut. xxxii. 20, it is applied to the whole race of Israel. We also read of "the generation of the righteous" (Psa. xiv. 5), "the generation of the upright" (Psa. cxii. 2), which clearly indicates the meaning of the word. The Jewish race, instead of being blotted out, or intermingled with others, as has been the fate of every other conquered and scattered people, were to remain a distinct and separate race to the end. And thus we see them at the present time.

Luke iii. 22.—"And Jesus Himself began to be about thirty years of age." The R.V. gives it, "And Jesus Himself, when He began to teach, was about thirty years of age," which makes the A.V. obscure reading, perfectly plain. Another difficulty of the

verse is the words, "As was supposed," which make it appear, as if there was uncertainty on the matter. But as Bloomfield notes, the proper translation is not "as was supposed" but "As was reckoned by Jewish custom," or as Liddell and Scott give the meaning of the word—"To own as a custom or usage."

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Is there any event of prophecy which must be fulfilled before the Lord Jesus comes? Not before the Lord comes FOR His saints, but many before He returns in glory WITH them. We do not say that events foretold may not intervene—as the history of the Church, given in Rev. chap. ii., iii., has during the last eighteen centuries been in process of fulfilment—but there is nothing must, which would necessitate delay, else how could the Philipians be "looking for that blessed hope" (Phil. iii. 20), and the Corinthians "waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (chap. i. 7). And this is to be our attitude as it was theirs. As Dean Alford remarks, "The apostolic age maintained that which ought to be the attitude of all ages, constant expectation of the Lord's return."

Answers to Correspondents

J. C., LONDON.—The Expositions you refer to, were by the late Wm. Lincoln, of Beresford. They appeared in "The Latter Rain" in 1872.

W. J. M., BELFAST.—There is nothing more helpful to a young preacher of the Gospel, than personal dealing with souls, such as house to house visitation gives the opportunity to engage in. If there were more of it among those who preach publicly, there would be less shooting over the heads of the hearers. Acquaintance with the real condition of people's minds regarding eternal things, and knowledge of the varied snares in which they are held, is the best school for learning how to adapt the message.

M. E. R.—We have no experience in the line of things you recommend as a means for reaching non-churchgoers with the Gospel. We greatly prefer the old time way of going out to the streets and lanes of the city, and taking it to them in its unadorned simplicity. We have never found it fail to "draw" a congregation, or to "hold".

them after they were gathered, unless the preacher was out of condition, and his message "flat" in consequence. That was not the fault of the message, but of the messenger. The "accompaniments" you name would hardly avail to give "power," although they might help to conceal the lack of it. This is possibly the cause of their adoption by so many of the class of "workers" you name.

"NEMO."—The book you send is a strange medley of evasive argument and human reasoning. "Liberty of Conscience in Baptism" is interpreted to mean: Believe anything you like, practise either sprinkling, pouring, or dipping; christen babies, pour on grown up unconverted households, or immerse believers, all is baptism, or anything else that takes the name, whether performed by Roman priest, Anglican clergyman, or dissenting pastor. We fail to see where there can be much exercise of "conscience" in any who contend for such "liberty" regarding the perversion of a Divine and typical ordinance, which has been fully set forth in its subjects, mode, and meaning in the Word of God.

J. L., DUBLIN.—The Lord's words to His disciples, as recorded in Matthew xxiv. 20, 28, in which He gives instructions regarding their experiences in the "great tribulation," and the persecutions of Antichrist, were not addressed to them as representatives of the church of the present dispensation, but as Jews dwelling in the land of Israel, under law, keeping the Sabbath (ver. 20), expecting the advent of the Son of Man, their Deliverer, but in danger of being deceived by false Christs who, as such, will present themselves. The Lord's reference to the holy place, the abomination of desolation, the mountains, Judea, and the Sabbath day, make it perfectly plain that the instructions given, do not apply to believers of the present age, to whom such references can have no meaning. But they will be of great value to the godly Jewish remnant of a later day, of whom the disciples then were the representatives, as afterwards they were of the church (see Acts ii. 42, iv. 33).

J. F., AYRSHIRE.—The seven Churches of Asia (Rev. ii., iii.), with their characteristics, were doubtless chosen to represent the entire dispensation, but they were seven actual assemblies, in the conditions described by the Lord. There was no affiliation or united control. Each assembly stood in its responsibility to the Lord, while by the fact that each of the seven received the whole of the messages, it was made aware of the condition and the Lord's judgment concerning the other six as well as its

own. This forbids the callous independency which says, "Am I my brother's keeper?" and seeks to shirk responsibility in acting as the Lord Himself does toward those who forsake His Word, and harbour known evil and evildoers. An assembly—like an individual—may so lapse into sin, that it would be dishonouring to the Lord, and dangerous for a saint, to have free intercourse with it, while in that condition. This is of course ignored by the "broad" churchism which demands recognition and recommendation of everything that takes upon it the name of an "assembly," no matter what its position and condition. But as you say to an individual who takes the Christian name, "Shew me thy faith by thy works?" before you accredit him a "brother," so you may test any company professedly taking the place of a scriptural assembly of believers, before they are fully accredited as such.

Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION V.—Where it is feared that a number of unregenerate professors have been hurried into the fellowship of an assembly, and continue there while manifesting no signs of spiritual life, what is the Scriptural way to deal with them?

ANSWER A.—This is a very serious condition of things, calling for deep humiliation and confession before God. Those who take the lead in such an assembly, must be sadly lacking in spiritual discernment, or utterly indifferent to the need of care, before such a state of affairs could possibly exist. We fear that it does exist in not a few cases all the same, and is the cause of barrenness and lack of power which is so often sighed over. The only remedy is to go to God on their behalf, and to deal with them faithfully, which will either manifest life if they have it, or send them into the world of which they really are, if unsaved. J. L. B.

ANSWER B.—Searching preaching of the Word in the power of the Spirit, has discovered to some their true state before God, who had been hastened into an unreal profession of conversion, and hurriedly added to a company of God's people, before time had manifested whether they had been born again. We know one assembly, in which several of the leading men and their wives discovered they had not been born of God, under the faithful preaching of a man of God. They owned themselves false professors, took their place outside, and remained there until they were really saved, and all others

satisfied with the genuineness of their conversion. It was a most solemn time, and caused deep searching of heart to all. In days of shallow work, when there is little conviction of sin, many are doubtless reasoned into a profession of conversion, who have no Christ and no life. The greater number of them remain so, because there is nothing in the preaching they hear to expose their emptiness, or bring them to see where they are. If they ever come under the Word in living power they flee from it, speak evil of the preacher, and seek a ministry of smooth things. Godly ones burdened with the condition of those whom they fear to be only professors, should lay hold on God on their behalf, and speak faithfully and plainly to them individually. It is wonderful what God does, through those who are true to Him and His truth, in this way. In cases where all who make a flimsy profession of conversion are hastily received to church fellowship, where there is no reproach, and little to distinguish them from the world, it is easy to understand how many, especially children and relatives of believers, may creep in, unsaved. So long as their lives are moral, it is not easy to deal with such, however much one may fear from their listlessness and worldliness, that they are destitute of Divine life. The only remedy is, plain personal dealing, the sharp edge of the Word (Heb. iv. 12) being brought to bear on them, which will either cause them to "cut themselves off" (Gal. v. 12, R.V.) or take offence and go out, making manifest, that they are not "of us" (1 John ii. 19).

R. M.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—We know of nothing more solemn, or more awful in its consequences, than for an unregenerate professor to be accredited as a Christian, and received into the fellowship of an assembly of God. Few who pass through such an experience ever awake to discover their true condition, but usually after a period of unsatisfactory profession and God-dishonouring walk, relapse into their former ways, or go back like "the dog to its vomit," into open worldliness, from which they never were severed in heart. But it must not be supposed that all, or any great proportion of those who "profess" and are accredited as Christians, without being born of God, go back openly to sin or sever their connection with those to whom they have joined themselves. If they find it comfortable to remain, their parents, relatives, or companions in social life, being there, with nothing to disturb them in the preaching that they hear, and no cross in the position they occupy, there being little difference

between it and any respectable worldly denomination, there would be no need to forsake or give up their profession. But to all such, a testing time must come, and as many know to their cost, "these having no root" in "time of temptation fall away," not perhaps from a religious profession, but from all trace of vital Christianity and testimony for God. That there has been a vast increase of such cases, some well known and many more lost sight of, within recent years, is sadly true. Lack of deep conviction of sin and the kind of preaching that produces it; undue haste in encouraging interested persons, especially those young in years, to make a profession of conversion before they either know their need of Christ, or receive Him, and then immediately, or with little time being given to manifest whether they have Divine life in them, they are baptised and added to the company of believers, there remaining, coming and going, but apart from their profession, manifesting nothing of having the life of God in them. It is this condition of things, our question bears upon, and the two answers given, suggest prayerfulness Godward, and faithful personal dealing, with searching preaching of the Word manward as the remedy. We entirely agree. But unless the standard of conversion is held to the full height as God's Word gives it, and not a mere assent to certain doctrines, or a holding up of hands, "taking a stand," "coming out for Christ," and such like, there must be successive crops of false professors brought forth of the same sort. And unless those who stand at the gates of the temple of God, and are primarily responsible for those who are brought into the fellowship of the Christian assembly are men of God, having spiritual discernment, jealous for the honour of His Name and without partiality, acting for God and not to please men, seeking to welcome all whom God has received, not because they say He has, but because they discern that His life is in them and His seal upon them (Eph. i. 13, with Rom. viii. 9) by their fruits (Matt. vii. 20), their deeds (1 John iii. 9, 10), and their conduct (1 Thess. i. 6-9), and giving due time for all to share the privilege and responsibility of welcoming newcomers, as God has commanded, as the early churches practised, and as was the godly custom in years past among those seeking back to the ancient paths of the Word, the enemy will make it his business to bring in false materials, and thus wreck the testimony of those who, in much feebleness, have sought to raise the ancient standard, and gather in the Name of the Lord Jesus alone.

THE PATHWAY OF BLESSING.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY W. J. M'CLURE.

Read Psalms cxxx. i., cxxxii., cxxxiii.

IN the first of these Psalms, we have a glimpse of the moral glory of the Lord Jesus. In the second we have Himself as the Centre around whom His people gather; and in the third we have what a company so gathered is to God, and to man.

In measure, the expressions of Psalm cxxx. i. were true of David, but when we think that it is the Lord Jesus who in prophecy utters these words, "Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for Me," we feel rebuked. O what lowliness! And such was His glory as the Son of God walking on this earth in complete dependence upon God. What a contrast to man stretching himself up *to be* something! The fatal poison injected into him in Eden's garden, "Ye shall be as gods," has gone on working, and will culminate in the Antichrist who will take the place of God—stretching himself up to be God. O the miserable pride that goes strutting around! One thinks because a few truths are learned that he knows something, and so makes himself distasteful. Here is One "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. ii. 3); the One who from all eternity was in the Father's bosom sharing of His deep secrets, saying, "My heart is not haughty."

There is another very precious picture. "Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child—that is weaned of his

mother: my soul is even as a weaned child." How very blessed! In the temptation, the Lord Jesus was forty days without bread, the sustenance of life, which He who was the Father's beloved Son might at least have expected. The devil waited till He was an hundred, and then came to Him and said, "If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread" (Matt. iv. 3). He had learned, however, the lesson of Psal. cxxx. i., and could in effect say to the devil, "My Father knows I need bread, but He has withheld it, and like the child that is weaned from the breast to which it naturally turns, I can say—'My soul is even as a weaned child.'" To how many of us does this come in a very cutting way? If God has not given us everything we think He should, we grumble at His dispensation. We see some Christian enjoying something we do not have, and we think we should have that too. But God knows what is best for us, and He loves us too well to give us just what we would like. If there is murmuring and grumbling, you are not a well-weaned child.

In Psal. cxxxii. we have David putting God's interests first. Before he would look after his own house, he would see that God's ark found a resting place. So our Lord Jesus says—"Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" (Luke ii. 49) at the age of twelve, and "It is finished" (John xix. 30) on the cross. Between these two points it was with Him, God only—always His Father's business.

This Psalm gives us Christ as the Centre

around whom His people gather. Notice the two sentences, "Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah: we found it in the fields of the wood." Between these two sentences, we may include all David's early life. "Ephratah" was David's boyhood home. "The fields of the wood" was Kirjath-jearim, where the ark had been all through the reign of Saul. During the days when disaster and defeat was the order of the day, David's godly parents would be lamenting the fact that the ark did not get its place, and that Israel was not enquiring of it. As David listened, he longed that a different order of things would be instituted. The time came, when God brought him to the throne, and one of the first things he did was, to carry into effect what he had wished to accomplish when he was a boy in Bethlehem-Ephratah. O for home surroundings which will produce results like this!

Turn back to 1 Chron. xiii. 1-3. All the forty years of Saul's reign, the ark did not get its place. That reign represents the condition of most of God's beloved people. God's earthly people were under the rule of a man, chosen by themselves to be their king, and in the same way many of our beloved brethren and sisters are being robbed and spoiled, because they are under man's order and rule. The flesh has intruded into the things of God, and instead of Christ being known as God's grand gathering Centre, where there is liberty for Him to speak to our hearts through whomsoever He may choose to use, man has imposed his order, effectually setting aside God's, and resulting in weakness, defeat, and disaster to God's

people. The reign of Saul was just one shameful history of weakness, defeat, and trouble on all hands. But when David came to the throne, the ark was brought to its rightful place. Once more Israel gathered there. Once more the priest stood before it, and then an era of blessing, victory, and prosperity began. Look at that graphic little picture in chap. xvi. The ark is in the true place, and Israel gathered around it—around God. The company is a happy one, and they leave with substantial tokens of blessing. David dealt to every one "a loaf of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine." The loaf of bread speaks to us of Christ incarnate; the piece of flesh, of Christ crucified; and the flagon of wine of the joy of resurrection. O how blessed! Called to share in God's own joy! There is wine to cheer the heart of God and man in that feast. If I had to choose between being one of two or three believers, gathered around our Lord Jesus Christ in simple dependence upon Him, and being a member of a denomination that had the most gifted and godly minister in the whole country, I should not be long in choosing. No one that knows God's precious truth, and has prized it in any measure, can say anything else than "He has brought me into a large place." We may have gifted brethren, and, while we bless God for them, we can do without them; but we cannot do without Him who says, "I am with you" and "There am I," and so while He is there, the feast remains. May the Spirit of God make this very real to our hearts.

(To be continued.)

OUTLINES IN "ACTS."

III.—THE THEME OF PETER'S MINISTRY.

WHAT was the nature of the ministry itself? What were the hopes that it spoke of to Israel? and what was the call that it made upon Israel? We shall find, in answer to these inquiries, *that the Apostles spoke of the proper national hopes of Israel, calling on them to repent in order that they might attain them, and be blest in the earth.* They declare Israel's sin in crucifying the Prince of Life; God's acceptance of this crucified One, and, upon repentance, the remission of Israel's sins, and the fulfilling of Israel's hopes.

Thus, in Peter's sermon in the 2nd chapter, his testimony to Israel was this—that the resurrection secured the promises made to David's throne; that the ascension was the source of the given Spirit; that Jesus was to abide in the ascended place till His enemies were made His footstool; and upon all this he calls on Israel to repent. But he says nothing about the Church ascending after her Head, and her consequent heavenly glory. So in the 3rd chapter (after he and John had recognised God's house at Jerusalem), in his preaching, he calls on Israel to repent in order that "the times of refreshing might come from the presence of the Lord," when Jesus should return to them, and all things promised by Moses and the prophets be accomplished. But all this in like manner was a testimony to the hopes of Israel and the earth, and not a testimony to the heavenly glory. It was a publication of the acts and promises of the God of Abraham, Isaac,

and Jacob, to the children of the prophets, and the children of the covenant. And so in the 5th chapter we have this—"Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins"—words very strongly marking the value which the Spirit in Peter gave to the resurrection of the Lord, applying it merely to Israel as God's nation.

And as the proper fruit of this preaching and of these hopes, we find the conduct and practice of the saints to have been this—they present beautiful order and grace in the way of settling their earthly possessions—they get favour with all the people, as Jesus had in His infancy at Nazareth—they continue daily in the temple, as though they knew not how soon the Lord might return to it—and they heal all disease among the people, as the Lord had done when He walked through the cities and villages of Judea. But beyond all this, perfect as it was in its season, there was something still. The Church had still to take with Jesus her earth-rejected and earth-rejecting character. Citizenship in heaven, death as to the earth, and life hid with Christ in God; a looking forth towards the things within the veil after the glorious Forerunner, were great and new things still to be brought out of the treasury. Neither Peter's testimony, nor the Church's conduct, were such as exhibited them. The glory within the veil first looks through, when Stephen's face shines as the face of an angel. And this was beautiful in its season also; for Stephen was soon to be made the first witness of the heavenly

calling. Martyrdom was the needed ground of the full manifestation of this calling. The Apostles might have suffered shame, and stripes, and imprisonment; but there was still space for repentance to Israel, as there had been during the Lord's ministry (though He in like manner suffered shame and rejection), till His last visit to Jerusalem. The cross, however, had closed the earth upon the Lord: and so did the martyrdom of Stephen close it now upon the Church; and awful separation for a while was made between all who are the Lord's, and this present evil world.

Thus till this death of a saint after the resurrection, the time had not come for the bringing out of this thing (the heavenly calling of the Church) from the treasury of the divine counsels. Types, and the other intimations of it had been from the beginning. Our Lord had given the vision of it on "the holy mount," but it was dimness in the eyes even of the Apostles. He hinted at "the heavenly things" which the Son of Man alone could speak of (John iii. 12), but they were not perceived. "The little while" of His abiding with the Father, was as strange to the disciples as to the Jews. His ministry of these things was to them "proverbs" (John xvi. 25). And so even the ascension of the Lord was not of itself adequate ground for the manifesting of that glory. For it was needed to the Lord's forming the Jewish Church for godly citizenship on the earth, the Holy Ghost being received through the ascension, "for the rebellious," that is, for Israel, "that the Lord God might dwell

among them—dwell among them *here*. But on the martyrdom of a believer in the Lord thus risen and ascended, the time had fully come for the manifesting of the heavenly calling, for the shewing out of this mystery, that Christ was to have a body which was to share with Him in the glory on high, into which He had Himself ascended, whose citizenship was not to be in Jerusalem, but in heaven.

"In the regeneration," as the Lord speaks, that is, in the coming kingdom of the Son of Man, there will be again a church that will find her proper place on earth, the Israel of God. And then the twelve Apostles will be manifested in connection with the twelve tribes, and the saints with the world (see Matt. xix. 28; 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3). All this will be the glory and joy of that happy time, and most beautiful and perfect in its season. The Son of Man seated on His throne of glory—the Apostles judging the twelve tribes—and the saints, the world. The servants will then share in the kingdom of their Lord, having authority with Him and under Him over the cities of His dominion. But this time is now delayed, for the earth has refused it. Israel has cast the Heir of the vineyard out, and killed them that were sent to them (1 Thess. ii. 16).

J. G. B.

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Whenever a few raise the banner of simple allegiance to God, they must remember that it is a challenge to Satan. They must be prepared for constant conflict, not indeed against flesh and blood, but with the wicked spirits in the heavenly places.—*R. J. Mahoney.*

THE HUMANITY OF THE LORD JESUS.

A BIBLE READING GIVEN IN GLASGOW.

BY THE EDITOR. PART II.

THERE are few subjects in which human speculation has made greater havoc, than in attempting to fathom by man's reason, and to express in words of man's devising, the "great mystery" (1 Tim. iii. 15), of the Incarnation. Our safety consists in adhering to the words in which the Holy Spirit, who alone knows its fulness, has set forth this great truth in the Holy Scriptures.

FLESH AND BLOOD.—"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same" (Heb. ii. 14). The words "flesh and blood" here used, describe true manhood, without reference to that corruption which in consequence of Adam's fall, has come into man's nature. The expression "in the flesh," used in Rom. viii. 8, and elsewhere, is something entirely different, and has reference to man's fallen condition and depraved nature—"the flesh," in which no good thing dwelleth (Rom. vii. 18). Very jealously does the Spirit guard against the possibility of any such thought, as that any moral taint was in the human nature of our blessed Lord, or that mortality, or disease, or any other consequence of sin, was in any sense present in that body which was prepared by God (Heb. x. 5) for His beloved Son, in which He was to serve and present Himself a sacrifice and an offering, as the "Lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. i. 19). The words "took part of the same," have by

some been made to imply that the Lord assumed man's nature in its fallen condition; that He knew sin but never yielded to it; that in His experience He knew distance from God, taking the place of those whom He came to save. But all this is utterly false, and however explained, must ever be regarded as gross error and a deep dishonour to "the Holy One of God." The words simply say, He "took part in these" [things], namely, flesh and blood, and the word used is different from that which describes the "children" who were "partakers" fully of human nature in its present condition in a sense He never was. In this connection it has been asserted that the words, "He hath no form or comeliness" in Isa. liii. 2, imply, that the personal appearance of our Blessed Lord was marked by the absence of outward grace and comeliness. But these words have no such meaning, nor do they apply to the personal aspect of the Lord at all. The words are used of kingly majesty, and earthly glory, such as attract the gaze of men. In His earthly surroundings He was poor, as "a root out of a dry ground," Jesus of Nazareth, the carpenter. Hence to the unbelieving Jews there was no beauty, no dazzling "outward appearance" that caused them to "desire" Him; but to those who received Him, He was the "altogether lovely One," as faith's eye "beheld His glory," ever full of grace and truth (John i. 14).

SACRIFICE AND HIGH PRIEST.—Two causes are assigned in Heb. ii. 14-18, for the Lord taking "flesh and blood." First, in order that He might become a sacrifice,

that He might die. He became our Kinsman, in order that He might be our Redeemer. He came as near to us, as was essential to His work as Mediator and Ransom (1 Tim. ii. 5), to suffer "the Just for the unjust that He might bring us to God" (1 Pet. iii. 18), but not to identify Himself with man in his fallen condition so as to violate the essential conditions necessary for the accomplishment of that great work. He "offered Himself without spot to God" (Heb. ix. 14), an offering and a sacrifice for "a sweet-smelling savour" (Eph. v. 2). And His death is of infinite value, because of the perfection of His Person. Second, in order that He might become "a merciful and faithful High Priest," in resurrection, able to sympathize with and succour His people, as they pass through the wilderness, amid temptations, and they themselves subject to infirmities. "It behoved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren." It is not said that He became subject to infirmity, but that "He was in all points tempted as we are, without sin." In this He is a contrast to the Aaronic priest, who could bear in his measure with the "ignorant and erring," because he himself was "compassed with infirmity," and had to offer for himself as well as for the people. Our Great High Priest is fully able ever to sympathise with and to succour, because He passed through all kinds of trials and tests, at the hands of men and of Satan, suffering "in all points" real temptation from without, although never from evil within, and was thus "perfected" or qualified, to become our great

High Priest, and "to save to the uttermost," or completely, those who are on the way to God through Him. May our hearts adore the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who thus stooped to meet us in our low estate, becoming "in the form of a servant," taking humanity into His Person, and never ceasing to wear it, even amid the glories of the throne, on which He will be for ever owned and worshipped as the Lamb once slain, ever worthy to "receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

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HELPS AND HINDRANCES TO GOSPEL WORK.

PART III.—THE ADMINISTRATION AND GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

NO candid reader of the "Acts of the Apostles" can fail to be impressed with the fact that in the Church's early day, the Director and Administrator of all service done for God in the world and in the assembly, was "The Comforter"—the Holy Ghost, who had come down from heaven to earth, to carry on God's business as the departing Christ had said He would. Power for witnessing (Acts i. 8), guidance in special cases (Acts viii. 29), the choice of proved servants for particular work (Acts xiii. 2), their sending forth (ver. 4), their hindrance from visiting certain places (Acts xvi. 67), are all attributed to the administration of the Spirit. Times have changed; special gifts and signs are now no more, but the work of the Comforter continues *throughout the age*, as the Lord declared it would

(John xiv. 16). But in that which bears the Name of Christ, in the great camp which calls itself Christendom, He is systematically deposed from His place of administration by men, who however unwittingly have usurped His place by becoming lords and directors in that sphere to which the Spirit of God has been appointed Administrator. We stay not now to speak of clerisy, which, as a system, ignores the Lordship of Christ and the presence of the Holy Ghost in the church entirely, and sets up man in their place. But in circles where the Spirit as indwelling and operating in the individual, where His work in filling and witnessing in the preacher is duly recognised and owned, He is still dishonoured as Guide and Administrator, patron, president, director, or committee assuming the responsibility of control and limitation of those serving in the Gospel in their various connections. The Lord in grace works in spite of such hindrances, but in how much fuller measure His work would be, if there were room and liberty for the operations of the Spirit through channels of His own choosing—"as He will" (1 Cor. xii. 11).

It is now a custom, advertised and announced as if it had the Divine approval, for evangelists to "book engagements" for months and years in advance, giving a week here, a month there, according to the supposed requirements of the place, or more frequently the length of time which those who engage them require and can pay for their services. Then prayer is made for the Spirit's guidance and for His operations in reviving saints and converting sinners. Very often, just when

a little interest has been created, and a few awakened or saved, the evangelist has to go, in order to fulfil another engagement, and the whole movement falls flat and ceases. Is this according to God? Is it of the Holy Ghost, or has man's arrangements interfered? These are pertinent, practical questions, and they ought to be faced squarely and honestly, by every godly man who mourns the lack of full results in abiding fruit from his evangelistic labours. They ought to be reverently and prayerfully weighed by every assembly of God's people in the light of God's Word, which they own to be their standard and their guide. If such ways are not according to God, then let them be dropped along with all else of man's invention, at once and for ever, and no countenance given to them, or provision made for their recognition in the next effort made for the evangelising of the masses. Time was, when these weekly and fortnightly "Campaigns" or "Revivals,"—as they are rather profanely named,—arranged, and advertised weeks and months ahead, to begin on a certain day and to cease at a given hour, would have been regarded by companies of believers outside of all sects as an import from the world's religion, and as such resisted, no matter by whom proposed or introduced; but what cannot be publicly brought in by the front door *en masse*, may be slyly slipped in by instalments another way by those who watch to gain their point. And owing to the lethargy or slackness of those who ought to be watchmen at the gates of the house of God, they too often find success.

That such customs are practised and approved in the religious world, we all know. But if one professes to take the Word of God as his guide in all such matters, and yet drifts into the world's way of things practically, the Lord will have a controversy with that man, because he has gone against light which he had, or professed to have. What if this and the like of it, has more to do with the lack of power in preaching the Gospel and of abiding Holy Ghost conversions than we think? God is very jealous for His truth, and if we take high ground and say we "go by the Book," He will hold us to it, and deal in holy discipline with all who know, yet lightly esteem His commandments.



A HEALTHY CHURCH.

II.—HOW IT WAS INCREASED.

ACTING on the Word of the Lord, they severed their connection with the various denominations of which they had been members, and waited upon God, searching His Word to learn His will. This step brought upon them the censure and anger of the whole religious communion, who looked upon them as misguided and ignorant pietists, who would speedily come to nought. Freed from the bondage of worldly religion and cast upon God, they soon found from His Word that as disciples of the Lord Jesus, it was their privilege to be baptised (Matt. xxviii. 19; Acts viii. 12), which none of them had as yet been as believers. This they heartily obeyed, and received the blessing such obedience brings, while the

great truths of death and resurrection with Christ and separation from the world, of which Christian baptism is the symbol (Rom. vi. 3-6; Col. ii. 12-20), were brought with fresh power to their hearts, and in practical effect to their lives. Next, they learned from the Word, that "where two or three" of God's people, apart from the unconverted, and bearing no distinctive or sectarian title, are "gathered together," not by human authority or under State or ecclesiastical control, but "in (or unto) His Name"—the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ alone being their centre of attraction and bond of association, there and to them, the promise "there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. xviii. 20) is fulfilled. They acted upon it and proved its reality. There was no attempt to reconstruct a "Pentecostal Church," no high claim of being "the only true Church," no boast of gifts or powers, but a simple reliance on a living, loving Lord, who is Head of His Church, to provide all that they required for ministry and government, for godly care within, and aggressive service in the Gospel without, according to His unerring wisdom and unfailing grace. And He did. From amongst that little company of lowly, godly saints, who had cut themselves adrift from the world's religious systems, and cast themselves upon a present, living God, and His Word, there were raised up shepherds to care for and feed the flock, able ministers of the Word to build them up on their most holy faith, and especially earnest and gifted evangelists to preach the Gospel to the world. They were of one

heart and soul, esteeming each other better than themselves. and by love serving one another. Their one desire was to please God, to be used of Him in making known His Gospel and His truth to others.

They resolved that by His grace this should be their chief business, their highest aim. God greatly blessed them, and added others to them. They were an attractive force to the spiritual, and those who sought the Lord and valued the pastures of His Word were found there. To worldly and carnal men, there was no inducement, no attraction; the brand of the Cross was their safeguard against such seeking identification with them. Every saved man and woman who sought association with them was fully taught why they were there, what they were there TO and FOR, and what their position of separation from the world's religious systems, to be gathered unto the Lord, to own His Lordship, and obey His Word involved. None were hunted after or hurried into their fellowship, for well they knew by experience, that God alone could teach His people His truth, and give them eyes to see it. They welcomed those who were thus led, and all were exercised and encouraged in such service for God as they had gift and grace to share.

ALL the brethren among them, went out two and two EVERY Lord's Day evening, making known the Gospel in various ways, some walking, others driving long distances. They rented halls, got the use of cottages, preached in the open air, and dealt with souls personally wherever they found them. All the sisters kept a supply

of Gospel tracts, and watched for opportunities to distribute them, and deal with individuals on eternal things. Fellowship in prayer and substance was cultivated with the Lord's workers, at home and abroad, working on godly and Scriptural lines, they could approve and therefore help, and a loving interest was maintained in saints who did not yet see as they did, but truly loved the Lord. The saints of God and the servants of Christ, wherever they were, they sought to "love as brethren," while keeping entirely separate from the systems many of them were in, ever seeking their deliverance from them, in a godly way. The full results will only be known in eternity, but they were manifest here, in that little company being greatly increased; in many being saved, Christians helped in the Word, assemblies multiplied, and thousands being brought under sound of the Gospel and conviction of the Spirit of God. The world knew them not. Popular, "up-to-date" Christianity scarcely stopped to notice them. Bigotry curled its lip, or passed a sneer. But God was there, as He had aforetime been at Bethlehem, Nazareth, Calvary, and Olivet, unnoticed and unknown. And one day we shall know the Master's estimate and hear His verdict on that feeble few, who, amid the world's reproach, clung to Him, held fast His Word, and did not deny His Name.



Form, and glitter, and colour, and art—things which raise religious emotions through the senses—can but cloud the eye of faith.

Editorial.

Tent work begins in many districts this month. In spite of drawbacks through varying conditions of weather, this is one of the best ways of reaching the masses in cities, and of getting the rural population under sound of God's blessed Gospel. There is a "free and easy" feeling in dropping in under canvas in working garb, which cannot be obtained in halls. May God give a season of rich blessing in conversions.

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Open-air Gospel preaching still holds the field as the "means" whereby tens of thousands of our fellows may be reached with God's message, but its success depends much on the ability, tact, and spiritual calibre of the preacher. Anybody will not do to collect a crowd of careless sinners, nor will anything, so long as it contains a few Scripture texts and religious phrases do to hold them, after they are gathered. The best men—best in the true sense of the word—right with God and with whom He is working, should have the burden of the open-air preaching, and be loyally supported by a full circle of fellow-believers, including "chief men" and "honourable women"—not a few youngsters only, as is too often the case.

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Singing and story telling may serve their purpose to draw a certain class, but there is nothing equal to the solid, solemn, and searching preaching of the Word to lodge arrows in the conscience, and bring men and women into contact with God and eternal things. It will be an evil day when open-air meetings degenerate into musical displays, interspersed by thin and pithless sermonettes of five or ten minutes' duration. It was not thus that Whitefield held the thousands on the Braes of Cambuslang, and William Burns preached to crowds of careless miners on the streets of Kilsyth, until the cry of deep conviction of sin was wrung from hundreds of awakened souls, followed by the joyful songs of deliverance from many. "Preach the Word" (2 Tim. iv. 3) is the evangelist's last command from the Risen Lord, and that amid abounding errors, increasing corruptions, and multiplying fables.

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Do you forget the children. In many cases they may be reached when their hardened seniors cannot. On the village green, by the broad wayside, on the shores of the deep blue sea, the "old, old

story" will be eagerly read and heard by the coming generation, and hearts not yet hardened by long years of sin, thus reached and won for Christ.

The Bible Annotator.

SUBJECTS FOR MUTUAL BIBLE STUDY.

THE CHRISTIAN IN THE WORLD.

As a Saint (John xvii. 16)—In Separation from it.
As a Subject (Rom. xiii. 1)—In Subjection to it.
As a Servant (John xx. 21)—In Service toward it.

CHRISTIAN EARNESTNESS.

Give earnest heed to the Word (Heb. ii. 1).
Earnestly pray to God (Luke xxii. 24; Jas. v. 17).
Earnestly contend for the Faith (Jude 3).
Earnest care for the saints (2 Cor. vii. 7).
Earnest longing for glory (2 Cor. v. 2).

FELLOWSHIP IN SERVICE.

One Will (1 Cor. iv. 19; Jas. iv. 15).
One Walk (1 Cor. iv. 17; 2 Cor. xii. 18).
One Work (1 Cor. xvi. 10; xvi. 21).

Misinterpreted Texts.

1 Corinthians v. 7-8.—"For even Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast;" or as the Revised Version has it, "For our passover also hath been sacrificed for us, even Christ. Wherefore let us keep the feast." The connection here is the Cross and the believer's communion. The death of Christ as the Antitype of the Lamb of Exod. xii., followed by the feast of unleavened bread; in other words, a life of communion and holiness during the whole period of our sojourn in the world. Those who limit the application of it to the Lord's Supper, on the first day of the week, miss the practical import of the passage, which extends to every day feeding on Christ, and practical godliness in all aspects of Christian life.

Jottings on Mis-translated Texts.

Romans v. 11.—"By whom we have now received the atonement." The margin and R.V. give "reconciliation," which is correct. Atonement is made Godward; the result manward is reconciliation, both being past and finished at the cross.

Romans iii. 25.—"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation"—R.V. margin, "to be propitiary." The same word is rendered "mercy seat" in Heb. ix. 5. Christ is the propitiation; as

we read in 1 John ii. 2 ; iv. 9, and because of His shed blood He is the Antitype of the propitiatory or mercy seat, where of old God said, "There will I meet with thee."

Hebrews iv. 15.—"In all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin"—apart from sin. Temptation in the Lord's case was all from without (see Matthew iv. 1 ; Luke x. 25) ; there was nothing in Him to answer to it, save in suffering. James i. 13, 14, shews it is otherwise with us.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

In Gen. xi. 1 we read, "The whole earth was of one language and one speech." Is there anything in the Scriptures to indicate what that language was? The names given to persons and places as recorded in the Word, up to this point, are all in the pure Hebrew language. Adam calls his wife's name "Ishah," because she was taken out of "Ish." So also Eve calls her sons by Hebrew names ; and so it is with all recorded names up to the flood, and from Noah to the building of Babel. From this we may surely gather that the "one speech" was Hebrew.

To whom does the words of Ezekiel xxviii. 13-15 apply? The chapter begins with a description of the Prince of Tyrus, and towards the close, alludes to the future, when the last usurper will appear, the wilful king, Satan's great masterpiece, of whom the Prince of Tyrus was the foreshadowing type. But these verses may also have reference to a larger subject, namely, the first estate of Satan and his fall. Nor need we wonder that this fall and the cause thereof should be thus introduced, for every lifting up in pride, and casting down in judgment, is according to the pattern set forth in our great adversary the Devil, who seeks to lead others along the path that he himself has trod (see 1 Tim. iii. 6 ; Jude 6).

Answers to Correspondents

NEMO.—The "Fathers" so-called, dating from the third century, nearly all held and taught **Baptismal Regeneration**, so you need not hope to find much clear Gospel teaching in their writings.

STUDENT.—The Albigenses were a company of

Christians of the twelfth century, who, cleaving closely and faithfully to the Word of God, preached the Gospel in its simplicity amid the gross darkness of the Middle Ages. They derived their name from Albi, in Languedoc, where they were condemned and excommunicated by the Church of Rome in 1176, and by her persecuted and slain for their faith. They were links in the goodly chain of Reformers, who lived long before the days of Luther, and prepared the way for the Reformation of the sixteenth century.

J. C. M., DUBLIN.—Failing to distinguish dispensations and the truths which characterise them, some have taught that believers of all ages compose the church, and this being so, that part of it must needs pass through "the great tribulation." If the former is conceded, the latter must follow. But what then becomes of "the mystery which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men"—"but hid in God," until the Apostle Paul who was the vessel chosen to "bring it to light," became its exponent (see Eph. iii. 1-10). If Abraham, David, Daniel, and others were of "the church," then there was no "secret" to unfold, unless it be—as some have taught—that the calling, hopes, and destiny of the saints of the present time are simply an elongation of Jewish privileges, rather than a contrast to them. We believe the whole subject hangs together, and that it will be generally found that those who advocate the theory of part of the "church" going through the tribulation, reject the limitation of the term to saints of the present dispensation as used in Eph. iii.

J. T., DUNDEE.—The only remedy to keep young believers from running hither and thither, hearing all manner of "divine and strange doctrines," with which the present time abounds, is to give them a full measure of the "healthful teaching" (Titus i. 9 ; 1 Tim. vi. 13-16) of the Word, which draws the heart to Christ, and exercises unto godliness of life and diligence in service. Where there is a fixed determination to "gad" about after all kinds of preachers, and dabble in all sorts of doctrines, no matter how unscriptural, or their outcome how ungodly, the question may well be raised—Have such persons the life of God in them at all? If saints are to be preserved in health of soul and in the path of obedience and communion, it must be by a free use of the Word, and this should be made far more of than it generally is in public ministry, and by pastoral exhortation and godly counsel. Never was it more needed than now.

Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION VI.—Should evangelists and others who move about preaching, take to do with assembly matters, especially difficulties, in places to which they go ?

ANSWER A.—As a rule, it is better they should not. First, because they are not in a position to know the persons and facts, both of which are essential to a godly settlement of most difficulties ; and next, because such matters usually unfit them for the work they are there to do. J. S.

ANSWER B.—They may give counsel (Prov. xi. 14), or help in showing the principles of the Word which bear on any difficulty, but when discipline has to be exercised in any form, it ought to be by the assembly, and under the guidance of those who locally shepherd and care for it (1 Tim. iii. 5).

W. J. M.

ANSWER C.—There were some in ancient time who evidently moved about "sowing discord among brethren" (Prov. vi. 19), and they were said to be "an abomination" unto the Lord. This generation are with us still, and not infrequently appear playing the *role* of healers and helpers, in times of trouble, while, in fact and reality they are generally partisans meddling with things they know not, only to make matters worse. Shepherd care includes "healing" (Eek. xxiv. 4) as well as feeding, and involves knowing individuals and details, which a stranger cannot. Evangelists, who forsake their vocation, to occupy themselves with assembly difficulties, do not generally excel as preachers of the Gospel or soul-winners. They are more apt to work into their platform speeches, what they hear in gossip during the day. Need we wonder if such meetings are "dry" and their results infinitesimal ?

W. C.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—When a difficulty arose regarding doctrine in the early Church, apostles and elders came together to consider the matter (Acts xv. 6). We have no apostles now, nor is there in the Church any council or governing body, whose decision carries authority such as their's did, or who can say of their decrees, "It seemeth good to the Holy Ghost and to us" (ver. 28). We have the inspired Word, final and complete, which they had not, and we are cast upon it for help alike for "instruction, reproof, correction, and discipline" (2 Tim. iv. 16). But while there is no legislative body, there are those whom the Lord has fitted to administer the commandments He has given, and to apply the

principles of the Word to particular cases. It is their responsibility to do so, by ministry of the Word, seeking to bring into exercise the consciences of God's people on all that relates to godliness—personal and collective. But as our esteemed correspondents point out, when it comes to be a matter of internal discipline, whether on account of doctrine or practice, the assembly guided by those who are "over it in the Lord" must act, and not visitors or passing preachers. If division arise affecting a group of assemblies, or if evil doctrine—such as annihilation—creeps in, and has to be dealt with, then surely it ceases to be a personal or local matter, and calls for the godly counsel and help of all who have the honour of the Lord and the welfare of His saints at heart. But even then, the actual discipline, whatever form it may take, emanates from within the assembly in which the evil has arisen. We fully endorse the remark, that it is not in general the work of a passing evangelist or teacher to "meddle with strife not belonging to him" (Prov. xxvi. 17), or to dabble in either personal or assembly troubles, but to "preach the Word," which, if rightly divided, and in the Spirit's unction and freshness, generally goes a long way to bring about the right spiritual condition so necessary to godly discipline, and the lack of which so often works havoc, while the rigid letter of the truth is gracelessly carried into effect.

Questions Requiring Answers.

We acknowledge with gratitude, the valued help given in this department by esteemed brethren and servants of the Lord and would most earnestly seek a yet fuller measure of fellowship in this deeply responsible and important ministry. There are many honest and inquiring children of God, who greatly value the help given in this way, and we have very many grateful testimonies to timely aid given in trying seasons, and in perplexing paths, received through these answers.

QUESTION VII.—Who is primarily responsible for the rent and expenses of halls in which assemblies of believers gather ? Is it the individuals whose names are on the lease, or the assembly as a whole ?

QUESTION VIII.—In matters in which a number of Assemblies, say in a city, are mutually interested, what is the Scriptural and proper way of arranging them ? Ought representative brethren from all these Assemblies together do so, or a select few who represent nothing ?

QUESTION IX.—If an assembly becomes divided from some internal trouble, and one party goes out forming a new meeting in the same town, is it according to God that both be recognised and received from as assemblies of God ?

THE TREASURE AND THE PEARL.

Matthew, Chap. xiii. 44, 45.

BY DR. J. NORMAN CASE, CHINA.

FROM very early days, the Treasure and Pearl of our Lord's parables have been taken to represent Gospel blessings, or Christ Himself (Matt. xiii. 44-46). But another view has been taken of these verses, viz., that the Treasure and Pearl respectively represent the people of God and the Church of Christ. I do not know when or by whom this interpretation was first given, but all things considered, it best meets the case, and is most consistent with other teachings of the Scriptures. It is not improbable, however, that our Lord so worded it, and the Spirit has so caused it to be recorded as to include both. For what at first is true of Christ, only later becomes true also of those who are Christ's. Just as He *emptied Himself* to make them for ever His own (Phil. ii. 7, R.V.), so they become willing to reckon all things but *refuse* that they may gain Christ, and be found in Him (Phil. iii. 8, 9). So now and here, we will briefly consider these figures as applying to the Church.

THE TREASURE.—In times of war or general unrest, the hiding of treasure, as here indicated, is of common occurrence (see Job iii. 21; Prov. ii. 4; Jer. xli. 8), and as is shewn by the verse from Jeremiah, the term was applied to other things beside silver and gold. The value of an article largely depends on circumstances. To a shipwrecked mariner a bag of potatoes may be of infinitely greater

value, than a bag of pearls. Hence we see that the term "treasure" can well be applied to other things than the precious metals. Yet it is evident that the term usually applies to the latter (as in *Sept.* of Gen. iv. 3, 23; 1 Kings xiv. 26).

The parable naturally calls to mind the several places in the Old Testament where Israel is spoken of as Jehovah's "special treasure" (Exod. xix. 5; Psa. cxxxv. 4; Mal. iii. 17). As I understand it, this parable embraces God's elect of all times, including those of the present age. They are looked at here chiefly in their individual character. The man is represented as unexpectedly finding the treasure, and because of its preciousness he sells all that he has, and buys the field; in this way, according to Jewish law, the treasure itself becomes his. In parabolic language, then, we have a striking picture shewing what the Son of God did to secure His people for Himself. Of the man it says, "he selleth all *that he hath*" and buyeth the field. Of Christ it is written: "Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye, through His poverty, might be rich" (2 Cor. viii. 9). We shall never fully understand how much it cost our Lord, to enrich Himself for ever with the confidence, gratitude, and love of redeemed sinners!

While the treasure was his object, the man had to purchase the field in order to acquire it. In the language of this chapter, "the field is the world" (v. 38). Hence it is not only said of true believers, "Ye are *bought* with a price" (1 Cor. vi. 20); it is also predicted of unregenerate

professors that they shall bring in "destructive heresies denying even the Master that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction" (2 Pet. ii. 11, R.V.). So that by purchase as well as creation, all souls are the Lord's, albeit many will not submit to Him in grace, and receive the benefits of his atoning death. Such only as do are His *redeemed*, in the full and proper sense of that term.

Further, all creation, in a way we cannot yet understand, has been affected by the death of Christ. As the apostle writes: "And having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself . . . whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven" (Col. i. 20). And again, "The earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God . . . the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of God" (Rom. viii. 19-22, R.V.). Whatever curse or bondage sin brought upon creation, it shall all be removed by Him who sold all that He had to buy the field, which contained what He esteemed to be an unspeakably precious treasure.

THE PEARL.—The two parables are evidently very similar in their teaching. Yet that there are points of difference goes without saying, otherwise there would not have been two given. In the first, the man is represented as unexpectedly finding the treasure, and it is a joyful surprise to him. In the second a merchant is seen *seeking* goodly pearls. It was his business. To enable him to do it, the man had doubtless special training and knowledge.

He knew how and where to search, and could appreciate at its proper value a good pearl when he found it. The treasure was probably in many pieces; the pearl is described as "one pearl of great price."

The merchant of the parable represents our Lord Jesus; the pearl the church, His bride. A pearl originally has its place in the ocean's depths; and the church was once in and of the sea of sinful humanity (v. 47). With toil and risk a pearl is brought forth from its hiding place; and at great labour and infinite suffering the Church has been redeemed, and is being fitted for its eternal destiny. "Christ also loved the church," it is written, "and gave Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. v. 25, 26, R.V.). Here, in doctrinal language, is set forth what the parable gives us in the words: "Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it." The pearl alone is in view; it only was purchased. * How much is contained in the phrase, "He went and sold all that he had," we can faintly enter into, as we ponder Phil. ii. 6-8 and kindred Scriptures. The soul is lost in wonder, love and praise, as it thus muses on what it cost the Son of God to make the church His own for ever. A pearl, we are told, begins to exist as the result of a grain of sand or other foreign substance getting within

the shells of certain molluses : this forms the nucleus around which the pearl-substance is gradually deposited. Sin is, as it were, a foreign thing in God's universe ; it is an abominable condition. Yet, but for its presence among men, Christ would not have had the joy of welcoming to Himself His redeemed, cleansed, and glorified church. And the time is fast coming when, the church complete and gathered to the home He has prepared for her, adorned with the comeliness He has put upon her, "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied."

Since, whatever view may be taken of these parables, the teaching we have gathered from them is borne out by the plain statements of Scripture, it becomes us to let the same mind be in us which was in Christ Jesus our Lord ; and to shew by our words and ways that we "count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus" our Lord, for whom we are willing to suffer the loss of all things, that we may gain Christ, and be found in Him now and at His coming.

Clouds.

"He scattereth His bright cloud : and it is turned round about by His counsels. . . . He causeth it to come, whether for correction . . . or for mercy" (Job xxxvii. 11-13).

The inner side of every cloud,
Is bright and shining ;
I therefore turn my clouds about,
And always wear them inside out,
To show the lining.

THE ATONEMENT OF CHRIST :

ITS NECESSITY, ITS NATURE, ITS RESULTS.
A BIBLE READING. BY THE EDITOR.

THE Cross of Christ, the atoning death of the Son of God, is the central doctrine of the Gospel, and fundamental to the Christian faith. In the glad tidings proclaimed by Paul, he delivered "first of all," how that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. xv. 3). "The sufferings of Christ" (1 Pet. i. 11) were ordained in eternal purpose (Acts iv. 28), and are essential to His work as Saviour. That "the Son of Man *must* be lifted up" (John iii. 14), that "He *must* suffer" (Mark viii. 31), that all which was written "*must* be accomplished in Me" (Luke xxii. 27), was the Lord's own testimony concerning His death. And that death was not only to be as a martyr for righteousness, but as "a ransom for many" (Matt. xx. 28).

THE NECESSITY OF ATONEMENT.

The whole testimony of the Word proclaims the fact that "without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22). The language of the types, the voices of the prophets, the experiences of the Psalms, the records of the evangelists, and the teachings of the apostles unite in setting forth Christ as the one Great Sacrifice for sin, by which satisfaction has been rendered to God, and through which salvation has been procured for men.

In order to have a just view and a full appreciation of the atonement of Christ, as set forth in the Scriptures, it is necessary to have a proper estimate of

sin, not only as it affects the sinner in its results, but in its relation to a righteous and holy God. When sin is lightly thought of, or a personal sense of its guilt wanting, the doctrine of the Cross will be but little valued. Errors on this and kindred subjects may all be traced to unscriptural or shallow views of sin, and to flippant language regarding its nature and retribution. Sin is the cause of all man's woe, yet the one thing he seeks to ignore or belittle.

THE NATURE OF ATONEMENT.

The word "atonement" has been etymologically described as "at-one-ment." It occurs only once in the New Testament (Rev. v. 11), and there it is imperfectly rendered, the margin and R.V. giving it correctly—"reconciliation"—as in Heb. ii. 17, "reconciliation" ought to be atonement. ATONEMENT is something made Godward, reconciliation is the result manward. The word "propitiation" occurs in 1 John ii. 2; iv. 10 only. In Rom. iii. 24, 25, another word is used and is rendered mercyseat (Heb. ix. 5). "Propitiation" is the New Testament equivalent to "atonement" in the Old. The mercyseat or propitiatory, was the throne of Jehovah, upon which the cloud or Shekinah of glory appeared. There, on that golden slab, with its crown around and Cherubim on either end, once a year the blood of atonement was sprinkled (Lev. xvi. 15, 30), and on this ground Jehovah dwelt among the people, and was able to say, "there will I meet with thee" (Exod. xxv. 11). So Christ crucified, the Propitiation and also the Pro-

pitatory, is the appointed meeting-place between a righteous God and guilty sinners in virtue of the blood of the Cross. Thus it was that the publican of old came to God, not appealing for mercy apart from righteousness, but taking his place before God, convicted yet confiding, he prayed, "God be merciful (or, make propitiation, same word as in Heb. ii. 17, R.V.) for me THE sinner" (Luke xviii. 13). The propitiation is "for *the whole world*," the ransom given is for *all* (1 Tim. ii. 6), and in virtue thereof any and every sinner however vile, who comes to God in His appointed way—"through faith in His blood" (Rom. iii. 23), will, as surely as the publican, be "justified freely by His grace" (Rom. iii. 24), "justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 39). It is on the ground of atonement made, satisfaction rendered by the death of Christ, that there is a Gospel to preach to "every creature" (Mark xv. 15), and that salvation is brought within the reach of all. Yet, only in the acceptor, the believer, is this salvation a present possession.

WHAT SIN IS.

Man is spoken of in the Scriptures as accountable, in relation to God and His government. His fallen condition is also there described, his ruin defined. *Sin* is "missing the mark," "coming short" of a standard. It is *transgression*, the breach of a known commandment. It is *guilt*, the violation of Divine law, bringing retributive punishment. It is *defilement*, unfitting him for the presence of a holy God. Men judge by outward and overt acts, as they must, for

cannot read the heart, but the all-seeing God, to whom all things are naked and opened, describes sin in its source and spring, and His Word concerning it is, "Sin is lawlessness" (1 John iii. 4), rebellion against His throne, in a word, self-will. Unregenerate man is a rebel, and regarded by God as an enemy (Rom. v. 10). His mind is enmity against God (Rom. viii. 9), his nature depraved and distorted in every region, himself "godless" (Eph. ii. 12, R.V.), and fallen under the authority of Satan (Acts xxvi. 18), the usurper, whose willing slave and tool he is. Moreover, he is "without strength" (Rom. v. 6) to deliver himself, and "no man can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him" (Psa. xlix. 7). And this depravity, this guilt, makes the sinner amenable to judgment, and "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. vi. 23).

The work of the Spirit in the world, throughout this age of grace, is to "convict" men "of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." These words are lightly disposed of by many, as if they meant no more than remorse for wrongdoing, such as a criminal feels when he is found out, or a gambler or speculator when he has lost his all. That men reap as they sow is a law of universal application, but its operation does not discover sin in its strength, nor lead to its acknowledgment before God. This is the conviction the Spirit works in the soul. He brings the sinner face to face with God; He brings sin to the conscience in its enormity as committed against the Holy One, and raises the cry, "Against Thee, Thee only,

have I sinned, and done this evil in THY sight" (Psa. li. 4). RIGHTEOUSNESS describes the character of His throne, and just JUDGMENT is the sure result. How can the Just One become the Justifier of the ungodly? Man can give no answer to this; he stands with closed mouth, without resource. Man's extremity is God's opportunity. A Saviour-God appears. His answer is, "Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a Ransom" (Job xxxiii. 24). The rejecter or neglecter who despises the provided meeting-place, passes on to judgment for his own sins (Col. iii. 6), and with the added guilt of despising the remedy (John iii. 18; Heb. x. 29).

THE MEANING OF ATONEMENT.

The Old Testament word *caphar* means "to atone," "to cover," and points to the expiatory character of the Lord's death. He appeared once in the end of the world to "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. ix. 26). The Baptist testified of Him, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29). Expiation, or covering by sacrifice, is the primary meaning of atonement. The same word is rendered "pitch" (Gen. iv. 14), as used of that which covered the gopher wood of Noah's ark, and preserved all within it from the waters of judgment. "Appease" in Gen. xxxii. 20, used of Jacob's present to Esau, his offended brother, designed as an atonement for past offences. "Ransom" in Exod. xxx. 12, of the atonement money, paid by Israel to protect them from the plague, and give them a title to be numbered among the people of God.

“Satisfaction” in Num. xxxv. 31, where no ransom, no atonement was to be accepted for the release of a murderer from the death penalty of his crime. All these words express in varied ways the meaning of atonement, and point onward to the work which was to be effected and now has been accomplished, once for all, by the offering up of the Great Sacrifice of Christ on Calvary.

(To be continued.)

OUTLINES IN “ACTS.”

PART IV.—THE APOSTLESHIP OF PAUL.

ANOTHER testimony was now to go forth, a testimony to the loss of Israel's and the earth's hopes for the present, and to the call of an elect people out of earth into heaven. And Saul the persecutor, that is, Paul the Apostle, was made the special bearer of it.

And how rich was the grace displayed by the Lord, in choosing Saul to be the vessel of this heavenly treasure! At this very time he was in full enmity against God and His Anointed. At his feet the witnesses whose hands had been first upon Stephen, laid down their clothes. But this is the man that is to be made God's chosen vessel; and such is the way of the Lord in abounding mercy. Before this, man's fullest enmity had been met by God's fullest love; for the cross was at the same moment the witness of both, as the person of Saul is now. “The soldier's spear,” as one has observed, “drew forth the blood and water—sin has drawn forth grace.” And now, as we may say, Saul's journey to Damascus was the spear

making its way a second time into the side of Christ; for he was now going with commission and slaughter against the flock of God. But it was on this journey that the light from heaven arrested him. The blood of Jesus thus again met the soldier's cruel spear, and Saul is a pattern of all long-suffering.

The sovereign grace that saves the Church was thus displayed in Saul. But the heavenly glory that is reserved for the Church, was also displayed to him, for he sees Jesus in it. And by these things his future ministry is formed.

And here I may observe in connection with this, that at the times of calling out new ministries, there have commonly been characteristic exhibitions of Christ. Thus, when Moses was called forth at Horeb, he saw a burning, but yet unconsumed bush, out of the midst of which Jehovah spake to him. And the ministry which he then received was according to this vision, to go and deliver Israel from the affliction of Egypt, in the midst of which God had been with them, preserving them in spite of it all. When he and the people afterwards stood under Sinai, the mountain was altogether in a smoke, so that even Moses himself exceedingly feared and quaked. But all this was so, because there was about to proceed from it, that law which poor fallen man can never answer, and which therefore is but the ministry of death and condemnation to him, though he be such an one as Moses himself. When Moses afterwards drew towards God, standing between Him and the people, he receives (in accordance with the mediate place which

he thus occupied) his commission to deliver, as the national mediator, the laws and ordinances of the King. But when in the last place, he goes up to the top of the hill, far beyond both the region of horrible fire and the mediate place which he occupied as the mediator of the nation, and where all was calm and the presence of the Lord around him, he receives the tokens of grace, the types of Christ, the Saviour and Priest, and is from thence made to minister to Israel, "the shadows of good things to come." In all these we see much that was expressive of the ministry about to be appointed.

So afterwards, though in a more limited way. When Joshua was about to receive a commission to compass Jericho with men of war, the Lord appears to him as a Man of war, with a sword drawn in His hand.

When Isaiah was called to go forth as the prophet of judgment against Israel, the Lord was seen in His temple in such terrible majesty, that the very posts of the door moved at His voice, and the house was filled with smoke (Isaiah vi.).

When our Lord stood in the land of Israel the minister of the circumcision, according to this place and character, He appoints twelve to go forth to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But after the resurrection, when He stood on the earth in a larger character, all power in heaven and earth being then His, He commissions His Apostles accordingly—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." And so now—ascended into heaven, and there calling and receiving the Church to Himself, He

appears to Saul from that glory; and in him appoints a ministry formed upon the principle of this manifestation. Heaven was the birthplace of Paul's Apostleship; and according to this, he was sent forth to gather out and raise up a people from earth to heaven.

Thus, from the place from whence his call into office came, we at the beginning might be prepared for something new and heavenly. But his Apostleship was "out of due time," as well as out of due place (1 Cor. xv. 8). It not only did not come from Jerusalem, but it arose after the Apostleship there had been perfected. Judas's forfeited bishopric had been filled up by Matthias, and thus the body of twelve, as ordered by the Lord at the beginning, was again complete; and Paul's Apostleship is thus a thing born "out of due time."

But though in this respect, "out of due time," yet not so in every respect. The times and seasons which the Lord has taken for the unfolding of his counsels are, doubtless, all due and rightly ordered; and having "the mind of Christ" (the present inheritance, through grace, of every spiritual man), we may seek to know this; remembering first of all, whose counsels we are searching into, and how it becomes us to walk before Him with unshod feet. May He keep us, brethren, thus treading His course, and may the haste of inquirers never take us out of the place and attitude of worshippers. Let us ever remember, that it is in His temple we must inquire (Psa. xxvii. 4).

J. G. B.

THE PATHWAY OF BLESSING.—II.

READ PSALMS CXXXII. CXXXIII.

This Psalm has a prayer of seven petitions and seven answers. Notice the similarity of the language in the earlier part, to that at the close. There are at least four petitions and four direct answers. The first petition is, "Arise, O Lord, unto Thy rest;" the second, "Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness;" the third, "And let Thy saints shout for joy;" the fourth, "Turn not away the face of thine anointed." Now look at the answers. To the first, "This is My rest for ever: here will I dwell;" to the second, "I will also clothe her priests with salvation;" to the third, "And her saints shall shout aloud for joy;" to the fourth, "I have ordained a lamp for Mine anointed: His enemies will I clothe with shame." I want you to notice that there is not a single petition presented to God that He does not *amplify in the answer*. For example, if they say "Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness," He says "I will clothe her priests with salvation," which is more than righteousness, for it implies righteousness and practical deliverance. God gives more than His people ask. There is one thing He gives for which we find no petition: "I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread" (ver. 15). It is just as if He said: Whatever you have asked, you shall have and more. But we are not speaking of Christ and Israel, but of Christ and His own now—little companies gathered here and there unto His precious Name. His promise is, "I will abundantly

bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread!" This would put an end to grumbling about "poor meetings." We do not need anything so much as we need the sense of His presence with us. And if we have it, what will happen? "Dry" meetings will be at an end. The brother who stands up to minister God's Word may not say anything very new, indeed it may be very commonplace; but if it comes in power and freshness from the living Head, the saints will have a feast. And what will conduce to this? Just what is suggested in this psalm—*Prayer*. In Acts ii., one of the four things the early believers continued stedfastly in, was "prayers." O how this is dropping out! Not many months ago I was in a large meeting where there would be somewhere about 175 nominally in church fellowship, and in the middle of the week prayer meeting I am safe in saying there were under a dozen and a half present. When such is the case, is it any wonder that there is not much spiritual power or progress?

Look now at the last Psalm. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" Here we have the blessing, the power, and the sweetness of a little company that goes on in God's precious order, and gives Christ His place, just as Israel gave the ark its place. It was the beginning of a new era to them. Two things characterise it. *Good and pleasant*. The order is divine. The first thing that the assembly thus walking with God is likened to is, "the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even

Aaron's beard." The savour of that ointment would fill the whole place. That ointment is a type of the exquisite graces that God saw in His blessed Son, and sees in measure in His people, when they are in this condition. When a company of God's dear people are walking in fellowship with God and with each other, seeking by grace to "keep the unity of the Spirit," God looks down upon that company with delight, as if He would say—Isn't it beautiful? It is the result of the Cross: And with approval and delight God says, "It is like the precious ointment"—the savour of it reaches from this poor earth groaning under the curse of sin, up to the throne of God. Then it is like "the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion." It is a far cry from Hermon to Zion, but it is all the better an illustration of the blessed results that follow. When a company of God's people are walking with God, who can measure the far-reaching consequences? Hermon means "devoted," and there it rears its head away up in that calm, quiet atmosphere. Zion means "very dry." A company of believers thus walking with God will be walking far above this poor world, and the result will be felt in the needy scene around. There ever must be such blessing resulting from an assembly walking with God and in unity. May we learn the threefold lesson of these Psalms: (1) To keep Christ before us as our perfect Model; (2) To give Christ His place as God's Centre, and as long as we give Him that place, not merely on the first day of the week, but every day of our lives, there will be victory. But if He is put out of His

place, it will be defeat and disaster; (3) Give Christ His place as Lord; "sanctify the Christ as Lord in your heart" (1 Pet. iii. 15, R.V.), always, everywhere, walking in unity, and the result will be pleasing to God, and a blessing to those around.

What is the Church?

WHAT is the Church? A house not made with hands;

Christ the foundation Stone on which it stands;

A Temple reared on earth to tell the praise
Of the Great Ancient of eternal days.

What is the Church? A Body—Christ the Head;
Members of Him, the First-born from the dead;
One Lord, one Life, one sympathetic soul
Indwells the frame, breathes in and through the whole.

One Family, though parted here beneath;
Severed by time, by distance, rank, or death;
Parted, yet gathered round one common board,
Where Jesus sits unseen—their Risen Lord.

A Living House, whose great Foundation Stone
Is Christ the Lamb, who did for sin atone;
A Living Band, whose ranks shall be complete
When circling round their great Redeemer's feet.

What is the Church? Not wood, or brick, or stone,
A Temple reared by human hands alone,
Or place where Christians meet for praise and prayer,
(Though e'en the Master deigns to meet them there).

The Church! It is the Lamb's own Holy Bride.
Cleansed in the blood which issued from His side;
Bought with the ransom price He freely paid,
When on the Altar, He for her was laid.

Church of the Living God! She soon shall rise
A glorious Temple towering to the skies;
With pearly gates and street of heavenly gold,
A City, angels shall with joy behold;

A Crystal Palace for the Saviour King,
To which creation shall its tribute bring,
Where He who wept and sorrowed, groaned and died,
Shall dwell for ever with His ransomed Bride.

The Bible Annotator.

OUTLINES OF GOSPEL SUBJECTS.

FOR GOSPELLERS AND CHRISTIAN WORKERS.

THREE CLASSES OF GOSPEL HEARERS.

PROFESSORS (Titus i. 16)—All without, no Christ within.

POSSESSORS (1 John v. 9)—Christ received and enjoyed within.

CONFESSORS (Rom. x. 10)—Testimony comes out, because of life within

THE TRIUNE GOD, IN LUKE XV.

The Shepherd seeking (ver. 4-7)—Work of Christ.
The Woman finding (ver. 8-18)—Work of the Spirit.
The Father receiving (ver. 11-32)—Work of the Father.

CHRIST GAVE HIMSELF.

FOR ALL (1 Tim. ii. 6)—The Widest Circle.

FOR MANY (Mark x. 45)—The Believing Circle.

FOR THE CHURCH (Eph. v. 25)—The Inner Circle.

FOR ME (Gal. ii. 20)—The Personal Circle.

FIVE LOOKS OF JESUS.

Look of Compassion (Matt. ix. 36)—On the Perishing

Look of Desire (Mark v. 32)—On the Healed.

Look of Complacency (Mark iii. 34)—On His Own.

Look of Pity (Luke xxii. 61)—On a Backslider.

Look of Anger (Mark iii. 5)—On the Hardened.

Familiar Texts Re-read.

"For of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who was made unto us wisdom from God, both righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. i. 30, R.V., margin). The marginal reading is a decided improvement on the text, but it fails to give the full reading, which ought to be "both righteousness and sanctification, *even* redemption." The wisdom which is from God meets the sinner's need as foolish, ignorant, and without the knowledge of God; but he needs more. Sin has brought in condemnation, corruption has rendered him unfit for God's presence, or companionship. In the fulness of His grace, God has met the triple need, making Christ not only wisdom, but also redemption, which, in its fulness, includes both righteousness and holiness.

"In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of Promise" (Eph. i. 13). The R.V. gives, "In whom having also believed," or as it might be even more simply and correctly rendered, "In whom also believing ye were sealed." There is no interval between the

believing and the sealing, as some teach. When the sinner believes in Christ, God immediately seals him, marks him out as His own, and on him His seal abides "unto the day of redemption" (Eph. iv. 30), of final, full redemption of the body (Rom. viii. 23) for which believers wait. Then God will claim His purchased possession.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Are the words of Isaiah liii. 5, "The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed," applicable to all, or to believers only? Primarily they are words which repentant Israel will use, when the veil is taken from their heart, and they recognise the once-smitten Lamb of God as their true Messiah. They are applicable now to all believers, but not to those who still reject the Saviour. Such are not "healed." The work accomplished on the Cross has brought such healing with their reach; it is proclaimed to them in the Gospel, but although "unto all" it is experienced actually, only by those who believe.

To what period does the words "the end" (1 Cor. xv. 24) apply? To the end of all God's dispensational dealings, including that of the millennial kingdom which has been "delivered up," and the judgment of both living and dead over. To the eternal state there is no end.

Answers to Correspondents

ANON.—The lines you partly quote are from Bonar's hymn entitled "The Song of the New Creation." The verse is as follows:—

"No night is there,

No shadow ever falls

Upon thy golden street,

Or stains thy jasper walls.

No watchman on thy towers

The night hours nightly calls;

No plunderer of the dark

The startled ear appals.

'Tis endless festival,

Within thy princely halls.

A. N. D.—Baptism is nowhere in the Scriptures connected with regeneration or life-giving; it is always the symbol, or likeness of death and burial (Rom. vi. 4; Col. ii. 12; 1 Pet. iii. 21). This is ignored by all who regard it as a means to, or seal of receiving life, no less by those who make it the means of entrance into the kingdom or the church,

INQUIRER.—There is nothing to prove that the days of Gen. i. were long periods, or anything different from ordinary days of twenty-four hours. If so, what meaning do the words, “the evening and the morning” convey? The sabbath (Gen. ii. 2) was clearly such a day, and as such was to be observed (Exod. xvi. 26; xx. 10). If your friend discredits the record of Gen. i. on the ground that God could not have possibly accomplished in so brief a period what is there said to have been done, he constitutes himself judge of the Creator, and fixes the rate at which He ought to have wrought to square with that school of scientific sceptics, of which he is a humble pupil. All that they or we know is, what is told us in God’s Book, and our wisdom is to take it as it stands.

J. G., LIVERPOOL.—A clean, comfortable hall, to which you can invite people to hear the Word, is a necessity alike for Gospel work and ministry to believers. The wonder is, that Christians who go in for comfortable, not to say elegant dwellings for themselves, fitted up luxuriously, do not use their good taste and a little more of their money in obtaining halls to which Christians who need help in the truth, and respectable sinners, of whom so few are usually reached, could be got to hear the Gospel. But there is something more important still, that is, to have those on the platform who have something to give the people when they do come, that will “grip” them and bring them back. This is the greatest lack of all, in most cases where the people “don’t come in.” And here the remedial process must begin; not by “up-to-date” or “flash in the pan” preaching, not a new preacher every week, or everybody having a chance in rotation, but those preaching whom God has called, fitted and sent, giving out sound, solid ministry of God’s Gospel, and His truth in the freedom and freshness of the Holy Ghost, as He may guide them.

Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION VII.—Who is primarily responsible for the rent and expenses of halls in which assemblies of believers gather? Is it the individuals whose names are on the lease, or the assembly as a whole?

ANSWER A.—Clearly the assembly as a whole. One or more acting on behalf of others may sign the contract, but those on whose behalf they do so, and who use the hall, are responsible for its cost.

J. C.

ANSWER B.—Such a question implies that if difficulties arise, those whose names are on the lease, and who are primarily responsible, may be held liable for rent, &c. But surely a recognition of the principles of Rom. xii. 17; xiii. 10, would prevent such being left to discharge a responsibility that they assumed for the benefit of others.

A. G.

EDITOR’S NOTE.—If it be necessary—as in most cases it is—that a lease be arranged, then it must bear the names of one or more to be held responsible by the landlord. If they represent the assembly and have their sanction for entering on the agreement, then clearly those who use the hall are responsible to meet all liabilities connected with it. Names on a lease, in such circumstances, do not however give those whose names they are, any personal claim either to the use of the building, or its control.

QUESTION VIII.—In matters in which a number of Assemblies, say in a city, are mutually interested, what is the Scriptural and proper way of arranging them? Ought representative brethren from all these Assemblies together do so, or a select few who represent nothing?

ANSWER A.—In all well-ordered companies of God’s people, there are those who are recognised as over them “in the Lord” (1 Thess. v. 12). If in the course of their service they find it necessary to consult together on matters of common interest, surely they have Scripture precedent for so doing in Acts xv. 2-6. Those who went up with Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem represented the assembly or assemblies which had been disturbed by the Judaizers. But it would have been entirely an different matter if a clique had gone on their own account, without the knowledge or fellowship of their brethren.

J. S.

ANSWER B.—A great deal has been spoken and written in recent years, exposing the mistakes and warning of the dangers connected with what has been named “United Oversight” meetings, and possibly it was all needed. But in recoiling from one extreme, there is the tendency to go to the other, and this is possibly where some now are, in respect of this matter. If a few men, all of one school, come together in secret session, and arrive at certain conclusions, or make certain arrangements which affect and involve many assemblies, who have no opportunity of expressing their mind

on such matters, is the danger any less? Or if a number come together, many of whom are neither qualified for, nor recognised as doing shepherd work in the assemblies where they are, what right have they to act on their behalf, or to assume that they are their representatives? Much evil is wrought by rash and inexperienced young men and others being pushed forward, or allowed to push themselves forward into places of prominence, especially in such meetings, greatly to their own hurt, and with disastrous effects in the work of the Lord.

W. M.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—Thirty years ago a division arose in a certain assembly, which made it necessary for others in the neighbourhood to acquaint themselves of its nature and cause. A meeting was mutually arranged for those exercising shepherd care, and recognised as guides in the various assemblies, to hear statements from representatives of both sides. When they came together, it was found the company included quite a number of inexperienced young men, and as many more who had in no way commended themselves as shepherds in the assemblies where they were, or as being possessed of discernment and wisdom to deal with such matters. To recognise such men in the capacity of overseers, by allowing them to share in the deliberations of such a gathering, was felt to be doing both them and the assemblies from which they came a moral wrong, and establishing them in a position for which they had no fitness. After prayer, an aged man of God, of much experience, suggested that before proceeding with the matter which had brought them together, they might quietly read 1 Tim. chap. iii. and Titus chap. i., where the qualifications and characteristics of those taking oversight in God's assembly are given adding, "and let the Word of God search and test us individually. If we lack the Divine qualifications of overseers, if we are not doing their work, or recognised as such by our fellow-saints who know us best, then we have no right to be here, and if we are honest before God, we will not force ourselves in where we have no title." The Scriptures were read; the effect was wonderful. More than half of the company rose and left; a few whose consciences were less tender, needed a little "personal application" of the truth before they made their exodus, but the cleansing had to be complete before the work could go on. The result was, through grace, complete oneness of mind and judgment, with healing and restoration of fellowship. Whoever

comes together to discuss matters of common interest to assemblies, should be those who represent them, who know, having ascertained their minds regarding the matters being considered, and who act not as individuals on their own account, but as on behalf of the assemblies they come from. Too often such matters are managed on the principle, that a "select committee" or party clique, gathered in a side room of the House of Commons, may pass a Bill and make it law, without reference to anybody but themselves. But God's business is not "manœuvred" on such lines; nor does He fail to manifest sooner or later His displeasure in all attempts to use craft and worldly wisdom and subtlety in Divine things. "He taketh the wise in their own craftiness" (1 Cor. iii. 19) are weighty words, and it is not without cause, that they occur in a passage where defilement of the temple of God through man's will and human wisdom is the subject.

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Questions Requiring Answers.

We acknowledge with gratitude, the valued help given in this department by esteemed brethren and servants of the Lord and would most earnestly seek a yet fuller measure of fellowship in this deeply responsible and important ministry. There are many honest and inquiring children of God, who greatly value the help given in this way, and we have very many grateful testimonies to timely aid given in trying seasons, and in perplexing paths, received through these answers.

QUESTION IX.—If an assembly becomes divided from some internal trouble, and one party goes out forming a new meeting in the same town, is it according to God that both be recognised and received from as assemblies of God?

QUESTION X.—What is the sin against the Holy Ghost mentioned in Matt. xii. 32?

QUESTION XI.—Do the words in 2 Tim. i. 14, "All they which are in Asia, be turned away from me," imply that the whole of the Asiatic assemblies had rejected Paul and his ministry?

QUESTION XII.—Is it according to God's will that men should be accepted as teachers in assemblies and at conferences who are frequently found in sectarian churches and chapels preaching, sometimes even on Lord's Day morning when the assembly they profess to be associated with is gathered to shew forth the Lord's death? This is a matter which is exercising very many, and has stumbled a large number of young believers. Help from the Word regarding it, will be greatly valued.

THE CHRISTIAN'S DAILY FARE.

BY FRANKLIN FERGUSON, NEW ZEALAND.

WE are amazed that many Christians exist at all, considering the scanty fare they live on. They have no time to leisurely partake of a meal on the food sent down from Heaven fresh every morning, but they hurry off, as though the cares and business of half the countryside were upon their shoulders. They would lead you to think that they were such important personages, that the whole business or household machinery would stop, if they did not superintend. Yet, passing strange, nobody seems to miss these same "indispensible" people, when our Lord graciously lays them for a season on their back, to allow them a little breathing space, and to take some nourishing food for their souls. Then we by and by hear them say, "It was good for me that I had been afflicted." Ah! it is a very short-sighted policy to be in so great a hurry, that we cannot afford a reasonable time to eat and masticate.

A Christian manufacturer was asked, "When do you manage to find time to read and study the Word of God?" The questioner well knew that this gentleman's life was a very busy one, and that to minister the Word of God on the Lord's Day and at other times, as he did, must need a fair share of time allotted to private devotion. "I never find time to read," he replied. "I am at the mill from early till late, and my business requires so much of my attention, that how do you think I could find time?" "But," said his friend, "how do you

manage then?" "Well," he said, "I will tell you, *I take the time*. For one hour in the middle of the day, I turn the key in my private office, and during that hour no one can see me however important is their business. If I did not *take time*, I should never be able to *find it*."

We can commend the example of this Christian manufacturer for the imitation of the Lord's people, as the only cure for any who are small, thin, or blasted in consequence of sinful neglect in attending to their spiritual needs.

Imagine, for a moment, the children of God beginning a day in the following fashion, which, by the way, is not at all unusual: Upon rising and having dressed, before leaving the bedroom, they do not open their Bible and read and meditate therein, thus getting in touch with God and strengthened for the concerns of life they must soon be battling with; but, instead, they are satisfied to drop on one knee for two minutes, bury their face in the bedclothes, and mumble something or other. They say they are praying! Such prayer cometh not forth but by laziness, and never "moves the hand which moves the world to bring deliverance down." They go forth from their room, only to immediately fall an easy prey to the snare of the devil. Let one of the children have mislaid your boots or another have upset the porridge pot over the stove, and we soon discover how much the one-knee prayer has helped you to curb your disagreeable temper. Other things follow suit, and you are fretting and blaming all day, and instead of the lips "ministering grace to the hearers," others

have got to endure hearing your murmuring complaint — "Life is a misery!" Certainly it becomes so, under such very unhappy conditions, whereas it could have been so different had a proper start been made.

Some follow the custom of reading every night before going to bed. To me this seems like a man working all day on an empty stomach, whom Nature will pretty soon teach that such a procedure is quite out of order. Do you know of any farmer who practises this method upon his horses? A hunger of soul is never brought about by this manner of reading, for you have little inclination to read after a hard day's toil, and this is quite clear to be seen as you sit by the bed with your candle and Book. You say to yourself "Let me see, where did I leave off? Surely I cannot remember." After satisfied by a little hunting to and fro where now to begin, you make a start. When nearly through the chapter there is a forward lurch, a grab at the Book as it is in the act of falling to the floor, and you exclaim "Dear me, I was almost asleep. Really, I must blow out the candle and get into bed!" How much is recollected by morning light, of reading God's precious Word in this way?

Can we now any longer wonder at the poor condition of such people? We think not. By such unnatural treatment their souls become so withered and thin, that if we had supernatural sight to see the "inner man" it would resemble a skeleton, as near as we can judge. Skeletons may do very well for a museum, but a skin-and-bone "citizen of Heaven" is no

credit to anyone, being an object of disdain in the eyes of the world and a butt for their ridicule. To our Heavenly Father they are a dishonour, because their lean state of soul implies scarcity at the family board, whereas the table groans under the good spread. Life has a very stern side, which we often prove, and wherewithal shall we meet its trials, glorifying God in them, if reading the Scriptures and prayer are neglected in their proper season? The example of David is deserving of notice: "I prevented (forestalled) the dawning of the morning and cried: I hoped in Thy Word. Mine eyes prevent (forestall) the night watches, that I might meditate in Thy Word" (Psa. cxix. 147, 148). "Forestall" is the word used in the Newberry Bible, and its meaning is "to buy goods before they reach the market;" and shows David's eagerness to get the start of everybody in prayer and meditation. Such enterprising spirit is becoming rare in these easy listless days of ours, in which sluggards abound (Prov. vi. 9-11).

The Heavenly Stranger.

HE came into a world which His hands had made,
 Dwelling here as a homeless Stranger;
 Though angel hosts could herald His birth,
 Man gave Him no place but a manger.

In lowliest grace He walked among men,
 The light all the darkness exposing;
 The Way and the Truth and the Life was He
 Who the heart of God was disclosing.

Yet man no comeliness in Him could see,
 While only the Carpenter knowing;
 But ever before the eye of God
 As a "tender plant" he was growing.

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

OR, ELEMENTS OF HEAVENLY BLESSEDNESS.

(Luke ix. 28-35).

BY THOMAS NEWBERRY, EDITOR OF "THE ENGLISHMAN'S BIBLE."

IN Matthew xvi. and Mark viii., the Transfiguration is stated to be "after six days," bringing us to the SEVENTH day, typical of millennial, earthly rest. But in Luke it is, "about an eight days after these sayings," thus connecting us with the eighth, or resurrection day, as foreshadowing the heavenly and resurrection rest of the saints of God.

In Matthew and Mark, the ORDER in which the disciples are named is, "Jesus taketh with Him, Peter, and James, and John," and this is emblematic of the three remnants of Israel during the great tribulation, and last week of Daniel's seventy weeks. Peter and James represent the two slain remnants; James those slain at the beginning, and Peter those who subsequently suffer (Rev. xx. 4, 5); and John, the type of those who are brought through the tribulation into the millennial kingdom. But in Luke the order is disarranged; it is here stated Peter, John, and James, because the three disciples in Luke, typify the risen saints.

In Luke, we have Christ as the SON OF MAN, and hence His dependence on His heavenly Father, and on the Holy Spirit especially noted, in His habit of prayer; He "went up into the mountain to pray. And it came to pass (*Gr.*) as He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and

glistening" [flashing as lightning]. This is the FIRST element of HEAVENLY BLESSEDNESS, the contemplation of the Son of Man in His Divine and heavenly glory, for THEN we shall SEE HIM AS HE IS, and be conformed to His image.

"And, behold, there talked with Him two men, which were Moses and Elias [Elijah]: who appeared in glory." These two men may be regarded as representing the law and the prophets, or perhaps more especially as types of the RAISED and CHANGED saints, for MOSES died and was buried, and ELIJAH was caught up without dying, but both appear in glory. This we may notice as the SECOND element of blessedness. FELLOWSHIP with the GLORIFIED REDEEMED, who are represented in the Revelation by the four and twenty elders and the four living ones.

These two men are seen "talking with Jesus," and we are told that the subject of their conversation was "the decease [departure] He should accomplish at Jerusalem." This is the THIRD element of blessedness: Communion with the risen Christ respecting those wondrous scenes of the crucifixion and Calvary, learning deeper, fuller lessons of the wonders of the cross from the very lips of the Redeemer Himself, and the secrets of the communion between the Father and the Son, and the witness of the Spirit, during those hours.

We now meet with a fourth element which does not appear in the accounts of Matthew and Mark. The men that were with Jesus "were HEAVY WITH SLEEP: and when they were FULLY AWAKE, they saw His glory, and the two men that stood with Him." Thus, TYPICALLY, these

three take their place in RESURRECTION.

While Peter spake, not knowing what he said, "There came a cloud (Matthew adds "bright"), and overshadowed them: and they feared as THEY entered into the cloud;" this gives us a fifth element of heavenly blessedness—the manifestation of Divine glory in the Shekinah, and the fellowship of the redeemed in that glory; for "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 John iv. 16).

Then, sixthly, we notice the fellowship of the Father with the Son, and His delight in Him. "And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear Him." Peter refers to this in his second epistle, first chapter: "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven WE heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount."

We next take notice of the language of Peter, which though out of place in connection with the vision of heavenly glory, is dispensationally true, for while the risen saints are keeping their eighth day, or resurrection sabbath in glory, the millennial saints will be keeping their seventh day eternal rest. They will be celebrating their feast of Tabernacles, or feast of ingathering at the year's end, the seventh-day sabbath of created rest.

FIRSTBORN AND FIRSTFRUITS.

BY DR. J. NORMAN CASE.

WE have previously had occasion to remark that some of the titles and symbols of Christ are, in a secondary sense, also applied to His people. The two symbols now before us are examples of this; for though both primarily apply to Christ, yet they are also used of Christians.

I. THE FIRSTBORN.—This word is twice found in connection with our Lord as born of a woman (Matt. i. 25; Luke ii. 7); thrice of Him as raised from the dead (Col. i. 18; Heb. i. 6; Rev. i. 5); and twice as a title of honour in His essential and eternal relation to the Father (Rom. viii. 29; Col. i. 15). But there is one passage where the word is used in the plural, and applied to the church. "But ye are come," it is said, "unto Mount Zion . . . and to innumerable hosts, the general assembly of angels, and CHURCH OF THE FIRSTBORN WHO ARE ENROLLED IN HEAVEN, &c. (Heb. xii. 22, 23, R.V. marg., Alford; Darby, &c). The "church of the firstborn" (ones) is a company that stands by itself, and refers, I judge, to the saints of the present dispensation.

Careful readers will observe, that the use of the word here (ver. 23) follows, and probably was suggested by, its use earlier in the chapter (ver. 16). Esau, it is said, for one mess of meat sold *his own birth-right*, the words in the two verses being practically the same. So this at once reminds us that we are dealing with an

Old Testament word and idea. To understand its force here, we must discover its use there. The title denotes pre-eminence and privilege. The firstborn succeeded to the headship of the family ; and this originally carried with it also the priestly function. It was this double privilege which the profane Esau despised, and bartered for a mess of pottage. Of that act an old writer well says : " There was never any meat, except the forbidden fruit, so dear bought as this broth of Jacob."

To the firstborn also pertained *a double portion of the inheritance* (Deut. xxi. 17). It was simply the portion of the firstborn which Elisha had in view, when he prayed for " a double portion " of his master's Spirit. Elisha knew his call from God, and now, for the glory of God and the good of Israel, he wished to be recognised as the heir to Elijah's gifts and office (2 Kings ii. 9). Little else, we may gather, had the prophet to leave.

To Pharaoh of old, through Moses, the word came : " Israel is my son, my firstborn," &c. (Exod. iv. 22). But through the weakness and wickedness of the nation, God could not give to all of them the portion and spiritual privileges of the firstborn. Later, the firstborn of each family was chosen for the position (Exod. xiii. 1), but even of this they did not prove themselves worthy, and in due time one tribe—the Levites, was chosen, instead of all the firstborn, to do the service of the sanctuary (Num. viii. 18). But now all Christians have the substance of which the above was but a shadow ; for all are " heirs of God,

joint-heirs with Christ ;" a " Kingdom of priests unto His God and Father " (Rev. i. 6, R.V. ; Rom. viii. 17).

But privilege always carries with it a corresponding responsibility. And woe to the Christian who, Esau-like, *despises his birthright!* In the full sense of the word, no true child of God ever does so ; though in an important respect regenerate people in large numbers are daily doing it. Any believer who allows a man on earth to take the name or act the part of priest on his behalf, in effect, despises his birthright. It is truly amazing, in the *light of the New Testament*, how true children of God can tolerate and be associated with Christ-dishonouring and soul-blighting systems of Sacredotalism !

The title carries with it the thought of dignity and pre-eminence. And these privileges, through union with Christ, in a peculiar sense apply to " the Church which is His body." Though still on earth, the names of His members are already enrolled in heaven. To that country they belong, to it they are hastening. And this is all of grace, unmerited favour from first to last. Thus brought into the place of firstborn ones, all the younger brethren gladly and adoringly give to the Lord Jesus His proper place of pre-eminence : thus owning and rejoicing in God's purpose, that He should be " the Firstborn among many brethren."

II. THE FIRSTFRUITS.—" Of His own will," it is written, " begat He us with the Word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures " (Jas. i. 18). " But this is found," some one may say, " in a Jewish epistle, and so has no

reference to the Church." Though the statement may be allowed, the inference therefrom does not necessarily follow. This great fact was stated of them, not as Jews in the flesh, but as those who had a part in the new creation. And there is nothing to show that the passage has any exclusive application to the future. It was true only of those among "the twelve tribes that were scattered abroad," who had been born anew, and all such, since Pentecost, belong to the elect Church of which Christ is Head. And in that church there are no class or national distinctions: all are one in Christ Jesus. There are reasons, both external and internal, for believing that 2 Thess. ii. 13 should read: "God chose you as *firstfruits* unto salvation," &c. (R.V., mar.). But on this we do not insist. In the Apocalypse the word is again found (chap. xiv. 4), but there it refers to the elect remnant of Israel, who in a future day will stand firm for God and His truth. The figure is chosen from the Old Testament. God ordained that the firstfruits of the field and vineyard should be consecrated to Him (Deut. xxvi.). Coming, as it did, early in the season, it was much prized by man. It was intended to teach them to put God and His claims first. On the part of Israel, it was an acknowledgment that every good gift they possessed came from God, and it became an expression of their gratitude. On the part of God, it was the pledge and promise that the whole harvest should be gathered in. It would thus still further remind them of His faithfulness.

In the present age, the children of God

are comparatively few. To the end the true Church will be "a little flock" (Luke xii. 32). It is the firstfruits only of God's creatures; the choicest and most prized if you will, get only the first selection of a great and glorious harvest. In due time "all Israel shall be saved," and their salvation will be the preparatory step to unspeakable blessing among all nations (Rom. xi. 15, 26). And throughout the thousand years, to the glory and joy of Christ, the great harvest shall be gathered in. It will be noticed that the term is not used absolutely. The word is "a *kind* of firstfruits." For Christ personally is the true Firstfruits (1 Cor. xv. 20, 23); and the Church only in virtue of its relationship to Him, occupies that position. In accordance with this, in Lev. xxiii. 10, the sheaf of firstfruits points to Christ; while later, in ver. 17, the two wave loaves, as firstfruits, refer to the church. For His resurrection was the pattern of ours, which also will be a resurrection from *among* the dead (Mark ix. 10; Phil. iii. 11 Gr.).

Even now and here, we have the Holy Spirit the Comforter, as the *firstfruits* of the joy, blessing, and holiness which shall soon be ours (Rom. viii. 23). And if the firstfruits be so precious and satisfying, what shall the harvest of heavenly bliss and glory be? Verily, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things that are laid up for those who love Him! If we, as taught by the Holy Spirit, practically enter on these things, the joys and glories of earth will be spread before us in vain.

THE ATONEMENT OF CHRIST:

ITS NECESSITY, ITS NATURE, ITS RESULTS.

A BIBLE READING. PART II.

BY THE EDITOR.

ATONEMENT BY BLOOD.—The testimony of the types, the language of the prophets, the teaching of evangelists and apostles is uniform and harmonious that atonement is by blood shed. Not the warm life-blood coursing through the veins, but blood shed, life poured out, the effusion of blood as the evidence of death. The Levitical rubric, "The life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you *upon the altar*, to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Lev. xvii. 11), tells *how* and *where* atonement was made, the words "blood" and "altar" clearly pointing to sacrificial death, foreshadowing the Cross. "Another Gospel," which better suits man's pride and more accords with "the dignity of human nature," denies all this, and sneers at it as a "religion of the shambles," a relic of heathendom, offering in its stead a humanitarian religion of self-sacrifice, of which Christ is the pattern and example, and His life infused, (the meaning they give to the blood) the power for moral purification and Christian conduct. The moral suasion of man, with a new motive brought into his life is uppermost in view. But this theory takes no cognisance of human guilt; it utterly ignores sin as it affects the throne and majesty of an offended God, nor does it provide any satisfaction or expiation Godward, or for

any legal deliverance from the curse—the death sentence—manward. It is generally associated with a denial of man's ruin, unscriptural views of Christ's Divinity, and denial of the punishment of the wicked. It is aptly described by Jude as "the way of Cain" (ver. 11), who was the first to come to God as a worshipper ignoring the fall, apart from the blood of a sin offering, bringing the fruit of his own toil, as religious sinners do now on the ground of the "Fatherhood of God," apart from redemption and regeneration.

THE RESULTS OF ATONEMENT.

The glory of God, the majesty of His throne outraged through sin, the restoration to Him of that which man had robbed Him, the vindication of His righteousness in "passing over" (Rom. iii. 23) the sins of men of faith in ages past, who, convicted of their guilt, had cast themselves upon His "forbearance," in view of the redemption to be wrought by a coming Deliverer; in brief, the Divine claims, not man's need but God's honour, was the first, the chief consideration in the atoning death of the Son of God. "He offered Himself without spot to God" (Heb. ix. 14, "An offering and a sacrifice to God for a *sweet smelling savour*" (Eph. v. 2). Like the burnt or "ascending offering," He was wholly laid upon the altar, and all that He was and did, went up to high heaven as a sweet savour.

In another aspect, God is the provider of the Lamb (Gen. xxii. 8). He did not spare, but gave His Son (Rom. viii. 32). He it was also who brought Him to death (Psa. xxii. 15), who caused the sword to

awake against Him (Zech. xiii. 7), who Himself put the awful "cup" into His hand (Matt. xxvi. 39, 42). In the sin-offering, the Victim was regarded as charged with the sin laid upon it, and consumed in devouring fire without the camp. So He, who in Himself personally was ever the Holy One, in whom God was well pleased, was "made to be SIN for us," that we might be made "the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21). It was not as is sometimes unwisely said, "the innocent dying for the guilty," which would be unjust, but the Holy One who knew no sin, so charged with the sin of others, as to vicariously suffer for and expiate it by His death.

The words used in the New Testament in connection with the death of the Lord Jesus, and descriptive of the result flowing from it, may be divided into two groups. First, that which the atonement has procured for men as men, for the world as such; second, the blessings it has secured for those who have received the Gospel, and who, by faith in the Lord Jesus, and new birth by the Spirit, have been brought into a new relationship with God, accepted in the Beloved, in whom they share all the blessings and benefits of the everlasting covenant, and stand before God in all the value of His perfect work and peerless Person. The confusing of these two aspects of the work of Christ, leads to many erroneous expressions in presenting the Gospel to sinners, and the truth to saints.

In the wider aspect, He is "a ransom for all" (1 Tim. ii. 5); the "propitiation for the whole world" (1 John ii. 2). It is

on this ground that the Gospel is preached to "all creation under heaven" (Col. i. 23), that God proclaims "forgiveness of sins" (Acts xiii. 38) to all, without respect of persons, that the invitation to "who-soever will" is to "take the water of life freely" (Rev. xxii. 17). No sinner who has heard the Gospel can ever lay the blame of his damnation at God's door, or plead as an excuse that there was no salvation provided for him. The death of Christ, which was "for (on account of) our sins" (1 Cor. xv. 3) and for the ungodly (Rom. v. 6), has procured salvation *for* all, and it is proclaimed *unto all* in the Gospel. To those who receive the reconciliation, and by faith become identified with Christ, other blessings are made known, as procured by and flowing from the one Great Sacrifice of the Cross. "They have *redemption* through His blood" (Eph. i. 7), and this includes deliverance by power as well as by price. They are "*loosed* from their sins (Rev. i. 7, R.V.), justified (Rom. v. 10), and sanctified (Heb. xiii. 12) through His blood. Their sins, which were borne in His own body on the tree (1 Pet. ii. 28) are so completely purged (Heb. i. 3) that they are remembered no more (Heb. x. 17), and they, as worshippers, once purged, stand before Him in peace, having "no more conscience of sins" (Heb. x. 2). All this and much more, becomes the present inalienable possession of all who by faith pass into the family of God (John i. 12), and become sharers in the benefits which flow from the one great sacrifice of Calvary, which here and in glory forms the theme of song, of all the redeemed.

THE PATH OF THE SERVANT.

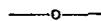
THOSE who fight the Lord's battles, must be contented to be in no respect accounted of—they must expect to be in no wise encouraged by the prospects of human praise. And, if you make an exception, "that the children of God will praise you, whatever the world will say," beware of this, for you *may turn them into a world*, and find them in a world, and may sow to the flesh in sowing to their approbation. And you will neither be benefited by them, nor they by you, so long as respect for them is your motive, so long as you are conscious as to how they will think of you.

All such motives are a poison to you, and a taking away from you the strength in which you are to give glory to God; and because such a time may be needful for you, I beseech you, be prepared for a time when you shall be as persons unknown, even to those that know God.

It is not the fact that all that see the face of the Lord, do see each other. It is not the fact, that the misapprehension of the world is the only misapprehension the Christian must be contented to labour under. He must expect even his brethren to see him through a mist, and to be disappointed of their sympathy, and their cheers of approbation. The man of God must walk alone with God; he must be contented that the Lord knoweth. And it is such a relief to the natural man within us, to fall back upon human countenance, and human sympathy, that we often deceive ourselves, and think it brotherly love, when we are just resting

on the earthly sympathy of a brother worm.

You are to be followers of Him who was left alone, and you are, like Him, to rejoice that you are not alone, *because the Father is with you*, that you may give true glory to God. Oh, I cannot but speak of it. It is such a glory to God to see a soul that has been, through the flesh, accessible to the praise of man, surrounded by hundreds and thousands of his fellow-creatures, every one of whom he knows how to please, and yet that he should be contented, yea, peaceful and happy in doing, with a single reference to God, that which he knows they will all misunderstand and misconceive. Here was the victory of Jesus.



Holding Fast the Truth.

IN a day of stress and strain, it is a great thing for the servant of the Lord to, through grace, maintain a steady testimony to what he knows to be the principles of the Word of God. He may not be able to hinder these from being set aside or disregarded by others, but he can, through help obtained from God, stand firm for and cleave fast to them in his own path and his own testimony. Results are with the Lord. It is not a servant's business to concern himself with these. He is called to simply do his Master's will. A coming day will clear up all the rest, and manifest that the path of obedience, is the only true way of blessing and honour.

The Bible Annotator.

OUTLINES OF GOSPEL SUBJECTS.

THREE SEARCHING QUESTIONS.

- Where art thou? (Gen. iii. 9)—Lost or Saved?
 Whose son art thou? (1 Sam. xvii. 28)—God's or Satan's?
 To whom belongest thou? (2 Sam. xxx. 13)—Christ or the World?

JESUS CHRIST THE SAVIOUR.

- A Saviour (Luke ii. 11)—General.
 The Saviour (John iv. 42)—Pre-eminent.
 Our Saviour (Titus i. 4)—Personal.
 My Saviour (Luke i. 47)—Individual.

DIVINE LOVE.

- UNMERITED: "Not that we loved God" (1 John iv. 10).
 UNLIMITED: "For God so loved the world" (John iii. 16).
 UNDESERVED: "His love towards us, while we were sinners" (Rom. v. 8).
 UNCHANGING: "Loved thee with an everlasting love" (Jer. xxxi. 3).

BIBLE STUDIES AND READINGS.

CHRIST, THE LIFE.

- The Source of Life (John i. 4)—"In Him was life."
 The Giver of Life (John x. 28)—"I give unto them eternal life."
 The Security of Life (Col. iii. 3)—"Your life is hid with Christ."
 The Sustainer of Life (John vi. 57)—"He shall live by Me."
 The Object of Life (Phil. i. 21)—"For, to me to live is Christ."

FIVE ASPECTS OF RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST.

- TO Christ (John vi. 37)—For Salvation.
 IN Christ (Eph. i. 36)—In Acceptance.
 ON Christ (1 Pet. ii. 6)—For Security.
 WITH Christ (John xiii. 8)—In Communion.
 UNTO Christ (Acts i. 8)—In Testimony.

WHAT THE WORD DOES.

- Life imparted through the Word (1 Pet. i. 23).
 Life nourished by the Word (1 Pet. ii. 2).
 Ways cleansed by the Word (Psa. cxix. 9).
 Path enlightened by the Word (Psa. cxix. 105).

Bible Words with Disputed Meanings.

Deacon (1 Tim. i. 13).—The word "diakonos" is found in the Gospels eight times, and is translated

"servant." It appears twenty-two times in the Epistles, and is generally rendered "minister," "servant." In Phil. i. 1 and 1 Tim. iii. 8, 12 it is "deacons," and out of this has grown an "office" in the church, of which the Word knows nothing. It covers service of all kinds; Martha's (Luke xii. 2) as surely as her Lord's (Luke xxii. 27). Lift the Word out of its ecclesiastical setting, and it becomes, not a badge of office, but a nerve for work.

Devils (1 Tim. iv. 1).—There is only one personal devil (Matt. iv. 2; Rev. xx. 10), whose character, history, and doom are given in the Word, so far as God has been pleased to reveal it. Beyond that, we know nothing. "Demons" is the word as given in the R.V., wherever the plural is used, rather than "devils," as in the A.V. Of these there are many. Some unclean (Mark i. 27; Rev. x. 13), others religious, teaching "doctrines" (1 Tim. iv. 1), subversive of God's truth. They evidently have access to men on earth. Fallen angels, "who kept not their own principality, but left their own habitation," are not the same, though generally they are confused, for of the latter it is said, they are "in chains" awaiting judgment. These can have no part in the affairs of human life (2 Pet. ii. 4; Jude 6).

Called (1 Cor. i. 24).—The word is used in connection with the general and gracious invitation given through the Gospel to all without limit (see Matt. ix. 13; Luke xiv. 23; Rev. xxii. 17), but here, as elsewhere in the Epistles (Rom. i. 6; viii. 28; 1 Cor. vii. 21), it has reference to the voice and operation of God, by which the sinner is brought from death to life, and out of darkness into light (1 Pet. ii. 9), not apart from, or against the choice of the individual, but representing the Divine side of that great work of which faith is the human, receptive principle. Both are true, and equally clear in the Word. "Whom He called, them He also justified" (Rom. viii. 28), expresses the Godward aspect. "All that believe are justified" (Acts xiii. 39), the manward.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Is it right for a Christian to read fiction, as an education to his mind? I heard this publicly advised lately, by one who is regarded as a guide and teacher in the church! The kind of "education" derived from reading popular fictitious tales of flirtation, lust, rapine, and murder, is not calculated to form or fashion "the pure mind" of which the

apostle speaks, as being characteristic of the children of God (1 Pet. i. 22 ; 2 Pet. iii. 1). Religious fiction is, if possible, worse still. Reeking with irreverence, scepticism, and scorn of sacred things, it is used by the devil to keep thousands under the spell of its delusions, practically leading them to infidelity. Ministers of religion (we do not say of Christ) are found among novelists, and their's is the most dangerous of all, the poison being generally coated with enough religious sentiment and phraseology to make light "Sunday" reading for the churchgoing crowd. Very likely the "teacher" who advised young Christians to read novels is "far gone" in the habit himself, as godly persons who have to listen to his ministrations will probably know from their savour. This and its like, is what is withering up spiritual freshness, and bringing blight and decay among God's people. A look through the bookshelves and private apartments of some who are prominent enough as preachers and teachers, would bring to light a good deal in the way of answering the question, "What is the cause of lack of power, &c.?" discussed at Conferences and such like in glowing theories, which cause lies deeper down and comes closer home than some who orate most eloquently are able or willing to see. God is holy, and He will be sanctified in all who come nigh unto Him. Minds defiled with fables and fictitious fancies, are ill fitted to deal with the Divine realities of God's Word, to draw nigh to His throne in effectual prayer and supplication, or to stand in His counsel, so learning His mind there, as to speak to others as "the oracles of God." As you value your growth in grace, your progress in the Divine life, the health of your soul, and your success in pleasing God, flee from fiction in all its forms, and eschew those, no matter how prominent in the church, or able to teach, who would lead you thither.

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Answers to Correspondents

A. B., NEW YORK.—Seventh Day Adventists are Annihilationists. They deny that atonement was made at the Cross, they say it is to be at the Lord's Second Advent. They hold soul-sleeping, materialism, and non-eternity of punishment also.

W. L. P., LANARKSHIRE.—It is no part of an evangelist's business to introduce those who profess to be converted under his ministry to the assembly. If he is a wise man, and not over-anxious to sum up and report the number of his converts, he will leave

this work to local brethren, who are better able to test the reality of their profession by seeing their lives at home and in the world. Hurried baptisms, followed by equally hurried additions, too often include a large proportion of "strange children" (Psa. cxliv. 11), who give no end of trouble, as the records of not a few assemblies tell. Some who groan over it, seem frightened to speak out, probably because they would be branded as "tight," and possibly preached "at" as lacking in "love." But those who are called to obey the truth and guard the doors of the house of God, must put their personal feelings aside, and leave their characters in God's keeping, seeking only His honour in the holiness of His house, and the carrying out of His will.

S. M., AYRSHIRE.—The best preparation for a special effort in the Gospel by an assembly of Christians is, a spirit of prayer and an internal condition of spirituality and unity. In the olden time, those believers who had come outside the camp of the world's religion, and had its modes and manners well cleansed out from them, had a week or fortnight's prayer and heart-searching, with confession of sins, cleansing of ways, healing of sores, and bringing up things generally into a right spiritual condition among themselves within, which was considered a necessity to any success in evangelising the world without. Then God was consulted and His counsel waited, as to who should preach, and when the effort should begin, with the result that some one was sent by God, sinners saved, and a number of believers drawn by the power of God, brought out from their sects and intelligently gathered with others unto the Lord's Name, usually accompanied by a storm of opposition from the religious world, which greatly helped to drive the chaff out, and knit the saints together. An evangelist "engaged" months before, a limit fixed within which a "revival" must begin and end, and a "singing practice" to draw the crowd, does not have the same effects, or produce the same abiding results. The Gospel is all right; the people are no worse than they used to be, but the change is to be found in the low spiritual condition and unscriptural practices of assemblies who profess to have God and His Word as their sufficiency and their guide. When the old simplicity, confessed weakness, and dependence on God are again resorted to, then no doubt God will appear to shew Himself as of old, and will make His work appear to His servants, and His glory unto their children (Psa. xc. 16).

Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION IX.—If an assembly becomes divided from some internal trouble, and one party goes out forming a new meeting in the same town, is it according to God that both be recognised and received from as assemblies of God?

ANSWER A.—Division in a company of believers is always a grievous matter, and should never be regarded as anything less than a dishonour to the Lord's Name. If caused by factious men (Rom. xvi. 17), they should be "marked" and avoided, and this would surely imply, that any faction or coterie they might form, would not be owned as an assembly of God, although simple ones led astray and others associating in ignorance of its formation would be dealt with differently from the originators.

J. S.

ANSWER B.—To "go out" from that which has been regarded as God's assembly, causing an open division and public scandal, to form another meeting in the same vicinity ostensibly gathered in the Lord's Name, is a step that should never be taken until every effort has been exhausted to put that which is wrong right, and the evil so persistently adhered to and defended, that the character and foundations of the assembly are in danger of being forfeited. In cases where such a solemn crisis does arrive, the fellowship of wise and godly men, especially of leading brethren in neighbouring assemblies, who are likely to be implicated and affected, should be sought, so that no after question may arise as to the relation in which other assemblies stand to the company at fault. Self-willed persons might be found recognising the wrongdoers, from personal reasons, but there would be no such thing as two meetings both recognised, received from and commended to, while have nothing in common with each other. When a division takes place, for which there is just cause or Scriptural warrant, it would certainly be sinful to help it on by associating with those who are responsible for it, or in receiving its leaders in other assemblies.

J. M.

ANSWER C.—In the part of the country in which the writer has lately been visiting, there are five divided meetings, within a radius of twenty miles, at the present time, two companies meeting in each case in separate halls in the same town or village, having no fellowship, yet both received from and commended to by other assemblies. In no case was there fundamental error alleged as the cause of

separation, but simply differences of judgment in cases of discipline, or administration, leading to alienation of confidence, latterly to discord and disorder, ending in division. Abortive attempts at reconciliation brought out such differences amongst leading brethren, that in no single case could oneness of mind be arrived at, some supporting the one, some the other, with the result, that younger Christians have been stumbled, believers seeking after the Lord's way are hindered, and most of the surrounding assemblies divided in their sympathies. These divisions were entirely uncalled for, and are all more or less the results of conflicting teachings. For example: It has been openly taught, that if Christians cannot agree on points of order and administration, or if there is internal division in regard to cases of discipline, it is better to divide than continue together under such unhappy conditions. But I ask—Where is there Scripture warrant for such a course? And what becomes of all the exhortations to attain to oneness of mind and judgment enjoined in the Word (1 Cor. i. 10; Rom. xv. 5, 6; Phil. i. 2)? Where divisions are allowed and recognised after this fashion, there is an end to all godly discipline and order, and as is painfully manifest to any spiritual mind, barrenness and decline, in spite of all efforts to keep up an appearance of activity and increase. Until there is self-judgment, humiliation, and confession, with a return to where the path was left, it is vain to expect the Divine blessing, or to bear any real testimony for God.

J. C.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—The only warrant for division, or separation from a company of Christians, Scripturally gathered is, that errors, subversive of the foundations of the faith, or of the constitution of God's assembly, have been received by its leaders, and are retained and allowed to operate, rendering void the Word of God, and that every effort has failed to remedy and restore. Even then, before a final step is taken, the fellowship and counsel of wise and godly men in assemblies around should be sought, so that it may not be an isolated or party act, causing further divisions. And, if after every effort has been made, no remedy short of separation is possible, owing to determined perversity and retention of the evil, then let it be effected in such a manner as will leave no excuse for any giving sympathy to the guilty, and let it be made known definitely and unitedly, by those who have investigated the matter, so that other assemblies may know the truth, and be able to act intelligently.

THE WORK OF THE LORD JESUS.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS ON JOHN I. 29-39,
BY ALEXANDER STEWART.

WE have a double testimony rendered to the Lord Jesus by John the Baptist in these verses. First, in ver. 29 we read—"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto Him and saith: Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." And again, in verses 32, 33, "And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him. And I knew Him not, but He that sent me to baptise with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptiseth with the Holy Ghost." It is as if he had said, "The same Person who will atone for sin, will after he has accomplished that work, begin another; He will baptise with the Holy Ghost." There are a number of young preachers here. Well, this tells you what to preach and how to preach it. It is not only that John preached a good Gospel, but see how he did it, Mark the attitude and manner of the preacher. "Looking upon Jesus as He walked He saith, Behold the Lamb of God" (ver. 36). His own eyes were fixed upon the Christ of whom he was speaking to others. Need we be surprised to learn the result of his testimony? "The two disciples heard him speak and they followed Jesus" (ver. 37). They were drawn to the Person whom John exalted. He preached his two disciples away from himself to Christ. His was a successful ministry. The test of

a true ministry is this: Does the preacher attract his hearers to himself, or does he, by his ministry, attract them to the Son of God? We have heard of the two "musts" in the third of John. The first is a hard word for the sinner. "Ye must be born again" (ver. 7). The second is a hard word for the Saviour—"The Son of Man must be lifted up" (ver. 14); but there is a third must, which is for the preacher, "He *must* increase, but I *must* decrease." "Fading away like the stars of the morning," and well pleased to have it so, as long as the Lord Jesus Christ is exalted and gets His own. He came here to do a great work—a sacrificial work, to make atonement by His blood. That work He has done, and we are looking back at it now. On the Cross He said, "It is finished," fulfilling His work as the Lamb of God. What is the other testimony John gave? "The same is He which baptiseth with the Holy Ghost." He will finish one work and then He will begin another. He will shed His precious blood to cleanse from sin, and then He will send down the Holy Ghost to dwell in those who have been cleansed by that precious blood. Think for a moment about these two things, how they meet the case of one who has been awakened to his soul's need. You sit down beside a man in an after-meeting, who has waited behind, as if he were anxious about his soul. But you observe the man's eyes are rolling this way and that way, all over the place. One advice I would give you: do not pour any more healing balm into that man. It is not a plaster he needs, it is a wound. When a man is

really convinced of sin, he has just one thing before his mind, and he thinks he has only one necessity, and that is how to get rid of his sin. You have been there yourself, so you know the burden of your cry was, "Oh, God, that I might know my sins forgiven, and their burden loosed." Then He brought you as Bunyan's pilgrim was brought to the Cross, and you looked on the Lord Jesus. Then it was the straps began to loose and the burden fell off, and rolling into the sepulchre, you saw it no more. Then like the pilgrim you sang,

"Blest Cross, blest sepulchre, but blessed rather be
The Man that there was put to shame for me."

What happened then? Then there rose up before you another great necessity, one that had never come into your mind before. What was that? Not how to get rid of your sins, that has been settled at the Cross, but your question was, "How shall I be able to live to God, who has pardoned me?" The same Person whose blood cleanses from sin is He that baptises with the Holy Ghost. The indwelling of the Holy Ghost is your power to live the life to which you are called, and to bring you through, until among the many sons, you pass into the glory of God.

If I were to seek to illustrate this from the types, I should do it from that in the fourteenth of Leviticus, where we are told about the cleansing of the leper. The leper was brought unto the priest. It is not only grace that we need, but *fetching* grace.

"'Twas the same grace that spread the feast,
That sweetly drew me in ;

Else I had still refused to taste,
And perished in my sin."

He is brought to the priest, and he goes through the ceremony; but I must fasten on the two points brought before us in verses 14 and 17. Mark, where the blood went, the oil went. Here is this man, once a leper, now cleansed, and he is going through a process at the hands of the priest. What is the priest going to do? The priest takes the blood first, and he puts it on his ear, on his thumb, and on the great toe of his right-foot. What does that mean? It means that God is CLAIMING that cleansed man in all his energies. We say, at the Cross God gives—He gave His Son. Yes, but that is not all; at the Cross God claims all. This is what it is to be a Christian. It is to be a person sanctified by the blood of Christ; first touching your ear, that through that ear the Word of God may come in and command you. Command what? Command the strength of your right hand to work for God, and command your foot to walk in the ways of God all the days of your life. That is the claim God makes on a believing sinner. Do any say, "that is an hard saying, who can hear it; never to deviate during my earthly pilgrimage from the ways of the Lord. Who is sufficient to these things?" The same priest who took the blood, took the oil, and where he put the blood, he put the oil. And when we go to the New Testament for the interpretation of this, we learn that if the blood of the Lamb is for cleansing, the Holy Ghost is for power.

The same truths as are found in this

first chapter of John are taught in Ephesians, chapter i. First in ver. 7 we read, "In whom we have redemption through His blood"; this is the work of the Son. Then in verse 13, "In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise;" this is the work of the Holy Ghost. You see how it all answers to the type. Wherever you have redemption by the blood, you have also the sealing of the Holy Spirit. And it is worthy of notice that no sooner does the apostle tell believers that they *have* the Spirit than he prays that they may *get* "the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him" (ver. 17). If we are to hold the balance of truth, we need to understand this also. What does it mean? Not that there is a fresh coming of the Spirit to dwell in the man, but the daily conscious renewal, the constant powerful operation of the Holy Spirit enabling him to live to God and to witness for God, doing for him the things that the apostle prays for here.

TRUE FELLOWSHIP.

The evangelist who goes forth from the bosom of the assembly with its fellowship (Acts xiii. 3, 4), followed by its prayers (Eph. vi. 19), returns to it to rehearse what the Lord has done through his ministry (Acts xiv. 26, 27), causing joy, and increasing interest in the work of the Gospel far beyond their own borders. This is all lost to the "free lance" preacher, who preaches in sects, and leaves whatever results there may be of his ministry, to be incorporated with the "denomination" he has been helping.

RECOGNITION IN GLORY.

SHALL WE KNOW ONE ANOTHER IN
HEAVEN?

AS we grow older, life becomes more and more a memory. In childhood we looked into the future, and life was in anticipation. In middle life we were actively engrossed in the duties of the living present. Now in older years, life all lies behind us. We live in the past. As memory recalls the past, it links with it many a loved form that has long since passed away. And of our loved and dear ones, the majority have passed beyond the veil. These have indeed passed from our sight; but how real is the hold they yet have upon our memories. How precious is every little relic which reminds us of them! And with what sorrow do we visit their graves, their last bed chambers, where they await the resurrection morning! The heart's tenderest affections go out toward the memory of those so dear to God and to us. We thank God afresh, as we remember how we trod the way of God together; how in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs we together made melody in our hearts to God; how we rejoiced together in one common salvation, and laboured for one common Master. Truly blessed are such memories as these. Let us thank God for them.

And did we not speak with those dear ones, ere they left us, of a glad reunion by and by, of an eternal meeting beyond? This hope still cheers and comforts us. They will not come to us, but we shall go to them. Either we too shall "fall

asleep" and join the great company of the dead in Christ, or He will come and they, the sleepers, and we, the wakers, shall be "caught up TOGETHER" around Himself, no more to be parted; Shall we see them to know them? Shall we recognise one another again? This is an interesting and often asked question.

Yes we shall; it must be so! Revelation and Reason alike testify to this. Unless it be ours to recognise, and to be recognised, we shall, in that future state, have lost our identity. This cannot be. The testimony of the Word, the very nature of Christianity, forbids it. The Bible assures us that Heaven is a gloriously beautiful place. But who would care for a place if that were all? Heaven is "the Father's House" (John xiv. 2), the Home of love.

That the departed have not lost their identity, is clear from many passages of Scripture. We hear David saying over his departed child, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" (2 Sam. xiii. 23). In 1 Sam. xxviii., we have the account of the bringing up of Samuel by the witch of Endor. Accepting the account as we do, in all its simplicity, we ask—Was not Samuel there in his identity?

Concerning the judgment of the wicked, it is written that they shall answer for the deeds done in the body. If, then, they are to be judged for what they did while on earth, they must retain the faculties of memory and recognition. They who have been wronged and sinned against by them, must be again recognised.

In Luke xvi. 19-31, we have very clear

teaching on this subject. We find the rich man in hell, possessed of all his faculties. Memory, sight, speech, feeling, hearing. And the fact of recognition is clearly stated in that "he lifted up his eyes and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." Again, what but the fear of recognition could have prompted the request, "Send him (Lazarus) to my father's house, for I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment!" It was doubtless the dread of the accusations and reproaches that he feared from his brethren, if they came to that same place of torment. Surely this teaches us, that in our individual identity we shall pass into the future state, recognising and being recognised. But let us remember that recognition beyond the grave may be either a blessing or a curse. How awful the thought of memory and recognition in hell.

In Matt. xxi. 31, 32, "As touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, *but of the living.*" Identity is clear from this: Abraham is Abraham *still*, Isaac is Isaac *still*, Jacob is Jacob *still*! Each one still exists in his own identity and distinctness. As such each one is known to the other, and each one to God.

"Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob" (Matt. viii. 11; Luke xiii. 28). Surely this implies recognition.

"Then shall I know, even as also I am known" (1 Cor. xiii. 12). Surely no word of comment is required here.

"Ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye shall also sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. xix. 28). Here it is asserted by our Lord that the twelve apostles shall share with Him the glories of the Kingdom. Included in this must be the fact of knowledge and recognition.

"We know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John iii. 2). And seeing and knowing Him shall we not see and know each other? Our spiritual bodies will appreciate and recognise spiritual beings hereafter; as our natural bodies now do natural objects.

In Romans viii. 23, we are now said to be "waiting for the redemption, to wit, the redemption of our body." The body itself shall be redeemed. This is the burden of that much loved 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians. And one of the most precious words in it is perhaps the little word it—"it (the body) is sown;" "it (the body) shall be raised." The body that is sown is the body that shall be raised; however changed, its identity is clearly preserved. The Lord Jesus came forth from the tomb, and whatever changes had passed on His form, He was recognised by the disciples after His resurrection (Luke xxiv. 38). "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself." The identity of the body was thus proved. His resurrection was a reality, not an

appearance. "IT IS I MYSELF." From this we may surely learn that we shall maintain our identity in resurrection glory, amid the joys of our Father's home on high.

In relation to this subject there is one grand word which sweetly confirms this great truth, and that is the word "TOGETHER." It is so used in the following Scriptures as to be conclusive on the recognition of, and fellowship amongst the redeemed in glory.

1 Thess. iv. 16, 17, "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven . . . and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up *together with them* in the clouds." Certain eminent scholars have said that the word "the" ought not to be between "in" and "clouds." If so, the beauty of the passage is much increased. "Caught up together," a cloud of rising saints, "to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord." What a blessed "together" is this—the raised dead and changed living. Verse 18—"Wherefore comfort one another with these words." And precious is the comfort therein contained, to such as are mourning the present loss of departed loved ones.

"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering *together* unto Him" (2 Thess. ii. 1). The gathering of all saints will, indeed, be unto Him; but at the same time it is "OUR *gathering together*." This Greek noun is nowhere else found in the New Testament, except Hebrews x. 25, where it speaks of the

assembling together of known believers for local worship. The “*our*” means the meeting of the living and dead together.

“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?” (1 Thess. ii. 19). It was the thought of meeting these Thessalonians with the Lord, that filled Paul with hope and joy. To have this hope fulfilled, they surely must know Paul, and Paul must know them.

Matt. xvii. 1-9, contains an account of the Transfiguration. This is perhaps one of the greatest passages of Scripture teaching identity and recognition after death. The disciples recognised Moses and Elijah. Without doubt Moses and Elijah knew each other. This Scripture is so clear that exposition is needless. Such is the testimony of the Sacred Word on this sublime subject, and the heart accepts and rejoices in it. To see the Lord's face and to be like Him, will be the chiefest joy of that heavenly land, but surely to be with those whom His grace made one with us and to whom His love knit us in closest bonds on earth, fellow-pilgrims once, fellow-citizens then of the same glorious city, will not detract from, but only still more enhance the glory of that grace to which we owe all, both now and hereafter.

We shall come with joy and gladness,

We shall gather round the throne :

Face to face with those that love us,

We shall know as we are known :

And the song of our redemption

Shall resound through endless day,

When the shadows have departed

And the mists have rolled away.

G. N. W.

HELPS AND HINDRANCES TO GOSPEL WORK.

PART IV.—DECLINE IN GOSPEL POWER, AND ITS CAUSES.

THE Gospel testimony of an assembly of believers should be heartily shared by all who are in its fellowship. It was concerning “the *church* of the Thessalonians”—not a fraction of it—that the apostle wrote—“From you sounded out the Word of the Lord” (1 Thess. i. 8). They were not all public preachers, but they were all “echoes”—or sounding boards as the word implies—sending forth in one harmonious sound the Word which had come to themselves in power, and which wrought effectually in them.

When God, in His richest mercy, led some of His own back to the ancient foundations and polity of His church, as they are preserved for all time in His written Word, they found the Lord's way to be a path of untold blessing, not only in worship and mutual edification, but also in Gospel testimony. Liberated from the trammels and restraints of sectarianism, and from clerical domination and worldly environment, by means of which their spiritual energies had been confined, and spiritual gifts unused and undeveloped, thousands, in the enjoyment of a fresh power filling their souls, stood forth as witnesses for Christ, and heralds of the Gospel. Assemblies springing up under the power of the newly received truth, freshly brought to individual souls in the power of the Spirit, made themselves felt in every place, as together of one heart and soul, with one voice they gave

testimony to the Gospel. There may have been zeal without much knowledge, and energy without much observance of order, but there was power with the testimony, and very many were aroused and converted to God by means of it. And one clear, outstanding feature of these memorable times was, that those brought outside the camp of the world's religion, and gathered unto the Name of the Lord alone, regarded Gospel work as part of the assembly's testimony, and as such shared in and stuck to it all the year through, outside and inside, leaving room for God to raise up and use whomsoever He would as leaders and preachers, but all "striving together," vigorously co-operating in the fellowship of the Gospel. Such conditions no longer generally exist. There are still here and there to be found companies of believers abiding in the truth, and seeking to maintain a godly testimony according to it, from whose midst there goes forth a united Gospel testimony, where there is a continuous and solid work wrought by God in the conversion of sinners, where they are retained, after they are converted, to be taught the truth of God, led on in the ways that be in Christ, and added to the assembly as God wills they should be. But it is no use blinking the fact, or trying to hide it by keeping up a fair show of outward appearances, that in general it is far otherwise, and that instead of a godly, vigorous, Gospel testimony, having a grip on the people to whom it is rendered, and which bears its timely and abiding fruit, there is to be found in most cases a feeble and futile "service" or "lecture"

in some places, accompanied by an organ, and advertised singers, to make up for what is felt to be lacking in the preaching. And this is usually listened to by believers, with an occasional stranger who seldom gets as much of God's truth put into him as compels him under the grasp of its power to return. Periodic "Special" services or even the visit of a God-sent evangelist do very little to bring things permanently into a better condition, the root causes of the evil remaining undisturbed, which, immediately the "spurt" is over, resume their reign and quickly reduce the spiritual temperature to what it was before..

It has been asserted by some that the causes of an enfeebled Gospel work are to be found in our separated position, that too much has been made of separation and unnecessary opposition raised as the result and that prejudice would be likely to be removed by keeping silence on all that gives offence to sectarian and worldly Christians, and by going occasionally to their denominations, when some special effort there gives sufficient excuse for doing so. In this connection it is not uncommon to find leading men of certain assemblies, on platforms or in pews in sectarian and worldly systems out from which they profess to have at one time been brought by the truth of God, fraternising with the very systems which they at other times declare to be unscriptural, and setting before younger ones an example which deprives them of all moral or spiritual influence to guide them in the truth. How does God look upon such inconsistency? how does it affect

their own consciences and spiritual state, and what are its effects on those who are looking on and having their opinions formed more by what they see men practice, than by what they profess? are questions which may suitably be asked in this connection. Expediency and compromise in the things of God are always wrong; they never gain anything in permanent, spiritual influence, but always lose much. Are men wiser than God? If any vainly imagine that by suppressing the truth that He has given, alike for the sanctification, edification, and spiritual growth of His people, and for the spread of His kingdom among men (see Luke viii. 11, Acts xii. 24, 1 Thes. ii. 13), they will gain prestige among sectarian Christians and allay the world's opposition to God's Word and Work, they will learn sooner or later that they have been deceived. It is a solemn thing to trifle with any part of God's truth, or to regard it as something of our own, with which we may do as we please, rather than a sacred trust committed to our care, to be held in faith and love, ministering its strength to our own souls (2 Tim. 13-14). owned and obeyed in personal (Titus i. 9) and assembly life (1 Cor. xiv. 37), and passed on intact as a sacred stewardship to others coming after us (2 Tim. ii. 3). One thing we do know, alike from experience and observation, and it is this, that Gospel work was never more vigorous, that conversions were never more abundant or real, that the unconverted were never got in larger numbers to hear the Word, than in the days when assemblies stood out clean and clear from all the systems of the world's

religion, walking in the path of separation and fearlessly testifying to the truth that produces and maintains it, having the vials of the religious world's wrath poured without mercy or measure on their devoted heads. But withal, as of old, "the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew" (Exod. ii. 12). The *real* causes of decay in Gospel power, must, we fear, be sought for elsewhere. We suggest nearer home, and deeper down.

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OUTLINES IN ACTS.

PART V.—SUCCESSIVE TESTIMONIES.

AS to times and seasons, I would observe that our Lord marks successive stages in the Divine procedure with Israel, when He says, "the *law* and the *prophets* prophesied until *John*." Here He notices three ministries, the law, the prophets, and John. But these extended only down to our Lord's own ministry, and therefore now, in the further progress of the Divine counsels, we can to these add others.

THE LAW.—This dispensation put Israel under a covenant which exacted obedience as the condition upon which they were to continue in the land, and in the blessings which Jehovah had given them. But we know that they broke it.

THE PROPHETS.—After offence and trespass had come in, prophets were raised up; among other services, to warn and encourage Israel to return to Him, from whom they and their fathers had revolted, that they might recover their place and blessing under the covenant.

But Israel, we know, refused their words, stoning some, and killing some.

JOHN.—The Baptist is then raised up, not as one of the prophets merely, to call Israel back to the old covenant, and to the obedience which it required, but to be the herald of a kingdom that was then at the doors, the forerunner of One who was coming with the sure blessing of His own presence. He summoned the people to be in readiness for Messiah. But John they beheaded.

THE LORD.—Thus introduced by John to Israel, the Lord accordingly comes forth, and offers the kingdom in His own person to them, and Israel is summoned to own it and worship Him. But we know that the Heir of the vineyard was cast out by the husbandmen. "His own received Him not." The builders disallowed the stone. They crucified the Prince of Life; but God raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places.

THE TWELVE APOSTLES.—They had accompanied with out Lord all the time that he had gone in and out among them, from the baptism of John to the day that He was taken up from them, and they were now called forth (being endued with the Holy Ghost) to be witnesses to Israel of the resurrection. And these witnesses tell Israel that the times of refreshing, the times of accomplishing all promised good to them, waited only for their repentance; for that Jesus was now exalted to be a Prince and Saviour to them. And now the final trial of Israel was come. What could be done more than had now been done? Trespass

against the Son of Man had been forgiven, at least, the way of escape from the judgment which it had called for, had now been thrown open to Israel by the testimony of the Holy Ghost in the Apostles; but what could provide relief, if this testimony were now despised? (see Matt. xii. 32). But the Holy Ghost is resisted, the testimony of the twelve is despised by the martyrdom of Stephen, and the Lord's dealings with Israel and the earth are therefore closed for a season.

PAUL.—The Apostle of the Gentiles then comes forth, fraught with further treasures of divine wisdom, revealing purposes that had been till now (while God was dealing with Israel and the earth) hid in God. He comes forth with this testimony—that Christ and the Church were one; that heaven was their common inheritance; and the Gospel committed to him, was the Gospel, as he expresses it, of "Christ in us the hope of glory." This Gospel he had now to preach among the Gentiles (Gal. i. 16; Col. i. 28).

We are thus enabled to see the fulness of the times in which the mysteries of God have been revealed. It must be so, we know, for God is God. But through His abounding towards us in all wisdom and prudence, He gives us grace to see something of this that we may adore Him, and love Him, and long for the day when we shall see Him face to face, and know as we are known. For all these His ways are beautiful in their season.—J. G. B.

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"PREACH THE WORD" was the Apostle's word to one standing amid declension from the truth, and this is God's remedy still.

The Bible Annotator.

SUBJECTS FOR STUDY AND MEDITATION.

DESIRABLE DISEASES.

Enlargement of Heart (Psa. cxix. 32).

Brokenness of Spirit (Psa. li. 57).

Sickness of Love (Song ii. 5).

"BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD."

Christ was loved of the Father (John xvii. 24).

The Lamb was foreordained to die (1 Pet. i. 20).

Believers were chosen in Christ (Eph. i. 4).

A THREEFOLD SERVICE.

The Evangelist's Work, to win Souls (Prov. xi. 30).

The Pastor's, to Watch for Souls (Heb. xiii. 28).

The Teacher's, to Warn and Teach (Col. i. 28).

Familiar Texts Re-read.

Ephesians ii. 21.—"In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth." The R.V. gives "each several building," in the margin "every building." Which of these is the proper reading? The building here is the church in its heavenly and Divine aspect, being built by God throughout this dispensation, which, according to all New Testament teaching, is one, not several. The A.V. reading is therefore the right one, as the context clearly shews. As has been aptly said, "The question to ask is, Does the context favour the imagery of 'detail' or that of 'total'?" Surely the latter. The idea points to one great building getting completed within itself, rising to its ideal."

Isaiah liii. 9.—"And He made (the R.V. gives "they appointed") His grave with the wicked." Crucified with two robbers, His burial, had it been left to His enemies, would doubtless have been with them, but in the appointment of the courts of heaven "with the rich man was His tomb" (Louth). Borne by the loving hands of Joseph and Nicodemus, the body of the Lord, wrapped in sweet spice, was laid in the new tomb, to await the hour of resurrection.

1 Timothy ii. 6.—"God will have all men to be saved." This rendering of the A.V. may either mean that God will save all men, as the Universalists interpret it, or that He is willing that all men should be saved as Evangelicals would expound it. The R.V. makes the meaning clear by rendering it "who willet that all men should be saved," or as it is in 2 Peter iii. 9, "Not willing that any should

perish." Yet of some He has to say, that they shall "utterly perish in their own corruption" (2 Pet. ii. 12), which precludes the thought of universal salvation.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

In order to overtake part of a very large number of queries on Texts, sent by correspondents during the past few months, we give the following condensed replies and notes, which are of a suggestive character, and may, we hope, lead to further careful searching and prayerful study of the Word.

Ephesians v. 4.—"Foolish talking." The word means insipid, saltless; the very opposite of that speech which is "always with grace seasoned with salt" (Col. iv. 6).

Matthew xviii. 17.—What is the sin here referred to? None is specially named. It is the persistent obduracy and self-will of the man, rather than the nature of the original trespass, which causes his expulsion to the place of a "heathen man and a publican."

Acts ii. 34.—The reference here is not to David's soul, as the context and especially verse 29 clearly shews, but to his body.

Matthew xxv. 46.—"Everlasting punishment." The word "kolasis" here rendered "punishment" is only once more found in the New Testament, where it is translated "torment" (1 John iv. 18). There can be no doubt it is conscious, but there is no thought of it being corrective, as those who teach Final Restitution, by means of purgatorial fire, vaguely insist, finding in the word as used classically the thought of chastisement, or corrective discipline. But this is not its meaning here. As Dr. Trench, in his "Synonyms of the New Testament," says, "The 'kolasis aionios' of Matt. xxv. 46, as it plainly declares, is no corrective, and therefore temporary discipline."

1 Cor. xv. 22.—"So in Christ, shall all be made alive." Two expositions of this passage are current. First, that as death is the common lot of all men, because of Adam's sin, so shall all be raised from the dead because of Christ's resurrection. But this does not accord with the context, the subject of which is—not a general resurrection, but an electic resurrection of "Christ the Firstfruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming" (ver. 23). The reference is to those who "are Christ's" and "in Christ," namely believers.

Answers to Correspondents

STUDENT.—Wigram's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance of the Old Testament, or Young's Analytical Concordance to both Old and New Testaments would give you the help you seek. The latter book is now much reduced in price.

YOUNG DISCIPLE.—It certainly would not be pleasing to God for any child of His, to engage himself as barman in a licensed house, or worse still, on a pleasure boat, where revelry and drunkenness are ministered to and encouraged. The word, "WHATSOEVER ye do in word or in deed, do ALL in the Name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. iii. 17), would, if heeded, prevent any believer from engaging himself in such an ungodly occupation.

A. G., FIFE.—Baptism should certainly be delayed, if any doing pastoral work among and guiding the saints, have a lack of confidence in the applicant. To talk of baptising on the "individual responsibility" of some one who, in order to carry his point, dissociates himself from his brethren, and riding rough shod over their discernment and judgment, takes the matter out of their hands, is an evidence of the lack of that subjection of spirit, and self-control, which are the marks of a true overseer (Titus i. 7, 8). Baptism, when celebrated in connection with an assembly, (and not like the eunuch's in the desert, where there was none, Acts viii. 26, 38)—and with a view of the one to be baptised, being added to the fellowship of that assembly, should surely not be hastened, or undertaken without the full fellowship of those who are the guides, and who would in any case have to be satisfied before one could be proposed to the assembly for fellowship.

J. S.—The initials P.S.A., stand for "Pleasant Sunday Afternoons." They are, as their name indicates, a kind of religious entertainment, got up to draw a class who cannot be got to go and hear the dry, read sermons in the kirks. Attractive singing, instrumental music, frivolous story telling, collections from the ungodly, with an occasional short "preach" from an unconverted minister, alternated by an evangelical, so as to catch and please all classes, is the common round of such "pleasant" services. The thought of anything to arouse sinners, or grapple with their consciences, such as Paul's reasoning of "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come," which would make it very "unpleasant" for some of them, as it did for Felix,

would not be tolerated, of that you may be perfectly sure. Those who preach the Word are not wanted in such circles, and if your friend, who professes to be "in separation," outside the world's religion in the morning of the Lord's Day, can go in with such movements in the afternoon, we fear he has not yet learned the "first principles." In any case, he is not to be regarded as one whose ways are a pattern to young believers, or whose influence will help them on in "the ways which be in Christ."

J. E. H., SOUTH WALES.—The happiest results have been obtained from such gatherings "around the Word of God" as you and your fellow-believers have begun. If conducted in a godly manner, and in a prayerful spirit, waiting upon God to open up His Word, and counting on the guidance of the Spirit whose work it is to guide into all the truth, you cannot fail to be edified, refreshed, and blessed. It is greatly to be regretted that in many cases this old-fashioned form of Bible Reading, with its hallowed associations, has given place to the more popular "lecture" or "address," which may be more attractive but is generally less edifying.

M. R., LANARKSHIRE.—"Ordination" of ministers is common to all denominations: Papists, Protestants, Congregationalists, Mormons, all have their ordinations, recognitions, and inductions, for which no intelligent reader of the Word will claim there is a shadow of Scripture authority. Yet it is by means of this "farce" that the "clergy" are created, and apart from which, no man, however gifted to preach, or used in blessing to others, is anything more than a "layman," whereas one who has undergone the process of ordination, although unconverted, or in spiritual things a "babe," is "The Reverend Mr———" authorised to preach to and preside over the church that employs him as evangelist, pastor, and teacher all in one. Time was, when no "layman" would have been allowed to rank with the "clergy," save as an inferior or "helper," but all that has gone, and now you may find betimes, a whole bench of "ordained" men sitting at the feet of a converted collier or "Cheap Jack," whose gift as an evangelist has "made room" for him, and given him a grip of the people such as few of the "ordained" ever get. People seem to know when there is "corn" in the crib, and go to get it. Clerisy has lost its hold on the spiritual during the last quarter of a century, and always must, where believers read their Bibles and learn their privileges.

E. G., HERRS.—It is the easiest thing possible for one who has gifts of ministry or rule, to quietly

allow himself to glide into the position of clerical domination, and become virtually "the minister," with the full consent of a lethargic people, who either have never learned their privileges and responsibilities as worshippers and workers, or have so lapsed in spiritual energy as to be unable to exercise them. "Peace at any price," then becomes the watchword, irrespective of whether God is pleased or otherwise. So it has always been. Jerome, who lived in the 4th century, commenting on Titus i., says, "Churches were governed by a common council of presbyters . . . but by degrees, that the plants of dissension might be rooted up, all responsibility was transferred to ONE PERSON." Yes, "by degrees" is the way it comes. Let us take warning, and watch the early stages of this pestilence.

J. C., DUBLIN.—In reply to your queries: (1) We do not know who wrote the poem, "John the Aged." (2) The article, "The Threshing-floor of Ornan," we believe was by J. G. Bellett, and appeared first in the "Christian Witness," Vol. I., about 1823. Can any of our readers tell where a set of its Volumes can be found?

J. B., COATBRIDGE.—While Christian females having grace and capability may teach in the Sunday School, and frequently do so with more success than males, it would not be in harmony with the place which Scripture has assigned to the woman, that she rule or take the lead, in this or any other circle of Christian work.

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Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION X.—What is the sin against the Holy Ghost mentioned in Matt. xii. 32?

ANSWER A.—The context shews that it was the blasphemy of attributing the miracles of the Lord Jesus, which were wrought "by the Spirit of God" (ver. 28), to Beelzebub, the prince of demons. It was a sin peculiar to the period of the Lord's personal ministry, and has no exact counterpart in this day of grace. J. S.

ANSWER B.—The cause of this mysterious and awful saying of the Son of God was, we are told in Mark's Gospel (chap. iii. 30), "Because they said: He hath an unclean spirit." The power of the Spirit of God (see Acts x. 38), in which the Lord performed His mighty works, was by the scribes of

Jerusalem attributed to Satan's origin. What was left for those who wilfully and deliberately thus blasphemed the Holy Spirit, but to be "guilty of an eternal sin," which, as the Lord declared, "hath never forgiveness" (Mark iii. 29, 30, R.V.).

W. J. M.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—This solemn passage, owing to a false interpretation of it, which contradicts the Gospel, has been greatly used by the enemy to harass and perplex convicted sinners, driving them on to despair, by the fear that they have committed "the unpardonable sin," and that for them the day of grace is past. There is nothing whatever in the passage to warrant its application in such a case. As one of our correspondents says, it has no precise counterpart now of which it can be said with certainty and Scriptural warrant, that it is "the sin against the Holy Ghost." There is in the latter day Satanic system of Spiritualism and its allies, much that comes perilously near to such blasphemy, yet God in grace has not so defined it, as to cut off from hope of forgiveness and salvation the sinner who repentingly turns to the Lord Jesus as his Saviour. There are two forms of rejection of the Spirit's operations mentioned in the Word, of which sinners, who now reject the testimony of God in charging home guilt, and setting forth the one great Sacrifice through which alone redemption is wrought, may be guilty of, and which it is not our purpose to take the edge off, or tone down in the least degree by the above explanation of a perverted text. "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost" (Acts vii. 51) are words true of more than those who "stopped their ears" at Stephen's convicting speech, when "full of the Holy Ghost" and wisdom, he charged home their guilt upon them. "And hath despite unto the Spirit of grace" (Heb. x. 28, 29) is the last statement of a passage where rejection of the Person and Work of Christ are so pronounced, as to be regarded as deliberate apostacy, and that too in the presence of such testimony of the Spirit to Him, as to constitute such rejection "open insult"—as the word is—to "the Spirit of grace." But while such warnings are given, and are meant to be used to shake and search Christ-despisers and others drifting towards apostacy, there is nothing in either of them to hinder a seeking soul from receiving Christ (John i. 12), and be received of Him (John vi. 37), or to cause fear and bring into darkness, the feeblest believer who "convicted yet confiding," reposes on the one great Sacrifice of the Lamb of God.

GOD OVER ALL.

FAITH'S REPOSE IN DAYS OF TRIAL.

IT is a "law of the kingdom," very fully established throughout the pages of the inspired Word, that God, who is over all, who ruleth and over-ruleth among the sons of men, causes "the wrath of man to praise him" (Psa. lxxvi. 10), and makes the opposition and malice of the enemy to subserve His work and fulfil His purposes of grace to the sons of men. Like Samson's riddle of the honey found in the lion's carcase (Judges xiv. 14), "Out of the eater" comes forth meat, and the very devices of the adversary, which loom like thick clouds of coming woe, are caused to "break in blessings" over the head of the righteous. A glance along the line of Scripture history will confirm the great principle in our souls, that "the Lord reigneth," that He "sitteth on the water floods," ordering, guiding all, for His own praise and His people's good: that the hour of the apparent triumph of wrong, is the appointed time for its final defeat; and that the time of man's extremity is God's opportunity to manifest His power. May the blessed Spirit, whose business it is to cause the truth to "work effectually" (1 Thess. ii. 13), making it good as a matter of spiritual experience in the saints, give practical possession and enjoyment of this in our hearts.

It was to the serpent, by whose instigation the fall of man was accomplished, that the promise of the coming Deliverer was given. The Seed of the woman, who had been by his subtlety deceived, became the Bruiser of his head (Gen. iii. 19), and the Breaker up of his power (Heb. ii. 14).

The *envy* of Joseph's brethren was the cause of him being sold as a slave to the Midianites, and sent into Egypt (Gen. xxxvii. 36); the *wickedness* of Potiphar's wife and her lies, sent him into the prison as a malefactor, where he was "laid in iron" and sorely tried (Psa. cvii. 18, 19), and thereby educated and fitted as all God's honoured servants must be, for the place of rule to which he had been called. Looking back to the experiences of the pit and the prison, Joseph said from the place of his power and glory in Egypt, "God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity, and to save your lives by a great deliverance" (Gen. xlv. 7).

Pharaoh's edict condemned to death all Israel's male children, yet out from it God caused his own daughter to rescue the babe (Exod. ii.), and bring up the youth (Acts vii. 21) who, in after years, was instrumentally the destroyer of Pharaoh's power, and the deliverer of God's down-trodden people Israel.

Haman, the Agagite, Israel's ancient enemy (Exod. xvii. 8, 16), had got into such favour with the Persian king, as to secure the issue of a death sentence on all the covenant people, and a high gallows was erected upon which Mordecai, God's solitary witness, who had refused to bow to the Amalekite, was to be hanged (Esther v. 14). But God, who had permitted things to go thus far, said, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further" (Job xxx viii. 11). and a sleepless night of the king, was the instrument to bring the proud Amalekite to his own gallows, to elevate Mordecai to power, and his people to glory and honour.

The furnace of Nebuchadnezzar may be heated seven times for the Hebrew youths, who refuse his idolatry, but not a hair of their heads perish, because One like unto the Son of God is there. Such are the ways of our God, who is "wonderful in counsel, excellent in working" (Isa. xxvii. 29). And the Cross reveals the same great mystery. There the prince of darkness had his "hour" and a temporary triumph. The Son of God was hung upon a felon's cross. His handful of feeble followers were scattered like autumn leaves. Truth had apparently perished from the earth, and evil sat enthroned. It was the great crisis of the world's history. God was not far off; yet He was silent, until the full time for His action had come. On the third, the appointed day, calmly, yet in the full might of His power, the God of resurrection entered upon the scene. The bars of death were broken; its power was spoiled, its prince defeated, and the Crucified One was led up in triumph amid adoring hosts, to the throne of the majesty of the heavens, to be owned as Lord and Ruler over all. And the story is the same ever since. The early persecutions of the Lord's early disciples, scattered them as preachers into regions far beyond. The martyrs, under Nero, thrown to the lions in the amphitheatre, or set up as lighted torches to illuminate his gardens, gave such testimony to the power of Christ, amid their sufferings, that thousands were led to embrace the Gospel. The Pope's bull against Luther, and his trial at Worms for his faith, aroused Europe to the true character of the Papacy. King

Charles Stuart chased the godly Puritans out of England, to found and evangelise the American Commonwealth. And the persecuted Scottish martyrs, whose blood purpled their native hills, left such a legacy of vital godliness and love of the Bible to their seed, as the evil influence of centuries has not yet wholly removed.

In our own day, and in our brief life story, have we not again and again proved that "God is stronger than His foes," that His eyes "run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew Himself strong in the behalf of those whose heart is perfect toward Him" (2 Chron. xvi. 9). and that although He may try, and severely discipline His own, He will never give them up, or allow the enemy to finally triumph over them. In days of testing and sifting such as the present, when God is permitting man to set aside and dishonour His Word, the pit, the prison, the furnace, and the gallows, after some sort may come again. Harder times and a more rugged path may await those who cleave to the Lord, and seek to hold fast His truth. But it will be for good. The purposes of the Lord will stand, come what may. Of the last great apostacy, in which evil will rise to power, and be found in high places, it is said, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him" (Isa. lix. 19). And on the day of Antichrist's proud triumph, he will perish for ever at the glance of the Lord. Such is the way of the Lord with His saints; and the darkest hour is but the herald of the coming dawn. The hottest fiercest battle, is on the eve of victory.

EVIDENCES OF ETERNAL LIFE.

BY DR. J. NORMAN CASE.

(Read John xx. 26-31 and 1 John v. 13.)

WHEN one is staying in a strange house in the country, it is a good thing to know where the key is kept.

The two Scriptures read, give us the key, first to the Gospel, and secondly, to the First Epistle of John. The former is in chapter xx. 31, where the Holy Spirit gives us the great object, the great divine purpose, in the writing of this Gospel. For what purpose has this Gospel been written? That we may know HOW to be saved. "These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God"—the eternal Son of the eternal God, that one Person in whom all the purposes of God meet and in whom all the needs of the soul are met and satisfied. "And that believing ye might have LIFE through His Name."

Turn now to the Epistle. For what special object has it been written? Chapter v. 13, gives the answer, "These things have I written unto you, that ye may KNOW that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God" (R.V.). In the one instance it is that we may know how to get eternal life, in the other it is to show us how we may know that we have it. Look at some of these evidences. Our first and great warrant for concluding we are born of God is, the written Word of God itself. That is a good foundation, but not the view of the truth here presented. It is "these things have I written." What things? Not merely a verse written to

tell us we have everlasting life, but the entire teaching contained in this epistle, by which it is intended that we may test ourselves, and use it as a touchstone to apply to our own souls in finding out and assuring ourselves before God that we have eternal life. Can I illustrate the difference? Yonder in America, we will suppose there is a son of Scotland. One morning he gets a letter from the old country containing a message from a lawyer, who has full authority to write him saying, that "You, Thomas Smith, on returning to Scotland, will at once come into possession of a large estate." There it is, simple and plain enough, addressed to a certain individual at a certain place, and he knows at once that the estate belongs to him. But supposing the letter read thus—"If you, to whom this letter is written, are named Thomas Smith, if your father lived in such and such a village, if your mother's maiden name was such and such, and if you have a brother of such and such a name, you may know there is an estate for you in Scotland," he could only, after being able to say "yes" to each question, write at the foot, "I know that I have an estate waiting me yonder in Scotland;" and then he has nothing further to do but come and prove himself, show his credentials, and claim the estate. This illustrates the way, as I understand it, in which this First epistle of John has been written—that we may prove, not to others first of all, but to ourselves, that we really have eternal life. Believers need for their own rest, joy and fruit-bearing, confirmations of the fact that they are

born of God. Does increased knowledge of God through the Scriptures, communion and answered prayer go for nothing? Are they not further confirmation to ourselves that we are the children of God?

As to the evidences then, as given in this epistle, let us look first of all at ch. ii. 3 and 4. "Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we *keep His commandments*. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." There is no mincing here, no mistaking of what is meant. "But whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him." Notice, this is not a standard given us to test somebody else by. It is easy enough, we are very prone to do that. It is not "Hereby somebody else knows," nor "Hereby we know that somebody else knows God," but "Hereby we do know that *we* know Him." How? Not simply because we have John iii. 16 as our assurance, but "if we keep His commandments." That is one great solemn searching test of personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Whoso keepeth *His Word*." Here we have the same distinction as in John xiv. between the commandments and the Word. "He that hath *my commandments* and keepeth them; he it is that loveth Me," and that one is loved not merely with the love of compassion which God has for all men, but with the Father's peculiar love of delight and complacency, and Christ graciously manifests Himself to that one's spirit. But there is something beyond

that. "If a man love Me he will keep *My words*," and what will be the result? The Father and the Son will come unto him and make their "abode with him" (ver. 23). What a wonderful thing it is to be a Christian. It is to have the Triune God coming unto us, and dwelling with us! And this intimacy with God will surely be a further proof that we are His! Let us see to it that we are not disobedient children who know almost nothing of communion; not even of those who, seeking to keep His bare "commandments," get occasional glimpses from the Lord Jesus, but of those who do His will, keeping His Words in the minutest detail, having no reservations from Him, and therefore enjoy his constant company.

Look also at chapter ii. verse 29, "If ye know that He is righteous, know ye that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him." This is again very searching and very practical. "That practiseth righteousness" is the force of the word "doeth" in this connection—not an occasional doer of righteousness, but one whose life is characteristic of righteousness. In this day of easy profession, if there is one revival above another that is needed among the professing people of God, it is one of practical righteousness, right dealings with each other as Christians, and with the world. We should be known as those who are "zealous of good works," consumed in our souls by the desire to do good. We hear a great deal about the enemies of Christianity and the harm they are doing. I solemnly believe, that Christ suffers more from his professed

friends, than from His avowed enemies, and that more infidels are made by the inconstant lives of professing Christians than by the cleverest infidel books scattered abroad in the world. No man living a dishonest life has any right to console himself that he is a child of God. Christians should be righteous, not merely as the law of man demands it, but as a righteous and holy God requires it.

See next chapter iii. 14, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." That is another assurance to me that I am a Christian, for I do love the people of God. There was a time when I avoided any Christian who was likely to speak personally to me, but after the Lord saved me by His grace, I had no truer delight on earth, than being in the company of saints who would talk to me and instruct me in the things of God. Let us take that big beautiful word in all its fulness. We cannot narrow it down to any section of the people of God. It embraces the whole household of faith, the whole family of God, all who are born again. There may be many of their ways that we cannot go in with, but wherever there is a true child of God, there is something in him that answers to something in me, and I love him because he belongs to Christ.

In chapter iv. 7, 8, we read, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love." And again in verse 13, "Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because

He has given us of His Spirit." That is what it is to be a Christian—to be in God and God in us. Oh, the marvel! that the Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is our portion, or our abiding place, even now. No man is satisfied until he rests in God. Then there is the other side, God in us. Oh the wonder of these words! They are almost impossible of explanation, but we can in some little measure by experience know the blessedness of God dwelling in and with us. In John xiv. the word "dwelling place" occurs twice; first, in the place He is preparing for us (ver. 2), and second, the dwelling we prepare for God (ver. 23). As we seek to walk in obedience and communion, we give God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit an invitation to come and dwell with us. If we understand this, not only as a doctrine, but as a mighty blessed reality, it will fill us with enthusiasm—not the excitement of nature—but the same mighty zeal which energised the Lord Jesus. There was never such enthusiasm, in the right and true sense of the word, as was seen in Christ, who said, "The zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up."

In chapter iii. 24, the same aspect of the truth is presented. "He that keepeth His commandments, dwelleth in Him and He in Him. And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us." The Holy Spirit becomes the witness with our spirits—not simply to our spirits—that we are the children of God, that we have eternal life, and that ours is not a mere lip profession. We have to do with a real God, who wants us

to be real also. No sham, no outward show, on empty profession will satisfy Him. May God make us honest to test ourselves, to try our ways by the standard of His Holy Word, to confirm to our own souls that we are His. and to manifest to all around that we are so, by being "imitators of God as beloved children."

FELLOWSHIP IN REJECTION.

MY heart has perfect repose in the thought of being rejected. I only trust I shall always be able to bear it in meekness, neither in disdain, turning from, and scorning those who thus act, nor in self-vindication retaliating, but accepting all simply as that path in which we are to have fellowship with Jesus, who was so misunderstood, and whose principles were so little understood even by His apostles and brethren. It is a valuable school to learn in, the one in which the more you love, the less you are loved, and still not to be faint or weary.—J. G. B.

DEFILED BY THE WORLD.—If we walk with God, we are in no danger of having our principles defiled by the world's rough handling. Not so if our home is in the world: there our purest principles are in danger of being abused, nay, often they are abused. for the world, if it touches, cannot but dishonour them.—A. J.

Be Real.

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

GLORIFIED IN HIS SAINTS.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY H. W. SOLTAU IN 1864.

(Read 2 Thess. i. 1-12.)

THERE are two things in this chapter to which I desire to refer—the glory of the Lord Jesus when coming to be glorified in His saints by and by, and the Lord Jesus glorified in His saints *now*. There is also His coming "in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." We have here then a word for the believer, and an awful, solemn word for the unbeliever.

Blessed indeed is the prospect of the believer; for though tribulation is promised to him here, he has before him a "rest" which will be a recompence; and God says it is "a righteous thing" with Him to recompense rest to those who are troubled. It is a bad thing, then, to be without trouble now, if that trouble be in a right cause; for without it we shall get no recompence. If we are in trouble now because of our obedience to the Lord Jesus, we shall certainly have a recompence. And it is not said that it is a *gracious* thing (although it will be by the grace of God), but a *righteous* thing with God to recompense rest. Therefore, beloved friends, let us never seek to avoid trouble on account of the name of Jesus. There is a great temptation to try and get on smoothly, to flinch from trial for the Lord's sake. It is an easy snare of Satan; for our flesh naturally shrinks from tribulation. But let us remember the coming rest. And oh, how blessed it will be to enter upon it! How blessed, like

the apostle Paul, to know that we have fought a good fight, and have *finished* our course, and have not been cut short in it! How blessed to enter the rest with that joy in our hearts which he had in his!

The apostle speaks of the Thessalonians as going on in the path of tribulation; and he comforts them with the thought of God's righteous recompence when the Lord Jesus shall come. That is the time of recompence; not at death. God never puts death before us, although it is far better to depart and to be with Christ than to remain here. But our expectation ought to be the coming of our Lord Jesus, to see Him glorified in His saints. What a sight! A company of glorified saints casting back their glory upon their glorified Head!

But before that glory comes, His name is to be glorified *in* us, and we in Him. "That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 12). This is what we should aim at *now*. There is no doubt but that He will be glorified in us *then*; but it will be no credit to us. It will be accomplished by the mighty resurrection power of the Holy Ghost. And let us remember that our bodies would not be raised *then*, but that the Holy Ghost dwells in us now; for "He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. viii. 11). This is another important aspect of the truth that the Spirit of God indwells us now.

Seeing then that the Lord will be glorified in us in resurrection, are we

seeking that His Name should be glorified in us here? His Name is the expression of all that He is—His great and glorious character. Beloved, is His Name confessed by us? loved by us? lived by us? Is He glorified in us now? I will venture to say that the world can tell in whom Jesus is glorified. But let us remember that His Name may also be dishonoured by us. Think of the contrast, and that we are doing either the one or the other! There is no half-and-half ground. There is no believer walking with God and with the world. No; God and the devil can never walk together. There is no concord between Christ and Belial. We may try to trim our ways, we may steer as near the wind as we can; but if we attempt to do this, we shall soon find ourselves on the wrong course. If we walk in a narrow path, and as near the ditch as we can, it will not be long before we are in the ditch. You cannot walk with one foot on the path; for both feet will soon be off. Beloved in the Lord; Jesus is either glorified in us, or He is dishonoured, and it is not for us to say how much or how little. It is in little things we have to glorify Him. We have usually no great things to do for Him; but many little ones, which make up the sum of our lives. Our daily round of duty may have little variation; then let us live so, that Jesus may be glorified in us every day—in what we say, and in what we do. Let our secret thoughts be of Him, and then His Name will be glorified in our ways. Let us make sure that we cherish the Word of God within us, and its fruit will appear outwardly.

The other part of this solemn chapter speaks of the return of the Lord Jesus in flaming fire. What a contrast! Coming to be glorified in His saints, coming as the object of their longing and delight, and of their worshipping admiration; and coming in flaming fire to others, to those who will not believe in Him, and who therefore know not God. Who would like to watch for His coming in flaming fire? Who that believe in Him, and love Him, would not like to watch to see Him, knowing that He is coming to recompense rest, and to be admired? But He will come to take vengeance on all those "who know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." Mark, it is not to take vengeance on those who obey not the *law*, for the keeping of which many often pray, but on those who obey not the *Gospel*. Men do not think that vengeance is coming for ignorance of God; they think it ought to come perhaps on a murderer or a thief, but not on a moral church-going or chapel-going person. But it is coming on those who *know not God*; and why? Because man is inexcusable for not knowing God. If God had lived all His eternity in the hidden glory, then there might have been an excuse. But God has come down here as man, and we can comprehend a man. God has therefore left all without excuse for not knowing Him.

If I want to know God, and go to Him confessing my sins, and pleading the atoning blood of His dear Son, He will reveal Himself, and send me away with the word, "*No condemnation*," and give me power over sin.

Let us, then, who through grace believe, remember that it is only a little while that the Lord Jesus can be glorified in us here, before He will be glorified in us in resurrection. May we therefore seek to know the meaning of that little word, "Redeeming the time"—buying it back; for His own words are, "Behold I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man [each one] according as his work shall be" (Rev. xxii. 12).

THE WORLD'S OPPOSITION.

IT is not a bad sign when the Lord's people and servants are set upon and ridiculed by the world. It shews, at least, that their testimony has some effect, else the devil would not trouble himself to oppose it. A Christianity that gets no opposition from the world, but is, on the contrary, acknowledged and accredited by it, is not the Christianity of the Book of God; nor, indeed, the Christianity of our forefathers, who were hated and persecuted for their close adhesion to the Word of God. Here is a passage from *Knight's History of England*, which gives us a glance of the treatment received by the Lord's witnesses in the days of Charles I., and its healthful results to them. "In proportion as the Puritans were *hated* by the courtiers, *denounced* in the High Church pulpits, and *ridiculed* upon the stage, they *grew* in the real strength of their earnest principles." Yes, praise be unto God, as it was of old—"The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew" (Exod. i. 12), so it is still.

RUNNING OUR SOULS THIN.

A BUSINESS man of intense commercial enterprise and activity, was laid aside by sickness. He who never would intermit his labour, was compelled to come to a dead halt. His restless limbs were stretched motionless on the bed. He was so weak that he could scarcely utter a word. Speaking to a friend, of the contrast between his condition now and when he had been driving his immense business, he said: "Now I am growing. I have been running my soul thin by my activity. Now I am growing in the knowledge of myself, and of some things which most intimately concern me."

No doubt there are many saints who are running their souls thin by their incessant action, without finding quiet hours for prayer and waiting upon God. Blessed then is sickness, or sorrow, or any experience that compels us to stop, that takes the work out of our hands for a little season, that empties our hearts of their thousand cares, and turns them toward God to be taught of Him.

But why should we wait for sickness or sorrow to compel into our lives these necessary quiet hours? Why should we not train ourselves every day to go apart for a little season from the noisy, chilling world, to look into God's face and into our hearts, to learn the things we need so much to learn, and to draw secret strength and life from the fountain of life in God? George Herbert's quaint lines, contain wise counsel:

"By all means use sometimes to be alone;
Salute thyself; see what thy soul doth wear;
Dare to look in thy chest—for 'tis thine own—
And tumble up and down what thou find'st there."

WISDOM'S QUEST.

Matt. ii. 1, 2, 11; xviii. 20.

LORD, like the wise men of the east,
We too have seen Thy natal star,
It drew us onward to this feast,
Footsore and weary from afar.

How far, Lord, Thou alone dost know,
It seem'd to us earth's utmost end.
We dwelt upon the brink of woe;
But Thou Thy messenger didst send.

Through more than Egypt's darkness led,
Yet clear and bright its lovelight shone;
With holy joy our soul was stirr'd,
It beckoned and we followed on.

Full many a stumble, many a stray,
Befel us as we journeyed on,
But Thy love star from night to day,
Still nearer, clearer, brighter shone.

And as we trod o'er Bethlehem's plain,
We heard celestial voices sing:
"Go gather to His holy Name,
And there your glad thank-offerings
bring."

The babe who in the manger lay
Has pass'd through suffering, death,
and shame;

And they who seek the King to-day,
Will find Him where He puts His Name.

Will find Him where the "two or three"
Are gathered in that Holy Name;
Remembering in the appointed way,
His love, His life, His death of shame.

O Lord, we come with thankful heart;
But oh, our gifts seem poor and mean!
Yet Thou wilt act the kinsman's part,
And cover all with golden sheen.

O'er all our weakness, fear and care,
O'erspread the mantle of Thy love,
That so Thy saints on earth may share
The joy of gathered saints above.

D. S. K.

The Bible Annotator.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE READINGS.

THREE GREAT FACTS IN ROMANS.

No Condemnation (chap. viii. 1)—In Christ.
 No Separation (chap. viii. 30)—From Christ.
 No Reservation (chap. xii. 1)—For Christ.

THREE DIVISIONS OF PSALM XXXII.

God our Justifier (verses 1-5).
 God our Hiding-Place (verses 6-7).
 God our Guide (verses 8-11).

FAITH'S ENERGIES.

It Purifies the Heart—Acts xv. 9.
 It Inherits Promises—Heb. vi. 12.
 It Works by Love—Gal. v. 6.
 It Overcomes the World—I John v. 4.

Misinterpreted Texts Examined.

Revelation xx. 5.—"The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." Those who teach the "sleep of the soul" after death, build their theory on this text, but it does not in the least support it. The word "lived" has here, as elsewhere, a definite meaning, and implies the possession and exercise of the functions of the body. The souls of departed saints, whilst in an unclothed or disembodied state in Paradise, are perfectly conscious, "at home with the Lord" and "very far better" (Phil. i. 23, r.v.), but they are not said to be in the exercise of the functions of life, which require the presence of their resurrection bodies. Hence they are still said to be "the dead in Christ." So also the wicked dead, although their souls now exist in hades in conscious torment (Luke xvi. 24) are not said to "live," that word being used not in the sense of existence, but of exercising the functions of life through the body.

Hebrews v. 7.—"Unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that he feared." It has been said that the "fear" here, was the Lord's dread of dying before He reached the Cross. Such a thought is utterly excluded from the passage, and is contrary to all the teaching of the Scriptures. That our blessed Lord knew He would die the death of the Cross, that He must be "lifted up" (John iii. 14; xii. 32, 33), and that for this He set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem, "knowing all things that should come upon Him," is perfectly certain from His own utterances. Equally sure is the testimony that no man could

take His life from Him, but that of His own power (authority) He could lay it down and take it up again (John x. 18). The "fear" spoken of in the passage is, as the margin tells us, "His piety"—or "reverence" (as the same word is translated in Heb. xii. 28)—on account of which He was heard, when He, in the days of His earthly life, offered up supplications unto Him who was able to save Him out of death, the answer to which was given in His resurrection from among the dead. Speculations like these on such subjects should be avoided. The mystery of our adorable Lord's experiences during the hours of His agony, should be approached with that reverence of spirit, which receives in wondering worship, all that God has been pleased to reveal, but refuses to pry into, or speculate on that, which He has retained among the "secret things" which belong to Himself alone. (Deut. xxix. 29).

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Do the words in Col. ii. 16, give any countenance for the non-observance of the Lord's Day? The apostle is not speaking of the Lord's Day, but of the Jewish Sabbaths, of which there were many in the course of the year besides the seventh day (Lev. xxiii.). "The first day of the week" is nowhere called "the Sabbath," but carefully distinguished from it (see Matt. xxviii. 1), and the special and distinctive name given to it is "the Lord's Day" (Rev. i. 10). This day is to be observed by Christians as a memorial of the resurrection of the Lord, not in a legal spirit, but as a day of rest from daily toil, and in joyful occupation in the worship and service of God (Acts xx. 7). The above verses do not deal with this, but with the Sabbath days which many Jewish converts continued to observe, and were evidently imposing as an obligation upon their brethren from among the Gentiles, which the apostle forbids.

It is said in John i. 18, "No man hath seen God at any time," and in Exod. xxiv. 18, "They saw the God of Israel." How can these passages be reconciled? God as God, in all the plenitude of His character, as Light and Love, was only "declared" in the Son. Partial manifestations "at sundry times and in divers manners" (Heb. i. 1) there had been, but when the Son appeared among men, He said, "He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father" (John xiv. 9). He only is "the effulgence of His glory, and the express image of His person."

Answers to Correspondents

H. E., ESSEX.—A meeting, say one night a week, for united study of the Word, would greatly help the young believers recently added to the assembly. In any case, whatever form it may take, let them be taught and led on in the truth. Nothing else will keep them right, and cause them to grow.

J. H., GLASGOW.—If there is no room for you and your companions in labour who desire to help in spreading the Gospel, in connection with the assembly of which you form a part, owing to a continuous supply of preachers being brought from other places, there is no need for you to sit as listeners in the pews with your talents buried in a napkin. There is plenty of scope for you outside in the world, where you will better test your spiritual strength, and prove the measure of your gifts and graces in beginning and sustaining a little Gospel work under your own care—say in a kitchen, rented room, or open-air meeting—than in attempting to occupy the platform in a large hall, with a “stated congregation,” largely composed of believers.

J. E. M., CO. DURHAM.—The great awakening and subsequent ingathering of sinners in the North of Ireland in 1859, was not the result of gigantic human arrangements, but began in a small country schoolhouse in Kells, where a few young men met for prayer. One at least of these is still in the body, and delights to tell of the beginnings of that memorable time. The danger now is, in spending much time, energy, and skill in making plans, which the Lord is asked to endorse and make use of. That He does not do so, results too often prove. The old fashioned way of waiting upon God, hanging upon His hand, moving along with Him as He leads and works, falling in with His plans as He discloses them, is the godly though not the popular way of carrying on Gospel work.

Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION XII.—Is it according to God's will, that men should be accepted as teachers in assemblies and at Conferences, who are frequently found in sectarian churches and chapels preaching, sometimes even on Lord's Day morning when the assembly they profess to be associated with, is gathered to shew forth the Lord's death? This is a matter which is exercising very many, and has stumbled a large number of young believers. Help from the Word regarding it, will be greatly valued

ANSWER A.—Those who publicly minister the Word, and are regarded as guides in the assembly of the saints, ought to be “ensamples to the flock” (1 Pet. v. 3) in their ecclesiastical as well as their personal conduct. Any whose ways are so contrary to the truth, as to be found upbuilding again by means of their gifts, religious systems, which they professedly separated from because of their unscriptural character, can never have really learned from God the truth of separation from them, or if they once had it, they must have trifled with it, until it has ceased to exercise any control over them. Their judgment is with the Lord, and He who knows best how to discipline His servants for their restoration, will not fail to do so in His own time and way, but it is a serious responsibility for any assembly to assume, to invite, or put forward such men as instructors of and guides to, the people of God.

J. S.

ANSWER B.—Paul refused the co-operation in service of John Mark (Acts xv. 38), because of his irregular ways, and evidently instructed assemblies regarding him, while he continued unprofitable for service (Col. iv. 10, with which compare 2 Tim. iv. 10, where, after his restoration, he is reinstated). The conduct of Peter at Antioch was such, and likely to produce such results among those who observed it, that he had to be “resisted to the face” because he stood condemned (Gal. ii. 11, R.V.) by his inconsistency. If one who takes the place of a minister of the Word, regards the truth of separation from sects as of so little value, as to set it aside, and go back to assist by his preaching that which he professes to have seen the evil of and departed from, he is in no fit condition to stand before others as a minister of the truth, who can turn to his hearers and say “Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do” (Phil. iv. 9). If they themselves have no conscience regarding the truth, those who have, ought firmly to resist their influence, which can only be for evil, leading others into the path where they themselves walk.

J. C.

ANSWER C.—Several of our most godly young men in the assembly here have been stumbled, by the actions of one whose name appears as a teacher in assemblies gathered in the Lord's Name and at Conferences outside of all sects, who came here to preach for and thus to build up a mission, whose promoters are bitter opponents of the truth, and of those who seek in feebleness amid the world's reproach to give it effect in their assembly capacity

here. He passed us by altogether, went in fully with all the unscriptural practices which obtain in this 'inter-denominational' or all-sectarian jumble, and the following week appeared as a teacher at a Conference in a neighbouring town in which there is a large assembly, which it is no cross to identify oneself with. There, he was "strong" in preaching the very opposite of what he practices elsewhere. The result is, several have been driven into "Exclusivism," to escape this sort of thing, which is doing more to distract and divide assemblies than any of us are aware. So far as we as an assembly are concerned, we will, through grace, withstand it, refusing to open our doors any longer to those who cause the "divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which we have learned" (Rom. xvi. 17 R.V.), for which we have God's own commandment. J. M'C.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—The above brief answers, bearing on a matter which is deeply exercising many godly ones, especially such as exercise shepherd care among the saints, and have more opportunity than others of seeing its evil effects, are commended to the calm and prayerful consideration of our readers. That there is cause for such exercise is well enough known; that such confusion is not according to God is generally acknowledged, by all who fear God and seek to be guided by His Word; but the danger is, as it has always been, to meet the evil with a human remedy, instead of waiting upon God and seeking help from Him according to His Word, which He never fails to give to those who seek to know His will in order that they may do it. An off-hand answer to a question like this, does not meet the difficulty. It requires an examination of the fundamental principles of the Word, and their godly application to such cases, to give confidence to those who have to act for God in the midst of such circumstances, that they are doing His will, and thus able to count upon His sanction and support in what they do for His Name and His Truth. A series of papers by various writers on such subjects, will shortly appear in our pages, which, we believe, will be helpful to many in the present crisis.

Correspondence.

A Correspondent, signing himself "Philologos, Sussex," taking exception to the note on 1 Cor. xv. 22, which appeared in our last issue, page 109,

remarks, that he favours "the wider application of the passage to a general resurrection." To us it seems perfectly clear from the context, that the bearing of the entire passage is limited to those who "are Christ's," and that neither here nor elsewhere in the Word, is there anything taught of "a general resurrection." That all who have ever lived will be raised, but not at the same time, or after the same manner 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17; John v. 28, 29; Rev. xx. 12, fully shews, but an elective resurrection of believers only, is the subject of 1 Cor. xv. Since writing the above we have come across a singularly apt and pithy extract by the late Mr Henry Dyer, on this subject, which we think our readers will profit by reading. He says:—"The fifteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, is indeed a rich and mighty Scripture as to the resurrection of the dead, and a most familiar and well known one. But its national use in this and other countries, over the graves of all who die, makes it only the more needful to guard against its painful and soul-deluding misuse, and to point out its real meaning. This chapter is used throughout Christendom, more or less, as elegant and assuring language concerning all the dead; and thus mourners are often falsely comforted about those who have died in their sins and really destitute of Christ, while they too are helped to believe that it is well with themselves also. "Peace, peace" is said to them, when "there is no peace," and that too by the untrue sounding in their ears of the voice of even God's Word itself. What a device of Satan! Truly, Satan does make himself 'an angel of light'; and his servants speak, like Balaam of old, as if they were 'ministers of righteousness'!

"The truth is, this Scripture is just one paragraph of an epistle addressed to children of God, and to them only; and it is raised SAINTS (i.e., sinners justified by faith in Christ) who are spoken of in this chapter, and raised saints only. Every raised dead one mentioned in it, rises in 'the image of the heavenly,' which the unbelieving dead never do, and this one fact should have utterly forbidden its general and indiscriminate use over all who die. The whole epistle is to believers in Christ; and just as well might any other portion of it have been falsely applied to men at large as this portion. But this chapter furnishes, alas! too ready and too agreeable an opiate for hopeless tears and terrible thoughts about the eternity of the unsaved, for it to lie unused; and hence the injury to souls by its wide application."

FORM WITHOUT POWER.

SOLEMN LESSONS FROM ANCIENT HISTORY.

THE Apostle warns us in 2 Tim. iii. 1-4, that the last days will be characterised by "a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." This, in its fullest measure, applies clearly to those who are religious professors without being possessors of Christ. But whatever is at any time rampant in the religious world, becomes a temptation and a snare to the true people of God, and needs to be especially guarded against in the assemblies of the saints. Form without power, an intellectual assent to certain doctrines, apart from their sanctifying and spiritual force being manifested in the life and testimony, the lip confession of the truth, without its inward grasp on the heart and conscience, and its outward controlling power in the walk and ways, is what believers need to dread, and watch against at the present time. Truth held in the intellect, or known as a creed, or received from others, even sound doctrine, does not sanctify, or lead to God. Unless Divine truth comes to the soul as the voice of God, and is welcomed and obeyed as such, maintaining the saint in soul health, sanctified walk, and communion with a holy God, it is of little practical value, and may at any time be wrested from our grasp. Those who "buy the truth" at some personal cost, or who, through many and hard conflicts, recover it from the enemy, generally set a proper value upon it, and hold it fast, because of its intrinsic worth, "in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus," "by

the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us," as the Apostle speaks (1 Tim. i. 13, 14), but when "faith and a good conscience" (1 Tim. i. 19) fail, the power of the truth is gone, and very soon its outward form is also lost or renounced.

The opening chapters of the First Book of Samuel, bring this line of things before us in a solemn and searching light. The history there, has its voice and its message to us, "upon whom the ends of the ages have come" (1 Cor. x. 11, R.V.), which we well to hear and to heed.

The house of the Lord is at Shiloh, with the sacred ark within its holiest of all. Eli, the aged priest, is there; so are his sons Hophni and Phinehas, who, as descendants of the Araonic line, succeed him in his office. But while all is right in outward form, there is an evil inward condition. Eli is an easy-going man; not himself personally wicked, but unable or unwilling to guard the honour of the Lord's house, or purge its courts from evil. Need we wonder when he failed to rule and judge his own? His sons were wicked men, "sons of Belial," who misused Jehovah's sacrifice, and wrought wickedness in the very courts of His house. Eli is not charged with sharing in, or even approving of this evil. Indeed, we are told he remonstrated with them concerning it, but the Lord says "he restrained them not" (chap. iii. 13). His business as Jehovah's priest was to set the Divine honour high above all, to guard the sanctity of the house of God, to see that His claims were honoured and His Word obeyed. But he did not. In the Lord's reckoning he honoured his sons

more than his God (chap. ii. 29), and for this he was judged and set aside, as the channel of communication between the Lord and His people. True, he still held his office, and wore the ephod, but Eli was no longer a vessel meet for the Lord to use. The "child Samuel" was taken up, and the aged priest was set aside because of his unfaithfulness. The secret of the Lord was with a praying Hannah, but not with the official priest. Yet he, who was thus judged by his God, misjudged and falsely accused the woman whose prayer the Lord heard, mistaking her sorrow of heart for wine, and misjudging her as "drunken." And thus it often is, as many godly souls well know. They are misjudged and misrepresented by fallen and faithless men, who neither judge themselves nor their house, whose eyes have "waxed dim" (chap. iii. 3), whose spiritual discernment is gone, and who being out of communion with God themselves, can only misjudge others who walk with Him.

The failure of the priests was the beginning of the evil, and had great and far-reaching results to Israel. It speaks to us solemnly of the failure of the saints in their inner life, their communion with God, and their service toward Him in His sanctuary, as those whose business is to guard His house, according to the holiness that becometh it, to teach His statutes and judgments, and to put difference between clean and unclean (Lev. x. 10, 11). But if the priest's lips fail to "keep knowledge," and to "seek the law at the mouth of the Lord" (Mal. ii. 7), that he may *do* it, and then teach it, the failure

of the priest is soon felt in the ranks of Israel. Godly worship of saints living in priestly communion, leads on to and gives power in teaching, which is set by God in the Church for "reproof and correction," as well as for "instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. iii. 16). When priestly communion fails, teaching ceases to have the desired effect. Such is the scene within. In Eli there is laxity and indifference to the Lord's honour; in his sons lawlessness, ungodliness, and unholy affinity with the world. Let us look at the results without. Israel goes to war with the Philistines, notwithstanding their fallen state, and are smitten on the field. The elders ask the question, "Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us to-day?" (chap. iv. 3), and without waiting to consult God, or find out the cause of defeat by falling on their faces before Him, as Joshua had done on a former day of disaster, to learn that secret sin was its cause (Josh. vii. 6, 11), they say, "Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh unto us, that when it cometh among us, it may save us" (1 Sam. iv. 3). And when the sacred chest was borne into the camp in charge of Eli's wicked sons, the people "shouted with a great shout" (ver. 12), as their fathers had done when that same ark was borne around Jericho's walls, preceded by sanctified priests in holy garments, walking "before the Lord"—for we are particularly told that they "passed on before the LORD" (Josh. vi. 8), whose presence was there with His Ark. But their shout was vain, for although the ark of God was there, the God of the ark was not, and

they were not only smitten with a great slaughter, but the ark of God was wrested from them, and fell into the hands of their enemies, while the sons of Eli, who were its custodians, were slain. That ark was the symbol of God's presence among His people, and of the doctrine that speaks of it. But it was in bad keeping. The priests who had it in their charge were God-dishonouring men. They had not His fear before their eyes. They were unclean, and the Lord had departed from them. How could they, or even the ark in their keeping, work deliverance? Instead of helping Israel, they bring judgment upon themselves. Thus the ark falls into the enemy's hand, the guilty priests are slain, Eli falls dead, and "Ichabod" is written upon Israel. The truth of God's presence in His Church, of the Lord Jesus in the midst, of His Supreme Headship and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, held in faith by godly men, walking in separation from evil and giving effect to the truths they own, will never fail to be a source of blessing and a means of victory to the people of God; but when only the outward form is there, the mere doctrine, apart from its holy and sanctifying power, the latter being lost through sin unjudged, unconfessed, and unrepented, then judgment instead of blessing will come to us. And in time that truth itself will be wrested from the Church, as indeed it already has been, by the uncircumcised. Truth held in unholy hands, by men out of communion with God, in unhallowed alliance with the world, will neither save or bless, but bring those who boast in its possession, under judgment.

THE CHURCH'S LAST DAYS.

IS there any notice in God's Word, that the *saints*, or the *Church*, are to rise to any condition of beauty or of strength befitting them, ere the hour of their translation come? The *apostate things* are to be great and magnificent just before their judgment—but I ask, is the *true thing* to be eminent in its way, strong and beautiful in that strength and beauty that belong to it, ere its removal to glory?

This is an affecting inquiry. What answer do the oracles of God give us?

Paul, in 2nd Timothy, contemplates "the last days," in their perilous character, and the ruin of the Church, which we have seen, and do see at this day, all around us. But what condition of things among the saints or elect of God, does he anticipate as following that ruin? I may say with all assurance, he does not contemplate any restoration as to Church order, any rebuilding of God's house, so to speak, any recovery of corporate beauty or strength worthy of this dispensation; but he exhorts the pure in heart to call on the Lord together, purged from vessels to dishonour in "the great house," and there also, together, to follow the virtues, and cherish the graces, which become them and belong to them.

Peter, in his 2nd Epistle, contemplates "the last days" also, and very fearful unclean abominations among professors, and very daring infidel scorning of divine promises in the world. But he gives no hint whatever that there will be restored order and strength in the Church, or in corporate spiritual action. He simply

tells the saints to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour, and to be assured of this, that the promise of His coming and majesty, is no cunningly devised fable. He speaks to them of an entrance into the everlasting kingdom, but never of a return to a restored order of things in the Church on earth.

Jude, also, in like manner, anticipates "the last time," and many terrible corruptions, such as "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness." But what then? He promises nothing in the way of restored beauty and consistency as in earlier days, but just encourages the "beloved" to build themselves up in holy faith, and to keep themselves in God's love; but he is so far from encouraging any hope of recovered order and strength in the Church on earth, that he tells them to be looking out for another object altogether, "the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life."

John, in his way, gives us the judgment of the seven Churches in Asia, in Rev. ii. and iii. It is a very solemn scene. There is some good and much evil found in the midst of them. The voices of the Spirit, heard there, have healthful admonitions for us, both in our individual and gathered condition. But there is no promise that the judgment will work correction and recovery. The Churches are judged, and they are left under the judgment. And we know no more of them on earth. The next sight we get of the elect is in heaven (see chap. iv.).

All this is serious and yet happy. And all this is strikingly verified by the great moral phenomena around us, under our

eye, or within our hearing, at this moment. For we know that the great *apostate* things, the things of the world, whether civil or ecclesiastical, are in the advance, ripening to full bloom of vigour and of beauty, while we see the *true* thing broken, enfeebled, and wasted, in no wise promising to regain what once it had in days of corporate order and power.

But it is well. It is gracious in the Lord, thus to cast up before us, in His Word, the high road along which we were destined to travel, and the sights we were appointed to see. And it is happy to know, that our translation does not wait for a regained condition of dispensational order and strength; for, according to present appearances, we might have to wait long enough ere that could be.

So, I say, there is no New Testament promise, that the Church shall recover her consistency and beauty, ere her translation comes. She passes from her ruins to her glory, while the world goes from its magnificence to its judgment—ruins, too, I add, which witness the judgment of God.

May I not say, beloved, in the light of these truths, comfort yourself as you look abroad, and see what it is that is *strong* now-a-days, and what it is that is *weak*. But let me add—let not the weakness of the saints, be the least occasion for personal moral relaxation. This would be a sad and terrible use to make of the truths we are speaking of, and gathering from Scripture. We are most surely to be separate from evil as distinctly as ever, and to cherish all the thoughts and ways of holiness. J. G. B.

THE OINTMENT AND THE DEW.

A MEDITATION ON PSALM CXXXIII.

BY THE LATE THOMAS NEWBERRY,
EDITOR OF *The Englishman's Bible*.

“**B**EHOLD, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”

It is “good” in the sight of God our heavenly Father to see His children dwelling together in holy concord. It is “good” in the eyes of the Lord Jesus to see those whom He has redeemed to God by His precious blood, realising their unity in Him, and fulfilling His new and true commandment in loving one another. It is “good” in the eyes of the Holy Spirit the Comforter come down, who is baptising Jew and Gentile, bond and free, into one body, when together they worship their Father, in Spirit and in truth.

“Great the joy when Christians meet,
Christian fellowship, how sweet!”

When such a spectacle is presented, even the world is constrained to say, “See how these Christians love one another:”

It is indeed “pleasant” when children of one heavenly Father, redeemed by one Lord, realise their oneness in the same Spirit.

Verse 2—“It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, *even* Aaron’s beard: that went down to *the skirts* of his garments.”

The comparison here used, is that of the anointing oil, and it was at first realised on the day of Pentecost. When that day was fully come, the disciples

were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing, mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost” (Acts ii. 1-4). Peter explains this. Jews and Gentiles having concurred in the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth, God had raised Him from the dead, and He having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, had sent down the Comforter. This was the precious ointment on the head of the high priest of our profession, Christ Jesus. When anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows, He received the anointing, not for Himself alone, but for His companions also. “The Father giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him.”

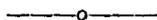
Another fulfilment of this Pentecostal filling may be realised when as disciples we gather together in the presence of God, around the person of Christ, in dependence on the presence and power of the Holy Ghost, in holy fellowship, harmony, and love.

In the consecration of the priesthood (Exod. xxix.) the anointing oil was first poured upon the head of Aaron (v. 7). Afterwards the blood of the ram was put upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the tip of the right ear of his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their right foot, thus setting apart the entire person from all iniquity, unto God, “Holiness unto Jehovah.” May we have the day of consecration renewed, the ear tipped with blood, taking heed what we hear, the hand consecrated, refraining

from every evil work ; and also the foot, that we walk not in any evil way, the blood standing sentinel at every door. Subsequently the anointing oil mingled with blood, was sprinkled upon Aaron and his garments, upon his sons, and upon the garments of his sons with him (v. 20, 21), thus setting forth their united separation to God, and their joint participation in their unction from the Holy One,

Verse 3—"As the dew of Hermon. *and as the dew* that descended [descending] upon the mountains of Zion ; for there Jehovah commanded the blessing, *even life for evermore.*"

The anointing oil is one emblem of the Spirit of God and of Christ. The dew is another emblem. "Hermon" signifies devoted. This devotedness may be twofold, either devoted to judgment or devoted to God. "Zion" means parched, or dry. "The mountains of Zion" is the symbol of the sovereignty of God in grace in contrast to "Mount Sinai," the responsibility of man under law. Where brethren are dwelling together in unity, there the Spirit of the risen Christ is continually flowing down. Where hearts, on the ground of sovereign grace are thirsting for the living God, there the dew of the eternal Spirit descends, and there Jehovah will command the blessing, *even life for evermore.* Here the word "life" is in the plural ; for it is life from the Triune God ; life for spirit, soul, and body ; life for time, and for eternity.



FRESHNESS.—The only way to maintain freshness in ministry to others, is to be receiving fresh supplies from God for yourself.

OUTLINES IN ACTS.

PART V.—A NEW WITNESS CALLED OUT.

ISRAEL was the favoured earthly people, and it was due to them to try whether or not the fountain would be opened in Jerusalem, from whence to water the earth. But this debt of Israel had now been paid by the ministry of the Lord, closed in by that of the twelve ; and Stephen's speech in the 7th of Acts, is God's conviction of Israel's rejection of all the ways which His love had taken with them. They had silenced, as he there charges them, the early voice of God in Joseph—they had refused Moses the deliverer—they had persecuted the prophets—slain John and others, who had shewed before of the coming of the Just One—been the betrayers and murderers of that Just One Himself, and finally, were then in His person resisting, to the end resisting, as they have ever done, the Holy Ghost. The Lord therefore had only to forsake His sanctuary, and with it the earth, and the martyr sees the Lord in heaven under such a form as gives clear notice that the saints were now to have their citizenship in heaven, their home in the glory there, and not on the earth. the earth.

This martyrdom of Stephen was thus a crisis or time of judgment, the final one with Israel ; and a new witness to God is therefore called out. There had been already such times in the history of Israel. Shiloh had been the scene of the first crisis. The ark that was there was taken into the enemy's land—the priest and his sons died ingloriously. Ichabod was the

character of the system then, and Samuel was called out as Jehovah's new witness—the help of Israel, the raiser of the stone, Ebenezer. Jerusalem was afterwards the scene of another crisis. The house of David had filled up its sin; the king and the people with all their treasures were taken down to Babylon, and the city laid in heaps; and Jesus (for the interval as to this purpose need not be estimated) is called forth, God's new witness—the sure mercy and hope of Israel. But He was refused, and in judgment turned His back upon Jerusalem, saying, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." That was a season of judgment also—judgment of Israel for the rejection of the Son of Man; and another witness is then called out—the twelve Apostles, who testify, as I have been observing, in the Holy Ghost, to the resurrection of the rejected Lord, and that repentance and remission of sins were provided in Him for Israel. But they also are rejected and cast out. Then comes the final crisis—Stephen is their representative, and he convicts Israel of full resistance of the Holy Ghost; and then a new and heavenly witness is called forth. Such witness is the Church, and of the Church, and of the Church's special calling and glory, Paul is made in an eminent sense the minister.

"It pleased God to reveal His Son in me," says he. This is the ground of the Church's special dignity, and the Gospel which Paul preached. It was not the Gospel of Messiah, the Hope of Israel, nor the Gospel of the once-crucified One, now exalted "to be a Prince and a Saviour,

to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins;" but it was the Gospel of *the Son of God revealed in him*. The Son had been revealed to the disciples by the Father before (Matt. xvi. 17); but now He is revealed *in* Paul. The Holy Ghost in him was the Spirit of the Son; and anointed with this oil of gladness, he had to go forth and spread the savour of it everywhere. And upon the Son thus revealed within, hangs everything that is peculiar, as I have observed, to the calling and glory of the Church. Thus we read, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together" (Rom. viii. 16, 17). And again, we read, "that we are predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ," that is, as Paul here speaks of himself, *to have the Son revealed in us*. And this being the predestinated condition of the Church, there comes forth, as in the train of this, all the Church's holy prerogatives—acceptance in the Beloved, with forgiveness of sins through His blood—entrance into the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, so as to have made known to us the mystery of the will of God—future inheritance in and with Him, in whom all things in heaven and earth are to be gathered—and the present seal and earnest of this inheritance in the Holy Ghost. This bright roll of privileges is inscribed by the Apostle thus—"spiritual blessings in the heavenlies;" blessings through the Spirit flowing from Him who is there.

CONFERENCE GLEANINGS.

WHOLESOME WORDS FOR TESTING TIMES.

REJECTION AND HONOUR.—It is an especial honour to be permitted to live and bear witness to the Truth in a day when it is unpopular. When David was acknowledged as king over all Israel, there was no great virtue in surrounding his person, it was, so to speak, a popular thing to do so. But in the Cave of Adullam, when he was a fugitive, despised and rejected, only a mere handful of the true hearted were around him, owning his rule. And it was among these that the honours of the kingdom were distributed.

GRACE AND FORBEARANCE.—It is easy enough to talk fluently on the platform about grace and forbearance, and to extol their virtues. But I have frequently found, that when there is a call for their exercise, those who talk most, manifest least of either, when their will is crossed, or their ways withstood. We manifest what we really are, when under trial, and then also, our actual spiritual condition comes out.

ENVY.—When Joseph's brethren saw the coat of many colours given by their father to their younger brother, as a token of his favour and love, they were filled with envy, and conspired to kill him. Had he been of the same type as themselves, he would have been spared this, and all that came of it in rejection, dishonour, and suffering. Envy is still the chief cause of godly men who speak and act the truth being defamed, and of such a tale of woe carried by their traducers, together with their characters,

like Joseph's coat, stained in blood, that even their nearest kindred are deceived. But it all recoils on themselves sooner or later, as Joseph's brethren learned, when they stood convicted of their long-forgotten sin, saying, "We were verily guilty concerning our brother" (Gen. xiii. 21).

GARNISHED ERROR.—Error, especially when it appears in some new and specious form, is wont to shelter itself behind Scripture terms clothed in new meanings, which beguile the unwary. This is what the apostle warns of, as "handling the Word of God deceitfully" (2 Cor. iv. 2), and never was it more prevalent than it is now. Error is never more seductive or dangerous, than when it is garnished and made attractive with distorted truth.

SCRIPTURE ALL-SUFFICIENT.—All that God regards as being needful to his people for their spiritual intelligence, the establishing of their souls in His truth, and the direction of their steps in His ways, all through the present age, is to be found in the Holy Scriptures. There is not a condition of the individual believer or of the church possible, which has not been provided for in the all-sufficient Word.

DISPARAGING OTHERS.—It is often urged by those who are themselves departing from the path of obedience, and seeking to lead others in the same direction, that there must be "progression" in the things we believe and do, and that we are not to simply walk in the faith and practices of those who went before us. It has even been hinted at, that they being for the most part unlearned men, were less qualified to expound and apply

the Scriptures than we of this enlightened age now are. But intellectual acuteness is a very different thing from spiritual intelligence, gained in communion with God, and whatever the godly of a past generation lacked in the former, they were men of God as their ways abundantly manifested. It is the sign of a very low and depraved condition, when men professing godliness, seek to exalt themselves, and to enforce their unscriptural ways, by speaking in language of disparagement of those who have gone before them, to whom instrumentally they owe anything of grace that they possess.

THE WORKER HID.

THE late C. H. Spurgeon, tells of a journey through South London during the time of "lighting up" the street lamps. Lamp after lamp was lit, and threw off its light, until a perfect illumination was the result. "But," says Mr Spurgeon, "I never saw the lamp-lighter." The work was manifest, the worker hid. This is just how it ought to be in the service of the Lord. The servant is not to exhibit himself, but His Master. One who knew and served Him well could say, "We preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord" (2 Cor. iv. 4). His aim was to shed forth the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, to attract and exalt the Son of God: to win hearts for Him. This is the sort of service that is much thought of in heaven, that has the Lord's blessing now, and will have His "Well done" hereafter. But alas! how little there is of it. It is rare to see the

work without the worker. Ours is a day of men "booming" their own service, and getting others to do it for them. It is sickening to read the inflated "Reports" of what those best able to judge know to be little else than "chaff," a heap of empty profession, an advertisement of the preacher, to enable him to sustain his reputation and make him popular for a time. But how weak it all is, and of how short duration! Yet while it lasts, it is quite apart from the way of the Lord, the Spirit of Christ, and the teaching of the Word. Those who serve the meek and lowly One, if they would be vessels meet for His use, must be content to be of little account here, not only in the world, but in the Church, and among fellow-servants; yea, if they are true followers of the Pattern Servant, they will gladly *efface* themselves, and like one of old, joyfully say, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John iii. 28). This is the true spirit of the servant of Christ, and the only path of abiding fruitfulness.

HELPING BY PRAYER.

THE weary ones had rest, the sad had joy
That day; I wondered how.
A ploughman, singing at his work, had prayed
'Lord, help them now.'

Away in foreign lands they wondered how
Their single word had power.
At home, the Christians two or three had met
To pray an hour.

Yes, we are always wondering, wondering 'how';
Because we do not see
Some one, unknown, perhaps, and far away,
On bended knee.

The Bible Annotator.

OUTLINES OF GOSPEL SUBJECTS.

THE FALL AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

- The Story of the Fall (Gen. ii. 17 ; iii. 7-8).
 Its Penal Consequences (Rom. v. 12-17 ; 1 Cor. xv. 22).
 The Inherited Nature (Eph. ii. 3 ; Psa. li. 5).
 Man's Total Depravity (Rom. iii. 9-18 ; v. 19-20).
 The Need of Regeneration (Job xiv. 4 ; John iii. 3).

THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST.

Offered once for all upon the Cross.

- It was an Expiation (Rom. viii. 3 ; Gal. i. 4).
 It was a Death Sentence (Gal. iii. 13 ; 2 Cor. v. 23).
 It was for a Propitiation (Rom. iii. 23 ; 1 John ii. 2).
 It was a Purchase (1 Cor. vi. 20 ; Acts xx. 28).
 It was a Peacemaking (Col. i. 20 ; Isa. liii. 5).

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

In Four Aspects.

- The Seal of a Finished Work (Acts xiii. 29-30).
 The Sign of a Great Triumph (Heb. ii. 14 ; Eph. iv. 8).
 The Pledge of a Coming Resurrection (1 Cor. xv. 20-22.)
 The Certainty of a Future Judgment (Acts xvii. 31).

ETERNAL JUDGMENT.

- Foretold by Patriarchs (Deut. xxxii. 22 ; Job xxxvi. 18).
 Warned of by Prophets (Psa. ix. 17 ; Isa. v. 14 ; xiv. 9).
 Described by the Lord (Matt. xxv. 46 ; Mark ix. 47).
 Taught by Apostles (2 Pet. ii. 9 ; Heb. x. 29).
 Unveiled in Revelation (Rev. xiv. 10 ; xx. 14-15).
 Denied by Scoffers (2 Pet. iii. 4 ; Jude 18).

Happy Work for Young Believers.

The following scraps, selected from letters received from Christian young men and women in various parts of the earth, may serve to show how varied are the spheres and ways in which those who have a heart for Christ, and a desire to serve Him, may happily spend and be spent in His honourable and blessed service :—

1. "I am a milkmaid, saved two years ago. I find my sphere of happy service in giving Gospel tracts to the servants in the houses where I call in the mornings. Many are glad to get them, and God has blessed the message to several conversions."

2. "Here in Queensland, we are far from any town, and do not have the privilege of preaching Christ to crowds as in bygone days. But I go from

house to house and speak a word for Jesus, and hope yet to have a meeting in one of them."

3. "Three of us have begun a kitchen meeting in a miner's house. We were very shaky at first, as neither of us had ever spoken before, but the Lord helped, and we have had the joy of seeing three decided conversions. Praise the Lord."

4. "Six of us, all recently converted, stand at the corners nearest to our hall, giving notices and tracts for an hour before the meeting on Sunday evenings, and the hall is now filled with strangers, whereas before it was only half filled, and they mostly believers."

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Why, and for what reason, do the Lord's genealogies, as given by Matthew and Luke, so greatly differ? In Matthew, we have the legal genealogy, the line of Joseph, traced through Solomon, who was the elder son of David, and whose line from a Jewish kingdom standpoint, which is what Matthew specially observes throughout his Gospel, was the more important. Luke gives Mary's line, traced through Nathan to Adam, showing the Lord's proper manhood. Jesus was legally—or by reckoning in the eye of the law—the son of Joseph, actually the son of Mary. The mode of His "becoming" man, and of His birth by a Virgin, was a transcendent miracle (see Luke i. 35).

To whom does the term "My brethren" used by the Judge in Matt. xxv. 40, apply? In order to properly understand who the various classes mentioned in this scene of judgment are, we need first to settle what judgment it is. It is clearly not the judgment seat of Christ, which is for saints (2 Cor. v. 10) and will be in heaven before the kingdom, nor is it the judgment of the dead before the great white throne (Rev. xx. 10), which will be after it. It is a "millennial" scene. The "nations" are gathered before the "Son of Man," who sits upon "the throne of His glory." There are three classes; the sheep, the goats, and "My brethren." According to their treatment of the latter, "the nations" are ranked on the right or left of the King, among the sheep or the goats. The King's brethren are Jewish, possibly preachers of the Gospel of the Kingdom, who have gone forth among all nations shortly before (see Matt. xxiv. 14), and some welcomed while others slighted them. The sheep enter on a place in the earthly kingdom; the goats go into everlasting punishment.

Answers to Correspondents

"BETA."—The paper you name, appeared in "The Northern Assemblies," published by Mr. Donald Ross in Aberdeen, in 1873. We fear it would be difficult to find a copy of it now.

"INQUIRER."—You will find the help you seek in the marginal readings of "The Newberry Bible," large type edition, which is being at present reprinted. We believe it is the best and most reliable authority on the meaning of Bible names, extant.

J. M., OXON.—The only remedy for the levity and lightness you mourn over, among those who profess to be "converts," is to give them in full measure the plain and wholesome ministry of God's Word (1 Tim. iv. 6; vi. 3; 2 Tim. iv. 2) which, if there is Divine life in them, will reprove, instruct, and correct (2 Tim. iii. 16), and if only empty professors, will winnow them out as chaff from wheat, as the Lord's own ministry did (see John vi. 66).

G. M., Co. DERRY.—A stranger coming amongst you, should certainly bring with him a letter of commendation from the assembly in which he has been, which, in general, would be sufficient; but if the place and the names should be alike unknown, a reference to some local or labouring brother, will invariably give the necessary confidence. Impostors have been known to forge names, and it is alike due to the Lord and to His people, that every godly precaution be taken in the matter of receiving to Christian fellowship, which no true man can or will object to.

A. G., LANARKSHIRE.—An evangelist who is by his own confession "interdenominational," that is, preaching in and belonging to all sects, would be a strange anomaly invited by, and for the occasion associated with an assembly of believers, professedly outside of all sects, those forming it having been professedly severed by the truth of God, from the very denominations, which he helps to increase, and by their position there, witnessing against them. Few, we think, who as preachers go in and out amongst the "churches," would risk their reputation by associating with such a disreputable lot as those, who, in the estimation of most denominationalist ministers, are branded as "dangerous." But from another standpoint: to bring a sectarian preacher and set him up as a teacher and example to those who have come out, or are seeking their way out from that with which he is associated, would be to cast a stumbling block before them,

and virtually blind them to the evils of corrupt Christianity, as it exists in the world's churches. Those who stand before others as ministers of the Word—as all evangelists more or less are—should be such as can say of their ways—ecclesiastically as well as personally—"Be ye followers of me" (1 Cor. xi. 1), and "those things which ye have both heard and seen in me do" (Phil. iv. 9). What effect would this likely have on young or untaught believers, who "follow" the preacher to a church or chapel in which he is to preach the following week, where Non-eternity or Higher Criticism infidelity is usually taught? And what moral influence could the "guides" of the assembly have to recover them, seeing they laid the snare for their feet. Such a condition of things comes of lowering the standard of the Truth, running to and fro among sects, and learning their ways. Then something popular and attractive is wanted to draw the crowd, and "outside the camp" evangelists, no matter how gifted or godly, are not sufficiently "up to date." An "interdenominational" must be engaged, and paid for his week or fortnight's work in proper clerical fashion. But while some would go all this length if they dare, there is still in most assemblies sufficient spiritual power to resist it. This should be done firmly and fearlessly, and God will own it.

A Few Friendly Observations.

BY AN AGED PILGRIM FROM A DISTANT SHORE.

AFTER twenty-one years' absence from the land of my first and second birth, it has been a great joy to me—one long-looked forward to—to visit for a few weeks, the scenes in which my early years were spent, and especially to meet with fellow-believers and fellow-labourers in the Gospel, of days long gone by. I miss very many familiar faces, no longer to be seen in the ranks of the saints below, they having finished their course, many of them, through grace, triumphantly, and gone to their rest with Christ, which is "very far better" (Phil. i. 23). Others, whose bow once abode in strength, and whose words were as streams of refreshing to our souls when they ministered the Word, have been turned aside, more by success in the world than through adversity, and have become like Samson asleep for the present in the embrace of the "present evil world," their locks shorn and their spiritual eyesight gone. What a pity! And what a loss, to themselves and to the Church! The greater number, however, still remain, and it

has been to me a great privilege to meet with and share the fellowship of beloved children of God, who for all these years, have been making it their aim to please the Lord, to walk in His truth, and to spread His blessed Gospel among their fellows. May He keep and preserve them to the end, in the simplicity and freshness of love, cleaving fast to His faithful Word. There has been a great increase in the number of Assemblies gathering only in the Lord's Name, outside of all denominations, taking the Word of God alone as their standard of faith and conduct, in which I much rejoice. In the earliest days of such a testimony in some of these places, it was literally limited to the "twos and threes," and they at times were all but scattered or crushed out, by opposition from the religious world. The fact that it has survived and increased, is a striking proof, that however feeble, it had its origin in God, and He, whose it is, has watched over it and caused it to grow. I cannot doubt, but the prayerfulness, the vital godliness, the spiritual tone and close dealings with the Word which characterised some of the earliest believers who were in these Assemblies, have left their mark and been instrumentally the means of their increase and their decided testimony. In other places, where less spiritual men were at the front, there is a very different condition. What a blessing to his generation and to others following, one true man of God is! Whether it be recognised or not during his life, it will tell in years to come. A true man's testimony whatever men may think of it, can never be in vain. God will own and honour it sooner or later. In moving among the various assemblies of believers, both small and large, I have been grieved to see certain tendencies and practices creeping in, which, to my mind, are a departure from the simplicity of "the ways that be in Christ" (1 Cor. iv. 17), and which indicate the secret working of the same leaven which has always been Satan's agent used to spoil and corrupt every fresh operation of the Spirit of God, as I verily believe the separation of children of God from the systems of worldly religion, and their gathering to the Name of the Lord outside of all sects truly was, and is, in spite of all the failures and weaknesses of man manifested in connection with it, from its very beginning over sixty years ago, until now. Not in a censorious spirit, but as one whose love goes forth to all the saints, and whose heart yearns to see all who "belong to Christ" together around Himself here, as they will be in glory, with no distinctive name, walking in

the truth, and in happy fellowship with one another according to it, I would humbly name, chiefly for the prayerful and earnest consideration of those who have shepherd hearts, and whose care is for the welfare of the flock, wherein—so far as I have been able to discern it aright—the dangers lie, and count upon my brethren receiving what I say, in the love and grace of the Spirit which dwelleth in us.

I have noticed that there is less of the **MINISTRY OF THE WORD** among us than in former years, and what there is, seems to be of a lighter and less experimental and searching nature. The old-fashioned **BIBLE READINGS**, by means of which so many of us were helped, are not so common now, fragmentary addresses in many cases seem to have taken their places. Whatever may be gained in attractiveness by these, much is lost in real edification by means of that through "every joint supplied," and in the leading out of lesser gifts and helps which are never heard in platform ministry. **GOSPEL PREACHING** has greatly altered in its character. There is less deep ploughing, breaking down, and stripping, with, I would fear, an increased danger of shallow professions of conversion, lacking "root," like the seed sown in the stony ground. Evangelists in olden times pegged away for weeks and months, but I learn that a week's "Special Services" is the popular thing now, often with undue haste to count converts and have them hurriedly baptised. This, with the standard of conversion lowered, is certain, unless carefully watched by those who deal with such as seek fellowship, to result in false materials being brought in, which, through time, will assert their presence and power, and always take sides with wrong doing. It was by this means that the Independents, Morisonians, Baptists, and others who began with a "converted" membership, were gradually corrupted, until now, as everybody knows, there is not even the profession of conversion maintained in some who are church members. A Scriptural form of Church Constitution and Government will not save us from this. Real work is of the Holy Ghost, and cannot be wrought by human device, or intellectual preaching. If the adversary cannot blot out all distinctive and separate testimony by alliance with the world, you may be sure he will seek to accomplish his purpose by bringing unsaved professors in to the assemblies of the Lord's saints. They, of course, will always be in and of the world, and the ways and customs of the world's religion, will always have their attractions for them.

(TO BE CONTINUED).

NEARING THE SHORE OF ETERNITY.

THE flight of time reminds us, that we are nearing the shore of Eternity. The lovely scene recorded in John xxi. very aptly describes our position, and what awaits us. The little craft, containing seven disciples of the Lord—a perfect and representative number—had been tossed all the night on the Lake, with no success in fishing. As the morning breaks, the Lord Himself is seen, although as yet by them unknown, standing on the shore. From that shore He has seen their struggles, and knows their thoughts and fears, and “on this wise” He is now about to manifest Himself, and welcome them to His immediate presence. The shore on which He stands represents Eternity. Thither He has gone as Forerunner, to make ready for and welcome His own. They are strangers there; but He is not. It is His own country, the land from whence He came, and whither He has gone, to prepare for them. The frail ship tossed by many a wind and wave throughout the long night, may well represent the Church of the dispensation. Toiling long with little result, yet at last, and under His own controlling word as spoken from the shore, with a full net, as surely the Gospel net is full, in these last days of grace and ingathering of sinners, as if the Lord were hastening His work of salvation, before the end. As the morning breaks the net is full, and love discerns the Lord is near. Some, like Peter, pass through the flood to reach Him. Leaving the ship and fellow-disciples there, they depart to be “with

Christ,” which is “very far better” (Phil. i. 23, R.V.). They reach Him only “a little while” before the rest, who touch the shore together, like those who will “go without dying.” On that Eternal shore the circle is again complete, and the living Lord, who has already prepared for them, welcomes and entertains the reunited company. O the joy of that coming morn, truly “a morning without clouds” to all the Lord’s redeemed. Each passing year is bringing us nearer to it, and to Him who stands awaiting us on the eternal shore. Long-loved companions and leaders, who in our way of reckoning were sorely needed in the Church below, are leaving the ship, and passing on to be “with the Lord.” None are being raised up to fill the empty places. Everything seems to say that we are not “far from land” (ver. 8). Great Gospel activity exists, and spite of all the failures of men, the Lord is completing the number of His own. Longing eyes are looking upward, and pilgrims footsore and weary, are pitching their last camp in the wilderness, “toward the sunrising” (Num. xxi. 11). “The blissful morn is breaking” and very, very soon, we shall stand with Christ amid the realities of the land where the heart has been so long. O to live and act as if we believed it! To have its separating and attracting power upon us as the days go by, so that when we stand with Christ on that eternal shore, there may be no regrets, that joyfully we may pass from this, the place of His rejection and His Cross, to the land of His glory and His crown, as those who have nothing to lose but everything to gain.

UNION AMONG CHRISTIANS.

THE following paper, written by a servant of Christ in 1806—exactly a hundred years ago—tells how godly souls were exercised in the truth and enabled to give effect to it in practice, in the midst of a condition of things such as we find in a more fully developed and corrupted form around us at the present time.

“In times of gross ignorance and darkness, such as existed during the long ascendancy of Papal power, diversity of religious sentiments among Christians was but little known, and wherever it appeared it was immediately crushed by the hand of civil authority. But no sooner did the Reformation begin, than a variety of sects sprang up. Increase of knowledge led to inquiry; and as truth, through remaining prejudice, was not at once discovered, inquiry produced a difference of judgment. This sad circumstance was immediately taken hold of by those who continued in the Church of Rome, and it formed the most plausible pretext of which they could avail themselves, for adhering to their old system. During the last century, the light of divine truth, especially in our own country, rapidly increased; and perhaps never since the apostles' days, has there been such a spirit of inquiry excited, or so constant an appeal made to the Word of God as now. Various causes have contributed to diminish the influence of human tradition in religion, by which many were held in bondage; and the consequence is, that believers are now more disposed to consult the oracles of God and own their

authority. The immediate effect of this, however, has not been to unite but to separate and divide believers from one another. In proportion as the traditional darkness passes away, new objects present themselves. These are at first but indistinctly perceived, and hence, while fresh discoveries continue to be made, those who make them are apt to make each a cause for division, and until the balance is regained, an end to such diversity can hardly be expected. Although such be the almost unavoidable concomitant of progressive knowledge of the will of God, it is no doubt an evil in itself to be greatly deplored. This being felt and acknowledged on all hands, a remedy has been earnestly desired.

It has appeared to many, especially of late, to be the most obvious and immediate cure for all such divisions among Christians, to cry down the importance of all subjects on which differences obtain among them. Viewing these as trifling, they characterise all attention to such things as Bigotry, and confer on the total disregard of them the auspicious appellation of Liberality. A distinction has been instituted between essentials and non-essentials in Divine things; and among the latter have been classed almost all those responsibilities which belong to Church fellowship, or the godly order and practice of Christians in association. This opinion has been highly applauded, and great advantages have been anticipated as likely to result from its being adopted. The supposed effect of immediately uniting all the followers of the Lord, and directing their endeavours to one great object,

undoubtedly claims peculiar regard. But is the foundation solid? This edifice of imagination appears a work spacious and beautiful, but it is not built on the rock of Divine truth, but on the sand of man's imagining. It is planned and reared by the skill and efforts of men, not in the wisdom and power of God.

The Scriptures present only one model of Divine truth. "There is one body and one Spirit. One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. iv. 4, 5). They command believers to be "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. i. 10), and whereunto they have now attained to "walk by the same rule" (Phil. iii. 16), to be constantly pressing on, and growing up into Him who is the Head, owning and submitting to His will as Lord, which, in proportion as they do, will effectually secure their union. The Word represents the wisdom of the Lord to be perfect in all the commandments which He has enjoined upon His people; all conducive, in the highest possible degree to His glory, and their blessing; and it also declares, that His authority is paramount to every other consideration. But the habit of which we have been speaking, under the appearance of securing union, legalises division, and renders it permanent. By introducing an unscriptural and unfounded distinction between the "essential" and "non-essential," it dispenses with many things that are enjoined in the Word of God, and which are indispensable to the nature of the Church of God. For whether disciples are found in churches which include the world, or in others unsound in doctrine and

sectarian in practice, which set aside all Scriptural discipline, and quash every appeal to God's Word, they are equally countenanced in their unscriptural practices, and lulled into security by the powerful influence of mutual approbation. This violation of Divine Truth impeaches the wisdom of the Lawgiver, and tramples on His authority. It has also the effect of turning men's attention from obedience to Christ, to supposed consequences, than which nothing is more adapted to mislead the judgment, or to induce, under the plea of usefulness, to supersede the former in order to secure the latter. This falls in with the natural self-righteousness of the human heart, and instead of being a proof of strong faith, is much the reverse. A higher apprehension of the majesty, the wisdom, the authority of Christ as Lord, of the stability of His counsel, and the certainty that He will accomplish His purposes by the means which He has appointed (weak and foolish as they appear to the carnal mind), would effectually cure us all of seeking His glory and doing His work, except in the ways which He has commanded. Never did any of His disciples receive so severe a reproof from their Master, as one who attempted to rectify and interfere with His avowed design. "Get thee behind Me, Satan, for thou savourest not the things which be of God, but the things that be of men," was His rebuke to that disciple. Undoubtedly Peter was perfectly sincere, and was actuated by a desire to promote the honour of His Lord; but he had forgotten the character of Him whom he addressed.

The advocates of this system of Chris-

tian union find it exceedingly difficult to draw the line between Truth and error. When they call that, Liberality, which sets aside in regard to others, what they believe to be the will of God ; and that, Bigotry, which refuses any such compliance, can they point out to us the boundaries of each ? Their plan has utterly failed in its principal design. It has not united even in appearance all the followers of Christ. It is admitted, indeed, that on special occasions, and for certain objects, Christians may have been brought thus together, while for a time they have buried from one another's view the various forms to which they still adhered. But does not this involve the condemnation of them all ? If the things in which they differ are non-essential, if they are the traditions of men, and not the commandments of God, why do they not entirely renounce them ? It is surely a great evil if they allow those things, which they characterise as "non-essential," to keep them from permanently manifesting the unity of the Spirit which they, on these occasions, profess to so greatly enjoy. There are Christians who seek to give the whole Word of God its place, and obeying its commandments to own the supreme authority of the Lord, who entirely disapprove of such distinctions. How are these treated by the supporters of what is most improperly denominated a "Liberal" system ? Is the liberality spoken of extended to them ? Consistently with itself it ought to be so. But it is very different. Much animosity towards such Christians is manifested. Here then the character of this liberality

is discovered. It is surely a liberality that descendeth not from above. It accuses all others of a narrow and a bitter spirit. But surely if narrowness of sentiment is to be measured by only approving of those who agree with ourselves, and bitterness of spirit by indulgence of evil speaking, they, of all men, can by no means escape these imputations. Their liberality is exactly similar to the charity of the world.

The object, however, which such Christians have in view, should always be distinguished from the means by which they pursue it. Their object is right, but they are seeking it in a way by which they will never arrive at it. Sin has equally separated men from God and from each other ; and nothing will effect a real union among Christians, other than a return to God, to the acknowledgment of the authority of Jesus Christ as Lord, and to loyal submission to that Word of truth, by which of His own will His people are begotten of Him, and in their regenerate life as His saints, personally, and in association, controlled by Him. All agreement which does not arise from this, is hollow and insincere. It proceeds on some false ground, however much concealed, and constantly falls short of the Divine standard of what is good. It cannot therefore produce good fruit. So far as we obey the Word of God, He will establish the work of our hands. All efforts besides, are unprofitable to ourselves and useless to others. Personal obedience is our first consideration, and the path of obedience is the only legitimate way to usefulness. In following it

by this road alone, our exertions may appear to be circumscribed, and our efforts to be cramped, but it is not for us to become judges of the law of the Lord. There is one Lord and Lawgiver, and His will is supreme. The Lord will vindicate His own wisdom in all that He has instituted. To the eye of men His ways may seem to be weak and foolish, and inadequate to their object; but, when all has been completed and is manifested in glory, they will be found to have been divinely adapted to accomplish every gracious design and purpose of His love.

—o—
 “NIGHT THOUGHTS.”

THROUGH the tangle of the forest
 Will the Lord our pathway clear,
 If we follow in His footsteps,
 Without wavering, without fear.

Or 'mid dark and surging waters
 Will be heard His word of “Peace;”
 Then the winds and angry billows,
 From their noisy strife will cease.

Though the night be lone and weary,
 Yet “the Morning” will arise,
 With its many shades of beauty,
 To illuminate the skies.

Let us follow daily, hourly,
 In the footprints of our Guide,
 May each trouble draw us nearer,
 Nearer to His wounded side.

Till the long and rugged journey,
 Of the wilderness is o'er,
 And we join the “Hallelujah”
 On the everlasting shore.

The late A. W. P. Strong.

OUTLINES IN ACTS.

PART VI.—CHRIST AND THE CHURCH.

OF this mystery, Paul was especially the steward. The Lord had hinted at it in the parable of the Vine and the branches. He had spoken of it as that which the presence of the Comforter was to effect, saying, “At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you.” He spoke of it also to his disciples through Mary Magdalene after the resurrection, saying, “I ascend unto My Father and your Father, unto My God and your God;” thus telling them that they were to be one with Him in love and joy before the throne, all through this present dispensation. But this mystery did not fully come forth, till Paul is sent to declare it. It is a calling of exceeding riches of grace, and nothing less could meet the mind of God towards His elect: for He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified, were to be “all of one” (Heb. ii. 11). Thus stood the covenant of love before the world was. A mediator such as Moses, whose best service was to keep Jehovah and the people asunder (see Deut. v. 5), could not answer the purpose of this marvellous love of our God. But in the Son the elect are accepted. And while His work and merit are all their title to any thing, they have everything by their oneness with the Mediator Himself (John xvii. 26). Nothing less than this could fulfil the desire of our heavenly Father’s heart toward us. The partition wall, whether between God and sinners, or between Jew and Gentile, is broken down; and

we sinners stand together on its ruins, triumphing over them in Christ, our heavenly Father rejoicing over them also. This is the marvellous workmanship of the love of God, and the forming and completing of this union of Christ and the Church, is the husbandry which God is now tending. He is not, as once He was, caring for a land of wheat, and oil, and pomegranates, that His people might eat without scarceness of the increase of the field (Deut. xi. 12); but He is the Husbandman of the Vine and the branches. He is training the Church in union with the Son of His love, until *all* come unto the knowledge of Him to a perfect man. It is this union which makes us of the same family with the Lord Jesus, and entitles us to hear of Him as "The *First-born*" (Rom. viii. 29). It is this union which gives us the same glory with the Lord Jesus, and entitles us to look after Him as "the *Forerunner*" (Heb. vi. 20). It is this which gives character to that life which we now have, and to that glory in which we shall be manifested, when He who is our life shall appear.

Our life and glory are thus both of a new character. The *life* is a new life. The man in Christ is a new creature; he is a dead and risen man. His powers and affections have acquired a new character. His intelligence is *spiritual understanding*, or "the mind of Christ." His love is "*love in the Spirit.*" The power in him is "*glorious power,*" the power of Christ's resurrection. And so He knows no man after the flesh, but all things are become new to him. It is not enough that human affections or natural taste would sanction

any thing; for being after the Spirit, he "minds the things of the Spirit." He serves in "newness of spirit," and the Name of the Lord Jesus is the sanction of what he does either in "word or deed." He has been translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, and there he walks, going forth in assurance and liberty to do service from morning till evening,

The *glory* is also a new glory. It is something above all that was seen in previous ages. Excellent things have been spoken of Adam and of Israel; but not equal to what is told us of the Church. Christ is to present the Church to Himself, as God presented Eve to Adam, to be the companion of His dominion and glory. The saints are to be conformed to the image of the Son. It is "the joy of the Lord" that is prepared for the saints, a share with Christ in the authority of the kingdom, in that which He has received from the Father. They are not so much brought into the glory, as made glorious themselves; as we read, "The glory that shall be revealed *in us*;" and again, "glorified together," that is, "together with Christ;" "fashioned like unto His glorious body." The place of the Son is the scene of their glory. They are not to stand on the footstool, but to sit on the throne. Israel may have the blessings of the earth, but the Church is to know the upper or heavenly glory. And it is *life* and *glory* that makes us what we are. The life makes us sons, the glory makes us *heirs* and our sonship and inheritance are every thing. And it was the Gospel of this life and glory that Paul was specially called out to minister.—J. G. B.

THE HEART KEPT FOR GOD.

THE most important thing for the Christian is, to have his heart right with God. When right, keep it with *all* diligence. Remember you are given a task requiring persistent application as long as life itself shall last. When Jehu the grandson of Nimshi lighted on Jehonadab coming to meet him, as he went on a divine errand to take and slay the prophets, the servants, and the priests of Baal, he asked this son of Rechab, "Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?" The reply was prompt and emphatic: "It is." Then the fiery Jehu gave him his hand and said, "Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord" (2 Kings x. 15-16).

The treacherous Delilah said to Samson, "How canst thou say, I love thee, when thine heart is not with me?" (Jud. xvi. 15). And how can many in this day say, "I love the Lord," when He fully knows their hearts are not with Him?

"Get right with God," is a summons that has startled many a careless heart, and suddenly awakened many a sleeping conscience. What a need there is at the present time for the Holy Spirit to speak these words solemnly in our hearing! The life with its daily actions has become, in the case of numbers of professing Christians, as a rudderless ship upon a stormy ocean. O God, what will the end of it be?

Is my heart *with* Him—God's Beloved? This question should be thoughtfully considered, in a day when the god of this world, Satan, is so busily catering for

the lusts of all men, and when Christians also are tasting that wicked one's dainties and losing their liking for the heavenly bread—the Holy Scriptures. Surely we see a need for restoration of soul among the people of God, accompanied by a thorough reformation of life.

Keep your heart above all that you guard, for it is the repository of precious things of greater value than the crown jewels of our sovereign, Edward VII., and it needs more zealous care. Those royal gems in London are guarded day and night with untiring watchfulness; for their skulk around the streets of the English metropolis roguish men, who would rob their own parents and steal from a collection plate. Nothing of value is counted safe, when these men are in the neighbourhood. Christian! your heart is the repository of Jehovah's treasures, which He entrusts to your care. The beautiful graces of Christian character are worth more than the sparkling stones of the diadem which encircles the royal brow. That notorious thief, the devil, is going about, and will, in an evil hour, when you are not aware, rob you of some priceless gem.

The selfish thought to have all that you can get for yourself, is nothing else than the robber breaking into your heart to take your generous LOVE. The feeling of discontent at your present lot that is creeping over the mind, is the hand of the evil one stealing your JOY. The anxious care concerning what you shall eat, what you shall drink, and what you shall wear, is Satan grasping for your PEACE. The impatient gesture when things do

not work smoothly, is an attempt of the devil to take your LONGSUFFERING. Those bitter words that suddenly escape the lips, is the adversary making off with your GENTLENESS. The indolence in your labour causing you to have nothing to give away to him who has need, is the effort of the thief to steal your GOODNESS. Doubt of the Lord's Word comes upon your FAITH with pilfering finger; vain pride steals away MEEKNESS; love of pleasure runs off with SELF-CONTROL. And you are left lamenting that the jewels you were supposed to be guarding, have been stolen from you. What will your Lord say?

One word more. From the heart comes the issues of life. With what vigilance must we guard these thoughts working in our bosoms, which ever and anon are released from our custody and take form as actions. As a few bits of driftwood will turn the course of a stream, so some seemingly trifling action on our part may lead to momentous issues, turning the whole current of our lives into an entirely different channel, with what results only God will know. Therefore, "keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee" (Prov. iv. 23-24). May the Lord help us all to be more diligent in the future, in guarding our hearts! F. F.

SAFELY KEPT.

Saint! the Eye that never slumbers,
 Watches over thee in love,
 And the arm that never wearies
 Is defending from above.

TRUMPETS AND LAMPS; OR, THE TESTIMONY OF LIPS AND LIFE.

THE victory wrought by the Lord in the days of Gideon over the hosts of Midian, has in it lessons we may learn with profit to our souls, in this day of the Gospel's triumphs among the sons of men. The instruments made use of were a trumpet to sound and a lamp to shine. When the three hundred chosen and tried men, who had set the Lord's cause and claim before their own comfort, and thus proved their true-heartedness to Him, went down to the camp of the Midianites, each man carried a trumpet and a lamp in an earthen pitcher. At the appointed signal, the three hundred trumpets sounded out loud and clear, and at the same time the earthen pitchers which contained the three hundred lamps were broken, thus allowing their lights to shine forth, and the Lord did the rest. He gave the victory by these instruments. The sound of the trumpet and the shining of the lamp, clear and bright amid the darkness, were the weapons used by Him (see Judges vii. 19-22).

We also who serve the Lord Jesus in this Gospel day, have the trumpet and the lamp; in other words, we are called to testify the Gospel of Christ with our lips, to sound aloud with clear and certain sound the Gospel trumpet, and to manifest in our ways the life of Christ. These are the instruments that God is using to deliver sinners from the devil's grasp, and to bring them into the Kingdom of His dear Son. But to see the hand of the Lord go forth in saving power, there

must be this double testimony of the lip and the life. The one without the other will not suffice. A clear trumpet sound, heralding forth the Gospel to every creature (Mark xvi. 15), is no doubt of great importance, but if it is not backed up by the testimony of the life, it will be sound without light. And the Lord has told us that "the *life* is the light of men" (John i. 5). What sinners hear, is only beneficial if backed up by what they see. What men hear, they accept or reject according to what they see in the ways of those who speak to them. If preachers tell with the lips that they are Christ's, that He has saved them, and that they are on the way to heaven, men keep their eyes open to see if the lives of those who so speak, are the outshining of their confession. In other words, they watch whether they *live* what they *preach*. If they fail to see the clear shining of the Christ life, they give little credence to the testimony of the lips, but if through God's grace they see in those who tell them of Jesus and His saving power, a manifestation of the Christ life and the Christ spirit, there is a lasting impression made on them, and either now or in days to come, it will be owned by God. No man should open his mouth to declare God's blessed Gospel whose manner of life and ways do not commend it.

A GOOD RECIPE.

WHEN thou hast failed—Look up ;
 When failing not, still gaze :
 When empty, raise thine empty cup ;
 When full return Him praise.

ALABASTER BOXES.

DO not keep the alabaster boxes of your love and tenderness sealed up until your friends are dead. Fill their lives with sweetness. Speak approving, cheering words, while their ears can hear them, and while their hearts can be thrilled and made happier by them ; the kind things you mean to say when they are gone, say before they go. The flowers you mean to send for their coffins, send to brighten and sweeten their homes before they leave them. If my friends have alabaster boxes laid away full of fragrant perfumes of sympathy and affection, which they intend to break over my dead body, I would rather they would bring them out in my weary and troubled hours, and open them, that I may be refreshed and cheered by them while I need them. I would rather have a plain coffin without a flower, a funeral without a eulogy, than a life without the sweetness of love and sympathy. Let us learn to anoint our friends beforehand for their burial. Post-mortem kindness does not cheer the burdened spirit. Flowers on the coffin cast *no fragrance backward over the weary way.*

Time and Eternity.

TIME wings its flight. The wasting taper burns,
 With ceaseless speed the circling axle turns,
 Days, months, and years in quick succession glide
 Like airy bubbles floating on the tide.

Time wings its flight. The parting shadows fly,
 And coming glory bursts upon the eye ;
 With triumph shout the Lord comes to the air,
 And all His saints arise to meet Him there.

One glorious band, they soar to realms on high,
 At their approach heaven's portals open fly,
 Amid its peace, its joy, and bliss sublime,
 They rest from all the ravages of—TIME.

The Bible Annotator.

OUTLINES OF BIBLE STUDIES.

For Personal and Collective Use.

BOND-SERVANTS.

Bond-Servants of Sin (John viii. 34)—By Nature.

Bond-Servants of Satan (Acts xxvi. 18)—By Conquest.

Bond-Servants of Christ (Rom. i. 1)—By Grace.

CLEANSED. CLOTHED. CROWNED.

Cleansed from Sin (Rev. i. 5)—By the Blood.

Clothed in Righteousness (Phil. iii. 9)—In the Person.

Crowned with Glory (Rev. iv. 4)—On the Throne.

LIFE GIVER AND JUDGE.

The Son of God (John v. 25): As Lifegiver—Present.

The Son of Man (John v. 27): As Judge—Future.

JESUS CHRIST, FAITH'S OBJECT.

Looking unto Jesus (Heb. xii. 2)—Our Saviour.

Learning of Jesus (Luke x. 39)—Our Teacher.

Leaning on Jesus (Song viii. 5)—Our Strength.

Looking for Jesus (Phi. iii. 20)—Our Hope.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Are the seven parables of Matthew xiii. concurrent with the Church dispensation, or do they extend beyond it? The parable of the Sower covers the period of the personal ministry of the Lord on earth, prior to the formation of the Church, and several extend beyond it, to the period when judgment will be executed, and the kingdom established in power and glory upon earth. It ought ever to be remembered in seeking a correct understanding of these parables, that they represent "the kingdom of heaven" in mystery, with Satan at work, not the Church, either as the body of Christ, or as the House of God.

Who, or what is the "He who now letteth" in 2 Thess. ii. 7? The Holy Spirit, the Roman Empire, the hand of God in government, and "the powers that be" have all been named, and by believers of various ages held to be the Restrainer or Hinderer mentioned here. There may be a certain studied obscurity as to who the restraining person or power is. In regard to the powers that be, which now are ordained of God to restrain lawlessness, we know that a time will come when they shall cease, and the beast who arises from the pit, to whom the devil gives his authority, will sweep everything

before him, all restraint having ceased. If the Holy Spirit's presence personally in the church, and governmentally in the world is referred to, we know from Scripture that this will cease when the church is removed to heaven, and the day of Gospel grace is closed to man. Then will arise the Lawless One, who already works in measure through the mystery of iniquity, but will then do so manifestly and without restraint.

Answers to Correspondents.

J. B., EDINBURGH.—The principle clearly set forth in Phil. ii. 4, would prevent any child of God who is exercised by it, from becoming a co-partner in the movement you name, which is essentially a selfish one.

M. J. B., SHEFFIELD.—There are many gifted and personally estimable Christian men in the "ministry" of most denominations, but this in no sense makes the humanly-devised systems which they support according to God. Nor can any who fear God, and are subject to His Word go into such systems, to benefit by their ministry. This is what some fail to see, or trifle with, and are finally caught in the toils of denominationalism.

J. R., CUMBERLAND.—In circles such as you describe, there is often more vital godliness and real spiritual zeal than where there is more light and knowledge of the truth. But this puts no premium on ignorance, nor does it invalidate the truth of God. Truth held in theory, or accepted as a creed, apart from its inward control of the heart and conscience, does not edify or sanctify, but frequently hardens those who triflingly traffic in it, whereas the Word dwelling richly in the heart, leading to God and Christ, does maintain spiritual freshness, as thousands of Christ-filled lives testify. The great thing is to let God and His Word dominate all aspects of the life.

H. J. M., LANARKSHIRE.—The testimony of many a bright and hearty Christian has been blighted by entering on a business which, while it may not stand condemned by the world, is not befitting for a child of God, whose standard of righteousness and integrity, is not what the world approves of, but what the Word of God sets forth. If you take God into your confidence, and lay hold of His promise as in Prov. iii. 5, 6, you will not lose anything.

E. R., GLASGOW.—The theory which you point out as appearing in a contemporary, namely, that

seeing the "church is in pieces," there is no organisation of any sort now, no "within and without," as set forth in 1 Cor. v. 12, simply and only the receiving to "a present act of fellowship," which may mean the breaking of bread or anything else, is simply the personal opinion and assertion of the writer, which may be negated, as easily as affirmed. He does not even attempt to give Scripture authority for it, you are simply to accept it. Such fanciful theories do not have much weight with those who are accustomed to seek a "Thus saith the Lord;" to guide them in all such matters. There is not an assembly of believers in existence, convened according to such a principle, nor could there be. Where is the room or need for godly rule and discipline, as commanded in 1 Thess. v. 14, 2 Thess. iii. 6, 12; or who is there to exercise it, if "the act of fellowship" being over, all bonds are dissolved and responsibilities ended, other than those that exist among individual believers as such. As a theory on paper, it may please some, and serve others for controversial purposes, but in actual experience, neither its advocates nor anybody else ever saw it in operation. Even the widest and loosest "go further," and draw their line somewhere, hard and fast too, when some one seeks association with them who is not of their particular way of thinking, and may likely ask Divine authority for some of their "beliefs" and practices.

Questions Requiring Answers.

The following questions, selected from many sent by readers in all parts of the world, because of their general importance and usefulness, will (God willing) be dealt with during 1907. We are always glad to have Scriptural help and wise counsel in answering such questions, which we are assured by many testimonies, are found to be reasonable and helpful to exercised children of God.

I.—What is the "sin unto death" mentioned in 1 John v. 16?

II.—Did the Lord Jesus personally partake of the bread and wine of the Supper, when it was instituted by Him?

III.—Who are the "spirits in prison" (1 Pet. iii. 19), and when and by whom, were they "preached" to?

IV.—Can a Christian guided by the Word of God become a Freemason? Can one be regarded as fitted to oversee and teach in the Christian Assembly, who is a member of this craft?

V.—Are there two circles of church fellowship authorised in the Scripture, one permanent, com-

posed of those who have been "received" (Rom. xvi. 1, 2) and "added" (Acts ii. 41) to the local assembly, and another of "casual" visitors who are either brought by friends, or come as they would to any of the denominations? If so, where are they described and wherein do they differ?

VI.—Do the words in 2 Tim. i. 14, "All they which are in Asia, be turned away from me," imply, that the whole of the Asiatic assemblies had rejected Paul and his ministry?

A Few Friendly Observations.—II.

BY AN AGED PILGRIM FROM A DISTANT SHORE.

DURING my visits to many smaller country assemblies of believers, I have been greatly cheered in seeing the godly simplicity, and in sharing the loving and true Christian fellowship, that continues as in years gone by amongst them. With fewer helpers, and small in numbers, they are more cast upon God, than dependent on gifted brethren, and by this means are kept fresh and warm, cleaving in heart to the Lord and holding fast His Word. I wish I could say I had found all larger companies in the same happy condition. City life, with its bustle and turmoil, seems to take so much out of God's children, especially those who are in business, that there seems little leisure for cultivation of the inner life, for prayer and meditation on the Word, and this soon tells on the tone of WORSHIP and the freshness of MINISTRY in the assemblies of the saints. There is no lack of activity, plenty of speaking, singing, and praying, but this may all exist, and often does, without that deep, calm spirit of worship, which is so grateful to the heart, and so well pleasing to God. The quiet pauses in audible worship, during which the heart is resting in the Lord's presence, and under the Spirit's guidance being led into His secrets, can never be compensated for by words and expositions of gifted brethren, however sound or reasonable they may be. When it is forgotten that worship is higher than ministry, and that for the saint it is more blessed to give than to receive, the tendency to use up much of the time in ministry increases, and as it does, the spirit of true worship declines. I found in several assemblies that a regular sermon or address was stately given by some gifted brother, and this soon came to be expected, and human expedients taken to ensure it. One who had gone far in this way told me, he and his family

had left and gone to a Baptist church, where the minister gave "a good sermon" which they enjoyed. Quite possible; but our first business is surely to seek what pleases God, and not what gratifies ourselves. I attended a number of CONFERENCES, and was pleased to see that still large numbers of believers can be got together to hear the ministry of the Word. This is indeed a hopeful sign; wherever it declines or fails there are greater evils near at hand. But is there not a tendency to assume that all who assemble at such times are in a right and spiritual condition, and to speak such things as edify and instruct healthy souls, whereas undoubtedly a great proportion of even true believers are generally away in heart from God, and need their ways searched and their consciences set into activity, by ministry of a kind that does not always please, or make people feel happy, but which brings existing sin and failure to the conscience to be dealt with before God, before there can be true restoration. I noticed an aversion to such ministry in one or two such gatherings, and was told that prearrangement and invited speakers had been adopted

in others to exclude it. Surely this is a retrogression, and a departure from the early principles, when our platforms were under the guidance of the Spirit, and open for God-sent ministers to declare the "whole counsel of God." We always need it, and if we shut it out, God will have a controversy with us, as sooner or later we shall know. I missed many familiar faces of five and twenty years ago, among those who ministered. Some I know have gone to heaven, but others yet below, and in full vigour of godly service, whose words have often been to me as the manna from on high, were not there. One often wonders where the ministering brethren and the godly men of experience to feed and guide the flock, are to come from in days to come; few of the coming generation seem to have either spirituality or gift, like unto their fathers. It may be that such service will not be long required, the Lord may speedily come. God grant that we may have grace given to end well, so that we may have no regrets when we meet Him and hear His verdict on our service and our testimony during our earthly years. Farewell.

PLANS AND PROSPECTS FOR 1907.

TO all who have been our helpers in the production and circulation of "The Believer's Magazine" during the sixteen years of its existence, we tender our warmest thanks.

We hope to continue it during the coming year, if the Lord will, on exactly the same lines as hitherto, keeping before us the motto with which we began—"ALL GOD'S TRUTH, FOR ALL GOD'S PEOPLE," nothing suppressed that is good for edification, nothing ruled out as non-essential, nothing kept back through fear of giving offence. For spiritual health and godly walk, for individual and assembly behaviour and testimony, the whole counsel of God ministered in clear and definite form, is needed, so that the simplest and youngest of the saints may understand it. Difficulties and perversities unknown a few years ago, are around on every hand, and the Word alone can give the help needed to deal with or avoid them, and to walk with God, serving Him with reverence and godly fear.

We shall welcome help from all who have the "word in season," and are able to minister it in grace. All unprofitable controversies we firmly eschew, but friendly criticism and godly discussion

of subjects, concerning which honest differences exist among Christians, we hold our columns open to receive, so far as they tend to edification.

For the coming year, we hope to insert the following among other SPECIAL articles and papers:—

Present Day Aspects of the Church. W. H. Hunter.

The Fellowship of Saints. By Twelve Different Writers, giving a comprehensive and varied testimony on this contested subject.

Godly Care and Discipline. T. D. W. Muir, Detroit.

Solomon's Temple, its Types and Teachings; their Literal and Spiritual Significance. The substance of Twelve Lectures given in Glasgow. The Editor.

Fundamental Truths of the Faith. The Personality and Work of the Holy Spirit. Man Created, Fallen, Redeemed.

The Spirit, Soul, and Body of Man; their relation and distinction, in life and death.

Aids to Business Life. By a Christian Business Man.

Divine Help in Testing Times. By the late Alfred J. Holiday. A series of valuable addresses given in London by our departed brother, which gave much help in a time of trial. With Questions, Correspondence, and Reports.