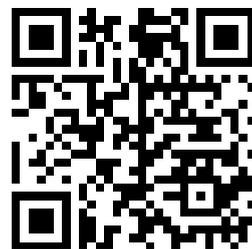

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56.

PRECIOUS TRUTH.

“WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURES?”—(Rom. iv. 3.)

Job Caudwell, 335, Strand, W.C.]

[Hall & Co, 25, Paternoster Row, E.C.

No. 1.]

APRIL 1, 1865.

[PRICE ONE HALFPENNY.]

OPENING ADDRESS.

“I seek not yours, but you.”—2 Cor. xii. 14.

We thank God there are many in these days who love the Truth as it is in Christ Jesus, and regard it as very precious. To such dear brethren in the Lord, one with us in the Lord Jesus, do we specially address this little sheet, hoping it will be accepted of Him and them, and that by it we may carry home ‘PRECIOUS TRUTH’ to the hearts of many who are strangers to its worth. We trust that such is the only motive which prompts the issue of this unpretending serial.

We desire to advocate the Gospel of Grace and Glory, as delivered by Jesus Christ, and preached by his Apostles. We own our Lord’s command, to preach the Gospel in all the world, to every creature, and we cherish his precious declaration—‘Whosoever believeth.’ ‘God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever believeth in Him* should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ (John iii. 16.)

We press this as the *foundation truth*, not to the exclusion of any, but to the *upholding of every doctrine* contained in Scripture. We disown all party spirit, and shall quote no authority but the Word of God. In simple-hearted dependence upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit we shall seek to make known the mind of God. We invite our readers to test all we say by the ‘Standard of Truth,’ and to reject everything which cannot be proved thereby. ‘Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.’ (1 John, iv. 1.)

Accept these declarations of our faith and purposes, and if you esteem us faithful servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, we pray you to make our paper known, and forward this, our labour of love in any way you can.

WHAT IS TRUTH?

(John, xviii. 38.)

Such was Pilate’s question; with him an idle question; for he did not wish to know truth: he had no heart for it, and understood not the importance of his own words. Truth confronted him, and he comprehended it not. Truth stood there before the representative of earthly power. Living, gracious, patient, precious Truth was there in the person of Jesus Christ, who had declared himself to be ‘The way, the Truth, and the life.’

Wretched Pilate! ‘What is truth?’ said he to

Jesus; ‘and when he had said this he went out.’ What! did he not wait for an answer? No; Pure Truth was before him, but in silence, though willing to speak, if enquired of in faith. Miserable, wilful Pilate! he might have heard Pure Truth, but feared it; so having invoked the most precious thing on earth, he turned away from it!

Alas! how many thousands have followed the example of Pilate? How many in these days find themselves in the presence of Truth, and though, like this Roman governor, they may in some measure own its purity and worth, being constrained with him to declare they can find no fault in him, yet turn away! We pray the reader to ponder this. For though Pilate obtained no revelation of Truth, failing to realise it in the Son of God, and though Jesus in person is no longer on earth, yet Truth is preserved to us in the Scriptures, and we are all responsible to receive it.

We shall seek to present in this paper Truth only—‘Precious Truth!’ *Life-giving truth*, and *life-sustaining truth*—these two great divisions, perfect in One, even in Jesus Christ. It is His word, and in His name we desire to speak. May the Holy Spirit lead us. May the reader attentively and earnestly consider, remembering always that word of exhortation.—‘Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.’ (1 Thess. v. 21.)

MARY SAT AT JESUS’ FEET AND HEARD HIS WORD.—(Luke x. 39.)

What an instructive contrast is presented between the characters of Mary and Pilate! The one meek, silent, trustful, attentive to hear: the other, proud, questioning, impatient, and wilfully deaf. Mary had but a lowly place on earth—she sat at the feet of Jesus, and He was poor and despised, the rejected of men. But Mary had *faith*—she did not form her estimate of Jesus by the position He held in the world, but by the gracious words which fell from his lips. As a *listener* she learnt that the despised Nazarene was none other than the Son of God, the Saviour of sinners. She *believed in Him*, so she sat at his feet, eager and attentive, ‘and heard his word.’ Happy Mary! What joy to hear the assurances of her Lord. ‘One thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.’ Yes, one thing is needful—to hear the word of Christ in a chastened, humble, dependent spirit—to receive his word—and we are assured that, to receive his word is to believe in Him, and that to

believe in Him is to have forgiveness of sins and the gift of everlasting life.

This, dear reader, is the good part which shall not be taken away. May it be yours. It is offered freely—'the word of life.' Oh, it is indeed a *vital* question which we would ask—"what do you think of the words of Jesus?" Pilate scorned them, and afterwards crucified the Lord of life and glory: Mary received them, believed them, found peace and happiness in them, and will rejoice in the love of Jesus through the countless ages of eternity!

Alas! how slow men are to receive that unspeakable blessing—the word of life! How hard it is to accept God's declarations about us and about His beloved Son! How easy, on the other hand, to treat mere words as very worthless, and to despise Him who uttered them! Men may even *admire* the spirit of Mary, yet *never take her place*; and they may condemn the awful guilt of Pilate, yet indulge the same evil heart of pride and unbelief. They suffer Truth to be brought before them a thousand times, but refuse to *hear it in their hearts*, and consequently die in their sins.

REPORTS OF SCRIPTURE MEETINGS.

'Search the Scriptures.'—(John v. 39.)

At a Scripture Meeting recently held at No. 12, Tabernacle-walk, Finsbury-square, the following observations were made, the passage studied being John vi. 28—40. The Jews said, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Men always ask what they shall do, but God sets us first upon *believing* and then upon *doing*. Perverse and proud natural man still tries to reverse God's order; but Jesus says to them, as He said to the Jews, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent. But men want *more* proof; they say What sign showest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? craving more evidence than they have got in the Holy Word, and think theirs is a hard case if Christians cannot furnish it to their satisfaction. This was just the position of the Jews; they had recently beheld the Lord feed five thousand with five barley loaves and two small fishes, and were actually following the Lord expecting to be fed in the same manner again and again, and yet they wickedly ask for a sign! Besides *this* miracle, they had others, for we read in the beginning of the chapter that 'a great multitude followed Him, because they saw his miracles.' And yet they wanted a sign! The whole narrative shows the insufficiency of eyesight to produce faith. If, therefore, the words of Jesus are insufficient nothing better can be had, not even the appearance of 'one from the dead.' (Luke xvi. 31.)

Jesus is God's sign and evidence of his love; the manna in the desert was a sign to the Israelites that God loved them (ver. 31). Jesus is a sign to us and to all, of God's mercy; 'My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven; for the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. I am the bread of life; he that cometh to

me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.' The soul of the believer is satisfied by Jesus as the Saviour, and kept satisfied by Him as the Good Shepherd, for 'he that believeth in me shall go in and out and find pasture.'

How constantly Jesus said He came not to do his own will, but the Father's (ver. 38, 39, 40), and yet his will and the Father's were one; and our blessedness and strength will be in proportion to our consciousness of will with the Father and the Son.

In the 40th verse we read 'that every one which *seeth* the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day.' Let the reader have no difficulty about 'seeing' Jesus, for the eye of faith does see Him, as Paul says (Heb. ii. 9), 'We see Jesus, who was made,' &c.

A meeting for study of the Scriptures has been held for some weeks past at No. 2, Old Street Road.* At the last meeting, Saturday, Feb. 4th, the subject proposed for consideration by a friend who came in, was REPENTANCE. Passages were read from Acts ii. and xviii., from which it was seen that God first sent the command by Peter to the Jews, and afterwards by Paul to *all men everywhere*, to repent. It was also observed that the call thus made by God upon his creatures was *not* that they should put themselves through a course of penitential sorrow (as many erroneously suppose), but that they should turn from their opposition to, and ignorance of Himself, and accept the Salvation He has provided by and in his only-begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

It was further shown, by reference to various Scriptures, that the call to repentance was but as it were the forerunner of the glad tidings conveyed in the words "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." This is seen in the person and work of John the Baptist. He came preaching repentance—that is, he proclaimed to the people that they must turn from the courses they had been following, which were contrary to the Divine mind, and look to One in their midst who was henceforth to be the Saviour, Teacher, and Guide of all who would regard Him as the Sent-one of God.

The call to repent is a *warning voice* telling men they are hurrying to destruction, seeking to arrest them in their downward course, and claiming their attention to the voice of God. But even as the ministry of John the Baptist was absorbed into, rather than superseded by, that of the Lord Jesus Christ, so God's command to all men to repent is *included* in the glad tidings proclaimed by the Lord himself—'That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Therefore, after the Lord Jesus had suffered the death of the cross, (having finished the work his Father had given him to do—having laid in the grave and risen triumphant over all our enemies,) He issued the world-wide proclamation of Salvation to all who shall believe in Him, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.' (Mark xvi. 15, 16.)

Here we have no *separate* call to repentance; yet in the very act of putting trust in Christ by faith there is of necessity a turning from everything else, and this is the true act of repentance.

No doubt deep sorrow and contrition for sin are often the first manifestation of the *power of the word of God* in the soul, but this is *not* 'repentance unto life,' according to Scripture. In truth, repentance is *not an expression of feeling*, but a *determined conformity* to the command of God.

* We are requested to state that the meeting hitherto held as above will be continued, if the Lord will, each Saturday evening at Half-past 7 o'clock, at No. 47, RAWSTORNE-STREET, Goswell-road, at which place is also held a Scripture Meeting each Lord's Day Afternoon at 3 o'clock and Wednesday at 7½. All Christians are invited. The unconverted are also welcome to attend—but only believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are permitted to speak. Controversy is carefully avoided.

THE CITY OF CONFUSION,
(Isaiah xxiv. 10.)
AND THE WAY OUT OF IT.

A FAITHFUL WORD FOR CHRISTIANS.

The chapter in Isaiah from which the first part of the above title is taken presents a solemn prophetic picture of the awful day of tribulation which is shortly to overtake this earth, of which the Lord Jesus Christ also prophesied, as we shall have occasion to show. Isaiah speaks of the scene which the earth would present at a future day, and calls it the 'City of Confusion.'

Read the chapter referred to, and say if the whole present condition of things does not answer to the description of the 'City of Confusion'? Whatever section of men's pursuits you examine—Politics, War, Commerce, Education, Science, Religion—looking at each part of the globe in detail, or taking in, at a glance, the whole scene, a Christian must readily admit the prophet's exact description, and own we are living in the 'City of Confusion.'

But this confusion is especially seen in the religious condition of the world, and the reader, perhaps, discerns and mourns over the fact that he is a dweller in the 'City of Confusion.' Do you not sometimes feel bewildered by the confusion of teaching and ideas which exists around you? Are you not tired of man's inventions and improvements in spiritual things? Is not failure stamped upon all? You may admit this, and, for that very reason, fear to listen to a new adviser. There is no lack of teachers, no lack of monitors—it is emphatically true of our time, that men 'heap to themselves teachers having itching ears.' Unsought advice, too, pours in on every side.

However, amid all the agitation and din, thank God, the voice of Scripture is heard: (oh, that it may rise clearer, and still clearer.) But, alas, as yet, what havoc has been made by the misapplication of parts of the Word of God! How obscured is some of the truth! 'The Word' is almost made of none effect by men's traditions. We gladly own, however, that Christians do contend for the 'whole Bible,' and will not suffer it to be mutilated, either by professors or infidels; but how few own practically that emphatic statement in 2 Tim. iii. 16—'ALL Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works!' It is in the light of this Scripture we would show the Christian reader the way out of the 'City of Confusion'; but it will be in vain for you to attempt to follow us unless willing to abide by ALL that is written in the Word of God. The mere word of man must be held to be absolutely of no account. Are you not exhorted to 'prove all things, and hold fast that which is good'? and what is the only proof, the only test, the only measure, but the Scriptures? We must prove all things by them. 'What saith the Scripture?' must settle every other question.

First, then, touching the question of SALVATION: 'What saith the Scripture?' As to

1. ITS COMPREHENSIVENESS. 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Do you implicitly believe in this declared love of God, and the way in which he has proved that love?

2. A PRESENT BLESSING. 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.' Do you believe that, as a believer, you have got everlasting life through faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God? Do you believe that, according to this Scripture, *faith in Jesus* is the only thing which makes you to differ from those upon whom the wrath of God abideth?

3. ITS CERTAINTY AND SECURITY.—'Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.' Have you been content hitherto with a kind of hope that through faith in Christ you may be saved at last, yet fearing some fatal temptation might cut you off from God's free mercy and love? We

pray you, dismiss all such God-dishonouring fears, and trust—(not yourself, but) Jesus. Consider his words—'My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.' Do you believe this clear and precious declaration of your Saviour? It is needful to your present peace—it is needful to a right understanding of the rest of the Word of God—it is needful to your faithful walk, as an adopted son or daughter of God—that you believe these declarations of your *absolute security* in Christ. Remember it is He who has said you shall never perish. But that you may be sure you ought to have confidence in forgiveness *obtained*, and eternal life *already given*, we quote one other Scripture, which leaves no room for further question. 'These things have I written unto you that *believe* on the name of the Son of God that ye may *know* that ye *have* eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.'—(1 John v. 13.)

4. WHO IT IS THAT PRESERVES US UNTO THE END.—We are not only thus blessedly assured of our safety, but our Lord has, in wondrous love, informed us *how* we are kept secure. To understand this, however, faith must be in exercise. Still the exhortation is—*trust* 'the Word,' *trust* in Jesus. 'In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your Salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.' (Eph. i. 13, 14) This was a *new* manifestation of the wondrous love of God. Under the Jewish dispensation, and indeed in all ages, the Holy Spirit of God wrought *upon* and *with* all who believed God; consequently, a holy man of old could pray 'Take not thy holy Spirit from me;' and when our blessed Lord Jesus was on earth he said to his disciples—'If ye being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask it?' In the following words Jesus shows the difference of the mode of the Spirit's influence before and after his death:—'I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you *for ever*, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be *in* you.' (John xiv. 16.) Thus the Spirit indwells all believers. This was altogether an unlooked-for blessing, the unspeakable importance of which was little understood at that time, and has, alas! been forgotten by thousands of Christians in every succeeding generation, though the promise has been strictly fulfilled. When the Lord appeared to the disciples after he had completed the amazing work of atonement by which we have forgiveness of sins, He commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. And so it came to pass: on the Day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the assembly of believers (about one hundred and twenty persons, according to the above-named scripture), and, as we learn by the continuation of the Sacred Word, the gift is confirmed to all who, in sincerity, own the name of Jesus. It is of unspeakable importance that this truth of the *abiding* presence of the Holy Ghost in all believers be fully received. As we have said, *faith alone* can realise either the fact or the resulting blessing. Reason may ask, with Nicodemus, 'How can these things be?' and if we look at what we are in ourselves, we may well be confounded in the presence of this sublime expression of God's love. But we must remember that emphatic declaration, 'The blood of Jesus Christ, his (God's) Son cleanseth from all sin.' Our heavenly Father has proved to us how *absolutely* we are cleansed by the precious blood of Christ, for the Holy Ghost could not possibly *indwell* an impure habitation; and we are declared to be 'temples of the Holy Ghost.' It is a common error among earnest Christians to pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the world for the purpose of conversion; but a little reflection upon that which the word of God teaches ought to convince all that, until *belief* in Christ has brought the *cleansing efficacy* of his blood to the soul, it is impossible for the Holy Spirit of God to take up his abode there. Every instance recorded in

the "Acts" of the Holy Ghost being given assures us that belief preceded that gift. But the scripture already quoted (Ephesians i. 13) puts it beyond question—'In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.'

—The following scriptures confirm what has been here advanced:—'But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his.' 'But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.' 'For as many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the Sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.' (Rom. viii. 9, 11, 14, 15.)—Again, 'And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.' (Ephesians iv. 30.)—Again, 'For God hath not called us to uncleanness, but unto holiness. He, therefore, that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit.' (1 Thes. iv. 7, 8.)—Again, 'If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.' (1 John iv. 12, 13.)

[The development of this subject, viz., deliverance from the 'City of Confusion,' we purpose continuing from month to month.]

MR. C. H. SPURGEON'S MIXTURES OF TRUTH AND ERROR.

The errors of one who occupies so prominent a place in the world as Mr Spurgeon are calculated to produce incalculable mischief, and none the less that they are mixed with much truth. We purpose therefore to subject some of his statements to the searching light of the word of God, and we would do this in all Christian love and solely for the vindication of 'precious truth.' We have no desire to enter into systematic criticism, nor to provoke mere controversy, Mr Spurgeon himself invites criticism. In his published sermon entitled 'True Unity Promoted,' (dated Jan. 1, 1865,) he says—'May there ever be found some men, though they be rough as Amos, or stern as Haggai, who shall denounce again and again all league with error, and all compromise with sin, and declare that these are the abhorrence of God. Never dream that holy contention is at all a violation of my text.' The text spoken of is, 'Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.'

There are many parts of this discourse which indicate in Mr Spurgeon a true perception of the mind of the Holy Ghost as expressed in the text. Thus, when the preacher referred to the words of our Lord—'That they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.' (John xvii. 21.) From what Christ has said, we know this absolute unity is preserved by God. But we are set to conform ourselves practically to His mind. If this disposition prevailed universally among believers, there would be manifested that unity which we are to endeavour to preserve in the bond of peace. Mr Spurgeon properly repudiates all kinds of unity based upon pretensions to ecclesiastical supremacy—as also every species of unity brought about by conformity to error. Would we could equally commend the entire sermon, but we cannot. The following is sadly mistaken teaching, (p. 3.) 'Men speak of the Episcopal Church, the Wesleyan Church, or the Presbyterian Church. Now I hesitate not to say that there is nothing whatever in Scripture at all parallel to such language; for there I read of the seven churches in Asia, the church in Corinth, Philippi, Antioch, etc. In England, if I speak according to the word of God, there are some thousands of churches holding the episcopal form of government; in Scotland some thousands of godly churches ordered according to Presbyterian rule; among the Wesleyans, churches adhering to the form of government first carried out by Mr Wesley.'

Down to the 'etc.' the speaker is correct enough, but with respect to the rest of the above passage, we hesitate not to say that Mr Spurgeon's words are as contrary to Scripture as those

with which he commences his statement, and which he denounces as erroneous. Recognition of different forms of government is directly opposed to the text, and is in complete contravention of the whole tenor of the New Testament. The several churches spoken of in Scripture, according to the preacher's own showing, are only distinguished by locality—'the churches of Asia, Corinth, Philippi, Antioch,' &c. How can Mr Spurgeon profess to see a parallel to this in the different denominations, or 'forms of government,' which he enumerates? Directly we attempt to justify sectarianism, we deny the unity of the Spirit. Look at the verses which follow the preacher's text: 'One body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all! Seven ones! i.e. perfect oneness, seven in Scripture being emblematical of perfection. This is unity. Let us own this, and we shall see that those who have brought in doctrines effecting divisions; those who have cut off sections of the one body, and given names and governments of their own invention, have ignored the 'unity of the Spirit;' and those who attempt to vindicate that which has been done, are not 'endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.'

Oh, that Christians would return to their one Lord! Reflect upon the meaning of that word 'Lord;' it is absolute ownership; 'we are not our own, we are bought with a price.' Only think of a number of servants parting themselves off into companies and setting up different forms of government for themselves, independent of their master! How did the Holy Spirit deal with the first evidences of sectarianism? Turn to 1 Cor. i. 10—13—'Now, I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul: and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?'

We leave this to the solemn reflection of our readers. We point to an error common throughout Christendom, and have contrasted it with the truth of the word of God. May the Holy Spirit apply the lesson in power.

Another observation of Mr Spurgeon's in the same sermon we ought not to pass over. 'I hope to exercise a ministry in this place which will drive out those of you who will not acknowledge your brethren when they are poorer and of less education than yourselves.' May we ask the preacher two questions? Firstly—Where are these intractable members of the Tabernacle congregation to be driven to? Secondly—Where is there a single word in Scripture to authorise any minister, or any Christian, or body of Christians, to drive out such as are pointed at in the above sentence? We read of exclusion (from the church at Corinth, for instance) for grievous sin, but for failure in the exercise of Christian graces—never. On the contrary, the unobedient members are to be waited upon, entreated, and exhorted to 'wash one another's feet.' This is the mind of the Father, the mind of Him who bears with all our perversity and failure, and will never 'drive out' a single one that trusts in Him. We oppose Divine thought to man's thought, and therefore leave it. Our object is not to find fault, but to present 'precious truth.'

NOTICES.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—We invite enquiries tending to the elucidation of scriptural truth. Controversial questions should be avoided entirely, if possible. Our earnest desire is to help simple-hearted Christians with words of encouragement, patience and love—and to advocate the practical operation of "precious truth" in Christian walk and practice. We hope, also, to be useful in spreading the glad tidings of salvation. Any enquiries calculated to help forward these objects shall have our best attention.

Letters for the Editor to be addressed to 335, Strand, W.C.

If the Lord put it into his people's hearts to support this Journal, we hope to enlarge it, keeping the price ONE HALFPENNY, wishing that it may be purchased and given away broadcast.

13 copies post free, for 6d. in advance.

Printed by the Proprietor, JOHN EVANS, 335a, Strand, W.C.; and published by JOH CAUDWELL, 335, Strand, London, W.C.

PRECIOUS TRUTH.

“WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURES?”—(Rom. iv. 3.)

Job Caudwell, 336, Strand, W.C.]

[Hall & Co, 25, Paternoster Row, E.C.]

No. 2.]

MAY 1, 1865.

[PRICE ONE HALFPENNY.]

A LETTER TO THE CHRISTIAN READER.

DEAR BROTHER OR SISTER IN THE LORD,—

We can, in all sincerity, thus address you; for though perhaps personally unknown to each other, and though we may never meet on earth,—yet as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are members of one body, and shall be associated together through all eternity. To such only is this letter addressed.

Shall we not now love one another? Shall we not extend to one another in faith the right hand of fellowship? We seek communion with you—true, loving communion. We offer you our thoughts about the things concerning our high calling, and the words which our loving Saviour has charged us to keep. Now, we invite you to communicate your thoughts in return. If we should say anything which at the first glance does not seem to run in the same channel as that in which your mind has been hitherto directed—have patience with us. In such a case we earnestly invite you to judge our words by the Scriptures, and then candidly *writes to us*, and state wherein you think we err.

Then, again, in any circumstances in which you would desire the counsel of those who love the Lord and all who are his, we would tender you our Christian sympathy and advice; you may write us under initials, and we will answer if possible in the following number of PRECIOUS TRUTH. May we thus endeavour to ‘bear one another’s burdens,’ and ‘exhort and edify one another.’ In all things let us seek to glorify our Heavenly Father, bearing fruit to Him by abiding in the ‘True Vine,’ and keeping the words of Jesus abiding in us.

In conclusion, we would ask you to make our paper known by giving a copy here and there to any who may be within the circle of your influence.

Yours very lovingly in Our Lord Jesus Christ,
THE EDITOR.

TO THE UNREGENERATE.

DEAR READER,—Listen and ponder. The ‘wrath of God’ is abiding over you—the wrath of Him in whom you live and move, and have your being, from whom you cannot escape, though you call on the rocks to hide you and the hills to cover you. Be not sceptical; it is the language of Jesus, the words of him who is the Truth, and who is Love, too, and would not needlessly pain the humblest of human kind; it is, therefore, the language of simple fact. Why, perhaps you say, should the wrath of

God abide over me? what have I done? You are daily giving God the lie. ‘He that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record God gave of his Son.’ (1 John v. 10.) He hath concluded all under sin—hath declared the whole world guilty before Him, and consequently yourself in that condition. ‘There is none righteous, no, not one; all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.’ To the sinner who dies in his sins God must be ‘a consuming fire.’ But your heart gives a flat denial to this also, and says it is too dreadful to be true. Listen not to your heart; it is ‘deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.’ ‘He who trusteth his own heart is a fool.’

Again you urge, ‘What have I done to deserve so dreadful a doom? Am I not strictly honest and moral?’ Admitted, and were we to ask your friends about you, they might add that you have much that is amiable, and useful, and attractive. Nevertheless, what is the use of it all, if it blind your eyes to the declaration of the Spirit of God—the natural heart is ‘enmity against God’? And you are believing your heart, and disbelieving God, when he says ‘the wrath of God abideth over you.’

Are you listening to the whisper of the Enemy that, not being so bad as others you need not fear? To this insinuation, the Word declares—‘There is no difference,’ ‘that every mouth may be stopped.’ (Rom. iii.) ‘If one died for all, then were all dead.’ Oh, sinner, who art thyself utterly unworthy of eternal life, think of Jesus as tasting of ‘death for every man,’ and consequently for you, provided you will accept him *by faith*.

Ah, there is the secret; the wrath of God against sin came down upon the spotless Sacrifice, and the wrath no longer abideth over those who trust in him.

CHRISTIAN, DO YOU BELIEVE IT?

‘What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God?’ (1 Cor. vi. 19.)

Even in the earliest days of the Christian dispensation, it was needful to remind believers continually of this solemn truth. The Corinthian saints knew very well, as a fact, that the Holy Spirit of God indwelt them; yet by their various and grievous failures they soon began to make it evident that they were not walking in the consciousness of being the temple of God.

It is forgetfulness of this mighty power in the Christian which opens the door to unfaithfulness and sin. Let the reader carefully notice the abundant testimony contained in the Epistles of Paul and John

that the Holy Spirit abides with every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

But what we desire particularly to press, just now, in the language of the Scripture before us, is—the claim thereby demonstrated to an ABSOLUTE OWNERSHIP of the Christian by the Lord Jesus Christ. 'And ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price! Therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.' (1 Cor. iv. 19, 20.) It is clear from this passage that believers have no rights of their own—that is to say, apart from Christ. It follows, therefore, that when selfishness, in any form, is manifested in our life, we are defrauding the Lord that bought us! Yet it is far from the Lord's wish that we should consider ourselves as bondmen, in the abstract sense of the term, for he has made us free. 'Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free;' again, 'For, brethren, ye have been called into liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh.' (Gal. v. 1, 13.)

The thought of the Lord's *ownership*, with which the Holy Ghost delights to refresh us, arises from our marvellous association with our Lord as members of his body. Just as a man reckons upon the spontaneous willingness and absolute devotedness of his hand or his foot because they are his; so the members of Christ should be quick to understand and unhesitating to obey their Head, the Lord of all, because they are His. 'For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.' (Eph. v. 30.)

Ponder and pray over these wondrous truths, beloved in the Lord. They are unspeakable gain to all who receive them.

REVIEWS OF RECENTLY PRINTED SERMONS BY EMINENT PREACHERS.

[Under this head we propose to examine, in the light of Scripture, some of the sermons which come under our notice, or to which correspondents draw our attention. Let us state distinctly that we shall in no case be influenced by personal feeling for or against the preacher; we take account only of his doctrines and teachings. We shall prefer to deal with the discourses of those who are deservedly esteemed, remembering that in Scripture the faults of the most approved are the most unsparingly dealt with. We entreat our readers to give us credit for entire freedom from personal bias.]

2. A Sermon preached by the Rev. H. P. Liddon, M.A. in St. Paul's Cathedral. Jan. 22, 1865. 'For what is a man profited if he gain the whole world but lose his own soul?' Matt. xvi. 26.

There are two grievous faults very manifest in this discourse—

1. The speaker uses so much eloquence in describing the successful labours of the men of the world, and (in his estimation) the grand results achieved, especially by Englishmen, that the natural pride of the human heart is necessarily aroused—the very thing most calculated to hinder the reception of God's truth.

2. Throughout the discourse there is an evident forgetfulness of the Lord's declaration, 'Ye must be born again.' Though Christ is spoken of as the Saviour, yet salvation by works is the chief theme. The multitude are taught that a soul may be lost 'by the conscious dishonesty that looks God full in the

'face, and then asks just one halfpenny too much for 'a pound of sugar'!! This is not Christ's doctrine.

We must give the same unqualified condemnation to another statement. Speaking of Jesus on the cross, the preacher said—'from his open wounds there flows a stream of life-giving power to his sacraments.' This is quite opposed to the word of God, which declares that the soul is saved through faith in Christ, and that alone. The Word gives no power to sacraments. Yet how useful a servant Mr. Liddon might be if careful to adhere strictly to the teaching of his Master, is evidenced by the following powerful appeal, the force of which is however lost where it stands in his sermon, through that which surrounds it. 'Do you know and feel that to live, except for God—to live in forgetfulness of the endless future, which is before the soul, is a vast folly—a mistake so gigantic that no other mistake in the world can rival it? And yet something holds you back—habits, friendships, cherished plans. You can seem to climb the summit of Pisgah, and wistfully gazing at the land of promise, almost resign yourselves to die beyond the Jordan. What shall it profit—that delay, that clinging to that which you have already condemned? What shall it profit when for you time is no more, and you have entered upon eternity?'

3. A Sermon preached by the Rev. W. M. Punshon, M.A. in the Liverpool Road Chapel, Aug. 23, 1864. 'But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you.' Gal. iv. 18.

In this sermon the preacher sweetly dwells upon the tender anxieties of a true minister in watching over the flock of Christ. He thoroughly enters into the feelings of the Apostle Paul detailed in the epistle from which the text is taken.

Concerning the nature of zeal, the speaker shows that 'in itself it is neither morally excellent nor morally blameworthy. It becomes Christian zeal only when it springs from Christian motive, when it is displayed in a Christian manner, when it is used for Christian ends. The great constraining motive of Christian zeal, as of every other grace or energy that is hallowed, is "the love of Christ shed abroad in the heart."'

We could quote much more, forcibly pointing out the effects of misdirected zeal, leading to persecution among professing Christian churches. Mr. Punshon omits, however, to state that something else is needful to the right exercise of Christian zeal; that is to say, besides love there must be knowledge—knowledge as to the mind of God. Christendom is full of the monuments of mis-directed Christian zeal, in the production of which love has been very manifest. Zeal may prompt and love may temper, but the Christian will ever fail in the rightful exercise of zeal if not directed by the Word of God.

The conclusion of the sermon is, alas! calculated to mislead. The preacher looks to Christian zeal as the means for bringing in the reign of Christ on earth. This is his fancy-picture—'The church itself, in growing purity and strength, becomes the do-

'minion of ever-ripening authority; the world, changed by the Word, as the living epistles speak it, bows its rank, and its intellect, and its pride, before the feet of Jesus;—he reigns.'

Oh, that Mr. Punshon, with many other gifted preachers, would search the Scriptures, to see whether these things are so. We declare, most solemnly, that the Word of God is entirely opposed to such doctrine. Let those who maintain it cite one single passage in its favour! The *world* will never accept the reign of Christ until the awful tribulation (Rev. iii. 10) has passed over it. The gospel has been preached for eighteen hundred years, yet the world is as much at enmity against God as when Christ died! Of course, we rejoice to know that an innumerable company have been rescued *from it*, and that thousands among the living have obtained salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. But these are no longer of the world, though in it.

No wonder ministers of the Gospel look complacently upon the world, many, alas! being ready to meet it more than half way, while they delude both themselves and their hearers with the hope that preaching can change the world, though the Word says it is 'ruled by the Prince of the power of the air.' Our Lord declares Satan to be the 'Prince of this world.' How can preaching dethrone him? Christ must come forth, as he will, to overthrow the usurper, and *put* all enemies under his feet. 'What saith the Scripture?' 'There shall come in the LAST days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as from the beginning of the creation.' (2 Pet. ii 3, 4.)

While we are to go on with preaching, to the conversion of those who believe, we are to *look* for the return of Christ himself. The world will become worse, not better, until He comes.

4. Sermon by Mr. C. H. SPURGEON, "Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit," Jan. 22, 1865.

TEXT—'And he showed me Joshua, the high priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake unto those that stood by him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thy iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the Lord stood by.'—ZECH. iii. 1—5.

The preacher rightly tells us that Joshua is primarily the representative of the children of Israel, and that the action described sets forth the restoring grace of God, as afterwards to be manifested in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is true, too, as he says, that we may very properly take Joshua as a type of all the people of God—first, in their natural condition of sin and faultiness—afterwards, clothed (not with the imputed righteousness of Christ, as Mr Spurgeon says, but) with Christ himself. He is 'our righteousness'—we are 'accepted in' him.

The preacher then goes on to denounce, very properly, all who claim to be priests, as descendants of

the apostles, and all their pretensions to priestly power. All believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are by him made 'kings and priests to God.'

Then come some of Mr Spurgeon's sad mistakes. He says—'Yet notice where it is that Joshua stands to minister; it is before the angel of Jehovah. You and I can never stand to minister before Moses, the Mediator, under the law; much less before Jehovah himself, for even our God is a consuming fire.' Mr Spurgeon is wrong both in fact and deduction. While Joshua was clothed with his filthy rags the did indeed stand before the angel, who facing Joshua, was a screen between him and God; but as soon as he was divinely clothed 'the angel of the Lord stood by.' So with the Christian believer; when he was in unbelief, and consequently in his sins, Christ stood between him and the Holy God. Through faith in the Saviour his defilements are removed—done away with—'the blood of Jesus Christ his (God's) Son *cleanseth* from ALL sin.' 'As He is SO ARE WE IN THIS WORLD.' This is far above the poor thoughts set forth above by Mr. Spurgeon. Who would not rather have the Word of God than that of man?

Again, the preacher, in setting forth Christian service, is just as contrary to the plain teaching of Scripture. He says, 'Gracious God, I bless thee, that I have not to present my sacrifice directly to thyself, else thou wouldst consume my sacrifice and me with the flames of thy wrath; but I present what I have before thy messenger, the angel of the covenant, the Lord Jesus, and through him my prayers find acceptance, wrapped up in his prayers; my praises become sweet as they are bound up with bundles of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia from Christ's own garden; then I own myself standing in him, am accepted in the beloved; and all my poor, defiled, polluted works, though in themselves only objects of divine abhorrence, are so accepted and received, that God smelleth a sweet savour. He is content and I am blessed.'

Let us contrast Scripture with the above.—'For by one offering he HATH PERFECTED FOR EVER them that are sanctified. . . . And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. . . . Having therefore BOLDNESS to enter into the HOLIEST by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated FOR US, through the veil, that is to say his flesh; and having a high priest over the house of God; let us DRAW NEAR with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.' (Heb. x. 14, 17, 19, 20, 22.)

This is very different. The Christian is shown to be perfect in Christ, and is accordingly invited into the holiest; and whenever he realises his standing by faith, he may 'draw near' boldly. Of course, if a Christian has sin upon his conscience, and has not confessed it, he cannot draw near with a *true heart*, and consequently cannot draw near at all. If we see a brother in such a case, let us remember that 'If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.' We are thus consoled about him, and are confident that he will, sooner or

later, be restored. Meanwhile, it is our duty to wait upon such an one in love, and seek to wash his feet with the water of the word. (John xiii. and xv. 3.)

How grievous to hear a Christian talk such nonsense as that of having 'his prayers wrapped up in the prayers of Jesus.' Let Mr Spurgeon look at the words of his Lord—such, for instance, as John xvi. 23, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give you.' Again, 'I say not unto you that I will pray the Father; for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.'

In page 52 of the sermon before us there is much unscriptural teaching, but our space forbids any attempt at analysis. In page 53 there is a happy conception put out.

But on turning over the leaf we come to an assertion not at all in keeping with the Word of God. The preacher says, speaking of the temptations of Satan, 'Whenever I get depressed in spirit, or the liver is out of order, or the head aches, then comes the hissing serpent, "God has forsaken you; you are no child of God; you are unfaithful to your master; you have no part in the blood of sprinkling," and such like things. You old rascal! if you say as much as that to me in my days of health, when my blood is leaping in my veins, I shall be more than a match for you,' &c.

This is grievous! So Mr Spurgeon has confidence in flesh and blood! Now we can understand our brother's many mistakes. How different is the 'Word.' 'Rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh.' 'Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might,' and so forth. We commend to any who heard or have read this sermon the passage at Eph. vi. 10—18. Let them contrast the language of inspiration with Mr Spurgeon's utterances to the prince of darkness.

At pp. 56, 57 we find a sorry dissertation on the advantages of Calvinism as compared with Arminianism. This is not preaching Christ; the Bible knows nothing about 'isms,' neither ought the followers of the Good Shepherd.

At the foot of p. 57 we find some forcible and well-chosen expressions by which Satan is answered as to the unsightly condition of 'the brand plucked from the fire.' Again, at p. 58, there is a happy description of the believer as accepted in Christ, but altogether inconsistent with, nay in contrast with, what the preacher had stated in the former part of the sermon. There is urgent need for Mr. Spurgeon's hearers and readers to 'prove all things.'

FORBID NOT.

'And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbid him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Forbid him not; for he that is not against us is for us.' (Luke ix. 49, 50.)

We have here a very important lesson; alas! how often forgotten by Christians. There is a tendency in us all to deem everyone wrong 'that followeth not

with us,' and if we yield to the promptings of the old nature, we shall desire to *forbid* such to labour in the name of Jesus. Notwithstanding the above unmistakable injunction, believers have, ever since the church was founded, been seeking to put down those who 'followed not' with them.

If such an inclination or practice could ever be justified, surely it was when our Saviour was upon earth. There would seem, indeed, to have been something very defective in the one whom John found using the name of Jesus, without companying with those whom the Lord had called to follow Him. To forego personal association with the acknowledged disciples of the Master, and apparently to stand apart from the Lord himself, would seem to human judgment most censurable, and the exercise of ministry under such circumstances quite out of place, and to be forbidden. Yet the Lord says, 'Forbid him not; for he that is not against us is for us.'

It is noticeable that he who had thus interfered was John the beloved. It might have been love for Jesus and jealousy for his name that thus guided the judgment of the disciple who was usually so quiet and gentle, and so glad to lean upon his Master. But however prompted, the judgment of even the most approved disciple must always prove a failure until he take the Lord for his counsellor. John's decision which seemed so sound, and which still commends itself to perhaps the majority of Christians, has to be absolutely reversed when submitted to heavenly wisdom. 'We forbid him,' says John. 'Forbid him not,' says the Lord.

How little did John expect such a reception of his report! he doubtless looked for a full approval from Jesus, or he would not have been so forward to recount the incident. May we meekly accept the lesson. We are called to 'patience' and 'longsuffering;' our plain duty is to refrain from interference with any who preach Christ. We may, in love and gentleness, point out, that *personal* 'fellowship with the Father and with his Son' is far above labour. But even in cases where there is the neglect of these higher teachings of the Holy Spirit, and there is a walking apart from the Lord, yet if they are working in the name of Jesus, 'Forbid not.'

Let any, however, who decline the personal guidance of Christ, and the fellowship of those who 'call upon the Lord out of a pure heart,' reflect that, though they are *not* forbidden to labour, they get no word of approval from the Master. Much less can he commend such as continue in association with hypocritical professors in these last days, 'having the form of godliness but denying the power thereof.' The Lord may permit such to go on in service, because His 'gifts and calling are without repentance.' He has, moreover, a right to their labours. But what says the Master of one who engaged in service without personal communion with himself and his disciples? 'Forbid not; for he that is *not against us* is for us!' This is the best that can be said; such an one is not against us! We are not to expect—'Well done, good and faithful servant' in such a case.

REPORTS OF SCRIPTURE MEETINGS.

'Search the Scriptures.'—(John v. 39.)

(RAWSTORNE MEETING ROOM, No. 47, Rawstorne-street, Goswell-road, Wednesday, April 19, at half-past Seven.)
John viii. 20—24.

'Jesus spake these words in the treasury, as he taught in the temple.' It was remarked by a brother present, that, in the divinely-appointed place of gifts was God's gift, his only-begotten; but how little man valued the Gift and all He brought with him to give! He brought bread, and fed the multitude, but the multitude walk no more with him when he proceeds to speak heavenly wisdom; he brought light, and gave it to the man who had been blind from his birth, but the Jews put out of the synagogue all who admit him to be the light of the world; he brought life, and raised Lazarus, and they were ready to send Lazarus back again to the dead; and at last they slew the gift himself,—all God's gifts in one! On this occasion he is giving wisdom, and they take up stones to cast at him!

'Then said Jesus: I go my way.' Christ's way, said a brother, was to the Cross, and thence to glory, whence the believer looks for him again, to take us to be with him in the glory. Yes, remarked another, Christ had first to taste of death, and abolish it for all them that believe.

'Ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins.' This 'seeking' for Jesus was supposed by one brother to indicate the posture of the Jewish nation, who still profess to look for the Messiah, but are, like their forefathers who rejected the Nazarene, dying in their sins. An enquirer wished to see how the text 'Seek and ye shall find' could be reconciled with this passage; to which a brother remarked that where seeking was done in faith and according to knowledge, (i.e. God's Word) it would be blessed, but where it was prompted by ungodly fear or was flowing in an unscriptural direction, no blessing was to be expected. 'When once the master is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without and knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us: he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence you are.' This no doubt expresses the 'seeking' of those who, when the Lord has taken his church up from the earth, are left behind to 'the tribulation which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth.' (Rev. iii. 10.) The same brother considered that when truth has been thrust before a man, as it was before these Jews, he might afterwards 'seek' in fear, not in faith, and die in his sins.

A remark was made that it was difficult to define faith. Faith is the reception of Christ into the heart, and these scriptures were referred to as tests—'Faith worketh by love,' 'We love Him because He first loved us.' Therefore if we love Christ we may be sure that we believe in Him and are saved by him.

'Ye cannot come.' Dying in their sins it is impossible for the unbelieving to stand in the presence of the Holy One.

The conversation then diverged from the subject in hand to a very useful gathering up of the light of Scripture on the power of Satan over all who continue to walk according to the flesh, and his extreme vigilance and subtlety in attempting to hinder the work of grace in the Christian.

(UNION HALL, St. John's-square, Clerkenwell. Lord's Day Evening, April 23, 1863.

The Christian meeting held here each Lord's day evening has at present under consideration the epistle to the

* Meetings for the spiritual investigation of the Scriptures are also held at the above room each Saturday evening at Half-past 7 o'clock, and each Lord's Day Afternoon at 3 o'clock. We shall be glad to hear of and report other Scripture Meetings conducted on the principles laid down in the answer to our Correspondent, "James J. J., Crewe."

Hebrews, the portion on the above-named occasion being Heb. iv. 11—16. It was observed that there were three kinds of rest for the believer. First, the rest given to him in salvation. Secondly, the rest obtained by taking the yoke of Christ. Thirdly, the heavenly rest reserved for him in the Father's house. That which is presented in this fourth chapter of Hebrews is the second-named condition of rest, which the believer is exhorted to *labour* to enter into, words which seem to involve a contradiction. But the truth is that in bearing the yoke and burden of Christ (thus labouring) we are enabled to enter more and more fully into God's thoughts about real rest—nay, more, we participate in the enjoyment of God's rest—'For he that is entered into his (God's) rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.' The believer ceases from all those works which *self* originates, and rests in the finished work of Christ, realising God as working in him to will and to do, and himself as but an instrument.

'Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.' The believer ought not to *seem* to come short of it.

The meeting proceeded to consider the important verses which follow, but pressure upon our space readers us unable to give more than this very inadequate notice.

COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL BY ST. JOHN.

(Written expressly for this publication.)

In the Gospel given us through the instrumentality of the 'disciple whom Jesus loved,' there are strongly-marked characteristics which attract the spiritual Christian to a frequent perusal of its pages. Its grand themes are Light, Love, and Truth. These are seen in the person of Christ as well as expressed in his doctrines. This sacred narrative also gives pre-eminently a constant manifestation of the power, as well as the grace, of God, shining forth in his Beloved Son.

But there is also a special difference between John's Gospel and those written by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. In these last three the stream of Salvation is, as it were, pent up until after the actual crucifixion of Christ, whereas in the book before us, the broad River of Life flows out from the third chapter to 'whoever will.' John gives us at the beginning of our Lord's ministry his teachings based upon *accomplished* redemption, as though he had actually suffered for sin. This is not so in the other Gospels. In Luke xii. 50, for instance, we hear the Lord saying 'I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I *straitened* until it be accomplished.'

The Disciple whose joy it was to lean on the Saviour's breast seems to have been drinking in the deepest spiritual truths, while the others were more taken up with the wonderful works of Christ and His dealings with the Jews in the then state of things. Doubtless John went very much with the others while events were in progress. But afterwards, when writing an account of those occurrences and doctrines which impressed themselves most deeply upon his own soul, he shows us how that the Lord, from the very outset of his ministry, taught that the lifting up of the Son of Man on the Cross would bring Salvation to all who should believe in Him. He records to our great joy that the Saviour himself brought in the Stream of Mercy, which God was free to extend only as a *consequence* of the work of the Cross, though that work was not in fact accomplished, until the end of His course. Enough that Christ had said, 'A body thou hast prepared me, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.' The work was done; it was determined in the counsels of God; and the Lord acted upon his predetermined sacrifice making the promise as effectual as though the cup of wrath had been drunk. 'He had power on earth to forgive Sins.' Bearing this in mind, let us open the first chapter, and may we meekly learn of the Holy Spirit.

Ver. 1, 2.—'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; the same was in the beginning with God.' What a mysterious commencement!

To mere reason it is quite unintelligible. The spiritual mind, however, discerns the profound truth, that Christ, who is here spoken of as the 'Word,' was the *expression* of God before he came in the likeness of men; just as, when he 'was made flesh and dwelt among us,' he was manifested as 'the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person,' and 'upholding all things by the word of his power.' We are, therefore, taken back to 'the beginning' of the time when the Creator said 'Let there be light, and there was light.' It was Christ, the 'Word,' who was the utterance of Almighty Power. 'God hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.' This exactly accords with what follows:—

3. 'All things were made by him (Christ), and without him was not anything made that was made.' We are thus his creatures, every one of us, and owe him obedience and worship.

4. 'In him was life, and the life was the light of men.' He was and is the source and fountain of life and light. Hitherto, however, the world had not known him. Hence the world was in spiritual darkness.

5. 'And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.' Christ the expression of God, and the son of God, had at the first brought life and light into the world. Satan had introduced darkness and death. Since the transgression of Adam in Paradise, God had made himself known 'at sundry times and in divers manners'—but the world had continued to listen to the seductions of Satan, disregarding the testimonies of God; so that when God determined to make himself fully known—he came into a scene of darkness, deep spiritual darkness, and the darkness comprehended him not.

6. 'There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.' (This name signifies the grace, gift, or mercy of the Lord.)

7. 'The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light (i. e. Christ), that all through him might believe.' The mission of John signified that God's mercy was ready to flow out;—Christ was the manifestation of that mercy. The messenger sent before him had to announce and point out the promised gift. He was sent to bear witness of the Light.

9. 'That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.' This is a solemn fact. The natural light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, is of Christ. Every kind of light is derived from Him. Yet we find thousands who have come *under the sound* of the gospel, preferring what they call 'light of nature' (by which they mean, their own reason)—and ignoring Christ, attempting to approach God without Him. To reject the Christ of God, is to reject the Light of God, and God cannot be approached by those who abide in darkness. Just what the sun which shineth by day is to the natural man, Christ the Son of God is to the Spiritual man. The sunlight enables us to walk safely. By its aid also we contemplate and understand the works of God as seen in nature; so it is with Christ and those who live by Faith. But one who is born blind does not understand the glorious effects of sunlight. You may describe them to him but he does not comprehend your meaning. Thus it is with the Soul of Man—He is born with his spiritual eyes closed. The light shines but he sees it not: he hears of its wonderful effects in the souls of others, but heeds not. Yet if he will only *believe* in the 'true Light,' his eyes are immediately opened; he sees, and glorifies God. But the very sunlight which cheers and blesses the natural man, is of Christ. The sun which shines in the heavens, is but an *instrument* for diffusing heat and light. It was called into being and is maintained by the Son of God. 'That was the true light' (Christ 'the Word') 'which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.' It is He who by the instrumentality of the heavenly body gives light to every man.

10. 'He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.' Sin had so thoroughly marred God's creation, Satan had so completely estranged the hearts of his creatures—that when the Son of God, the veritable Creator, stooped, in wondrous grace, to man's estate—the world knew him not.

11. 'He came unto his own, and his own received him not.' Not only did the world at large reject him, but God's chosen

people Israel did the same—the nation which God had selected to be his own peculiar people, to whom he had given blessings innumerable, to whom he had made himself known, to whom he had revealed his counsels, to whom he had promised the Messiah, foretelling them of his birth, life, and death. In every respect, as to his rights over them, they were his; but when he came to his own they 'received him not.' Of course, as we have said, he had an absolute claim to all creation. The world was his own, and was responsible to receive him. The people of Israel were, however, pre-eminently his; but neither the world nor Israel would have him—'His own received him not.'

12. 'But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.' Though neither the world nor the nation received Him, individuals did. Neither the world nor the nation are in the least altered; to this day they refuse to receive him. But He whom the Masses reject, individuals receive. While the multitudes are hurrying down the broad road, refusing the true light, and hastening into the blackness of darkness for ever, the few, comparatively, (though in the aggregate an innumerable company,) are taking sides with the *rejected Christ*.

'To them gave he'—and to them gives he—'power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.' What an amazing truth! power given to become sons of God! And the qualifications on our part? *Belief* in the name of Jesus, Son of God! Children of wrath have power given them to become sons of God! The power given by Jesus, through faith in His name!

13. 'Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.' It was not that men willed to be re-created in holiness, but that God willed to re-create them. Flesh. (i. e. the natural man) had become thoroughly corrupt in its desires, and any spontaneous manifestation of its will was, and is, *always* exercised in enmity to God. It was 'not that we loved him, but that He loved us.' That which God demands from the natural man is *acquiescence*. God gives His gift, His own dear Son, His agent of Mercy. Will man have Him? True, the natural man requires a new birth. Christ will take care of that, provided only the man will receive Him by Faith.

(To be continued, D.V.)

SINNERS—YET SINLESS.

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

'Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.' (1 John iii. 9.)

None but those who are taught of the Spirit can hope to understand how it is possible for these two Scriptures to apply to the same persons. Can it be true that if 'we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us,' and yet that, being born of God, we do 'not commit sin'? Yes, indeed, it is assuredly true of every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Christian ought to see clearly that he is a double person—(we use such an expression because of the imperfection of human language). As being still in a body of sin and corruption, he has a depraved nature; yet as to his standing before God, all that is abolished. Through faith in Christ he is dead to sin, and stands in resurrection-life 'accepted in the Beloved;' and, in truth, only waits the visible manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ, when he will be instantly changed into his likeness, as we learn in the same epistle—'We know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' (1 John iii. 2.) This fact is true to faith even now—to see Jesus is to be like him—whenever we see Jesus with the eye of faith we are like him. Then it will be absolutely, gloriously,

for ever true—'We shall be like him.' 'He will change these vile bodies, and fashion them like unto his glorious body.'

But in his experience in everyday life the believer is prone to forget his standing in grace—to lose sight of the fact that his is a *heavenly*, not an earthly citizenship—that here he is only a stranger and a pilgrim. Then the old corrupt nature gets the upper hand, the dead thing is resuscitated, the new nature is hindered, the spirit groans. Now God, who abounds towards us in all wisdom and prudence, as well as love, sees well, for the trial of our faith, to leave us awhile in this *double* condition of being. He would have us, by watchfulness, prayer, and self-denial to keep down the dead thing—to *mortify* the body, and thus let the new nature always triumph. The true believer is, however, ready to own, *when in the light of God's presence*, that he has failed, has sinned; and this brings in the way by which he gets rid of his burden. Thus, the Holy Spirit, by the Apostle John, after telling us that 'if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us,' immediately adds, 'If we confess our sins he [God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' This is not so much a fresh forgiveness as a re-assurance of it, for the same chapter, ver. 7, has previously assured us that 'the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from ALL sin.' The full efficacy of this we had as soon as we received 'the Word of life.' Of this we are abundantly assured in many Scriptures.

Thus, the true Christian is a forgiven, cleansed, justified, adopted child of God, and having had imparted to him a divine nature (2 Pet. i. 4), being born of God, he cannot commit sin, as stated in the second text under consideration. Yet the old man, or old nature, being left, it is equally correct to speak of the individual as a sinner. For though, as we have seen, he is a double person, he is also an unit. The Christian as an entity does sin and feels all the sorrow consequent upon it, until he gets into the presence of God by faith and confesses his sins, whereupon he gets a renewal of forgiveness and a cleansing from all unrighteousness. But the Christian as born of God does not commit sin; his new (divine) nature has no part in the sinfulness and failures of the man, though it groans under the weight of them; and so far from evading the responsibility, it is by the promptings of the new nature only that the individual is ready to confess to God.

THE CITY OF CONFUSION,

(Isaiah xxiv. 10.)

AND THE WAY OUT OF IT.

A FAITHFUL WORD FOR CHRISTIANS.

(Continued from our last.)

It is because this grand and consoling fact—the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter—is not believed, that the Scriptures are so little understood. How can we seek the guidance of God's Holy Spirit—how is it possible to expect it—if we start with unbelief in his declared presence? Oh, that Christians would rely upon the precious assurances of the Lord Jesus Christ! Look at his words—'But the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father *will send* in my name, he shall

teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you.' Again, 'Howbeit *when* he, the Spirit of Truth, *is come*, he will guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear shall he speak, and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine; and therefore said I that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you.'—(John xvi. 13, 14, 15.)

Beloved, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, *is come*, and he is ready to guide you into all truth; will you accept his guidance? Alas! instead of praying for this, Christians are continually crying to God to *send* his Holy Spirit! What should we say of a disciple who, when the Lord Jesus Christ was upon earth, had prayed to God to *send* his Son to save us? Yet this is precisely a parallel to the prayer of the Christian who now asks God to send the Holy Ghost! Need we say that this unfaithfulness does *not* drive God's Holy Spirit away from us? No; 'He is faithful,' though Christians so sadly fail. He it is by whom every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is kept in perfect security, as to the ultimate safety of his soul, 'until the redemption of the purchased possession.'

Do you ask what you lose by disbelieving the Spirit's presence in all who believe? We answer—the fulfilment of those gracious promises of our Lord which we have already quoted from St. John's Gospel; and more than that. Look at what is stated in 1 John iv. 17: 'Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world.' Dear Christian Reader, Do not expect to understand this, or to experience the comforting presence of the Comforter—expect not to be guided into ALL truth, if you deny that the Holy Spirit is in you. 'We walk by FAITH, not by sight.' Faith only can realise the blessings of communion while we remain on earth. Would you know more of Christ and the blessings he has prepared for you? would you enjoy the fullest foretaste of the precious fruits of the heavenly Canaan?—own the positive indwelling presence of the Holy Ghost the Comforter, and be *in subjection* to Him.

We have shown clearly by the Word of God that every believer ought to realise the assurance that 'God for Christ's sake *hath forgiven*' him. (Eph. iv. 32.) This is absolutely true. The precious blood of Christ has brought the believer perfect pardon and perfect cleansing from ALL sin. Yet there is a kind of forgiveness we need daily. Because we dwell in bodies of sin, and have deceitful hearts, and are tempted of the devil, we get defiled by the way—we sin. 'If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.' (1 John i. 8.)

Now, mark, what is the Divine remedy for this condition of things. Are we sent back to the cross, as is generally taught? Nay, the blood of Jesus Christ brings pardon at once and for EVER! 'What saith the Scripture?' Do let that decide us. Pray read the verse next to the one quoted above; 'If we confess our sins, he is *faithful* and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'

Do remember this, dear Christian reader, and act upon it—You are a child of God, having all the privileges and all the blessings of a child; you will never lose your sonship, for you are held secure by God's Holy Spirit. Therefore, when you have erred, go and freely and fully confess to your heavenly Father whatever you have done, said, or thought, which you know to be contrary to his mind. In seeking to do this, there may be need of much contrition—much breaking down of the natural will, and if you have acted wilfully there will be sorrow when you remember you have *grieved* the Spirit of God. But your God and Father is not only loving and kind; He is *faithful* and *just* to forgive when you confess. Yes, you may, as a believer in Christ, plead the very *justice* of God as the ground of your forgiveness. But remember, you are dealing with God, who is holy, and knows the thoughts of the heart! How different is this divine provision to general and formal confessions of sinfulness as practised by professing churches! Look at the words which one sect puts into the mouths of those who follow its guidance: such as—'Oh, holy, blessed, and 'glorious Trinity, three persons and one God; have mercy 'upon us, miserable sinners.' 'Remember not, Lord, our

'offences, nor the offences of our forefathers; neither take thou vengeance of our sins. Spare us, good Lord, spare thy people, whom thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood, and be not angry with us for ever'! and much more to the same effect, as though Christ could possibly be angry for ever with those he has redeemed with his precious blood! Indeed, He has not the least anger towards those He he has brought nigh. Grieved, by their wilfulness, He may be; but his one feeling towards them is Love! always Love, unchanging, unfailing, inexhaustible Love! Let us exhort you, then, no longer to follow the poor and Christ-dishonouring thoughts of men, but cleave to the words of the Lord. Think, and act, as a 'child of God,' 'accepted in the Beloved.'

5. **LOOKING FOR THE LORD.**—Another truth we would earnestly commend to your faith. Just before our Lord began to speak of the Comforter whom he would send, he said—'I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I WILL COME AGAIN, and receive you to myself, that where I am there ye may be also.' (John xiv. 2, 3.) Many Christians consider this promise is fulfilled whenever death removes them from the world; but a little consideration of Scripture will show that this is not so. If we die we 'sleep in Jesus.' The spirit goes to Him—He does not come for it. 'Having a desire to depart (says Paul), and to be with Christ.' Consider the death of Stephen (Acts vii. 55—60.) He said—'Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God.' . . . 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And when he had said this he fell asleep.' Is anything said here about Jesus coming at death? Turn to 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14. 'But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.'

[The development of this subject, viz., deliverance from the 'City of Confusion,' we purpose continuing from month to month.]

CORRESPONDENCE.

EVERY CHRISTIAN A PRIEST.

(To the Editor of "PRECIOUS TRUTH.")

Dear Sir,—The priesthood of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, though a truth most distinctly taught in Scripture and one of vast practical importance, has become, through the general corruption of Christianity, an almost lost truth in the Church. The following quotations are conclusive—'Ye also as lively (or living) stones are built up a spiritual house, an Holy Priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. . . . Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood.' (1 Pet. ii. 5, 9.) 'Unto Him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us Kings and Priests unto God and his Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.' (Rev. i. 5, 6.)

Upper Norwood.

Yours faithfully in Christ, J. G.

NOTE.—Our Correspondent adds extracts from the writings of Augustine, Luther, Leighton, Ambrose, and Bradford in support of the above. But when we assure him it is our steadfast purpose to maintain the All-sufficiency of Scripture, which 'is given by Inspiration of God, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished,' &c. he will understand the omission.—*Ed.*

A REQUEST.

(To the Editor of PRECIOUS TRUTH.)

Dear Sir,—Would you please to elucidate by an article in your paper the following problem? In John i. I read—'As many as received Him, to them gave he power [or privilege, margin] to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.' In Rom. viii. 'As many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God.' In 2 Cor. vi. 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord God Almighty.' In these passages sonship is made to hinge upon obedience and faithful walk, whereas we know from other Scriptures that all believers as such are 'born again,' and can 'never perish.' Sonship is not separable from simple life, surely.

Hoping that the Lord's people will uphold you, by each purchas-

ing and distributing copies monthly, as you uphold the preciousness of the Word, I remain, yours in the Lord,
E.
Islington, April 22, 1865.

[We will endeavour to answer our Correspondent next month.—*Ed.*]

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"JAS. J. J. CREWE," writes "I very much rejoice in the appearance of your little paper, and hope it may be circulated widely. . . . I am seeking to introduce Scripture Reading Meetings here, but it is difficult to get attendance at people's houses."

We believe that prayerful meetings for studying the Word of God to be the means above all others the Holy Ghost is using for drawing Christians to personal communion with their Saviour. Satan's opposition may, therefore, be specially looked for to prevent such meetings. Persevere. "In due time we shall reap if we faint not." If you can get "two or three" of the same mind, meet wherever there is a door opened, making it generally known that any believer is welcome to attend without reference to sectarian opinions. Never mind how humble the place—a room in a cottage will suffice. You will need much patience and real dependence upon the Lord. Impress upon those who come together that they must look to the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth. Let all have liberty to speak, as in the presence of the Master, and for each other's good to edification, not for the display of self.

We find by experience that the lappiest plan is to commence one of the books of the New Testament, and continue right through from night to night. John's Gospel is specially recommended, as not requiring for its study much previous knowledge of Dispensational Truth. Avoid lecturing as much as possible. Let all feel that they really have liberty to utter their thoughts with a view to elicit truth. By holding to the Scripture in hand, and counting upon the Lord's presence, you will avoid controversy. Never suffer the unconverted to speak; such must sit and listen. Though he should be the most learned man on earth, his thoughts about Scripture must be utterly worthless, unless he be a believer.

We entirely sympathise with our correspondent in his sorrow at finding a professed minister of Christ lecturing on "the late Richard Cobden" on Lord's day evening, instead of preaching Jesus Christ and him crucified. We cannot, however, attempt to deal with such palpable unfaithfulness; alas! the professing church abounds with such.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—We invite enquiries tending to the elucidation of scriptural truth. Controversial questions should be avoided entirely, if possible. Our earnest desire is to help simple-hearted Christians with words of encouragement, patience and love—and to advocate the practical operation of "precious truth" in Christian walk and practice. We hope, also, to be useful in spreading the glad tidings of salvation. Any enquiries calculated to help forward these objects shall have our best attention.

Letters for the Editor to be addressed to 335, Strand, W.C.

NOTICES.

WANTED, Youths and others, to sell 'Precious Truth.' Apply to the Printer, 335, Strand, opposite Somerset House. Persons willing to sell this Paper at the meetings now being held will be liberally dealt with.

Will be published (D.V.) in a Tract form,
'THE CITY OF CONFUSION, and the Way out of It.' A Faithful Word for Christians.

TO OUR READERS.—We find considerable reluctance on the part of the Newspaper Trade to push the sale of this Journal, because of its low price. As it is our earnest desire to cater for the poor of the Flock, we hope we shall not be obliged to raise the price to 1d. We therefore urge our readers to order, either individually, or in twos and threes, six-penny worth or one shilling's-worth through a news-vendor, leaving them in his hand to expose for sale through the month, and then buying for distribution what he has not sold. For the truth's sake make an effort with us, who desire to contend for the honour of the Word and against error.
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CHRISTIANS in the Neighbourhood of the Strand are invited to the Scripture Reading Meeting at 335a, side-door, Monday, † past Seven.

Printed by the Proprietor, JOHN EVANS, 335a, Strand, W.C.; and published by JOH CAUDWELL, 335, Strand, London, W.C. and Hall & Co, 25, Paternoster Row, E.C.

PRECIOUS TRUTH.

“WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?”—(Rom. iv. 3.)

Job Caudwell, 335, Strand, W.C.]

[Hall & Co, 25, Paternoster Row, E.C.

No. 3.]

JUNE 1, 1865.

[One Halfpenny

A LETTER TO THE CHRISTIAN READER.

BELIEVED OF THE LORD,—

I desire to address you personally, and therefore drop the editorial *we*.

A wonderful work is going on in the world, and I am persuaded it will not last long. So many thousands of souls are accepting the word of life, that Christians of experience are filled with astonishment. Be assured the Lord is completing the work of this Dispensation. Eighteen hundred years ago it was written—

‘A short work will the Lord make upon the earth,’ (Rom. ix. 28.)

‘Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come and will not tarry,’ (Heb. x. 37.)

‘Be ye also patient, stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.’ (James v. 8.)

‘Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me to give every man [believers only are addressed] according as his work shall be.’ (Rev. xxii. 12.)

‘Surely I come quickly;’ to which the Spirit replies—‘Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.’ (Rev. xxii. 20.)

Beloved, this is no speculative doctrine; Scripture abounds with these calls to expectancy of the Lord’s Coming,—not his return to earth;—that will take place afterwards. You will find a full explanation of the true Christian hope in 1 Cor. xv. and in 1 Thess. iv. 11—18. Do let me commend these passages to your most prayerful consideration.

In this letter, however, I desire to be intensely personal. I pray you let the Word of God produce its proper and full effect upon your life and conversation. The Christian calling is one of individual earnestness. When you and I stand before the judgment seat of Christ—(the judgment seat of reward, for the judgment of death due to us, was accepted by Him in our stead)—each of us will have to answer for his or her own work, whatever it may be. I believe it will include every thought, word, and act since first we received the Word of life. ‘Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon [see context] he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, HE SHALL SUFFER LOSS: but he himself shall be saved: yet so as by fire!’ (1 Cor. iii. 13—15.) Oh, how earnest, careful, diligent, and prayerful we ought to be! Care not what men say. ‘What saith the Scripture?’ Look at the exhortations attached to the quotations I have presented to you; and you will always find exhortations attached to the promise

of the Lord’s return; for there is power in that expectation to brace us up to faithfulness and labour.

I will point out one more faithful word—‘Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world; LOOKING FOR that blessed hope, and the glorious APPEARING of the Great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: who GAVE HIMSELF FOR US, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works,’ (Titus, ii. 12—14.) Oh, I beg of you not to forget this Scripture: take it to the Lord in prayer, and ask him to lay it upon your heart: THEN ACT UPON IT. Visit the sick and the needy: speak to your kinsfolk and acquaintance, and to others also, as God may give you grace, about the precious Saviour and his great Salvation. Never mind about combinations and human arrangements. Yet simple fellowship in labour is to be desired, and we are to be helpers one of another. But do not wait for such fellowship. Hear the Spirit’s cry—‘The time is short.’ Wherever the Lord opens a door, go in and do his work. Do it diligently, in the consciousness of the Lord’s presence and strength; for ‘it is he that worketh in us to will and to do of his good pleasure.’ He will work in us if we are willing. Unwilling servants he will not accept. Seek grace to keep your spirit always prayerful: be satisfied with nothing less than fellowship with Christ Jesus; ‘pray without ceasing.’ Watch and wait for the Lord, and he will abundantly reward you.

Let me ask for a place in your prayers. Pray for all the ‘household of faith.’ I pray for you that the ‘crown of righteousness’ may be yours, which the Lord shall ‘give to ALL THEM THAT LOVE HIS APPEARING.’

Yours ever in the Lord,

THE EDITOR.

TO SINNERS, WALKING IN DARKNESS,

Jesus says, ‘I am the Light of the World; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.’ Christ speaks of but one Light, of one Light for all the world, and of himself as this one Light—this Sun in spiritual things. In bodily presence the man Christ Jesus is withdrawn to the glory which he had with the Father before the world was; nevertheless, he is present in power, by his Spirit, and in his written word, and in his people. He is still, therefore, the Light of the World. But just as men shut their eyes to the Light when He was on earth, and tried to extinguish the light, so they

now avoid and shrink from the Light. And why? 'because their deeds are evil.' The sinner fears being reprov'd for his love of the world and the pleasures of sin, and therefore he cometh not to the Light, but prefers to remain in darkness.

But, oh sinner, who art keeping away from the Light, do you think you can really hide yourself? Ah, no; 'the eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good.' The ostrich, which hides its head in the sand, but leaves its bulky body exposed to the hunter's shafts, is as wise as thou.

Oh, sinner, walk no longer in darkness, but come to the Light of the World. Think of the darkness you are in—you cannot see yourself aright, nor the filthiness of your soul's garments—nor where you are going! Do you ask why you should come to the Light while you are so unfit to be seen? we reply, that in coming to the Light, (that is, accepting Jesus as your Saviour by faith,) you will be made clean, and eternally saved. Come, then, at once. Should you, alas! reject this invitation, within this fleeting hour you may stumble in your darkness into the pit of death, and fall—and fall—and your loss be irremediable. 'He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.' This night thy soul may 'be required of thee.'

Is not this world the 'valley of the shadow of death'? the deep, deep shadow falls everywhere. How blessed to believe in Jesus, and fear no evil! Death, which is terror-striking to the sinner in the darkness, is to the believer but falling asleep, as Stephen did, in the Light of heaven and the Light of the World.

'EARNESTLY CONTEND.'—Jude 3.

'Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine.'—2 Tim. iv. 2.

Two of our correspondents deprecate our comments upon printed sermons as 'fault-finding.' Nevertheless, there is a positive need for faithfulness in this matter. The readiness shown by Christians generally to accept without question whatever comes from the pulpit is very sad. If the Apostle Paul could write—'Judge ye what I say,' surely no other servant of the Lord is to expect immunity.

We desire to show our readers that they cannot safely follow even the most gifted men. The more man-honoured the preacher the greater the danger of his misleading his audiences, if his preaching be left unjudged.

It was not in vain that the Ephesian elders were warned—'Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.' Who cannot see the fearful prevalence of this in our day? Believers willingly become disciples of men, instead of remaining disciples of the Lord, in whom they have obtained eternal life. Preachers having special gifts often fall into a snare by being thus personally followed, even many who commenced their ministry without seeking such a 'following.' The result is necessarily most dishonouring to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Preachers tax themselves to produce novelties—they have a reputation to keep up, and are driven, for the sake of being startling and effective, to sacrifice Scripture and substitute thoughts of their own. We *could* use stronger language than this. How many pulpit-preachers are there who can take up the declaration of St. Paul—'I KEPT BACK nothing that was profitable unto you'?

Let us take our Master's judgment about substituting men's thoughts for His thoughts. 'Jesus, when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of MEN.' In this lies the whole weight of the censure—Peter was offering his poor thoughts and desires in defiance of the declarations of God. It was the same Peter who had just before testified so preciously that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. So it is now. The same men who boldly and clearly declare the way of salvation, and are blessed of the Lord, are continually obscuring the counsels of God concerning christian walk and 'calling,' by substituting their poor thoughts for his sure words.

Our Lord, when he condemned Peter, looked upon *all* the disciples. That which he said was to be remarked and remembered by all of them. Jesus knew that the warning would be needed by all. May He, by his Holy Spirit, engrave his most precious lessons more deeply on our hearts, and may we all seek to be more faithful to him, even if we lose, in consequence, for a time, the love of our brethren.

REVIEWS OF RECENTLY PRINTED SERMONS

BY EMINENT PREACHERS.

[Under this head we propose to examine, in the light of Scripture, some of the sermons which come under our notice, or to which correspondents draw our attention. Let us state distinctly that we shall in no case be influenced by personal feeling for or against the preacher; we take account only of his doctrines and teachings. We shall prefer to deal with the discourses of those who are deservedly esteemed, remembering that in Scripture the faults of the most approved are the most unsparingly dealt with. We entreat our readers to give us credit for entire freedom from personal bias.]

5. Sermon by Mr. C. H. SPURGEON, "Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit," Jan. 29, 1865.

TEXT—'Then cometh he to Simon Peter; and Peter saith to him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?'—John xiii. 6.

WE have had to read this sermon nearly through before we could find aught stated which, judged in the light of Scripture, will bear a word of approval. After propounding all sorts of things, which are neither written nor implied in the text, the preacher, in his two concluding paragraphs, brings out our Lord's lesson, that we are to follow his example by washing one another's feet. Mr. Spurgeon has some curious ideas even on this subject. A collection was to be made for the relief of poor ministers, and he thus concludes his discourse:—'You have an opportunity of doing it'—[washing one another's feet]—'in the collection; for I believe that these servants of God, these aged ministers, these ministers who are in great poverty, need to-day that you

'by your contributions wash their feet'! We ask, Where is the connection between relieving poverty, (which may be laid upon us by God, for the trial of faith in us and love in others towards us,) and washing away defilements.(?) Our Lord washed feet, feet which needed *washing*. He also fed the hungry when occasion required—but the two acts are very different:

But we have some things of much greater seriousness to comment upon in this discourse. Giving rein to his imagination, the preacher teaches that our feet are washed by the Lord Jesus Christ every day! that this is done by caring for our temporal affairs! and also by putting away from us day by day our daily infirmities and sins!(?) Then, again, by washing our works! by being content to suffer in his people's sufferings! and by washing our poor prayers!! These ideas exceed in folly his assertion on the previous Lord's-day, 'that our prayers need to be wrapped up in the prayers of Jesus.'

Hear the Word of God. 'If any of you [believers] lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.' (James i. 5.) 'Behold, what manner of love THE FATHER hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear [i.e. it is not yet evident to sight] what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; and every man that hath this hope in him PURIFETH HIMSELF even as He is pure.' (1 John iii. 1-3.) 'Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God; and whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things which are pleasing in his sight.' (1 John iii. 21, 22.)

It would be easy to multiply Scriptures, but surely these will suffice to show our actual standing and privileges as children of God, against whom (as such) there is nothing to be said, for 'it is God that *justifieth*;' we have therefore freedom of access and boldness. Indeed, the fulness of the word for us is—'Truly our *fellowship* is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.' (1 John i. 3.)

To say, therefore, that our prayers need 'wrapping up' and 'washing' is quite untrue. In his unspeakable love, God has forgiven us who believe, cleansed us, justified us, accepted us, made us children; He invites us to pray to him, and assures us of his unceasing love and favour. What dreadful ingratitude and folly, therefore, to deny this, and to teach the children of God to contravene the express declarations of his Word!

We know it is our duty and privilege to present all our prayers in the *name* of our Lord Jesus Christ, and reckon upon having the blessings we desire for *his* sake; and also to take the lowest place and to own that we have no claims at all in our own right; all we are, as well as all we get, is through the merits of our Lord; but then we must not forget that 'it is he who worketh IN us to *will* and to *do* of

his good pleasure.' So that though, while in these bodies, we must each say, 'I know that in my *flesh* dwelleth no good thing,' yet, being 'partakers of the Divine nature,' and indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God, our prayers and doings (*in faith*) being wrought of God, must be in themselves acceptable in his sight.

As for Christian works, the preacher says they are fit only to rot or to be burned; whereas the Word of God says we are 'ordained to good works.' The preacher compares Christian works to old rags; but what says his Master? 'I am the true Vine, and my Father is the husbandman; every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away, and every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. . . . *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit! so shall ye be my disciples.*' (John xv. 1, 2, 8.)

There are, however, many works undertaken by Christians which are not of faith, which have their origin in zeal of the flesh, or are founded on baser motives. These works are worse than 'old rags,' for 'whatsoever is not of faith is sin.' Let us all look to it, and judge ourselves and our doings, and take care that we are abiding in Christ and His words in us; then will our works be acceptable, and will want no 'washing,' any more than our prayers.

The washing of the disciples' feet signifies the washing of water *by the Word*. This is clearly shown in the same book from which the text is taken, (xvi. 3,) 'Now ye are clean through *the Word* which I have spoken unto you.' Again, (xvii. 17,) 'Sanctify them through thy truth, *thy Word* is truth.' Then in Eph. v. 25, 26, 'Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water *by the Word*.' This cleansing we need constantly—the application of the Word of God to the conscience. To apply this to each other in all faithfulness and humility is to wash each other's feet. But it is the Word of God only, unmixed with man's thoughts, which has this cleansing efficacy.

We now pass to page 69, in which is a wild diatribe against the Plymouth Brethren. The speaker states that at a certain prayer meeting, of which he *heard*, some person stood up and said that, his sins being all forgiven, and being accepted in Christ, he had no sins to confess. Now, had the preacher been simply desirous of presenting truth, all that was necessary in the case was to quote 1 John i. 8, 9; 'If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' But instead of rebutting error with simple truth, the preacher makes the incident the basis for an attack upon a sect the members of which he admits he loves and respects, and whom he owns to be men having grace. It is far from our desire to defend Plymouth Brethrenism. We are not of that body. We own no name save that of CHRISTIAN. But we must warn Mr. Spurgeon's hearers and readers against his indiscriminate denunciations. Of all the sects into which Christians have unhappily divided themselves, the body generally known as

Plymouth Brethren we believe to be, as to doctrine, nearest to a practical apprehension of the revealed mind of God. If the reader meets a sincere member of that body, he will find a Christian who is taught to regard the Word of God as the rule and guide of life, and to conform to it, not only in theory but in practice. Nor is this all. Such an one will be found to apprehend in measure the power and safety arising from the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit and the value of 'the exceeding great and precious promises' which God has given to all them that believe. Hence Mr. Spurgeon is constrained to confess they are 'gracious men.'

We would say, in passing, there are two divisions of this sect, viz. 'The Plymouth Brethren' (proper) and 'The Brethren;' the latter separated from the former on account of heretical doctrine being partially received by them. We hope in our next to be able to give an account of this matter. 'The Brethren' are not free from error, for no sect as such can be. But let Mr. Spurgeon's hearers be re-assured. They may safely take the preacher's description of the men instead of his intemperate talk about the body. The young people of the Tabernacle may rely upon it, that if their minister loves and respects these Brethren there cannot be much danger in their company.

Respecting the doctrine in question, that of non-confession, we happen to know that a person who attempted to promulgate it some time ago among the Brethren was immediately put away, and it may have been the same person who spoke at the prayer meeting referred to. It is clearly wrong to charge the utterances of any one person upon the body with which he is supposed to be identified. Would the Surrey Tabernacle congregation like to be held responsible for all the opinions of its [members]?

FAITHFUL TESTIMONY.

The following is extracted from a speech delivered by Canon M'Neile (would we could omit the mysterious title) at a recent meeting of the Church Missionary Society:—

"Canon M'Neile, in referring to such literature as 'Essays and Reviews,' said, I believe that there is such a love of moderation in our English people, that there is such a repugnance to extreme opinions and extreme measures, that half-and-half statements are doing more injury than bold and direct scepticism itself. We have a school of compromisers more to be dreaded in the recesses of our missionary work than open sceptics. These compromisers ought, I think, to be brought to the test. Do they believe the Bible or not? Where serious differences in human matters occur there is no infallible perfection of knowledge on either side. Therefore, a mutual concession, which is a compromise, may be the nearest possible approach to true practical wisdom. But to extend this principle to religion is to declare, concerning religious differences, that there is no infallible perfection of wisdom on either side; that is, that Almighty God has not spoken. * * * Oh, let me earnestly entreat you; let me urge upon you, as an old man who has almost finished his course, that you refrain from the indulgence of that curiosity which has given currency to that pernicious literature which has neither power nor life in it, because it compromises the truth of God's holy Word. Oh, let no hesitation arising from such arguments, or such assertions, or such diffi-

culties—hinder you from a repetition, a bold and faithful repetition of the glorious Gospel of the grace of God. See how the apostle, without any ethnological or anthropological dissertation, boldly declares the ruin of the race by the first man; so that this is not merely contained in ancient history that might be explained away, or, as some call it, a poem, semi-myth or semi-prophecy, but as the very basis of the most logical arguments contained in the Epistle to the Romans, the foundation of the whole system of apostolical truth. Oh, believe him, imitate him, declare this truth; and do not be afraid of the captious critic. And do not let even difficulties which you are not at present able to solve stand in the way of the plain and faithful declaration of the Gospel. Rest assured that no discovery has been made, that no discovery will be made, which, when fully tested, will operate against the plain, grammatical, and practical understanding of the writings of Holy Scripture. * * * Let us hope that the plain and faithful declaration of the Gospel, the one only glorious Gospel of the Grace of God, the only sacrifice of the death of Christ, will be more relied upon, without any mincing arguments against opposers of the Atonement, but let there be a bold proclamation of it in spite of all. Proclaim it as a thing not to be gainsaid, or doubted, or argued upon. But when all dangers are fairly looked at, and all the exhortations arising out of them are fairly pressed upon the Christian public, there remains still the glorious consolation for the encouragement of the Christian heart, that there is no danger to the Church of God. Whatever danger there may be to the Established Churches in this or other lands; however one church may fail, as other churches failed; however the Church of England, as it is called, may follow the Church at Antioch or the Church of Rome, the Church of Christ is safe. The gates of hell cannot prevail against her; and her missionaries are going from place to place, as we have just heard, preaching from the Gospel that fulness of the Gentiles which is to be prepared before the Lord, the King of the Jews, shall return. It is the fulness of the Gentiles and not of the world. Pre-eminence in everything is given to the Jews. They were missionaries, and Christian missions succeeded more while Jews were missionaries than they have ever done since. And when the King of the Jews shall re-appear, and all Israel shall be saved, the sentence will go forth, Life from the dead to the world.

"The beam that rests on Zion's hill
Shall lighten every land;
The King that reigns on Zion's towers
Shall the whole earth command."

REPORTS OF SCRIPTURE MEETINGS.

'Search the Scriptures.'—(John v. 39.)

(RAWSTONE MEETING ROOM, No. 47, Rawstone-street, Goswell-road, Wednesday, May 10, at Eight.)

John viii. 37—44.

'Ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth.' It was remarked that the presentation of spiritual truth, which is generally disregarded by the world, always excites the violent opposition of the hypocritical and self-righteous.

Attention was drawn to the fact that though Christ admitted that the Jews were 'Abraham's seed' (ver. 33) He denies that they are his 'children,' because they have neither Abraham's faith nor works (ver. 39). They were not therefore the children of the father of the faithful, who saw Christ's day and was glad (ver. 56).

The Jews also claimed God as their father (ver. 41). This claim Christ again and again denies, proving to them by their works that they were of their 'father the devil.' It was remarked that all men must be, by adoption, the children of one of these two Fathers—we are either the children of God Almighty or of Satan. Satan promises present rewards to those who accept him—God's promises have chief reference to the world which is to come.

'If God were your Father ye would love me.' If any

one is doubtful whether he is born of God, let him ask himself—Do I love Jesus?

Attention was finally directed to the awful truth that this father of 'the children of disobedience' has been a 'murderer from the beginning,' the success of his machinations being death to the race,—first in the garden of Eden, then in the times succeeding till the flood swept them all away, and so on afterwards, till his murderous lust culminated in the crucifixion of the Lord. But just when he thought himself most triumphant, he was being most signally defeated. God was come into the realm of Satan's usurped sway, and was rescuing out an innumerable multitude. These rescued ones (glory to God!) are, by the power of his Spirit and his Word, kept safe in the very scene itself from falling back again into Satan's power, and that, too, in spite of being such poor frail things!

THE FIRST TEMPTATION OF THE SECOND ADAM.

(Rawstorne-street, Saturdays, at Eight. May 13.) Luke iv. 1.—4.

'And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil.' It was remarked that when 'full of the Spirit' believers also are impregnable to Satan's onslaughts, and also, that as with our Lord, so with us—when full of the Spirit we are led to use the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. Hence St. Paul's exhortation—'Be filled with the Spirit.'

The redeemed of the Lord, though saved and brought out of Egypt, and receiving the gift of the Spirit, are yet left in the wilderness—left in the wilderness, but only to pass through it. Christians too often try to settle down in it, instead of pressing on, as pilgrims, and caring little for the pleasures of the way, looking for the Lord and the mansions he has prepared in the Land of Promise—the heavenly Canaan.

As with the Israelites, so with our Lord—one of the first temptations relates to hunger. But while the Israelites sadly failed in faith and patience,—were filled with murmurings and desires to return to Egypt,—Jesus cast himself upon God, and waited till he should relieve his necessities. Let not the child of God be surprised if he have to endure for a season poverty and hunger. 'My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing that the trying of your faith worketh patience,' &c. May we be content to pray and wait.

'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.' Some Christians, it was observed, having accepted the word of *life*, and received salvation, neglect to go on feeding upon every word of God. This was applied to show the necessity for Scripture meetings such as the present: it was felt, indeed, that they were the special want of the day, and it was well remarked that the more we lean on man, even though he be a true minister of the Lord Jesus Christ, the greater will be the danger of getting wrong; we must, therefore, keep close to the Word, and check everything we hear by Scripture.

THE GLORY THAT IS TO BE REVEALED.

(Rawstorne-street, Lord's Day Afternoon at 3. May 14.)

Revelation, iv. and v.

The connexion between these two chapters was pointed out; they form, indeed, one presentation of the divine ultimate idea of the state of things in heaven and earth. We see first the throne and Him that Liveth for Ever and Ever, whose holiness is the object of constant delightful contemplation and worship; then the Lamb in the midst of the throne, also the object of adoration; the Church,

round about and nearest to the throne; then the angelic natures in countless numbers encircling the Church, and finally the inhabitants of earth, all of whom join in the universal anthem.

The meeting had previously studied the fourth chapter, attention was therefore turned to the fifth.

John wept because no man was found worthy to open the book and to loose the seals thereof. The book here referred to is doubtless that containing the mysteries of the Revelation. How different is the thought of many Christians who believe the Revelation to be still a sealed book, and lay it aside with little regret. John 'wept much,' but the Lion of the tribe of Judah prevailed, and prevails still, by his Spirit given unto us, for 'the Spirit searcheth the deep things of God.' He 'shall show you things to come.'

As the Lion prevailed to open the book because He was worthy, in like manner those only who possess a derived worthiness can enter into its depths, by divine grace.

Oh, the glory of being called brethren by him who alone as man was found worthy in heaven and in earth!

It was remarked that the Divine Son appeared as a Lamb that had been slain. From this we may draw confidence. We can only say 'Holy, Holy, Holy,' with regard to Him that sits upon the throne, by being enabled to say 'Worthy is the Lamb.' The Redeemed, it would seem, can enter more deeply into the holiness of God than the angels.

Notice was then drawn to the fact that the same One who appeared as a Lamb that had been slain, possessed seven horns (perfection of power), and seven eyes (perfection of knowledge).

The harps in the hands of all the saints was regarded as teaching that every saint will have many strings of sweet praise, and that heaven will be full of harmony. The odours (or prayers) in golden vials rendered it evident that when prayer is no longer necessary, the prayers of love presented on earth will be so precious that they will be preserved in glory hereafter. Hence the word to Cornelius—'Thy prayers and thine alms have come up for a memorial before God.'

The three songs of the three orders of being were then contrasted, to all of which the Church says, in the last verse, 'Amen,' and worships the Father.

The meeting was somewhat hindered by a poor soul who had notions of special revelations being given to the Church now. He was invited to produce any of the prophecies of those who profess to receive and give these new revelations, that they might be compared with Scripture. But at the same time he was assured they would certainly be proved to be false—for if according to the written Word of God they could not be *new* revelations, and if not in accordance with Scripture they must needs be lies on the face of them. Those present, however, were pleased to see a degree of willingness in him to be checked by the Word, and as he left before the meeting was over, prayer was offered on his account. The Lord give his people patience to teach his Word and power to rebuke all heresy and traditions of men.

THE HIGH PRIEST AND FORERUNNER.

(UNION HALL, St. John's-square, Clerkenwell. Lord's Day Evening, May 14, 1865.) Hebrews, vi. and vii.

One of the most interesting points developed in this passage is that 'God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath.' The infinite descends to the weakness of men. If in any matter of dispute even between two men of the world, one of them takes a solemn oath, it is generally felt to settle the matter.

Melchisedec was considered a vision of Christ or glimpse of Christ himself; first, because it seemed to the meeting

that Christ could not be a priest after an order inferior to himself; and secondly, because of the exalted language that is used with respect to Melchisedec.

Believers have a great consolation in the thought that their High Priest is a priest for ever. The Jews might have one year a high priest touched with a feeling of their infirmities, and the next year an unfaithful one.

The attention of the assembly was then directed to the intimate connection between faith, diligence, and hope, and it was shown that the passages chap. vi. 10—12, and 19, 20, prove that if the former slacken the latter will not be realised, so that the slothful Christian will not realise the 'full assurance of faith,' and though really safe for eternity, yet like an unanchored vessel liable to be driven out of port, and buffeted about by the winds and waves of doubts and fears, temptations and sins.

It was remarked that the Christian ought to be influenced most by the highest motives of love and faith—not duty or personal good. To which it was truly observed that, like Abraham in this passage, we must desire little now besides the precious promises of God; Abraham received the promise 'multiplying I will multiply thee,' and yet Isaac only was the present fulfilment, and that not till he was an old man.

A brother referred to the wonderful honour put upon the Church in that the Lord is here designated by the Spirit 'our Forerunner,' remembering that the duty of the forerunner is to herald the Coming One, and usually implies inferiority.—With regard to Christ's giving special honour to his Church, and assuming an honour-giving office, it was thought to be in beautiful harmony with the divine principle of giving honour to the weaker vessel—Christ the husband, the Church the spouse.

LIVING WATER.

(335A, STRAND, opposite Somerset House, Mondays, at 7 p.m.)
May 15. John iv. 10—19.

'Jesus answered and said, If thou knewest the Gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him, and he would have given thee living water.'

The first thought laid upon the minds of those present, was that it is really through ignorance that sinners do not ask of Jesus. 'If thou knewest,' &c. But then it is a wilful ignorance for which they are responsible. For instance, it was said, we press souls to come to this Scripture meeting; we don't wish them to accept our words, but to listen to Christ. But they will not come; they therefore go on in wilful ignorance, unless the truth come to them from another quarter.

It was then remarked how patiently the Lord led the woman from truth to truth, and that He did not disdain single scholars. Indeed, the lessons he sometimes gave solitary hearers are of the greatest importance, because they were often of individual application. The result of the Lord's patience is pleasingly evident in the increasing respect of the woman towards him; he who was at first a despised wayfarer, is presently addressed as 'Sir,' and then admitted to be a prophet, and lastly believed in as Christ. So with us, when we were sinners 'Jesus was despised and rejected;' but his love overcame us, and now he 'is the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely.'

Water, it was remarked, enters into and forms an essential part of the constitution. The truth which Jesus delights to give, not only slakes thirst and revives the spirit, but is needful to life and growth. Hence our Lord's admonition, 'Let my words abide in you.' Christ the Vine, we the branches, and his words the life-sap.

Attention was drawn to the disciples marvelling that he talked with the woman; the humility of the Lord Jesus is indeed to be marvelled at. But the Lord desired to bless other souls through her. When she believed him to be the Christ, she left her waterpot, to tell others. The Lord put it into our hearts to leave our worldly affairs for a time with the Lord,

and go with the truth to souls. Jesus works wonders where there is faith, in man or woman.

'Shall never thirst.' The more the worldling drinks of the satisfactions of the world—the waters of Egypt—the more he thirsts; but the believer, drinking as a pilgrim of the living water from the Rock that follows us, thirsts no more for the pleasures of the world, does not crave them, and knows there is nothing half so satisfying as the living water.

COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL BY

ST. JOHN.

(Written expressly for this publication.)

CHAPTER I.

Ver. 14.—'And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth.' We have seen in the first part of the chapter, how that the Son of God, as the Almighty Word, is the Creator and giver of Light and Life. In this passage he is presented to us in another aspect; he is no longer the invisible One, making himself heard and felt while shrouded in mystery. The world is to be no longer left in doubt about God. There is henceforth to be no excuse for man's ignorance as to what God really is; 'the Word was, therefore, made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.' He who could not be seen by us in his essential being as Son of God, thus took our nature upon him, his creatures can now know him, and those who receive him (i.e., believe on him), see that he is 'full of grace and truth.' 'And we beheld his glory,' says the Apostle, 'the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.' Faith could, and can, say 'He is all glorious to behold,' though unbelief says, 'he is without form or comeliness.' He who here testifies of Jesus saw him on the Mount of Transfiguration, where it was made manifest that *divine glory* was his,—'the glory which he had with the Father before the world was.' There must be no uncertainty as to the nature of Him who undertakes to be the Saviour of sinners, Creator, Sustainer, giver of Light and Life both temporal and eternal. He is now manifested full of Grace and Truth, and in his own glory—perfect glory, such as of necessity belongs to 'the only begotten of the Father.'

15. 'John bare witness of him, and cried saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.' The mission of John the Baptist was not to set up a new dispensation, nor to disturb anything which had been ordained of God. His life had been a sign and protest against the iniquity of the nation. The messenger of God, sent to prepare the way of the Lord, had been unable to dwell among those who called themselves the people of God. He who had to proclaim the coming of the Righteous One, must keep himself in separation from evil. To those who had resorted to him in the wilderness John the Baptist had testified of the coming of Christ, but now he is called forth to meet the Messiah, and to declare him as the Saviour of his people. 'The word of God came to John in the wilderness; and he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.' (Luke iii. 2, 3.) 'John verily baptised with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him that should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.' (Acts xix. 4.) The Lord Jesus Christ having been introduced to us by the forerunner, John, in the 15th verse, we next get the sweet testimony of the disciple whom Jesus loved, John, the writer of the gospel.

16. 'And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace.' This is the declaration of a heart full of the love of Jesus. The apostle, taking up all believers, not only affirms salvation in possession, but that we *have* received of the *fullness* of Christ. Because the objects of grace, we have received more grace, 'grace for grace.' 'Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance.' (Matt. xiii. 12.)

17. 'For the law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.'

(To be continued, D.V.)

THE CITY OF CONFUSION,
(Isaiah xxiv, 10.)
AND THE WAY OUT OF IT.

A FAITHFUL WORD FOR CHRISTIANS.

THE SECOND COMING OF THE LORD.

(Continued from our last.)

In this passage the word of prophecy clearly points forward to the time when Jesus will come, according to his promise, and God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Him. It is very blessed to know that when the believer 'puts off this tabernacle' he falls asleep in Jesus. But this is not the proper expectation of the Christian, and is not the fulfilment of our Lord's promise to come again and take us home. When he comes we shall be raised in glorified bodies. The Lord himself, as he is, the Son of Man in person, as he passed from the earth, will then come. As it is said in Acts i. 11, 'Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is thus taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.' He will come as the visibly glorified one, to all who look for him. Turn to Acts iii. 20, 21: 'And God shall send Jesus Christ which before was preached unto you, whom the heaven must receive UNTIL the times of restitution of all things.'

This was the hope and expectation of the early Christians. 'Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven.' (1 Thess. i. 9, 10.) 'For our conversation [or citizenship] is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall CHANGE our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body,' &c. (Phil. iii. 20, 21.) Thus Christ's coming is connected, not with our death, but glorification. 'When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.' (Col. iii. 4.)

We are not now speaking of Christ's coming to the earth—a word on that subject presently. The event we are treating of is the assembling around himself in the air the whole company of believers gathered out of the world during the present dispensation. It will be the commencement of the first resurrection spoken of in Rev. xx. 5, 6. The thought very widely entertained of one general resurrection of the just and unjust at one and the same time, is quite contrary to the direct word of prophecy. Believers in Christ will be raised in glorified bodies before the commencement of the reign of the Lord on earth. Those who die in unbelief will be raised for judgment after the thousand years of earthly blessing. "The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished."

Now we pray the reader's careful attention to the following passages from the "Word of God." They speak of the time under our consideration in terms quite unmistakable, if we are free from theories of our own or other men's invention. 'Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead—[those who sleep in Christ, as the context shows] shall be raised incorruptible,' &c. (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52.)—'For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you, by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God, 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, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.' (1 Thess. iv. 14—18.)

The New Testament abounds with allusions to this glorious hope of the Christian; and though the vast majority of those who believe in Jesus pay no heed to—nay, generally disbelieve these wonderful revelations of their Saviour's purposes respecting themselves, yet the plain declarations of scripture remain;

and the Lord has said 'all must be fulfilled.' The word of warning He left us is—'What I say unto you, I say unto ALL, Watch!'

[The development of this subject, viz., deliverance from the 'City of Confusion,' we purpose continuing from month to month.]

CORRESPONDENCE.

[Our Correspondent, J. S. J., has written us an exceedingly interesting letter, which we have thought it best to answer at some length, and have therefore dealt with each paragraph separately.—ED.]

SCRIPTURE READING MEETINGS AND OTHER MATTERS.

(To the Editor of PRECIOUS TRUTH.)

DEAR SIR,—I am interested in your suggestions and counsels on the above subject. There are, however, one or two points on which I would make a few remarks. You say, 'Avoid lecturing as much as possible.' But if it happens that those present are unable or slow to give utterance to any thought on the Word, must it be merely read and pondered in silence, even if one's own heart and mind be 'full of matter' pertaining to the subject on hand which he designs to utter?

[Ans. to PAR 1.—It is a very common practice in Bible Classes for one or two leaders to charge their minds with a quantity of learning, which they consider themselves bound to deliver to those who come together. There is a danger of the same thing creeping in at Scripture meetings. It was against everything of this character we desired to utter a word of warning. Be it far from us to counsel silence 'when the heart and mind are full of matter pertaining to the subject in hand.'—ED.]

2. And this leads me to a further remark—'Never suffer the unconverted to speak,' &c. How am I, or any one, to know who these are, in a promiscuous gathering of persons, till they be made manifest as such? and even then, what power have we to hinder any who may choose to do so, except it be an occasion of annoyance and grief to all present? But if they speak the 'Oracles of God,' though but the mere letter of the Word, why may it not be listened to, though coming possibly from an inquiring, though unconverted mind? Balaam 'prophesied' and uttered truth, though an enemy (I suppose) of Israel, and a false prophet. Still, I doubt not but that, by truly waiting on God for direction and counsel, a way will be made open for avoiding anything unseemly or incongruous at such meetings. He will surely lead, guide, instruct, and bless.

[Ans. to PAR 2.—There are unhappily many mere professing Christians in these days companying with true believers—persons acquainted with much of the letter of the Scripture, and who consider themselves quite competent to teach others. The children of God should beware of them. If they do not reveal themselves, of course we need take no account of them; indeed we should rejoice if they will attend as learners; but if they begin to speak (we mean in the way of instruction or exhortation) it will be soon discovered that they are hindering the outflow of truth. If we are 'waiting on God for direction and counsel,' there will, we think, be an evident need for demanding of the speakers what they believe, and we doubt not it will be made manifest whether they know the Lord or not. If they have not accepted Jesus as their Saviour, depend upon it anything they may offer will stumble others rather than help them. All present at Scripture Meetings should, we think, have full liberty to put questions tending to elicit truth; and at all times we should encourage simple-hearted enquirers to ask for any explanations.

We cannot class Balaam among unbelievers or false prophets. False-hearted he was; but, as you say, his prophecies were true ones, whereas a false prophet prophesies falsely. His case, therefore, does not help us with respect to this matter.—ED.]

3. Again, I fear very much we may be over-scrupulous and hyper-critical in some matters; and I remark, in passing, that whilst desiring to maintain the principle of "proving all things," one may be led so to criticise the words and judgment of others, as to overlook that statement—"Charity hopeth all things, believeth all things, thinketh no evil."

[ANS. to PAR 3.—Christians should constantly exercise forbearance and love; while we do so, we need not fear being called 'hypercritical.' But let us be true to God. If a brother should speak his own thoughts, or the thoughts of others, and they are at variance with the Word of God, 'charity' teaches us to point out the truth, both for the profit of his own soul and those who sit by. But then, of course, those of us who have gift in any measure, and are led to teach others, must hold ourselves open to the same thing. This may be sometimes unpleasant to the flesh, but it is profitable to the spirit. It should make us watchful and prayerful, and cause us to cast ourselves entirely upon the guidance of the Holy Ghost.]

4. With this feeling, I cannot heartily approve of the habit of a critical examination of the discourses of the good and holy men of our day. I fear it may be overdone. To err is human. We are full of imperfections. We must avoid making a man an 'offender for a word.' I read and hear discourses, and utterances in public prayer, the mere words of which do not commend themselves to my heart as being consonant with truth at all times; but I think of the probable intention and aim of the speaker, and check myself from judging that which may be rightly put in his own mind. (See Acts xv. 8.) For instance, I sometimes hear prayer that "God may send His Spirit." I do not join in this, as far as the mere words are concerned, for I believe the Holy Spirit has been sent; but I accept the possible meaning of a fresh and realizing sense of His gracious presence. Just as you remark (No. 2, p. 11) on 1 John, 1-9, 'This is not so much a fresh forgiveness as a re-assurance of it.' This thought will apply to other points of doctrinal statements apparently contradictory to Scripture, but probably, in the speaker's mind and judgment, in harmony therewith. Does not Rom. xiv. 13 apply here?

Yours, in much affection, for Christ's sake,

Crewe.

J. S. J.

[ANS. to PAR. 4.—We may very much respect the feeling which shrinks from dealing with the mistakes and failures of dear Christians whose labours have been owned of the Lord, just as we sympathise with the tremor of faintness which seizes the young student of surgery when first he causes blood to flow from the flesh of a fellow-creature. Should we, therefore, tell him to abandon his profession? But the shuddering which is felt by the spectator at a surgical operation doubtless exceeds that which is experienced by the young surgeon. Does he, however, on that account seek to deter from the needful use of the knife? Nay; he disregards his own feelings and suffers his friend, however dear, to be wounded that he may be healed. It is in this way we must exercise true Christian love. It were indeed sad to make a brother 'an offender for a word.' But if those who hold a foremost place as teachers, put forth continually utterances which are opposed to God's truth as revealed to us in Scripture, it is a libel on Charity to say in such a case he 'believeth all things.' When prophets prophesy falsely is Charity to believe them? Nay, she 'rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.' Oh, it is not a question of words; it is a question of robbing the children of God of their standing before Him. If Christ assures the believer he is clean every whit, and tells him to rejoice in the Father's love; if the divine word declares 'as he [the Lord Jesus] is, so are we in this world;' while a disciple who is listened to by thousands teaches that the prayers of saints need 'washing,' and that they themselves are not fit even to stand in the presence of Moses, shall we be silent?

We hope to take up the true meaning of 1 Cor. xiii., from which you have quoted, in our next. Respecting Rom. xiv. 13, we can only say that what is there taught applies to Christian observances. We are not to bring one another into judgment about meats, and days, and such like; this passage has, therefore nothing to do with heretical or perverse teaching, which we are charged to judge and condemn.—Ed.]

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. H. B., Torquay—in ordering 13 copies each of Nos. 1 and 2, PRECIOUS TRUTH, happily says he orders them to circulate for the 'truth that is in them, not to aid a commercial speculation.' This is just what we desire. We have no wish to make a pecuniary gain out of PRECIOUS TRUTH. It is published at a loss, and is likely to be so for some time. We gladly make the sacrifice for the Truth's sake, and in the hope of the Paper becoming self-supporting.

E., Islington.—Our correspondent in a letter inserted in our last, to which we refer our readers, asks us to harmonise those Scriptures which 'give power to become sons' to those who have already become children by faith in Christ. Our correspondent says 'Surely, sonship is not separable from simple life.' See Rom. viii. 14, John i. 12, 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.

We answer, the Scriptures referred to press upon us the realization of our Sonship now. All who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are children of God by adoption and grace. It by no means follows, however, that the adopted child acts in accordance with, or even understands his high calling. The Lord would have us to know practically, experimentally, while yet upon earth, the unspeakable joy of having a place in the 'household of faith,' of being 'sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty.' That this may be our happy experience, it is first necessary to lay hold of the power or privilege by faith; for if we do not believe the fact it is impossible to act in the strength of it. Secondly, we must be led by the 'Spirit of adoption.' He is ever willing to lead, but we must voluntarily, and by sought-for grace, keep ourselves in subjection to his guidance. Thirdly, if we would realise our standing as children of God, we must be 'separate from sinners.' 'Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from all iniquity.' This is a cutting word, and, alas! Christians generally refuse to submit to it. We cannot know God as our Father—we cannot experience love towards Him, nor comprehend his love towards us, as children should, while we go on in intimate fellowship with those who are 'without God in the world.' The unholy fellowship may exist in the form of companionships, or deliberate union in wedlock with an unbeliever, or it may exist in what is called 'public worship.' God cannot own us as his children in such unfaithfulness, 'for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters saith the Lord Almighty.'

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—We invite enquiries tending to the elucidation of scriptural truth. Controversial questions should be avoided entirely, if possible. Our earnest desire is to help simple-hearted Christians with words of encouragement, patience and love—and to advocate the practical operation of "precious truth" in Christian walk and practice. We hope, also, to be useful in spreading the glad tidings of salvation. Any enquiries calculated to help forward these objects shall have our best attention.

NOTICES.

Letters for the Editor to be addressed to 335, Strand, W.C.

TO OUR READERS.—We find considerable reluctance on the part of the Newspaper Trade to push the sale of this Journal, because of its low price. As it is our earnest desire to cater for the poor of the Flock, we hope we shall not be obliged to raise the price to 1d. We therefore urge our readers to order, either individually, or in twos and threes, sixpennyworth or one shilling's-worth through a news-vendor, leaving them in his hand to expose for sale through the month, and then buying for distribution what he has not sold. For the truth's sake make an effort with us, who desire to contend for the honour of the Word and against error.
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CHRISTIANS in the Neighbourhood of the Strand are invited to the Scripture Reading Meeting at 335a, side-door, Monday, at Seven.

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Printed by JOHN EVANS, 335a, Strand, W.C.; and published by JOHNS CAUDWELL, 335, Strand, London, W.C. and Hall & Co, 23, Paternoster Row, E.C.

PRECIOUS TRUTH.

“WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?”—(Rom. iv. 3.)

Job Caudwell, 335, Strand, W.C.]

[Hall & Co, 25, Paternoster Row, E.C.]

No. 4.]

JULY 1, 1865.

[One Halfpenny.]

A LETTER TO THE CHRISTIAN READER.

BELoved,—

Once more our gracious Lord permits me to address to you a few words of exhortation and comfort. We are passing through the world; let us cheer each other by the way. We are really strangers and pilgrims. Alas! many of our companions refuse to believe that theirs is a pilgrim's portion here below, and therefore they know nothing of the joy of being by faith already seated in the heavenlies. Nevertheless it is true, that every regenerate child of God is no longer of the world though in it. Moreover, strive as they may, worldly-minded Christians cannot find true happiness upon earth. The new life, the *regeneration*, is resurrection-life! It is a new nature, foreign to earthly tastes and desires—quite as much, perhaps more so, than is the angelic nature. If an angel of light were sent to dwell with us in bodily form, he would be manifestly a stranger. If he were so directed of God, he might be a carpenter or a merchant, a servant or a monarch, but he would not be of the spirit of this world. He would just do whatever the Lord gave him to do, without losing the consciousness of his heavenly calling, and without seeking mere self-gratification or aggrandisement.

It is our high calling to live thus upon earth. We are positively “children of light,” “children of God,” “partakers of the divine nature”! Beloved, these are realities. The amazing things said of us in Scripture are FACTS. Alas! Christians treat them as unrealisable fictions. But I assure you the Lord gives grace to those who seek him to enable them to live in the enjoyment of the same life he enjoys. Hence we are taught to reckon ourselves dead with regard to the old carnal nature. “Old things are passed away;” we are therefore to “set our AFFECTIONS on things above.” It is true, we go on with our appointed temporal duties, following our earthly occupations, whatever they may be, because our Heavenly Father has thus ordained. And we attend to them diligently and carefully, because we do them to the Lord. “Whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do,” we are to do all to the glory of God; and though we be truly labouring for the meats that perish, God is glorified thereby if done to him in faith. Nor are we to have any anxiety about the result, knowing that “the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof.” We, then, who are his children have no need to fear. Yet he may see well to try our faith by leaving us under the pressure of temporal need; should it be so, however, it will be for the ultimate profit. Our duty is, to feel quite

SURE that Our Heavenly Father cares about us *always*, that He loves us *always*; that He is interested in all our thoughts, wishes, and doings. How are we to be sure of this? He says so! Faith rejoins, “Then it must be so.” What, though it may be against the evidence of our senses? Yes. The new nature owns no argument based on the mere evidence of the senses. One word of God far outweighs all the tangible evidence in the world. Let us cultivate Faith. Let us maintain, in defiance of the sophistries of men, the subtleties of Satan, and the natural hesitancy of our own evil hearts, that “God is true,” that we are his “dear children,” and that “he will withhold from us NO GOOD THING.” Whatever he does withhold, it would not be good for us to have.

Dearly beloved in the Lord,—Look into his Word; you know comparatively nothing about the precious promises which are there, yet they are all for you; and a single promise from God our Father is worth all the treasures of earth. Oh! if faith were strong in us, how we should sing! We have abundant cause for rejoicing. “Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice.”

Yours in much love in our Lord Jesus Christ,
THE EDITOR.

THE “PLYMOUTH BRETHREN.”

ABOUT thirty years ago a few earnest Christians, having prayerfully studied the Scriptures, separated from all systematic religion. They found that while they had followed the various traditions which men had engrafted upon the Word of God, they had practically ignored some of the highest privileges conferred upon believers by the “Head of the Church.”

One of the first things of which they became clearly convinced was that the Lord Jesus Christ has sent, according to his promise, the Holy Ghost to guide his followers into all truth. Acting upon this conviction, they cast themselves, in simplicity and faith, upon the Holy Spirit's guidance, which resulted in unspeakable blessing to their own souls and to the souls of thousands who had faith to follow in the same course.

Those, however, who were first led out committed the great error of giving themselves a separate designation. This was not their only mistake, but it is the one which has become specially manifest. It is surprising that such a mistake could have crept in at the very outset, while *realising* the blessedness of being governed by the written Word, under the direct teaching of the Holy Spirit. But astonishment

ceases when we recollect how fallible a creature man is, and that the most enlightened disciple is prone to err the moment he allows his fleshly judgment to act.

Though the Holy Spirit is given to every believer, we have to keep ourselves in subjection to his guidance, and unless we keep watchful, failure is sure to follow. Hence the exhortations of Scripture—"Grieve not the Holy Spirit," "Quench not the Spirit," &c.

The leaders of this movement no doubt desired to be Scriptural, and in adopting the distinctive title of "The Brethren" considered it a term almost synonymous with "Christian." But the name has become as much a badge of a sect as that of "Baptist." "The Brethren" doubtless thought it impossible to walk in separation from corruption and false teaching without becoming a distinct order. This, however, was mere human judgment, and is entirely opposed to the Word of God. Any Christians, however few, who may act upon such a Scripture as 2 Tim. ii. 19—22, and separate from all that dishonours the name of Christ, and follow "righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart," have no need to ticket themselves, or fix upon a name. There is but one body and one Head; the name of the Head is "CHRIST;" the name for each member of the body is "CHRISTIAN,"—nothing more is needed, everything added is a hindrance.

"The Brethren," however, in real, simple faith in the abiding presence of the "Comforter," became diligent and dependent SEARCHERS of the Scriptures; the truth was wondrously opened up to them, and they rejoiced in "the liberty with which Christ had made them free." They became a company of true worshippers, worshipping the Father in Spirit and in truth." They accepted the glorious revelations of God respecting Christ and his Church; they became a WAITING people, having been "turned from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven." Their spiritual search into Scripture brought to their joyful souls the intelligence that the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is to be looked for and hoped for by all believers—that the coming of the Lord for his Bride is quite a different thing from his coming to earth in judgment;—that though both events are distinctly foretold, they are most emphatically stated as separate;—that, in truth, when the Lord comes for the Church he will descend into the AIR (1 Thess. iv. 17), whereas when He appears in judgment, previously to setting up his Millennial reign, he will come to the EARTH. Moreover, that the final judgment of the unsaved dead is again quite distinct from, and not to be confused with, the judgment of the nations upon the earth. It became also evident to these students of the Word, under the guidance of God the Holy Spirit, that, though Scripture plainly declares "we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ," true believers will never stand to be judged for their sins, because the Judge himself has put them away, blotted them out for ever by the Sacrifice of Himself. They also learned that when the believer stands before the judgment seat, *he will have been already*

changed into the likeness of Christ, and that therefore the only questions to be gone into by the One who went away to prepare heavenly places for his people will be concerning the bestowal of His rewards; "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be." The inquiring reader is referred to 1 Cor. iii. 10—15, which clearly shows the character of our Lord's judgment when dealing with his dear blood-bought friends.

Our readers will perceive that our object is not to "cry up" "the Brethren," of whom we are not, but to give that which we think many need—a brief statement of their "standing."

"The Brethren" soon began to multiply. Meetings for worship, teaching, &c. were established in Dublin, London, Bristol, Plymouth, and many other places. The assemblies were mostly held, as they are still, in obscure neighbourhoods, in rooms of the most unpretending character. Following the practice of the earliest churches, they came together on the "First Day of the week" for the special purpose of "breaking bread," in order to "show the Lord's death till he come," as the Lord ordained. Gradual but steady progress in the knowledge of the mind of God, characterised the Brethren for some years, and many souls rejoiced in the liberty of the truth. But, in course of time, there came to pass that of which Paul warned the Ephesian saints,—men arose "teaching perverse things to draw away disciples after them." A very grievous heresy began to be taught at the gathering at Plymouth, viz. "That the Lord Jesus Christ, as man, was associated with the place of distance in which man in the flesh was, and therefore that he had *through obedience to find his way to that point where God could meet Him*," &c. This is a specimen of the teaching put forth.

It is well understood that but very few were tainted with this heresy; but it became the occasion of a permanent rupture. Some who had obtained a very prominent position as leaders among "the Brethren" insisted upon the excommunication, not only of any who received the heretical teacher or teachers, but of whole gatherings that declined to deal with the question at the dictation of certain self-constituted rulers. We have long had the impression that the section which resisted this assumed authority became known as "the Plymouth Brethren," while the despotic party specially repudiated the local title and maintained their claim to be "the Brethren." We are assured, however, that this is not so, but that the term "Plymouth" came into use at a time when the Christians who came out from systematic religion in that place were rather numerous, and we suppose were not very well informed as to the fact that the precious truths opened up to them were being widely promulgated in other towns and cities.

This, however, is very unimportant. That which is of far greater interest to us is, that, as we are informed, all sections of "the Brethren" and "Plymouth Brethren" utterly repudiate the false doctrine; that the one who introduced it has long since ceased

to have any connection with either party; and that he has himself recanted.

In this rupture, however, is manifested one of the many evils arising out of the first mistake made by "the Brethren" in taking a name to distinguish them from their fellow Christians. Had they been content with simple Scriptural usage in the matter, their meetings would have been but Christian assemblies, as the early churches were; and none but those meetings which were tainted with false doctrine would have had to deal with it, probably it would have been confined to a single gathering. But with a distinctive name came a distinct organisation. As a mere human arrangement, "Brethrenism" has failed, as man's cleverness always does; yet so much of it as was of God (we mean as to principles of association) has stood, and will stand. "The Brethren," from the first, came together in the power of the Lord's assurance—"Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them." Owing the Head of the Church as present in their midst, and subjecting themselves individually to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, their assemblies still present (to the astonishment of Christians who follow the letter, but not the spirit, of God's word) numbers of believers worshipping "the Father" in spirit and in truth, and realising, in measure, while yet upon earth, their heavenly portion as eternally associated with Christ, the Son of God. It is not a small thing for little gatherings of true followers of Christ to company together, and realise the Lord Jesus in their midst; yet this may, with certainty, be said of the meetings of "the Brethren."

But as a consequence of having combined together under this name—a body separated from "*the one body*," i.e., the body of Christ,—they have to bear, more or less, the odium of whatever false teaching has emanated from any one of their gatherings. Thus, not only the enemies of the cross of Christ, but Christians, who, through self-interest or other unworthy motives, seek to prevent the return of believers to the simplicity and blessing of the first days of "the Church of God," sneeringly apply such a term as "Plymouth Brethrenism" to those who, in the exercise of a good conscience, have separated from whatever they consider dishonouring to the name of Christ. Among teachers in Christendom generally, there are few who can be compared with those found among "the Brethren" in the faithful exposition of the Scriptures; none know better than they that there is but "*one body*," comprising all the members of Christ. Yet, marvellous to say, they persist in constituting themselves *another body*!

We purpose, if the Lord permit, in our next number, to show wherein "the Brethren" have otherwise fallen short in faithfulness by slighting the Lord's ordinance of Baptism. May the facts into which we have been looking stir the Lord's people everywhere to increased carefulness, and an earnest, steadfast conformity to the Holy Word and the Holy Spirit of God.

THE PROPHET OF THE LORD MUST SPEAK ONLY WHAT THE LORD SAITH.

"And the messenger that was gone to call Micaiah spake to him, saying, Behold now, the words of the prophets declare good unto the king with one mouth: let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak good. And Micaiah said, As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, THAT will I speak."—(1 Kings xxii. 13, 14.)

THE incidents narrated in 1 Kings xxii. and 2 Chron. xviii. are full of instruction for such as are willing to learn under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, had hitherto been careful to follow the precepts and commandments of the Lord, and had been jealous for the glory of God. For this faithfulness God had prospered him. But he fell into temptation. "He had riches and honour in abundance," (2 Chron. xviii.) he had hundreds of thousands of soldiers at his command, and, as if to display his power, he "joined affinity with Ahab," the sinful king of Israel, "which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up." Alas! for the union of Jehoshaphat and Ahab; though brief, nothing but evil could come of it. May the children of God take the lesson to heart! How many Jehoshaphats are there at the present time fighting in a common cause, hand in hand, with the enemies of God? It may be ostensibly fighting for the Lord, but He will never own their labours.

Ahab gladly welcomed the arrival of the king of Judah: "he killed sheep and oxen for him in abundance." Ah, it is very enticing to be received in this way, and to be made much of; but mark what follows. In the midst of the feasting, Ahab "persuaded him to go up with him to Ramoth-gilead," to fight against Syria. Jehoshaphat had misgivings about it. He knew in his soul that the expedition could not succeed unless approved by God; he therefore said to the king of Israel, "Enquire, I pray thee, at the word of the Lord to-day." "Therefore the king of Israel gathered together of prophets 400 men, and said unto them, Shall we go to Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up: for God will deliver it into the king's hand."

This was very satisfactory to Ahab. If the prophets will only prophesy in accordance with the desires of wicked men, their words will always be welcome. But this is the very height of folly; for what real encouragement can be found in the oracles of lying prophets? The 400 prophets prophesied in the name of God, and professed to ascribe to God all the glory of the victory they foretold. There was perfect unanimity and absolute confidence. "All the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramoth-gilead, and prosper: for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king." But—

What a solemn lesson is here! May the reader learn it thoroughly. Who were these 400 prophets? They took the place of being prophets of God; but they were in fact the KING'S PROPHETS! They must consequently prophesy for the king; and they therefore accept the inspiration of a lying spirit, instead of that of the Holy Spirit of God. Ahab is well

pleased with his prophets; they have nothing to say but what would exactly suit their master's purpose. He listens to their honeyed words, caring nought about the hidden, lying source whence they flow, and is lured by them to his own destruction. Ah, there have always been such prophets; and they abound—these prophets of the king—in our day. Oh, beware of them; they prophesy smooth things; their word is ever "Go up, and prosper." They have nothing to say against self-will and carnal desires; they pronounce God's blessing upon your undertakings with confidence and unanimity. But they themselves are not subject to the "Spirit of the Lord;" and their word will prove to be nothing but a delusion and a snare.

However satisfactory to the king of Israel, these words of the prophets afford little encouragement to Jehoshaphat. Though erring for a time, he knew the value of God's guidance. He does not, it is true, disown Ahab's prophets, but he is not satisfied with them. "And Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides, that we might enquire of him?" Yes, that is what the earnest enquirer wants—not the ready promises of those who may bear a mere official standing as prophets, but the true testimony of "a prophet of the Lord."

"And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, Micaiah, the son of Imlah, by whom we may enquire of the Lord: but I hate him: for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so." Micaiah is therefore summoned in haste; and the messenger sent for him takes upon himself to deprecate anything like an adverse answer to the question the kings of Israel and Judah wish to propound. "The prophets have declared good unto the king; will he not speak as one of them?" "And Micaiah said, As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak."

Micaiah's faithfulness has to be fully put to the proof. Ahab and Jehoshaphat arrayed in their royal robes, and surrounded by their retainers and the prophets who have responded so cordially to the wishes of the kings, were calculated to seduce or overawe the prophet of God. But the servant is true to his trust. He has received the word of the Lord, and there shall be no doubt left as to what is the mind of God about the proposed expedition. Micaiah is undismayed by the splendour of the scene,—undeterred by the frown of Ahab or the consciousness that his message is most unwelcome, or the fact that his voice is the only adverse one. The 400 prophets may scorn him, and Zedekiah may smite him on the cheek; but Micaiah falters not. Regardless of consequences, he tells them the inevitable result of their attack upon Ramoth-gilead. "Ahab shall there be slain and the people shall be scattered." How they despised his words! what a pitiful figure did Micaiah present, according to men's thoughts, in the midst of that scene of excitement and earthly grandeur! How eagerly the sophists of our own time, had they been there, would have sought to

stifle his faithful testimony. "Consider," they might have said, "that though Ahab is a bad man, Jehoshaphat is one approved of the Lord; refrain, for his sake, or at least modify the severity of your judgment. Then, again, see what confusion you are creating; here are 400 prophets—and you cannot deny that they *are* prophets—yet they say with one voice, Go up and prosper. Surely you must be wrong. It is really too bad to oppose. All these men, who are as good as you—perhaps better, have as much right to their opinion as you have to yours. You know that many of God's words admit of different interpretations. You are positively bringing all prophets into disrepute—who will believe anything if one controverts what is stated by the others? Then, too, do you not see how angry you are making the king? what will become of you if you persist in your singular views?"

All this, and much more, such reasoners argue now, and doubtless would have done then. But Micaiah has got one simple answer to it all—"What the Lord saith unto me that will I speak." Ah, this is very precious; how it simplifies everything! May we be careful to have a "Thus saith the Lord," and then testify in defiance of every opposition.

God's Word is sure—not one jot or tittle of it can fail. Ahab wreaks his malice upon the messenger of God; he consigns Micaiah to prison, with bread and water for his fare. But in that place the prophet has a portion the King knows nothing of, "the peace of God which passeth all understanding," and he has doubtless a high reward in the glory which is to be revealed. The ruler of Israel may display his power for a little while; but he is fighting against God. Vainly does he seek to avoid his doom by disguising himself before going into the battle. "A man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the King between the joints of the harness." Thus he had by his disguise escaped the captains of the king of Syria, but to fall by the arrow of a nameless warrior. The man drew the bow "at a venture," but an unseen power sped the shaft. Jehoshaphat fought with the Israelites in the battle, and barely escaped destruction at the hands of the Syrian captains, who mistook him for Ahab. Returning afterwards to Jerusalem in peace, he had to bear the reproof of Jehu, son of Hanani, the seer, "who went out to meet him, and said to the king, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? Therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord. Nevertheless there are good things found in thee, in that thou hast taken away the groves out of the land, and hast prepared thine heart to seek God."

TRUE CHARACTERISTICS OF CHARITY (LOVE) IN THE CHILDREN OF GOD.

As proposed in our last, we now purpose to look into the application of 1 Cor. xiii. It is needful, however, to notice first that the word "Charity" has in our day a more circumscribed signification than when originally used as a translation from the Greek. Love gives a much more truthful idea of the thing spoken of; though every kind of true benevolence may well be included in the full apprehension of this christian grace. Substituting therefore the word "love" for that of "charity,"

let us look at the entire passage. "Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

Now all these characteristics of the love which includes charity are manifested by the true-hearted Christian in his individual dealings with others. All the sweet qualities enumerated show that the grand lesson enforced is, *thorough unselfishness*. We will apply each expression to the Christian reader, as a child of God. In the exercise of the love which has been planted in you, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, you will be long-suffering and kind. Instead of resenting injury you will bear it; and you will not then wish harm to any who offend; on the contrary you will be actively kind. You will not envy others, neither with respect to spiritual gifts (the subject of the previous chapter), nor any other blessing. You will not vaunt self; your love will be quiet and unobtrusive. You will not be puffed up; pride and self-sufficiency cannot dwell with true Christian love. There will be in you no unseemliness of behaviour; but a meek and gentle bearing towards all. You will not be self-seeking, but your actions will be generous and disinterested. You will not be easily provoked. The treasure is in an earthen vessel, so perchance you may be provoked, but not easily. You will think no evil; and you will put the best construction upon the *motives* of your brethren. You will not rejoice in iniquity; you will have no part in it, and will be grieved to see it in whatever form it may appear. You will rejoice in the truth. The Word of God will be always precious to you, remembering the prayer of our Lord, "Sanctify them by thy truth, thy Word is truth." You will be ready to bear all things; whatever trials may be laid upon you, especially in connection with the wrong doings of others. You will be ready to believe all things, generously and hopefully; unlike the natural man, who is usually suspicious and unbelieving. You will hope all things; when others would give over the hardhearted, the ungrateful, and the rebellious, your love will still hold on and hope for a change. You will be ready to endure all things, in patience and self-devotedness, remembering Him who first loved you and gave himself for you. All this applies to yourself in your dealings with mankind. It is entirely an exemplification of unselfishness and self-sacrifice for the advantage of those on whose behalf Christian love is brought into exercise.

That this is the true teaching is fully confirmed by the context. The Corinthian saints were blessed with all spiritual gifts, and they were unhappily giving way to the display of these, in ungenerous rivalries and contentions. Self-assertion was beginning to predominate. The apostle has, therefore, to remind them that these gifts were not given for selfish use, but for the edification of all the members of the body of Christ, and he concludes the twelfth chapter with the words "Covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way." That more excellent way he goes on to show is Christian love. For the exercise of this no special gift is required. It may be fully practised by Christians who have but little intelligence or brightness of gift. It is greater than faith and hope, for while these will necessarily cease in the eternal state, Love will endure for ever.

But this in no way interferes with the duties of a Christian teacher. He must be *answering* with all that is in opposition to the mind of God. Love prompts him in the exercise of his calling to oppose error, and it may be, "rebuke sharply;" for the very reason that he cares for others, not for himself. His mind is to be in entire accord with the Scripture under examination, but he has duties superadded to those which appertain to ordinary Christian intercourse. He therefore looks to other portions of the Word of God for instruction in those exceptional duties. When Paul found that the apostle Peter was not acting truthfully towards the Gentile converts he says—"I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed." The Holy Ghost has had this recorded for warning and instruction. We must act in the same spirit. God forbid that we should entertain the least animosity towards any brother. We love all who "love our Lord Jesus Christ in

sincerity." But while Christian preachers who hold high places before the children of God and before the world, are not content to set forth the simple, faithful teachings of Scripture, our unquestionable duty is, to withstand them to the face, for they are to be blamed.

REPORTS OF SCRIPTURE MEETINGS.

'Search the Scriptures.'—(John v. 39.)

(335A, STRAND, opposite Somerset House, Mondays, at 7 p.m.)

June 19. Acts i. 12—14.

"Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet." It was remarked, that in returning thus to Jerusalem the disciples were taking the path of obedience, for the Lord had previously commanded them to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father. The path of obedience is ever the path of blessing, not only to ourselves, but to others through us. What a great blessing descended to these obedient ones on the day of Pentecost, and through them to how many others!

Not only did they believe the promise, and obediently return, and patiently wait, but "all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication." Times of weakness will be times of united prayer, and of clinging together, as does a poor, fearful, defenceless flock of sheep. The shepherd was personally withdrawn, and the righteous cry; anon, the Holy Ghost descends, and "the righteous are as bold as a lion." Oh, that Christian assemblies generally would be more content to be weak outwardly, rest less on visible resources, and seek, by prayer in the Holy Ghost, to "be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might."

Though the blessing for which they are waiting is promised, and promised not many days thence, yet they continue in prayer, doubtless, among other things, for the fulfilment of the promise. The churches on earth should still take the same posture of waiting and praying ones—"Behold, I come quickly. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

"With the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus." How remarkable that the last time we hear of Mary, it is as a praying one! what a rebuke to that large section of Christendom which prays to her! Long after it is said, "Blessed art thou among women," we behold her as a suppliant, and a suppliant for that blessing we now possess—the Spirit as an indweller, thus evidencing that she needed, equally with all believers, to be "baptised by one Spirit into one body," and if in the Body it follows that she cannot be an independent dispenser of blessing, because that glory appertains necessarily to the Head.

"And with his brethren." In John vii. 5, we read "Neither did his brethren believe in him." But here we see that after his death they do believe. How often are the prayers of Christians not answered during their life. The obduracy of heart of his kindred was one of those respects in which he was tried "like as we are, yet without sin."

COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL BY ST. JOHN.

(Written expressly for this publication.)

CHAPTER I.

How often we are constrained to pause and wonder, when reading the inspired Word, at the peculiar and lofty way in which divine truth is linked together. The most careless reader ought to be convinced that the books, called collectively the Bible, are no mere human production. Such thoughts arise spontaneously when looking at the words of verse 18, in connection with the contrasted missions of Moses and Jesus as stated in the preceding sentence.

Ver. 18.—'No man hath seen God at any time; the only

begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared,' not only declared *him*, (as the authorized translation has it,) but his thoughts, ways, and purposes. Man could give or promulgate God's righteous laws; but the Son of God alone could declare or make known 'the Infinite Unseen' Himself. It needed the Son, who was not only from, but *in*, the bosom of the Father to reveal the perfect attributes of God, and, above all, his amazing love towards fallen men. No man had seen God at any time. Moses had but a glimpse of him; and therefore none could adequately describe him. But his only-begotten, his well-beloved Son had fully known him, and continued to dwell with him, in closest intimacy. He could declare, he could show us, not only the 'I AM,' but the FATHER.

We must not omit to notice the remarkable difference of expression as to the manner by which men were brought, first under Law, then under Grace. Not only did the One who made known the latter require for higher qualifications than he who brought in the Law; the Law was *given*, or laid upon, those to whom it was sent. They were brought under obligation *by* it. It was a yoke; a yoke which, said Peter, 'Neither our fathers nor we were able to bear.' Whereas grace and truth *came* by Jesus Christ; came that we might be attracted by them to Him by whom they came. The very thought presented by the words is impregnated with grace. Jesus came! Who can find words to express how gracious it was of Him to come to us? Well—grace and truth came by Him. We cannot say they accompanied Him; He was the expression of them. He cannot be had without them, nor they without him; yet he has left them here for us. They are stored up in his word; and happily the Soul who appropriates them takes Jesus with them.

19, 20. 'And this is the record (or testimony) of John when the Jews sent Priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed I am not the Christ.' The emphasis with which it is here recorded that John confessed he was not the Christ, is remarkable. The people were no doubt struck with the holiness and austerity of his life, and the righteousness of his doctrines. 'And all men mused in their hearts of John, whether this were the Christ or not.' It would have been easy to encourage the thought and even possible, perhaps, for John to have been so inflated by his divine mission as to have suffered himself to be deluded by the suppositions of others. He repudiated however every pretension, not only to Messiahship, but even to the dignity of Elias.

21—23. 'And they asked him, what then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered no. Then saith they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us? What sayest thou of thyself? And he said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.' Admirable humility! He must needs take up the prophetic word, but he will not assume prophetic honour. He was a 'voice!'—content himself to be of no account, if they would only hear him, and prepare the way of the Lord. 'He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.' Of him who thus confessed himself to be but a 'voice,' Jesus said, 'Among those that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist.'

**MAN BREATHES THREATENING AND SLAUGHTER:
JESUS BREATHES PEACE.**

"Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of."—Luke ix. 55.

THE Gospel of Peace has been preached for eighteen hundred years, nevertheless it is as needful as ever to remind Christians that war, strife, and vengeance are utterly opposed to the spirit of the present dispensation. To the hearts of sinful men there seemed good reason to call down vengeance upon certain Samaritans, who would not allow the Lord Jesus Christ on his way up to Jerusalem to rest awhile in their village. He was journeying up to the sacred city

with the "stedfast" purpose of offering Himself a sacrifice for sin; yet these Samaritans refused him a temporary repose by the way! This treatment moved his disciples with indignation, and they said "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, even as Elias did? But Jesus turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save." (Luke ix. 54—56.)

These words are not understood by the world, not even the Christian world, so called; but they ought to be apprehended by all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. As for those who merely hold opinions *about* Him, the principle here taught cannot be received by them. There must be, by faith, personal interest in the Saviour. We must have confidence, trust, absolute reliance on and in Him before we can appreciate the sublime teachings of the Son of God.

To those who are with us on this heavenly ground we earnestly commend the words of our Lord. We are led to press them especially at this time through having read the report of what transpired recently at a general meeting of the Congregational Union. On that occasion a number of ministers of the Gospel of Peace delivered a succession of warlike speeches which could not easily have been more anti-Christian had they been uttered by so many heathens. They endorsed the fratricidal war of the Northern Americans against those of the South; they applauded the thought of the undying anger and vengeance which would, under certain circumstances, actuate both Englishmen and Americans; they moreover allowed Scripture to be explained away; for the Rev. Mr. Vaughan endeavoured to show that the apostles only failed to preach the abolition of slavery because they feared the opposition which such a course would have provoked! altogether forgetful that it was the Holy Ghost, upon whom the fear of man could have no influence, who wrought in and by the apostles, revealing fully the mind of God.

Such teaching not only controverts the spirit of "the Word," but is in defiance of the emphatic declaration of Paul—"I have not shunned to declare unto you ALL the counsel of God"! If, therefore, the abolition of slavery was a principle of Christianity, Paul must have declared it. But not only so; the plain teaching of Scripture respecting the question of slavery is this—"Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called being a slave? Care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather."

In the days when the New Testament scriptures were written, slavery was a common thing; and many slaves became spiritually free—the Lord's freemen. It was therefore needful that plain directions should be given to them as to the course the Lord would have them to follow under the trying circumstances in which they were called. And blessed be His name, they were not left in any uncertainty about it. Being called in slavery they were "therein to abide with God," not caring about their bondage, though if they might lawfully be "*made free*" they were to use it.

Neither violence nor fraud was to be contemplated for a moment, nor means of escape sought; yet many of them doubtless were civilised, and even refined men and women, who had been brought into slavery by the most cruel means. Their consolation was, that though in earthly bondage, they had the freedom of heaven, and Christ was with them using them to his glory where they were.

But that the true-hearted child of God might not err in this matter, the Holy Spirit has given us the epistle to Philemon, wherein we learn that Onesimus, a slave, having escaped from his master, Philemon, a CHRISTIAN, was sent back again to his owner by Paul after he had received the word of life from him. Thus we have the Christian Apostle of the Gentiles sending a Christian slave back to a Christian master. It is very true that Paul intreats Philemon to receive Onesimus no longer as a slave, but as a brother. But the Apostle makes himself a petitioner in the case. He desires that the loved one may have liberty; but there must be no constraint. They are all the subjects of grace, and therefore grace must be appealed to as the only guide for them all. Paul would not have been acting in grace had he failed to send back the slave and had he not begged for his release. He would equally have mistaken the mind of the Lord had he taken the attitude of command instead of that of request. So, too, Onesimus would have failed had he asserted and maintained any supposed natural right to liberty. And certainly Philemon would have been a transgressor against the law of love had he stood upon his legal claim to possess himself of his bond slave.

In short—the mind of our Lord is that even where there is the grossest wrongdoing, his people are never to seek to restore the right *by violence*. The Christian calling is essentially that of long-suffering, gentleness, patience, love—love even towards our enemies. This is not a mere question of abstract doctrine, but one with which almost every Christian has to deal practically; and, alas! how commonly failure results. So that, sad to say, many of the clergy are promoters of violence, when their passions, as men, are stirred by questions of national importance. It has been so in America of late. The sanguinary conflicts there, which have added to the long list of man's iniquity, have been fostered and embittered by those who have thrust themselves before the world as followers of the all-suffering, gentle Jesus. It is most grievous to see the same spirit in this country in many who hold the place of pastors.

Let it not be supposed, however, for one moment that we could advocate the perpetuation of Slavery. It is altogether unnatural. We have not an atom of sympathy either with Slave-taker or Slave-holder—the *whole system is utterly abhorrent* to all who have a spark of divine love. The horrors which have been practised upon the Negro race are a burning shame to the world—but God has not entrusted us with the sword of vengeance. It is utterly impossible for man to rectify the evil by force. And to Christians we say emphatically—every attempt of yours to accomplish its abolition in that way is directly

opposed to the counsels and teachings of your Master. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." The "day of vengeance" will overtake the world soon enough; but it will be the "day of the Lord." There will be bloodshed then, more than enough to gratify man's lust for it. Meantime, the only weapon committed to us is the Sword of the Spirit, the word of God. Where that does not prevail Christians are powerless as to aggressive means; they must ENDURE and WAIT.

We will not dwell on the sad scene presented at the meeting referred to. May those who took part in it have grace to see how deeply they have grieved the Holy Spirit. We believe the speakers were betrayed into the utterance of thoughts which calm reflection must have caused them to condemn and sorrow for.

But we have one other point to allude to. That which led to the exhibition of the sinful passions of the natural man on the occasion in question, was the consideration of the sad news of the assassination of President Lincoln. The assembly was anxious to express its abhorrence of the fearful crime spoken of. Now, if Christians were but faithful to maintain the plain teachings of their master, there could be no need for any gathering of Christian men to proclaim their detestation of murder in any form. We ought, every one of us, to be living protests not only against the crime of Cain, but of every exhibition of his mind and spirit.

Ah! brethren and sisters in the Lord, we have need to watch over and KEEP UNDER the old carnal nature, which is left to us yet for a little while, although we have the new nature. Remember that in us, that is, IN OUR FLESH, dwelleth no good thing. It is hard to believe this, but if it was true of Paul, it must be of us also. The word for us is—"Rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have NO CONFIDENCE in the flesh."

THE CITY OF CONFUSION,

(Isaiah xxiv. 10.)

AND THE WAY OUT OF IT.

A FAITHFUL WORD FOR CHRISTIANS.

THE SECOND COMING OF THE LORD.

(Continued from our last.)

How different from men's poor interpretations are our Lord's gracious designs as He has Himself expressed them! Will you henceforth go on with the commonly received thought of believers and unbelievers assembled at the same time and place for judgment, all remaining in uncertainty of their final doom till that dread day? There is not a single Scripture to justify such teaching as this. The order of events to come, as foretold in the Word of God, is as follows—

First, the coming of the Lord for all who have believed in Him during the days of his rejection, i.e. during the whole period of the present dispensation, from the time of his ascension. This assembly is 'The Church,' 'The Bride,' or 'The Body of Christ.' It is formed of all who have fallen asleep in Jesus and all believers who are alive on the earth at his coming. These last will be translated (as was Enoch). The former will be raised in heavenly bodies, equally happy and glorious. Christians have difficulty in believing this pre-eminent and glorious place given to them, as being associated with Christ, the King of Glory; but this is because they look at what they are

in themselves, instead of what they are in Him. Read Rom. viii. 'Heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.' Now we know that mere reason cannot receive this and unbelief raises a thousand difficulties; but the only question allowed by faith is—Has God said it? See how enquirers according to the natural mind are answered on this subject in 1 Cor. xv.

The present dispensation will close with this marvellous gathering of the saints in glory. Then the prominent place on earth will be restored to the Jews. 'For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened unto Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in; and so [after that time] all Israel shall be saved; as it is written,' &c. (Rom. xi 25.)

But that which will immediately follow the translation of the Church will be the commencement of the 'Day of Tribulation' on earth. This is spoken of in all prophetic Scripture, both in the Old and New Testament. Hear the Lord himself: 'Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time [the time the Lord was foretelling], no, nor ever shall be [afterwards].' Matt. xxiv. 21. A description of the day of vengeance occurs in the latter part of Rev. xiv. and in many places in the Old Testament. After this solemn event, the Jews (Israel) will receive the full blessings promised to Abraham and his seed. They will be exalted above all the nations of the earth. 'For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.' (Isa. xi. 3.) The Lord Jesus Christ will come to the earth, and having executed judgment on the nations, (see Matt. xxv. 31—46,) will reign with his saints a thousand years. During this period of happiness for mankind, Satan will be chained in the bottomless pit (Rev. xx 2); so that the human race will be freed from his temptations, and the reign of Christ will be a reign of righteousness. At the end of this period called the "thousand years," (commonly spoken of as the Millennium,) Satan will be loosed for a season, and will go forth to tempt the nations, and many will rebel against God (Rev. xx. 7—10); fire from heaven will consume them, and Satan will be cast into the lake of fire, to be tormented for ever. Then will take place the final resurrection and judgment—the judgment of condemnation. The great white throne will be seen, and the dead, small and great, will stand before God, (Rev. xx. 11—15,) and whosoever is not found written in the book of life will be cast into the lake of fire.

Dear Christian Reader,—If you are really a believer in Jesus, you will never be summoned to that great white throne for judgment. Before that judgment day you will have been a thousand years already in glory with Christ, reigning with him over the earth. The foreknowledge of all this is given to you for your comfort and joy during the present period, in which you are called to "walk by faith, not by sight."

To refuse to believe this glorious truth is to dishonour your Lord, who has graciously revealed it, and to lose unspeakable present happiness. Rejection of this testimony will probably also entail loss in glory; but it will not imperil your Salvation. But, oh, dear fellow Christian, think of the baseness of refusing the messages of Him who loves you so perfectly, and who gave himself for you!

Any other interpretation of prophetic Scripture than here set forth, you will find involves contradictions, doubts, and fears. Scripture interprets Scripture, if we 'rightly divide the word of truth.' Difficulties may arise, but if we believe and wait upon the Holy Spirit, all will be made clear. Let us not be disturbed by such words as—'We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men,' &c., (2 Cor. v. 10—11.) The Apostle is here speaking in general terms of a certainty which applies to all. In ordinary conversation we might say of a number of persons and ourselves—'We are all going to business.' It would by no means follow that all were going to the same business! In like manner, every human being will have to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. But for all who believe in him, it will be a judgment seat of reward.

There will be no unbelievers judged at that time. It may be that some who will stand there, will have no reward to receive, because of their unfaithfulness after they believed in Christ. Yet they will be in absolute possession of the gift of perfect Salvation, for they will be in glorified bodies before they come to that judgment seat: 'Every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, [upon the true foundation,] he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.' (1 Cor. iii. 13—15) Can anything be more explicit?

[The development of this subject, viz., deliverance from the 'City of Confusion,' we purpose continuing from month to month.]

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. S. J. Crewe.—We deeply sympathise with you in your bereavement. How gladly we remember that Our Lord is the good Shepherd. In such a case as yours all hope must be in him, and He restoreth the soul. When He has healed the wound, we shall be glad to hear from you respecting your Scripture meeting.

R. B., Milford.—We are cheered by your kind remarks, and thank you for your valued efforts to spread the knowledge of Precious Truth.

J. H., Barnsbury.—We appreciate your remarks, and the spirit in which you have written. Respecting our brethren in the Lord, who as members of His body are faulty as to walk, we have nothing to say—"Charity covereth the multitude of sins." But as to Christian teachers, the very same love which would screen them as undistinguished individuals, must be unsparing in rebuke when as teachers they are unfaithful—otherwise Charity would be perverted to the injury of the Church, and the dishonour of Christ. We desire that our little paper should become generally known. Then, let it stand or fall. May it perish the day in which we "shun to declare the whole counsel of God." Accept our sincere thanks for your valued advice and kind promise of support. Be assured any of your communications shall have our careful and prayerful consideration.

RUGBY.—One signing himself "a weak disciple if one at all" asks our prayers; we pray for him heartily. His letter distresses us; would he could open his heart and give us his confidence. He may safely do so. He complains against himself, that, as a preacher, he has not enough love for precious souls, that his motives generally are selfish, that he is all sin and weakness. The answer to this is, Look off self, look at Christ—Get your AFFECTIONS set upon him, and all the rest will come right. Gather a few earnest Christians together for combined prayerful study of the Scriptures. Believe in the guidance of the Holy Ghost, and by earnest prayer place yourselves under His guidance. Then look at the word of truth boldly, accept what you are taught, and ACT IT OUT.

H. M.—Sends us a "Skeleton Key to Leviticus" published at 51, Gt. Marlborough Street. He says, "These are circulated among the needlewomen. Are they Scriptural?" We think this "Key" would prove useful to intelligent, enquiring Christians—but we should not think of placing it in the hands of the unregenerate. We notice the writer says "Moses and Aaron represent Christ, King and Priest." We think this is not quite accurate. Moses was used of God to make his will known to the Children of Israel, and was accepted as a mediator for them, &c. But Jehovah himself reigned over his people. He was their King.

RECEIVED.

"Tracts by the Rev Wm. Parks, B.A.," which we hope to notice in our next.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—We invite enquiries tending to the elucidation of scriptural truth. Controversial questions should be avoided entirely, if possible.

NOTICES.

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THE SCRIPTURAL CONSTITUTION OF A CHRISTIAN CHURCH.
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Printed by JOHN EVANS, 335a, Strand, W.C.; and published by JON CAUDWELL, 385, Strand, London, W.C. and Hall & Co, 25, Paternoster Row, E.C.

PRECIOUS TRUTH.

“WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?”—(Rom. iv. 3.)

Job Caudwell, 335, Strand, W.C.]

[Registered for transmission Abroad.]

No. 5.]

AUGUST 1, 1865.

[One Halfpenny.]

A LETTER TO THE CHRISTIAN READER.

BELOVED,—

Is it well with you? How will you answer me that question? Where will you look for evidence? It may be you are in a period of calm—that you have found an oasis in the desert. I pause not to ask of what character this is, though it behoves you to examine it thoroughly. But if you are in enjoyment of a temporary rest, you will doubtless reply to me at once—All is well.

It may be, however, that just now you are in trying circumstances, that you are weary with the journey, and ready to faint. Beloved, Look at Jesus. Think of him at the well of Samaria! He was there in the heat of the day; he was hungry; his disciples had gone for food, and had not yet returned. He was thirsty, for he asked the woman of Samaria to give him a drop of water to drink. He was tired; “Jesus being weary with his journey, sat thus on the well.” Oh, how inimitably touching are the words of the narrative. The Son of God, hungry, thirsty, and wayworn! He was the Lord from heaven, and could have commanded the stones to be made bread, and the water of the well to rise up to his parched lips. But there he sat, *patiently waiting*, careful only to do the will of his Father! And what was the Father’s will just then? That he should show us a *perfect pattern of patience and resignation*, and that just as he was—worn, and old, and famished—he should have his heart made glad, and his soul satisfied by ministering to the deep need of a poor sinner woman! “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.” Beautiful, glorious, heavenly Lord! His words and actions of tenderness, grace, and love, bow our hearts in worship now; how overwhelming will be our joy when we see Him face to face!

Dear brother or sister in the Lord: this lesson is for us, each of us. When our own souls are most tried, it is just the time in which we are best fitted to minister to others. Oh, the golden opportunities we are losing of being dispensers of blessing! We may have neither money nor goods to give; words of consolation and TRUTH are often far better and more welcome. But, oh, we must ourselves minister to those who need. Do not let us be satisfied any longer with the *deed* of charity distributed by deputy, best part of it *lost* away ere it reaches the needy, altogether *lost* the blessing which should go with it, and which should return abundantly multiplied to our own hearts: Oh, be up and doing. Jesus sent out many *messengers*, but above all he came *himself*. He had his Father’s work to do, and *he did it HIMSELF!*

Oh, let us imitate Jesus; then will it be always well with us in the highest degree.

But it is well with you, beloved. Indeed, it is well with you whatever your trials, however stormy or calm your way. “We know that *all things* work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to his purpose.” You do love God—it may be a very weak love—it is altogether unworthy as a response to that love of his which prompted him to give Jesus. But you believe on the Son, and therefore cannot help loving both Him and the Father. You are “called according to his purpose”—His unalterable purpose—and that is, unmixed blessing. All is well.

Ever yours in our adorable Lord Jesus Christ,

THE EDITOR.

CHRISTIAN UNITY.

“Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”—Eph. iv. 3.

MUCH thought has recently been devoted to this subject, and a large amount has been written with a true-hearted desire for the restoration of that which it is assumed has been lost. This interest in Christian Unity has been excited because it is seen to be most lovely in itself and entirely in accordance with the mind of our Lord.

But the great mistake generally made by Christians on this subject is—that they seek to effect that which is supposed to be called for in the passage quoted, by combinations, concessions, and arrangements of their own devising. This course might do if the object were to bring about BODILY UNITY, which, in truth, is the thought in most minds, though they would fain persuade themselves they are striving after the unity of the Spirit. To those who have not deeply considered the subject, it is indeed marvellous that we should be set to “keep the unity of the Spirit;” because, at first sight, this would seem to be beyond our power. Mere human reason might jump to the conclusion that our province would be to keep the unity of the *body*, looking to God to keep the unity of the *Spirit*. What we have to be convinced of, however, is this—In the sense of PRESERVATION the unity (both of the *body* and the *Spirit*) is for ever perfect; for we are “baptised by one Spirit into one body.” Every member of the body is kept by the Holy Spirit. The unity of the Spirit is a fact; we have neither to create it nor to combine to effect it. Now the Lord says to each believer—Keep this unity; hold it, cherish it, keep it. Look at the context—

“I beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in

love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

In this passage it is entirely a question of individual walk and conduct, not a matter of combination at all. Thus, if there be but one Christian following the Divine exhortation here given, he is keeping the unity of the Spirit. Though every other member of the body upon earth should continue in perversity and self-will, he will be in accord with the mind of the Spirit, which never changes. The lessons of Scripture are beautifully simple, though in wisdom most profound. When Christians conform themselves INDIVIDUALLY to the mind of the Spirit—to that extent, and in that way only, is it given them to "keep the unity of the Spirit."

To put the matter in another way: Suppose all Christians were to embrace Popery; would that be to keep the unity of the Spirit? We know it would not. If all were to become either Anglicans, Wesleyans, Independants, Baptists, or Plymouth Brethren—would it follow, as a consequence, that they would endeavour to "keep the unity of the Spirit?" Nay, we know it would not.

Look again at the Scripture before us, just as it stands: Nothing can be more evident than that the question raised is not what we ARE, or should seek to BE, but, (in accordance with God's purpose,) what we should individually DO.

Then, if we consider the question of Union; what is the basis of true fellowship? It is the mind of the Spirit made known to us through the Written Word. Here we have a true foundation. Any mere compacts between Christians have always failed, always must fail, and deserve nothing but failure. If the Lord had not provided unity, we might have been excused for seeking it in our own way. But unity *is*, and ever will be maintained. What we are set to do, is to "keep" it. The way to do this is clearly shown us.

With respect to creeds and sectarian divisions, these are produced by pride or ignorance, perhaps invariably an union of the two. We do not mean to be offensive in saying this. There are very few Christians, if any, against whom this charge may not be made. We are all sadly ignorant. "If any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." (1 Cor. viii. 2.) And as to pride, we little understand our own hearts if we do not detect pride lurking there, however much we may strive to subdue it.

There is but one remedy for all the mischief experienced through sectarian divisions: namely, a return to the Written Word, with a sincere desire to learn of the Holy Spirit, and then to DO, each one for himself or herself, the will of God. We assure dear brethren and sisters in the Lord, that if they meet together over the Scripture, with true purpose of heart, they will find there the perfect and only ground of unity.

To avail ourselves of the gracious provision made, we must, however, practically carry out the lessons the Lord will teach us. We must be lowly, meek, long-suffering, forbearing, loving, gentle, kind, peaceful. And then, when we are thus conformed to God's thoughts about keeping the unity of the Spirit, we may expect to be scorned and laughed at as weak and foolish, not

only by the world, but by fellow-Christians. This is hard for flesh to bear, but the Lord makes his faithful ones always to triumph, and such will discover that the joy of the Spirit far outweighs the mortification of the flesh.

SEPARATE FELLOWSHIPS INCLUDED IN LOCAL CHURCHES.

NOTWITHSTANDING all the disputation about churches, it is very plain that our Lord in addressing any one church in any place includes ALL believers in that locality. This is always true, by whatever servant he sends the message. Paul's epistles to the various churches, and also those in the Revelation, are each directed to Christians in a specified place. There is no such thought in Scripture as churches differently constituted. A denominational church ought to be regarded by the faithful as an impossibility. Looked at from on high,—(and it is as taking our stand with Jesus in the heavenlies that we ought to regard everything on earth,)—we should look upon believers as simply members of THE BODY. In the full realisation of the union of each believer to the glorified Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, we should pity the folly of regarding "a church" in any other aspect. We have heard Christians speculate about the difficulty they would have, supposing the Lord were to send an epistle to "the Church in London," in deciding where it should be delivered. There really ought to be no difficulty or doubt on the subject. A faithful servant would read it, or cause it to be read, in every assembly or congregation owning the lordship of Christ. This is proof that, as a fact, all believers in London do form but one Church.

Beloved, however perverse Christians may be in giving themselves separate names, titles, organisations, —calling themselves Societies, Associations, Bodies, Sects, Confederacies—ists, isms, and schisms,—Scripture is quite unbending, and will insist upon it we *are* ONE, a perfect unity. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

Now comes the question. What kinds of divisions, for temporal purposes, are necessary or justifiable? Primarily, difference of locality was the only Scriptural ground of division. If all Christian assemblies were simply meetings of Christians, such as described in "the Acts" and in Paul's Epistles, each regenerate person would, immediately on receiving the word of life and making profession of faith, be baptised, and then company with the assembly of believers nearest to his place of residence.

But heresy, apostacy, tradition, and every kind of confusion having been brought in, Scripture plainly recognises and enjoins the principle of SEPARATION as to fellowship. We cannot be sufficiently thankful for the Second Epistle to Timothy, as a safe guide in all inquiries on this important subject. When Paul wrote that letter, division, strife, and apostasy had already made rapid strides. "Wolves were not sparing the flock" and "perverse teachers were at work drawing away disciples after them." What are the faithful ones to do in such circumstances? The answer is plain—"separate from evil." "Let every one that nameth the

name of Christ *depart* from iniquity." (2 Tim. ii. 19.) What were they to do then? form a new church? Nay, the word of God could not teach that; it would be departure from divine principle to do so. Therefore, in the epistle referred to the case is fully met thus:—"Flee also youthful lusts; but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, *with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.*" (2 Tim. ii. 22.) We are to separate from everything that dishonours our Lord (ver. 19) and seek and enjoy *fellowship* with the faithful, the righteous, the loving, the peaceful, and the pure-hearted of the flock of Christ. We shall still be part of the one Church; that great Body which includes many with whom we cannot have fellowship while they walk unfaithfully and dishonour our Lord. Is the reader ready to say, We shall have but few companions? Indeed that *is* what we must expect. But oh, how unspeakably more blessed to be with a faithful few and our Lord in the midst, than with the showy multitude, the majority "having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof"!

A man who has many sons and daughters will see strifes and divisions among them; some may rebel and go right away from the rest of the family. Others, though remaining in the father's house, may be very undutiful children. Two or three perhaps grow up loving one another dearly; and manifesting gentleness and kindness to all. These become a little fellowship apart from the rest, having thoughts, desires, and purposes in common, seeking, above all, to be obedient to their parents. But notwithstanding all quarrels and separations, the family is one; nothing can alter that. Even though some were to give themselves new names, they cannot lose their common parentage. Do the two or three true-hearted, loving ones, consorting together more or less exclusively, disown their wayward or rebellious brethren? Nay, they love them, and strive in every righteous way to make all happy, in true family union.

Thus it is with the Church. All who are loving, faithful, and true, are prompted by the new nature, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to seek in fellowship the practical realisation of that unity which is established unalterably through faith in Jesus Christ, the one glorious Head. While many, alas! walk in ways of their own choosing, and seek to slake their spiritual thirst out of "broken cisterns which hold no water."

Here, then, we see the principles upon which our Lord would have us act. But then we must be careful to apply them to consciences instructed in the word of God and kept in exercise before the Lord. If we look at verses 20 and 21 of 2 Tim. ii. we shall see what is true motive for separation. "In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge [separate] himself from these he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified [set apart] and meet for the *Master's use*, prepared unto every good work."

Is this what we desire? Do we wish to be set apart for the Master's use? If so, we must separate from all who are careless of his honour. Our most

intimate fellowship, communion, and fellow-service, must be with those who call upon the Lord out of a pure heart.

Yet in the present confusion, there is a general kind of fellowship we may have, more or less, with all believers, because of the oneness of the body, and because we must love all in the Lord, and seek the welfare of all. Practically, we consider prayer meetings, Scripture meetings, &c. to afford valuable opportunities for such universal fellowship with believers. But even here—indeed always—we must act carefully, *in the consciousness of the abiding presence of the Lord.* At some of these meetings, those who venture to lead are manifestly ignorant of the revealed will of God and his unalterable purposes. Such persons offer prayers which *cannot* be granted. Others pray in the full vigour of their *carnal minds.* Indeed, the spiritual are frequently and most deeply grieved at promiscuous prayer meetings. There must be earnest closet-prayer for guidance here, as in all cases of doubt and difficulty. We believe a conscience kept in exercise will frequently compel withdrawal. There is great need that meetings for the spiritual study of Scripture should be deemed *essential*, in connection with meetings for prayer.

RELIGION—WHAT IS IT?

This may seem a very needless question; yet, how very few could give a just reply to it. People talk about "natural religion"! There is no such thing in existence. Then, as to Christian religion—what is it? Oh, how many human definitions one might enumerate of Christian religion! and all of them, more or less, vague and unsatisfactory. Christians go on with their various notions of religiousness, most of them being of a very traditional and superficial nature, and think these serve for religion. How few can give a sharply-defined and prompt exposition of the true meaning of religion! There is, indeed, but one religion; there was another, viz., "the Jews' religion." What was that? Not mere sentiment, but practical *obedience* and *active service*; and these characteristics are preserved in the very highest degree in the religion given to Christians.—"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." (James i. 27.)

This is the only definition of true religion furnished in the New Testament. People think religion is the one thing required of them; whereas it is only *one* of *many* requisites in the child of God. The first claim upon us is *faith*; and this must be preserved throughout our earthly pilgrimage: "we walk by faith, not by sight." Then, when the glory and work of the Son of God are revealed to us, we become *worshippers*; we *have* become spiritual, and "the Father seeketh such to worship him." We are also called to *fellowship with Jesus*, and, in measure, to be co-workers with Him. Moreover, our affections are to be "set upon things above," from whence also we are to "look for the Saviour."

But after enumerating all these, we find *religion* has to be added. Religion is the practical manifestation

of divine love and sanctity. It is essentially personal. Its requirements cannot be met by deputy. Do you wish your religion to be "pure and undefiled before God and the Father"? You must be *personally* a *visitor* of those who need the *ministrations of love*. You must also keep *yourself* in sanctification, separateness, "*unspotted from the world*." None but a faithful follower of Jesus can do this. Every other kind of religion (so called) is vain—utterly worthless.

"TO YOU WHICH BELIEVE HE IS PRECIOUS."

"Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" John xiv.

The manifestation of Christ to the soul is glory revealed. Between the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and the completion of the Written Word, he graciously gave many special manifestations of himself, some of which were—

To the weeping Mary lingering at the tomb, to turn her sorrow into joy, and send her to comfort others. John xx.

To the penitent Simon. Over this interview the veil is drawn; but it was doubtless to restore him. Luke xxiv. 34.

To the eleven, (locked indoors from fear of the Jews,) and said, "Peace be unto you. . . . Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." John xx.

Again, for the sake of poor, weak Thomas. . .

To the disciples gone a-fishing, to recal them to the walk of faith. John xxi.

To the apostles in Galilee, to commission them to preach to all nations, baptize, and teach. Matt. xxviii.

To encourage his lowly ones to wait in Jerusalem, assuring them that they should be endowed with power from on high to fulfil the commission they had received. Acts i.

To the first martyr, falling asleep. Acts vii.

To the imprisoned preacher, cast down and sorrowful. "The night following, the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul, for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou also bear witness at Rome." The apostle to the Gentiles was probably mourning that he had left his proper sphere of duty, and had persisted in going up to Jerusalem.

To the last remaining apostle, rejected of the world, lingering in the solitude of a desert isle. Rev. i.

If the heart be true to the Lord, and the believer walk in faith and obedience, he who is with us always delights still to spiritually manifest himself, and will do so until he come in person to take his Bride to the heavenly mansions. "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Even so. "My Beloved is mine and I am his."

Christ is now manifested to the soul—

1. By the Holy Spirit through the Written Word:—"He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." At the time Christ spoke not a book of the New Testament was written. This is a blessed promise, for us as well as the apostles. Oh, that we may value it more.

2. We may expect a spiritual manifestation of Christ in proportion to our love of, and obedience to the Word: "If a man love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." John xiv.

3. In the breaking of bread—"And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him. . . . And they returned to Jerusalem. . . . and told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in the breaking of bread." Luke xxiv.

4. By the spiritually minded in all meetings held in Christ's name—"Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them." Matt. xviii.

5. The Church now is like the disciples in their little vessel on the troubled sea of Galilee; it is night, but the "night is far spent, the day is at hand," that is to say, "The Lord is at hand." When he is seen, he will be gladly received into the ship, and immediately—calm, day, and home.

COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL BY

ST. JOHN.

(Written expressly for this publication.)

CHAPTER I.

Ver. 24, 25.—"And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him and said, why baptizeth thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet." How sorely puzzled were these Pharisee Priests and Levites by the simple testimony and ministry of John! Prophets told specifically of "the Christ," and "Elias," and also spoke of "a prophet" without giving a name, as in Deut.: xviii. 15,—this latter evidently, *as we see*, pointing to the Messiah. But guided only by their carnal judgment, these enquirers seem to have concluded that one might be neither the Christ nor his forerunner. They appear, however, readily to have understood that an order of *purification* was to be introduced by the expected messenger from God—and they no doubt thought baptism would purify them, provided only the administrator were duly authenticated. Hence their desire to know John's standing. "If you cannot show your mission in the prophetic word, why baptisest thou?" In Matthew's gospel we are told that "Many of the Pharisees and Sadducees came to his baptism," but "he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance;" we think that this proves they expected to find a virtue in baptism itself—instead of seeing it to be, as it was, but a *sign* of repentance. In consequence of this error, John said, --First give some evidence of repentance before you take the sign of it.

26, 27. "John answered them, saying, I baptise with water; but there standeth one among you whom ye know not; He it is who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoes' latchet I am not worthy to unloose." In other words, It is of very little moment whether you are satisfied about me. Turn your eyes to the important One. The long promised Messiah is in your midst; let every other consideration wither in His presence; He alone is worthy. I am not deserving of so menial a task as that of unfastening his shoes. My Mission is as weak as water-baptism, compared with his, whose ministry will be sealed with the outpouring gift of the Holy Ghost.

THE "PLYMOUTH BRETHREN."

(Concluded from our last.)

Coming into spiritual liberty in the way we have shown, it was not long before the question of baptism presented itself to "the Brethren." Unhappily, many whose consciences were exercised on this subject bowed to the dictum of one of their leaders whose ministry in most things had been greatly blessed to them. Acting under the guidance of this brother, our Lord's ordinance of baptism was practically ignored. It was, in fact, impossible for "the Brethren," as a *body*, to enjoin baptism upon those whom they had already brought into fellowship. They had received Christians without raising any question as to whether they were baptised or not; and they could not now turn upon one another after having wrought together in *fellowship life*, and demand that those who had not passed through the waters of *death* should now do so. It was contended also that baptism was unimportant—that Paul has left on record, "he was not sent to baptise," &c. It became, too, a favourite dogma that baptism ought not to be made a door of entrance to the Lord's Table. Moreover, the leader we have alluded to (whose name and works generally are deservedly held in high honour) decided that any kind of baptism which satisfied a believer's conscience would do. These palliatives

for the practical unfaithfulness of the association ("the Brethren") have, of course, proved inefficient to still the consciences of the members. With very few exceptions, we believe, "the Brethren" individually, and simply as Christians, do that which their leaders thought it inconsistent to lay upon them. After walking for awhile in fellowship life, unbaptised, they soon find the plain teaching of scripture too strong for all sophistry, and voluntarily seek baptism. Obedience is the highest kind of wisdom for sons and servants. In a question of this kind much knowledge is apt to prove a hindrance. "Knowledge puffeth up." Indeed, it will often be found that the greatest darkness on the subject of Christian baptism prevails in the minds of those who, on many doctrinal questions, manifest great spiritual intelligence. A child in grace, content to be but a child, will say, "My Saviour certainly commanded it, and therefore it cannot be wrong for me to obey;" and in that simple way cuts the knot which many wise (?) ones spend a life-time in endeavouring to untie. Indeed, the matter is one which has to be dealt with practically (according to Scripture) immediately a soul has received the new birth through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Such an one is not competent to grasp the question as one of doctrine, but bows to it instantly as a command. As such, it is expressly given by the Son of God, and it would not be competent for even apostolic authority to set it aside; much less should any inferential arguments be permitted to call in question either the ordinance itself, or its proper place as clearly given by "the Lord."

We do not profess to be giving a history of "the Brethren." Our object is simply to point out wherein they have acted faithfully, and have been blessed; and, for warning and profit, to note in what respects they are manifestly wrong. Through ignoring baptism, "the Brethren" were driven to invent some means of testing those who seek fellowship with them. The scripture order of procedure is (let the reader search and see) declaration of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, water baptism, fellowship. That is to say, a *believer* who had submitted to baptism is entitled to come into *fellowship* with assembled believers without further question. "The Brethren" are not satisfied with that divine rule. They say, "We do not consider baptism effectual to keep out all we wish to keep out." This is it. They are not content with bare evidence of the new birth, and of faithfulness to the Lord's first requirement; they demand an amount of Christian progress—in knowledge, at least. They, therefore, discard the Lord's ordinance of baptism, and appoint *visitors*; or, rather, some among them take that office. Persons are received into fellowship on the recommendation of two or three known as such. In London, the visitors report the result of their investigations to a central synod, which again communicates the names of candidates to the several gatherings, in all of which they are read over as proposed on the following Lord's day.

We but glance at this matter. It is so wholly wanting in faith, and contrasts so unfavourably with much which is bright and valuable among "the Brethren," that we gladly avoid further details.

In early days, "the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved." In these times, "the Brethren" undertake to do this! It is very solemn, very sad! And this rebuke applies to nearly all denominations. Happily, the Lord is again working in His own way. There are now many little bands of Christians who assemble themselves together in all but primitive simplicity. Baptism before fellowship is not pressed as it should be; but we believe this simple act of faithfulness will, ere long, very generally prevail. We anticipate that the Lord, at His coming, will behold the Church upon earth mainly in similar attitude to that which it had at the beginning, only in much weakness—His people in little companies, and despised by the world. Many, doubtless, may be found in the conditions which they obtained in the Churches of "Sardis" and "Laodicea," (Rev. iii.); but the generality, we trust, will have the characteristics of "Philadelphia."

There is one other subject respecting which "the Brethren" are faulty. Altogether slighting the ordinance of baptism, and making it, by their traditions, of little or no effect, they, on the other hand, give undue prominence to the institution of the Lord's Supper. They make fellowship to consist, almost ex-

clusively, of "breaking of bread." Then, they have a theory that *they only* possess the Lord's Table—that, in London, "the Table" is one, and that each of their gatherings (exclusive, be it understood, of those who were excommunicated) have, or are (?) a corner of the Table! So that, unless a Christian be received into Brethrenism, he or she has no place at the Lord's Table! And, of course, it follows that if one leaves this little community, he or she is said to have withdrawn from *THE* Lord's Table!! We are stating simple fact, incredible as it must appear to many. Alas! how far from the truth can dear saints drift away when once they let go their hold upon "It is written." When other Christians meet to break bread and partake of the cup of blessing, they certainly do show forth the Lord's death. We doubt very much whether the most bigoted among "the Brethren" would deny that. What, then, becomes of the exclusive Table? Any pretension to such is very silly, as well as sad. The tendency of all this is, of necessity, towards narrow-mindedness and degeneracy. "The Brethren" groan under a spirit of worldly-mindedness,—not in any very gross form, but it is growing upon them. And they lack that Christ-like simplicity and devotedness which belonged to them when they were little in their own eyes. As belonging to "a body," this is beyond remedy; but as members of "THE BODY," the Church, "the Brethren" have only to quit the mistaken position they hold, abandon their traditions, and gather as Christians, without any human organisation. Let them be content to be faithful *few*, and *little ones*, and follow the Lamb *whithersoever* he leadeth. The eye of faith must be fixed upon Christ, not upon human leaders. When will Christians learn that lesson? But notwithstanding all—the members of this community, whose failures, as such, we dare not screen (call them Brethren, or Plymouth Brethren, or what you will), are individually very dear, loving, and lovable Christians, generally well taught in "the Word," and very sincere. They love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and joyfully wait for His appearing. The Lord bless them, and lead them, and keep them, with all His dear saints everywhere, in patience until He comes, for His own glorious name's sake.

As respects Ministry, the way in which it is recognised and exercised among "the Brethren" is in entire accordance with Scripture. Such as have gift, labour without fee or reward. Bright, shining lights there are in their midst, unknown to the world, and but little owned by Christians beyond the limited circle of their own denomination. But the Lord owns and honours them, for they honour him. Their influence has been and is felt far and wide, however little they may be known by name. We believe it would not be too much to say that most of the advanced truths of Scripture, now generally expounded by spiritual evangelists and teachers, have been unfolded afresh in these last days by the Holy Spirit, chiefly through the instrumentality of those who have ministered among "the Brethren."

But it has been apart from Brethrenism that these faithful servants of the Lord have been so greatly used. It is their writings which have been so much blessed. These are in most cases published under initials only, and are (almost without exception) free from sectarian bias. Many a preacher whose name is celebrated, and many thousands of Christians who are in some degree enjoying spiritual liberty and rejoicing in the hope of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, are indebted to the writings of these faithful ones, who, though a little cramped perhaps, when dealing with their own party, have discarded all narrowness when expounding the word of God, and have sought to embrace in their large-hearted love all who love the Saviour. Careless of name and fame, they have kept themselves in obscurity, and have done all to the Lord, content to await from his gracious lips the much-prized words—"Well done, good and faithful servant!"

NO HOUSE OF GOD.—In the present dispensation, there is no Temple on earth. Persons foolishly talk about going to the House of God and the Sanctuary. It is quite a delusion. Buildings called churches are opened with a ceremony called consecration; but it is all in defiance of the spirit or letter of Scripture. See Acts xvii. 24. The true worshipper must, even now, know his place in the heavens—"within the veil;" there only in spirit can the believer worship. See Heb. x. 19—22.

ON SANCTIFICATION.

We consider sanctification to be *isolation* from evil. Jesus was ever sanctified—set apart to holiness. Devotedness and self-sacrifice seem also to be implied in some applications of the word. The Lord said, "For their sakes I sanctify myself," &c. (John xvii. 19.) But separation from all that is opposed to the mind of God is the chief thought pressed upon us in Scripture. Thus it was with our blessed Saviour. He was separate from evil, isolated from it. A short time before his hour of agony, He said, "The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing *in* me." Satan could lay hold of nothing in him to fasten sin upon. The Lord Jesus was undoubtedly sanctified, i. e., in the condition of sanctity, even when "He bare our sins in his own body on the tree." For though our sins were, most incomprehensibly to us, yet actually, in his body, they could never commingle with his pure self.

Now, He is our sanctification. "He is of God made unto us sanctification," as well as wisdom, righteousness, and redemption. He is also our pattern as to sanctification. Our calling is to be like him. Our standing and acceptability before God are that we are identified with him. (Of course we are speaking only of those who believe in him unto salvation.) We are "Accepted in the beloved;" "As he is *so are we* in this present world." This is in respect to the new life which he has given to us; the new nature which sinneth not. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for His (God's) seed remaineth in him, and he *cannot* sin *because* he is born of God." But then, as to experience, (being not yet actually delivered from the old carnal nature, but *in a* "body of sin,") the believer is liable to commit sin. The new nature, however, never consents. It shrinks from and detests evil; such sin as a true Christian may be overtaken by, is committed in the power of the Old Adam nature. Through faith in Jesus Christ, the believer is sanctified, i. e., set apart to holiness. He is not only forgiven and justified—a new life is also given to him which is a holy life, a sanctified life, identical with the life of Christ, isolated from evil. But as sin came very near to Jesus when on the accursed tree, being in his body (most mysteriously so, beyond our comprehension); so also sin comes, so to speak, even nearer (perhaps) to the new nature in us, because of the carnality of our minds and permitted desires.

This brings us to the second order of thought which Scripture furnishes respecting sanctification: viz., the prayerful desire of Paul expressed in 1 Thess. v. 23; "The very God of peace *sanctify* you *wholly*; and (or, that) your whole spirit, and soul, and body be *preserved blameless* unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Now this, we think, is not, as is generally understood, progressive sanctification, or the completion of the work of sanctification. Surely it is more a renewal of that consciousness of sanctification and practice in sanctity which belong to us, and is akin to Eph. v. 25, 26, 27. "Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it; that he might *sanctify* and

cleanse it with washing of water by the word, that it should be holy and without blemish." The Lord first sanctifies (or sets apart to holiness) the Church: then, because of earthly defilements, he brings in the washing or purifying influence of "the word;" thus renewing, as it were, its standing in sanctification, its separateness from evil, its holiness. While it is so with the Church, it is so also with the individual believer.

A simple illustration may be helpful to a true understanding of Scripture teaching. Suppose one of the golden vessels belonging to God's ancient sanctuary to have been abused or used for some vile purpose, such as the display of human pomp and pride at Belshazzar's feast. The *quality* of the vessel is unaltered. It is of Pure Gold. But it has been handled by a vile sinner; therefore it may have to be purged in some divine way before restoration to its sanctified uses. Its intrinsic fitness has never been changed. First and last it was a pure vessel made unto sanctification. So with the blood-washed sinner. He is henceforth a vessel formed (Heb. x. 10). unto sanctification: He is sanctified. Satan comes in and misuses the believer; but his standing in purity and sanctification is unalterable. Purging may be needful, more or less frequently, according as he is walking circumspectly or otherwise; and the process will be proportionately painful. To be restored to *sanctified uses* is the believer's need. Hence the prayer, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly," &c.

If any of our readers have other thoughts on this theme, we invite them to search and see whether they can find any Scripture to bear them out. In that case let us hear from them. We are quite open to conviction.

THE CITY OF CONFUSION,

(Isaiah xxiv. 10.)

AND THE WAY OUT OF IT.

A FAITHFUL WORD FOR CHRISTIANS.

(Continued from our last.)

6. THE WRITTEN WORD.—Surely enough has been said to induce the reader to 'Search the Scriptures' like the noble Bereans (Acts xxii. 10—12), to see whether these things are so. This searching must, however, be accompanied by prayer to God and faith in the Holy Ghost, as the one who is to 'lead us into all truth.' May we ask you, dear reader,—Is it a practice with you to pray to God in faith for enlightenment upon his Word? When you meet with difficulties in reading the Scriptures, do you take those very difficulties to the throne of grace, and pray the Lord to teach you? 'If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God, that giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not: and it shall be given him.' (James i. 5.)

7. RESTORATION OF ISRAEL.—We just add a few words on this subject. Christians have in thought and teaching confused the *Jewish* Dispensation with the present *Gentile* Dispensation. For eighteen hundred years have believers (in unholy alliance with mere professors) tried to blend those utterly opposite things, *Law* and *Grace*. The Jewish Dispensation, which brought in the Law, was completely set aside (not abolished) when Israel refused to receive the testimony of the Apostles, after the ascension of Christ. When the Church—a *world-rejected* Body, following its *world-rejected* Head—has

been gathered home to heavenly glory, the Jews will be restored, under the immediate reign of Israel's long-promised Messiah. The passage already quoted from Romans xi., and many other scriptures, clearly prove this. 'A remnant of the earthly Israel will be found faithful in and after the day of the great tribulation. These will be restored to the Promised Land, and through Israel will all the nations of the earth be blessed. 'His people shall be willing in the day of His power.'

One most important result of discerning the marked separation of, and contrast between the Jewish and Christian dispensations is, deliverance from the bondage of the law. 'Ye are not under the Law, but under Grace.' (Rom. vi. 14.) This is surely emphatic enough for all who own 'the Word' as rule and guide. But as long as Christians listen to preachers who uphold the anti-scriptural blending of Judaism with Christianity, they will be kept in comparative darkness, sorrow, and doubt. What else can result from disregard of the plain teachings of the Word of God? Alas, how many thousands of souls are kept under the bondage and terror of the Law, instead of rejoicing in 'the liberty of the Sons of God'—the liberty 'with which Christ has made them free.' Of course it should be evident to all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, that the liberty he has given is *not* licence to sin. It was sin which killed the Lord of life and glory! and it ought, therefore, to be intensely hateful to every believer. Rom. vi. fully settles the question as to *how* we are delivered from Law; and we pray you to consider this Scripture prayerfully.

8. THE MINISTRY.—We must now submit to the test of 'What saith the Scripture?' another most important subject. It is that of Ministry. In the Christian economy, according to Scripture, there is no division into classes. Clergy and Laity are distinctions unknown in the New Testament. In Israel there was a distinct tribe set apart as priests. But, as already shown, we have no part in that dispensation. The Ministry *given* by our Lord Jesus Christ is expressly enumerated in Eph. iv.—viz. 'Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers.' These are distinctly stated to be *gifts* from Himself to his body, the Church. Apostles and Prophets (who had power to ordain and foretell things to come, by direct revelation from the Lord,) ceased as soon as the mind of God had been fully made known. We have now the Written Word instead.

The Lord still gives Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers; but he never calls upon his people to give themselves such, nor to appoint or ordain them. Neither does he set them to ordain one another. Men are foolish and unfaithful enough to accept ordinations and appointments from their fellows, and are unbelieving and perverse enough to go to colleges for wisdom instead of going to God as he has expressly instructed them to do; but unless they have gifts from Christ they can neither evangelize, shepherdize, nor teach. 'My speech and my preaching (says Paul) was *not* with enticing words of *man's* wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should *not* stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect; yet *not* the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought, but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God *ordained* before the world unto our glory.' (1 Cor. ii. 4—7.) 'Now we have received *not* the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might *know* the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, *not* in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth *not* the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.' (1 Cor. ii. 12—14.) 'Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise. For the *wisdom of this world is foolishness with God*. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, the Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise that they are vain. Therefore let no man glory in men.' (1 Cor. iii. 18—21.)

All this is plain enough, if Christians will be taught of God. The entire institution of *Clergy* is a most grievous mistake. Ministry is thus set before us in scripture:—

An *Evangelist* is a person gifted to preach the Gospel of Salvation, and it is evident he should exercise his calling whenever and wherever he can get unconverted persons to hear him. He is appointed by the Lord, and to him *only* is he answerable. He should never accept from man either an appointment or a stipend; by so doing he becomes the servant of man. Yet if he be given wholly to the work of the Lord, those who have profited by his ministry are to take care to supply his temporal wants—'The Lord has ordained that they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.' All the Scriptures which speak of pecuniary aid in connection with Christian Ministry, apply to those who devote their lives to preaching the Gospel. It is for Evangelists, who travel far and wide, to proclaim the glad tidings of Salvation, for whom the Lord provides by laying their needs upon believers. But for those who preach the Gospel near home, if they can follow their ordinary avocations, labouring with their hands, as did Paul, it is far happier to do so. In any case let them never ask help of unbelievers.

Pastors or *Elders* are given by the Lord to care for the Sheep and the Lambs of His flock. They were, in the first days of the Church, ordained by Apostolic power. This power of ordaining was sometimes delegated to others, as Timothy and Titus; but this delegated power was conveyed by special gift, and was laid upon them for temporary purposes only. No power of ordaining is possessed now, for we nowhere read that it was to be perpetuated. If any pretend to it, we ask—Whence is it obtained?

The *Teacher's* office is evidenced by the name. His labours are exercised in the *assembly of believers*. Neither the Pastor nor the Teacher should accept payment. 'The Elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. 'Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the *oversight thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; *not for filthy lucre*, but of a ready mind; neither as being Lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.' (1 Pet. v. 1—3.)

This question of Ministry will, perhaps, be better understood by Christians who may not hitherto have given attention to the subject—by looking at the true construction of a Church.

In the highest sense of the term, there is but one church, the body of Christ, which will be revealed in the glory. But upon earth the one church should be represented by assemblies, or churches of believers. In such assemblies the unconverted have no place as worshippers, nor can they have part in any matters for which Christians should assemble themselves together. They may, however, sit by as hearers. The basis upon which believers should come together is the word of the Lord in Matt. xviii. 20—'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.' In this we have not only a *promise* of the Lord's presence, but an *assurance* that irrespective of time and place the *Head of the Church is present* where two or three believers are gathered in his name. Of course faith only can realise the blessing of it. Christians generally do *not* gather in the name of Jesus simply, but in the names of sects—Anglicans, Methodists, Baptists, Independents, and so forth. What are called congregations are notoriously mixed assemblies of believers and unbelievers. The assurance of the Lord's presence is evidently not for such. His presence as Head of the Church is not owned, and of course is not reckoned upon, (except, of course, in respect of the worship of God, who is everywhere present.) Yet we gladly acknowledge that the power of the name of Jesus is owned in such assemblies, and the Gospel of his salvation is preached. But this is no recognition of the *very presence* of the *Head* of the Church. On the contrary, man is exalted, to headship; all worship, teaching, &c., being under the rule and guidance of a clergyman, who is in many cases appointed by secular authority, or at best elected by the congregation, in any case by some mere human arrangement.

We refrain from touching upon Pew Rents, Salaries, Livings, Lordships, &c. The whole system is *thoroughly unscriptural*. All is summed up in that word.

[The development of this subject, viz., deliverance from the 'City of Confusion,' we purpose continuing from month to month.]

OUR CORRESPONDENTS AND OURSELVES.

J. L., Peckham,—informs us that "the origin of that which has grown into Plymouth Brethrenism dates at least from 1821, and is consequently over 40 years old." Our correspondent also corrects us on several points, and gives much information about their doctrinal controversies, which would be important if we desired to give all the ramifications of the movements and agitations which have occurred among the Brethren. That was not our object. All we wished, was to furnish Christians generally with a truthful account of what the Brethren really are. We sincerely thank J. L., however, for the clear statements contained in his very kind letter.

C. P., East Moulsey,—has also written us a very able exposition of the grievances and ruptures which have occurred among the Brethren. These matters we have purposely avoided, and cannot touch them now. We give, however, two or three extracts from C. P.'s letter, which are pertinent to the line of things we desired to review.—"Fifteen years ago I took the step I had long felt I must, or would come at last; I came out from the Church of England so-called. I had shrunk from joining Dissenters, and for some reason equally shrunk from joining the Brethren; still, having taken the one step, the next seemed to me, at that time, inevitable; and I found myself worshipping with those called (by others) Plymouth Brethren. Still, I never did, and do not now, recognise any other than the "one body, one Spirit," and thus was I kept, by God's grace, from falling into the snare laid by some of constituting themselves the body, the one assembly of God. * * To my own mind, you exalt the Plymouth Brethren, or rather depreciate other Christians, by attributing to the former that they became clearly convinced that our Lord Jesus Christ had sent the Holy Ghost to guide his followers into all truth. It was just such an assumption which often set me against the Brethren while in the Church of England, because while there I as fully acknowledged this truth as I may be supposed to do now. So I did the unity of the Body. * * * I have reason for saying you exalt the Brethren beyond their due. As regards certain principles, I must thankfully own them, accept and act on them; and must therefore be content to be called (by others) a 'Plymouth.' No doubt the fact of leaving Baptism an open question did of necessity lead to confusion; many were afraid of insisting too much upon it lest they should lose Mr D—, who still clings to 'infant sprinkling.'" [Your last letter in our next.—Ed.]

W. H. H., Derby, writes as follows:—"Will you be kind enough to send me 26 copies of PRECIOUS TRUTH? I enclose stamps. I like your paper much, and believe it will be made a blessing to the Lord's people. You will be glad to hear that I have been able to get nearly 30 regular subscribers, and live in hopes that this number will soon be much increased. Kindly send me a few numbers (in accordance with your note in No. 3) to distribute gratis, and to send to friends at a distance. In this way I trust I could get many to take it up who do not know of its existence yet. I am a lover of precious truth, and desire to see it scattered far and wide. About a fortnight ago a few Christians with myself commenced a meeting on Monday evenings for reading the Scriptures. I hope if the Lord will to let you know more of this, and how we progress by and bye. I have the privilege of gathering with a few Christians, in the name of Jesus only, every week for breaking of bread. This is not on the Lord's Day; at present there are hindrances to our coming together on the first day of the week. Will you kindly give us a word on Sanctification—what is it? Many Christians think of it as perfection in the flesh—absolute sinlessness of life in this world. Are not all believers sanctified? Has the word only one or several meanings?" — [We thank W. H. H. very heartily for his exertions in spreading the knowledge of PRECIOUS TRUTH. May many other dear brethren and sisters be led to do likewise; not for our advantage, for we have nothing to gain, but for the sake of the sheep and lambs of the flock. We congratulate our correspondent upon the open door for searching the Scriptures and for fellowship in breaking of bread. May the Lord send abundant blessing upon these and all such manifestations of faithfulness. As requested, the

subject of Sanctification is noticed in our present number.—Ed.]

J. P. Birmingham, orders some copies, and says, "Please explain Heb. vi. 1, 5, 6."—[We hope to comply in our next number.—Ed.]

A Z. says, "I have read your little paper from its commencement with interest; and am particularly pleased with the article entitled The Plymouth Brethren. By this movement the holiest, deepest truths of Scripture have been perverted and made formative of a sect. Alas! what is man? To suppose Paul when he by the Holy Ghost wrote his epistles had in his mind the forming of Plymouth Brethrenism is manifestly absurd. And yet to this his epistles are twisted. God has certainly come in with a breach, but who as yet has learned the lesson He would fain teach?"—[We believe the lesson is, that henceforth earnest and true-hearted Christians should be content with very small fellowships, in which the activities of divine love are kept in exercise—where brethren and sisters really love one another and prove it one to another in deed as well as in word. Above all we must walk in the consciousness of the deep humiliation which has come over the Church. We deserve to be a despised people. Just as the world's Churches are arrogating to themselves more and more of pomp and self-sufficiency, must the Church of God manifest humility and self-abasement: and this not only because we are so taught in "the Word," but in consequence of our manifest failures as a chosen people. Indeed we have nothing to boast of but the love of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Our hope and expectancy must be the perfect deliverance which he will bring at his coming. We must really be "turned from idols to serve the living and true God, and wait for his son from Heaven."—Ed.]

W. L., (Camden Town, takes us to task for saying "The word of God declares that the soul is saved through faith alone," and asks us to point out the passage. We refer at once to Rom. x. 9, 10; Acts xvi. 31; 1 John v. 13. We merely cite these passages. Our difficulty is not in finding Scripture evidence, but out of the abundance where to choose from; we are amazed that any Christian (i.e. a believer) can have any difficulty about it.

E., Islington, writes—"I have known dear Christians who have sought to gather believers in faithfulness to the Lord in small fellowships, stigmatised 'robbers of churches'! This is grievously harsh and ungenerous."—[It is more; it is untrue. E. will see from our article in this number on "Separate Fellowships included in Local Churches" that the ground taken by those of whom he complains is quite un-Scriptural—that there is no such thing in Scripture as "our church" from which to rob. "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." Let us seek grace to approve ourselves to him, and to "feed his sheep," wherever we may find them.

RECEIVED.—"Lay-preaching," &c. Too late.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—We invite enquiries tending to the elucidation of scriptural truth. Controversial questions should be avoided entirely, if possible.

NOTICES.

Letters for the Editor to be addressed to 335, Strand, W.C.

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TO OUR READERS.—We ask brethren and sisters in the Lord to order a few numbers monthly, and take some pains to lend them about. If done to the Lord in faith, you will thus be dispensers of much blessing.

CHRISTIANS in the Neighbourhood of the Strand are invited to the Scripture Reading Meeting at 335a, side-door, Monday, at Seven.

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NOTICE.—Employment is wanted for a Christian man, a labourer. He wants a Porter's place, or other suitable employment. Any communication will be gladly received by the Editor, 335a, Strand.

Printed by JOHN EVANS, 335a, Strand, W.C.; and published by JOB CAUDWELL, 335, Strand, London, W.C. Tuesday, August 1, 1865.

PRECIOUS TRUTH.

“WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?”—(Rom. iv. 3.)

Job Caudwell, 335, Strand, London, W.C.]

[Scott & Allan, 109, Sauchiehall-street, Glasgow.

No. 6.]

SEPTEMBER 1, 1865.

[One Halfpenny.]

A LETTER TO THE BELIEVER IN JESUS.

BELOVED,—Once again I greet you in the name of our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. I love you for his sake. You are a sheep or a lamb of his flock. On what are you feeding just now? Is that new life which Jesus has given you through faith in his name, growing? Have you life “more abundantly”? If not, it is because you are not feeding upon his Word. Is divine life shining out from you? If not, it is because you need “the washing of water by the Word.” Dear Christian, Brother or Sister—you require that the Scriptures should operate in you continually. How much do you know of the mind of God? How can you *please* your Heavenly Father if you do not know his will? How can you follow the Good Shepherd if you do not listen to his voice? You have got a few passages of Scripture well in your memory; they have been very precious to you in times past, and you are apt to quote them. All very well. But you want *fresh* food, and *fresh* washing, every day. You do not want washing in the blood of Jesus every day; that has been done effectually once. It was a thorough cleansing, and you will never need blood-washing again. You may often commemorate the event, and remember it always with thankfulness, but you cannot have it repeated. We are “sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once.” (Heb. x. 10.) The Israelites kept the feast of the passover every year—but the blood was used to save them from judgment only once, and that when they were in Egypt. Doubtless, by keeping the feast of our passover—the Lord’s Supper—and by every faithful remembrance of the atoning work of Christ, the *conscience* is as it were sprinkled with the blood. But you were effectually sanctified when you were first saved by faith. Now, however, you want *frequent* washing by “the Word.” Oh, come to it often: not turning over its pages with the thought that you can find its virtues on the face of them. But by earnest spiritual prayer, obtain the guidance of the Holy Ghost. Never open your Bible without praying in the spirit that “the Comforter” may minister the Word of truth to your soul. Trust God to feed and wash you while you read his word; and he will do it. Jesus said, “The Comforter, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, *he shall teach you all things*, and bring all things to your remembrance *whatsoever I have said unto you.*” “He is faithful that promised.” Trust him and he will do it. So shall you be delivered from *traditions of men*, which have hitherto so grievously perplexed and hindered us.

We cannot *depend* upon the teachings of those we may esteem as the best of men, without *proving* them by the word of God. How many *hirelings* have “climbed up some other way” into the sheepfold. Dear sheep, you must get to the Good Shepherd. Let him care for you, lead you, feed you, water you. Read the Twenty-third Psalm: “The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want,” &c. What is it that fills you so much with joy on reading that Scripture? It is the presence and acts of the Lord. You begin by placing yourself under the care of the Almighty One. The Good Shepherd is LORD of all. The LORD is *my* Shepherd: HE will do everything for me: HE will not hand me over to hirelings. If I keep close to him all will be well with me. “I shall not want. HE maketh me to lie down in green pastures: HE leadeth me beside the still waters. HE restoreth my soul. HE leadeth me in the paths of righteousness.” Walking “through the valley of the *shadow* of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me: THY rod and THY staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies. Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.” Why? Because the LORD is *my* Shepherd. I know his voice, and I follow him. Believe me, my brother, my sister—there is no *safety* with any other.

Yours in everlasting love
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
THE EDITOR.

THOUGHTS ON HEBREWS VI.

Verses 4-6.—“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”

Verses 7-8.—“For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: but that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and nigh unto cursing; whose end—to be burned.”

SATAN would fain persuade us that from this Scripture we may infer the possibility of a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ coming under eternal condemnation. Trusting in the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we pur-

pose to show that this is *not* its true bearing: such a doctrine is nowhere taught in the word of God. Christians are snared into these Christ-dishonouring thoughts by suffering the enemy to isolate a verse or two, and put his construction on the passage; whereas they should look at the context to find a correct interpretation. The Apostle's theme is, *Progress in Christian walk and practice*. Towards the close of the preceding chapter he says to the Hebrew believers, he has many things to tell them about Jesus—things "hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time [considering how long you have been in the faith] ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God: and have become such as have need of milk and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe." This is the key-note to what follows. Let us glance over the entire chapter.

Read verses 1-3.—Herein they were taught that repentance from (Jewish) dead works, submission to baptism, and the belief in the primary doctrines of Christianity, were things past and done with. They could not repeat these things—nor should they stagnate in the consideration of them, but "*go on to perfection*."

Christians generally have long fallen into the same mistake as the Hebrew converts. The vast majority of believers in these days get no further than the foundation truths of Christianity. They go one Lord's day after another to hear Gospel preachers, i.e. evangelists, whom they ought to have done with long ago. Only the unregenerate require to hear the Gospel of Salvation, none but the recently converted ought to want baptism and primary doctrine; the Child of God should be *growing in grace* and in the *knowledge and love* of God. We ought to progress constantly, even to a right, spiritual, understanding of *all Scripture*.

Verses 4-6.—Now we see the bearing of these verses specially under our consideration. The reason why believers should not continue merely in the consideration of the doctrines, which were once the only ones of vital importance to them, is here given. If they should fall away it would be impossible to renew them again to repentance, i.e. they could not be brought back to that point where they first found Salvation. This is *not* God's way of dealing with his people; He does not bring them back to the condition which was needful for the reception of life. They *have* been born again; and with respect to that new life, they cannot sin. It is the old, corrupt, carnal nature which brings into sin. Hence the need of constantly watching over and keeping it under. If this be neglected we shall more or less fall away. What is to be done, then? God, in mercy, comes in with chastening, breaking down and *consuming* the fleshy will,—thus bringing us into the attitude of the prodigal son; in which condition *the Father* is ever ready to receive and restore us. That which is allowed in us of evil, arising from the promptings of the natural heart, *must* be got rid of. The divine provisions for affecting this are watchfulness, prayer, the application of the "Water of the Word," (i.e. Scripture applied by the Holy Spirit,) self-judg-

ment, and confession. "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. (1 Cor. xi. 31.)"

This is the wonderful trust our Lord has committed to us—self-judgment. He who is careful to judge himself will be watchful and guarded against sin; for he knows what sorrow follows upon the commission of Peter's fault. One who by sin has denied his Master, will surely when he gets the look of reproof from the Lord (by coming under the operation of the Written Word,) go forth and weep *bitterly*. If the believer will not act as his own judge, the Lord *must* judge him. "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." (1 Cor. xi. 31, 32.) This is conclusive, as to the way in which the Child of God must deal, *or be dealt with*.

Verses 7-8.—Here we have, in a simple figure, the righteousness of God, in thus dealing with us, explained. The earth which is cultivated by man, and receives the rain from heaven, is expected to bring forth produce for the sustenance of those who dress it. If instead, it produces only thorns and briars, fit for burning—such a plot of land is rejected. It is in like manner, with a heir of Salvation. The Lord has bestowed labour upon him. He enlightened him, gave him to *taste* of the heavenly gift, made him partaker of the Holy Ghost, permitted him to taste of the good word of God and the powers of the world to come. Now, when the giver of life and all these good gifts, looks for fruit unto God,—If He finds nothing but thorns and briars, he must burn *them* up, but *not him*. The cultivator of the land burns *that which it has produced* contrary to his desires. He does not destroy the land; but, being unprofitable, he rejects it, and will bestow no more labour on it. Thus it is with the Christian—If he be altogether unprofitable, he is rejected as a *fruit producer*, and is *nigh unto cursing*. That is what he *deserves*. We have the same teaching in John xv. The unfruitful branch of the True Vine (i.e. one who does not keep himself in practical union with the Vine,) "is cast forth as a *branch*, and is withered—and men gather them and cast them into the fire and they are burned." That is what unfruitful branches are fit for, and what *men* do with them. The Lord does *not* say that HE so deals with his people, *in regard to their Salvation*. The purport of all such Scriptures is to show that everything we produce contrary to the mind of God, *must be consumed*—and if we bring forth no fruit, we must be *taken out of the way*. "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you and many *sleep*," i.e. die. (1 Cor. xi. 30.) As to the ultimate issue, there ought to be no doubt left after reading 1 Cor. iii. 15. "If any man's *work* shall be burned he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire."

Our gracious Saviour has given us abundant assurance of our *safety* in him. He says, "My sheep shall never *perish*, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand;" and then, to put an end to all doubt, he adds, "My Father which gave them me is greater than all, and no one is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." (John x. 28, 29.)

Verses 9-11.—Concerning the Hebrew believers to whom he was writing, the Apostle had not only confidence in their Salvation, but was persuaded they were going on with the things properly consequent upon Salvation obtained. As an encouragement to persevere and be diligent, he says, God is not unrighteous to forget the evidences you have given of your faith. So that to suppose the Lord ever will forget the manifestations of faith, is to attribute unrighteousness to God. In these verses he adds: "We desire that every one of you do show the same diligence [as you have already shown] to the *full assurance of hope unto the end.*" Though active service and faithful walk are not enjoined as necessary to Salvation, they are needful for our enjoyment of the *full assurance* of hope. Look at the words given us by Peter—"Giving all diligence, add to faith—virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and Charity. For if these things be in you and abound, they make you to be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But *he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.*" (2 Peter i. 5-9. Alas! how many believers there are in this last-named condition.

Verse 12.—"That ye be not slothful, but followers [imitators] of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." Our present inheritance consists of *promises*—contemptible things, perhaps, in the estimation of the men of the world—but the *very life* of the Christian, for they are *divine* promises. Men accept a bank-note, which is but a promise to pay, without hesitation, and reckon it to be equal in value to the thing it represents. A person having a bank-note for a thousand pounds (i.e. a mere promise of the Bank to pay a thousand pounds), considers himself in actual possession of property to that extent. He says—"I have got a thousand pounds," although in fact he has not got it, but only a written promise. If men thus regard the mere pledge of an Association, *because they have confidence in it*, how ought we to act who inherit the promises of God?

Now read to the end of our chapter, and say then whether any soul who really believes in Jesus can ever be lost. God not only gave promises to Abraham but he swore by himself "saying, *Surely*, blessing I will bless thee," &c. Did God make any conditions with Abraham? Nay. "Abraham *believed* God"—that was all on his side: God *gave* his promises, and then swore in confirmation of them; that is what we see on His side. The promises are *absolute*. Without any condition whatever. Abraham is called the father of the faithful; we are of his family and have the same present inheritance, *viz.*, *promises*: And we hold them on the *same security*, *viz.*, the "SURELY" of God.

Mark verse 16.—If men of the world are at variance, an oath puts an end to the strife. A man swears that what he says is true, and that is deemed sufficient. See, then, what assurance God gives to our poor doubting hearts. "God willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath. That by two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we

might have a *strong consolation*, who *have fled for refuge* to lay hold upon the hope set before us." Oh, the tender mercy of our God in thus dealing with us! Who can doubt any longer? This scripture well might have ended here; but the Holy Spirit has added one thing more. The *hope* above alluded to "*we have as an anchor of the soul*, both SURE AND STEDFAST, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is *for us* entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec"! Faith has cast the anchor of hope into the sure ground of the presence of Jesus within the veil, whither he has *for us* entered. Beloved, the language is full, it is perfect, it is divine! God forbid that we should seek to add to or take from. We write for those who desire to be faithful, that they may rejoice in the liberty with which Christ has made them free. We would fain remove from such the last lingering doubt. To this end there is no need to force Scripture; only let it speak for itself. With respect to Christians who are *unwilling* to conform themselves to the "mind which was in Christ Jesus"—who prefer to hold the world with one hand, and the Saviour (whom the world crucified) with the other,—we have no wish that they should understand Heb. vi. nor any other passage of the word which brings them into fear. If they will hug Satan's chains, may they gall and fret them. Let them have sorrow to the full. Until they turn afresh to Christ in whom they have life, and give themselves up in devotedness and devotion to Him, the truth will ever perplex them—most justly so. We would not spare them a single pang.

COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL BY ST. JOHN.

(Written expressly for this publication.)

CHAPTER I.

VER. 28.—"These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing." Bethabara signifies "House of Passage;" Jordan is "The River of Judgment." These two names help us to contrast the mission of John the Baptist with that of the Lord Jesus. The work and teaching of John were transitional, and only came to the point of judgment. He brought his disciples to that river, and there showed them their deep need. Beyond that, he could only tell them to look to another for deliverance; whereas Jesus suffered Himself to be laid in the waters of judgment, typically in the Jordan, but afterwards in the bitter waters of retribution and death; and so delivered for ever all who are in faith baptized to Him.

It is a great mistake to confound the baptism ordained by Christ with that of John. Act xix. 1-5 places this beyond question; for we there read that the first believers at Ephesus, having been baptized unto John's baptism, were afterwards, when enlightened by Paul, baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

VER. 29.—"The next day, John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Here was the Lamb, innocent and spotless, to be sacrificed under the fire of God's righteous judgment, as a substitute for sinners. "God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering," said Abraham of old, speaking prophetically; for at that time God pro-

vided not a lamb but a ram. Now, however, the time was come when types and shadows were to pass away, and a victim was to be offered of *sufficient worth* to atone for sin: one who should indeed take away the sin of the world. During this present dispensation, the efficacy of that perfect sacrifice is experienced *only* by those who, *through faith*, accept the finished work of "the Lamb slain." But in a day to come, it will be seen that the Atonement of Christ has power to take away the sin of the world. He will come and reign in righteousness, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, having first taken away the sin of the world. Of course it is sheer folly to suppose that the sins of all mankind were put away by His death on the cross. The word is, "taketh" (or will take) away the sin (not sins) of the world: i. e., the character of the world, which is sin, He taketh, or will take away; but that in His own time. The price is paid; He bought with His blood the whole field—the world. But He has not yet taken possession, and therefore its sin yet rests upon it. The world must undergo the retributive judgments of God, long pronounced, but long in mercy withheld. "All power," said the risen Saviour, "is given to me in heaven and earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations," &c. Why *therefore*? Because both the power and the will is His to extend mercy. But He will not afford it to those who continue in rebellion against Him *after* they have been *taught* by His disciples the way of salvation. So when the present course of preaching is ended, and *all who are willing* (or rather, those who have accepted the will of God), have been *gathered out* of the scene, the *rebellious* world which in the Lord's absence declares, "We will not have this man to reign over us," shall be judged by Him; and all enemies be put under his feet. Then it shall be seen that the Lamb of God taketh away the sin of the world. Until its sin shall be *taken away* "the Holy One of God" could not reign over it. Notwithstanding the wrath which is to come over it, no purging of that kind could take its sin away. Nothing but the cleansing blood of the spotless Lamb could render it fit for a reign of righteousness. In the meantime Jesus is gathering to himself in glory all who in faith flee to him for refuge. All who trust in Him.

VER. 30-31.—"This is he of whom I said, after me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me, and I knew him not, but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore have I come baptizing with water." We have here additional evidence of the ephemeral character of John's baptism. This sign by which he was to make manifest the Lord Jesus was for that nation and that time *only*, that God's chosen people Israel might know their Messiah, *therefore* came his forerunner baptizing with water. Yet as we have said (and it is abundantly evident in this gospel) Christ also *instituted* and *permanently established* a baptism (immersion) by water, having altogether a different significance to that brought by John to the Jews. This, too, quite independent of the other truth that Jesus himself baptized with the Holy Ghost.

VER. 32-33.—"And John bare record (testimony) 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 baptize with water, the same said unto me, upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." How good of our God to give this (as it should be) unmistakable stamp of the Sonship of Jesus. John did not personally know Christ with an absolute knowledge until he saw the Son of Man sealed with the Holy Spirit. This was the sign God had given John, by which to recognise The Son. Yet, as we read in the Gospel by Matthew, when Jesus came to John to be baptized, the latter "forbad

him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee," &c., thus evidently recognising the Lord, before the sign was given. This but shows how unmistakable, *to the eye of faith*, was the person of the Saviour. And the goodness of God is the more evident in giving the visible sign by which John should *know* the Father's well-beloved. The forerunner was not left to his own judgment, which might have faltered and failed, as indeed it afterwards did. God removed, in his own divine way, all uncertainty, and left the Jews without excuse. But not only was the Holy Spirit, thus given, the sign of the Sonship of Christ—it is the sign and seal of the sonship of all believers. Jesus has obtained for us that promise of the Father, and according to the prophetic word of John the Baptist, He baptizes all who come to him in faith, with the Holy Ghost.

But to return to John's testimony, v. 34, "And I saw and bear record that this is the Son of God!"

FALSE DOCTRINE.

As mentioned in a recent number, we have received two pamphlets written by the Rev. W. Parks, B.A. Rector of Openshaw, Manchester, and proceed to notice one of them, entitled "Professor, Beware!"

On the first page we find this startling announcement—"You may believe in Christ, and be lost"! This is a flat contradiction of the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore, however much we may hope and trust that Mr Parks is himself a believer, he is a false teacher and has denied his Master. Jesus said—"He that *believeth in me*, though he were dead yet shall he live; and *whosoever* liveth and *believeth in me* shall never die." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life," &c. We need not multiply quotations. The plain declarations in Scripture of the only way of Salvation, by belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, are abundant, and, to the true-hearted, unmistakable. Mr Parks is bewildered by the system of religion to which he belongs, and rather than think that to be in fault, he has the hardihood to gainsay the immutable word of the Saviour.

He goes on to say—"It is wholly absurd and monstrous to suppose that they who are in the habit of repeating the formula—*I believe in Jesus Christ our Lord*, or who believe the fact that *Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners*, as they believe any other fact, will be saved by such belief." This is, indeed, true. But then arises the simple question, Who is responsible for deluding poor unbelieving sinners by inducing them to profess belief while their hearts are untouched? And the answer is—Mr Parks and all of his order, from the Archbishops down to the least of those who occupy the reading desks and pulpits of the Church of England, so-called. An awful iniquity it is, and they must answer for it!

Many dear Christian men there are in that long list we have summed up so briefly; we mourn over their consciences, wounded, as they must be, while they go on with their sorrowful task of hindering souls, and deluding them into false security by the repetition of creeds and formulas. From whence came these wretched snares, with their flowing words and mock religion, but from that well of corruption, the Romish System? Reformed they may be.

They were no doubt pious minds which re-modelled the "Book of Common Prayer," but they only refined upon an imposition; and it is just simply that refined imposition still, with all its religiousness and its appropriation of much truth. The whole contrivance is totally opposed to the spirit of the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no Scripture to justify such a concoction, either wholly or in part.

The pamphlet before us is mainly filled with gratuitous difficulties, in the overthrow of which much scholarship is wasted. Mr Parks desires to prove that men *cannot* believe. At page 12 he says expressly "Men *cannot* credit God's revelation." What a fearful position to take! Will Mr Parks tell us what his object is in writing and preaching? He is dreadfully indignant with those who preach the Gospel as it was preached by the Lord and his apostles; but he does not say in what these preachers offend. It is evident that their preaching can never hinder salvation, even though it were incorrect; for if the Calvinistic doctrine advocated by Mr Parks were true; viz. that none believe unto Salvation except those who have faith *given* to them by the Holy Ghost,—all so gifted must be saved, independent of the way in which the gospel of Salvation is proclaimed. His preaching and writing are therefore utterly vain. The evangelists who follow the commands of Jesus, at any rate do no harm. But, from this point, we turn round on the pamphlet writer, and all of his mind, and denounce them as those who "pervert the right ways of the Lord." We tell them plainly that their teaching is nothing but fatalism in disguise—that its necessary consequence is to induce the common remark, "If I am to be saved I shall be, and if I am to be lost I cannot help it." That is the only result to be rationally expected from such "damnable heresies;" and, alas! it is the effect produced. Can a more sweeping condemnation overtake any teacher, than that his doctrine *cannot* do good and *actually accomplishes* incalculable harm?

We hope in our next to examine *seriatim* the few texts quoted by Mr Parks, upon which he, with all the wrongheaded ones of his school, base their fallacious arguments. In the meantime, we thank God that His truth is stronger than men, and utterly scorns all their presumptuous contentions. "He is no respecter of persons." His glorious gospel of Salvation in all its simplicity is now proclaimed in all lands. The house is being filled; the Master will presently "rise up, and shut to the door." But his servants are yet in the highways and hedges, and their message is "Whosoever will." "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Rom. x. 9.)

SCRIPTURE MEETINGS.

The same day on which Jesus arose from the grave two of the disciples travelled to Emmaus. "And they talked together of all those things which had happened. And it came to pass, that while they com-

muned, and *reasoned*, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But *their eyes were holden that they should not know him.*" The Lord then elicited from them an account of what had taken place concerning himself, and laid bare their *unbelief*. "Then he said unto them, O fools [foolish ones] and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself. * * * * *

And they said one to another, did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while HE opened to us the Scriptures?" (Luke xxiv.)

What a precious Scripture Meeting was that! If we now gather in his name, over his word, in faith, Jesus, by the Holy Spirit, will *open to us the Scriptures*. We have the very fulness of the truth in the New Testament, which the disciples then had not. Our Lord revealed through Paul, James, Peter, John and Jude, marvellous things for us to know and enjoy as Christians—which saints who lived before the time of Christ knew nothing of. We need to be well grounded in these amazing truths, that we may be able to understand the things written before, in the Old Testament. If this is not attended to, and the distinct, peculiar character of the present dispensation apprehended, there will be no intelligent perception of the divine mind. And there will be lack of steadfastness accordingly.

FAITHFUL TESTIMONY.

We have perused, with heartfelt thankfulness to the Father of Mercies, three numbers of a monthly publication entitled the *Spiritual Watchman*,* they being full of sweet and precious expositions of truth. May the paper be continued in the same spirit with which it has been commenced, and then we are persuaded it will be abundantly used for blessing. The Editor is Mr W. T. Turpin, recently a Clergyman in the Church of England (so-called) who has come out, giving up ALL in faithfulness to the express commands of His Master, "CHOOSING rather to suffer affliction with the people of God,* * Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt."

Thank God, that his Word, "the Sword of Spirit," is thus working effectually in his true servants. We may well expect that divine weapon to be powerfully wielded by one who has in faith suffered its keen edge to be felt by himself—operating to cut him off from resources in which he had previously trusted. We do not know personally this dear "Brother in the Lord," but we love him dearly, because he has, otherwise than in words, declared that he loves our Lord Jesus Christ *in sincerity*. Bless God, that we can and do believe that there are (shall we say *many*) more like him. There is a mighty sifting going on—the "Lord is thoroughly purging his floor," and will soon gather the wheat into his garner. We cordially recommend the *Spiritual Watchman* as another "help" from our faithful Lord. Let us, however, add one word of warning to our dear christian friends. Do *not* take for granted that whatever the *Spiritual Watchman*, or *Precious Truth*, or any other publication may state, is necessarily correct. "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." Test everything you read by the Scriptures, praying God to give you the *guidance* of His Holy Spirit into all truth.

* Glasgow, Scott and Allan: London, the Book Society, 19, Paternoster Row. Price One Penny.

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

Every soul that has not got salvation is in need of it. People will not believe their necessity; they say, Do not bother us with your religion: we have got something else to attend to. It takes all our time to get a living; and besides, we are not a bit wiser than anybody else. In fact, the reader may be ready to tell me he (or she) knows plenty of religious people who do many things he (or she) would be ashamed of. Let me say at once, my present object is not to speak to you about religion. Salvation is one thing—Religion, quite another. What I desire to press upon you, my friend, is—that, sooner or later, you will *want to know* the way of salvation. There are but *few* who are able—still fewer who are faithful and simple-hearted enough—to tell you. You had better look at it now.

The plain declaration of Scripture is this, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Rom. x. 9.) Well, say you, what if I don't? Hear the words of the Son of God: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John iii. 36, 37.) This is not said to frighten people into religiousness; it is a solemn declaration of fact, and is stated here to arouse your earnest attention. I repeat, making what I first said personal, If you have not got salvation, you are in need of it. I beg of you to get the question settled. To allow it to pass by, is to continue in unbelief; and the sentence, as above, is already pronounced by Him who alone could save you!

Do you ask me, Who is this Lord Jesus in whom you wish me to believe? That is a sensible question. It is the most desirable thing you can ask. Do not rest till you get a full and satisfactory answer. It is because they do not know Jesus, that people perish. Do listen whenever you hear Christians tell about the Lord Jesus Christ. If people perplex you about keeping the Sabbath, or breaking it—if they bother you about tectotalism and reformation, and religious associations, you may very well turn a deaf ear to them all. But if you can find any willing to tell you about Jesus, listen to them with your whole soul's attention. Ask them to explain all they know about Him. It is a living person you want to enquire about. Who is this Lord Jesus? What was He? What did He do? Where is He? Who saw Him? What is He doing? Shall I ever see Him? Can He save me? How can He save me? Oh, never give over asking till you are fully satisfied.

I can reply briefly to these questions; but it is a never ending theme. Do not be content with the little I can say about it.

Jesus, the Son of God, (in eternal union with the Father,) the Creator of all things, came into this world more than Eighteen-hundred-and-sixty years ago, in the likeness of sinful men. While He was here, He was occupied in teaching men the will of God. He *only could* make the mind of God fully known. One thing He stated expressly—namely, that the thing needful to a right understanding of God is *trust, belief, faith* in the Son—Himself, Jesus. We never can understand God or His ways till we trust in Jesus. According to mere reason, faith in the Son may not seem necessary to an understanding of the Father, but it is absolutely so. When the Saviour was upon earth, He was not only occupied in preaching and teaching, but *He went about doing good*; and *He commanded all His followers to do the same!* How unlike the so-called great men of this world, who are ever seeking to get something for themselves! Jesus the Saviour was all benevolence—*always giving, taking nothing!* He fed the hungry, healed the sick, poured blessings upon the poor. He was, as indeed He is, the DIVINE MAN—full of excellence, altogether lovely. Will you not believe in Him? Will you not trust Him? But, above all, He gave Himself over to death and judgment for the sake of all believers. Yes, He became our Substitute and Sin-bearer, enduring all the judgment of God on account of sin, *instead of those upon whom the wrath of God must otherwise have rested.* Hence the force of his own words, which I have quoted. If you *believe in Jesus*, God will never have a word to say to you about wrath; the Saviour endured it in your stead. If you *believe not*, the wrath of God abideth on you.

You may say, you do not understand how this can be. Let

me remind you that God's provision for salvation is, "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.*" He never says wait till you *understand* the work of salvation. In truth, it is a mystery beyond our comprehension. But I declare it to you, as one who believes, and who, through faith, *knows* every word of the declaration to be true.

Let me entreat you not to consider this question as an abstraction, as a doctrine. The Lord Jesus is not only the risen Man; He is the living God; He knows the secrets of all hearts. While this life endures men may harden themselves in unbelief, and treat Him with scorn, as they do. But, in a day soon to come, "every eye shall see him." He will shortly be seen coming to this world, which has so long rejected Him, "in power and great glory," and then shall all the kindreds of the earth wail because of Him. "We shall all stand before the judgement seat of Christ." He will judge *ALL.* Death will be no refuge, as some men vainly hope. He will judge both the living and the dead. Then will the unbelieving hear that word of fearful import, DEPART!

There will be another judgment for those who trust the Saviour during these days of his rejection. On these He will bestow blessings and rewards, to endure for ever and ever. This will be salvation indeed.

Such is the unspeakably important issue of the question—Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? Are you doubtful whether you believe in Him or not? If so, I will ask you another question. Do you love Him? Give over thinking of an abstraction. Do you love Him personally, the risen Jesus? You perceive that, for faith to be effectual, the *heart must be stirred.* What Scripture demands is, *confession with the lips, and belief in the heart*; belief in the Lord Jesus, once dead, now in resurrection life and glory. If such is your belief, you must *love* your Saviour: you cannot help it. If you do not love Him, it is because you do not believe; you are yet in your sins. Oh, think of His lavished love on ruined sinners. Believe in Him, and live for ever.

In faithfulness, I must tell you, if you believe, you ought to be baptised. The command of Jesus to His disciples is, "Preach and baptize." The Lord said again, "He that believeth, and is baptised, shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned."

W. S.

A Servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.
19, Sherborne-street, Downham-road, N.

THE CITY OF CONFUSION,

(Isaiah xxiv. 10.)

AND THE WAY OUT OF IT.

A FAITHFUL WORD FOR CHRISTIANS.

8. MINISTRY.—(Continued from our last.)

Yet we have no desire to press or censure unduly either the Clergy or Christians who 'sit under them.' The majority have been trained up in the belief that the various denominational systems as they exist, are more or less in accordance with the word of God, and that the only question for a believer to decide is, 'Which is the best?' Doubtless it must seem a heinous piece of presumption on our part to declare them all wrong. But this is the only possible result of a spiritual search into scripture, provided the searcher be free from bias. We can only say, dear christian reader, we have no personal object to serve. *Search for yourself.* It is to our Lord *each one of us* will have to give account.

For the Clergy we desire to express the deepest sympathy. The majority have doubtless accepted their appointments in perfect integrity of heart, and it requires a mighty effort of faith to withdraw from such a position. We believe our gracious Master regards them most tenderly, and yearns over them most lovingly even where faith is weak, and the natural mind leads them to cling to the 'things which are seen,' rather than give up all in faithfulness to Him who is unseen. But, oh, what rejoicing there is where faith triumphs! where pure love for the Lord responds to his touching appeal, 'If ye love me

keep my commandments!' Dear Christians, there have been—such there are—who, preferring to honour the counsels of Him who died for them, have quietly abandoned clerical dignity and emoluments—have chosen to 'deny themselves, and take up the cross daily, and follow Jesus.' And what amazing power for good there is in such an act! Thus to walk in the footsteps of Him who 'steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,' there to suffer many things, and to be rejected and crucified—is to be a 'a living epistle' indeed, 'known and read of all men.' No power of language can preach such a sermon as that. We are speaking the truth in love, yet know that it will generally be unwelcome; but must testify the truth.

If Christians believed in the presence of the Lord in the midst of any two or three believers, they must own practically that the *first place*, the Headship of the assembly is His. Heb. x. 24—25 is pretty conclusive as to Christians gathering together without any mere human leader: 'Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.' Gathered round the Lord himself, His presence being as real to faith as when he presented himself in the midst of his disciples after his resurrection. He will lead his people by the Holy Spirit indwelling them, in worship, in prayer, and in opening up the Scriptures. He is faithful, and ever honours faith. 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever!' If we own his presence, and place ourselves in absolute dependence upon his guidance, and 'have no confidence in the flesh,' he will raise up Teachers and Pastors. These, however, are secondary blessings. If we hold to the Lord himself and His Word, we may well be content. Read Paul's address to the Ephesian elders, in Acts xx. 32—34; after warning them of dangers from without and within, he says: 'And now brethren, I commend you to God and the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands (his own hands) have ministered unto my necessities, and them that were with me.'

9. MEETINGS.—A careful study of the Epistles to the Corinthians will clearly show the mind of God as to the way in which Christian assemblies should be conducted. All who assemble together are there taught to be in subjection to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, *ever present with them*, and guiding all subject ones by the Holy Ghost. He will use whom he will, even as he gives gifts, 'dividing to every man severally as he will.'

This is so contrary to the systems of religion men have been constructing for centuries, that the reader may have difficulty in receiving it. Yet the one question is 'What saith the Scripture?' Read Acts ii.; you will there find the true church at its very commencement, in all its freshness and simplicity of construction. Look at verses 41, 42: 'Then they that gladly received his words were baptized, and the same day there were added about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the Apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers.' The chapter concludes with these words, 'The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.'

In these few sentences we have a perfect presentation of God's order of things for Christians, viz.: 1. The reception of the word of truth; 2. Baptism; 3. Continuance in the Apostles' doctrine; 4. Christian fellowship; 5. Breaking of Bread (the Lord's Supper); 6. Prayers. All that is here stated any two or three Christians are competent to carry on. Anything added to it of man's invention (or changes made to suit his thoughts about what is best,) must entail positive loss.

We do not expect these truths to be generally received. But the question for each believer to ask himself or herself is, 'Am I going on with that which is wholly of God? Have I decided for God and the word of his grace, to the rejection of all else?' Be assured, dear reader, there is deep significance in the spread of the knowledge of the Lord's promised return. The sound has gone forth, 'Behold the Bridegroom cometh.' He would have us, in all simplicity, waiting and watching; not seeking

to build up systems of religion, nor going on with worldly thoughts of improvement, but looking for that full and perfect deliverance which He himself will bring. 'We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure.' (1 John iii. 2.) In the meantime, the word for us is, 'Let us go forth, therefore, unto Him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.' (Heb. xiii. 13, 14.) The camp of Israel consisted of all who were called to be God's people; but when evil came into their midst, Moses pitched the Tabernacle, the holy place, outside the camp, and all who desired to be true worshippers separated to him, and went outside the camp. This is the figure used in the above scripture, and is specially adapted to the present times. The camp—that is the entire mass of those who take the ground of being God's people—has become a 'City of Confusion,' the Babylon of Rev. xviii. Dear Christian reader, we have shown you the 'Way Out of It.' Can you not find two or three content to gather around the Lord in a room of your own, or in any convenient place? God will own you, and 'add to the Church.' Once more we repeat the Lord's gracious assurance, 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, THERE AM I in the midst of them.'

In conclusion, let us own the hand of our Saviour God, in bringing many together for mutual edification over the scripture, and for prayer. We believe that bible meetings and prayer meetings are producing wonderful and blessed effects. The way in which believers *assemble themselves* in these last days, simply as Christians, for prayer and study of 'the word,' is proof of the unsatisfying character of denominationalism, with all its aids, appliances, and organizations. No doubt, many who attempt to teach, and many more who undertake to lead in prayer, are sadly ignorant of God's ways. But most of those who read and pray are men of faith, and the Lord owns them. Blessed be his name, he will own whatever is of faith—and 'whatever is not of faith is sin.' We, therefore, earnestly exhort our brethren and sisters in the Lord, (whether or not you have faith enough to give up your sectarian standing,) to seek frequent opportunity of meeting earnest followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, however few in number. Be teachable, be prayerful, depend upon the Holy Ghost to 'guide you into all truth.' If you do not know of such meetings, invite Christians to your own houses. Anywhere, anyhow, MEET.

Once again we quote the words—'provoke one another to love and to good works; not forsaking *the assembling of ourselves together* as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another,' and so MUCH THE MORE AS YE SEE THE DAY APPROACHING.' Surely those who are watching can see the day approaching!

BAPTISM and the LORD'S SUPPER we would fain offer a few remarks upon, but space will not permit; separate papers on these subjects may be had of the publisher of this journal. We would, however, press these two ordinances upon the solemn attention of believers. Though in no way essential to salvation, love to the Lord requires our faithful observance of them. As soon as a person has faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, he or she ought to be baptized. We believe a Christian has no claim to be received into fellowship until baptized (if scripture-teaching on the point be regarded). As a follower of Jesus he should not permit his conscience to rest until he has conformed to the plain command of his Saviour. *Receiving* into fellowship is another question. Assemblies must deal with it in the presence of the Lord, guided by the 'Written Word' and the Holy Spirit's interpretation thereof. If each Christian chooses faithfulness to his Lord in preference to every other consideration all will be plain enough. After baptism there should be complete fellowship with Christians, in Prayer, in Praise, and in the Breaking of Bread, i.e., the Lord's Supper. We gather from Scripture that the early Christians came together on the first day of the week for that purpose, but there is no rule. Love to our Saviour cannot be very strong, if once a week be found too frequent to 'show the Lord's death till he come.'

If our hearts are true to our Master when he comes he will find us as to walk and fellowship outside the 'City of Confusion.'

(Concluded.)

(To the Editor of PRECIOUS TRUTH.)

Highgate, August, 1865.

DEAR BROTHER—As one who for more than 20 years has testified against "Visiting Boards" and "Notice Boards," as dishonouring to the Holy Spirit; and who has avoided mixing himself up with either "side" in "the present distress;" and who yet feels that among "Brethren" only is true liberty of Ministry and of worship Scripturally recognised, I may be allowed to thank you for your valuable and opportune publication.

Those who call such as seek to gather Christians together (or rather that Christians should be gathered) in twos and threes "robbers of churches" do not know that the Greek and context Acts, xix. 37, imply "robbers of heathen temples;" they are therefore to be pitied and forgiven.

When you speak of "water baptism," do you mean "baptism in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," or "baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus?" There is much "cause of stumbling" in not keeping these things in mind.

I quite agree with you, and have *always* urged, that "Brethren" make too much of "the Table." This arises from the Clerical Element having been so strongly developed in many of the dear early Brethren. It is simply Popish! Of all places, the Lord's table is surely not the place of judgment! [Self-judgment is quite another question.] We eat and drink judgment if we discern not the Lord's body 1 Cor. xi. 28, 29; and what is that body? 1 Cor. xii. 27 says 'Now ye are the Body of Christ and members in particular.' Jesus, then, as the Head, and his Members, as the body are to be discerned. Ephes. i. 22, 23. 1 Cor. viii. 12. &c., &c.

Let us not sin against Christ! 1 Cor. viii. 12.

With love, and in patient waiting, yours to serve,
S. C. H.

OUR CORRESPONDENTS AND OURSELVES.

R. S., KENNINGTON.—Consider Acts, chapter x. verses 43—48. Cornelius and those with him, having heard the word of life from Peter, believed, were saved, and received the gift of the Holy Ghost. "Then answered Peter, can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days." Suppose Cornelius and the rest had made answer, "We have received salvation and the gift of the Holy Ghost, and therefore consider water baptism quite useless; we consequently decline to accept it, either as a privilege or a command." Would Peter have had fellowship with them in their unfaithfulness? Would he have listened to their invitation to tarry certain days? Would he be setting up a new sect by declining intimate association with those who set at naught the plain command of their Saviour? We trust the reflections we have suggested will entirely dispose of your difficulties. It is not a party question at all, but one for each individual conscience taught of "the word" by the Holy Spirit. The matter to be determined is *not* "who *may* I break bread with?" but who shall I have true, *loving*, Christ-like fellowship with? You say, you see *three* water baptisms—viz. that of "John," "The Twelve," and of "Paul." This puzzles us greatly. We can see but two baptisms by water—First, that by John, which was introductory, or the sign of repentance—and which came to an end as soon as Jesus commenced his ministry. Second, that ordained by our Lord, which is the sign of our baptism into His death.

T. S., CREWE.—We gladly own the loving spirit manifested in your letter. But, dear Brother, you have written in haste. You say we are wrong in stating that the "Plymouth Brethren," "The Brethren," or "Brethren," (which you will) have given this separate designation as marking themselves off from the rest of the Church of God. We may be technically wrong. It matters not, however, whether you give yourselves a separate title or whether you adopt one which others have given you. You say "your lot is cast among these people,"

and in your letter you expressly identify yourself with them as a party.—Speaking of what is done among you, (pardon us for paraphrasing your sentences,) you say, "the tracts we publish prove we do not give ourselves a separate designation" Do you not see you are self-convicted? You take upon yourself to answer our strictures upon the Body or Bodies known under the several titles above enumerated; but you really establish what we have asserted. If you did not belong to a Party, you would not be offended by charges made against a party. Our words would make no impression upon you. Christians who do *not* say WE, when "The Brethren" are spoken of, are not at all annoyed by our remarks upon that denomination. Be sure, my dear brother, that if the shoe pinches it is because *we* wear it.—You say, "Though you do not acknowledge yourself one of us, we at Crewe acknowledge you as a brother in Christ with all the saints in every place that call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." The first part of this sentence is virtually contradicted by the last. You know very well that, as members of the body of Christ, we are as ready to own you as you us. Not only so, but if our gracious Lord were to lead us to Crewe we could have full fellowship with you as members of the Church of God, at the same time that we should repudiate your party standing.—You call us to account for upholding the simple title of "Christians." We are just as free to use the terms "Saints" or "Brethren"—but, in consideration of the special appropriation of these by Brethrenisms, we, in general speaking, prefer the other Scriptural term, because it is that by which *all* parties are known. We thus take upon us, *in common with all believers*, "reproach for the name of Christ;" we bear our part in the common burden, and own ourselves no better than the rest.—You quote against us Gal. vi. 1. In this you make a common mistake. The thing spoken of in that Scripture is, the duty of restoring an *individual* overtaken in a fault. We would gladly and humbly do this for you, dear brother, if needful; or, at least, we would seek grace to do it, if we knew of any fault in you. But it is quite a hopeless thing to seek to restore a Confederacy. May the Holy Spirit enable you and all the dear people of God to see the distinction we have endeavoured to point out.

C. P., EAST MOULSEY.—Your third letter is received, with thanks. Lack of space only prevents our answering you in this number.

J. B., LEICESTER.—May your act of self-devotion be entirely of faith. In that case, you need not reckon up your resources beforehand. Commit all to the Lord. Read Matt. xix. 29.

A letter without a signature and marked private.—We cannot notice correspondence of that kind.

NOTICES.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—We invite enquiries tending to the elucidation of scriptural truth. Controversial questions should be avoided entirely, if possible. Letters must be sent before the 15th.

Letters for the Editor to be addressed to 335, Strand, W.C.

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TOUR READERS.—We ask brethren and sisters in the Lord to order a few numbers monthly, and take some pains to lend them about. If done to the Lord in faith, you will thus be dispensers of much blessing.

Printed by JOHN EVANS, 335a, Strand, W.C.; and published for him by JOB CAUDWELL, 335, Strand, London, W.C. and Scott & Allan, 109, Sauchiehall-street, Glasgow. Friday, Sept. 1, 1865.

PRECIOUS TRUTH.

“WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?”—(Rom. iv. 3.)

Job Caudwell, 335, Strand, London, W.C.]

[Scott & Allan, 109, Sauchiehall-street, Glasgow.]

No. 7.]

OCTOBER 1, 1865.

[One Halfpenny.]

TO ONE WHO LOVES THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IN SINCERITY.

BELOVED,—You will gladly listen to what I bring you in the name of our Lord; though to many, I find, the proclamation of the whole Truth is very unwelcome. It is a great while ago since the request was first made to a prophet of God—“Prophesy to us smooth things.” The spirit which actuated the unfaithful Israelites of old is, however, rife among Christians. An unsparing declaration of God’s mind operates now, as it always did.

In the first days of the present dispensation, “the word” was not as honey to the taste of all. Let us contrast two cases. When Peter and the rest of the Apostles, on the day of Pentecost, accused their hearers of the wickedness they had committed—these were *pricked* to their heart, and said, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” They owned their error, enquired for the remedy, and obtained it. When another audience was before Stephen, and he laid against them the solemn charge, “Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost,” these were *cut* to the heart, and gnashed on him with their teeth. Moreover they cast him out and stoned him. Yet these were religious people!

Blessed be God, there are many in our day who will listen to the Truth, though it pricks. The divine word soon heals them. But, alas! what a multitude find themselves more grievously wounded by “the Sword of the Spirit”—continually *cut* to the heart, yet *obtain* no healing balm for their wounds, because they stubbornly resist the Holy Ghost. Beloved; be sure that mere words of man, mine or any other, are (concerning the truth as it is in Jesus) powerless to hurt. Those who wince under what is written in this paper, are those who need to be either pricked or cut; and the *word of God* does it. Let the puncture, however, effect its purpose, and the member soon becomes whole. As to those who are only willing to listen to exhortations adapted to their prejudices, and made like the sound of “a pleasant song”—I can only say, They are in the Lord’s hands, and he will deal with them. For my own part, though earnestly intent upon “speaking the truth *in love*,” my only *care* is, to make known the mind of the Lord.

When of old, the man of God had cried against the altar at Bethel, it was a **PROPHET** who tempted him from the path which God had appointed! He had fulfilled one part of his mission and would have completed it faithfully but for his brother prophet. **Solemn warning!** Christians, alas! mislead one

another. They entice one another from the way in which God would have them to walk. They say, “Turn aside; rest and be comfortable with us; we also are of the prophets.” “What harm is there” in this, that, or the other? Satan is transformed into an angel of light!

Beloved; We must answer all with—“It is written.” When our Lord was tempted of the devil, having fasted in the wilderness forty days, the devil said to him, “If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.” Jesus was “hungred,” he needed the bread; what objection could be made to the proposal? The natural man would say, “None whatever.” But “Jesus answered him saying, *It is written*, that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.” So with the other temptations. There is much in each to commend it to mere human judgment. Satan exerted all his subtlety when dealing with our Saviour. In every case Jesus defeated the foe with, “*It is written*!” Let us imitate our Master, and be armed with an “*It is written*,” with which to repel every invitation to unfaithfulness.

Oh, my Brother, my Sister, Think of the immeasurable consequences of the present fight of faith. Think of “the crown of life,” “the hidden manna,” “the white stone with a new name,” “the rule over the nations,” “the Morning Star,” the owning of thy name by Jesus before His Father and before his angels, Jesus making those “who say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie, to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that he has loved thee!”

The “Lord Jesus,” the “I am,” the “Alpha and Omega,” “the Beloved,” saith to thee—“Behold, I come quickly! hold that fast which thou hast, that thou lose not thy crown. [He does *not* say, that thou lose not thy life!] Him that overcometh will I make a Pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God; and my new name.” Moreover, He saith to thee—“As many as I love I rebuke and chasten: be zealous, therefore, and repent [i.e. turn from all that is contrary to his mind—and do whatever is pleasing in His sight;] Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with me.” [Now at this present time, while you are yet a pilgrim.] “*To him that overcometh* will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and set down with my Father in his throne.”

Beloved, You can only overcome by *faith*: Faith *kept in exercise*. Faith, not in men's words and devices, but in, "*It is written*." Faith manifested in personal love to Jesus, and intimate, holy fellowship with him. Let him "dwell in your heart by faith." How prone we are to forget that we are in a scene of spiritual warfare! Carnal weapons will not avail us. "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Put on the *whole armour of God*, that ye may be able to stand against the *wiles of the devil*. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, [though the tempter often comes against us in human form,] but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness on high." Satan is above you, and he is stronger than you. If you do not accept divine provision for the conflict, he will get many an advantage over you. I pray you consider the perfect equipment Christ has provided for you; see Eph. vi. 10—24. Estimate the value of His strength, and the armour provided for you in that Scripture. *Put it on*, and do not cease to wear it. Divinely equipped, you can indeed stand. Thus may you be found by the Lord at his coming. He will come soon. How precious are those words in the last chapter of Revelation, "Behold I come quickly," "Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." "Surely, I come quickly." May you and I be always ready with the rejoinder as it is written—"Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Waiting that bright and happy consummation,
Believe me,
Yours in true Christian fellowship,
THE EDITOR OF PRECIOUS TRUTH.

PLYMOUTH BRETHREN—THE BRETHREN—OR BRETHREN.

When we issued our second paper on "the Plymouth Brethren," our purpose was to have left the subject there. We have, however, received so many communications touching their unhappy disputes, and, moreover, so much misrepresentation has been published respecting them, especially by a certain Dr. C. and a writer in the *Sword and Trowel*—that for the Truth's sake we are constrained to offer some further remarks. What particular name each section of the Brethren should be called by, we cannot discover. Originally, no doubt, the believers who came together upon the ground now occupied by these denominations, were recognised among one another simply as "brethren." But it is now common with many of them to speak and think of their party as, "*the Brethren*," "*the Saints*;" while by other bodies of Christians and the world they are generally known as "the Plymouth Brethren," without any divisional distinction.

With regard to the principal rupture produced among these (once united) bodies, some years ago, it seems, the leading brother at Plymouth was betrayed into an unfaithful use of Scripture. He began to teach what was certainly heretical; but it was covered

up with so much cleverness, that many might read his writings without detecting the snare. Yet Christians who compare what they hear with Scripture, could not fail to discover it. (Alas! that this duty is so little attended to, notwithstanding the warnings of Christ, and the experience of eighteen hundred years.)

Then ensued the manifest failure of Brethrenism as an institution. Plymouth ought, according to Scripture, to have been left to deal with its own heresy. In the days of the Apostles, the Church at Ephesus did not interfere with Smyrna, nor Pergamos with Thyatira, neither Rome with Corinth, nor Corinth with Colosse. The Lord admonished each assembly apart. To the same Lord Jesus Christ should the cause at Plymouth have been committed, if the evil remained unjudged by the members of his body in that place. Instead of this, the leaders of the confederacy in London assumed jurisdiction in the matter. Nor did they stop there, but (as we understand) proceeded to propound an anticipated difficulty to assemblies of "the Brethren" in various places: namely—"On the supposition that Plymouth failed to put away the heretic, would any member of that Church be received elsewhere to communion?" It is not surprising that some of the assemblies so addressed declined to reply to that question. Of these the Bristol meeting, using a chapel called Bethesda (as we are informed), sent an answer to the effect—that should such a case as that suggested, occur with them, they would seek guidance from the Lord to deal with it.

Hereupon it seems the *dictators* in London decided to *put away* all meetings who would not at once concur with the demand made upon them to pronounce beforehand upon a difficulty which might never arise. Absurd as this reads, we believe we have given but the simple facts. Only think of a christian conclave in London, based upon, *no one knows what*, assuming power to *put away* assemblies in the gross, not only in London, but in Bristol, and other places! Thus, it seems, was brought about the first great division. The separatists henceforth excluded all who did not hold their views, and gave them the designation of "Bethesdas," or "the other side"—while those *put away*, denominated the other party "exclusives." Oddly enough, there are many dear christians in both camps who know little or nothing of the nature of the *middle wall* built up between them. The *young* "exclusives" are led to think the "Bethesdas" all heretics; and the latter must of necessity look upon the "exclusives" as sad fanatics—but the cause of division few are able to tell. There have been other ruptures. The chiefs of the London "exclusives" have since sat in judgment upon matters concerning "The Brethren" at Guernsey, and we know not where besides. There is no end to ecclesiastical pretension when once the anti-scriptural principle of *confederacy* is admitted.

One circumstance connected with these matters we must not pass over. The extra-judicial conclave in London on one occasion (probably oftener) were non-plused for want of scripture on which to base their proceedings; whereupon the conscience of the meeting was appeased by reading from the 2nd Epistle of John, as follows:—"For many deceivers are entered into

the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an anti-christ. Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

This epistle, be it remembered, is written "To the elect lady and her children," and does not in any way deal with Church questions. It is given for the guidance of individual christian conduct, especially respecting those who may call upon us at our dwellings professing religion. If such bring not the doctrine of Christ (i.e. particularly, that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh), we are neither to receive them, nor bid them God speed.

Marvellous to say, the meeting was imposed upon by this, and considered they were fully furnished with justification for their arbitrary proceedings. And to this day the "exclusives" boast of it as a piece of profound wisdom. Yet "the doctrine of Christ, and his coming in the flesh" was not at all in question—nor has the Scripture quoted the most distant application to the case over which judgment was assumed.

All this would be very mortifying if it were desirable that mere human arrangements, as touching the things which belong to Christ, should succeed. It is, however, far better that the Lord *alone*, should be glorified. We have not a doubt that "the Brethren," from first to last, have been desirous of acting most conscientiously: but the old nature has betrayed them. They commenced as a "*feeble few*," and were abundantly blessed. As soon as they became a *strong party*, they began to fail. They gathered simply to the name of Jesus, and trusted to his guidance personally, and by the Holy Ghost and the Scriptures. He has never failed them. But as their numbers increased, they began to think they had found therein a fresh source of strength. It is a common mistake. Let the world have its axiom, "Union is strength"—Christians ought to hold exactly the reverse. "The Lord said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for MY strength is made perfect in weakness." Then says Paul: "Most gladly will I glory in my infirmities, that the POWER OF CHRIST may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distress, for Christ's sake: *for when I am weak, then am I strong.*"

None are more ready than "the Brethren" to receive such truth as this theoretically: Paul held it *practically*. So must all who would profit by it.

If any party, *as such*, ever could deserve success—according to human thought, "the Brethren" might well look for it. We bear them witness that, save in the matter of Baptism and substituted rules, together with this mistake of federal union, they seek to conform to the mind of Christ. But success, as a party, would have been dishonour to Christ—and they could not wish *that*. Let this thought console them. Nay, may it

make them rejoice. With respect to the writings of some who have constituted themselves *enemies* of "the Brethren," such as those we have alluded to—nearly all their statements abound with errors, and malice is stamped upon them. They are like the men of Belial; we must let them alone.

Dear "Brethren,"—Let us ask you, in all love, what do you get by holding on to your mutilated federations? Would you lose if you were to seek *only* the unity of the Spirit, and to give up the vain struggle for a unity of the body which God alone can preserve? Why cling to the *importance* which attaches to a large union? Drink of the spirit of Christ—give up the desire for greatness here—and you will be infinitely richer for the loss. Do you fear a lack of ministry? Is the Lord's arm shortened? Are your resources in men? On this point let us in faithfulness exhort you. Beware of "the itching ear!" You need to be warned in common with all Christians against an excessive love of preaching and hearing. Fear not a lack of the things of 1 Cor. xii: but cultivate rather the theme of 1 Cor. xiii.

We do not dispute the advantage of pre-eminently gifted ministry. But the Lord is equal to all our needs. Only wait upon him, and he will give the best gifts *according to his own estimate* of our wants. Alas! how apt we are to think we can manage for ourselves! Remember, those who have troubled you in times past were gifted men. The strong ones are they which have brought leanness upon you. Ministry is not the chief thing.

Beloved,—Your union brings you both weakness and sorrow. Why should Islington be perplexed and hindered with the affairs of Guernsey or Kensington? Why should Exeter sit in judgment because error creeps in at Bristol? Such interference between local churches is quite opposed to Scripture.

You are bearing heavy burdens. Listen to the invitations of Jesus—"Come to me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and *I will give you rest*. Take MY YOKE upon you, and LEARN OF ME; *for I am meek and lowly of heart*: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

These considerations, and many more in "the Word," offer abundant inducement, for any who have faith, to abandon the confederacy, and become really what you now profess to be—two or three gathered in the name of Jesus. Should any of you act thus in faithfulness, your fellow-Christians generally may think you very foolish. So much the better. "The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. * * * God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence"! Brethren—do you believe it?

We trust our readers generally will catch the spirit in which these remarks are written. Our object is the very reverse of seeking to ferment the unholy enmity

against the Plymouth Brethren which exists in the minds of many who name the name of Christ. We have exposed their failures and weakness, that others may be warned; and in the hope that many among themselves may be led to search for the mind of the Lord, as to what HE would have them to do. The sweet words of encouragement and promise in Rev. iii. 7-12 are not given to a strong confederation, but to a *local Church* which has but "a little strength." For such *the Lord* has set "an open door."

BELIEVERS—FOLLOWERS—SERVANTS

We discern in Scripture the above three attitudes in which those who are *saved* should be found in this present state, in relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. The BELIEVER may remain simply a believer, and not advance to the other conditions. Where that is the case it is greatly to be deplored, because it entails a low, grievous, and unhappy course here, loss of reward hereafter, and dishonour to God and Christ. That belief *may* apparently exist alone is evident from the case of Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night and said—"We know that thou art a teacher come from God;" and Jesus, by receiving him and patiently teaching him, admitted his faith. But what glorious opportunities did Nicodemus lose of *following* and *serving* the "Teacher come from God;" and what must have been his grief when, the God-sent One having been crucified, he could do nothing but honour His lifeless body! Are there no believers now who endeavour to do without daily communion with a Living Lord?

Nicodemus was not alone in this respect, for we read in John xii. "Among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." So it is now; if believers will look at, and reckon up what they will have to lose by conformity to the Word of God, they will probably fail to become followers and servants.

In John vi. 66 we read of believers who essayed in their fleshly will to be followers also, but who impatiently went backward, and walked no more with Jesus, when he began to press heavenly truth upon them. With how many is this the case now. Men set up their "I think this" and "I think that," and will not receive the plain statements of Scripture! How few regard the Written Word as deserving the same unquestioning obedience and reverence as was due to the Incarnate Word when He was on earth! More or less, Christians who will argue, where the expressions of Scripture are plain, must go backward, and, in some respects, swerve from following. Where there is no doubt as to the simple meaning of words in the sacred writings, there is no room for the exercise of opinion. To draw inferences, is to dishonour the text and to open an avenue to the subtleties of the Deceiver.

But it may be said, the instances above produced are from among those who believed before the Holy

Ghost became the Indweller of believers, and that to believe now and not to follow is impossible. Is it? Is it not possible to "quench" the Spirit? If believers are of necessity followers, why does Paul exhort the Corinthians, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ"? Does not the apostle weep over certain believers, because by their teaching and conduct they were (instead of being followers) "enemies of the cross of Christ"? Is it not possible to be fruitless branches of the True Vine, and to be taken away in consequence? Does not the Spirit say by Peter that the believer who neglects to add to his faith—virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity, becomes blind, and (though not ceasing to be a believer) actually "forgets that he was purged from his old sins"? Who will say it is not possible for a believer to neglect and decline to "take up his cross daily and follow" Jesus? Oh, it is ever needful for us to exhort one another not to be "conformed to this world," remembering what Jesus says to all who are his—"Ye are not of this world, even as I am not of this world."

Not only may dear Christians, in the general tenour of their daily walk, not be following Christ, but whenever such as are endeavouring (by his grace) to follow him, do listen to their own wills or the wishes of others in any matter, and do not make direct reference to *his* wishes and *his* will, they cease for the time to be followers of Him who came not to do his "own will, but the will of him that sent him."

2. And for what reasons did believing ones become FOLLOWERS of Jesus when he was on earth and should be (in spirit) now?—Because they loved to be *with* Him; they loved to *learn* of Him; they desired to *become like* Him; they were delighted to *view* the marvels of his power and grace; and to *honour* Him. As they have opportunity, all believers should rejoice to make it evident that they are disciples, or learners, and followers. If all could not personally follow Christ when he was on earth, all believers can now, through his grace, his Spirit, and his Word.

3. From among those who follow the Lord spiritually, and thereby increase in conformity to Himself, He chooses and sends forth SERVANTS. It is true that service may immediately succeed faith, as in the case of the woman of Samaria; but generally, we believe, the Lord observes the same rule now as He did with the apostles and evangelists—"Come ye *after* Me, and I will make you fishers of men." "Every one that is perfect shall be as his Master." Blessed encouragement!

Service is too multifarious in kind to allow us to go into details. It includes everything that can possibly be done unto the Lord, and may be active or passive, apparent or unknown to men. The true servant, while not desirous of hiding his good works, would rather cultivate that love which "vaunteth not itself." It is enough for him to serve the Master, and to know that the Master sees all.

It is self-evident that, even in the affairs of this life, no one can take upon himself the power of appointing *another man's servant*. Christ's servants

must be made by himself. Take, for instance, the preacher of the Gospel; "How shall he preach unless he be sent?" (Rom. x. 15.) Again, "He gave some, apostles; some, prophets; some, evangelists; some, pastors and teachers;" &c. (Eph. iv.) "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers." (Acts xx.) Worldly churches, according to their own institutions, and assemblies of believers, do constitute and appoint clergymen, but such a course of action does not make them the servants of Christ. They are only servants of those who appointed them. It is true that such may be previously and afterwards true servants of the One Master, do his work, and be honoured by him; but all this does not justify them in receiving a badge of office from man, but on the contrary proves its non-necessity. There is no ground for Christians claiming the power to appoint to the ministry, or for ministers to ordain one another. When believers assemble, they should gather, not to each other, nor primarily for the benefits of ministry, but to the LORD. Will he suffer his own Body to want for ministration? "No man yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth, and cherisheth it; even as the Lord the church."

There is great danger in these times of religious *bustle*, when human instrumentality is over-estimated, to forget the necessity even of life, in order to do Christian service. We are thinking just now of a young man whom we knew, and a young woman of whom we have read, being engaged as Sunday-school teachers who were not clear as to their own salvation! Think of the miserable work of pointing the way to heaven and not being in it! The young man said he thought he was "doing good;" no doubt he had undertaken the work at the earnest solicitation of Christians, who taught him, as he said, that "in watering others his own soul would be watered also."

What a snare! It really does become us, in very faithfulness, to press upon nominal Christians that "they that are in the flesh cannot please God;" "Without faith it is impossible to please him." There cannot be any kind of service till there is simple faith unto salvation. We have known a similar instance of unregeneracy in a district visitor.

Worship is the highest form of service; but as it rather appertains to the attitude of sons than of servants, we will not consider it here.

Believer, dost thou desire to be a *servant*? Thou "desirest a good thing." But remember the command of the Eternal Father to those who had already been servants for some time—"This is my beloved Son; hear ye HIM." Follow on as a learner and a lover, doing whatever Jesus has given thee to do, as "unto the Lord and not unto men." Purge thyself from all that is not of the Word, keep thy body under, and He will "set before thee an open door." Do not for a moment forget the emphatic declaration of the Master—

"Without *Me* ye can do nothing;"—
or the experience of a fellow Servant—

"I can do all things through *Christ* which strengtheneth me."

SCRIPTURE MEETINGS.

'Search the Scriptures.'—(John v. 39.)

(RAWSTORNE MEETING ROOM, No. 47, Rawstorne-street, Goswell-road, Saturday, Sept. 2.

A FEW TREASURED THOUGHTS.

"And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor; for your's is the kingdom of God."

How blessed to have the eyes of Jesus "lifted up" in complacency and blessing upon us! But in order that it may be so, we must be "disciples" (or learners) as well as believers.

It was noticed that these words did not countenance the notion that poverty in itself was a blessing, but only the poverty of *disciples*—poverty in connection with faith.

The question was raised, Did our Lord mean poor in spirit? Doubtless poverty of all kinds is meant, a primary reference being made to straightened temporal circumstances. Whom Christ pronounces blessed must be blessed indeed, absolutely blessed—the poor. How different from the conclusions and maxims of the natural man!

One of the chief blessings which were seen to arise from the discipline of poverty, was that it led the child of God to go on from day to day in faith; hence such an one comes to be, though "poor in this world, rich in faith," if rightly exercised thereby.

How wonderful is the antithesis which the Lord himself makes!—"Blessed are ye *poor*, for your's is the *kingdom*." [Oh, that every poor saint among our readers may rejoice, entering into the mind of Christ on this subject. Wait. Patiently wait.]

COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL BY

ST. JOHN.

(Written expressly for this publication.)

CHAPTER I.

VERSES 35, 36.—"Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!" The "voice" had yesterday called his hearers to behold the Lamb of God with reference to sin; now he cries, Behold the Lamb of God, that his hearers may become *followers* of the Lamb. John's mission would now soon come to an end. He had, in the first days of his ministry, proclaimed the coming of the Messiah. Then he had declared him as the Son of God. Next, he had made known that the Lamb of God, as the Saviour, was in the midst of his people. Finally, he had emphatically called attention to Jesus as the one who ought to fill the vision of all who have hope in God. "Behold the Lamb of God!" There was no object on earth worthy to be compared with him! Yet John the Baptist did not himself become a *follower* of Christ. His was a separate mission; he belonged to the former dispensation. Like the prophets who preceded him, the purpose of his testimony was to direct the attention of all to the Messiah. Having heralded the approach, and declared the presence of the long-expected One, his own sojourn upon earth soon terminated.

37.—"And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus." Most blessed result! It is a happy thing to be under the guidance of a man who can point us to "The Truth." But when, by faith, we see Jesus, let us *follow Him*. As believers, we may well be thankful to our John—the voice which made Jesus known to us—whoever he may be. We should, indeed, "esteem him very highly for his work's sake." But we have now a divine guide: we must *follow* our Saviour.

38.—"Then Jesus turned and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi (which is to say, being interpreted, Master), where dwellest thou?" Here we have the enquiry of true-hearted followers of Christ. They long to know the place where he dwells.

39.—"He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day; for it was about the tenth hour." How many sinners, saved by grace, have heard the same response to the desire of their

hearts! In the midst of suffering and sorrow here, weary of human leaders, troubled, perhaps, with manifold perplexities, they have turned to the Lord and said, "Where dwellest thou?" and have received his gracious invitation, "Come and see." They have gone, as to a temporary abode, but it is to be with him. They must be raised, with us, in glorified bodies, before they can be put in possession of the mansions which Jesus has gone to prepare. Meanwhile, the Lord has pitied his weary followers, has answered many who have cried to him, and has put them to rest. Their day had reached the tenth hour, so he has taken them to be with him in Paradise: "Absent from the body, present with the Lord."

40, 41, 42.—"One of the two that heard John and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother, Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ; and he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon, the Son of Jona; thou shalt be called Cephas, which is, by interpretation, a stone." It is sweetly said here of Andrew, that he not only *told* his brother Simon of the precious One he had found, but "he brought him to Jesus." And the Lord put a new name upon Simon, though he did not then give him the place of an Apostle. Jesus did not call out the Twelve till the public ministry of John the Baptist had absolutely ceased by his being shut up in prison.

THE WORLD CANNOT BE IMPROVED BY CHRISTIANS

Followers of the Lord Jesus should not seek to *re-form* the world. Unregenerate men of course strive to remodel, alter and refine themselves and their affairs. But according to the mind of God, all such efforts are *quite* hopeless. Man is by nature radically bad—bad at the heart. The divine remedy for his condition is, *a new nature!* This is *given* to all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence the plain teaching of the Saviour. "No man seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment, else the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse."

Many Christians foolishly imagine that the world is to be gradually improved and Christianized. All Scripture is directly opposed to this thought, and all experience is equally against it. The pure doctrines of Christ have been taught during 1800 years. Believers have in measure practised them. Unregenerate men have been impressed with a sense of their loveliness, and have endeavoured to appropriate a portion of them. Members of Christ have entered into a league with the men of the world. Unbelievers have consented to be called Christians; while the (professed) followers of the crucified Saviour, have agreed to be *of the world*. This, too, in spite of that emphatic declaration of the Word,—“The friendship of the world is enmity with God. Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”

And what is the result produced by opposing God's mind and counsels? What is the aspect of Christendom at this moment? England presents the most favourable picture which can be found in it, and what are its characteristics as seen by the Lord of all? We find a full description in Mark vii. 21, 22. "Adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness." The newspapers teem with accounts of crime in its most hideous aspects. Adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts—every evil which springs from that corrupt thing—the heart of man. And, oh,

the iniquity God sees there which is never published to the world!

Let Christians be well assured that no human power can alter it. That which believers can do is to live Christ, and preach Christ. In both ways warn sinners to flee from the wrath to come. Let it be no longer hid from mankind that not only is there to be a judgment day when the dead small and great shall be judged; but that, long before that day, the wrath of God will be poured out upon this present evil world. "Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. * * * * * The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: *for the Lord hath spoken this word.* The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants are burned *and few men left.* * * * * * The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth *shall* reel to and fro like a drunkard; and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it," &c., Isa. xxiv. All this is fully confirmed in Matt. xxvi. 29, 30; 2 Thess. i. 7—9; 2 Pet. iii. 3—10; Jude 14, 15; Rev. xix. 11—21, and numerous other Scriptures.

In vain do both believers and unbelievers seek to explain away these prophecies, telling us they are to have only a spiritual fulfilment. Our Lord has said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall *not* pass away." The judgment formerly pronounced against the ante-diluvian world was *literally* fulfilled, that against Sodom and Gomorrah was *literally* fulfilled—the long series of judgments prophesied against the Israelites from the time of Moses until Christ, have been, and are being, *literally* fulfilled. The condition of the Jews for the last 1800 years is a standing witness that the promised visitations of God will always be *strictly* executed. May real Christians in these last days learn for themselves in the "written Word" the mind of their Saviour and Lord, on the two following points.

First. His Teaching that, denying "ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify *unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.*" Titus ii. 12—14.

Second—His injunction—"Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: **FOR THE TIME IS AT HAND.** He that is unjust let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous let him be righteous still: and he that is holy let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Rev. xxii. 10—12. The coming of

Christ will bring an effectual reformation; none but he can produce it. Meanwhile, our warning cry to the unregenerate, is, "Escape for your lives."

BAPTISM:

ITS PLACE, AND MEANING, (AS GIVEN IN THE SCRIPTURES.)

In Scripture, baptism is never proposed to the believer as a matter of choice. The Lord Jesus Christ did not leave room for a question to be raised about it, but issued His command to His servants—"Baptize." His words are, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. xxviii. 19.) Again, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark xvi. 15, 16.)

In the foregoing first-named Scripture, in which the servant's office is contemplated, the command is absolute, to "baptize," while in Mark's Gospel the result of receiving or rejecting the word of life is also declared; and here belief and baptism are linked together, and are laid as a responsibility upon all who hear the Gospel.

Though the Lord knew full well the perversity of the human heart, and certainly foresaw that His commandments would be disobeyed, he completely ignored all questioning on the subject of baptism, and contemplated only *obedience* in connection with belief.

In strict accordance with this, when we turn to "the Acts," to see how the Apostles carried into practice the instructions of their Master, we find a total absence of demur to the ordinance of baptism. In the second chapter we read Peter's first sermon after the descent of the Holy Ghost. His hearers are pricked to the heart, and say to Peter and to the rest of the Apostles, (verse 37,) "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you," &c. "Then they that gladly received his word (verse 41) were baptized; and the same day there were added about three thousand souls."

Now notice what follows (verse 42): "And they continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

Here we have the simple but perfect construction of the church; and all who follow any other model, must necessarily dishonour the Head, and grieve the Holy Spirit. How beautiful is the order, and how exactly it commends itself to the spiritual mind—Faith in Jesus Christ, baptism, fellowship, breaking of bread, prayers. Alas! that Christians should have the presumption to think they can make better arrangements than this.

Any spiritually minded Christian who would look into the "word of God" for instruction respecting water Baptism, should first prayerfully seek to dismiss from his mind all the traditions of men respecting it. The confusion which exists on the subject is truly astonishing.

The following questions naturally suggest themselves to an earnest enquirer after the truth:—

1st. Why are Christians to be baptized?—To which we answer, Simply because our Lord and Saviour ordained it, and no human authority whatever can set aside His ordinance without rebellion against Him who has *bought us* with his own precious blood.

2nd. What does Baptism signify?—The act of baptism signifies, on the part of the Christian immersed in water, that he accepts the death of Christ as his own death. By this act of conformity to the will of his Saviour, he in effect says this, "I now realize by faith that when Christ the Son of God died on the cross, I died with him. Through His infinite foreknowledge, he anticipated the day when I should believe in Him, and, therefore, accepted death for me. The old Adam nature represented by my body is consequently, in the sight of God, a dead thing." And the action of the person immersing a Christian may be rendered in words thus—"You are indeed, as

to your sinful, condemned nature, dead, and I, therefore, bury you under the water. But though, through faith in Christ, you are dead as a *child of Adam*, by that same faith you are alive as a *child of God*. I, therefore, raise you out of the water, for you are really in spirit already in resurrection life."

3rd. Is Baptism essential to Salvation?—Certainly not. Baptism is for believers only. The believer has already obtained salvation before he comes to be baptized.

4th. If Baptism is not necessary to salvation, what good will it do me?—On this point Scripture is silent. But we may venture to say, the Lord's blessing surely follows upon obedience to His commands. We have put the question in its *meanest* form. Should not the Christian rather enquire, "Is there anything *I can do* by which I can *testify* my faith and love?" There should be an earnest craving, on the part of one just rescued from eternal death, for some means of declaring, otherwise than in words, that he knows the Lord Jesus Christ to be his or her Saviour and Lord. This right desire is exactly met by Baptism.

5th. May infants or other unconverted persons be baptized?—It ought to be evident to everyone, that as Baptism is of no assistance whatever as a means of bringing salvation, and as, indeed, *in itself*, it is of no benefit even to the believer, it can do nothing for the unconverted, whether young or old. But when we reflect further upon the act which typifies death and resurrection, and own that these things can only be true of those who believe in Christ, it is manifest that to perform the rite upon the unregenerate is to *act a Lie*, and make a solemn mockery of an ordinance of God.

6th. Can sprinkling be accepted as a satisfactory substitute for immersion?—By putting a person under water, scripture teaches us, we signify burial; but by sprinkling we signify nothing. Men may accompany such an act with whatever prayers and ceremonials they choose to invent, and they may put what interpretation they please upon their own contrivances. But what is the use of it? Real Baptism is an *act of faith* performed to God. Sprinkling, or Christening (so called), is at best but a delusion—and is, in reality, a *denial of faith*, being in direct opposition to the counsels of God.

7th. When ought the believer to be baptized?—As soon as possible after he has received the word of life. It is the true Christian's first active step in the path of faith.

8th. Ought a Christian to be received to the Lord's Supper before being baptized?—No rightly instructed believer could wish it. The Lord has placed water baptism first, and why should anyone seek to reverse the divine order? Moreover, it is evident that death to the old nature—or rather, resurrection life in the new, is that which brings us into membership in the body of Christ; therefore, the rite, which is significant of this mysterious truth, ought to be performed before we are received into fellowship by the members of his Church on earth.

9th. Does it follow from what has been stated, that faithfulness requires all Christians to join the sect called Baptists?—Certainly not. Sectarianism is completely opposed to Scripture. A believer ought to solemnly repudiate every name but that of "Christian." Baptism should no more be made the badge of a sect than the Lord's Supper.

The reader will find in the 2nd Chap. of "Acts" the true model of the Church—and in the Epistles, the various evils which crept in are severely denounced. At the very opening of the first Epistle to Corinthians, sectarian spirit even then manifested, is rebuked and forbidden.

These questions and answers are introduced only for the purpose of bringing the whole subject into a succinct form. We will now resume our investigations of Scripture. May we accept the teaching of God's word, and submit to that only.

(To be continued, D.V.)

OUR CORRESPONDENTS AND OURSELVES.

G. P., LAUNCESTON.—Several communications received with thanks. We are, however, quite unable to find space for them.

A. B., GAISFORD-STREET.—We would gladly accept sacred poetry if of the very highest order, and calculated to stir the *new* nature to faithfulness and worship. Our space, however, is so limited, that we are unable to promise insertion.

O. P., EAST MOULSBY.—Your letters interest us deeply, and we hope to profit by them; but feel quite unable to do them justice in the few remarks we offer here in reply. We should need a dozen of those sheets to examine all the momentous questions you raise. It is, as you say, very important that we believe in the presence of "Christ in the midst" without any qualification. We must, indeed, be careful to hold our thoughts, and speak them, scripturally. Yet, if one proposes to be conformed to the Holy Spirit and the Word, that, of necessity, involves conformity to the mind of Christ. You rightly fear that where so many have failed, including Mr D. and the Brethren, others will be liable to failure. Well, we must be content to be very foolish, and when we make mistakes, retrace our steps—go back to the Master, and learn our lesson afresh. We need both meekness and humility, do we not?—We were certainly wrong in saying that the Brethren gave themselves that name; but you agree with us that they have practically adopted it. Respecting the requirement of baptism before receiving to full fellowship—Practically, there is no difficulty about it. Where those who exercise ministry are faithful in pressing the word of truth on the subject, either subjection follows, or such a spirit of wilfulness becomes manifest as to show that there would not be true fellowship were the applicant admitted.—On the subject of Pastors, Elders, and Angels we hope to offer a few thoughts separately.

S. C. H., HIGHGATE, whose letter was published in our last number; the only point requiring a reply is, that respecting Baptism. We believe there is but one baptism by water divinely given to believers; namely, that ordained by the Lord himself, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The reason why in "The Acts of the Apostles" the name of Jesus only is given in connection with immersion, is (it appears evident to us) to show how God delights to exalt that name. Men had despised Jesus, and said, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" but now, God had "highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." Moreover, the believer is to be immersed according to the command of Jesus, and the thing signified has been accomplished in the power of his name. We are baptized into his death—"buried with him in baptism." The whole work of Salvation, and the baptism which commemorates it, is in *personal association* with the Son of God. Hence the force of the record, "they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." By the outward act of immersion we testify that we are by faith baptized to, or into, Him. The solemn act is, however, celebrated in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; for through faith in the Son of God we are brought into fellowship not only with himself, but also with the Father and the Holy Spirit. It is a great mystery, but faith can grasp it.

J. L., HILL STREET, PECKHAM.—We thank you for your communication, and return it at your request. (Call at 335, Strand.) Your arguments against water baptism are ably put; but, we trust, you will find them fully answered in the article on "Baptism," now in course of publication in this paper.

A WEAK DISCIPLE, EARL, BRISTOL.—We deeply pity you. But why continue to sow that which produces such a sorrowful harvest? You are evidently opposing the mind of your Master. In what way we cannot exactly tell, for you only give us a half confidence. The remedy is not to be found in asking the prayers of your fellow believers. If you would get rid of your pangs of conscience it must be by a *practical conformity* to Matt. xi. 29, and Luke ix. 23.

W. B., SKINNER STREET, CLERKENWELL.—We have much pleasure in reading your very earnest letter in defence of "The Brethren." You will see we elsewhere admit their distinctive title was rather accepted than chosen. As to the rest we know what we affirm. You have probably not had opportunities of forming the same judgment we have. What we all ought to desire is, to discern the mind of our Lord. May all really seek to do this. You say "we are of the *Pauline Dispensation*." Dear Brother, there is no such thing in Scripture. This is one of the subjects taught among you, which like water baptism and church union, wants looking into in the full light of the "word of truth." Bear with us—our one desire is to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints," free from all taint of parties and isms. May our writings about "The

Brethren" induce all dear Christians to search out truth for themselves—to "*prove all things*." Alas! it is easier to let others search for us, and take it for granted that those we love are correct in all they teach. All we have said we can commit to Him that judgeth righteously.

E. M., CREWE.—The simple answer to your argument is this—John's baptism preceded Salvation, but the baptism of Christ follows after it. There is as great a difference as between the value of John Baptist's ministry and that of our Lord. The whole question of Baptism will, we trust, be fully dealt with in the present and succeeding numbers of our paper—after which, should any difficulty remain, we shall be happy to hear from you again.

A. G., BIRMINGHAM.—We thank you sincerely for your assistance in circulating PRECIOUS TRUTH. Your remonstrance is received with the greatest respect, but we have fully answered similar remarks in previous numbers. Our desire is to be faithful to the Lord; we dare not spare where rebuke is needed.

J. S. J., CREWE.—Be assured of our full sympathy in your disappointment respecting Scripture Meetings. Do not give up. "In due time we shall reap if we faint not." We think you would do well to go to the meetings held by T. S. Look to the Lord to use you, if needs be, to counteract any "peculiar views" if unscriptural. For our own part, we are free to go to any reading meeting where there is liberty to look into the Scriptures, and speak out what we are able to understand therefrom. Never mind though there be but very, very few. The true object of such meetings is better attained where there is but little room for personal display. Surely you can invite some dear Christians to your own house. This need not interfere with the other meeting.—Respecting baptism, we simply present the truth, as it is plainly written in the "Word of God." What the result will be, it is not for us to inquire. If our dear brethren in the Lord reject the testimony, there will be at least a verification of that Scripture, "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine." You say, "To advocate believer's baptism will make us *Baptists*, if not *close communionists*." Dear brother, the remedy for all that kind of thing is to look right away from men to Christ in the glory. Are we to be men pleasers, or are we to conform to the plain commands of our Lord? You add, "Very many dear children of God believe in and practise the baptism of infants." It is one of a thousand ways in which MANY DEAR CHILDREN OF GOD thoroughly dishonour the Lord Jesus Christ. That infant sprinkling is held as a superstition by thousands who trust in Jesus for their own soul's salvation, we are very well aware. There is no end to men's superstitions. We met a dear brother a short time since who believes in the influence of the planets! This is a ministering brother, one who on most points manifests much spiritual intelligence. What are we to do in the midst of such miserable failure? The answer is simple. Read the 2nd epistle to Timothy, written in contemplation of these times—and act out individually, as in the presence of Christ, what we are there taught.—Further remarks in our next.

[Other Notices to Correspondence unavoidably postponed.]

NOTICES.

Letters for the Editor to be addressed to 335, Strand, W.C.

To facilitate the obtaining of PRECIOUS TRUTH, packets will be sent post free to any part of the United Kingdom, by remitting, in advance, as follows:—Two copies for 2d., Five for 3d., Ten for 5d. Send Stamps.

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TRACTS for the Unregenerate: reprinted from 'Precious Truth'; Single leaf, 3s per 1,000. J. Evans, Printer, 335a, Strand, W.C.

THE SPIRITUAL WATCHMAN, (Monthly, 16pp. 1d) is commended to the Notice of his readers by the Editor of PRECIOUS TRUTH; see No. 6. To be had by order through any bookseller; or of Messrs Scott & Allan, 109, Sauchiehall-street, Glasgow; or of the Book Society, Paternoster-row, London.

Printed by JOHN EVANS, 335a, Strand, W.C.; and published for him by JOB CAUDWELL, 335, Strand, London, W.C. and SCOTT & ALLAN, 109, Sauchiehall-street, Glasgow. Friday, Sept. 1, 1865.

PRECIOUS TRUTH.

“WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?”—(Rom. iv. 3.)

Job Gaudwell, 335, Strand, London, W.O.]

[Arthur Hall, 25, Paternoster-row, London.

No. 8.]

NOVEMBER 1, 1865.

[One Halfpenny.]

A LETTER TO ONE WHO LOVES THE SAVIOUR.

BELoved.—If you are permitted to serve our Lord Jesus Christ, it is one of the most blessed privileges conferred upon you by him. Are you a servant? You are a child of God, by adoption, through faith in Jesus Christ. But it by no means follows of necessity that you are his servant. There is much misapprehension on this subject. The unregenerate are fond of thinking they can become servants of God, and afterwards, through the acceptability of their works or service, receive *Salvation* as a reward! Now we know, through the grace of God, that salvation is a *free gift*; which you and I, as well as all who believe in the Lord Jesus, have received without any deserving on our part; nay, in spite of our utter unworthiness—for, *we were by nature the children of wrath even as others.* But God, *who is rich in mercy,* for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ—*by grace we ARE saved.*’

Now, the next consideration is—we are re-created (made *partakers* of the divine nature) that we may be workers of good. Are you, beloved, fulfilling the purposes of God in this respect? “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus *unto good works,* which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” These good works, then, are not to be of your own invention, nor contrived by men. But God hath ordained them. You must therefore learn in His word what HE calls good works.

What folly to attempt works as servants of God without a knowledge of His will about them! Think of that solemn declaration made by Jesus (Luke. xvi. 13-15). “Ye cannot serve God and Mammon. And the Pharisees [religious, self-righteous men] *who were covetous,* heard all these things: and they derided him! And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; *but God knoweth your hearts:* FOR THAT WHICH IS HIGHLY ESTEEMED AMONG MEN IS ABOMINATION IN THE SIGHT OF GOD.”

See to it, beloved. The Master has made known his will, FULLY, in His word. Are you doing what he has said, or, “that which is highly esteemed among men”?

Christians accept tasks at the hands of others, and think their performances will be esteemed by Christ. They talk about working *for* Jesus. Dear Brother, dear Sister, you cannot work *for* Him. Yet if you keep yourself *in sanctification* (i. e. having no fellowship or connection with things contrary to the mind of God, though of course liable to incidental failure and sin,) you may indeed work *with*

him. It is He who “worketh in you to will and to do of His good pleasure.” “Without me,” said the Lord, “ye can do nothing.” “If ye abide in me, and MY WORDS abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.”

The majority of Christians act as though they consider there is uncertainty respecting the word of the Lord, as touching what he would have them do. This, beloved, is quite a mistake. Oh, that believers would search the Scriptures prayerfully!—that they would trust the Holy Ghost the Comforter to guide them into all truth! They would then speedily abandon *many* works which are “*highly esteemed among men.*”

And this leads me to the point I wish to urge upon you. Do you know what it is, my brother, my sister, to meet from time to time, with two or three true-hearted believers, in the name of Jesus? Do you know what it is thus to have fellowship with Christians, together taking the word of God for your study, and accepting the Holy Ghost as your teacher? If not, you have missed much strength and joy which the Lord has provided for you.

Ponder this, dear Christian. Pray about it. The time is short. If you would be a servant, you must know your Lord’s mind. To know his mind you must search the Scriptures. Doubtless you read your Bible alone from time to time—perhaps every day. But I would put the question to myself as well as to you, “Understandest thou what thou readest?” “If any man think he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.”

Oh! the riches contained in that collection of books called the Bible! The store is inexhaustible. Well, God be praised for all we obtain from it in secret. But what one can get in that way, is I believe but as a drop compared to the outflowing from the well of truth, which comes when the members of Christ meet together in His name, to commune over His word, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Remember, too, that it is scarcely possible for a Christian in these days to be untainted by party prejudices. The word of truth is generally looked at obliquely. Tradition has been so thoroughly indoctrinated that it is difficult to know whether we are free from it until our thoughts are subjected to the scrutiny of fellow believers, in the presence of God. Then, again, there may be times when it is needful for the living word to be felt by us as “a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart,” as “*sharper than any two-edged sword.*” Perhaps you or I would shrink from thus applying needful

portions to our own souls; but the word of truth uttered by others may pierce home, convict us of error, and send us to the throne of grace for peace. I might dwell at great length upon this subject;—but must conclude by assuring you that the advantage of fellowship-study of the Scriptures is incalculable. Depend not upon that which man's wisdom teacheth, but upon "that which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual." Meet then, beloved, over the word of God; open your cottage or barn, your parlour or your kitchen; and any souls you know to be followers of the Good Shepherd, or enquirers after the way of life, invite them in freely, whatever party-name they bear; and pray God to teach you. Never mind the frowns of your neighbours. Disregard the scorn, not only of the world, but of Pharisees also. Nay, rather count it as cause for rejoicing, if in any measure you are called to suffer shame for the name of Christ. In this way, then, you may be a true servant, for "the word" will sanctify you, if you are really true-hearted; and you will be "a vessel meet for the Master's use, prepared unto every good work." That it may be thus with you is the fervent prayer of

Yours in the love of Christ Jesus our Lord,

The Editor of

"PRECIOUS TRUTH."

SIMPLE FELLOWSHIPS.

The following is copied from an account of a Christian's travels in the Scilly Isles, and elsewhere, as reported in *The Revival*, October 12. It shows a happy return of at least a part of the household of faith, to the simplicity of the first days of Christianity.

"It was observable that in the isles, Bryher and Tresco, where there is no chapel and no resident minister, the believers were in the most quickened state of any in all the islands. We heard, on our visit to Tresco and Bryher, much about Christ and nothing of sect or party; Christ was all! They meet in each other's houses at Bryher, bringing their chairs with them, coming together thus to pray and exhort one another. . . .

"It has been my privilege in various places to meet groups of believers of a primitive stamp, true Bible Christians, *i.e.*, desiring to be taught from God's own book all that they should learn and practise. Many of these are unsectarian and unattached, representing, as it appears to me, such as are recorded in Malachi iii. 16, and such as would seem to be indicated in Jude 20. These companies or simple gatherings are sometimes met with in the houses of the wealthy, others in the cottages of the poor; sometimes in hamlets and villages, sometimes in more populous places. My impression is that they are far more numerous than we think, and, if one may express his opinion, they betoken a healthy Christian condition. Those I allude to do not set up themselves to be better than others, but only claim to obey God's word in its simplicity, judging no man or set of men, but seeking to worship the Father, 'in spirit and in truth.' They read His word. For myself I can say, I have been much edified at such meetings,

and am a witness to facts of striking interest in the way of the conversion of persons who have been present at them as observers. J. F. E."

(To the Editor of PRECIOUS TRUTH.)

DEAR BROTHER IN THE LORD JESUS,—

I last night received three numbers of PRECIOUS TRUTH from a dear brother in the faith in Edinburgh; and to-day my heart is so full of joy, to see such a treasure published for the sake of truth, that I cannot remain silent. May the Lord bless you abundantly, and make you a blessing to many a disciple of the Lamb.

I thank God, whose I am through the redemption that is in the blood of Jesus, that many are beginning to hear the cry—"Behold, the Bridegroom cometh: go ye out to meet him." Some twelve years ago my mind was enlightened on this "bles-sed hope." I stood alone in that hope for years, but the Lord was pleased to give me zeal with the light, and I began to talk on the subject. My friends and neighbours began to entertain serious fears about my mind, and thought I was going fast astray into error. However, one truth opened the way for others. I got great good from reading and studying the "Book of Daniel," and "the Revelation." By and bye, some began to search the Scriptures! The victory was won. The ice being broken, they began to see I was right after all. Now there are a good many christians hereabout that are waiting for the gloriou appearing of the Lord Jesus.

About two years ago Christ's ordinance of baptism was the next truth examined, and seeing that to be a believer's duty, I (when in London) sought an interview with Mr Spurgeon and was baptized. Before that, I was a member of the Church of Scotland. I ceased to have connection with that church about this time twelve months.

A few baptized disciples of the Lord Jesus have now hired a room, and we meet every Lord's Day for the worship of God and breaking of bread. And, oh, how precious we have found this to be! Since ceasing to have connection with the state church we daily experience the presence of the Lord. We see it to be right to meet only as Christians, about a dozen of us in all. Each brother takes part in worship, as the Holy Spirit enables. Another brother or myself gives a word of exhortation. Pray for us.

I trust you will excuse this letter from the "North" from a brother. I pray for you. My main motive is to say, Go on in the work of the Lord. I will be exceedingly obliged if you will send me a supply of *Precious Truth* regularly to give away around me. I enclose you 2s. in stamps, and will thank you to send me back numbers, from the first, to that amount, and I will remit you again for twelve months.

May the Lord bless your labour of love in his service; may He add daily to the church such as shall be saved, so that at his coming there may be a great multitude ready to meet Him in the air.

I am your loving Brother,

Waiting for our Lord's appearing,
—, Wigtonshire.

30th August, 1865.

FALSE DOCTRINE.

We resume our examination of the pamphlet entitled "Professor, beware." Let us further test it by the word of God, and may poor doubting ones be convinced thereby, that the Gospel of the Lord Jesus is really what it purports to be—A message of free salvation to all who trust in Him. He commanded it to be proclaimed in *all the world, to every creature.*

Mr Parks, at page 6 in his tract, gives a glossary of the Epistle to the Romans. The following is his commentary on chapter x. of that scripture. "The election obtains salvation in virtue of sovereign grace, and when a man *can* call upon the Lord with his heart, he has good evidence of being an elect vessel of mercy prepared for glory."

Now, compare this teaching with the simple word of God. "The righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart: That is, the word of faith which we preach: That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved, for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith **WHOSOEVER** believeth on Him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek (or Gentile): for the same Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Rom. x. 6—13.

This is not a bit like the forced construction of Mr Parks. On the contrary, it is here expressly stated that there is now no difference between the Jew, who stood on election ground, and the Gentile who was (before the coming of Christ) considered by them beyond the reach of God's favour. God had in times past been pleased to have a chosen people, the descendants of faithful Abraham; but these as a nation had rejected the Son of God. That favoured people was therefore set aside. Now there is no difference, but **WHOSOEVER** believeth in the world-rejected Christ, receives forgiveness of sins and the gift of everlasting life. Let it not be supposed that we seek to evade one single word taught in the scriptures about God's electing mercy. Rightly understood, it is a most glorious and joyful theme. But the doctrine of election as given of God is not that which is taught by Mr Parks.

In the 9th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and in other scriptures, God claims an absolute right to do what he will with his creatures. Accordingly, in the manifestation of his sovereign will, he chooses from time to time to interpose specially and exceptionally with divine power, as a deliverer. Such was his dealing with Paul. In the exercise of this supreme right he declares, that notwithstanding the apostacy of his people Israel, in the latter days, he will put forth his mighty power and save a remnant of them.

In the meantime, the Lord chooses to dispense undeserved mercy to all who trust in Jesus. There-

fore during the present dispensation, salvation is made to depend upon preaching and believing. For this reason it was, the Apostle Paul laboured so earnestly in pressing the truth upon his countrymen. As he says in the very epistle under consideration,— "If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh (the Jews), and might save some of them." Rom. xi. 14.

Such language as this would be sheer nonsense if, according to certain teaching, they could not believe without having faith planted in them by direct intervention of the Holy Ghost.

We now come to a passage of the tract which should sadden all who know Jesus as the One who came to seek and to save the lost. At p. 9, Mr Parks says—"I grant that Christ has *the power* to save; for all power in heaven and earth is given into His hand, and I am certain that if he exerts that power in any sinner's behalf, that sinner *must* be saved, otherwise His power would not be '*all power*': but suppose He has not *the will*? What then?"

This may seem to be forcible logic—Alas! it is a denial of the truth. What saith the scripture? "For this [supplication for all men] is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; **WHO DESIRES ALL MEN TO BE SAVED**, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." 1 Tim. ii. 3, 4. The authorised version gives the words "who will have all men to be saved"; but the other is a better translation. In either rendering, the **WILL** of the Lord Jesus is express and unmistakable.

How grievous to find a professed minister of the gospel in direct antagonism to the mind of his Master: In fact, *opposing* the gospel he undertakes to preach!

(To be continued, D. V.)

SUBJECTION—ITS UNIVERSALITY.

WHEN man was created, the world of animal life was made subject to him; but that the spirit of subjection might be exercised in him, a tree was appointed of which he was forbidden to eat. But man failed, for, instead of remaining subject to Him who created him, he listened to one who was given to be a "help meet" for him, i.e. the woman. As a part of her punishment, God said—"Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." Unhappily, women often deny and despise this law, claiming equal right of rule, if not aspiring to something higher, the result being grief and mischief.

The law of subjection is observable in the New Creation from the following points of view:—

1. **CHRISTIANS** are to be subject to the powers that be. "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers."
2. **CHRISTIANS** as brethren are to be subject to one another; "Submit yourselves one to another, in the fear of the Lord." "Yea, all of you be subject one to another; and be clothed with humility."
3. **Christians** are to be subject to those whom the Lord raises up among them, "rightly dividing the word of truth," and who visit and admonish and care for them. Thus, in the last chapter of the

Hebrews, the Holy Spirit by Paul refers to this duty : "Obey them that have the rule over you, [or your guides, see the *margin*], and submit yourselves ; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief ; for that is unprofitable for you." (Heb. xiii.) It is evident this submissiveness is not to be exacted by those who take the oversight of the flock, but is to be voluntarily rendered, in love and gratitude for spiritual good received through them, the church recognising the will of Christ in making them under-shepherds. Nevertheless, this subjection in love gives no claim to authority of an *official* nature. For—

4. While the exercise of authority is the proper and natural sign and proof of greatness in the *world*, among believers it is to be the very reverse. "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. *But it shall not be so among you* : but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister ; and whosoever will be great among you, let him be your servant ; even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." The authority of an Office or an Order is *incompatible* with the nature of servitude, and must partake of the nature of mastership ; it is therefore contrary to the mind of Christ.

5. In the Christian WIFE. "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord."

6. In WOMEN in the church or assembly for worship. "Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."

7. The MAN in the assembly is to be subject to the Lord. (a) Because *He is present* ; (b) because He is the *Head* and believers are members in particular ; (c) because the faith which commits the conduct of the meeting to the Lord, who works in all subject ones by his Spirit, is the most honouring to Him who is worthy—worthy of *all* honour.

8. The ANGELS made subject to Christ by God.—"He saith, Let all the angels of God worship him."

9. CHRIST was subject to God, and will be so again after the consummation of all things. "My Father is greater than I." "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, . . . then shall the Son also himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all."

To the natural man it seems noble not to be of a subject spirit—submissiveness is regarded by him as only appropriate in children. Let it be so : the Lord says of children—"Of such is the kingdom of heaven," and that is enough. Oh, that we may all have more of this mind, "which was also in Christ Jesus." Let the worldly-minded and apostate church in Rev. xviii. say—"I sit a queen," glorying in her own rights and her increased goods ; but let true assemblies delight increasingly in lowliness and patience and contentment with the assured presence of the Lord Jesus.

COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL BY ST. JOHN.

(Written expressly for this publication.)

CHAPTER I.

VERSES 43, 44, 45.—"The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the City of Andrew and Peter. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

It is interesting to notice the interpretation of the names of the four men grouped around the Lord Jesus in the latter part of the chapter.

Andrew, signifies Strong or Stout.

Simon, signifies Hearing, Obeying. *Peter* or *Cephas* (the name given by our Lord to Simon,) means a Stone or Rock.

Philip, signifies Warlike.

These three belonged to *Bethsaida*, the meaning of which is, a House of Fishing or of Fruits, and all became apostles.

Nathanael signifies, "the Gift of God."

The Strong or Stout (*Andrew*) was the first to follow Jesus, but he remained in company with the Lord only a brief part of the day, from the tenth hour. He however went forth to seek his brother, the Hearing and Obeying one (*Simon*). In this name is indicated the character which specially pleases the Lord ; and he accordingly gives *Simon* another name, "the Stone or Rock," (*Cephas* or *Peter*), for Jesus will build his church of hearing and obeying ones. It is especially noticeable that on the occasion here spoken of, *Simon* was silent (an unusual circumstance with him, we may say), and the Saviour was thus left to deal with him according to the indication of the name he bore.

Next comes the Warlike One (*Philip*). As in the case of the other two, he was of the House of Fishing or of Fruits. Thus, however warlike in name, he was to be occupied peacefully ; for he was called to follow the "Prince of Peace."

Look at the bearing of the incidents another way. *Andrew* the Strong or Stout, hears the cry, "Behold the Lamb of God," and he follows Jesus. Then he goes forth and finds his brother *Simon*, the Hearing and Obeying one, and he brings him to Jesus. After that, *Jesus himself goes forth as the seeker*. He finds *Philip*, the Warlike, and saith unto him, *Follow me*. This follower findeth *Nathanael*, and invites him to come to Jesus ! It is sad to see how this first called one of the Lord, fails as to his statement of fact. "We have found him," said *Philip*. But he had not found the Lord ; *Jesus had sought and found him!*

Nathanael questions whether any good can come out of Nazareth ; but he accepts the invitation "Come and see."

46.—"And *Nathanael* said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth ? *Philip* saith unto him—Come and see."

A complete answer for all questioners about Christ and his ways—"Come and see."

47.—"Jesus saw *Nathanael* coming to him, and saith unto him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile !"

Nathanael, "the Gift of God," must needs come to Jesus, notwithstanding his doubts—according to that word of the Lord—"All that the Father hath given me shall come to me." *Nathanael* was a faithful and a true hearted one, "an Israelite indeed in whom was no guile." He could pour out his soul to God under the fig tree—but he needed the same Saviour as the vilest sinner. He must hear of the despised Nazarene, and must "come and see." *Nathanael* was a sinner. It was not any inherent holiness in him

which called forth so precious a greeting from the Lord. No—but he had *faith* and *truth*. He was a true child of Abraham, the father of the faithful—and he was without guile. He could confess his sins and shortcomings to God, and in faith count upon his promise of a Saviour. Philip tells him the Messiah is now revealed, and he forthwith goes to Jesus. How many precious thoughts are suggested by this narrative of the various ways and instrumentalities by which sinners are brought to “The Truth.” But however devious the means, and diverse their characters the one result must be, personal communion with Jesus. Nothing short of that will do. The sinner must by faith know Jesus personally, as his own Saviour, “the Lamb of God.”

48.—“Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him. Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel!”

Nathanael found himself in the presence of Him who is “a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart,” and he was not slow to believe and confess *Jesus of Nazareth*, the contemned and lowly one, as son of God and King of Israel! Precious testimony! a sample of that which shall be offered by many “an Israelite indeed” when Jesus comes to earth again. As representing Israel in those days, the name Nathanael does not occur among the Twelve.

50.—“Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these.”—Thus it is ever with our blessed Lord. If we but believe, according to the revelation he has made of himself, there is no end of his goodness in unfolding more and more of himself, as the way, the truth, and the life; and he will unveil to faith the glory which shall soon be revealed to sight.

51.—“And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”—Thus shall it be in the days of Earth’s millennium. Jesus shall reign over his earthly people, Israel, “the gift of God”—and they shall see heaven open, and angelic communication, from the heights above to earth beneath, as in the vision of Jacob’s ladder.

BAPTISM:

ITS PLACE, AND MEANING, (AS GIVEN IN THE SCRIPTURES.)

(Continued.)

We turn to Acts viii. 12. The preceding verses give an account of Philip’s preaching in Samaria. We then read—“But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were *baptized* both men and women.” Then follows the narrative of Simon the sorcerer. He believed and was baptized: but afterwards manifesting a corrupt heart in offering money that he might obtain the apostolic gift of imparting the Holy Ghost, he was immediately denounced by Peter. The end of this Simon is not recorded; it is evident, however, that *baptism* had not kept out this erring one, whose heart was “not right towards God.” But did that lead the Apostles to adjudge baptism to be of no avail, or to set it aside as Christians have since done? Never. It was reserved for later days to bring forth those who in this matter think themselves wiser than their Master.

Next we come to the conversion of the Eunuch by Philip, (in the same chapter,) “And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water; and the Eunuch said, See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be *baptized*? And he commanded the chariot to stand still; and they went down both *into* the water, both Philip and the Eunuch, and he *baptized* (immersed) him.”

Now, if in any case, the right of baptism could have been

dispensed with, as many assert it can, surely, it might have been in the instance before us. There are those who tell us baptism was intended only as a mark of separation between such as owned Christ and those who rejected Him; and that as it is no longer regarded in this way, its observance may be discontinued. But here was a man converted as it were in secret, and not intending to settle down among Christians, but returning to a heathen land, where the inhabitants would know nothing of Christianity or immersion except as he might tell them. Of what use was baptism to him? Of what significance was it as a witness or mark of separation? The Eunuch asked no such questions; enough for him that his Saviour had ordained it. He might or might not have understood that he was “buried with Christ by baptism.” He *knew* he was performing an act of obedience to the One he had just owned as Lord, and he *eagerly* seized the first opportunity of manifesting faith and love by keeping His commandment.

Turn we now to chapter Nine, in which is recorded the conversion of Saul. Ananias is sent to him to restore his sight—“And immediately (verse 18) there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose and was *baptized*. And when he had received meat he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.” Here we find the same order of things as in the second chapter, but with something added. Look how unchangeable is the mind of God—belief, baptism, fellowship, (undoubtedly including breaking of bread,) then service (ministry).

Now we come to the case of Cornelius and his household (chap. x. 47). Peter says, “Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he *commanded* them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.”

Baptism is here presented both as a *privilege* and a *command*. He commanded them in the name of the Lord to be baptized—and fellowship with the apostle was immediately sought thereupon. [The phrase used here and elsewhere—“in the name of the Lord” doubtless means—on the authority of the Lord, and is not an alteration of the words of the commission given by our Lord Jesus Christ to his apostles, to baptize “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” It is evident, it was a question of authority with Peter: “Can any man forbid?”]

Chapter xvi. 14-16, gives us the conversion of Lydia—“And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us, whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was *baptized* and her household,” (not until she was *baptized*), “she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there. And she constrained us.”

This is another instance of baptism following immediately upon faith, and of fellowship succeeding baptism.

Look now at the case of the Philippian jailor (in the same chapter). In answer to the question of this man “What must I do to be saved?” (ver. 30) Paul and Silas said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in the house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, [they having been beaten,] and was *baptized*, he and all his straight-way. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.”

Observe again, the order already pointed out as that which should always follow upon conviction—faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, baptism, fellowship, praise or worship. It is, however, precious to notice that the Holy Ghost, in giving the record before us, has graciously guarded against the possibility of permitting such a fearful error as that water baptism might be considered essential to salvation; (of course the same remark is true of all other scriptures which take up the subject, but here it is very marked). Belief in the Lord Jesus Christ is distinctly stated as the only requisite for salvation; but water baptism

followed as immediately *consequent thereupon*, as the Lord had ordained.

The next instance given in "the Word," of baptism taught practically, is in chapter xviii 8.—"And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house, and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized."

Here we have Jews and Gentiles alike submitting to the rite of baptism; "the middle wall of partition" being broken down, all are laid in the waters of death, and raised in resurrection-life.

In the 19th chapter is given a most interesting account of certain believers submitting to immersion a second time; though in the first instance, baptised as *believers*; but it was not the baptism of the Lord Jesus Christ. As soon as they hear of this perfect baptism, they make no question of what course they are to adopt. How much argument they might have used to show they had done all that was really necessary! But they seem to have had no such thought. The way in which baptism is introduced in this narrative is most remarkable. Paul finds in Ephesus certain disciples, and enquires of them whether they have received the Holy Ghost. They reply they have not even heard "whether there be any Holy Ghost." Whereupon the apostle asks (not whether they had been baptised, evidently considering it a matter of course that being believers they had been immersed) unto what were ye baptized? "He said unto them (verse 3), Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the *baptism of repentance*, saying unto the people that they should believe on him which should come after him,—that is, on Jesus Christ. When they heard this they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."

Is not this a complete answer to all the sophistries of those who contend that *any kind of baptism will do*? Neither sprinkling in infancy, nor other humanly devised practice will do, when we find even the baptism of John, to which the Lord himself submitted (because, as He said, it became him to fulfil all righteousness, and he would thoroughly recognise John's divine mission,) had now to be superseded by the baptism of faith in Jesus Christ. May Christians be led in these last days to act as these Ephesians, to conform in *all things to dutifully appointed ways*, and "have no confidence in the flesh."

(To be continued, D.V.)

"UNLEARNED QUESTIONS AVOID."

(To the Editor of PRECIOUS TRUTH.)

DEAR SIR,—I write not for the sake of controversy, but for the truth, and the benefit of others. Being satisfied in my own mind I wish to put a few questions, if you or your readers will be so kind as to pay attention to the same.

1st.—Does salvation depend on condition? Is that condition faith? If so, who supplies it, God or the sinner?

2nd.—Does Christ stand as the surety of all men, or only the elect?

3rd.—Did God elect some because He foreknew they would be so good as to believe, or the contrary?

4th.—Can a believer become an apostate or child of the devil, and be eternally lost?

5th.—Can a sinner resist the regenerating work of the Holy Ghost so as to make it non-effectual? Did the Holy Spirit want to regenerate the antediluvians, when His Spirit is said to "strive" with them? Did the Jews resist the said work when Stephen charged them with that sin?

6th.—Does God love all men alike? If so, how is it that His wrath abideth on some? If He loved all men with the same love as He loved Christ, how is it that any are lost?

Yours truly in Jesus,

W. SHORTER.

Latimer-road, Notting Hill.

ANSWERS TO THE ABOVE.

We will answer your questions in order:—

Ans. 1.—Take an illustration. Many persons who have never travelled out of England yet believe there is a place called Australia. Who supplies their belief?

Ans. 2.—Your second query must be treated in a similar way.—Suppose you were to make it known among your neighbours that you were willing to be surety for any who might need suretyship. If some of them took you at your word, faithfulness would require you to be surety for them. But for those who had no faith in you, you would not be surety.

Ans. 3.—"Whom he did foreknow, he also did *predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.*" (Rom. viii. 29.) "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God." (1 Pet. i. 2.)

Ans. 4.—"He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, HATH everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." (John v. 24.)

Ans. 5.—"Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." (John v. 40.) "*How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not.*" (Matt. xxiii. 37.) Read also Gen. vi. 3, and Acts vii. 51.

Ans. 6.—"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever believeth in him* should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.)

P.S.—Every true Christian must be grieved at witnessing the spirit in which your questions are propounded. Remember our Lord rebuked Peter with these solemn words, "Get thee behind me, Satan (i.e. Adversary)."

OUR CORRESPONDENTS AND OURSELVES.

SAVED THROUGH FAITH ALONE.

W. L., MILTON HALL.—Glad are we that you manifest so sincere a desire to be guided only by the "Divine Word." In this, at any rate, we are agreed. But you still think something more than faith is needful to salvation. Let us look, then, at a few more Scriptures. Of course, all who have obtained salvation are saved by Jesus Christ our Lord. He is our Saviour. He has saved us from sin, death, and judgment. The efficacy of his work, however, is brought to us through faith; it would be better to say "*the faith*," for it is faith unqualified, and that not of the head, but of the heart. In this sense it is that we are said to be saved by or through faith. "By grace [undeserved mercy] ye are saved THROUGH faith; and that not of yourselves—the gift of God [i.e. salvation is the *gift* of God]; NOT of works, lest any man should boast." (Eph. ii.) Nothing can be more conclusive. But take a living example. When the Lord Jesus Christ was yet on earth, a certain Pharisee, Simon by name, invited him to his table. While sitting at meat, a poor sinner woman found her way to his feet. She came as she was, just what she was, a known sinner. As such she came by faith into the presence of the Saviour. She had faith in him before she came there; for she brought her box of ointment, and (what was better) a heart full of love. She did not *know* her sins were forgiven, but they were, and the result of forgiveness had taken possession of her; there she was, pouring out the tears of gratitude, the ointment of worship, and the love of her soul. She uttered not a word, but silently manifested the humility and homage of a saved sinner. Simon might question in his heart whether Jesus were a prophet or no; but the sinner-woman worshipped him as her Saviour and Lord. And Jesus accepted all she brought him. She was not saved on account of anything she had done. All her manifestations of love were the results, *not* the cause, of salvation. And now her loving Redeemer would not let her go out of his presence unrewarded. She should know her sins forgiven, and also the reason why, and the happy consequence. "And he said unto her, *Thy sins are forgiven; THY FAITH HATH SAVED THEE; go in peace.*" (Luke vii. 36–50.)—It seems almost a pity to add anything to the above; yet, for the sake of general application we quote our Lord's words from John iii. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that *whosoever believeth in Him* should not perish, but have everlasting life." No other condition but belief in Him! But further—(like God confirming his promise with an oath, that his poor doubting people might be sure)—our gracious Lord in the very next verse repeats his plain de-

claration, with the additional assurance that salvation is thus provided and obtained, for the simple reason that God so wondrously loved the world. "For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"! The word goes even beyond this, for Jesus adds, "He that believeth on Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God"! Thus, then, not only are we assured that faith in the Lord Jesus is that alone by which salvation is brought to mankind; but that lack of faith seals condemnation upon them who believe not on Him.—Who, then, are saved? All who believe in the Lord Jesus. Who are lost? All who believe not in Him. If any other Scriptures seem at all contrary to the foregoing, we will willingly examine them one by one.

DEATH.

J. R., CHARLES-STREET, Edinburgh.—Scripture does not, we think, teach, as a doctrine, natural immortality. Yet all through the Bible it seems to be assumed as understood by man universally, that his being does not cease with the death of his body. In a certain sense (Scripturally) all mankind are, as naturally born into this world, already dead. The thousands we meet with daily who do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are before God actually dead, as much dead as though their bodies had been laid in the grave. Mere continuity of being in a condition of sin is, in the word of God, frequently called death. This is shown in the person of the first man, Adam. God brought the beasts into being, and gave them animal life by the power of his word; but he formed man out of the dust of the ground, in his own likeness, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. A very different order of being! Then God gave his innocent creature an earthly paradise. In the midst of this paradise, however, there was one tree of which Adam was commanded not to eat; for, said God, in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. Adam ate of it,—and death was stamped upon him that very day. His existence in the world was continued for hundreds of years; but as regards real life, that which God values and speaks of as LIFE, the father of our race was a dead man as soon as he became a transgressor. And death has passed upon all. We inherit death from Adam, both bodily and spiritual, just as we do our present being. God's remedy for this awful condition of things, is—the gift of new life. "Ye must be born again." These were the words of Jesus. This new life he gives to all who believe, according to his word. Those who do not obtain this gift, are but death-stricken souls while in this world, and retain the same deathly existence when their earthly tabernacles have fallen to decay. A day will come when their wretched bodies will be restored to them. Then the dead, small and great, [not any who have received the gift of Life.] will stand before God to be judged according to what is written in the Books. All whose names are not written in the book of life will be cast into the lake of fire—the place prepared for the devil and his angels. "This is the second death." Not a death which terminates existence, but which places lost man in a condition where the sufferings of death never end; "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."—Our souls may well recoil from such an unspeakably awful doom. In view of it many have sought to explain away Scripture. These latter say that "ever and ever" ought to be rendered "ages and ages." We have a pamphlet before us entitled "The Second Death, or ultimate destruction after Ages of Torment." The writer, evidently a dear Christian, contends very cleverly for his hypothesis. We think all the evidence is against him. But the best hope he can express is, that the existence of the damned will terminate after incalculable ages of torment! However kind the desire to tone down God's threatenings touching the fearful consequences of man's wilful rejection of mercy, His decrees cannot be altered one jot. We fear there is no palliative, for "their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." (Mark ix. 44.) In other words, existence and endurance of torment by unsaved man seem to be declared in Scripture as never-ending.

CALVINISM.

W. L., FELIX TERRACE, Islington.—We quite apprehend your meaning, and appreciate your desire to honour God, and to ascribe all the glory of salvation to Him. This is quite right. Your statements, however, are not so. You cannot cite a single passage of Scripture in support of your theory. If you will accept God's teaching on the subject, it is this—"We are begotten with the word." (Jas. i. 18.) "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." "The words which I speak are spirit and are life." "Go forth and speak in the temple all the words of this life." Any doctrine set up in contradiction of these plain statements, would render the preaching of the Gospel of Salvation a delusion—and does, in fact, charge the Holy Spirit of God with unwillingness to save souls. If men cannot believe, how can they be condemned by a righteous God on the ground of unbelief? "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the only begotten Son of God." The explanation of the difficulty is simply this:—Regeneration is a profound mystery. God declares it is effected by hearing and receiving His word. Instead of accepting this in simplicity, as little children, men desire to analyse the subject; but finding it above and beyond their reasoning powers, they have invented a *modus operandi* which comes within the grasp of the mind! But, alas! in their infatuation, they shut their eyes to the fact that they are in opposition to many declarations of Scripture, and, moreover, they lay upon God the responsibility of the condemnation which rests upon them that believe not. This, notwithstanding the declaration of the Saviour of sinners—"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Bear with us, dear brother, if we offer as a piece of profound wisdom, what at first sight may appear but a truism. It is this—The Word of God means what it says.

CHARITY AND TRUTH.

J. L., UPPER SEYMOUR-STREET.—We entirely approve of the charitable and loving tone of your letter. But let us ask you, Is not divine truth absolute? Can it admit of any qualifications? For our own part, we judge no man to condemnation. But we warn all. If, on comparing the written words and doctrines of Christ with the practice of Christians, we find them at variance, shall we be silent? Surely our Lord was not undecided as to the way in which he would have believers to hold water Baptism? Far be it from any Christian to have such a thought. Indeed, our Master has given us his mind very fully on the subject. Respecting this, as almost all other divine truths, great numbers of saved souls are ignorant—not because of any real ground for difficulty—but because they will not search the scriptures. You say, "Many dear Christians consider that Infant Baptism is God's ordinance." Alas, they do think so. But why? Simply because they are taught of men, preferring the traditions of the fathers to the word of God! We spoke advisedly when we expressed our belief that the regenerate cannot scripturally claim full Christian fellowship until baptized. We are convinced that in the first days of the Church no believer was received until he or she had been passed through the water. Who could have refused that sublime figure of burial with Christ? It is almost entirely through the unfaithfulness of teachers in not laying the Lord's charge upon those who receive the new birth, that the rite is so shamefully neglected. But, as we said, the responsibility of receiving is another question. Where two or three (or more) baptized Christians are meeting together in the name of Jesus, and others offer to join such a fellowship, the first thing they, as servants of the Lord, should require to be satisfied about, would be, as to whether such were in the faith. If so, then follows the question, "Have you been buried with Christ in Baptism?" Should the answer be "No," you have but to say, "It is the Saviour's command. He has told his servants to baptize; we, therefore, make known to you his will in this respect, and shall be happy to immerse you." Should the rejoinder on the applicants' part be, "We do not see the need of it," or "We do not understand the meaning of it." The answer is still very obvious, "The Lord gives you no choice in the matter. Show us a single scripture leaving it at your

option whether you will be baptized or no, and we will say no more about it."—What you say, dear brother, about the Head of the Church having received you into fellowship before you were baptized, does not affect the question in the least. Of course he did, else you could not have been baptized with His baptism. Does His faithfulness justify our unfaithfulness? To press such an argument, is to revive that old atrocity, "Let us sin, that grace may abound."—You cite the case of Apollos, and wish us to consider that, because the 19th of Acts does not tell us that Aquila and Priscilla spoke to him about the necessity of being baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, therefore, it was not needful. But the record says no more about the Lord's Supper, and a thousand other important things, than it does about baptism! Will you on that account discard the bread and wine?—Next, you take us to the Old Testament Scriptures, and show us the failure of the Israelites in the Wilderness, to keep the commandment of Circumcision, until Joshua became their leader! Well, let us all become Joshuas, and preach faithfulness to the Lord. May past failures suffice; henceforth, let us be earnest in seeking to bring Christians into conformity to the mind of Christ. When Moses separated from the people, and pitched the Tabernacle outside the camp, he did not cease to be of Israel. Neither do those who seek to follow the Lord Jesus and keep His commandments, cease to be in spiritual fellowship with the whole body of Christ. That is not the point. The real issue is very simple. Those who hold to the things of Christ *just as He has given them*, associate together. On the other hand, those who prefer the traditions of men, band themselves together according to their own thoughts and devices. But ought it to be said of Christians, as of Israel under the Judges—"In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes"? Ought not one King to reign without a rival in every Christian soul?

J. S. J., CREWE.—Your quotation from Rom. 14, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind" has been thrown at us of late, we know not how many times. Just think of the confusion which would follow if that were adopted as the principle of christian life! It would justify every heresy which has disgraced the name we bear—for all would tell you they were "*fully convinced in their own minds.*" It applies *only* to the theme of Rom. xiv, which is a question of *meats and days*. Look at the passage. "One believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be taken up: for God is able to make him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another: another man esteemeth every day. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks," &c. What has this to do with the substitution of men's superstitions for the direct command of the Saviour. The misuse of Scripture is one of the most sorrowful facts incidental to these last days.—Your communications are always welcome.

W. H. H., DERBY, writes as follows:—"Please send me 30 copies, back numbers, as per list, of *Precious Truth*, for which I enclose 1s. 3d. Stamps. The number of those who take in your paper through my hands monthly, has increased to about Forty. I see you freely point out your brethren's faults. May you have wisdom and grace to do this in the right way—in such a manner as to carry conviction home. To do it even in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself."—It is cheering to find our labour of love taken up and forwarded by such dear brethren in the Lord as W. H. H. Thank God, there are many now seeking to make *Precious Truth* known. We still ask our readers to help in that way, not for our sake, but for love of souls who may be profited through their efforts; and for the truth's sake. We thank the Lord for laying it upon our hearts to issue our little serial at so trifling a charge, and though frequently urged to alter the price to a

penny, we have now no intention of making any change. We have no desire to realize any pecuniary gain. The circulation has, of late, sufficiently increased to make the return nearly equal to the cost of issue. In that respect we are therefore content. The price, however, being so very small, it does not pay the booksellers and news-vendors to take any trouble in extending the circulation, and in many cases they will not even supply the demand. We shall be glad, therefore, if dear brethren and sisters will take the trouble to get christian friends to give them their names for a regular supply. If ten numbers are ordered to be sent to one address, the publisher will forward them post free. So that ten christians in any one place can receive *Precious Truth* for One Half-penny each, the price they would have to pay in London. To the prayer of W. H. H., we fervently say, Amen!

"SURELY, I COME QUICKLY."

Some may say, "How can this be true? over 1800 years have passed since it was written." To such we reply, This sweet and precious promise was only given to believers; and they only can understand how it is literally true. First, concerning believers who have "fallen asleep"; as present in the spirit with the Lord, doubtless the lapse of time is not noticed, it follows that whenever they are awoken by the shout of our coming Lord, it will indeed be felt to have been "quickly." Then, with respect to "us who are alive and remain," what is our life? "it is even as a vapour which appeareth for a *little time*, and then vanisheth away." To look back upon, it is but "a moment." Paul says, our light afflictions are but for a moment. So that the word of the Lord is strictly true to faith—"Surely, I come quickly," and all will acknowledge it when the event is past.

TO OUR FRIENDS.—We should like to occasionally publish a List of Agents for *PRECIOUS TRUTH* in large towns, and ask our friends to acquaint us with the names of Booksellers who are likely to help our sale in each large town.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—We invite enquiries tending to the elucidation of scriptural truth. Controversial questions should be avoided entirely, if possible. Letters must be sent before the 15th.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED FROM—A. Z.; J. P.; G. H., Duke-street; A. G., Birmingham; G. W., Ludlow; S. C. H., Highgate; F. H., Inverness; J. H. D.; J. G., Edinburgh.

BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS.—"The Nature and Construction of a Christian Church," by W. R., Derby. "Summary of the Christianity revealed in the Bible," Dr Thomas. "Man's Philanthropy Antagonistic to Vital Christianity," by Philologos. POETRY, by W. H., respectfully declined.

Letters for the Editor to be addressed to 335, Strand, W.C.

NOTICES.

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TO OUR READERS.—We ask brethren and sisters in the Lord to order a few numbers monthly, and take some pains to lend them about. If done to the Lord in faith, you may thus be dispensers of much blessing.

CHRISTIANS in the Neighbourhood of the Strand are invited to the Scripture Reading Meeting at 335a, side-door, Monday, at Seven.

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PRECIOUS TRUTH.

“WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?”—(Rom. iv. 3.)

Job Candwell, 335, Strand, London, W.O.]

[Arthur Hall, 25, Paternoster-row, London.

No. 9.]

DECEMBER 1, 1865.

[One Halfpenny.]

LETTER TO A TRUE-HEARTED CHRISTIAN.

Dear Child of God,—It is a great thing to have the affections centred on one grand object. The object of your desire is Christ. It may be your thoughts have wandered from him; that the world has from time to time betrayed you into unfaithfulness, that you have experimentally proved the deep deceitfulness of your own heart. But when you come back to *the faith*—when you come under the power of the inspired word—when you think of Jesus, and say “he loved me and gave himself for me,”—then He is again installed in your heart, and is the object of your desire. If at such a time an angel came to make known to you—“The Lord is at hand; he is here;”—how gladly you would welcome the message! How quickly you would forget all else! When Martha announced to her sister Mary “the Master is come, and calleth for thee,” she rose up hastily and went out to meet him. What a spring of joy was in her heart even in that moment of deep sorrow! Jesus had come. She had waited and longed for his coming; and now he was there waiting for her. She knew His love; her heart was full of it. How touching are those words—“Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.”

Beloved, it is the same Jesus, and he loves you. You scarcely realise the fact,—but he loves you, and he is coming;—no longer the despised Nazarene, but the risen, glorified Jesus, to whom all power is given in heaven and earth. Yes, He is coming; the Mighty One, yet gentle as ever. He is still the Lamb, though Lord of all. When you think of his coming in glory, you have need to remember his deep, deep love. It is not a question of your love to Him. When you see Him as He is, you will love Him as you ought. Oh, my brother, my sister, what an unspeakable joy it is to say to one's soul—“Jesus loves me.” Do you ask why he loves you? You see there is nothing in you to attract His love. Why does He love you? Because He is Jesus, because He has saved you, because He is God—and God is love. Oh, I want you to rejoice in His love, for He is coming. He expects you to be waiting and watching. You will never know the time till the moment arrives, and then you will be with him in glory. “Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep—but we shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump. For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead [in Christ] shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” Into what shall we be changed? Not into angels, not disembodied spirits, but into the likeness of the risen Jesus! Oh, how beautiful, how glorious we shall be,

beloved. “We know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see Him as He is.” Can you not weep for joy at the thought of it? Well may the announcement break in upon us with “Behold, I show you a mystery!” Who can grasp it fully? But we know it is true. Even in this visible creation, God has given us a figure of that wondrous change. Look at the caterpillar; what an unlovely thing it is, as it crawls on the earth;—presently it is changed into a chrysalis, and appears like a dead thing: but, anon, there is another metamorphosis: the once unsightly, earth-bound crawler is transformed into a beautiful butterfly.

We are but little like Jesus now. Oh, how we shall sing His praise when His “mighty power” and love shall have conformed us wholly to himself! And this will come to pass in a moment—in the brief space of time required to twinkle the eye!

Beloved, are you looking for Jesus? He is the bright and Morning Star. He is the only hope of the church. Your only hope and mine.

Lord Jesus, when I think of Thee,
Of all Thy love and grace,
My spirit longs and fain would see
Thy beauty face to face.

While you cherish this hope you can hold all things loosely here. You can stand apart from evil. This is what the Lord would have you to do. “He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as He is pure.”

May your constant enquiry be—What hath the Lord said? What would He have me to do? May you be satisfied with no answers to these questions but such as you find in Scripture. Accept no man's doctrines; but whatsoever the Lord commands you—Do it. We are left to prove our faith and love. The time is short. A moment, and we may be with Jesus in glory.

Rejoice, beloved, in this hope, with

Yours in all christian love,

The Editor of PRECIOUS TRUTH.

TO EVANGELISTS;

A FEW OF THE MASTER'S WORDS ABOUT PREACHING.

We speak as being ourselves of your number—preachers of the glorious Gospel of Christ. Our Lord said, “This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” Anything like universal, or even national, conversion during this dispensation, is utterly hopeless. When the end of the present age has come, and our Saviour-God has taken us, and

all true Christians to the heavenly mansions; when, after that, the wrath of God has been poured out upon the Christ-despising world,—then, “in the dispensation of the fulness of times,” shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. It is necessary for us to know *our Lord's mind* about this, if we would rightly do His work.

What, then, is the extent of our commission? It is as wide as the world—as illimitable as the number of the human race. “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”

And what is to be the result? “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”

This is solemn work. To them that believe not, we are messengers of condemnation, though to those who believe, we are ministers of grace. “To the one, we are the savour of death unto death, and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?” A question, this, which ought to bring us to the feet of Jesus.

And now let us look at the verse which follows the above interrogatory. “For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God; in the sight of God speak we in Christ.” 2 Cor. ii. 16, 17.

This searches right down to the bottom of our hearts. Do we speak in Christ? Are we abiding in the “true vine?” “Without *Me* ye can do nothing.” What is Jesus to us? Saviour, Life, Truth, Lord! What can we do without Him? Oh, the presumption and folly committed on every side of us in His name! We say nothing here of those who corrupt the word of God, save that they are to be counted by thousands. Let us cast aside all devices of men—preach the gospel as Paul and the faithful in his day preached it. Above all, taking care to realise that the Lord is *with* us, and we *in* Him.

He has assured us of his power, delivered his charge, and declared his abiding presence. “Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things *whatsoever I have commanded you*; and lo, *I am with you* always, even unto the end of the age. Amen.”

Some thoughts about aids and accessories in our next, if the Lord will.

CONTRASTS:

BISHOPS OF THE STATE, V. BISHOPS OF THE
CHURCH OF GOD.

Nothing can be more contrary to the mind of the Lord, than the amalgamation of things belonging to the Church with the governments of this world. The calling of Christians is, expressly, to be apart from the world. They are to be a “peculiar people,” “separate,” “sanctified.” While Satan continues to be “the god of this world,” as he is at present, how can the followers of the world-rejected Christ have anything to do with earthly government? But of all

the outrages committed on the spiritual order of God's word, it is not easy to imagine anything worse than the invention of State-Bishops!

In the first days of the Church, bishops were ordained by apostolic power, to act as shepherds or overseers of the little companies of believers in Jesus. They were to watch over and care for the sheep and the lambs—to “feed the Church of Christ which he hath purchased with his own precious blood.” They were expressly commanded *not to be lords over God's heritage, nor to take the oversight thereof for filthy lucre's sake*, but of a willing mind—looking for their reward in the future, when the Chief Shepherd should appear, who would give them a crown of glory. See 1 Peter iii.

A Christian appointed to this office was to be “blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre, but a lover of hospitality, [i. e. one ready to receive strangers and needy ones, ever seeking to minister to the helpless,] a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate.” Titus i. 6.

A little reflection makes it easy to comprehend the need there was for the appointment of such Bishops or Elders, and the sort of persons pointed out for the office by the Holy Ghost, through the Apostle Paul, in his instructions to Titus and Timothy. We must remember that the first converts in pagan cities were exposed to peculiar dangers and temptations. Though believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, they were mostly ignorant of the scriptures, and liable to be led astray by self-constituted leaders. Such men as are described in the remaining part of the first chapter of the epistle to Titus. The apostles, therefore, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, ordained suitable men as bishops or elders, who were to be as fathers, to whom the weak ones could look up with confidence. On the part of such bishops, the *motive* of their care for others, was to be love for Christ. Our Lord's last conversation with Peter shows this. “Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Feed my sheep. Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Feed my lambs. Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? [i. e. Lovest thou me pre-eminently?] Feed my sheep.” Pre-eminence in love for Christ, made manifest by devotedness to his brethren, was to be the true characteristic of the pastoral office. Worldly position was no item of consideration. Indeed, it could not be; for a follower of the Lord Jesus is no longer regarded by God as of this world. He has become a stranger where once he was a citizen, and is now only a pilgrim passing through.

All the passages of scripture which speak of bishops or elders, indicate just such a class of christian men as would in our days be considered eligible as superintendents of schools. Married men, having well-ordered families, because, if they could not rule their own household, they were not fit to bear sway in the family of God. [See 1 Tim. iii. 5.] It was by no means *indispensable*, though *desirable*, that they should

be gifted as *teachers*. "Esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake," 1 Thes. v. 13, and count them worthy of "double honour wholabour in *word and doctrine*," 1 Tim v. 17. The gift of teaching was probably exceptional, rather than usual, with those ordained as bishops. There are now many estimable christians who would prove to be excellent pastors or bishops, having the needful qualifications indicated by the inspired writers, though quite unable to speak or teach in an assembly.

Compare the foregoing with what we see in this so-called christian country:—

Bishops, as ordained of God, belonged to THE CHURCH, of which Christ is the Head! Bishops, as appointed by men, are of a church over which the reigning sovereign of England is the Head! [The same remarks apply to the Romish section of the world's church, of which that of England is but a modification.]

The apostles, and those delegated specially by them, alone had power to ordain Bishops for the Church of God. But for the world's church, the monarch nominally, in reality the prime minister of state, (even though he should happen to be a deist or an infidel,) appoints them!

We have seen the sample of what a true bishop should be, in our Lord's commands to Peter. As to his emoluments, In the early part of "The Acts," Peter declares "Silver and gold have I none!" Again, as a bishop, Paul was not a bad example. He reminded the Ephesian Elders that he had laboured with his own hands to supply his needs and the wants of those that were with him. Acts xx. State-bishops cannot, however, manage with less than some thousands of pounds per annum, palaces to live in, retinues of servants to wait upon them, carriages to ride in, &c., &c.! A true bishop would seek to be the humblest man in the Church. He could not well forget the express injunction not to be a lord over God's heritage. But a state-bishop can be nothing less than a lord, and considers his proper place to be a seat among the highest rulers in the land. In this position, he takes part in the legislation of a large portion of the world, which rejects Christ, and upon which the judgments of God will soon be poured out!

Our readers will readily discern further contrasts. Here for the present, we leave them. In our next we hope, if the Lord will, to unfold more of what scripture teaches us about the pastorate, as given by our Lord Jesus Christ.

EVIL:

IS THERE POWER TO GET RID OF IT?

There is power to put an end to all the evil under which the world groans. When the Lord Jesus Christ comes to set up his reign in righteousness on the earth, evil will be swept away: the besom of destruction will be passed over the scene; "all things that offend" will be gathered out. The earth will then be peopled with a race rejoicing in a reign of righteousness. As Noah and his family were pre-

served through the flood to re-people the earth, so revelation shows, a few faithful ones will be safely kept through the coming day of tribulation, and afterwards nations will arise who will enjoy millennial happiness.

In the meanwhile, this purposed order is reversed. The Lord Jesus Christ now gathers out the faithful, and leaves the evil. By shedding his own precious blood, He has effectually freed from evil all who trust in him. These he will presently summon to himself, giving them glorious bodies like unto his own glorious body. When that takes place, the unredeemed of the human race will be left to Satan's full sway, and the wrath of God will follow.

Nothing but the presence of Christ will put away evil! Every effort on man's part only manifests his utter impotency. What, then, is the Christian to do? He must, by faith, cling to his Saviour, ACT OUT HIS PRECEPTS, and WAIT. This by no means implies a life of idleness. We must learn the mind of Christ by close and prayerful attention to His word. And then, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, DO IT." Let Christians be no longer satisfied to do the things which religious men teach them. They should, indeed, *listen* to the exhortations of faithful men, but they are to do the things which Jesus has commanded. He says "If ye love me keep *my* commandments."

Read the practical lesson taught by our Lord in washing the disciples' feet, John xiii. Look how that touching narrative concludes: "So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for I am. If I then, Lord and Master, have washed your feet; YE ALSO OUGHT TO WASH ONE ANOTHER'S FEET. For I have given you an example, that ye should DO AS I HAVE DONE TO YOU. Verily, verily, I say unto you the servant is not greater than his Lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know THESE THINGS, happy are ye if ye DO THEM."

Christians, alas! prefer doing *other things*, instead of *these things*. Feet-washing is very humiliating work, and not at all to the liking of the carnal mind. So when teachers turn their thoughts from *these things*, and set them about *other things*, they willingly undertake works which will all be burnt up! Oh, how grievous it is to see the wretched vanities with which believers, as well as professors, are occupied. Oh, that they would ask themselves the simple question, "Are we doing the things of Christ, or merely the tasks which men have set us?" The answer to that would reveal to many that what they are striving to accomplish is *opposed* to the mind of their Lord and Master. It seems very religious to be running about with begging boxes for church buildings and charitable purposes. But where do you find a word from your Master setting you about such work? You want to improve the world. It is a hopeless task. You never can succeed. So far from mending society by your efforts—you have made Christendom one vast scene of hypocrisy. The history of what most of you call *the Church* is written in the Lord's addresses

to the seven churches of Asia, (Rev. ii. and iii.) It has reached its last aspect, and that is so loathsome that the Lord when he comes will "spue it out of his mouth." Read for yourselves the warning to Laodicea.

Touching the individual safety of believers, as we have said, Christ will take them *out of* the hypocrisy, and all other evil. Blessed be his name, if you are trusting in Him, no power can pluck you out of his hand. But what will you do till he comes? Will you still try to accomplish the work of changing the face of the world, in spite of all which is written, showing that the Lord in person will come forth to do it? Will you still persist in working for clergymen and societies, instead of washing the feet of the saints, and doing those things which your Lord has appointed you to do? Then are you but men-pleasers, and not doers of the will of God. Then you may well fear to be "ashamed before Him at his coming."

Oh, suffer the word of exhortation, and turn to the word of the Lord. The poor widow who cast her two mites into God's treasury [He has no treasury on earth now, save his living disciples] did not go about with a subscription list. She gave what she had. The amount was small enough. But it was all her living. It was done to the Lord; and in his judgment, she had given more than all the rich ones who had cast in their costly gifts. When Mary desired to honour the Lord she did not make a collection, but took her own box of spikenard, very precious, and herself anointed her beloved Master. And Jesus said, "She hath done what she could." Oh, that we may be all emulous of obtaining from his lips when he comes, "She hath done what she could!" "Whatsoever ye have done to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." A cup of cold water given to a disciple by one of his, shall in no wise lose its reward.

Not *collective*, but *individual* work, is what the Lord Jesus has left for his servants. Let them stand apart from all which is contrary to his mind. "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." Get away from it, however specious, however religious it may look; for "Satan is transformed into an angel of light." Then let the constant cry of faith be, "Lord, what will THOU have ME to do." Learn the LORD'S mind in his *own word*. Do it; and wait till he comes; He will then deliver you from all evil. In the meantime, you can honour him by walking apart from it.

THE SPIRITUAL WATCHMAN.

Our readers will remember a notice we gave of a monthly paper, published in Glasgow, under the above title. We were led to remark particularly upon the faithfulness of the editor, Mr W. T. Turpin, who at the time of commencing his editorship was a clergyman in the Episcopal Church, but who afterwards abandoned his living and title, to follow Christ. The proprietors and publishers of the "Spiritual Watchman" are Messrs. Scott and Allan, who, it seems, belong to the exclusive party of the Plymouth Brethren.

From a notice in the November number of the "Spiritual Watchman," it appears that the editorship of that paper is now withdrawn from Mr Turpin, though the proprietors are constrained to confess how much they are indebted to our dear brother. On reading the said announcement, we wrote to Mr Turpin, enquiring the cause of the rupture. It seems he was loath to enter upon an explanation of the circumstances of the case, and therefore invited Messrs. Scott and Allan to give an account of the matter. The following correspondence speaks for itself:—

[From Mr Turpin to Mr Scott.]

12, Nelson-terrace, Glasgow, Nov. 2, 1865.

My dear brother in the Lord,—I, this morning, received a letter from the Editor of PRECIOUS TRUTH, a copy of which letter I enclose in this. You remember you sent back numbers of the *Watchman* for review in PRECIOUS TRUTH, and it was in this way I came to know the editor. I do not like to trust myself in answering his question, and would therefore feel obliged if you would kindly furnish me with your reason for dispensing with my services as Editor of the *Spiritual Watchman*, with a view to my giving him a fair and candid answer, which will not be an *ex parte* statement.

Believe me, yours very truly in the Lord,

W. T. TURPIN.

To Mr Walter Scott.

[Answer.]

109, Sauchiehall-street, Nov. 3, 1865.

My dear Brother,—I would rather not give, in writing, our reasons for requesting you to cease editing the *Watchman*, as you know them well.

I am, dear brother, yours very faithfully,

WALTER SCOTT.

To W. T. Turpin, M.A.

[From Mr Turpin to the Editor of PRECIOUS TRUTH.]

12, Nelson-terrace, Glasgow, Nov. 9, 1865.

My dear Brother in the Lord,—I have delayed answering your kind note, partly doubting whether it were the Lord's mind that anything about this miserable question should be published at all or not, and even now I am in doubt, but will leave the matter with you. May the Lord guide you either to notice it or not, as He is pleased. The facts are, the *Spiritual Watchman* was begun when I was minister of St. Silas English Episcopal Church, Glasgow. At Messrs. Scott and Allan's request, I undertook the work of editor, being positively a Church of England minister. The paper was to be an *unsectarian* one, as you will see by the original prospectus enclosed in this. Matters went on so until, having left the Church of England, I saw my way to begin and break bread with those to whom the Lord made my teaching profitable. We began on the principle of fellowship with all the Lord's children, as such, meeting here and elsewhere. Mr Scott asked me if our meeting was in fellowship with Bethesda, Bristol. I said, Yes, meaning that we would receive a *bona fide* saint of God, sound in the truth and walk, who might come from thence, just as we would receive a child of God from anywhere else who was sound in faith and walk. After this, Mr Scott called on me, and told me he could no longer work the *Watchman* in connection with me; and I, at once, at his request, told him I should give up my position as editor. After your note came, I wrote him a letter, to which I received the reply enclosed. These are the simple facts. How should we long for the Lord to come and put an end to our unhappy divisions.

Believe me, my dear Brother,

Yours very affectionately in Jesus,

W. T. TURPIN.

To the Editor of PRECIOUS TRUTH.

The Bethesda party are those assumed to be *put away* by the exclusives, under pretence of holding heresy, but in reality, because they would not bow to the dictum of those whose behests emanate from the Priory, Islington. The truth is, there was from the first no more heresy held by those announced as put away, than by those who excluded them. Indeed, a true-hearted, intelligent Christian who examines the writings, and hears the lectures and teachings of both parties, will find the same precious scripture truths unfolded and proclaimed. There is no difference. And we now challenge the exclusives to point to a single heretical doctrine held by those they call Bethedas. Moreover, we solemnly warn them, that though, hitherto, most of them have acted in entire ignorance of facts, in imputing heresy to so many dear brethren in the Lord—to perpetuate the same course will be to persist in wilful falsehood. Let every one among them insist upon knowing the truth, and no longer accept a shrug of the shoulder and an upturning of the eye as a sufficient condemnation against a large section of the true and zealous followers of Jesus. We cannot refrain from saying thus much. All sections of "the Brethren," or "Plymouth Brethren" are wrong when tested by Scripture, as we have had occasion, in previous numbers, to show. Yet we gladly testify to all that is lovely among them. Alas! that we should also have to bear witness against that which is severely reprehensible on the part of some.

CALLED—CHOSEN—FAITHFUL.

It is common to hear some who are theologically read, speak of a "common call" and an "effectual call." The Scriptures know of no such terms. The preaching of the Gospel is nowhere spoken of as "calling:" there cannot, therefore, be two kinds of calling—common and effectual. Indeed, the term is never associated with human ministration at all. It is always associated with the Divine act and deed. Preaching is the proclamation by man of the Gospel of God's grace. When that Gospel is received, God then "calls" all whom he has foreknown would believe and whom he has "predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son." (Rom. viii.)

That this word *calling* implies the Divine action is also clear from Acts ii. 37—39. "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them"—i.e. to those, and those *only*, who believed the word and were pricked in their hearts—"Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, [the promise of the Holy Ghost,] and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Here the Apostle, speaking by the Spirit, says the promise of the Holy Ghost is not to all who hear, but to those among the Jews, their children, and the Gentiles, who, having gladly received the preached word, like these Jews on the day of Pentecost, are "called" by the Lord our God.

To what, then, does God call? Certainly not to

faith: the preaching of man is the means to that end. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God;" (that is to say, God's *word*, or *command*, is that every soul should hear and every servant preach.) 1 Cor. i. 24 renders it still clearer that the "*called*" are such as have received the truth in the love of it, not all those who are brought within the sound of the Gospel.

The question, therefore, remains:—To what, then, does God call? *To be saints!* (Rom. i. 7; 1 Cor. i. 2.) He calls believers to be saints, because he calls them *to Himself*—to fellowship with himself. "As He that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation and godliness." "This is the will of God concerning you, even your *sanctification*." "If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." This is the *vocation* (or calling, or occupation,) to which we are called by the Lord our God.

Now, it is evident that a calling, or profession, implies freedom and choice—that we may be either indolent or diligent, fervent or cold, self-sufficient or self-suspecting, having an eye to present wages or to the rewards which the Lord will bring with Him. Hence the Holy Spirit exhorts us—"Give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fail. For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. i. 10—11.) There could be no sphere for exhortation if there were no freedom of action. By freedom of action, let us not be supposed to mean *sufficiency* for action; "we are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency" is in Him, who "worketh in us, both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

Thus God deals with all who believe. Having enlightened us by his Word and his Spirit, he pressingly invites or calls us to walk as dear children, to hold forth the Word of Life, and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. We are *brought* "by the mercies of God," to "*present*" our bodies "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God." (Rom. xii.) God speaketh unto us as unto sons.

To encourage us to diligence in our Christian vocation, we are called to glory, as well as to holy walk: indeed, the degree of the former is made to eventuate upon the latter. (See 1 Pet. v. 10)—"The God of all grace hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus." "If we suffer with him we shall also be glorified together." "Where I am, there shall also my servant be." "Surely I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be."

Those Christians who thus desire and seek to yield themselves up in heart and life, without reserve, become "chosen," or choice ones. "Many be called, but few *chosen*." (Matt. xx. 16.) Dearly beloved, believers in the Lord Jesus, the "*called*" indeed are many, blessed be God, and you are among them. Are you obeying the call to "come out" in spirit, and be separated from all that is of the world, and walk by faith? are you desirous of being among the "*chosen*"?

It is only such as walk in separation from the world, who are "led of the Spirit," yea, who "walk in the Spirit," who now realise and enjoy their sonship (Rom. viii.) Such are the "chosen" now, and will be manifested as such when we all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Oh, that we may count all else as dung and dross that we may win the approbation of Christ! seeking to make, not only our "calling," but "our election sure," i.e. our acceptance of Him in our walk and our consciousness of being by His grace, elected, or chosen ones.

Happy to be among the called; thrice happy to be by grace among the "chosen," because the Lord is glorified by "vessels unto honour," choice, fit for his use. But let us remember Demas, and his falling into the love of this present evil world, and have grace to be ever looking to the Lord Jesus Christ who can keep us from falling—keep us *faithful*—faithful to our "calling."

Who will be with the Lord when he makes war on the earth, as foretold in Rev. xvii. 14?

"The CALLED,—and CHOSEN,—and FAITHFUL."

COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL BY ST. JOHN.

(Written expressly for this publication.)

CHAPTER I.

In taking a spiritual review of the entire chapter before us, we see, as it were, the history of God's dealings with the world in grace. It is full of the wonderful mercies of God, without a word of condemnation. We are taken back to the beginning, and find everything good emanating from Christ. All things were made by him. He is also the source and fountain of Life and Light. Mankind admitted evil, went far from good, became dark, preferred darkness. In mercy God sent THE LIGHT, the darkness comprehended it not. He first sent a witness of the Light, but he was disregarded. Then the True Light showed Himself; but his own creation and his own specially chosen people received him not. Yet he did not call down fire from heaven. Mercy triumphed—for He is full of grace as well as truth. His forerunner gave perfect testimony that he is the Son of God. Man, however, persisted in rebellion, and rejected Light and Life. Jesus is announced as the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world;" then again as the "Lamb of God." Whereupon a few follow him and make him known to others; He also specially seeks after some and reveals himself to them. These become sons of God. They are redeemed by the Lamb, in virtue of the sacrifice he would accomplish. But it is all of grace. They "are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." This course of God's grace is being perpetuated during the whole of the present dispensation. The divine word goes forth; men hear, and receive it; and thus become regenerate, born again. It is not because of the will of the preacher, nor of any fleshly will, but of God. Great is the mystery. God provided the Sacrifice, the Saviour, the Gospel, and the Preacher. If the Lord had not done all, even to the supplying of messengers—there would be no will on the part of the flesh, towards regeneration. Thanks be to God, all is done by him—man has but to believe. But thus it is disciples are gathered out of the world to Jesus the once despised Nazarene. They become sons of God, and will presently be displayed in glory, transformed into the likeness of the risen and glorified Jesus. Yet even then God's purposes in grace, as set before us in this chapter,

do not come to an end. The once-rejected Messiah, the betrayed, the crucified—will come to the world again. Then Israel which received him not, and his sin-stricken creation which comprehended him not—shall welcome him with joy, and rejoice in his righteous sway. Then heaven shall be visibly open, and the angels shall be seen ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. We know there will be much sorrow and judgment for the world before this glorious consummation; but the extreme tribulation will doubtless be concentrated into a short space of time; "for mercy rejoiceth against judgment." How sweetly this is evidenced in the Scripture before us. The mercies of God are presented like links in a golden chain, extending from the time of Creation to Millennial days.

BAPTISM:

ITS PLACE, AND MEANING, (AS GIVEN IN THE SCRIPTURES.)

(Concluded.)

The ordinance of baptism having been thus thoroughly established both by command and by practice—no room for exceptions being anywhere admitted—the subject is subsequently but briefly, and as it were only passingly alluded to by the inspired writers. Is it not evident from this, that having given us clearly the importance and the place (as to Christian order) of water baptism in the divine counsels—room was left for the exercise of faith? For though there is no excuse for the believer who does not submit to the rite, yet it must be *voluntary* submission. Our gracious Lord does not enforce His commands, but he says, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Moreover, it was needful that water baptism should not have undue importance. The perversity of the human heart has, notwithstanding, led some to insist upon it as essential to salvation; while others, equally perverse, have treated the ordinance as of no importance at all, or as that about which they may form their own ideas, or which they may modify to suit their own or others' convenience. Nay, more; the Church of England confounds water baptism, which is voluntary on the part of those receiving it, with the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which is involuntary on the side of those who partake of it. Those who follow this sad delusion teach that water baptism regenerates, and constitutes the receiver of it a member of the body of Christ. Need we say more than that such are teachers of men's fables and not of God's truth; such doctrine is completely opposed to scripture; and the first duty of those who love the Lord Jesus Christ, is to separate from all who countenance this fearful heresy.

Anyone who reads carefully the scriptures we have quoted, will see that the baptism of the Holy Ghost (the importance of which it is impossible to over estimate) is quite separate from baptism by water. Sometimes the Holy Ghost was given before water baptism, (as in the case of Cornelius,) sometimes afterwards (as at Ephesus). The one is quite independent of the other, and no spiritual reader of the Bible can possibly confuse things so entirely distinct. The baptism by water was given for men to enjoin and accept. The baptism of the Holy Ghost is the free gift of God, and, blessed be His name, does not depend upon man at all. To help us in guarding against error, let us see what scripture teaches as to the significance of water baptism.

Paul, in giving an account of his conversion, (Acts xxii.) repeats the commands he received by the mouth of Ananias (verse 16)—"And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptised, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Paul was already converted, already a believer, and consequently he had already received forgiveness of his sins. But the work inwardly wrought has to be outwardly signified. The baptism of the Holy Ghost is unseen; water baptism signifies to the eye, that the believer is made clean "every whit." Water baptism teaches us, however, something more than this. The Epistle to the Romans (vi. 3,) explains baptism thus—"Know ye not that so many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into his death? Therefore

we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." The apostle is teaching believers that they are dead to sin, and to show that according to the mind of God this is absolutely true, he tells us that baptism signifies *burial*. The believer is, as to his standing before God, no longer as descended from Adam. God regards his Adam nature as dead: he is a "new creature." The believer signifies by baptism (whether he fully understands it or not) that he sides with God in condemning flesh as utterly worthless. He was mysteriously made a partaker of judgment and death in the person of Jesus Christ; and he therefore gives his body to be laid in the water as though dead. From this attitude he is raised up, and thus in a figure shows that which is actually true, namely, that he is in resurrection life. Death, in the way of judgment, he will never encounter. Christ, in wondrous love, accepted death for him eighteen hundred years ago, and He now as it were ratifies that act: in the first place, by faith in his Saviour; and secondly, by the outward form of baptism. Thus, then, water baptism teaches death and resurrection: death past, and resurrection life in Christ in possession. (See Col. ii. 12, 13.)

As partakers, then, of death and life through Jesus Christ our Lord, who would forego the privilege of setting this forth by the baptism which He has ordained?

But again, we have allusion to baptism in the first Epistle to Corinthians x. 1—"Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that *all* our fathers were under the cloud, and *all* passed through the sea, and were *all* baptized (the same figure of burial) unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." Herein we learn that none of those who came out of Egypt were exempt from this baptism to Moses. To the Christian, Egypt represents the world; we are called out of it by faith in Jesus, and should evidently *all* be baptized to him. The Israelites had no place as worshippers until after this baptism to Moses; it was after they were thus baptized that God gave them his Sabbath, and fed them with manna, and taught them how to worship Him!

Such is rightfully the teaching for the Christian also; though he may, and alas does, set aside God's order of things, because he is "not under law but under grace." But the Lord loves His people to be faithful to all his words, and those will realize greatest blessing who seek, in the way He has indicated, to please Him. The whole course of this Chapter (1 Cor. x.) enforces not only the duty of conformity to baptism, but the primary place given to it in Christian life. The apostle begins the chapter with baptism, and goes on to the Lord's Supper, and worship, in regular order. This is insisted upon, that in the word of God, water baptism is always interposed between declaration of faith and the full privileges of the believer, as touching the assembly and fellowship with Christians. In other words, the Christian has no right (according to scripture) to take his place among Christians while he repudiates baptism. Of course it is admitted that it is mainly owing to unfaithfulness on the part of the majority of Gospel preachers, in this matter, that so few receive the rite of baptism. But conscience once aroused, our duty is clear, to return to first principles, taking the Bible as our only guide. It is by that only we are taught of the Holy Ghost. Let there be no fear of seeming to be legal. Look how the next chapter in Corinthians opens (verse 2)—"Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things, and keep the *ordinances* as I delivered them to you."

One more reference. In 1 Peter iii. 20 the Apostle refers to the days of Noah, and the ark in which eight souls were saved by water; then he says (verse 21)—"The like *figure* whereunto even baptism doth also now save us." The salvation of Noah and his family, in the ark is a figure of baptism, and baptism is a figure of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. It is specially the resurrection aspect of baptism which is here looked at (see conclusion of the verse) "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

Looking at the manner of Noah's deliverance as given us here to be the type of Christian baptism we find the same line of truth pressed upon our attention, which we have seen repeated again and again, namely, that baptism is the *first* thing

required of a believer. Noah was a believer on the other side of the flood, there was no question about his faith; he had to prove his faith by building the ark, and submitting to the baptism of the waters of death—and what then? He could build an altar, and be accepted of God as a worshipper!

We cannot conclude without a brief remark upon the practice of sprinkling infants. The dreadful delusion which prevails on this subject is said to be based upon the words of our Lord—"Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Now it must be remembered that the disciples were about to prevent children from coming to Jesus. But He will not suffer any to be prevented who are willing to come to Him, especially children and all of childlike mind. But what has this to do with baptism? Is it not obvious, that if the Lord had contemplated infant baptism, He would have enjoined it on that very occasion? The reader will have perused this paper in vain if he fails to see that unless the reception of water baptism be an evidence of faith already existing in the person receiving it, it is utterly in vain, and is a mere mockery. No terms can be too strong in denouncing any who wilfully teach (that is, with full knowledge of its meaning,) the doctrine as set forth in the ritual and Catechism of the Church of England. The entire system with its promises and vows, its godfathers and godmothers, and its confirmation to follow, is not only opposed to the letter of Scripture, but is entirely subversive of the spirit of Christianity. To the simple hearted who love the Lord Jesus Christ, these remarks are addressed. They are intended as an exhortation to faithfulness on a point respecting which nearly all Christendom has proved unfaithful. Baptism is a command, though there are no pains and penalties recorded against its nonfulfilment. It is deeply significant, but is not essential to salvation. It is a test of faith and love, and therefore we know not what consequences may attend failure respecting it. There are cases, such as that of the thief on the cross, where water baptism cannot be received. Of such it will never be required. It is a matter for each one's conscience. We shall all be revealed in the presence of Christ in that bright day when nothing will remain secret. What reason, dear reader, will you give to the Lord (if unbaptized) for your disobedience and lack of love? Thanks be to Jesus our Lord, you cannot imperil your salvation if you believe in Him; but the word of God clearly reveals that our position in glory will depend upon the degree of our faithfulness here, "as one star differeth from another star in glory." Even in our present state, be assured spiritual happiness is ever consequent upon obedience.

Finally, to any who may be exercised in spirit by truth presented herein, and may consequently be cast about as to who to apply to for help and guidance. Have full confidence in the "written word;" pray God to guide you. Any Christian can baptize you. As to fellowship,—remember the Lord's precious assurance, "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

The Editor will gladly aid with such counsel as the Lord may enable him to give, any who may desire it; but he would chiefly urge searching the word of God and prayer.

OUR CORRESPONDENTS AND OURSELVES.

PLYMOUTH BRETHREN.

W. D. W., HEREFORD.—Your letter is written in so very gracious a spirit that we would fain quote from it at some length if any good were likely to result. In speaking of the "leading brother at Plymouth," with reference to the great rupture between "The Brethren," we had no desire to press unduly on him personally. Doubtless his opponents dealt with him most unscripturally. The exclusive party assumed judgment where they had no jurisdiction. Their leader, and the few in power who act with him, seem to have been overtaken with that spirit of persecution which has more or less characterized every Christian sect, as in turn each has attained to any degree of ascendancy. It is heartrending to find among godly men such unholy zeal. No doubt all you say is correct respecting the one in whose defence you write, whom you describe as so cruelly persecuted. It seems clear that his heretical writing

(indited, we are willing to believe, without evil intent,) had for years freely circulated amongst those who eventually made use of it to hunt the writer down. But after all this is admitted "he was to be blamed," not for causing a rupture in the confederacy, but for what he wrote. Had he not taught Christ-dishonouring doctrine, it could not have been used against him. This brother is now publishing a pamphlet in which he seeks to show that the calling of the church is *not* special to this dispensation, but includes all saved before Christ came to suffer for sin. We hope he is not sinning against the light. Alas! how many have been betrayed; like Diotrephes, through love of *pre-eminence*. This is the true spring of bitterness among "the Brethren," and in all other divisions of the Church. How it contrasts with the Lord's words. "If any man will come after me, *let him deny himself*, and take up his cross *daily* and follow me." We expect, dear brother, no "healing of breaches," but "we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

A. Z.—See our answer to W. D. W.

G. H. DUKE-STREET—In our statements about "the Brethren" or "Plymouth Brethren," we have endeavoured as far as possible to avoid speaking of individuals. Our object was to show that as an association they had dishonoured the Lord Jesus respecting water baptism—also that they are opposed to Scripture in acting as a confederacy—and that the result has been on the part of those who assumed power, a manifestation of intolerance, persecution and bigotry, which we should have thought impossible among those who love the Saviour. Yet they do love Jesus; who that knows them can doubt it? How greatly too the Lord has used them to spread the truth! We love them then for all their well-doing, and pity their shortcomings. May each little gathering yet be brought to see that the Head of the Church is the only safe guide, and that His words, followed in their integrity, are wiser than all the wisdom of men. May they yet learn that Spiritual strength is not found in human combinations—that on the contrary the Lord's word is "My strength is made perfect in weakness."—See also our answer to W. D. W.

L. C. H. HIGGATE—informs us that on one occasion, when the ground of rupture among the Brethren was discussed, a brother present enquired of the chief leader of the exclusive party—"Dear Brother, why did you not stay at Plymouth and drive out the evil?" The reply was, "*God alone can drive out evil.*" Our Brother adds, "Oh, that even now, he and his followers would act on this principle and lay down their arms."—Many thanks for your kind offer of the tracts on "Philanthropy," but we do not know how to effect a gratuitous distribution of them. We would gladly have reviewed the paper if procurable of a publisher. Will you kindly point out wherein you consider we are in error about Baptism? Need we say that *mere thoughts* are of no avail when a command of the Lord is in question?

A. G. BIRMINGHAM.—Many thanks for your long and kind letter. We would gladly avail ourselves of the information you communicate if suited to our pages. You will notice, however, that our object is to unfold scripture truth without displaying human agencies. Respecting the preaching of the Gospel of Salvation, we thank the Lord of the harvest for sending forth in these days many true evangelists—We pray God to sustain them and give them grace to declare the truth with all boldness, but with all humility. The Lord will prosper his own servants provided *there be thorough dependence upon him*.

J. H. D.—"Mourning and feasting." This paper is very nicely written, but scarcely pointed enough for the needs of the present day. We thank the writer, though we cannot afford space for the communication.

P.—Thanks for the kind interest you have taken in the spread of PRECIOUS TRUTH. Respecting the paper on the "New Church" so called, it is quite beyond criticism; contradiction of the plain statements of the word of God abound almost in every sentence. The doctrines of Swedenborg live only through the ignorance of his followers. If they would but search the

scriptures they could scarcely fail to detect the glaring impostures of that false prophet.

J. G. E.—You will doubtless have seen in our reply to J. R., in our last, the chief part of your own inquiry answered.—Respecting Rom. ii. 7—none but the regenerate, those who are born again, can be found answering the description in that scripture. If a natural man can be found, in *patient continuance in well-doing*, let him claim the promised reward; of course from childhood there must have been this patient continuance in well-doing, and it must be also maintained to the end of this present life. The first three chapters in Romans must be read in connection; then you will come to the plain declaration, that "both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin; as it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one." And again, "that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." Where is deliverance to be found? In Jesus Christ. He has wrought salvation for all who *trust* in him. All who refuse to believe in the only Saviour are condemned already, and pass away in their sins into eternal misery. As to 2 Tim. i. 10, you must read the 9th with the 10th verse, which makes it plain that for those who are saved (believers only) Christ hath abolished death, &c. You will almost invariably find deliverance from any supposed scripture difficulty by looking at the context prayerfully, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost.—"Thomasites," we suppose, are followers of Dr. Thomas, one of whose pamphlets we have been reading. He seems to have acquired some insight into dispensational truth; but he writes in a somewhat mystifying style. If we understand him, he appears to teach that water baptism is essential to salvation. This is contrary to truth.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED FROM—J. H. J. Monks Eleigh; J. R., Edinburgh; J. M. D. Wigan; W. Shorter; Mnason; to be answered in our next, D.V. Also Notices of Books.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—We invite enquiries tending to the elucidation of scriptural truth. Controversial questions should be avoided entirely, if possible. Letters must be sent before the 15th.

Letters for the Editor to be addressed to 335, Strand, W.C.

ERROR.—A few copies of No. 8 got into circulation with the following error:—The first line of the second column of page 55, was placed as the second line of the first column of page 56.

SCRIPTURE READING MEETINGS IN LONDON.

The Editor knows of the following, and takes the opportunity of notifying them to brethren in the Lord.

Lord's-day afternoon,	at 3 o'clock, 47, Rawstorne-st, Goswell-rd.
Monday evening,	at 7, 335a, Strand, oppo. Somerset-house, side door.
Tuesday "	8, 19, Sherborne-st, Downham-rd., private house.
" "	7, Mr Lynn's, 70, Fleet-street; second-floor.
" "	8, 10, Waterloo-street, Lever-street, St Luke's.
Wednesday "	8, 47, Rawstorne-street, Goswell-road.
Thursday "	8, 28, Collier-street, Winchester-street, Penton.
Saturday "	8, 47, Rawstorne-street. [ville.
Sunday, Tuesday,	Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, 79, Tower-street, at half-past 3.

NOTICES.

To facilitate the obtaining of PRECIOUS TRUTH, packets will be sent post free to any part of the United Kingdom, by remitting, in advance, as follows:—Two copies for 2d., Five for 3d., Ten for 5d. Send Stamps. Address either of the Publishers as below.

TO OUR FRIENDS.—We should like to occasionally publish a List of Agents for PRECIOUS TRUTH in large towns, and ask our friends to acquaint us with the names of Booksellers who are likely to help our circulation.

COUNTRY AGENTS.—Edinburgh, Taylor, 31, South Castle-street; Elgin, Macdonald, High-street; Crews, J. Robertson; Plymouth, J. V. Luxmore.

Published in a Tract form, 16pp.

THE CITY OF CONFUSION, and the Way out of It. A Faithful Word for Christians. 1d. Caudwell, Strand, and Smart & Allen, 2, Londonhouse-yard, Paternoster-row.

PRECIOUS TRUTH. The Nine Numbers for 1865 can now be had in Neat Wrapper. Price 6d.

Printed by JOHN EVANS, 335a, Strand, and published for him by Job Caudwell, 335, Strand, London, W.C. Arthur Hall, 25, Paternoster-row, London, E.C. Smart & Allen, 2, Londonhouse-yard, Paternoster Row.

PRECIOUS TRUTH.

“WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?”—(Rom. iv. 3.)

Job Oswald, 335, Strand, London, W.C.]

[Arthur Hall, 25, Paternoster-row, London.

No. 10.]

JANUARY 1, 1866.

[One Halfpenny.]

THE EDITOR'S LETTER TO THE CHRISTIAN READER.

PATIENCE! Beloved, Patience! This is a theme on which we have much need to exhort one another. It is what the word of God constantly presses upon all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Having already obtained salvation through faith in him, why are we left in the wilderness? There should be no doubt as to the reason why. God's purpose is that we should glorify him by living a life of faith—enduring a condition of things entirely contrary to the new nature which he has given to us. We are to endure as seeing him who is invisible, (i. e. as though we could always see God.)

But not only so: we are to wait as those who are *heirs* to an incorruptible inheritance. It is not as though we were uncertain as to what will eventually become of us. God has made known to us that “*we are more than conquerors through him that loved us,*” — that we are “*joint-heirs with Christ,*” already “*accepted in the Beloved.*” The only uncertainty on our side has regard to time. We wait to be taken home, to be changed into the likeness of Jesus, and to be put in possession of the inheritance—the free gift of God. How soon the change will come, we know not, though our heavenly Father knows full well. Hence the necessity for the exercise of patience.

“For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come and will not tarry.”

While he tarries, we are to live by faith, as the Scripture quoted (Heb. x.) goes on to say.

A similar exhortation to patience is given for our comfort in the Epistle of James—

“Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.”

What a beautiful illustration is here given of what the Lord looks for in us! The farmer expects the fertilising rains of spring and autumn. He sows his corn seed in faith, and waits the result with patience; he reckons that in due time he shall gather in the harvest. So may it be with you and I, beloved in the Lord. In our case, no vicissitudes of weather can alter the final result. All is secured for us in Christ Jesus our Lord. All God's promises are Yea and Amen in Him. There is, of course, the question of rewards and degree of glory, dependent

upon faithful walk down here. But the certainties of eternal life and heirship were settled, the moment we trusted in Jesus.

Patience, then, beloved; ye have need of patience. I pray you, be firmly established in the promises our Lord has so abundantly given you. Stand firmly in the established fact that you are going to God in the glory. Let both your life and conversation assert this fearlessly, yet with all humility. Say this—“I am a poor sinner deserving hell; but through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, *I am saved;* and am therefore patiently waiting for my Redeemer to take me to heaven. He has said he will come and take me to himself, and to the mansions he has gone to prepare, *and He will do it.*”

Never suffer Satan to get you on the vantage ground of *uncertainty*. He may often tell you how unfit you are for the presence of God. Let your ready answer be—“Christ is fit, and I am accepted in Him. Moreover, when He comes I shall be changed into his likeness—in that likeness shall I appear in the presence of God.”

Remember we have to **STAND** against the **WILES** of the Devil. He seeks to cheat and deceive us in every way. It is not an openly avowed foe we have to contend with, but our adversary is the Prince of Darkness. Yet fear not: “**GREATER IS HE** that is in you, than he that is in the world.” You have the Holy Ghost the Comforter ever with you—in you. Be therefore strong—not in yourself, but in the Lord. Put on the **WHOLE** armour of God. Do not attempt to make shift with a part of it. (See Eph. vi. 10—18.) Pray always. Stand firm in the assurance that the Lord Jesus will quickly come, and deliver you once and for ever.

Though clad in the whole armour of God, you are only to stand on the defensive. You cannot destroy your foe; you can only resist him. You cannot march up to heaven as a warrior. You can only stand and wait patiently, till He who has conquered for you, comes forth with the welcome shout. Then faith will be wanted no more; you will need no further exhortation to patience. That which is now seen as through a glass darkly, will then be a bright, glorious possession. Oh, dear brother, dear sister, you may well **WAIT** in meekness and **PATIENCE**, for it is true, that “*when Christ, our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.*”

Yours ever in Him,

In true Christian love,

The Editor of **PRECIOUS TRUTH.**

TO MR. W. PARKS, B.A.

OPENSHAW, MANCHESTER.

DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST,—

Considering you to be a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, we thus address you. Hitherto we have spoken of you, or rather, of your writings. Henceforth we purpose to address you personally. We hope thus to be able to speak more lovingly, in pointing out the grievous errors you are teaching.

What are we to think of you as a professed minister of Christ, when, instead of teaching the plain and simple truth as it is in Jesus, you talk about syllogism A and syllogism B—a series of mental propositions erected by yourself for the purpose of overthrowing them? Is that sort of preaching in conformity with the passage in 1 Cor. ii. 1—5?

“And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was *not* with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should *not* stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”

We refrain from further consideration of your extravagant language, both in reasoning and declamation; but cannot help expressing our grief to see so much argument expended in an endeavour to prove that the Lord Jesus is UNWILLING (!) to save.

It is now our duty to consider the Scriptures you quote in support of your doctrine. At page 13 of your tract (“Professor, Beware,”) you say—

“Christ and Paul have most distinctly stated that “no man can believe without supernatural power,”

And you quote in support of this assertion John vi. 44 and 1 Cor. ii. 14. The first-named Scripture contains the following words from the mouth of the Lord Jesus—

“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

Now, in verse 40 of the same chapter we get a very simple explanation of the above—

“This is the will of Him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

The Father draws to Jesus all who believe in him. Look at living instances—those who came to Jesus, as set before us in the Gospel narratives, such as the leper, the sick of the palsy, Jairus, the woman with an issue of blood, the Syro-phenician woman, &c. &c. What were all these but believers? and why were they drawn to Jesus, but because they were believers? Such are they whom the Father draws to the Son! According to your theory, the Father draws *unbelievers* to the Son, that He may give them faith. But the Scriptures tell us that sinners *who believe* are drawn to Jesus, that He may save them!

You see, brother, you and the word of God are quite at variance.

Turn we now to your next Scripture, 1 Cor. ii. 14.

“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

The subject here treated of, as you surely must see, is not salvation, but the unfolding of the hidden wisdom of God to believers. We have given, in the commencement of this letter, the portion of the chapter which speaks of Salvation, ending at the 5th verse. From that point the Apostle dilates upon God’s dealings with believers, thus—

“Howbeit we speak wisdom among *them that are perfect*: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought; but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory. Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God *hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit*; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so, the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now, *we have received*, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the *natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God*; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind, of Christ.”

What has all this to do with your assertion, that “Christ and Paul distinctly stated that *no man can believe without supernatural power*”? The whole object of this passage is to show the necessity of being a believer, and having the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and that because the things of the Spirit are foolishness to the unbeliever. There is nothing at all about faith being given to the unbeliever to receive the Gospel message. You confound two very different things. Paul speaks of some in his day who “handled the word of God deceitfully;” we do not accuse you of this; God knoweth our hearts. But it is clear, you do not “rightly divide the word of truth.”

You have, in fact, selected a text which condemns your position entirely, for this passage is quite in accordance with Eph. i. 13—

“In whom [Christ] ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.”

The Holy Ghost is given to *believers*, that they may understand and teach spiritual truth. He is given *after* they believe, as the above passage shows. He is never given to unbelievers. You cannot find a scripture to justify such a thought.

Your further quotations in our next, if the Lord will.

COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL BY
ST. JOHN.

BY THE EDITOR OF "PRECIOUS TRUTH."

CHAPTER II.

"And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee: and the mother of Jesus was there, and both Jesus was called and his disciples to the marriage." (1, 2.)

Why the third day? The third period of the world's history had commenced. At its close there is to be a marriage in heaven: the glorified Son of God is to receive his Bride (the Church) and she will have made herself ready. But Cana of Galilee was emulous, and in spirit anticipated and typified that heavenly union. (Cana signifies—Emulation.) In the joyful time to come, Jesus and his disciples will occupy the foremost place. In Cana, they were but invited guests.

"And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine." (3.)

How touchingly simple, yet how noble! The mother of Jesus knew what a tender heart was in her son; he would sympathise with the need of the hour. She was conscious, too, that his power equalled his gentleness and his grace; she, therefore, asked nothing, but only mentioned the want. Was she not, however, trespassing upon his love? Was it not presuming upon a temporary relationship which was soon to come to an end? It would seem so?

"Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come." (4.)

He had indeed descended from heaven to provide joy and gladness for the children of men; but the time had not yet come. He must first endure suffering and death;—the poured out wine was to become the emblem of his own precious blood, shed for sinners, ere man could thoroughly joy in the blood of the grape. However, Mary had not reckoned in vain upon the exceeding grace of Jesus.

"His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever He saith unto you, Do it." (5.)

Oh, that these words were graven on the heart of every servant! How sublime in their brevity, and how perfect! Never let a Christian speculate as to what he is to do. The Lord Jesus, after his resurrection, gave the same directions—"Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.)—Yes, that is it; "*Whatsoever He saith unto you, Do it.*"

"And there were set there six water pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins a-piece. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the water pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim."

And the water became wine, without another word or touch. The Creator was there—and his will was sufficient. The wine that was wanted to make glad that little company, was supplied without stint. It was limited only by the number and capacity of the water-pots.

"And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it." (8.)

Here we have the lesson illustrated with the same grand simplicity of sacred narrative. How brief are the words! how unhesitating and prompt the responses! Jesus said, Do this, and Do that; *and they did it.* Speaking after the manner of men, these servants had some room for questioning the value of the work He had given them to do. The Lord had not told them what HE should effect; and we should scarcely have been surprised, had they hesitated to carry to the governor of the feast what they had just poured into the vessels as water, knowing that he expected wine. But they had received the command, and they obeyed it. May we willingly learn the lesson which the Holy Ghost would teach us here. How few, comparatively, of the Lord's own servants—his blood bought ones—accept the simple expression of His will, *and do it!*

"When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was; (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, and saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now." (9, 10.)

So the bridegroom was praised for the blessing that Jesus had wrought. But the servants which drew the water knew! Yes—and the servants who draw the water of the Word, and minister it to needy souls—they know that it is the power and love of Jesus which turns the water into wine. The water of life (the Word of God), given and received in faith, becomes, through Jesus, the cup of Salvation—the wine which fills the believer's soul with joy unspeakable and full of glory. But, alas! some accept praise and honour from man for work which is all of the Saviour!

∴ "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him." (11.)

Fit commencement of the work the Father had given him to do! Herein he shows us, too, some of the features of his own bright character. He came in accepted weakness, and pure as water; but he poured out the life-stream in blood. For our sakes he endured, under the winepress of judgment; and for us he has become a continual joy, of which wine is but, as it were, the shadow of an image or figure.

From Galilee, he manifested forth his glory; it was outside the hitherto favoured city of Jerusalem, that the Lord commenced his ministry. Happy indication of what is going on now; namely, the display of the grace and glory of Jesus to the despised and rejected ones of the world. Galilee and its inhabitants were held in contempt, and the true disciples of Christ now are lightly esteemed, as were the Galilæans.

"LAY ASIDE EVERY WEIGHT."—Though the weights be as precious (in an earthly sense) as gold, lay them aside, to run all the better in the Life of Faith."

RAHAB, THE HARLOT.

THEOLOGIANs of the Schools—such as seek to make Scripture conformable to their thoughts of propriety and the traditions of men—are sorely puzzled about Rahab, the Harlot. A woman of the most depraved character, a harlot, and of a nation of idolaters,—one who, moreover, in the very act of screening the messengers of Joshua, manifests such a lack of moral rectitude as to utter repeated falsehood for the sake of misleading the pursuers! Such is the person whose faith is presented to us as a bright example, both in the Epistle to the Hebrews and the general Epistle of James.

How can these things be? says the Reasoner. Surely, exclaims one, God's moral law was suspended in favour of Rahab! Doubtless, remarks another, this woman had been a harlot, but must have forsaken that course of life before receiving the messengers! These, and such like speculations, are seriously propounded by men who take a foremost place as christian teachers!

Yet the truth is very simple. What saith the scripture?

“By FAITH the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.”—Heb. xi. 31.

“Was not Rahab, the harlot, justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”—Jas. ii. 25, 26.

The point to recognise is FAITH!—faith manifested in works. In Rahab's case, it was not a mere profession of belief in God; Her's was a living faith. What she *did*, was proof of what she *believed*. She made full confession of faith, too; and her testimony proves that she was indeed actuated by *faith only*, in protecting God's people. Look at the narrative. This is what she believed:—

“She said unto the men, I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that the terror of you is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you; for the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.”—Joshua xi. 9—11.

This was precious testimony; but something had to be *done*: and the harlot's faith was equal to the occasion. While her countrymen were seeking to oppose God's purposes, she not only bowed in faith, but did all she could, in active accordance with the designs of the Lord.

She was a great sinner; but she believed God, and made her faith manifest by her works. Thus she obtained salvation. Her immorality never comes in question. Nor is it ever palliated; on the contrary, in every Scripture where she is referred to, her vile calling is distinctly set forth. It is always—Rahab, the Harlot. Why is this? Is it not evidence of the most powerful kind, that faith obtains

salvation in spite of sin? that God accepts living faith without *first* requiring a change in the character of the believer? *After* salvation is given, God does, indeed, look for conformity to his mind in all respects. That is quite another thing. What Rahab's history shows us is—that faith brings a sinner to God, *just as she is*, without any stipulations whatever. It is so with the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ now. If there be real faith, we shall see evidence of it; “by their fruits ye shall know them.” But salvation is given to the believer as a *free gift*, however vile a sinner he may be, without any conditions either as to present or future conformity. Hence the need of so many instructions and exhortations in the word of God to the believer. Faith is very ignorant, and has to be taught of God. Faith, has, however, wonderful perception as to the fitting way in which to manifest itself to God. But the person who has faith may perhaps have such dull moral perceptions, in consequence of a life of sin, as not to perceive very quickly the divine call to rectitude.

Thus it was with Rahab. She lied to the pursuers; the lies came readily to her lips—there seems to have been no hesitancy, no struggle. *Morality* was dead in her, but FAITH was alive. This is the thing to note—the triumph of faith!

BAPTISM AND BRETHRENISM.

“MNASON” writes as follows:—

“Of the many rightminded Christians who witness and deplore the divisions which exist and mar the testimony of “the Brethren,” but few have had the opportunity of tracing these sorrowful results to their real causes. Respecting Baptism, from the very first there has been division in the camp. This was early felt to be a hindrance to a visible expression of unity, and in order to meet the difficulty a compromise was made. . . . Think of the demoralising effects of such a compromise, and the inevitable and often unconscious duplicity of spirit it engenders. . . .”

Our correspondent then adds a very able and conclusive argument against infant baptism, showing that those who contend for its sufficiency, do of necessity deny the need of faith in the members of the Body of Christ!! “MNASON” remarks—

“If a servant of God baptize, without either command or example in the word of God, the infants of parents, one of whom, at least, is christian—does he baptize on the faith of the parent or without it? which? If he reply, on the faith of the parent, then here is a soul, on his theory, introduced into the Church or Body of Christ on the faith of another. But if he say, without faith—then, according to this view, here is a soul introduced into the Church, or Body, without any faith at all! Why, then, preach the Gospel?”

We await a further communication, as promised.

“THOU SHALT CALL HIS NAME JESUS.”—We love to associate the voluntary humiliation of the Son of God, with the sweet name, JESUS. For our sakes he became a babe and bore an earthly name;—or, let each believer say, for my sake!

“There is a name I love to hear,
I love to sing its worth;
It sounds like music in mine ear—
The sweetest name on earth.”

GOING INTO COURT WITH A BAD CAUSE.

All who know anything of proceedings in courts of law, are aware that many a case is brought before the judges of the land, respecting which it is well known beforehand what their decision will be. Persons sometimes insist upon defending cases which are utterly hopeless. Any one having a knowledge of law would have settled the question for them, by simply stating what the law requires. But in defiance of advice and warning, such persons persist in standing before the judgment seat, and bring upon themselves inevitable shame and humiliation. Greater folly than this, is, however, committed by those who call themselves Christians, without having faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Judge of all the earth has pronounced beforehand His judgment about mankind. The Lord has declared in his word that the result is the same, whether judged by the law of conscience or the law given by Moses:—

“That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God.” (Rom. iii. 19.)

This is the solemn truth. Our natural condition is, that of being already under judgment, waiting to be cast into outer darkness, because we are sinners. Scripture presents the case thus,—

“Without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.” (Eph. ii. 12.)

In spite of this clear revelation, men persist in thinking they have a good case, with which to stand before the Judge! They will trust themselves and their doings. They go to church or chapel, sing hymns, repeat forms of prayer, listen to long sermons, and persuade themselves that God will accept them for their religiousness! From time to time they have fearful misgivings that all is not well with them; but they shut their eyes to such unwelcome declarations as we have quoted from the scriptures, soothe their souls to sleep again, go on hoping they will attain to holiness and heaven at last, and—die in their sins.

Is there no remedy? Yes, indeed, there is. The Lord says, “*I have found a ransom.*” Many submit to the just sentence of God about sins, and gladly accept the terms of the ransom. Yes, all who receive God’s truth, and bow in faith, owning, as Saviour and Lord, Him whom the world rejects, even Jesus Christ, the Son of God—these are the ransomed ones, redeemed by blood, the precious blood of Christ. Doomed they were, like the rest; *by nature the children of wrath, even as others.* Nothing less than the sacrifice of Christ could save them. But this atonement is of sufficient worth to ransom all mankind, if all would but trust in Him.

Are any of our readers among those who are not *wholly* trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation? In vain you say, you believe he is the Saviour of sinners, if you are depending *in any measure* upon your own religiousness for salvation. Forgiveness and life eternal are extended to those only who heart and soul, trust in Jesus. We pray you be warned in

time. Do not go into court with a hopeless case. Do you really believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? This is the one momentous question upon which everything hinges as to eternal happiness or misery.

“He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, *because* he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (John iii. 18.)

Think, oh, think, of that solemn word in Heb. ii. 3.—

“How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?”

FAITHFUL ASSEMBLIES.

At the present time, perhaps more than ever, it behoves Christians to consider the addresses sent to the Seven Churches of Asia. (See Rev. ii. and iii.) When those epistles were first delivered through John the beloved, it is pretty evident there was but one Church in each place named. Sectarian division had not yet been established. Each Church is therefore admonished according to its general characteristics of declension, apostacy, admixture, falsity, deadness, *faithfulness*, worldliness. But he that hath an ear to hear, is to hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches. Thus we see, each individual believer is expected to take up all the admonitions, warnings, and encouragements sent.

In contrast with that which existed when John wrote, namely, an undivided Church in each place—thoughtful Christians are now bewildered by the claims of a variety of Sects, most of them in measure guided by the Word of God, but overruled by traditions and arrangements of their own, the result of confused thoughts about Divine order and the speciality of the present dispensation. Now any faithful enquirer, simply desirous of conforming to the mind of the Lord Jesus Christ, (especially if such an one be waiting for the Coming of the Lord,) can scarcely fail to detect which of the Seven Churches is most approved by the Master. Then comes the question, Am I in that condition of things? In vain he examines the various denominations to find the characteristics which meet with Divine approval, discerned in the address to Philadelphia. In Popery, he sees the worst features of Pergamos and Thyatira. In Anglicism, a fusion of Smyrna, Pergamos, Sardis, and Laodicea. In almost all other denominations, with great variety of shades, amalgams of Ephesus, Sardis, and Laodicea, with a slight admixture of Smyrna. Of all the Sects, the Plymouth Brethren are nearest to the standing of Philadelphia, but tainted with the failures of Ephesus and Laodicea.

Dear Reader, Why should you not stand on clear Philadelphiaian ground? Listen to the Message to that Church—“I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. . . . Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the face of the earth. Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.”—Rev. iii. 8, 10, 11.

These are precious words sent from the Lord Jesus Christ after his glorious Ascension. Addressed originally to the Church at Philadelphia, they are for any Assembly of Believers which maintains personal faithfulness to Jesus Christ and his Word as their one object. How different are the messages to the Churches of Sardis and Laodicea in the same chapter! to the former, (having a name to live but dead) the Lord threatens to come as a thief, unwelcomely taking them by surprise. While of the latter he says, he will reject it with loathing and abhorrence: “Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” This is a fearful warning to religionists who are not in “*the faith.*”

But let us return to the address to the faithful church. There are two or three points to which we wish to direct the attention of all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

Let us assume that two or three Christians wish to be in the attitude of the Church which was in Philadelphia; and resolve, by the grace of God, having carefully waited upon him in prayer, to be nothing but Christians. On coming together there should be much prayer and earnest study of the New Testament Scriptures (consideration of Old Testament truth should follow later; otherwise the remarkable character of the present dispensation may not be

seen so clearly.) After awhile, the "two or three" will begin to see the true, simple, Scriptural structure of an assembly of believers or Church. We may anticipate their deliberations, and the results of them, as follows:

I. As to the RULING and GUIDANCE of Christ by his WORD and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Ghost, given to every believer, is the ACTIVE guide of all who submit to his sway. Our Lord leads or guides, but it is by the Holy Spirit. He said before he suffered, when promising this priceless gift—"When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me, for he shall receive of MINE, and shall show unto you."—John xvi. 13, 14.

The Lord rules by the written Word, the Scriptures. He guides by the Holy Spirit. Thus our gracious God has perfectly provided for us. But—

II. To experience the blessing of this divine provision, FAITH must be active. It is in vain for us to say we believe in the sufficiency of the Word and the Spirit if we practically set aside their rule of guidance. That which is written in the Scriptures we should conform to, and the leading of the Holy Spirit we should seek and follow. True Christian life cannot be separated from these influences. They should pervade private life as well as the services of assembled believers. But with respect to the latter, our Lord when speaking of the Church, or glorious Assembly, [church simply means assembly,] which he was about to build, says "Where two or three are gathered together in my name THERE AM I in the midst of them." (Matt. xviii. 20.) We are to be content with this fact as the foundation blessing,—namely, Christ in our midst when assembled in his name. We are to accept this, not as a mere theory or doctrine, to read about and pass over, but when met in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, our faith must own—"He is there." The result will be, that in all our doings we shall seek to be subject to Him. Does one desire to give out a hymn of praise? it should be his joy first to pray inwardly (in spirit) for permission and guidance; and so with respect to everything done in the assembly.

III. Then there comes for consideration another thing. Our Lord Jesus Christ says—"If ye love me keep my commandments." Now the Lord's first commandment to the believer is—"Be Baptized." (Mark xvi.) His first and only command to the unconverted is—"Believe in Me." In sending forth his Gospel messengers, the Lord puts the two things together; he says—"Preach and Baptize." But it is only to those who hear and believe that the preacher can say—"Be Baptized." "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned."* Baptism is our Lord's first command laid on the believer." And, in a certain sense, a Christian is not left to his choice in the matter, because the Lord says to his servants—"Baptize." After Peter had preached to Cornelius and his household, and they believed, "He commanded them to be baptized." Of course there are thousands of Christians who never do submit to this ordinance, but it is generally through false teachers or blind guides who themselves do not submit. All who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are saved. There is no doubt about the salvation of unbaptized believers. It is wholly a question of faithfulness to him, who has bought us with his own precious blood. Do we desire to be obedient to him? That is the question. "If ye love me keep my commandments." "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." These are the Master's words.

From the time our Lord, after his resurrection, sent forth his servants to preach and baptize, baptism is always presented in Scripture as administered before receiving the believer into the church or assembly, to possess the privileges of its members. "Then they that gladly received his word were BAPTIZED; and the same day there were added about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the Apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." (Acts ii. 41, 42.) Here then is the church, as the Lord set it up. Believers are first baptized; they are then henceforth an assembly of worshippers, receiving and exercising ministry, and celebrating the Lord's Supper.

IV. Though looking for obedience to be shown by baptism, it is not justifiable to use the term "Baptist" for a sectarian purpose. Moreover, we see clearly that sectarian assemblies cannot be built upon the Lord's simple model. Christians have

* Any inquiring believer may obtain a full explanation respecting the significance of baptism by consulting a small pamphlet "Baptism, its Place and Meaning." (Job Caudwell, 336, Strand. Price 1d.)

no right to mark themselves off by different denominations. It matters not whether they make doctrine or personal ministry the ground of sectarian difference. It is totally wrong. Look at the Lord's word by Paul to the Corinthians—"Now, I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you... everyone of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Cor. i. 10, 12, 13.) This is conclusive. Nothing can justify the adoption of any other name than that of CHRISTIAN. Those who would be faithful must stand apart from those who are unfaithful. This is a rule laid down in Scripture, the adoption of which makes our path plain.

V. What results from taking this ground? We can hold communion with all believers who are content to meet as such. At Scripture and prayer meetings Christians may be received without question. Ignore their sectarianism, and gladly meet them as brethren and sisters in the Lord. But in coming together as a Church, owning the Lord's presence in our midst, we must entertain those who seek fellowship to be obedient to his commands. For we understand by fellowship,—true community of interest—where there is one Lord, one united love towards Him, and a practical recognition of His new commandment. Jesus said, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another. As I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." John xiii. 34—35.

Do not be persuaded, dear christian reader, that this is impossible. Do not listen to those of whom we are prophetically warned as characterizing the last days, "having the form of godliness, but DENYING the power thereof: from such turn away." 2 Tim. iii. 5.

In conclusion, we do not invite Christians to a hasty adoption of that which is here presented. There should be earnest prayer for guidance and wisdom. Pray the Lord to open the door. Pray that those who put their hand to the plough may not look back. There must be the spirit of self-sacrifice. What is done must be done in faith, with a single eye to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let it never be forgotten that from time to time, as efforts have been made, either by individuals or by sections of the Church, to get back to Scriptural standing, shipwreck has almost invariably been made through personal ambition. Christians have abundant cause to feel greatly humbled by all their failures; and such as would be faithful now must be humble. We believe that Meetings numbering from about 20 to 40 will be far happier, more faithful to one another and to the Lord than where 200 meet together. Yet circumstances differ. The Lord must be our counsellor in every case. We cannot have rules. With the written word in our hands, the Holy Spirit to guide, and Jesus in the midst, ministry, in the way of preaching, need have but secondary place. Spiritual teachers however are to be attended, the Lord's gifts in them to be recognised, and his name to be praised for all such. But those who are ordained by our Lord to ministry, must remember his rule—the greatest is to be servant of all. Anything like dictatorship on the part of such must not be thought of. Let the most gifted be the meekest in walk and conversation. Let there be nothing like confederacy. Let all bonds of union be of the Lord's providing.

BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS SENT US.

"The Temptations and Sympathy of Christ"—(8 pp. One penny, E. Allen, 31, Edgware-road)—Contains some very happy thoughts respecting divine sympathy, and under what conditions we are to expect it. It is calculated to help the spiritually-minded Christian.

"Baptism, a Point of Practice and a Sign in Theology"—(18 pp. Two pence, W. Yapp, 4, Old Cavendish-street)—presents the truth on this subject, but would be better for a little more fervour. "It is good to be zealously affected always in good."

"On the Qualifications for Religious Enquiry"—(20 pp. Three pence, J. Nisbet and Co)—Shows the incapability of the carnal mind to judge of the inspired word.

"On the Imprecatory Psalms—their dispensational place and value" (23 pp. Two pence, J. Nisbet and Co)—Calculated to be very helpful to Christians generally.

"The nature and constitution of a Christian Church"—(11 pp. Wilkins and Ellis, Derby. W. H. Brown, 34, Paternoster-row)—Ablly contrasts the truth of Scripture with the traditions of men.

"The Armourer"—A monthly Protestant publication.—The Editor is fighting an earthly warfare with carnal weapons! He

has much zeal, but it is not according to knowledge. May he be led to consider Col. iii. 3, and Heb. xiii. 13, 14. It would be a happy thing if one so earnest should be led to see the mind of God respecting this dispensation,—how that believers in Christ are not of the world—that they are here only as strangers and pilgrims, having nothing to do with governments, save to submit to them as “the powers that be.”

“Spiritual Worship, a lay discourse”—(61 pp. R. Hardwicke, 192, Piccadilly)—A powerful, because Scriptural, exposition of the errors of ritualism, official priesthood, and earthly temples. These things are faithfully contrasted with true spiritual worship.

RECEIVED.—“Beware of false prophets.”

OUR CORRESPONDENTS AND OURSELVES.

FAITH, ITS SOURCE AND ORIGIN.

W. B. S., LONDON.—We heartily thank you for your letter, and bless God for the sweet Christian spirit manifested therein. Respecting Eph. ii. 8, bear with us if we state again our clear conviction that the argument of this scripture is “Ye are saved by God’s grace—it is all of Him, and not of yourselves—it is through faith, which has no merit or deserving in itself—not of works, which would imply merit, lest any man should boast.” This rendering is consistent with all scripture. Look at Eph. i. 12, 13.—“That we should be to the praise of his glory who first *trusted* in Christ. In whom ye also *trusted*, *after that ye heard the word of truth*, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also *after that ye believed*, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.”—Consider what faith or belief is. It is not an act, as you seem to suppose. In itself it is quite passive, though when genuine it always leads to action. In faith itself there is no manifestations of will. It is little, if anything, more than a cessation from resistance. God proclaims, by his servants, the word of life, the gospel of Salvation. There is wonderful power in that word, far beyond our comprehension. Yet some resist it and die in their sins: others resist a long time but are broken down by it at last; others gladly receive it at once. What said our blessed Lord on this subject? “When anyone heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth not, then cometh the wicked one and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the wayside. But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but endureth for awhile: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. He also that received seed among the thorns, is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. But he that received seed into the good ground, is he that heareth the word and understandeth; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.” (Matt. xiii. 19–23.) There is nothing here to support the theory of faith being given;—on the contrary, we are shown that where faith does not spring up, it is because of hindrance arising from Satan, the fear of man and the world, with its cares and riches.—Your quotation from Psalm cx. 3, does not admit of the forced construction put upon it. The original does not even say *shall* be willing, but “Thy people willing in the day of thy power.” “Thy people will be willing” is just as true a translation. But even admitting the *shall be*, it is merely a prophetic declaration. The reason why they shall be willing is clearly given in the context, so that we are not left to our own speculations about it. “The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power,” &c. This is it:—The Israelites will be willing when they see Jesus. Now they are unwilling because he offers himself only by *testimony* to faith. “Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them,

except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.” This is in effect what the Jews say now. How did Jesus deal with Thomas? He presented himself to him and said, “Thomas, reach hither thy finger and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust into my side, and be not faithless but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.” Thus will it be with Israel. We cannot finish without giving the Lord’s comment on the above. “Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed.”—Respecting John vi. 44, see our letter to Mr Parks, M.A., of Openhaw; see also our reply to W. Shorter. We shall be glad to hear from you again if you demur to what we have stated.

W. SHORTER, Notting-hill.—We gladly own the gracious spirit in which you reply to us, and willingly examine all you urge. With respect to the answer we gave to your former question No. 1, we have only further to remark, that just as what you call historical evidence has the effect of eliciting belief or unbelief, about the ordinary affairs of the world,—so the testimony of *the word of God* operates upon the Soul. It is quite as foolish to say that belief is given in the one case as the other. We do not ask you to take our dictum for this—What saith the Scripture? “Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God.” The proper translation from the Greek, viz: “The faith cometh by hearing,” &c., is even more forcible. Why not accept such a plain statement as this? You are wrong to suppose that the office of the Holy Spirit is hereby ignored. The Scriptures were written by his inspiration—and there is spiritual power in the divinely given word, effectual to the conversion of souls. Moreover, the Holy Ghost indwells every true servant of Christ; and it is in his energy the gospel is preached unto salvation. It is thus the Holy Spirit works to save sinners. The quotation you make from John xvi. 7, does not apply to the question at all. What the Lord Jesus there says, is spoken to believers. It was expedient for him to go away that he might send the *Comforter*. What for? To *comfort* his disciples, to guide them into *all truth*, to glorify Jesus by receiving of his and showing to *them* (believers); also to reprove or convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. There is nothing said here about the conversion of sinners. Our Lord’s purpose in the chapter before us is the building up of believers. You ask us to read the 14th and 16th of John’s Gospel. There is not a single word in these Scriptures to support your position. From John xiii. 31, forward, the Lord is dealing with *believing disciples*, establishing them with his counsels and promises. There was no need to preach to them the Gospel of Salvation; they had already received it. Jesus testifies of them to the Father—“I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me: and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.” It is a common mistake among some christians, to suppose that all Scripture is written for the conversion of sinners; whereas, in fact, but a comparatively small portion is given for that purpose. The great volume is furnished for the guidance, comfort, and blessing of believers. It is needful to understand this if you would enter into the mind of God.—You next lead us to 1 Thess. i. 5:—“For our gospel came not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost.” This is exactly confirmatory of what we have stated. Paul’s proclamation of the Gospel was effectual because of the gifts and utterance of the Holy Ghost working in him. He had not only the mighty word, but also the Holy Spirit. What has all this to do with your supposition of faith being given to sinners? Paul does not say the Holy Ghost gave faith to his hearers. On the contrary, his testimony is, “Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God.”—As to the reply we gave to your question No. 2, you own its force and must needs be content with it. If you will raise enquiries in an unscriptural manner, we can only seek to answer you as our Lord Jesus did the Jews about the tribute money. What you now write does not touch the point at issue. The subject you propose is suretyship; and with a view to show us that we do not entertain correct thoughts about it, you desire us to consider the fact that God always was the

seeker of sinners from the time of Adam's fall in Eden. What has that to do with the question? We really must ask you to write more appositely.—Let us say, we are quite convinced that you and many who reason as you do, are truly desirous of ascribing to God all the glory of Salvation. Your object is right, but the way in which you seek to do it is wrong. The truth is simply this. God has spoken to us through a sent servant, in power of the Holy Ghost. We who believe are able to say, There was such power in the testimony that we dared not resist it. We gladly own it was all of the goodness of God that the word of Salvation was effectual to our regeneration. "Of his own will begat he us *through the word of truth.*" To Him be all glory and praise, for ever and ever.

FOR WHOM WAS THE BLOOD SHED?

J. R., CHARLES-STREET, Edinburgh.—We ought to receive truth in the way it is given to us in the Scriptures. The death of Christ was, we believe, of sufficient value to atone for the sins of all mankind, (see 1 John ii.) The efficacy of his sacrifice is however during this present dispensation extended only to those who believe in Him. We cannot see in what sense it can be affirmed that Christ died for an unbeliever. When, in the Epistles, Christ is said to have died for all—the word is addressed to believers only. According to Scripture order, Christ is proclaimed to the world as the Saviour of whosoever believeth in him. Those who receive him by faith, are afterwards taught how their salvation was effected—namely, by their sins being laid on Jesus, and his endurance of judgment and death in their stead. Thus the Christian *only* can say, "He loved me and gave himself for me." The death which the Lord Jesus Christ has abolished for the believer, is the death which passed upon all in consequence of sin. A Christian who walks by faith never dies. It is not said of the Martyr Stephen that he died, but that he fell asleep. The separation of body and spirit is *deliverance*, for a true hearted believer. See Rom. viii. especially v. 13. A worldly minded Christian will have to experience something of what death is—because he has not through faith realised death with Christ—and has not mortified the flesh. There will therefore be the pang of separation from that which has been cherished. We quite agree with you that it is frequently very difficult to explain Scripture language. Yet the Lord does enable us to help one another. But, after all, each one should seek to be taught of God. We must search for the *spirit* of the written word—"The letter killeth, the spirit maketh alive." Look at the word which says "Ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God." The natural mind says, How can this be? while those who are spiritual understand it very well, and know the power and consolation of it. So with the comments on John to which you allude. Read them again in connection with the Scripture we have referred you to.—The latter part of your letter is fully answered in our reply to W. L. in No. 8.—We do not know any simple meetings of Christians in Edinburgh, though we trust there are such. Pray the Lord to guide you into fellowship with two or three believers content to meet in his Name.

J. M. D., WIGAN.—Loving thanks for your Christian sympathy and help. It gives us true joy to hear of your love in the Lord and faithfulness in keeping his word. The tract on the "Scriptural Constitution of a Christian Church," was not written for "Precious Truth," but having remodelled the matter, we have inserted it. Touching your remarks about baptism, all the testimony of Scripture goes to show that it is required as an evidence of faith, and is a sign of that which has been accomplished through faith. The act of immersion itself effects nothing; all it confers is, such blessing as is consequent upon obedience. Re-consider the subject. The sum of it all is, the Master has said, Do it.

W. G. W.—In our remarks on Mr Spurgeon's sermon No. 3, it would have been better to have said "a person had been put away by the Brethren on the charge of teaching non-confession." It certainly did not occur to us that the charge might be untrue. We are sorry, indeed, that our inadvertence

seems to have caused you pain. Do we rightly understand you that your teaching was "the non-necessity of confession to men?"

W. G., HAREFORD.—We are much cheered by your very kind and loving letter. What a glorious proof we have of the Divine Power of the word of truth, that by it so many souls are knit together in love who are strangers to one another in the flesh! Many thanks for your efforts to spread the knowledge of our little work. May the Holy Spirit lead you into all truth, dear brother, and use you for blessing to many of the flock of Christ.

J. H., JUN., MONKS FLEIGH.—Do not be surprised, dear brother, that Christians reject the testimony of PRECIOUS TRUTH. When the Lord Jesus Christ, "THE TRUTH," was upon earth the majority of believers would only listen to Him up to a certain point, and then went away and "walked no more with Him." Respecting the title of our little paper, it is set up as our standard—it is what we contend for. Our first number more fully expresses the thoughts we have about it.—Touching our Lord's words, "This generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled," Luke xxi. 32—they apply to the Jewish people. The expression *generation* is thought to apply sometimes to the entire race. Much that was prophesied by the Lord Jesus in Luke xxi. and similar passages, respecting the Jews, has yet to be fulfilled. That generation has therefore not passed away. Though they are persecuted and scattered through all lands, yet we see them wondrously preserved as a distinct race. They have yet to experience much suffering and sorrow; but their gracious Messiah will come again and restore them. See Rom. xi. 25, 26.—We shall be glad to hear from you again, if you require further explanation.

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 Job Caudwell, 335, Strand, London, W.C.
 Arthur Hall, 25, Paternoster-row, London, EC.
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Printed by John Evans, 335a, Strand, London, W.C.

PRECIOUS TRUTH.

“WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?”—(Rom. iv. 3.)

Job Caudwell, 335, Strand, London, W.C.]

[Arthur Hall, 25, Paternoster-row, London.

No. 11.]

FEBRUARY 1, 1866.

[One Halfpenny.

TO THE CHRISTIAN who in his heart believes in the Lord Jesus, and confesses Him with his mouth.

BELoved, Have you realised the wonderful, joyful, and solemn truth, that you are a saint? Ignorant and wicked men worship dead saints, but they laugh and mock at living ones. The fact, however, remains, that every true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is a saint. Beloved, you are a saint. You are also a sinner, I know. When judging yourself in the light of God's presence, and under the power of his Word, which is—

“a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart,”

—you are ready to confess yourself one of the greatest of sinners. Indeed, it is difficult for you and me to measure our degree of sinfulness. Paul took the foremost place in self-judgment, and named himself, by inspiration, “chief of sinners,”—otherwise, either you or I might well have expected to rank in that humiliating place of pre-eminence. When we think of the evil which has lurked in our hearts—of the enmity against God which we remember to have discovered there;—oh, what a sink of iniquity has been found within us! Even now that we are redeemed ones, we are constrained to exclaim with the Apostle—

“I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing.”

Our God knows all this; his eye has searched us through and through. He knew us long before; and knowing us thoroughly bad, vile, wretched, hell-deserving sinners, the fact remains that, God our Father has called us saints. Beloved, you *are* a saint—Christ Jesus has made you that; neither earth nor hell, man or devil, can alter the joyful truth. Blessed be the name of the Lord. This does not depend upon anything *you* have done, said, or thought, but upon what He has done, said, and thought for you!

“Sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints.” 1 Cor. i. 2.

That is our condition before God. Oh, Beloved, are you not glad? does not your soul overflow with gratitude and praise as you think over what Jesus *is* for you? Wonderful, indeed, is that which he has done *for* you. He took your sins *for* you, and bore the wrath of God *for* you, and brought life and immortality to light *for* you. He has wrought wonders *for* you that tongue cannot tell or pen describe. But, oh, think now of all that which He *is* for you!

“Of Him [God] are ye *in* Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.”

You feel you want wisdom? Christ Jesus is your

wisdom. You want righteousness? He is your righteousness. You want sanctification? He is your sanctification. You want redemption? He is your redemption. In short, Christ Jesus is *for* you all you desire to be! If you wish to be happy in the presence of your Heavenly Father, realise all that Jesus *is*, and you are that, *in* Him! You are “accepted in the Beloved.” Amazing truth! wonderful mystery! But truth it is—the *truth*, as it is in Jesus.

And now, seeing the Lord Jesus *is* all this *for* you, what are you for Him? Is it your earnest desire to *be* what He would have you to be, and to *do* the things which He has said? I ask these questions not only of you, but of myself also: and for my own part, humbly answer, through grace, “Yes, I do so desire.” I trust, Beloved, your affirmation is even more hearty than mine.

Now for a simple test—

“If ye love me, keep *my* commandments.”

“If a man love me, he will keep *my* words.”

“If ye know these things, [the things He has shown, especially washing the feet of saints,] happy are ye if ye *do* them.”

These are some of the sayings of Jesus. My own soul is refreshed, and I trust yours, also, in repeating them. Yet they search us, do they not?

But let me ask another question. Why are we saints? Why are we sanctified? The answer is, That we may be WITNESSES for Jesus. We can only witness for Him in sanctification, i.e. in separation from all evil. When we cease to stand apart, in separateness from this present evil world, we cease to be witnesses for Jesus. We fail to accomplish that for which He has called us to sanctification here on earth. Thereby we also grieve the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, and bring sorrowful experience to our own souls. Dear, blood-bought saint—Why are you saved *now*? Why are you sanctified *now*?

“Ye turned from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven.” (1 Thess. i. 9, 10.)

“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Titus ii. 13, 14.

Here, Beloved, is the power of practical sanctification touching our behaviour on earth—The recognition of the purpose of Christ Jesus our Lord in *giving Himself for us*. The Lord would have you—*pure*, and *peculiar*, and *zealous of good works*. Do you discern His mind? do you respond to His purpose? You do in measure, yet you feel you want power to fully conform as you would wish? Is that so? Then look

up, and *expect* the Son of God from heaven. You will find *power* in that hope.

"Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as He is pure." (1 John iii. 3.)

If you are *looking* for that blessed hope, and glorious appearing of the great God our Saviour, you will fear neither the scorn nor the hatred of the world—you will diligently search the Scriptures, that you may know your Lord's will and do it. You will gladly witness for Him in sanctification, as a true-hearted saint. You will deal with all in grace, knowing that it is by the grace of God you are what you are. Groaning, it may be, under the weight and infirmities of the flesh, and sighing over many shortcomings, you will yet "Rejoice in the Lord alway." Remember—

"There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."

We have this precious declaration from Jesus himself. Look at his own words—

"Of a truth, of a truth, I say unto you,—he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life."

Praying you to keep this in mind, however weak your faith may be, and however full of failures your past Christian life—I exhort you to watch and wait—a glorious eternity is before you. When Jesus comes forth, it will be to call you *instantly* to eternal happiness and glory. Once again, then, let me say, in deepest joy and earnest longing—Beloved,

"Stablish your heart, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

Yours ever in Him,

Even Jesus our Lord,

The Editor of PRECIOUS TRUTH.

NEARNESS TO GOD.

Nearness to God is the place of utmost blessing. Man's *sinful* nature cannot believe it. The word of God however plainly declares the fact.

"In thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Psalm xvi. 11.

Every regenerate soul ought to know this by experience. A believer (*i. e.* a true christian) has *not* to wait until taken from the world ere he can realise nearness to God, and the joy of it. On the contrary, he is called to know and enjoy it *now*. God has come near to such an one, yea, even indwells him by the Holy Ghost. This calls for responsive action on the part of the christian. He is invited to draw near in faith to God. He can do this in safety and in confidence through "the blood of sprinkling."

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." Heb. x. 19—22.

Therefore, we are exhorted to "Rejoice evermore," and to "pray without ceasing;" "rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say rejoice." Nothing more thoroughly tests the condition of a soul than the practical acceptance, or tacit rejection, of these scriptures. If the carnal nature is allowed to predominate, there will be a desire for distance from God. Our first parents when they had transgressed, immediately sought to avoid the presence of God. They hid themselves. Aforetime they had enjoyed the visits of their all-bountiful Creator—now they feared his return. Of the sons of Adam, we may contrast the histories of Cain and Enoch. Cain having sinned went as far as possible from where the Lord had previously met him in grace. Enoch, on the contrary, "*walked with God*, and he was not found, for God took him." This seventh son of Adam know the sweetness and power of constant communion with his Creator. In the place of nearness to God, he prophesied of judgment, which is yet to come.

"Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." Jude 15.

The place of nearness to God is not found with the multitude. It is a pathway of separation. You cannot walk in it in the energy of the flesh. You must be spiritual. There is nothing in the path of faith to attract the natural eye—"We walk by faith, not by sight." For a believer to realise the joy of nearness to God, there must be a clear apprehension of the *perfect cleansing from sin, effected for him by the precious blood of Christ*. A cleansing which has not to be waited for, but which has already been accomplished. While conscience is burdened with sin, there can be no happiness in the thought of fellowship with God. And here we must notice the sad effect produced by the intervention of Priests and Clergy ordained of men,* between true Christians and their Heavenly Father. The effect of all such interposition is, to set the believer at a distance from God. Yet His word to every child of His adoption is, "*Draw near*." Priestly *public* prayers treat the unbeliever and the christian as on the same level—They lead the former to hope for salvation without faith in Jesus—and the latter to think of God as one who may yet deal with him in judgment for his sins.

May the redeemed ones of the Lord, in these last days, accept His call, and, like Enoch, walk with God in holy separation.

"Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord; and touch not the unclean, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.

* Where true Christians meet in the name of the Lord Jesus, He raises up those who act as pastors and teachers, of whom there will probably be several in the same assembly. But such are not Clergymen, nor are they Priests, except in the sense in which all believers in Christ are Kings and Priests to God.

FROM A CHRISTIAN DAUGHTER TO HER UNSAVED MOTHER.

The following is an extract from a letter of a dear young christian to her mother. From the time this lamb of the flock of Christ received salvation through faith in his name—her life and conversation were at once wholly changed, and she became a living epistle known and read of all. She has gone to be with Jesus, the Saviour she loved so well. May her words of tenderness and affection lead many a believer to go and do likewise.

"MY VERY DEAR MOTHER,—Will you forgive the liberty I am taking? If you knew what I feel, I am sure you would. Mother dear, I could not speak to you, and as I could go no longer without, I thought I would write. It is because I love you, mother; because God's Spirit is striving with me, so that whatever happens, I must speak. Mother dear! I I feel so unhappy about *you*. I hope, through the grace and mercy of God, I am safe for *time* and *eternity*, but oh! that only makes me more anxious that you should be so too, for I should be indeed sinful if I could see you daily living without God, without any real hope, and not utter one warning cry, not try to lead you to Jesus, who alone can give salvation. Mother dear! I never loved you half so much before I knew Him, and if you could only feel the happiness of knowing Him as your own Saviour, you would love Him too. It is not enough to know His name; it is not enough to be moral; we must be born again, and, mother dear, till that change takes place—a change so great, that it is called passing from death unto life—we are all under condemnation, all, young or old, rich or poor! It is not only the wicked that are to be turned into hell, but also all the people that *forget* God. Dear mother, God forbid that I should call you wicked, but oh! do you not *forget* Him who so loved us as to give his only begotten Son to die for us? If He spared *us*, He could not spare *Him*. He is a holy God, and sin is what He hates. He is a just God, and must punish all sin; but He is a merciful God. He loves mercy, and gives the greatest gift He has to bestow for *us*, His dear Son, because if He punishes Him for us, He will be able to forgive us, and all He asks from us is, 'My son, my daughter, give me *thine heart*.' He wants nothing else. Oh, how condescending! He before whom angels bow, He who gives us life, health, all, to ask our hearts, our sinful depraved hearts! Mother, *dear mother!* forgive me for writing thus to you, but I cannot bear to think that the day may come for you to be able to say to me, 'You knew all this and *never told me*.' It is the best return I can make for all your love to me. Mother dear! I have been an ungrateful child, but God knows my heart. I love you better than when I loved the world, and oh! were you in my place, I know you would not let me live without at least telling me of my danger. When we love Jesus, it makes us love our friends with a more real love. God knows it is my greatest desire, greater even than life itself, to be sure you were all safe. Joyfully would I sacrifice every earthly blessing for it. You may be safe; He offers pardon, peace!

"My own dear mother, do not be angry with me for saying this. I do not think you will. It has been written with many prayers and tears for your welfare; for 'what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' I trust that He, who I feel certain has urged me to write this, will bless it to you. I beseech you to think earnestly whither we are going. There are but two ends to the journey. We are all hastening to one or the other. God grant we may all meet at last—a family in heaven—not one missing! God bless you, dear mother, and give you His Holy Spirit, is the prayer of your affectionate child,

"Please forgive me."

ELIZA.

CONTRASTS—BISHOPS.

We have seen in our former paper under this heading, that the Bishops which were given to the early churches, were appointed, not by secular authority, nor by the churches themselves, but by power of the Holy Ghost given to the Apostles. Timothy and Titus received a special commission from the apostle Paul to appoint such Bishops or Elders; but those trusted servants of Christ, themselves needed exact directions for their guidance, and special gift communicated by laying on of hands of the apostle. Search scripture through, and you will find no provision for the perpetuation of such gift. How, then, can any claim the right of ordaining bishops in these our days? Yet, marvellous to say, not only do men pretend to the power, and act upon their assumption—but State-Bishops take upon themselves to ordain ministers of the gospel! Now, any one acquainted, even with the letter of New Testament scripture, must see that priority belongs to the Evangelist. Bishops were appointed to take care of the flock, which evangelists had gathered out of the world. The position maintained by state-bishops is therefore like placing the effect before the cause. The truth is, that, according to the Lord's ordaining, the two orders of ministry are wide apart. The gifts requisite for each are of very different character, though often united in the same person. It would be about as reasonable for a master carpenter to claim the right of appointing workmen for his neighbour the mason, as for a bishop to assert the prerogative of ordaining ministers of the Gospel. Yet it is quite possible that skill both as carpenter and mason may occasionally be found in one workman. Certainly in the way of superiority, (if it were right to recognise such, which it is not) the evangelist who goes forth into the world with the word of life, at a constant sacrifice of himself, should rank above the bishop or elder, who receives honour and esteem among his brethren in the midst of whom he dwells. It was because the apostles had laboured as evangelists, they came to exercise gift as elders, and power to appoint such. Thus we see that, in the exercise of the dignity of a state-bishop, God's ways are turned upside down. Moreover such an one exercises a sway utterly inconsistent with the title he bears.

THE BREAD AND WINE.

OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST gives us Bread and Wine. We say this to His disciples or followers, *i. e.*, those who really *trust* in Him. Many unbelievers, alas! partake of what *they* call the communion. These have, however, no part in *our* Lord's gift. The bread and wine signifies nothing to them. But let us, as being saved through faith in the Son of God, consider His gift of the Bread and Wine. The Apostle Paul says,

"I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the night in which he was betrayed, took bread: and when he had given thanks he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner [*i. e.* giving thanks] also, the cup when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye [*i. e.* give thanks] as oft as ye drink in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." 1 Cor. xi. 23—26.

Is it not remarkable that nothing is said about blessing to be sought for by those who partake of the bread and the wine? Yet the common thought among christians is, that the ordinance is efficacious only as it ministers to their comfort. Do not many have recourse to it for the gratification of self alone? Of course *blessing does result* to all who are faithful respecting this observance. Indeed, there is always blessing in keeping the Lord's commands. But that is not the object set before us in this scripture. The preceding verses of the chapter quoted, show that *denial of self* is the lesson the Holy Ghost is teaching. It is in that way really, that the breaking of bread is introduced. The Lord Jesus himself is presented as the pattern of absolute self-denial. It was "*the night in which he was betrayed*" he gave his body and his blood, and also the memorials thereof. Thus, it is the Lord's death which is presented as the theme of our meditation, and the Lord himself as the object of our desires, when seated at his table. Brethren beloved, our highest joy is to be absorbed into Christ. Self came to an end at the Cross; and though, as to walk down here, we retain our individuality, yet in spirit it should ever be as having fellowship with Christ and the members of his body, our brethren and sisters in the Lord. We ought never to have desires exclusively *selfward*, especially when assembled together in the name of the Lord Jesus.

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the *communion* of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the *communion* of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread." 1 Cor. x. 16, 17.

As those who, in faith, break the bread and take the cup of blessing, our individuality is lost: we are in *communion*, merged into one body, as shown by the one loaf which we break among us. This is the condition in which we, who show the Lord's death, are seen by the Lord.

Now as to that which we are to do when thus gathered in one. The first thing is, to *give thanks*;—very different from seeking isolated blessing

as solitary ones. Then we are to break the bread among ourselves and eat it, in remembrance of the Lord Jesus, discerning the Lord's body; *i. e.* realising by faith that through the breaking of His body, we are made partakers and members of himself, viz., as His body, the Church. Again, and on taking the cup of blessing, we are to *give thanks*, and drink all of it, also in remembrance of the Lord Jesus; pondering his words "*This cup is the new testament in my blood.*" And now, briefly, what is the sum of this ordinance of our Lord?

"As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."

Thanksgiving, remembrance of Jesus, recognition of the assembly as one in Christ, discernment of the Lord's body, communion (*i. e.* participation in breaking of the bread and drinking of the cup)—thus showing the Lord's death till he come! This is the epitome of our observance. In no other position on earth is self so utterly ignored.

The ordinance of baptism shows the *burial* of the unit, *self*, as a dead sinner;—that of "*breaking bread*" which follows after, demonstrates *communion* with Christ and with one another.

(To be continued, D.V.)

HEAVEN IS NOT OFFERED AS A REFUGE FOR THE DESTITUTE.

It is quite a mistake to offer *heaven* to unconverted persons, as an inducement to reformation, repentance, or faith. Scripture does not thus deal with sinners in their sins. The one proposition to be offered to each unforgiven soul is—Jesus, as the only Saviour! We have to tell men, women, and children, that in the sight of God, they are not only sinners, but *already* condemned ones. We have to warn them to "*flee from the wrath to come.*" Wrath is to come, and that soon. The only question therefore is, that of *escape*. A traitor, tried and sentenced, shut up in prison, waiting execution, does not think about a further trial; nor does he foolishly imagine that the officers of justice will pass him over. No, his only hope, if he have any, is—Escape! Shall he send a prayer to his sovereign for pardon? He feels that such a petition is hopeless; his sin is too great. Can he break through the walls of his cell? Alas, he cries, they are too strong. In vain he tries to the utmost the powers of his mind, in considering every imaginable resource. There seems nothing for him but despair.

Suppose in such an extremity, a person were to appear to the criminal, saying "*Trust in me, and I will save you!*" What joy would fill his soul! yet, perhaps, he might be slow to believe. We should not be surprised were he to say, What you tell me is too good to be true. But if the stranger were to add, "*I have found a ransom for you, only believe me; and I give you liberty; you are free.*" The poor despairing one beholds the open door; he scarcely waits to thank his

deliverer, but hastens to avail of the way of escape, almost wild with gladness, and singing in his heart, *I am saved! I am saved!* Now, carry thought a little further. After awhile, let the once condemned criminal learn, that the person who saved him was the king himself, and that he, the sovereign, died to atone for the sin of his prisoner,—that because he desired to forgive the traitor, but must needs provide a victim that justice might be satisfied, he had sacrificed himself! How amazed would the escaped one be to hear of such a salvation effected for him! How his heart would be melted by it! He might well cry out—Oh, that I could serve my deliverer; oh, that I might kneel before him and pour out my heart with gratitude for his wondrous love to poor worthless me! Then let it be further revealed to him that God had raised from the dead that devoted Saviour; He is now seated in heaven, whither he has gone to prepare a place for all his redeemed ones, in which they are to dwell with Himself for ever!

In this manner is written the glorious Gospel of Christ, in the word of God.

Let us not talk about heaven to the undelivered criminal. While he is conscious of being under condemnation, our glowing accounts of the joys of an unseen world only mock the fears of his soul. Give him the message of Salvation; show him Jesus, the Saviour of sinners. Let him know that Blessed One, who came to seek and to save the lost! Tell him of that gracious message of the risen Saviour to his servants:—

“Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; he that *belleth* and is baptized shall be saved; but he that *believeeth* not shall be damned.”

Will he trust in Jesus? will he accept forgiveness, deliverance from condemnation, salvation? If through faith, he can rejoice in God's wondrous declaration of mercy—then we may proceed to unfold the heights and depths of His grace, in his provisions for the everlasting happiness of ransomed sinners. But if he have no faith in the Saviour, he cannot believe truth about heaven.

In short:—

Heaven is *not* a refuge for the destitute, but the Lord Jesus Christ *is!* All the repentance and good works in the world can never take a man to heaven. Jesus, Son of Man, Son of God, He who once died, but now liveth for evermore—He must be the sinner's refuge. Not in prayer or religious observance, but in a *living person*, is safety to be found from the wrath to come. Jesus forgives, cleanses, and justifies the believer, makes him a saint, and then takes him to heaven. He will convey the one who trusts in Him to the heavenly home, *not* as a *destitute* one, but as a child of God!!

JESUS could sleep in the storm; why? because of his confidence in God. Trouble-tossed one, Rest: lie down in faith, realizing Jesus at your side, and it will please God more than by crying out for a calm sea and fair weather.

BAPTISM IS NOT POURING.

WE have received a tract entitled “Baptism by Pouring.” The writer, Mr Boardman, we regard as a dear brother in the Lord, and esteem as a zealous and honoured servant of our Master; but we must take the most decided exception to his views, both as to the character of baptism as given by the Lord Jesus, and its spiritual meaning. We are glad, however, in starting, to be able to state that our brother clearly apprehends and enforces baptism *after faith*. We rejoice to feel that we are agreed upon this most important issue.

(1) Mr Boardman says—

“The ancient custom of washing or baptizing the hands was by having water poured upon them by a servant. And the Greek verbs *bapto* or *baptizo* mean—to wash by pouring upon, or by dipping, or immersion.”

Our brother thus admits that baptism meant a *complete covering* of that which is said to be baptised: if, according to his own definition, the hands were said to be baptised, they were necessarily wetted or covered all over. His argument, so far, is only of use by his admitting that the whole body of the candidate for baptism should be *also* completely covered by pouring. But this is not Mr Boardman's object. His object is to prove that a little water poured on the head is sufficient. If, as he says, *baptizo*, as applied to the hands, meant washing by “pouring upon, or by dipping, or by immersion,” why does he go on to argue that the body is baptized when a portion only of the upper part is wetted? Would he, in view of his own definition, contend that the hands were baptized if the thumbs only were wetted? Certainly not.

(2) We admit that now-a-days washing of the hands is performed in the East by pouring on them, while they are held over a vessel with a perforated false bottom, through the holes in which the dirtied water runs, and the servant passes on, if need be, to the next guest, with the same vessel, but carrying fresh water. This mode of washing would also seem to be very ancient, for we read that Elisha “poured water on the hands of Elijah,” (2 Kings iii. 11,) but the Greek word in this passage, in the Septuagint version, —*epicho*, means to pour upon, and the word used here in the original Hebrew, *yatsak*, means to pour out, neither of which terms is any where associated with baptism or bathing. The Greek word for “wash” or “bathe” is *louo* and for “dip” or “bathe,” *bapto* and *baptizo*, and the Hebrew equivalent for “wash” is *rachats* and for “baptize,” *tabal*. Therefore where *baptizo* is associated with washing hands, the passage ought to be rendered “wash hands by dipping them” (Mark vii. 2, 4), and is so rendered in one translation that is widely circulated. Mr Boardman has, therefore, no ground at all for asserting that *baptizo* is ever associated with pouring on the hands, and if it were, there is no parallel between *completely* washing the hands and most *incompletely* wetting the body.

(3) Our brother is equally unhappy in his other instances of baptism by pouring. For instance, he

illustrates his argument by reference to the baptism by the Holy Ghost, who is said to have been "shed forth" and "poured out." (Acts ii.) But let Scripture speak about this baptism; "and suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting." Can we have immersion more complete than when we are surrounded and swallowed up of a "rushing mighty wind," and which fills "all the house" where we are sitting? Complete immersion that. If Mr Boardman thinks pouring sufficient, let such pouring be analogous in degree to that in his illustrations.

(4) In the case of our blessed Lord and Saviour, (to whom be glory for ever and ever,) Mr Boardman first assumes as proved, that the rite was administered by pouring water on his sacred head, while he stood in or on the brink of Jordan, (the river of death or judgment,) and then sees in the rite, so administered, a typifying of "the wrath of God that would be poured forth upon him as the sin-bearer on the cross." At first sight, this may seem plausible enough; but where is the Scripture to justify the phrase or the figure—"wrath of God that would be poured forth upon him"? If he sees it in the fire which descended and consumed Abel's offering, surely that was *immersion*, and the burnt-offerings under the Law were surely completely surrounded and covered over by that which consumed them—a baptism of fire. Our Lord did indeed say—"I have a baptism to be baptised with;" and we see it approaching in Gethsemane, when his "sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground," and hear him exclaiming, in the 69th Psalm, "I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me." Surely such language will no more justify pouring than sprinkling, in relation to baptism.

But viewing our Lord's baptism in Jordan, as indeed an immersion into the river of death or judgment, we see a vivid figure of his subsequent descent into the grave—indeed, a figure of his death, burial, and resurrection. *Bapto* and *Baptizo* are rendered by all lexicographers—"immerse"; and metonymically "wash," and "dye," but never "pour."

Passing from a consideration of our author's illustrations, let us endeavour to weigh his arguments respecting *probabilities*. These may be ranged under two heads: 1, *Considerations of decency*; 2, *The possibilities of the case*.

(5) Mr Boardman says—

"Aaron was washed or baptised by Moses on his entrance to the priesthood, as well as anointed with oil. God is the God of order and decency, as he says, 'Let all things be done decently and in order.' We cannot, then, imagine Aaron standing naked before the congregation by God's order, though he might be unclothed in the sense of being divested of his upper garments. And we can easily imagine Moses pouring some water upon him, in the presence of the people, and thus Aaron was washed or baptised with water. (Exod. xxix.)"

We agree with our brother with respect to the laying aside by Aaron of his outer garments, and his having only some light clothing about the loins. Thus clad, how would "pouring" be more decent than "bathing"? Indeed, the word in the original

has but to be known, in order to see the fancifulness of Mr Boardman's supposition. While our brother would give the English word "wash" the significance of "wet," the originals do positively mean "bathe." The Greek is *louo* and the Hebrew *rachatz*, and the exact meaning of both these words is most clearly fixed by the Holy Ghost in 2 Kings v. 10—14. Elisha tells Naaman to go and wash—(Hebrew, *rachatz*; Greek, *louo*)—in Jordan seven times. What then? Was water poured on him?

"Then went he down, and dipped [Heb. *tabal*, to dip in; Gr. *bapto*, to dip] himself in Jordan seven times."

Thus, the word, in both the Hebrew and Septuagint, which describes the action of Moses in washing Aaron, is understood by Naaman to mean "bathe," and he went and dipped himself in Jordan seven times. The Word of God interprets itself.

Besides this fixation of the meaning of "wash," we know, as a fact, that Aaron's sons, during their periods of temple service, washed all over, as the first duty, every morning, like their progenitor. All of our readers are perhaps not aware that "the washing of regeneration" is literally "the bath of regeneration."

(6) Again, Mr Boardman says on page 7—

"Would men and women strip themselves, or change their wet garments on the banks of the Jordan? Would this be acting decently and in order?"

Here, again, we repeat, there was no necessity for completely stripping in such a climate, where evaporation is so speedy that walking with slight under clothing recently wetted would be exhilarating, rather than unpleasant. Dr Thompson, in "The Land and the Book," writes thus—

"After a two hours' ride over an uneven plain, we reached the Jordan, as the sun rose above the mountains of Moab. Immediately the pilgrims rushed headlong into the stream—men, women, and children. . . The pilgrims were highly delighted with their bath. The men dipped the women, . . . while the little children were carried and plunged under water, trembling like lambs."

This is a common spectacle every Easter.

Concerning the climate at Bethabara, which was near Jericho, but on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing, Dr Thompson says—

"The valley at Jericho is 1,300 feet below the level of the ocean, is sheltered on all sides by mountains of great height, and is open to the warm southern breezes from the deeper basin of the Dead Sea. It has, therefore, the climate of the tropics, though in the latitude of Jerusalem."

When will Englishmen learn the essential difference between our climate and that of the East. While cold is with us the rule, and heat the exception, heat is with them the rule and cold the exception. Hence the speciality of the promises:—

"The sun shall not smite thee by day."—Ps. cxxi. 6.

"Neither shall the heat nor sun smite them."—Isa. xlix. 10.

Who has not read of shipwrecked mariners, in open boats, wetting their clothes with the sea water in order to slake thirst by absorption through the skin?

The following is an extract from a letter from an oriental traveller, with whom we are acquainted, and to whom he wrote on the subject:—

"In the East—in the Holy Land, very little clothing is necessary, unless you desire to keep the heat of the sun from your body. Evaporation is astonishingly rapid. For some months I was accustomed to rise in the morning before sunrise, (living in tents,) and find my clothes saturated with the dew that had fallen in the night. I put them on, and they were quickly dry. I never have felt any ill effects resulting from the practice. In fact, I never, under any circumstances, dreamed of taking cold. . . . Two or three minutes in the sun would remove all moisture [supposing clothes wetted by dipping.] We cannot judge of things in the East by what we do and experience here."

(To be continued, D. V.)

UNION WITH CHRIST.

In the dispensations which went before, and that which will follow after the present, many great and happy privileges were, and will be, conferred on those who trust in God. But the amazing truth about true christians is, they are one with Christ.

"Members of His body, of his flesh, and of his bones." (Eph. v. 30.)

Comparatively few, even of those who realise salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus, have any practical knowledge of this unspeakably sublime revelation. By many, the Epistle to the Ephesians is treated as an unfathomable mystery, instead of being recognised as itself an unveiling of the *great mystery*; namely, the union of Christ and the Church. Of course, the mere reasoner esteems the statements of that epistle foolishness, or at best but figures of speech; but every *christian* ought to *know* that he is *actually* a member of the body of Christ, already united to Him by the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Believe the fact, and you will know the blessing which accompanies it. It is this—

"No man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church: for we are members of His body, of his flesh, and of his bones." (Eph. v. 29, 30.)

Who would not wish to realise what it is to be *nourished* and *cherished* by the Lord Jesus Christ? Let us accept the declarations of the divine word in simple faith, and *act* in accordance therewith—then "we shall *know* of the doctrine whether it be of God." (John vii. 17.)

How difficult it often is to induce Christians who have been brought up under the teaching which most prevails, to realise their glorious standing in Christ Jesus. For instance, how common for believers to thank God for his "sparing mercies," and "that they are spared to meet again at his footstool." Let us realize the statement—"Now *are* we the sons of God." Well, then, if our sons and daughters were to come to us and express thankfulness that we still allowed them to live, we should be grieved at their low estimate of our love for them, should we not? Thus, may dear souls (though unwittingly) grieve the Holy Spirit of God. Though it is indeed a thing to be thankful for, if we remain in this world, as is all the will of God concerning us, yet we fear such Christians would say very feebly "For me to depart and be with Christ is far better." During our pilgrimage, health is indeed a blessing to be thankful for, but thankfulness "for being spared" is not a fit expression for a *child*—from one having the gift of everlasting life, who knows that his "life is hid with Christ in God." We have heard believers thank God in prayer that they are still out of hell!" Such is the awful bondage in which much of the teaching of the day leaves children of God.

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST,

IN HIS VARIED CHARACTERS IN THE FOUR GOSPELS.

[The following is extracted from a volume entitled "The Evangelists,"*—a book of great value, breathing a sweet spirit throughout. The writer, we hear, is with Him on whose moral glories he descants.]

What is the Holy Ghost's work in the Apostles, whether speaking to sinners by preaching, or teaching saints by epistles, but unfolding the Jesus whom the Evangelists have, under Him, already given to us? Surely, Jesus is every thing. "Christ is all." And by different persuasives and reasonings we are challenged to make every thing of Him. Nothing is left for our own speculations—absolutely nothing.

We have God Himself revealed in our own nature, in our own world, in our own circumstances. Well might kings and prophets have longed for such a privilege. But they had it not. It is ours, and it is beyond all price. We are not left to gather our knowledge of God from description; we see and hear and learn for ourselves, through personal manifestation, who and what he is. We sit before His image, His likeness, in the Lord Jesus. The Gospel is "the Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God." Scripture, as I may speak, lets God shew Himself by His acts, and does not take the method of describing Him. He has not committed the revelation of Himself to the pen of even inspired description. He has graciously chosen to be His own Revealer, in personal, living action, by His own sayings and doings, that simplest and surest way of making Himself known, the way in which the way-faring man may not err, and in which the child need not mistake his lesson.

And in accordance with this, we see the Lord during His life, in constant activity. For there is deep meaning in that activity. He was, by it, ever pressing God or the Father upon the notice of sinners—and this constant diligence in doing and in speaking tells us that He would have us learn *much* of God. It seems to tell us, that we are to acquaint ourselves *largely* with Him—in all that, at least, in which such knowledge is good and sweet and profitable, suited to us in our necessities and for our blessing.

It is not by treatises or discourses, but by personal activities in our own ordinary circumstances, we learn Him; and, therefore, the simpler we are,—the more like children (who learn their lesson rather than discuss it) we carry ourselves,—the more surely shall we find Him, and reach Him, and know Him.

The divine nature was found in His person, the divine character in His life. And this gives us an interest in every passage of His life, however small and occasional or ordinary it may be. For he who traces the life and death of Jesus reads God, or the characteristics of the divine moral glory.

And I ask, beloved, did this image, this glory, as it shone in the face of Jesus, alarm? Had sinners to treat it, as Israel treated the glory which shone in the

* Published by Bateman, Paternoster Row.

face of Moses? Did the poor convicted one need that the Lord should put a veil on His face as Aaron and the children of Israel required Moses to do? The Samaritan was convicted as deeply and as thoroughly as ever Sinai would have convicted her. Jesus had *all* the secrets of her conscience out. But did she withdraw herself? The sinner in the temple is before Jesus as one whom the law would have stoned—but does she hide herself? Does she find that light oppressive or overpowering, which was then filling the place, and which had emptied it of her accusers?

And I ask again, did disciples, who walked with Him every day, tremble before Him? Did they wish Him away, as though they felt his presence too much for them? Nothing of this. They had sorrow when He talked of leaving them; and when they had indeed lost Him, as they judged, they were found by the angels weeping. They never walked with Him as though they wished that a veil had been on His face. And His rebukes made no difference. To their spirits such rebukes, though they were sharp at times, were never the thunders of Mount Sinai. They felt the holiness of His presence, and were ashamed to let out the secret of their heart; but they never desired his absence.

What privilege, what consolation!

We can well understand the greater ease with which we could receive a person of distinction at our house, than go and visit him at his. But a visit from him would be the surest way of preparing us to pay a visit to him, and see him in those conditions and circumstances which are properly his, and more than ours. And after this manner is it between the Lord and us. Who can tell it in its blessedness! He has been here, in the midst of our circumstances, as the Son of man who came eating and drinking, shewing Himself in the gracious freedom of one that would gain our confidence. He walked and talked with us, as a man would with his friend. He knew us face to face. He was in our house. And after he rose, He returned to us, if not to our house, to our world—for the resurrection-scenes were all laid there. He was then on His way to His own place, but again He tarried in ours, that the links between us might be strengthened. For then, after He had risen, He was the same to us as He had been before. Change of condition had no effect upon Him—blessed to tell it. Kindred instances of grace and character, before He suffered and after he rose, shew us this abundantly. Late events had put the Lord and the disciples at a greater distance than companions had ever known. They had betrayed their unfaithful hearts, forsaking Him, and fleeing in the hour of His weakness and danger, while He, for their sake, had gone through death, tasting the judgment of God upon sin. And they were still poor Galileans, and He was glorified with all power in heaven and on earth. But all this wrought no change in Him. "Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature," as an Apostle says, could do that. He returns to them the very Jesus they had known before. He shewed them His hands and His side, that they might know that it was He Himself. Yea, we may add, He shewed them His heart, and

His thoughts, and His ways, His sympathies, and considerateness, and all His affections, that in another sense they might know that it was He Himself.

I would not stop to offer the evidence of this from the Evangelists: it so abounds, addressing us on every occasion in which we see the Lord in resurrection, if we do but duly heed it. But if I might for a moment pass the bounds of the Evangelists, and look at the ascended Jesus in the Book of the Acts, there we find the same identity. Jesus here in ministry, Jesus in resurrection, Jesus in heaven, is the same Jesus. For, from the heavens he seems to delight in knowing Himself by the name He had acquired among us and for us, the name which makes Him ours by the bond of a common nature, and by the bond of accomplished grace and salvation. "I am Jesus," was His answer, as from the highest place in heaven, when Saul, on the road to Damascus demanded of Him, "who art thou, Lord?"

What shall we say, beloved, of the condescendings, the faithfulness, the greatness, the simplicity, the glory and the grace together, that form and mark His path before us! We know what He is this moment, and what He will be for ever, from what He has already been, as we see Him in the four Gospels. And we may pass into His world in all ease and naturalness, when we think of this.

"There no stranger God shall meet thee,
Stranger thou in courts above."

He is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," in His own proper glory. With Him "there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning," according to His essential divine nature. But so, in His knowledge of us, His relationships to us, His affections for us, and His way with us.

(To be continued, D.V.)

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

These are unavoidably postponed. We ask accordingly the kind indulgence of dear brethren.—Commentary on Gospel by John also postponed.

NOTICES.

COUNTRY AGENTS.—Glasgow, George Gallie, 99, Buchanan-street; Elgin, Macdonald, High-street; Crewe, J. Robertson; Plymouth, J. V. Luxmore.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—We invite enquiries tending to the elucidation of scriptural truth. Controversial questions should be avoided entirely, if possible. Letters must be sent before the 15th.

Letters for the Editor to be addressed to 335, Strand, W.C.

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MARCH 1, 1866.

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TO A TRUE-HEARTED BELIEVER IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

BELoved,—I want you to think of that ascription in the opening of “The Revelation” :—

“Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.”

This is said on behalf of all believers in Jesus, even they who are yet in bodies of sin and corruption down here. Dear brother, dear sister—it is said of you. I earnestly desire that you will take it to yourself, that you may know your calling to kingship and priesthood, although you have yet to wait for the manifestation of the kingdom. Before that display, we must be changed.

“Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. . . . The trumpet shall sound, and the dead [in Christ] shall be raised *incorruptible*, and we [if alive at that moment] shall be changed. For this corruptible [body] must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.”

All who are in the Faith must wait for this, until “the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout.” But “whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s,” and he will come for us, according to his word. Immortality, glory, and the kingdom, are before us, sealed, settled, and certain, according to the sure promises of God, which are all Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus our Lord!

Observe, Beloved, that the note of triumph and praise, quoted at the commencement of this letter, from Rev. i. 5, 6, and given you by the Holy Ghost to rejoice in *now*, is that which we shall sing in heaven. (See Rev. v. 9, 10.)

Dear child of God, I have spoken to you, of his wondrous purposes respecting yourself. Now, I desire to call your attention to what He has said of others. But I am anxious that you should be fully established in grace, before I invite your attention to the solemn revelations of the King of kings, regarding those “who obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Remember, beloved, these words of Jesus,—

“Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord saith: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.” (John xi. 15.)

This is the *second* proof our gracious Lord gives us of his *friendship*. He had previously expressed His tender regard towards us, thus—“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” Having done this—having *laid down his life for us*; now he makes us his

confidants. He tells us—(you and me)—that which the Father has revealed to him. This is what comes out so sweetly in the first verse of the book of the “Revelation.” We are told it is—

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.”

It is true we are here spoken of as servants, because we are in the place of service,—but the revelation comes from the same Lord who has before told us we are his friends, giving this as evidence of that truth, namely, that he tells us what God has revealed to him. Stand, then, beloved, in that attitude of *confidential servant and friend*, and attend to what our Lord has to say about the world. We are not of it, though left in it for a little while; and we shall better understand this glorious fact, if we receive our Redeemer’s declarations respecting it.

It is helpful to a right understanding of the Lord’s purposes in *making known to us* the world’s doom, if we call to mind God’s dealings in a like case with Abraham. He, also, was called the *friend* of God; and the Lord God made a confidant of Abraham.

“The Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?” (Genesis xviii. 17.)

And He proceeded to reveal to Abraham his purposed judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah. Now, Abraham was not *personally* interested in the doom of Sodom. He and his household were in perfect safety, for we read that after Abraham had entreated God that the city should be spared, if only ten righteous persons should be found there—

“The Lord went his way, as soon as he had left off communing with Abraham; and Abraham returned unto his place.”

He was sure the Judge of all the earth would do right. He had pleaded the cause of the righteous, and could calmly wait the result.

“And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the Lord: and he looked towards Sodom and Gomorrah, and towards all the land of the plain; and behold, and lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.”

What is to be the portion of this sin-stricken and unbelieving world? (The word ‘world’ means in Scripture—human society as it exists under the reign of Satan.) What hath the Lord said?

“As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man. They did eat, they did drink, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them

all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed." (Luke xvii. 26—30.)

I would fain multiply Scriptures, but cannot in the compass of this letter. From Deuteronomy to Revelation passages abound, foretelling the fearful days of tribulation soon to overtake the world, which judgments will be consummated by the coming of the Lord as Judge of all the earth.

"Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." (Jude 14, 15.)

Let me commend to your most serious reflection 2 Peter iii.; read the whole chapter, but dwell upon verse 12. Here is the practical result of the revelation given us from heaven,—

"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?"

Beloved, may you and I answer this in all faithfulness to the Lord, by living in practical separation from evil, and by testifying unceasingly that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh—testifying, not in the zeal of the flesh, but in *calmness yet earnestness* of spirit. Be not yourself disturbed, dear brother, dear sister; our Lord will first call us, (and all who trust in Him during these days of his rejection,) home to himself. Then shall the hearts of men begin to fail for fear, and for looking for those things which are coming upon the earth.

Oh, how awful it is to know all this! Yet, oh! how blessed to feel assured that we ourselves are, by faith, delivered already. May we be found waiting for that gracious Lord who has gone to prepare mansions for us in his Father's house; How often he has repeated for us that assurance—"Behold, I come quickly!"

Yours ever,

In Christ Jesus our Lord,
The EDITOR of PRECIOUS TRUTH.

QUERIES.

(To the Editor of "PRECIOUS TRUTH.")

DEAR SIR,—Please answer in your next the following questions, as you may be enabled by the light of "the word"—

1. St. Paul says the "Rock which followed" the Israelites through the desert was Christ. We read of two rocks being smitten (see Exod. xvii. and Numb. xx.), or perhaps it was the same rock, as it receives the same name, they having returned to the same place in the wilderness?

2. Do the Israelites wandering in the wilderness represent the true Church—spiritual Israel, or professing Christendom—the "kingdom"?

[Question No. 1 we hope to answer in our next Number. The water which flowed out from the rock is typical of that living water which streamed forth when Christ, the Antitype of the rock in Horeb, was smitten. He, "the Truth," followed the Israelites in all their journeys. Much of the History of Israel doubtless sets forth in type, the experience of the Church on earth, and also of the individual Christian. We do not see Christendom mirrored in the wilderness wanderings of the Children of Israel.—Ed. P. T.]

COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL BY ST. JOHN.

BY THE EDITOR OF "PRECIOUS TRUTH."

CHAPTER II.

"After this he [Jesus] went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days." (v. 12.)

"Capernaum" means "The Field of Repentance" or "the Village of Consolation." All the loved ones of Jesus go there in spirit. It is one aspect of the scene which all believers pass through down here, but they do not continue in it many days. Our time here is brief. Thanks be to the Lord, He soon removes us to the heavenly country.

"And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting; and when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables, and said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise." (v. 13—16.)

What an awful scene of iniquity is presented in these few verses! Here were the called people of God—those who boasted their descent from faithful Abraham—making the very temple of God a market place, and the sacrifices he had ordained, an excuse for pandering to their lust after gain! And are Christians blameless when judged in the light of this Scripture?—What shall we say of those who make merchandise of the pastoral office? How do they stand who buy and sell sittings to hear prayers and preaching, as if at an entertainment for the gratification of Mammon? We say nothing of grosser forms of the same evil, which abound in Christendom.

The Lord Jesus drove them out, and scattered their wretched pelf. It was a solemn judgment, though a mild one compared with their guilt. Such was Jesus, such he is—*full of grace and truth*. He delights in mercy; but this provocation roused the gracious one to anger and violence. It is the only instance recorded of his infliction of chastisement. Even then, he made his scourge of *small cords*. Moreover, his indignation was measured—He drove them all out of the temple, and the *sheep and oxen*; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables. To them that sold doves he made a difference—He said unto them, "Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise." Doves were the offerings made by the *poor*. Such a sacrifice was made for the meek and lowly Jesus when he was circumcised, (see Luke ii. 24.) He was ever gentle to the poor—he came to preach the gospel to them. So those who sold doves for the use of the poor in the service of God were dealt with, though among the herd of offenders, with an extra measure of grace.

But, oh! the solemn significance of this visitation! How dreadful the character of the guilt which could thus provoke the Lord Jesus! The Jews might persecute Him, revile Him, seek to stone Him, buffet and mock Him, and finally hand Him over to be crucified!

He bore it all in patience. He remonstrated with them, taught them, wept over them, and prayed for his murderers. But for those who had turned his Father's house into a place of merchandise, He made and wielded the scourge! How will it fare with those who make a traffic of religion in these days? Alas! in the day to come, when He shall have taken his great power and shall reign—how many will say—

“Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And he will answer them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

God will have purity in His house. Jesus will maintain the honour and glory of God, however patiently he bears with scorn and rejection himself. Thus we are brought to the Holy Spirit's comment—

“And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.” (v. 17.)

TO THE MAN OF THE WORLD.

In these days a man of the world is generally quick to apprehend a question of profit and loss. Ask such an one whether he would not readily forego some present enjoyment for the sake of future great profit. He will be quick to agree to the proposal. What is the opinion entertained of those who squander all their resources on the passing hour, leaving themselves to destitution in the future? Are they not universally condemned for their folly?

God has set before you, by the mouth of his beloved Son, a proposition of profit and loss. It takes in the commercial thought of present and future—present gratification against future loss. The stake is your own soul! “What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

This is deeply solemn. How will you answer it? You may shirk the question now, turn a deaf ear to it now, but sooner or later you must realise the intense reality of all that is involved in it. Do not think that God is asking you to give up anything you esteem valuable, that you may obtain as a reward forgiveness of sins. *Forgiveness is never extended as a reward.* It can only be had as a *free gift.* The object of the Lord's proposition is to show you your utter destitution, so that you may be glad to accept salvation as a *free gift.* Perhaps you do not think you can be in that state of abject need? What, then, will you give in exchange for your soul? The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof. You cannot then offer gold, however rich you may be. It belongs to God already; and when you die your temporary possession of it must cease. Will you offer prayers and tears as an atonement for sin, and so hope for forgiveness? These will not do, for the Word of God declares “without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins.”

All this is said that you may realise your bankrupt condition, and so accept God's mercy in the way he has promised it for *ruined sinners.* “Behold the Lamb of God.” The blood has been shed by which there is remission of sins. Jesus has died on the cross, bearing the guilt and the punishment of all who believe in Him. Yes, Jesus died and rose again. This is God's remedy for your utter need, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.” Will you turn away from this wondrous truth? Then, in bitter anguish must the question one day recur to you, “What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

BAPTISM IS NOT POURING.

We resume our consideration of Mr Boardman's pamphlet, “Baptism by Pouring.” Having examined his own definition, his illustrations, and some of his objections, we will now look at his—

7. Objections against *possibility.* Mr Boardman says—

“Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, were baptized by John. Thousands upon thousands. Could any man stand midway in the water, day after day, immersing thousands in a rapidly flowing river? Impossible. No man, except by miracle, could do so; and we are not told of anything miraculous in this event.”

Mr Boardman's objections, it will be seen, are threefold: the numbers baptized, the rapidity of the river, and the bodily capability of the Baptist. On the hardihood of John, in deserts bred, we need not enlarge; sufficient it is for us, that “he was a man sent from God,” prepared by God, to do God's work. The other two difficulties vanish in the light which the Holy Ghost has furnished us in the word *Bethabara.* We admit the Jordan may be called a deep and rapid river, averaging ten or twelve feet deep; but it had its shallows or “fords”, through which travellers waded. This mode of crossing has always been sufficiently convenient. Now, Bethabara was a village on the other side of the Jordan deriving its name from a neighbouring ford across that river. The word Bethabara means—*House of Passage,* and was clearly the chief ford across the Jordan, for in Judges vii. 24, 25, when Gideon is fighting with the Midianites, he sends an army to secure this ford, and thus captured their retreating foes.

We see several beautiful lessons in John being directed to baptize at Bethabara beyond Jordan. It was in all probability near this place, that the people originally, under Joshua, passed over and received the land, as God's free gift. In passing over to John, there was a transient surrender of that gift, which, however, they are allowed to re-take, as it were, on confession of sin and obedience to God.

Now, let us think of the Baptist, just finishing a short and stirring address, principally directed to those who have come across the Jordan to him. He then goes into the ford, waist high, and the people follow him. Approaching him, confessing sin, they are immersed, one by one, bowing forward, as in the act of adoration. They then pass on across the river, others following continuously, till all who are prepared for baptism are immersed. In all probability, the Baptist then resumes preaching to those who were already beginning to arrive, and, anon, to immerse those who desire it. We commend this explanation to Mr Boardman and our readers, and feel sure our brother could *not closely limit* the numbers which could be baptized in this way daily.

8. The next difficulty in the pamphlet before us has reference to the baptism of the Ethiopian Eunuch by Philip. The writer thinks we ought not to infer

that there was immersion because there is no mention of changing clothes! To this we say, we need make no inference at all; baptism means immersion, and nothing else. Mr Boardman may reason, but he is without authority, human or divine, for saying it *does* mean anything else. All the lexicographers are agreed upon this point. In our last we met the difficulty concerning changing clothes, showing that the slight clothing worn in the East is no sooner wetted, so to speak, than it is dry again. But while we see no difficulty *against* immersion in the case of the Eunuch, we *do* see a difficulty if there were *not* immersion; and we commend the following consideration of the circumstances of the case to our dear brother.

The Ethiopian Eunuch being a chief man of the realm from which he came, and travelling home in a chariot, must have been accompanied, according to oriental custom, with many servants. Indeed, it is notoriously necessary for the rich to travel in these lawless regions, with a company of armed retainers, in order to preserve themselves from robbery and violence. Going, as they were, across deserts, does Mr Boardman suppose the company was not abundantly supplied with water, though not sufficient for the purposes of immersion? He is surely aware that great care is taken, especially by the rich, to guard against the possibility of that dire distress—thirst by the way. We know the usual practice is to devote certain camels to this one duty of carrying water, in ox-hide bags, for use and emergencies. If, therefore, a little water only, poured on the head, were necessary, they must have had abundance with them for the purpose; but as it was not the right thing, how natural that the Eunuch should start with satisfaction *at the sight of a pool!*

9. Mr Boardman is again in a numerical difficulty.

"Peter preaches on the day of Pentecost, and 3000 are converted. The same day, it appears, they are baptized and added to the Church. Could all this have been done in one day, admitting even that the twelve apostles took 250 each?"

Why does Mr Boardman confine to the twelve apostles the duty of baptizing on the day of Pentecost? The Scripture does not. We read that "the number of the names together were about an hundred and twenty," and, the narrative continues, "they were *all* with one accord in one place." Who? Evidently, those who had just gathered in solemn assembly. Now, upon each of these "all" the cloven tongues of fire alight, and the same "all" are filled with the Holy Ghost, i.e. the whole hundred and twenty. Perhaps very little baptizing was done by the Twelve at all, who were more especially given to ministering the word. Baptizing, as well as preaching, is nowhere in Scripture associated with office or gift; any right-minded Christian, himself baptized, may devoutly lay another in the waters of death, sanctifying the occasion with the Word of God and prayer. St Paul deliberately left this simple act of service to others. (1 Cor. i.) Besides the "hundred and twenty," we hold that some of the "three thousand," perhaps many, were soon after

being themselves baptized, ready to baptize others, in the holy enthusiasm of their new life. Where is our brother's difficulty?

10. But then comes another—on the score of water supply on the occasion above alluded to! Strabo, a very ancient traveller, says—

"Jerusalem—a rocky fortress; within, *well-watered*; without, wholly dry."

And Dr Robinson, a modern traveller, says—

"Almost every private house in Jerusalem, of any size, is understood to have at least one or more cisterns, excavated in the soft limestone rock on which the city is built. The house in which we resided had no less than four,"—and these, he says, were on an average, 16 feet by 13!!

11. In the case of Cornelius, Mr Boardman thinks that the interrogative, "Can any man forbid water?" is tantamount to asking *for* water, and that, too, in small quantity. But this is not so. The gist of the passage is whether water-baptism is to be allowed or forbidden; and fully perceiving what was the mind of the Spirit, Peter commanded—what? some water to be brought? No.

"And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord."

Our impression is that Peter did not baptize them himself at all; but that they left his presence, at his command, and were baptized by some fellow-servant of Christ who had accompanied him. The bearing of Peter is rather that of a man having authority to direct others, than himself acting. We do not read the simple expression—Then *he* baptized them; so that Mr Boardman's reasoning on this passage is really without any basis, because he takes for granted two things, viz.—that Peter carried out his *own* command, and that, too, on the *spot!*

The articles "Baptism, its Place and Meaning," which appeared in previous numbers of our journal, have been published as a penny tract. As few of our readers have seen this tract, we will here present them with a few remarks on *bapto* and *baptiso* which will be found added to the 2nd edition of the tract, to render the subject more complete:—

To BAPTIZE means primarily to DIR, and figuratively to cover over, or overwhelm. It is to be regretted that our translators did not so render it; instead of which, they adopted the foreign term into the language, not translating it at all! Thus, as the practice of pouring or sprinkling was so general in the Anglican, as well as the Romish Church, the popular mind naturally associated the word in the New Testament with that act.

If tradition had any weight with us, surely the practice of the Greek Church might be admitted, as fixing the meaning of a *Greek* word. In that church (so-called), the practice is, and has been, to dip the child, even in the depth of winter; and in the Prayer Book of the English Establishment (compiled *previously* to the present translation of the Scriptures) it is expressly ordered that the child is to be dipped, "discreetly and warily," unless the sponsors declare it to be in such a delicate state of health as to render immersion dangerous. Accordingly, we are told, as a fact, that in all the older churches, fonts are constructed large enough for the purpose. We also hear occasionally of ministers of the National Establishment administering immersion to adults as well as infants; indeed, a clergyman of the Church of England can do as he chooses in this respect!!

The reader will, of course, remember how clearly we have

shown, in previous papers, the flagrant folly and sin in the baptism (so-called) of infants altogether; these references are merely made to show the necessity there is for each believer to go back to the Scriptures, and getting therefrom reasons for his practice that he will not be ashamed to give to the Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming. In the practice of Christendom we see nothing but confusion—each believer should therefore receive the command as a little child—"Be Immersed."

BAPTISM, as we have said, must not be regarded as an English word; but as an adopted Greek word. *Baptizo* (to dip, to bathe) occurs 79 times in the New Testament, and is 77 times rendered "baptized," and twice by the word "wash," without stating the mode of washing, which latter would have been better rendered "washed by dipping," because the ordinary Greek word for "wash" is *louo*.

When the translators have to render *Bapto* (to dip, to dye) they did not hesitate to translate it, and to translate it *dip*. *Bapto* occurs thrice in the New Testament; we refer the reader to John xiii. 26, Luke xvi. 24, Rev. xix. 13. In the Greek or Septuagint Version of the Old Testament, made two or three hundred years before Jesus Christ was born, *Bapto* (to dip) occurs in conjunction and contrast with the Greek words to "pour" and to "sprinkle,"—clearly showing its essential difference. Thus we read—"He shall *pour* (*cheo*) the oil; he shall *dip* (*bapto*) his finger in it; he shall *sprinkle* (*raino*) the oil." (Lev. xiv. 15, 16.) No word in the Greek language is more definite. The authority of the Septuagint is beyond doubt, because the New Testament writers quote from its text. It was much esteemed by the thousands of Jews dispersed among the Gentiles, who spoke Greek.

Bapto seems to have been used in connection with the dipping of things, and *Baptizo* in connection with the dipping of persons and also of things when the latter are in any way associated with religious ideas.

In order to secure a sacred word instead of the common word 'dip,' but chiefly to save the State Religion from self-condemnation, King James directed the translators to adopt the word *Baptizo*, instead of translating it!! But as this Greek word is always rendered into Latin by *Mergo*, there should have been no difficulty for an appropriate word, and that seems to us to be the word—**IMMERSION**.

The reader will thus see that 'Baptize,' and its derivatives, are essentially foreign words adopted rather than translated into the English language, and if he wishes to know their meaning he must go to the mother tongue. The simple-minded reader who cannot do this, sees plainly that the term *burial*—"buried with him in baptism"—implies putting out of sight—*immersion*. "Bury my dead out of my sight," said Abraham.

On another important part of this question, in which Mr. Boardman has come grievously short, we shall desire to touch in our next. No apology need be offered for the fullness of our investigations, this simple subject of Baptism being one of the chief tests of faithfulness and childlike obedience to the Lord in these latter times.

THE WORK OF THE CROSS.—The first evident result of the Crucifixion of Christ was the salvation of one who was crucified with him—an exemplification of that which is true of all who are in the faith. We who believe are "crucified with Christ," Gal. ii. 20. We are also risen with him. The offering having been completed, and the justice of God having been vindicated about sin, it is immediately made manifest that He delights in mercy. Secondly, having manifested Himself as the risen Jesus, gloriously triumphant over Death and Hell, He sends a message by the faithful women to His disciples to meet Him in Galilee. The glory has departed from Jerusalem, "Her house is left to her desolate." Henceforth the Lord Jesus is to be met *outside* the place of ceremonial worship. "Let us go forth, therefore, unto Him without (*outside*) the Camp, bearing His reproach." (Heb. xiii. 13.)

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST,

IN HIS VARIED CHARACTERS IN THE FOUR GOSPELS.

(Continuance of Extract from "The Evangelists.")

After Jesus had risen, and was returned to His disciples, He never once reminded them of their late desertion to Him. This tells us of Him. "I know no one," says another, "so kind, so condescending, who is come down to poor sinners as He. I trust His love more than I do any saint's; not merely His power as God, but the tenderness of His heart as man. None ever shewed such, or had such, or proved it so well. None have inspired me with such confidence. Let others go to saints or angels, if they will, I trust Jesus more."

But this is but one ray of the moral glory that shone in Him. What a sight it is to see to, if we could but look at it in its full measure! Who could have *conceived* such an object? it must have been exhibited, ere it could have been described. But such was Jesus—who once walked here in the unclouded fullness of that glory, and whose reflections have been left by the Holy Ghost on the sacred pages of the Evangelists.

What attractiveness there must have been in Him for the eye and the heart that had been opened by the Spirit! This is witnessed to us in the Apostles. Doctrinally they knew but little about Him, and as to their worldly interests, they gained nothing by remaining with Him. And yet they clung to Him. It cannot be said that they availed themselves of His power to work miracles. Indeed they rather questioned it than used it. And we have reason to judge that, ordinarily, He would not have exercised that power for them. And yet, there they were with Him; and for His sake had left their place and kindred on the earth.

What influence His *person* must have had with souls drawn of the Father!

And this influence, this attractiveness, were alike felt by men of very opposite temperaments. The slow-hearted, reasoning Thomas, and the ardent, uncalculating Peter, were together kept near and around Him.

May we not healthfully dwell on these samples of His nearness to us, and of his preciousness to hearts like our own; and accept them, too, as pledges of what remains for us all, when gathered out of every clime, and colour, and character, from every phase of the human family, we shall be with Him for ever?

We need to know him *personally* better than we do. It was this knowledge the Apostles, in those days of the Gospels, had of Him—it was the force and authority of such knowledge their souls felt. And we need more of it. We may be busy in acquainting ourselves with truths about Him, and we may make proficiency that way; but with all our knowledge, and all the disciples' ignorance, they may leave us far behind in the power of a commanding affection toward Himself. And I will not refuse to say, that it is well, when the heart is drawn by Him, beyond the knowledge we have of Him (I mean knowledge in a doctrinal form)

may account for. There are simple souls that exhibit this; but, generally, it is otherwise.

"The prerogative of our Christian faith," says one, and his words are good and seasonable, "the secret of its strength is this—that all which it has and all which it offers, is laid up in a *person*. This is what has made it strong, while so much else has proved so weak. It has not merely deliverance, but a Deliverer; not redemption only, but a Redeemer as well. This is what makes it fit for wayfaring men. This is what makes it sunlight, and all else, when compared with it, as moonlight; fair it may be, but cold and ineffectual; while here the life and the light are one. And O how great the difference between submitting ourselves to a complex of rules, and casting ourselves upon a beating heart, between accepting a system, and cleaving to a person. Our blessedness, and let us not miss it, is this—that our treasures are treasured, in a person who is not for one generation, a present Teacher and a living Lord, and then for all succeeding generations a past and a dead one, but who is present and living for all."

Yes indeed—and this ever present and living One, in the Gospels, is constantly Himself either seen or heard. He is the Teacher or the Doer on every occasion; and the Evangelists have little or nothing left for them in the way of explanation or comment. And this gives to their narratives simplicity and palpable truthfulness, a truthfulness that may be felt.

But further; in His relationships to the *world* which was around Him, we see Him at once a *Conqueror*, a *Sufferer* and a *Benefactor*. What moral glories shine in such an assemblage! He overcame the world, refusing all its attractions; He suffered from it, bearing witness against its whole course; He blest it, dispensing the fruit of His grace and power incessantly. Its temptations only made Him a Conqueror—its pollutions and enmities a Sufferer—its miseries only a Benefactor! What a combination!

(To be continued, D.V.)

CHRISTIANS AND THEIR HEAVENLY FOOD.

New-born babes require milk. As with the natural, so with the spiritual. Accordingly, after Peter has spoken of the new birth, in the opening chapter of his 1st Epistle, we find him exhorting believers, in the commencement of the second chapter, thus—

"As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby."

Yes, babes are fed with milk, that they may grow. They are, however, not always to be fed on milk. Alas! the majority of Christians little understand this; they suffer themselves to remain in the hands of nurses, many of whom can feed with nothing else than baby-diet. From time to time, however, there arises in many, if not in all, a craving for something stronger, on which to feed that new life which the Lord Jesus Christ has given them. Yet they persistently cling to the nurses of their babyhood, who have nothing but milk-food to offer

them. But God has given his people the entire Bible, and has put this declaration upon it—

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the *man* of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim. iii., 16, 17.)

See how beautifully consistent is the wording of Scripture! To the *man* of God is given the *whole* of the sacred writings, that he may be perfect, thoroughly furnished [furnished through and through] unto all good works. This cannot be said to a babe, nor to one just beginning to walk. We must not, therefore, expect a babe in Christ to be able to understand or receive *all* truth at once. Many of the most glorious revelations of the Word of God are too strong for infant Christians; they cannot receive them. Numbers of aged believers, who have known the Lord Jesus Christ from *afar* for many years, are shocked if we tell them they are called to have *fellowship* with God—the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. They have not yet realised that their sins are forgiven, and that they are "*accepted* in the Beloved." In vain we repeat to many of the Lord's blood-bought ones—

"This we say unto you *by the word of the Lord*, that we [believers] which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [or go before] them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we [believers] which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them [the dead in Christ] in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." (1 Thess. iv. 15-18.)

"We [believers] shall not all sleep, but we [believers] shall all be changed, *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,*" &c. (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52.)

How many children of God treat this as a theoretical doctrine, in which they have no vital interest—one which they may receive or reject at will, notwithstanding that it is said, "Comfort one another with these words"! How is this? Such Christians have either made but little progress in their new life, or they are "carnal, and walk as men." In any case, they have got no further than the milk-food of "the word"; that is to say, they have only received the simplest truths of Christianity. This is not according to the mind of God; on the contrary, it is most dishonouring to Him, for these His children are neglecting the rich provisions of His grace. "Go on to perfection," should be a watchword for every Christian. We may never be satisfied if we are not making progress. To this end, the Lord has given us ALL His words. He has also given the Holy Ghost the Comforter, to lead us into ALL truth. How touchingly the Apostle wrote in the Epistle to the Hebrews, concerning these *standstill* Christians. He desired to unfold to believers the precious offices of the risen Jesus, that they might know how *actively* the Blessed One is engaged even now for His people. This, we are told, is strongly manifested in His character and work as our great High Priest. The Apostle says, Jesus is—

"Called of God, a high priest after the order of Melchisedec. Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be

uttered, *seeing ye are dull of hearing*. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God: and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk [i.e. first principles] is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Therefore leaving the principles [the first principles before spoken of] of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection." (Heb. v. 10-14, and vi. 1.)

Now, that which is spoken of here is not Christian walk (though that necessarily follows), but we are urged forward in the acquisition of *divine knowledge*, that we may grow! The Hebrew converts had not been slack in the activities of Christian life. The Apostle says to them,—

"God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye showed towards his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister;"

and again in the 10th chapter of the same epistle he says—

"Call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated [enlightened, converted,] ye endured a great fight of afflictions; partly whilst ye were made a gazing stock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and enduring substance." (ver. 32-34.)

These dear saints had borne persecutions, had endured a great fight of afflictions, were faithful, were cheerful givers to the needy ones of the flock of Christ; yet respecting divine knowledge and growth, they had gone back to babyhood; and, instead of becoming teachers of others, had need to be taught again the first principles of Christ. Alas! for the many BABES of the present day, in comparison of whom, these Hebrews were as giants! The baby condition of so many Christians is mainly attributable to bad nursing—teaching, it should be. While the Lord's people are content with mere pulpit preaching, instead of accepting the guidance and teaching of the Holy Spirit of God, they must continue mere starveling babes, instead of becoming strong in the Lord.

But there is another aspect of soul spoken of in Scripture, in which only the MILK of "the Word" can be taken; that is, where the believer clings to the things appertaining to the carnal nature—willing to walk in the old Adam life, instead of in the life of Christ. Alas! what hindrance is presented to the work of the Holy Ghost by carnally minded Christians!

"I, brethren, could not speak unto you [says the Apostle to such] as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?"

May this question search many hearts! There cannot be true spiritual progress where the old carnal

nature is not treated as a dead thing, and mortified accordingly. "Consider yourselves dead." That is the remedy for strife and division—dead with Christ, and alive with Him in a new order of being, the prominent characteristics of which are love and peace.

PRAYER AND PRAYER MEETINGS.

Christians are enjoined to "pray without ceasing." Happy would it be, if believers generally realised their unspeakable privilege by filling up every vacant moment down here with prayer. Not necessarily spoken prayer. It is often far better for the desires of the soul to pass up to God, untrammelled by words, as it is written—

"The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." (Rom. viii. 26.)

What follower of the Lord Jesus does not know something of these groanings? Blessed are they who get much aid from the Holy Ghost in that way. And He is ever willing thus to help our infirmities. If dear, "blood-bought" saints would only get more deeply earnest for the spiritual welfare of one another, their groaning prayers would be much increased, and the name of Jesus more fully glorified. Look at the Saviour's words—

"Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." (John xvi. 24.)

Might not many Christians apply this sentence to themselves almost literally? Their asking is almost nothing. But if we would pray, to the end "that our joy may be full," our asking must be much on behalf of others;—for the obtaining of those things we desire for self will never fill us with joy. Let us pray for, and obtain, blessing for others, and our joy will full. Of course, there is much presentation of names at the throne of grace. (We are speaking still of private prayer.) No doubt all believers call over, in prayer, the list of their relatives, and those that are dear to them; perhaps they do so night and morning. Thanks be to God, the God of all grace, for every effort thus truly made. But, alas! how often does this practice sink into a mere formality—a mere naming of names! Shall we be wrong in hinting that, with some Christians, it is an irksome task? But to the true believer, it need not be so. If the love of God, "shed abroad in our hearts," is suffered to produce its proper fruit, there will be earnest, craving desires for the spiritual welfare of many who are known to us—known to us continually, in varied circumstances of difficulty, danger, and suffering. Look after such, watch them, care for them; and then you will surely pray for them. Bring some new names continually into your prayers; and open your hearts to God about them, as really wanting and expecting the good you ask for them. We conclude this part of our subject with the following scriptures; (may they be much used for blessing.)—

"Rejoice evermore."

"Pray without ceasing." (That is, Ever be in the spirit of prayer.)

"In *everything* give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

"Quench not the Spirit." (1 Thess. v. 16—19.)

Respecting PRAYER MEETINGS.—We believe that, even when Christians gather *together* for prayer, the most blessed exercises of soul, the most powerful appeals to God, and the most accepted of Him, are silent aspirations and inward groanings, produced by the Holy Spirit. Yet outspoken prayer on such occasions is to be looked for. In 1 Cor. xiv. 15 we read—

"I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the understanding also."

This need of praying with the understanding should ever be borne in mind by those who take the place of mouthpieces at prayer-meetings. It is a solemn office—that of speaking to God for his people! If those who *string sentences of words together*, on many occasions, could only get *one glimpse* of the God whom they are supposed to address, how quickly would they become silent! May we, in all earnestness, simplicity, and love, offer advice in two words to Christians who lead in prayer? The words are these—BE BRIEF! Hear what our Lord says about it:

"When ye pray, use not vain repetitions as the heathen do; for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking. But not ye therefore like unto them; for your Father knoweth what ye have need of before ye ask Him." (Matt. vi. 7, 8.)

The Lord Jesus then gave a prayer—as a model of brevity. In that respect it is a model for every man. It consists of 65 words only. Yet it comprises all the petitions a true-hearted Jew need desire to present to God in *that day*. But Christians have a more comprehensive range of subjects of prayer now. They are furnished with the whole word of God to teach them right desires, and they have the Holy Ghost in them, to help their infirmities. They cannot plead with God in a *form of words*, nor in a formal prayer. They must, if they would prevail, deal with Him in spirit and in truth. Moreover, attached to all true Christian prayer there must be the precious name of Jesus Christ. Still, the above-mentioned prayer must ever be a model for brevity and force.

Dear brethren, leaders in prayer—Suffer the word of exhortation. When you feel really led to pray, consider the perfections of our God; give utterance only to the *earnest* desires of your soul, and in few words; then sit down again. Oh, how grievous it is to those who sit by, to find leaders who undertake to offer prayer, merely cudgeling their memory for words with which to satisfy their own vanity! How must such performances appear in the sight of Him who reads the thoughts of the heart!

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

M. H. D.—Your long but interesting paper on Baptism deserves a much fuller notice than our limited space permits us to give. You consider water-baptism essential to salvation. One reason you urge in support of that position is, that none, in the early days, were deemed believers, who were not members of *the Church*, and none were members of the Church who were not baptized with water. We quite agree that Scripture warrants us in arriving at these

latter conclusions. But they by no means proves water-baptism to be essential to salvation. Water does not unite us into one body. The baptism of the Holy Ghost does that. Water-baptism only buries that which is deemed dead, viz., the Adam nature of the believer; or, to take the other scripture explanation of its meaning, it, *in figure*, washes away sins (Acts xxii. 16), though we are plainly taught elsewhere that it is the precious blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, which *really* cleanses the believer from all sin (1 John i. 7). Acts x. shows there is living union of members to *the one body*, before water baptism. This is fully confirmed by Eph. i. 12-13. Then, we would ask you to consider the case of the thief on the cross. How could he be saved if Water-baptism were needful to salvation? And this brings us to the *practical* bearing of the question. Only a few days ago the writer was called to the side of a dying woman. One could not preach in such a case, "Believe and be baptized." The scripture given me to read on this occasion was Rom. x. 9; "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." A sister in the Lord, who helped to nurse the dying one, considers she afterwards confessed with her lips, though the writer could not obtain a clear testimony. God only knows whether there was belief in the heart—but if so, she is certainly saved. We are glad to find you urge confession, and all other requirements of scripture. Truth, as given in the word of God, has many aspects—and *faithfulness* requires that we should take heed to them all. But when salvation is in question, John iii. 14-15 clearly shows the essentials—namely, on God's side, that His only begotten Son should die and be raised again — on our side, that we believe in Him.

T. C.—In the case you mention—that of dear brethren in the Lord absenting themselves frequently from your meeting place, on the Lord's day—there is no remedy but prayer and brotherly love. We have no *command* from the Master to meet on that day, although we have abundant evidence of His approval of Christians so doing. Acts xx. 7 is certainly written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost for our guidance; but there is no word to bind us as to a set observance. We shall be happy to hear from you again, if you have other thoughts on the subject. Meantime, dear brother, pray for the wandering ones; seek them out as often as you can, and by the constraints of love endeavour to bring them back to faithfulness to the Lord, according to Heb. x. 26. This is true pastoral work. It needs much grace and patience—patience to wait, for the approval of our labours, until we shall stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. Our God is, however, equal to all our needs.

E. H. W., Woolwich.—We feel grieved at the cruel treatment you speak of as having been received by those you mention, from "the exclusive Brethren." May dear Christians see the Lord's mind as to what true fellowship means; and come out from a Confederacy which, though it contains a great number of most estimable servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, yet, as a *corporate body*, has much dishonoured his name. Accept our sincere Christian sympathy and love. We should be glad to know where you and the few tried ones now meet.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED—E. C., T. T., W. G., H. T., Lewisham, (we were unable to accept your kind invitation); W. C. Boardman, Mnasom, W. G. W. Also numerous pamphlets, some of which we hope to review.

Published for the Proprietor, by
Job Caudwell, 335, Strand, London, W.C.
Arthur Hall, 25, Paternoster-row, London, E.C.
Smart & Allen, 2, Londonhouse-yard, Paternoster Row.
George Gallic, 95, Buchanan-street, Glasgow.

Printed by John Evans, 335a, Strand, London, W.C.

PRECIOUS TRUTH.

“WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?”—(Rom. iv. 3.)

Job Caudwell, 385, Strand, London, W.C.]

[Arthur Hall, 25, Paternoster-row, London.

No. 13.]

APRIL 1, 1866.

[One Halfpenny.

TO ONE WHO TRUSTS IN THE LORD JESUS.

BELOVED,—

Are you getting an increased knowledge of Jesus? To “know Him, and the power of his resurrection,” is the sum of christian knowledge. It is one thing to know *about* Christ Jesus. But to have a personal, experimental knowledge of Him by faith, is the amazing privilege we are called to, while waiting down here for the day of his manifestation in glory. Nothing less than constant communion will satisfy “Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.” Neither can anything short of that, answer to the cravings of our New Nature. Let us then listen to ALL His words, with the earnest intentiveness of Mary. Like her, let us sit at the feet of Jesus to hear his word. Hers was the attitude which manifested a spirit of meekness and lowliness. When I hear the gracious words which proceeded out of the Lord’s mouth, I like to think,—He has spoken those words for ME. I get from my gracious Saviour, not only Life, but also wisdom and knowledge. He indeed supplies all my wants. Yes, he is my Friend and Counsellor. None on earth can give me such counsel as I get from Jesus.

Beloved: Is he your Counsellor? Do you appropriate his gentle warnings? Do you take up practically his wise teaching? If so, you are truly making progress in the knowledge of Him. You know of the peace that passeth understanding. You know, in measure, what it is to “joy in God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Go on, dear Brother, dear sister, to learn of Him, in meekness and lowliness.

To each of us the Master has said—

“Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Yes, the yoke of Jesus is easy, and his burden is light. Indeed it is. I know it. But only in the spirit of meekness can we find it so. No yoke more galling to PRIDE, than the yoke of Jesus. May every child of God, in these closing days of the age, with lowly hearts rejoice to sit under the teaching of our Saviour, Jesus; bearing the yoke he has made easy, and his burden, which he declares is light.

In all this, our Lord has fellowship with us; and in accepting his teaching practically, (i.e. doing the things he says,) we have fellowship with Him. And this leads to another phase of communion. In the intervals of labour, hour by hour, my THOUGHTS speak to Jesus, my risen Saviour and Lord. I have no wish to hide anything from Him. Many an unholy

thought from time to time, springs up within me, many an incidental sin overtakes me. But as soon as I detect the wrong, I judge it, according to the mind of the Lord. Then I can think of Him, and to Him again, uninterruptedly. Of course, my estimate of sin is far below God’s judgment about it. But I HATE sin, and all taint of it. May the day soon dawn when every trace of it shall be clean gone for ever.

Beloved,—Never be afraid to judge your sin. Be bold to look it full in the face, as an enemy which has wounded you, but against which the Lord has, in grace, provided a perfect remedy.

“If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, [i.e. in forgetfulness of him] we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light [i.e. in the abiding consciousness of the presence of God], we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John, i. 6—9.)

Here I find perfect deliverance.

“The Lord is my Shepherd He restoreth my soul.”

I learn, afresh, the perfect efficacy of the blood of Jesus Christ. I realise again, that forgiveness is (amazing truth!) a manifestation of God’s FAITHFULNESS and JUSTICE, because my Saviour atoned for my sin. I see how my iniquities and transgressions have been dealt with, in the person of my adored Redeemer—and I loathe all that is of the Serpent, more than ever. I think of Calvary, I remember those hours of unspeakable anguish, when Jesus “bore my sins in his own body on the tree.”

O Lord! what Theo tormented

Was our sins’ heavy load;

We had the debt augmented,

Which thou didst pay in blood.

I see God’s hatred of sin declared, in that most awful judgment, accepted, IN MY STEAD, by the good and gentle Jesus. I seek more and more to look at evil only in the light of the Cross. Brought to that tribunal (however specious it might be, if judged elsewhere,) it is a detestable and detested thing—I am ready to condemn it, utterly, though in my own body.

Thus I come back to communion with my risen Saviour. In my spirit (often without words) I tell Him how I long to be more true, more like himself. While I wait to be TRANSFORMED into his likeness, I seek to be CONFORMED to his mind. I strive to cherish his words, and do—whatsoever He has said. How

much failure there is, in my walk and conversation, the Lord knoweth. Blessed be his name, he has given me right desires, and I do seek to follow after Him.

Beloved,—most probably you do not know me in the flesh, and therefore I need not fear to shew you my heart (boasting could profit me nothing), in giving you a glimpse of my experience of fellowship with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. My only desire is, that you may be encouraged. May we in these days of much confession of failure, maintain an earnest protest against the exaltation of such general confession into a virtue. Oh, let your walk and mine, be in the light of the abiding presence of God. Let us be content with nothing less than all-day-long communion with Jesus, our Saviour and Lord. May we, in meekness and patience, know experimentally, more fully than we have yet known, that the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, is with us, to lead us into all truth—and that “the Father himself loveth us.”

Yours ever, in the Lord,

THE EDITOR.

COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL BY
ST. JOHN.

BY THE EDITOR OF “PRECIOUS TRUTH.”

CHAPTER II.

“Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?” (verse 18.)

The Lord Jesus had just executed a judgment which was in itself a sign of power and righteousness. He had demonstrated that he would not tolerate profanity and thievery in the House of God. The descendants of Israel, both priests and people, were so degenerate, that they had turned the Temple of God into “a place of merchandize,” “a den of thieves.” But at length one had appeared in their midst who was jealous for God, and who feared not man. They were astonished to find themselves in the presence of such an one—and they ought, in consequence to have searched the Scriptures to see whether their promised Messiah was to act and speak as Jesus did. Alas, they depended upon their own discernment instead of the word of God. They felt the power of Jesus, and were conscious that his ways were far above them. But their hearts were at enmity against the Lord—so they cavilled at the authority they began to fear, and demanded of him a sign.

“Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body.” (verse 19—21.)

The Lord gave them a sign—but the faithful alone would understand it. He could destroy and raise again, by the word of his power, that temple which had taken the Jews forty-six years in building. But

the mighty work of raising up the temple of his body, after laying it in death, was a sign which proved that he is very God.

“When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.” (ver. 22.)

It is important that we believe the Scripture, and the word which Jesus has said. Most true, that, after he had suffered, “God raised him from the dead,” that He was “raised up by the glory of the Father.” But Scripture also abundantly testifies, that *he rose* from the dead. “I have power,” said Jesus, “to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again.” He who is *the* life, permitted his enemies to destroy the temple of his body. But on the third day, Jesus, the Son of God, arose, in his own strength and majesty, from death, for “it was not possible that he should be holden of it.” “In three days I will raise it [his body] up.”

“Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.” (v. 23—25.)

Here were many accessories to help belief. The place, the feast of the passover, the presence of Jesus, and the miracles which he wrought. Therefore many believed in his name. It is a name to believe in. “Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.”

But though many believed in his name, He could not trust them; and he did not want testimony that man is not trustworthy. He knew it. What withering comments are these, with which the chapter closes. Jesus did not commit himself to them—He knew all—He knew what was in man. Man cannot be trusted. Jesus did, afterwards, commit himself, in measure, to the twelve—and with what result? One sold him for thirty pieces of silver, and the rest, when the hour of trial came, forsook him and fled.

True, there was restoration for all but the traitor. And, in the power of the Holy Ghost given, there has been true testimony borne in the world, of the risen Jesus, the Saviour of Sinners. But looking at the body of Christ, the Church, as it is seen on earth, all Christians may well feel humbled, on reading the conclusion of the Second Chapter of John's Gospel.

LITTLE CHILDREN, KEEP YOURSELVES FROM IDOLS.—This exhortation is still as needful as ever. Alas! how many dear children of God will serve God in their own manner, and bow down to the likeness of Truth which has been set up, and rejoice, like the Israelites, in the work of their own hands. Officialism now, as then, in the person of Aaron, was and is seen to be culpably weak. Presently the Lord will come down from the Mount, the golden calf of Christendom will be burnt, ground to powder, and strawed upon the waters of truth, and all will freely admit that whatever was not *faith* was *sin*.

BAPTISM IS NOT POURING.

With a few more words, we conclude our review of Mr. Boardman's tract—"Baptism by Pouring."

At pp. 10-11 we read—"Having been immersed 'myself, I know the arguments quite well about 'death and resurrection. (Rom. vi. ; Col. ii.)'" And this is all the use which Mr. Boardman makes of these Scriptures which, to a simple-minded Christian, completely put an end to every difficulty! He says he knows, and then quietly shuts out the light. The passages in the above chapters which tell us plainly the *meaning* of Baptism, demolish at once all sophistry about pouring! In the first-named Scripture, believers are thus addressed—

"Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?" (Rom. vi. 3.)

Here it is *not* water-baptism, as the context shows. Allusion is made to the *reality* of the accomplished work, which the ordinance of baptism sets forth in a *figure*. By faith in Jesus Christ, we understand how that our union with Him immerses us into His death. It puts an end to us, as respects the flesh. We are baptized into the death of Jesus Christ as a *fact*, in the sight of God. Now see what follows—"Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death." Because, by faith, we are immersed into His death, *therefore* we are buried with Him (by water). Christ died, we died; Christ was buried, we are buried. By the figure of burial in water, the Lord has given us to see how completely our old standing is put an end to, by *fellowship in His death*, through faith.

"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been *planted* together in the *likeness* of his death, we shall be also of his resurrection." (Rom. vi. 4, 5.)

Now look at the Epistle to the Colossians—

"In whom [Christ] ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh [all that was under judgment] by the circumcision [death of] Christ." (Col. ii. 11.)

Here, again, we have union with Christ in death, and thereby the complete cutting off (circumcision) of the flesh—carnal nature, the (entire) body of the sins of the flesh. Therefore this Scripture also brings in *burial*. "Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with (Him) through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead." (Col. ii. 12.)

Can anything be more evident than the truth here taught in the inspired Word? In water-baptism we see the believer buried, as dead, and also raised up again, as risen with Christ. The reality of both, is "through the faith of the operation of God." Without faith, water-baptism is an empty shadow, or something worse. But immersion, performed in faith, is a sweet showing forth of the work of Christ in the believer—namely, fellowship in his death, burial, and resurrection. And, as an act of obedience, it is precious in the sight of God.

In a footnote, Mr. Boardman says—"Burial of 'old was not so much by laying under ground, as it

"is now; putting the bodies into caves, rocks, and 'sides of hills was the usual mode." The answer to this is simple; there can be no objection to the immersion of a believer in water *after that fashion*. That is to say, if you can pile water up in a heap, like a rock or a hill, you may so baptize him; there can be no objection to burial in that fashion, but bury the convert you must, if you would fulfil the Lord's command.

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST,

IN HIS VARIOUS CHARACTERS IN THE FOUR GOSPELS.

(Continuance of Extract from "The Evangelists.")

Without the *death* of the Lord Jesus, all his virtues and his ministry would be to us as nothing. In the "place that is called Calvary," or onward to that place from the garden of Gethsemane, we see the great crisis, as we may surely call it, where *all* are engaged in their several characters, and all disposed of, answered or satisfied, exposed, or revealed or glorified, according to their several deservings. What a place, what a moment, presented to us and recorded for us, by each of the Evangelists, in their different ways!

Man is seen there, taking his place and acting his part, wretched and worthless as he is. He is there in all variety of conditions; in the Jew and in the Gentile; as rude and as cultivated; in the civil and in the ecclesiastical place; as brought nigh or as left in the distance; as privileged, I mean, or left to himself. But whatever this variety may be, all are exposed to their shame.

The Gentile Pilate is there, occupying the seat of civil authority. But if we look there for righteousness, it is oppression we find. Pilate bore the sword not merely in vain, but for the punishment of those who did well. He condemned the One whom he owned to be "just," and of whom he had said, "I find no fault in Him:" and the soldiers, who served under him, shared or exceeded his iniquity.

The Jewish scribes and priests, the ecclesiastical thing of that hour, seek for false witness—and the multitude who wait on them are one with them, and cry out against the One who had been ministering to their need and sorrow all His days.

They who passed by, mere travellers along the road, (men left in the distance as to themselves,) revile, venting impotent hatred, as so many Shimeis in the day of David. And disciples, a people brought nigh and privileged, betray the common corruption, and take part in this scene of shame to man, heartlessly forsaking their Lord in the hour of danger, and when He had looked for some to stand by Him.

All is, thus, worthless. Exposed in all this variety, Man is put to shame as in the face of creation, at this crisis, this solemn moment of weighing him and testing him, as for the last time. The woman with her box of ointment makes no exception. Her faith was of the operation of God; and beautiful as it was, to be had in remembrance through the whole world, it is God's praise and His alone, through the Spirit.

Satan, as well as man, shews himself in this great crisis. He deceives and then destroys. He makes his captive his victim, destroying by the very snare by which he had tempted. The bait becomes the hook, as it always does in his hand. The sin we perpetrate loses its charm the moment it is accomplished, and then becomes the worm that dies not. The gold and silver is cankered, and its rust eats the flesh as if it were fire. The thirty pieces of silver does this with Judas, the captive and the victim of Satan.

Jesus is here in His virtues and His victories; virtues in all relationships, and victories over all that stood in His way. What patience in bearing with His weak, selfish disciples! what dignity and calmness in answering His adversaries! what self-consecration, and surrender to the will of His Father! These were His virtues, as we track Him on this path, from His sitting at the table to His expiring on the cross. And then, His victories. The Captive is the Conqueror, like the ark in the land of the Philistines. He put away sin and abolished death.

"His be the Victor's name
Who fought our fight alone."

God is here, God Himself and in the highest. He enters the scene, as I may express it, when darkness covers all the land. That was His acceptance of the offer of the Lamb, who said, "Lo, I come." And such offer being accepted, God could show no mercy. If Jesus made Himself sin for us, it is unrelieved, unmitigated judgment He must have to sustain. The darkness was the expression of this; God was accepting the offer, and dealing with the Victim accordingly, abating nothing of the demands of righteousness.

And then, when the offer has been fulfilled, and the sacrifice rendered, and Jesus has given up His life, when the blood of the Victim has flowed, and all is finished, God, by another figure, owns the accomplishment of every thing, the fulness of the atonement, and the perfection of the reconciliation. The veil of the temple is rent from the top to the bottom. He that sits on the throne, that judges right, and weighs all claims and their answers, sin and its judgment, peace and its price and its purchase, gives out that wondrous witness of the deep, ineffable satisfaction He took in the deed that was then perfected "in the place that is called Calvary."

What a part for the blessed God Himself to take in this great crisis, this greatest of all solemnities, when every thing was taking its place for eternity!

And further still. Angels are here also, and heaven, earth, and hell, sin also and death, yea, and the world too.

Angels are here, witnessing these things, and learning new wonders. Christ is seen of them.

Heaven, earth, and hell are here, waiting on this moment; rocks and graves, the earthquake, and the darkness of the sky, bespeaking this.

Sin and death are disposed of, set aside and overthrown; the rent veil and the empty sepulchre publishing these mysteries.

The world learns its judgment in the sealed stone being rolled away, and the keepers of it forced to take the sentence of death in themselves.

Surely we may call this "the great crisis"—the most solemn moment in the history of God's dealings with His creatures. Wondrous assemblage of actors and of actings, God and Jesus, man and Satan, angels, heaven, earth and hell, sin and death, and the world, all occupy their place, whether of shame, or of defeat, or of judgment, of virtues and of triumphs, of manifestations and of glory. This is the record of each of the Evangelists in his several way, or according to his own method, under the Spirit. Our speculations can find no place. We have but to take up the lessons which they teach us, lessons for an ascertained and well-understood eternity.

EXPEDIENCY PAVES THE PATH TO FAILURE.

Whether this principle had an exemplification in the latter part of the career of John the Baptist, we leave our readers to judge. We can only say, the following considerations have led us to a conclusion which deeply impresses upon us the above important lesson.

The Baptist's mission was twofold—to preach repentance, in preparation for the appearing of the Messiah, and to point out the August One when He had appeared. God's chosen people, sunk in sin, especially formalism (or a mere outward seeming to be godly), had to be roused, not to a belief in Christ's coming, but to the need of being spiritually prepared for His searching presence. "That He should be made manifest unto Israel, therefore am I come," said John, "baptizing with water."

Suddenly, therefore, a voice—a loud, urgent, piercing voice, is heard in the wilderness of Judæa.—Repent! Repent! He cometh! behold, He cometh! But though John began preaching in the wilderness of Judæa, (which extended along the shores of the Dead Sea,) and though he produced a deep and wide impression, he did not begin to baptize till he had travelled up to and crossed over the Jordan.

"Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins."

There was deep significance in John's thus baptizing in the Jordan, which means, the River of *Death* or *Judgment*. His mission was, as we have seen, to convict of sin, to lead to repentance and to administer the baptism of repentance. Now, because of sin, death had "passed upon all;" that is, all mankind had been *baptized into death because of sin*. Baptism in the Jordan was a confession of the deserts of sin—*Death*. Confession of sin and Repentance are not, and cannot be, Salvation, or deliverance from *Death*, though they may lead to it, or prepare the way for the Coming One—the Saviour. Confession of sin and Repentance could not, therefore, take further than the "River of Death." This was the true character of John's ministry. The Jordan, therefore, with its wilderness banks, was, it would seem, the Baptist's place—and nowhere else.

What led John to leave the Jordan is not stated; and we therefore acknowledge that to speak dogmati-

cally on this branch of our subject would be wrong. Whatever the motive, the act was clearly a failure. We cannot but think—"judge ye what we say"—that it was caused by thoughts of EXPEDIENCY!! John ought to have kept to his post till told to remove by Him who had sent him there. Without seeking or awaiting that guidance, he seems to have yielded to the guidance of EXPEDIENCY. Deceitful Guide! readiest tool of the Arch-Antagonist.

John's baptism had not been received by the higher and professedly religious classes. His disciples were dispersed, exposed to the influence of these disbelieving teachers, and engaging with them in controversy. (See John iii. 25.) Hearers were becoming scarce. What should the zealous man of God do? To remain there, was to spend his breath upon a contracted and still contracting audience. If hearers would not come to him, could he not go to them?

Satan might have led him through some such course of reasoning, as he has many other servants of God, inducing them to leave clear spheres of duty for those to which they were not called—spheres more tempting, but in which their testimony has been marred, and they have positively hindered the Lord's work! Satan's object was to mar John's testimony to Christ, and to induce him to take his eyes off the Son of God. And he succeeded; and what was the consequence?—mistakes so grievous that John has speedily to be set aside!

In the first place, he leaves the Jordan, his only proper place for baptizing, and goes to "Ænon, near to Salim." Expediency might have justified this step; first, because "there was much water there," and, secondly, because, while it furnished equal facilities for immersion, it was in a thickly-peopled country.

But while Expediency seemed to approve of the step, look at its mistake. Ænon means *Springs of the Dove*,* and is appropriately near Salim, *Peace*. These names indicate the wrongness of the ground on to which the Baptist had got. This baptizing at the "Springs of the Dove," near to "Peace," was trenching (in a figure) on the precious prerogative of Him who, as John himself declared, came to baptize with the Holy Ghost, that blessed Spirit who descended upon Him like a *Dove*.

Though the Baptist is thus acting in accordance with his own thoughts, he is nevertheless graciously honoured by being permitted to give his most explicit and emphatic testimony concerning Jesus—but it was his *last*! (John iii.) and mingling in it we see a premonition of himself being set aside—a commencement of that sad darkness of soul in which he doubted whether Jesus were "He that should come," or whether they were to look for another!

But the Baptist did not retrace his steps to the place of duty; a wrong step taken ever increases our danger of going further. And he whom prophecy (as quoted by himself) declared was to be the Voice in the Wilderness, we find in cities—crowded, corrupt cities; yea, in the court of a hypocrite! But, END

* Gesenius.

EXPEDIENCY, how much better to have and to sway large and applauding audiences! how much more good will be done than by remaining out at the Jordan! See, Herod is hearing him gladly! and he is doing many things through his preaching!

Ah, but shall a servant reason, when he has a simple command before him? It was all very showy, but was John's work according to God's mind? We have seen that it was not; and what was its result? The reformed king becomes his murderer! showing that his labour was mere surface-work—a varnishing of a rotten thing. John's preaching of reformation in luxurious cities, God knew would only lead the hypocrite to increased hypocrisy; but his ministrations at the Jordan, to those who were sincere enough to go out to him, might still have been of continuous and decided service. While, therefore, he is zealously labouring to improve an irremediably bad thing, and, consequently labouring for nought, what does his labour produce as regards himself?—*Silence*, in respect to *testimony to Christ, neglect of the known duty of baptizing, and the loss of his head*. Whereas his ministry had been full of most precious testimony, we now read of him no longer as pointing to the Lamb of God, or baptizing earnest repenting sinners and sending them to Jesus; anon, he who has been silenced by the subtleties of Satan, is further silenced by the stroke of the executioner. "To bear witness to The Light" was emphatically John's work: to go into cities and attempt to reform the wicked, was getting away, far away from his SPECIAL DUTY and his SPECIAL PLACE.

Moreover, it was setting up a ministry in antagonism to that of the Lord Himself. While John's disciples are discussing questions of purification with the Jews, the Lord is seeking to impress the truth that men "must be BORN AGAIN," that they must spiritually eat of Himself and drink of Himself or they could have no life in them. Besides, the attempt to improve the authorities then ruling God's people was practically admitting that Herod might, if he were only good enough, divide the reins with Christ! Thus the Forerunner got to be a Hinderer; and what was the consequence? He had to be set aside. This is evident from various passages, which show that Jesus, having traversed Judæa, is about to go into Galilee, where John was, but abode at Sychar until he heard that John was cast into prison, and then he went forth into the cities of Galilee. (Compare John iii. 24; iv. 1, 46; Matt. iv. 14; Mark i. 14.) How gracious, then, of the Lord Jesus to testify of John that there was "none greater born of woman," even while he was under a cloud of doubtfulness, and even though his failure had cost the Lord (speaking after the manner of men) a living WITNESS.

Beloved in the Lord, we have the same gracious Master, but let us take heed how we listen to EXPEDIENCY when his commands are in question. To obey only is to be safe. There is no safety in doing anything, for which we feel we have not clear Scripture warrant. Are we in doubt? let us seek guidance, and wait till we get it.

THE FOREGOING CONSIDERATIONS APPLIED TO MODERN PRACTICE.

Servants of the One Master, shall we not carefully and in the light of the Word, consider whether, like John the Baptist, we have not received a special duty and a special place? Where has OUR LORD placed us and what has He given us to do? Having saved us, He has placed us between the living and the dead—between his living, saving Self and a world under sentence of death. Having enlightened us, He has sent us into a dark world to show Himself as the Light of the World. Having been sin-bitten and healed ourselves, our special duty is to point to Him who was lifted up, like the brazen serpent in the wilderness; to direct the sin-cursed to Him who know no sin, but was made sin for us, and endured the curse; to the Lamb that was slain, but is alive again, and liveth to die no more. "The words which thou hast given me," said the Lord Jesus Christ, "I have given them." And what are they?

"God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

This is laid upon us among the Lord's last words on earth:—

"Go ye into all the world; preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned."

Side by side, in these passages, are seen condemnation and salvation. Every soul is in one condition or the other. Clearly, therefore, our primary duty is to urge men to flee from the wrath to come—the wrath soon to come, inevitably to come. John the Baptist spake of the fan being in the hands of God's Messiah, and that He would "thoroughly purge His floor." There is, therefore, a striking analogy between John's primary duty and ours.

Towards such as receive the truth in the love of it, another sphere of duty is opened up. But the duty of the evangelist is primary, in the order of time, and is (according to gift and opportunity) the duty of all Christians; "Let him that heareth say, Come:" and the Philippians are exhorted by Paul to hold forth the "word of life."

Not only is our duty of pointing to the blessed Lamb of God strikingly analogous to that of John the Baptist, but so is also our *place*. Twice in John xvii. does the Lord say of believers—"They are not of this world, even as I am not of this world." And why? Because the world, or human society, is under the rule of Satan: unwittingly the unregenerate obey his behests. He is the god of this world, and ruleth in the hearts of the children of disobedience. To have fellowship with the world in any of its pet schemes, is for those who represent Christ on earth to have fellowship with Belial!

* "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel [unbeliever]? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God;

as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor. vi. 14—18.)

Attempts at reformation, improvement, and social progress are favourite pursuits with the world. And Satan has no objection to any amount of civilization and institutions by which the old nature, sin-wrecked, may be patched up. If the world will not listen to our testimony, that the wrath of God abideth over it, notwithstanding all its attempts at keeping down vice, doing away with poverty, and elevating the general taste, and so forth, the fact remains that the whole world "lieth in the Wicked One." Considering that to-morrow we may be out of the scene, if the Lord come,—and that destruction will soon afterwards come down upon it,—it is preposterous for us to have fellowship with the world in its ways.

Our place is therefore, like John's, *out in the wilderness*, spiritually speaking; "come out, and be separate, and touch not the unclean." Not personally apart, but spiritually apart; *in the world*, but not *of it*.

Satan will say, appealing to EXPEDIENCY, What is the use of your stopping out there in the wilderness, raising your voice? why not go among men, approve that which you find to be good, persuade them to be better, help them to make the best of this world, and they will be more likely to listen to your testimony, especially if you give them something to do.

Beloved, it is a subtle snare; how many do not see their way through it! Depend upon it, as sure as we find ourselves in fellowship with the world in any of its darling, self-elating projects, or preaching reformation of the old nature, so surely shall we find ourselves, like John the Baptist, silenced in testimony for Christ. As certainly as Christians follow their own thoughts of EXPEDIENCY, and turn aside to try, as it is called, "to ameliorate the condition of society" and "elevate the masses," by arrangements of man's devising, so surely will their testimony be marred. Under such circumstances, they will find that bearing witness to the truth will be found often unsuited to the occasion, and that "Christ or hell?" would be an unwarrantable intrusion upon such good, well-meaning associates!!

Christians all around us are striking hands with the world in such things. We say it with great grief. For instance, many Christians think that, by giving evenings, more or less frequently, in union with worldly men, to serve the Temperance movement, they are indirectly furthering the Gospel.* Others,

* We do not wish to cast a slur on the practice of abstaining from the ordinary use of alcoholic drinks. Timothy was evidently an abstainer from wine as a beverage, and was only advised to "take a little wine" for his "stomach's sake" and his "often infirmities." So long as we have no infirmities of the kind indicated, we cannot appropriate the advice. For many reasons we wish abstinence from these drinks as beverages were general, and are glad to show by our personal practice that abstinence is best. But as a *Social Agitation*, Christians cannot

preside at or take part in worldly amusements and entertainments with the thought of impressing the people with the interest taken in their general welfare. Other instances will occur to our readers.

Let such Christians remember that the Word of God declares this friendship with the world is spiritual *adultery*: read what the Spirit says by James.

"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world is an enemy of God."

"Indirect furthering" is a process undiscoverable in Scripture. By such subtle Expediency has Satan turned those who might give true testimony into—"dumb dogs which cannot bark." Oh, brethren beloved, be "not ignorant of his devices;" be not gagged by our wily Adversary. There is no safeguard in reasoning; therefore, do not begin to do that. Your Lord says—"Abide in Me, and let my words abide in you." Let us, therefore, go nowhere, do no thing, in which we cannot realize *his* presence and scatter his words, urging men to accept Himself, declaring that unless they spiritually eat his flesh and drink his blood, there is no life in them.

THE SMITTEN ROCK.

"They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." (1 Cor. x. 4).

We proceed to answer an enquiry printed in our last number, page 86. We are taught that the Smitten Rock was a type of Christ. Therefore, there could be but One Rock smitten by God's appointment.

"The Lord said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand and go. Behold, I will stand before thee upon the Rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the Rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink." (Exod. xvii. 5-6.)

In Numbers xx., the word is,—

"Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the Rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the Rock," &c.

Observe, the definite article, *THE*, is always used. This is confirmed in all passages of holy writ, where reference is made to the Smitten Rock. So that, though this latter event took place in Kadesh and the former in Horeb, we have a conviction that there were at the two places two different peaks of the same rock or mountain chain, and reference to the map confirms this impression.

The Rock received no name. But the waters which flowed out are, on the second occasion, called Meribah (meaning Contention). Elsewhere, they are called "The waters of strife in Kadesh." (Ezek. xlvi. 28.) In the narrative given in Exodus, the *place*, not the

take part in that or any other movement. The confusion of thought and the self-righteousness, which the unholy alliance of the Church and the World has produced, are shocking, and are patent to any Scripturally-taught Christian on the face of most Temperance publications.

water or the Rock, is named by Moses, Meribah, and also Massah (Temptation.) Thus the place of the Rock, when first presented to faith, is called "Temptation" and "Contention." Afterwards, the waters are called "Contention" also. Truth becomes contention when we do not receive it in God's way.

This helps to an understanding of what the Holy Spirit designs to teach us in recording these wonderful incidents of Israel's journeys in the wilderness. In 1 Cor. x. we are told that those who came out of Egypt were all baptized to Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink; and if we would profitably follow the course of their wanderings as narrated in the Scriptures, we, too, must eat and drink spiritual food. The Rock, then, is Christ. When smitten by command of the Lord, he is presented to us in Horeb (All Alone, or Forsaken); and God stood before the Smiter there, upon the Rock. Christ was thus smitten indeed. The place where he suffered, is well named Massah and Meribah (Temptation and Contention). Yet, notwithstanding, the waters of life flowed out, and his people drink of his lifegiving streams of truth. The Rock was to be smitten, and the results were all in pure and perfect grace. The Israelites murmured, contended, and tempted, in Rephidim, and there was no word of judgment for them; God endured it all, and supplied all their needs! But afterwards, when the Rock has to be dealt with in Kadesh (Holiness or Sanctification), it is not seen from the place in which God had said, "Take thy rod and smite." It was enough that the Rock should be smitten *once*, for that Rock (in type) was Christ. In the place of holiness or sanctification (Kadesh) the command to Moses was, "Speak ye unto the Rock." Alas! Moses transgressed the word of the Lord.

"Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the Rock, and he said unto them, Hear, now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this Rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the Rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also."

Yes, grace flowed out, in spite of the irreverent act. But God will mark his sense of disobedience through lack of faith.

"And the Lord spoke unto Moses and Aaron, *Because ye believed me not*, to sanctify me in the eyes of the Children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them." (Num. xx. 12.)

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. B. S., LONDON.—Many thanks for your very gracious letter. We must, however, ask you to look again at our Scripture reference. You tell us that in quoting Eph. i. 12, 13, we "Confound two very different things, viz. Faith the gift of God, and the gift, or sealing, of the Holy Spirit." We now append that Scripture; let the Word of God speak. "That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were

sealed with that holy Spirit of promise." Now it is very evident that we who first trusted in Christ are to be to the praise of God's glory—i. e. we who *trusted after hearing* the word of truth, the gospel of our salvation. Then, it is added, we were sealed (made safe) in Christ by the Holy Spirit, *after that we believed*. We consider this passage most blessedly calculated to remove any difficulty a child of God may have respecting Eph. ii. 5. It would require two or three numbers of our little paper to contain a full answer to your lengthy epistle. We hope, however, to return to it on a future occasion, if the Lord tarry, for it is a pleasure to answer one who writes so lovingly, and evidently according to honest conviction. Meanwhile, we believe your desire to insist upon "faith unto salvation" being a gift, arises from the supposition that otherwise there would be merit in believing. We think this is the chief warp in the minds of those who hold what are called "Calvinistic views." But the truth is, there is no praise due to belief. We do not consider it a meritorious thing on the part of a criminal to accept a free pardon! We can only add further, on this occasion, that, if the Lord will, we purpose continuing our investigations of that which is written on this solemn theme. The manner of the reception of the word of life, and the new birth, are mysteries beyond our present comprehension—all we can hope to do is, to receive whatever the Lord has taught us in his word.

C. BOARDMAN.—It appears to us there is an essential difference between our Lord's promise—"Ye shall be baptized (*baptizo*) with the Holy Ghost," and God's prophecy by Joel, "I will pour out (*ekcheo*) of my Spirit," &c. You think these Greek words, as having reference to one event, may be taken as equivalents, and so strengthen your position that baptism may be by pouring. We think not, and for these reasons. Of course, Peter's declaration on the day of Pentecost was true, but it was true on the principle that the less is included in the greater. The immersion of the disciples of Jesus, with the Holy Ghost, was a higher fulfilment of the prophecy than had entered the heart of any prophet of old. The Old Testament promises were given to an earthly people, and will be fulfilled literally to that earthly people. Upon them, God's Spirit was and will be poured or put. When the Seventy Elders were appointed by Moses, God said, "I will take of the Spirit which is upon thee, and will put upon them," &c. (Num. xi. 17.) The amazing gift of God on the day of Pentecost is far above this. For, certainly, the Holy Spirit was put upon the disciples; but "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." (Acts ii. 4.) Joel's prophecy had the very highest fulfilment: yet, in another sense, it was only a partial fulfilment, as the rest of the quotation in Acts ii. shows. The word by the prophet is—"I will pour out of my Spirit upon *all* flesh." This, we know, will not be completely fulfilled till Israel is restored, and blessing to the world.—Your remarks about "Rahab" have no support from Scripture. The inspired narrative does not countenance your inference that Rahab "identified herself with God's army;"—in all her conversation with the spies she identifies herself with the inhabitants of the country; otherwise, she speaks of God's people with reverence, and asks for mercy for herself and relatives at the hands of Joshua's messengers. The Harlot is not commended, in the Epistle of James, for "*out-generaling*" the Canaanitish soldiers; but because she received Joshua's messengers, and *sent them out another way*.—It is a grief to us, dear brother, to find ourselves at issue with one whose labours in the Lord have been so widely owned. Be assured, all we have had to say, has been said in love.

MNASON.—We quite agree with what you say respecting the *practical* failure of "the Brethren" as to *visible* unity;

and would gladly insert your letter, but are deeply convinced that argument only, without appeal to Scripture, is very profitless.

W. G. W., BLACKHEATH.—It seems evident to us that "the Brethren" are entirely without Scripture warrant for *putting away* in such a case as yours. Surely you have cause to rejoice if you have suffered persecution or reproach for Christ's sake. We trust you have found fellowship with a few who call upon the Lord out of a pure heart. So that we keep in separation from evil, and communion with the Head is maintained, we need not many companions till the Lord comes.

E. C. MANOR PARK.—We are much cheered by your letter, and rejoice with you in your experienced faithfulness of the Lord.

T. T., WOOLMIT.—We thankfully acknowledge your kindness in making our little paper known.

W. G., HEREFORD.—Your kind letter cheers us. We praise God our Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord, that His children rejoice in the truth, and that so many in our day have their hearts open to receive the mind of Christ, and seek to be conformed thereto. The Lord keep you and the dear Christians with you, and bless you with all spiritual blessings, for His Name's sake.

W. H. H., DERBY.—We very much rejoice that you are enabled to speak so favourably of your Scripture Meetings. You have deep truth before you in the Epistle to the Romans. May every child of God among you have entire confidence in the guidance of the Holy Ghost. We pray for your little fellowship, "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him."—Respecting your enquiry as to the intercession of Christ, and the way it affects us now, we hope to consider it in a future number, if the Lord will.

A. B. C. writes as follows:—"If our union with Christ is in resurrection and not in incarnation, how are we crucified and buried together with Him? This is a difficulty with some unlearned ones, who believe the former but are not able to answer the latter. I wish your valuable paper were a weekly one. The time is too short before our Lord comes—for a month to elapse before one can get an answer to important queries on that coming."—We would offer the thought that, believers are crucified and buried with Christ, as *associated with him*, rather than as *united to him*. Union is a principle of life, not of death. Yet it might be correct to say we were united *with him* in death, but not united to him. It is only in the new life we are united to Christ. "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." If these remarks do not meet your difficulty, we shall be glad to hear from you again.—It is quite out of our power to issue our little sheet more frequently. If the circulation were greatly increased, we might perhaps be led to publish twice a month.

CHRISTIANS in the Neighbourhood of the Strand are invited to the Scripture Reading Meeting at 335a, side-door, Monday, at Seven.

Also to the meetings for Prayer at the above Christian Meeting Room, on Monday and Wednesday midday, from ¼ past 1 to 2.

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Published for the Proprietor, by
Job Caudwell, 335, Strand, London, W.C.
Arthur Hall, 25, Paternoster-row, London, E.C.
Smart & Allen, 2, Loudonhouse-yard, Paternoster Row.
George Gallic, 99, Buchanan-street, Glasgow.

Printed by John Evans, 335a, Strand, London, W.C.

PRECIOUS TRUTH.

“WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?”—(Rom. iv. 3.)

Job Caudwell, 335, Strand, London, W.C.]

[Arthur Hall, 25, Paternoster-row, London.

No. 14.]

MAY 1, 1866.

[One Halfpenny.

TO THE READER, IF IN “THE FAITH.”

DEAR CHILD OF GOD,—

I have a very special object in addressing you *personally* from month to month in the opening page of this little periodical. My desire is to induce in you a more earnest longing after spiritual progress. The tendency in us is to *settle down*, either in despondency through past failures, or in contentment with a standpoint to which we may have attained. I find it to be a common failing among believers, to mistake a resting-place for the end of the wilderness journey. It is written of Israel, *for our warning*,

“The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.”

And this is quoted as a warning against idolatry—(see 1 Cor. x. 7.) I believe that idol worship is inseparable from the self-satisfied condition of soul indicated in the above scripture. The Israelites had set up a golden calf. And, alas! many christians worship a similar object in various forms; its name is “*covetousness*, which is idolatry.” (Col. iii. 5.)

Beloved,—We must keep the eye of faith upon our Leader, even our Lord Jesus Christ, who *hath* saved us from our sins, and is now our *Shepherd*. The Children of Israel said respecting their leader,

“As for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what has become of him.” (Exodus xxxii. 1.)

Moses had gone up to meet God on Mount Sinai! Jesus has ascended to God our Father! And, alas! how many of His people have said in effect, by their lives, We wot not what has become of him. Oh, what a contrast between the scene on the Mount, and that at the foot of it! While the Israelites were giving themselves to idolatry, the Lord was instructing his faithful servant how his people should serve Him, the only true God! And when the Lord threatened to consume the rebels, Moses was found pleading for them, even the ingrates who had so soon deserted him! What a spectacle! But, oh, think of the baseness of deserting for a moment *our* glorious and gracious Lord, who has delivered us out of Egypt, not only with signs and wonders, but *by* the sacrifice of Himself!

Dear Brother, dear Sister—Do you know any covetous and worldly christians? Warn them, entreat them, show them of the wondrous love of Jesus, and pray for them. But what a joy it is that in the midst of our sorrowing over the grievous failures of such, we can think of our great *Advocate* who “ever liveth to make intercession” for them.

Concerning our own individual walk, beloved,—Let us be well assured that the mind of our Lord about it is, *progress*. The language of the Apostle Paul, speaking of himself simply as a christian, was this—

“Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend [lay hold of] that for which I am apprehended [laid hold of] of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: [i.e. not fully, he wanted to get hold of more knowledge of Christ, and the power of his resurrection] but this one thing I do, *forgetting* those things which are behind, and *reaching forth* unto those things which are before, *I press* toward the mark *for the prize* of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. iii. 12—14.)

Many a prize has our gracious Master in store for those who thus reach forth, and press forward. Salvation is not the prize. That we have already through faith in his name. It is a gift, without any doings of ours. But the Lord has prizes to give. He says—

“Behold I come quickly, and my *reward* is with me, to give every man *according* as his *work* shall be.” (Rev. xxii. 12.)

What poor thoughts we have about the “Lord of Glory!” Surely, when we think of it, *Our Lord* must be very rich. If it were not so, yet he is very loving and gracious, and it would be worth a life-long struggle to press forward, learning of and following after Him, if but to hear from his gracious lips the words, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” But, indeed, our Lord is *very rich*. He made the worlds—He has gone to prepare *many* mansions—He has in store *many* crowns—He *is*, in truth, “*Lord of Glory*.”

I know you may answer me that after all, to be with Him, to see His face—will more than compensate (infinitely so) for the most earnest efforts we can make down here. And it is well that himself, Jesus our Lord, should be our supreme object, even as to the question of reward—

“For more than all I long
His glories to behold,
Whose smile shall fill the radiant throng
With ecstasies untold.”

This is the true response of every regenerate heart. But our God, in his excellent grace, furnishes us with every kind of inducement—seeking in every way to draw us by *progressive stages* to the end of the pathway of faith—“For we walk by faith, *not* by sight.” We know not how soon the journey will end. The shout of the Lord, as he descends from heaven to call his redeemed ones, may be heard by us to-day, to-night, or a year hence. It may be we shall first

fall asleep in Jesus. The Lord knoweth. In any event, happy are we, for we are "accepted in the beloved." It is but a *little while*, and the *trial* of our faith will have come to an end.

"Wherefore, *gird up the loins* of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation [appearing] of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. i. 13.)

When worldly men run in a race, they tighten their waistbands—they "gird up their loins." We also are to—

"Run with *patience* the race that is set before us, *looking unto Jesus*, the author and finisher of faith; who *for the joy that was set before him* endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb. xii. 1, 2.)

With such an example, such a Sustainer, and such a reward before us; let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset. Whatever the persuasion to stop short—*however few* may continue with us in the race—let us *run with patience*, laying aside the *weights* (encumbrances) even though they be golden ones—and the sins, however specious, remembering that "whatsoever is not of faith is sin." (Rom. xiv. 23.) We must be well girt with the girdle of truth.

In conclusion—Let us never forget that if we are steadfast, our God will clear away all doubts. I have one Scripture more for you at this time, and it presses upon me as specially given of the Lord. It is this—

"The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth." (1 John ii. 8.)

Ponder this well, beloved, for Our Lord Jesus Christ's sake.

Yours ever in Him,
THE EDITOR.

A MORE THAN CONQUEROR.

(A few thoughts expressed at the Scripture Meeting, 335a, Strand, Monday, April 2, 1866.)

Acts vii. 54—60. Stephen rejected of men, received of God.

One of the primary principles taught in the scene described in the above passage, was that the clearest testimony may bring out the fiercest opposition. It has ever been so; the servant of the Lord must not, therefore, be surprised if violent persecution arise. Indeed, the Lord has warned us to expect it, and bidden us rejoice in it.

"If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you."

"Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and *leap for joy*; for, behold, your reward is great in heaven."

If, like Stephen, we be full of the Holy Ghost, and keep the eye of faith on Jesus in the glory, we shall have a joy like his. Stephen was so occupied with the glory of God and Christ, that he seems scarcely to have noticed the enraged assembly, gnashing on him with their teeth. How blessedly did Divine grace conform Stephen to the likeness of

Jesus in his death—praying for his murderers. And as the Lord commended His spirit into the Father's hands, so Stephen committed his spirit to the Lord. Thus are we taught, by the dying act of Stephen, to honour the Son, even as we honour the Father.

The Lord Jesus Christ foresaw the deep waters His servant would have to pass through, and He blest Stephen with this vision of Himself beforehand, furnishing him with special grace for a special trial. The Lord sees the end from the beginning. His grace will not fail us, though, alas! we may fail to avail ourselves of it.

Jesus was seen in the place of favour—and of power—the Right Hand of the Majesty on High. As He said—"All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth."

It was also remarked that this was the great final, or closing act of the rejection of their Messiah by the Jews: they had rejected the testimony of John the Baptist, then that of Jesus and that of the Father through the miracles of Jesus, and lastly that of the Holy Ghost in the persons of the Apostles and Stephen. It is an interesting fact, that Stephen saw the Lord *standing*—an attitude implying readiness to come then again to earth, if his people would but receive the testimony and turn and repent; but afterwards, when the Holy Ghost is addressing the same people, and that, too, by one who was present at the stoning of Stephen, it is said the Lord Jesus had *sat down* at the right hand of God—the attitude of rest—resting there till his enemies be made his footstool. (Heb. i. 3, 13.)

In the subsequent conversion of Saul, we see Stephen's prayer far exceeded. And so have the last prayers of many departed saints.

The meeting closed by contemplating the believer's departure, like Stephen's—a falling asleep.

CONTRASTS -- BISHOPS.

When we think of what a "state-bishop" in this country is, with his high-sounding titles, his emoluments, his offices of state, his palaces, servants, and carriages;—when we picture him in his lawn-sleeves and with his mitre—we would fain persuade ourselves that such an one must be ignorant of all that God has said in his word, as to what a bishop should be. Yet, in the "Form of Ordaining and Consecrating Bishops" (so-called) as printed in the "Book of Common Prayer," that most touching address delivered by the Apostle Paul to the elders or bishops of the church at Ephesus (Acts xx.) is quoted in its entirety! We cannot refrain from repeating a part of it here, though we have before alluded to it.

"I take you to record this day," [said the Apostle,] "that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you *all* the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the *Holy Ghost* hath made you Overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall *grievous wolves* enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember that by the space of three years, I ceased not to warn everyone night

and day with tears. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel; yea, ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered to my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak; and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."

This passage of Scripture, and others equally commendatory to himself, must a state-bishop listen to, according to the state-formulary provided in the Prayer-book, when the ceremony, therein called consecration, is performed over him! He hears from the Inspired Word that a true bishop ought to labour with his hands, as Paul did, "to support the weak," instead of receiving or desiring silver, gold, or apparel from others; and having heard this, he accepts the title of Lord, and rides away from a Lordly cathedral, to his Lordly palace, and takes his seat with the proudest Lords of the world!

Does such an one ever read Matt. xxiii.? Can he not see himself reflected in that Scripture? For the hierarchical systems of this age are, in many respects, a reflex of Judaism in the days of the Lord's ministry on earth; with this important difference, however, that the scribes and Pharisees were in the appointed place of authority, whereas on the part of their modern imitators the assumption of power is without any justification whatever!

We wonder men do not tremble at the words of Him who is LORD of all, and who will soon come in judgment!

Yet we sincerely pity, while we present the solemn truth. Alas! for the blindness that prevails through the "traditions of men." Alas! for the blind leaders of the blind. From our heart, we pity them. Yet the words of the Lord Jesus are—"Shall they not both fall into the ditch?"

But let us not be misunderstood. God forbid that we should pass judgment on any one who holds the office of a "Bishop of the State," as touching the question of salvation. There was a Simon the Pharisee, who invited the Lord to his house. We call to mind also Joseph of Arimathæa and Nicodemus, and others, belonging to the order the Lord denounced so bitterly, who we have no doubt were saved. Yet, because they persisted in clinging to their party, in spite of their convictions, they had to listen again and again to those bitter words, "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!"

The Lord alone can judge the heart. Faithfulness in Christian life and walk is, however, quite another thing. On this subject the Master has given us the light of his own instruction for our guidance.

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheeps' clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" (Matt. vii. 15-16.)

Paul warned the elders at Ephesus (bishops really ordained by the Holy Ghost) both against wolves from without and perverse and selfish teachers from within. State-bishops may be either one or the other;

but if, when tested by the Word of God, their actions are found in complete contrast with the lives of the pastors given by our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. iv. 11), Christians must be warned against them.

But we have not yet stated the worst feature of the case. We feel sure that there are many real Christians who follow on with "Church-of-Englandism" only because they do not know of anything better. We sympathise with all such, and pray that the Word of God may deliver them. May all who read these words be led to search into the truth for themselves, earnestly praying God for the guidance of his Holy Spirit. We especially commend to prayerful consideration that which we have now to unfold.

The following is copied verbatim from the "Form for Ordaining Bishops:"—

"Then the Archbishop and Bishops present shall lay their hands upon the head of the elected Bishop kneeling before them upon his knees, the Archbishop saying, Receive the Holy Ghost, for the office and work of a Bishop in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the Imposition of our hands, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

Before being ordained as a state-bishop, the candidate has of necessity undergone "the Form and Manner of Ordering of Priests," from which we quote as follows:—

"Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the Imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained."

Do those who go through these AWFUL forms, believe one word of what they profess to do? None but the Apostles ever had the power of imparting the gift of the Holy Ghost. There was no need, neither was any provision made, (to be found in Scripture,) for communicating the gift of the Holy Spirit, through HUMAN agency, after the power of God in man had been in that way fully manifested in the persons of the Apostles. That display of it evidently ceased with them. Afterwards, it is simply stated that ALL who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise," (Eph. i. 13.) Respecting gift, or manifestation of the Spirit, we are taught that the Holy Ghost worketh in all true believers, "dividing to every man severally as He will." (1 Cor. xii. 11.)

After the Apostles' days there was no longer power given to Christians to appoint one another to any kind of ministry. There is no provision in Scripture for any such appointments on the part of man. The Lord Jesus Christ is the ACTIVE Head of the Church, and continually raises up servants to ministry, in contravention of, and outside of all human arrangements.

"Unto everyone of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. . . . And he gave some Apostles, and some Prophets; and some Evangelists; and some Pastors and Teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying [or building up] of the body of Christ." (Eph. iv. 12.)

How long does the Lord perpetuate ministerial gifts? Let Scripture answer.

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." (Eph. iv. 13.)

Thus the *pretence* of imparting the Holy Ghost in these days by laying on of hands is fully exposed. If Christians were only true to the Lord and themselves, in refusing everything which has for its object MAN'S aggrandisement down here, they would be delivered from all such delusions as we are pointing out. Moreover, when God entrusts power to his servants, He displays that power in them SUPERNATURALLY; this is an important rule, which may be traced throughout the Bible. We refer to Moses, to the Old Testament prophets, and to the Apostles. When the Holy Ghost was communicated by the specially chosen servants of the Lord, those who had power to impart the gift, gave PROOF of their divine commission by working miracles. Let us claim manifest *proof* of the possession of divine power from those who *profess* to impart divine gifts, and the door is immediately shut against all pretenders.

And now let us look at the other delusion—that of communicated power to forgive or retain sins. The occasion on which the Lord Jesus Christ gave that extraordinary and solemn authority is stated in the Gospel by John only.

"Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." (John xx. 19—23.)

"THE DOORS WERE SHUT." It was an exclusive company, the Lord's own specially called Apostles. Then, notice, "HE BREATHED ON THEM, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." It is all one sentence. There was a quality which none now possess, given through that breathing on them by the Lord Jesus. Unless a man has seen the risen Jesus, and has been breathed on by Him, receiving a special commission from the lips of his Lord, it is impossible for him to remit or retain sins.

But if State-bishops *will* pretend to give such power to their clergy, and the latter *will* pretend to exercise it, then we turn upon them, and demand the meaning of this sentence in their Litany, repeated by them every Lord's Day?—

"Remember not, Lord, our offences, nor the offences of our forefathers; neither take thou vengeance of our sins: spare us, good Lord, spare thy people, whom thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood, and be not angry with us for ever"!!!

So those who say they have power to remit sins,

pray continually for themselves and the people, that the Lord will not take vengeance on sins supposed to be remitted! and this occurs in the service *after* the *Absolution* of sin has been pronounced by the priest!!

Out of their own mouths are they convicted of an absurdity so monstrous, that if committed in any secular matter, those who practise it would be exposed to the derision of mankind. Alas! how infinitely worse is the case, seeing it pertains to the professed service of God!

"Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor. vi. 18.)

THE SCENE NEAR BETHANY.

AN ANALOGY.

In the Tenth chapter of the Gospel by John, we see Jesus as the rejected of the Jews. They assert that he has a devil, and accuse him of speaking blasphemy; they press him for plain statements as to who he is, and then try to stone him for those very same plain statements.

"Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand, and went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode. And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true. And many believed on him there."

We see here, in starting, a striking analogy, (or resemblance in *some* of its circumstances,) to the present state of things. Jesus is still the rejected of the Jews; they subsequently "sought to take him," and thought they had done so when they crucified him; but—"He escaped out of their hand," i.e. at the Resurrection. And where has He gone? Beyond the Jordan—beyond the River of *Death* or *Judgment*; and there He is abiding. And many, in faith, are resorting to Him there, and are being taught by Him, while the favoured people have completely lost his ministry, unless they, individually, also resort to Him where He is. The testimony John the Baptist had given proved of great value in leading many to belief in Christ; and it is the testimony of believers in Christ now which is mainly used by God to gather souls to Jesus. Those who believe in Jesus should rightly apprehend themselves as with him beyond Jordan (beyond "Death" and "Judgment")—"risen with Christ."

While the Lord Jesus is abiding beyond the Jordan, Lazarus is sick, and a message to that effect is sent to Him. But Jesus abode "two days still where He was." And to whom do the hearts of believers, lingering here in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, turn, when their dear ones are suffering, and separation seems probable?—to the Lord in the glory. We know that if He were to come, who is our Life, sick ones could not die. But the Lord is still abiding his two days—(two thousand years? the Lord knows,) and suffers his redeemed to fall asleep,

giving, however, two precious words to faith; first, concerning the sick--

"This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby;"

and, secondly, concerning the departed--

"Our friend Lazarus sleepeth."

Bereaved ones! be comforted. They *must* sleep, in order that the Lord may have the special glory of awakening them. How glorified, indeed, will He be, when He shall descend from heaven with a shout, and that same "loud voice," which called Lazarus forth, shall call *us* into His presence, (not, as in his case, "bound about with grave-clothes, and a napkin about his head," showing that the trammels of Death were still about him, and he must fall asleep again,) but we shall come forth as the Lord did, leaving the grave-clothes in the sepulchre, death having no more dominion over us. Glory for ever to the Lord!

When the Lord Jesus arrived, he did not enter the town of Bethany; and we know, from 1 Thess. iv., that when the Lord comes for his Church, he will not come down to the ground, but descend into the air, and we shall be caught up, "to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Lazarus had been actually dead "four days;" this may indicate the four thousand years that Death had already reigned from Adam; and his coming forth "bound about with grave-clothes," as we have said, indicates that all the power of Death was not then actually abolished.

The family at Bethany may well represent the Church of Christ on earth. The members of it are spoken of in John xi. 5 thus—"Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." The Lord Jesus is emphatically said to have "loved his Church." The three loved ones are all of them believers, and they constitute a family. The Church is the "household of faith," and believers are called his brethren. They lived in Bethany (the House of Figs); where his Beloved are is a place of sweet fruit to the Lord. The three represent the Church as—by nature—dead, depraved, and "cumbered" with trifles; but—by grace—as alive again and feasting with Him, as pouring the precious ointment of worship upon Him, and as accepted servants. This is beautifully shown forth in the supper at Bethany, John xii. 2, 3.

But in the meanwhile, these three of Bethany vividly represent the characteristics of the Church at the Lord's coming. Lazarus prefigures those who have fallen asleep in the Lord: Mary represents Christians who long for His arrival, who know that "He that shall come will come, and will not tarry," and are patiently waiting till He calls them. Martha seems to be a type of those Christians who do not realize themselves as already in resurrection-life, and who are putting off the resurrection of those who are asleep to an indefinitely distant day. It is pleasant to see Martha's faith in Christ as the Son of God, and how free she is to confess it, but the Lord desires that she is as much in want of teaching as sympathy, and

accordingly proceeds to test her faith and knowledge, and to show that her statement "I know that he shall rise again at the resurrection of the last day," was a figment of tradition, and not founded on His own blessed teaching. This is exactly the position of many dear Christians now; they place the resurrection of the saved and the unsaved at one and the last day! The Lord does not test *Mary*; she fell at his feet, as a worshipping one and a listener, to quietly await what He would do. Oh, that this may be our attitude of spirit. With such Jesus weeps; and though "our light affliction is but for a moment," as with *Mary*, yet during that moment the Lord Jesus "weeps with them that weep," for He is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities."

But Martha's is a most instructive case:—

"Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died. But I know that, even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give thee.

"Thy brother shall rise again.

"I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

"I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"

"Yea, Lord; I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world."

Many Christians think that Christ is indeed the "Resurrection and the Life" *because* He will raise the dead at His Coming. But the fact is, He is the Resurrection and Life *now*, because "we are new creatures in Christ Jesus." He was judged in our stead, died for us, and when He rose, we, virtually, rose with Him—our Life, our Head—and are, in the Divine view, sitting "together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (Eph. ii. 6.)

"Your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, our Life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

Those who have got no further in the faith than Martha cannot grasp this blessed fact; such Christians are looking at death as an inevitable necessity, and are continuing "all their lifetime subject to bondage"—the bondage of a shadow! the fear of something that has been abolished! for the Scripture saith, He "hath abolished Death!" The believer may fall "asleep in Jesus," and the Lord may descend from heaven at any moment, and call us all, both those asleep and those awake, to himself. This rapturous event we should be looking for and patiently awaiting.

If the Scriptures which teach the blessed fact that we are "passed from death unto life" are quoted and pressed upon many dear Christians, they will give an assent, because the passages referred to are from the Bible; but it will not, through the bad teaching they have received, be an intelligent assent. It will be like Martha's answer; the Lord had said, "Believest thou *this*?" She answers "Yea," and proceeds to say she believes in Him as the Christ! But that, though a blessed

It is not in *human nature* to forego present honour for future glory. But power will be given to us who believe, if we ask grace of God, and earnestly study to be conformed to the mind of Christ Jesus, as revealed in the Scriptures. What we want is Humility, Obedience, and Love.

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus; 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; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became *obedient* unto death, even the death of the cross."

Beloved,—If you wish to please God, you must let this mind which was in his beloved Son be also in you. It will mortify the flesh, but cause you to rejoice in spirit. It will separate you from evil, and make you to be "a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, prepared unto every good work."

May the words of Jesus sink deeply into our souls, and *abide* in us; may we also by faith abide in Him; and may He dwell in our hearts by faith. Oh, let us earnestly watch, that we hold fast these provisions of grace; so shall we bear much fruit, according to the word of the Lord.

Yours ever in true Christian love,

THE EDITOR.

NATIONAL FASTING AND HUMILIATION:

Can there be such a thing during this Dispensation:

The Scriptures clearly teach that there can be no action, of a spiritual nature, by nations, as nations, in these days. The Word of God recognises three divisions of mankind at present in the world—viz. the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God. There is now no preferential nation, although the Jews remain a distinct people. England never had such a preference, nor any nation but that of the Jews; and the Jew is at present set aside dispensationally;—he has no country, no temple, wherein alone he could sacrifice and worship in the highest sense, as it was prophesied respecting them.

"For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod and teraphim." (Hos.iii.4.)

We get a vivid impression of the disruption of the Jew from his proper national standing, when we remember that every male of age ought to appear thrice every year before the Lord, in the place where the Lord had chosen to place his name. Thus the Jews, as a nation, are shut out from all spiritual action. Broken off, for the present, faith in their rejected Messiah can alone bring them individually into acceptance with God; but when they admit that Jesus is the Christ they cease to be Jews.

The Gentile nations, as such, never were admitted on to any ground of approach to God, in fasting, prayer, worship, or sacrifice. Before the Gentiles formerly could have any spiritual status, they had

individually to be circumcised and go upon Jewish ground. It is true, there is the remarkable case of Nineveh placed before us in the Bible. That is, indeed, an instance of general action on the part of a large city of the Gentiles, in which fasting, humiliation, and prayer were effectual to the suspension of the threatened doom. But in this case, there was no putting forth of any claim, because there was no covenant. It was a simple casting of themselves upon the mercy of God—a peradventure of despair.

"Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger that we perish not?"

They had, as they confessed, no ground to expect the mercy they received; nevertheless, it was their only hope, and it pleased God to withdraw his arm. Does the English Nation, in times of peril or of pain, humble itself in any such spirit, and ordain fasting and prayer with similar expectations?

In view of the *real* humiliation of Nineveh, the so-called national humiliations and fastings and prayers of modern times, like so much else, are mere shams. In the first place, in the instance cited there was FAITH—

"So the people of Nineveh *believed* God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even unto the least of them. For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything: let them not feed nor drink water: but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one of them from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?" (Jonah iii.)

But if any Gentile nation were willing so to cast itself on the undeserved mercy of God, admitting it had no claims or grounds on which to expect the same, there would be still *less* reason for hope than in the case of Nineveh. For now the word of Jesus Christ, Son of God, has gone forth:—

"No man cometh unto the Father but by Me!"

And this coming by Jesus is not mere coming with his people, repeating written prayers after a priest, but a heart-faith in Him personally.

"Without faith it is impossible to please Him."

"With the HEART MAN BELIEVETH."

But if every individual in a nation had faith, the whole would cease to be of the World, or Gentiles, and would become of the third division recognised in Scripture—the *Church of God*. Thus, we see that the phrase "Christian nation," in such common use, is a contradiction of terms. All this dreadful confusion has come in through Christians selfishly wooing the World for what it can give. Oh, what a mournful failure! And look at the degrading bondage it has led to: In times of calamity, instead of the World cowering before the power of God, in conscious helplessness, and, perchance, turning to the only Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, what do we see?—We see many who profess and call themselves Christians *kneeling* at the command of a Worldly

Government, *taking* at the hands of that Worldly Government a form of prayer, and *repeating* it at its command! Degradation most deep!

In view of the wrath of God which is coming upon the children of disobedience, as shadowed forth in the Revelation, the present calamities endured by the World are trifles. For the unconverted, of high or low estate—whether in attendance at places called chapels and churches or not,—to think they can, by some modification of self-indulgence, and saying Amen to certain prayers, please God, and remove his hand from pressing on the nation, is not less monstrous than it would be to proclaim a general rejoicing that the great judgments are not yet poured out, notwithstanding the Lord's plain declaration that they soon will be!

That individual Christians may fast privately, for spiritual reasons, we learn from the practice of the early disciples of Christ. The Apostle Paul said—"I keep my body under." To allow anything more than this, is to incur the danger of putting works before faith.

THE INTERCESSION OF CHRIST.

(An answer to the enquiry of a correspondent, as to "how it affects us now.")

Allusions to the office of Intercessor, which the Lord Jesus Christ has undertaken for his people, are very rare in the Scriptures. Intercession brings in the thought of *distance*. But the believer's true place is that of *nearness* to God. It is in the epistle to the Hebrews that the Holy Spirit, by the Apostle Paul, after reviewing the object of the Levitical priesthood, and declaring the priesthood of Christ to be infinitely higher, and in every respect more perfect, assures us that—

"He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Heb. vii. 25.)

Whenever there is a felt need of the intercession of our Great High Priest, true Christians may well be re-assured by the recollection that "He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

It is unspeakably blessed to be of the heavenly people whose Head is the possessor of an unfailling priesthood; one who maintains them and their cause before God *perfectly*. Who is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him. Who can tell the joy of knowing that we have one in the presence of God, who is our Saviour, Friend, and *Great High Priest*. But then we ought to remember that the intercession of Christ for his disciples (all who believe in him) *has been made*, and is already completely accepted. He has prayed the Father for us; see John xvii. Therefore it is that we are carried forward by the Holy Ghost from Heb. vii. to consider in the following chapter the more excellent ministry of our Lord.

"But now he hath obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises." (Heb. viii. 6)

That is to say,—not only is the priesthood higher, and infinitely more perfect than that which began

with Aaron; but the covenant also is far better. For whereas the old covenant brought in a continual reminder of sin, and only made manifest the failures both of the priests and the people—the new covenant, of which Jesus is the mediator, has made an end of sin, and has established the subjects of that covenant before God for ever in sanctification.

"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness; and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." (Heb. viii. 10—12.)

This promise to *earthly* Israel, which will be fulfilled in Millennial days, is true of the *heavenly* people (christians) now. Our Lord has not only saved us *from* death, and given us life, but he has *put away sin* by the sacrifice of himself. Nor does the blessed work end here:—He has brought us into the presence of God our Father as perfect ones.

All this is most fully brought out in Heb. ix. and x., especially in the latter chapter. In due time Jesus had said, in act as well as in word—

"Lo, I come, to do thy will, O God. * * * * * By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once." (x. 9, 10.)

After this we are shown the inherent weakness of the Levitical priests and their sacrifices, and then, in contrast, it is said—

"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever [never to be repeated], sat down on the right hand of God." (x. 12.)

Behold, then, this perfect consummation! The eternal sacrifice, (i. e. of eternal duration as to its efficacy) completed; Intercession fully accepted; Mediation effectual and established; and the Great High Priest *seated* on the throne of God!

But this is not all—

"For by one offering he hath *perfected* for ever them that are sanctified"! [i. e. all those who are saved through the faith in His name.] (x. 14.)

What next, as to walk on earth?

The will of God written in our hearts, and sins remembered no more!

Then what follows?—

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the *holiest*, by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" [i. e. by the word of God.] (x. 19—22.)

This is our condition and calling, as "accepted in the Beloved," though yet waiting as strangers and pilgrims on earth.

While living in this range of God's revealed word—and the Lord would have us to abide in it—our affections are drawn out towards God:—"We love him because he first loved us." It is "fellowship with the Father and the Son." For such as continue

in practical conformity to the will of God, the period of intercession has passed; we are, by faith, in the Father's house. We may, alas! practically fall from this—some never attain to it—then it is precious to know of Christ's unfailling Intercession.

"My little children, these things [the things of 1 John i. and following chapters] write I unto you, *that ye sin not*, [as children of God we ought to hate and avoid sin]; and if any [Christian] man sin, we have an *Advocate* with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: " &c. (1 John ii. 1, 2.)

Thus it appears to us, that Intercession or Advocacy, as presented to Christians in Scripture, is ever in connection with practical failure in walk, and consequent distance from God (i. e. as to consciousness.) All believers have had need of Christ's intercession, and may have again. But it is far better to know our Great High Priest as the one who maintains us in nearness to God, than as having to intercede for us when aught of sin is resting upon the conscience, which, while it endures, practically keeps the child at a distance from the Father.

"But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes [in times past] were far off, are made *nigh* by the blood of Christ." (Eph. ii. 13.)

"Be ye therefore followers of God, as *dear children*, and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour." (Eph. v. 1, 2.)

BARABBAS, AND SIMON THE CYRENIAN.

These two characters are apparently introduced very incidentally into the sacred narrative of the Trial and Crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ. Barabbas and Simon are not by any means voluntary actors, but are brought in per force, without any reference to their own wills, and take no part essentially necessary to the development of the chief issue. Nevertheless, they doubtless fill important parts in the solemn scene, and what those parts were the Holy Spirit will teach the humble, patient, trustful reader of the Word.

We see BARABBAS—a murderer and a robber, and one who had stirred up sedition—bound and powerless, fearing the worst, yet not beyond hope of reprieve. Now, how truly was all this the case with SATAN at that moment! a robber, a murderer, one that "perverted the people," and that from the beginning. Not alone was Barabbas in his sedition; neither was Satan without compers: Again, when Satan went to our Lord in the wilderness, hoping to worst the glorious "last ADAM," he found himself paralyzed and powerless in his presence. For the first time, Heaven and Hell saw a perfect MAN, completely proof against all the subtleties of Satan. Indeed, in some sense, the Lord "bound" him, too; and the proof was, the liberation after he came forth from the wilderness of those who had been bound by Satan, that is, the delivering of those who were possessed of devils. This appears in Mark i. and Matt. xii.

"How can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house."

(This was virtually re-accomplished, in a still more glorious sense, by our Lord's death and resurrection, though Satan's reign is yet permitted, but soon actually to come to an end.)

Like Barabbas, Satan knew his sentence, and from the fact of the presence in the world of the "Holy One of God," had feared being "tormented before the time"—just as Barabbas was fearing a violent and premature end of his bad career. Nevertheless, Satan, doubtless had hopes of a reprieve—a further prolongation of power—a temporary deliverance from fear. This could only come to pass, however, by a deliberate preference by the Jews of *him* and of *his rule* to that of their rightful King. To this point his energies and subtleties were consequently directed. Deep, though short-lived, was his triumph, therefore, when they cried out—

"Not this man, but Barabbas!"

Had the contrary been the case—if, when the Messiah came unto his own, his own had received Him, there could have been no reprieve for Satan, no preferential liberation of Barabbas; for Christ must have reigned in righteousness, monarch of the earth; He could not have divided the kingdom with Satan. Then would have taken place that which will happen when the Lord takes to Himself his great power, and reigns King of the Jews—sinners will be cut off and Satan will be bound and in prison; and will there remain all the period of the millennial reign of Christ on earth. (Rev. xx.)

Turn we to SIMON, the Cyrenian, whom we are convinced prefigures believers in general, as to their original condition in the world, and their course and character as new creatures in Christ. *Simon* means he "that hears or obeys;" now of believers it is true that faith has come "by hearing," and they have "yielded the obedience of faith." As having a Jewish name but of Gentile residence, he is a fit representative of believers, both from among those who "were nigh" and those "who were afar off." We shall see he is always introduced outside the Holy City and the land to which pertained the promises, showing the distinctness of our calling from that of earthly Israel, and he settles down (Acts xi. and xiii.) still further away from the land of his birth, the sin-cursed land of Ham, in which region Cyrene was. It is so with the believer; while he is not "under the law" nor on Jewish ground, as regards earthly promises and blessings, he is still further off from his original condition, as born in sin, having been "translated from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God's dear Son," and that people for whom his King and God cherishes such purposes of grace must be nearer and dearer to him than his father's house—the world—just as Antioch, Simon's residence, as a Christian, was much nearer Judea than Cyrene, the place of his birth.

Not individually, but as one of the race, Simon the Cyrenian was implicated in the rejection and cruci-

sion of the Lord Jesus; and were not we "sinners of the Gentiles" verily guilty, in the persons of Pilate and the Roman soldiers? and during our unregeneracy did we not endorse their guilt by not grieving over it? "He was despised and rejected of men," (not of the Jews only,) and the unparalleled guilt lays still at the World's door.

As further bearing out our thought that Simon represents believers in general, it is interesting to trace him in Acts xi. and xiii. at Antioch, where himself and others are first called "Christians."

"Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord. Then tidings of these things came unto the church which was in Jerusalem; and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch." (xi. 19—22.)

"Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon (that was called Niger), and Lucius (of Cyrene), and Manaen (which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch), and Saul." (xiii. 1.)

Our judgment is that as "Simeon" is only another way of writing "Simon," (for Simon Peter is written "Simeon" in Acts xv. 14,) and as the plural "men of Cyrene" is employed with reference to those whom the Lord used in this work at Antioch, but only *one* (Lucius) is so designated, that therefore this "Simeon that was called Niger" is "Simon the Cyrenian." But why called "Niger"? why is the old designation dropped? Is he not introduced by the Spirit with everything new about him, compared with what it was with him when he was brought into our view as the "stranger coming out of the country"? He is located, not at Cyrene, but at Antioch; he is of a new people, "Christians"; and the Spirit records his new name "Niger." (Christ being Lord in his own house, re-names whom He will, and may, as in this case and that of John and James (whom He called "Boanerges,") give no reason for the act. It is true that Simon might have been re-named by the Church; but the fact of the Holy Spirit here appropriating the name seems to indicate that it was quite of the Lord. Now "Niger" means *Black*. If Christians had been left so to call Simon it might have been on account (as we may suppose) of a deep swarthy-ness of complexion, being a native of Africa, in which continent Cyrene was; but doubtless the Lord had a higher and spiritual reason, and if we are right, that Simon prefigures believers in general, as called from outside Judaism to bear the cross and follow Jesus, what a beautiful harmony between this new name given to him who typifies the Church and that which the Church says in the Song of Solomon?

"I am BLACK, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon. Look not upon me, because I am BLACK, because the sun hath looked upon me."

Let us now turn our attention to the main lesson associated with the person of Simon the Cyrenian—that which is derived from the contemplation of him in the act of carrying the cross after Jesus. The cross represents rejection, contumely, suffering, burdens for Christ's sake, borne after the Lord's manner; in faith following Him up the mount whither He has gone. In Simon's case, he was *compelled* to bear the cross; the World, in the persons of the soldiers, laid it on him; and the Christian must expect burdens from the World and the dislike of worldly christians, and that in proportion to the spirituality and zeal of his walk. "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." But we are encouraged to patiently endure it: "If we suffer with Him, we shall be also glorified together."

To such as take up the cross the Lord will be ever near, and his grace is ever sufficient for us, Doubtless, the Lord feels for us, as He did for Simon, but "as our afflictions abound, our consolations shall much more abound." "Let us therefore go to him outside the camp bearing his reproach," knowing that "our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Oh, how thankful we shall be in the glory for every burden laid upon us down here! Though it was grievous at the time, yet how must Simon have rejoiced afterwards that he had the special honour, though against his will, of fellowship with the Lord in his sufferings.

Thus we see in Simon, the Members, by anticipation, called into participation of suffering with the Head; but oh, how slight as compared with His deep, deep affliction! Simon had no part with the Lord in the shame and spitting, the mockery and the buffeting: the pain of the thorns, the scourge, and the cross: at Calvary, where the wrath of God against sin must be endured, Simon vanishes. Believing ones were utterly unable to endure with the Lord. In Gethsemane they slept, in the presence of the officers they fled, in the hall of the high priest the Master is denied, and at the cross a few women and one young man stand afar off, and though before He dies two of them draw near, it is only when fellowship is no longer possible, and to hear Him cry, with a loud voice, "It is finished!"

Oh, that we may realize that special acquaintance with the Lord which Simon obtained through bearing the cross after Him! He heard and saw him lament over the daughters of Jerusalem—"Weep not for me; weep for yourselves and your children." Oh, how these words of wondrous pity—of deepest sympathy for others' woes, crowding out the keenest suffering in Himself—must have fallen on the heart of Simon! how they revealed the Divine Man before him! Did he think much of his hardships after that? Nor shall we, if the same blessed example is steadily realized by faith.

NOTICE.

EACH Number of "Precious Truth," as issued, together with a Packet of assorted *Tracts and Leaflets*, will be sent, post free, to all who may so desire, by remitting in advance, 24 postage stamps for 12 months, to J. E., 164, New North-road, London.

TO DEAR CHRISTIANS (i. e. BELIEVERS IN CHRIST)
WHO ARE ASSOCIATED WITH
THE STATE RELIGION OF ENGLAND.

LETTER NO. I.

We desire in christian love, and in the spirit of meekness, to offer a few thoughts for your solemn consideration before God, respecting your "Book of Common Prayer," and matters connected therewith. Many of you will be ready to reply—"We are well acquainted with the defects existing in that book, as well as in our church arrangements, and we live in hopes of seeing them reformed." We are thankful that such is your desire. Notwithstanding, we think, if you will patiently look into the whole matter with us, praying to God that the "Holy Ghost" "the Comforter," "the Spirit of Truth," may lead us into all truth—the examination will surely result in profit to your souls. First, as respects Ministry. We have already, in previous numbers of this paper, offered some serious remonstrances concerning your Bishops. The script res plainly show how that their political and lordly standing completely contravenes the commands of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the Holy Ghost by the apostles.

"Jesus called the twelve and said unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise *Lordship* over them; and their great ones exercise *authority* upon them. *But so shall it not be among you, &c.*" (Mark x. 42, 43.)

The spirit of this scripture was reiterated by *Our Saviour* continually, and shines out in all the sacred epistles, which were given after His ascension. But we will not dwell upon this point now, as we are conscious that most of those who are spiritual among you, blush for the anomalous position of the men who exercise a *Gentile Lordship* over you. For the present, therefore, we leave the "Bishops of the State," and turn to your every-day ministers—the priests. Priests? Why Priests? Do not think we are questioning the name without seeing a most weighty issue involved in its assumption. If you will refer to 1 Cor. xii. you will find an enumeration of divinely given *christian* ministries. Speaking of gifts in the various members of the body of Christ, the Church, we are there taught that—

"God hath set some in the church, [simply as members of the body,] first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, then gifts of healing," &c. (v. 26.)

Here we have ministry of various kinds, as it should be exercised, to the extent of gifts now given, in any assembly of true believers. "Diversity of gifts, but the same Spirit." Look carefully and prayerfully at the whole chapter, and you will see to what end gifts are given, also how they are to be exercised. But Eph. iv. 11 enumerates most completely, our Lord's gifts in the way of servants or ministers, thus—

"When he [Christ] ascended up 'on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. * * * And he gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers."

In the epistle to Corinthians, ministerial gifts in

the midst of true christians gathered to the Lord, are in contemplation. But in that to Ephesians, the whole "work of the ministry" is considered. Therefore, we have in addition to ministries which are exercised *within* the assembly, *outside* ministers also, namely, Evangelists, who go forth into all the world to preach the gospel—and pastors, whose office, when rightly understood, is much exercised in visitations from house to house.

Now, is it not remarkable that the constructors of *Anglicism*, have discarded every name by which the Head of the Church in that epistle to the Ephesians distinguishes His sent servants!

Thus it is, however. Those who exercise authority among you neither recognise the Lord's right to appoint, nor even to name, ministers who are called His servants!

Bishops. Priests, and Deacons! These are the orders established by the religion of the State. Bishops, as Lords, are in opposition to scripture. Deacons, according to the word of God, were appointed primarily to serve tables, and were not officially for spiritual ministry at all. Priests belong to a past dispensation!

Of course, the *titles* of Bishops, Priests and Deacons are found in scripture. But the *characteristics* of those who hold these titles among you are thoroughly *unscriptural*: a candid appeal to the New Testament cannot fail to show this. And we must ask you again to reflect, that the ministerial designations, and as far as possible the gifts also, given by our Lord—namely, Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers, have been entirely discarded by your rulers. Nor is this all. They have not only taken up titles which, though found in scripture, are now misapplied—but they have introduced a list of dignities, for which there is no sanction whatever in the word of God. *Arch* Bishops, *Arch* Deacons, Deans, Canons, Vicars, Rectors, Curates, and we know not how many more!

Now, all these inventions are built upon a man-made Priesthood. However great or small the office held by your clergy. (excepting the deaconate,) the holder thereof must be a priest! This, therefore, is the keystone of the whole edifice of the Church of England (so called.) We wish the proposition to be clearly understood. It is held by your church as essential to effectual ministry, that the man be an ordained priest! Let us, then, seek to know what our God has revealed respecting Priesthood. There are three priestly orders of God, as made known in the scriptures. First, that of Melchisedec, which belongs to Our Great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ. Secondly, the Aaronic or Levitical Priesthood, which was given exclusively to one family and tribe—called of God to offer sacrifices, to make atonement for the sins of the people, and to wait upon the service of the tabernacle.

The third order of priesthood we purpose to examine hereafter.

It was, and is ever, impossible to take the priestly office, or receive it at the hands of men, unless expressly called of God. "No man taketh this

honour unto himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron." (Heb. v. 4.)

The judgment executed upon Korah and his confederates, in Numbers xvi., clearly shows the Lord's estimate of such presumption. Of course, it is easy to assume the TITLE, or for men to confer it upon one another—especially in these days of God's "long-suffering," during which judgment is suspended. For vengeance is only delayed, not forgotten, as men foolishly suppose. [2 Peter iii. 9, 10.]

We see in measure, living evidence of what priestly assumption leads to—namely, popery in Rome, and its counterfeit in England and elsewhere. It is all of the spirit of anti-Christ, and foreshadows him who is yet to come. The culminating point will be reached when THE anti-Christ appears.

"Let no man deceive you by any means, for that day [the day of Christ's coming to earth to judge the nations] shall not come except there come a falling away [apostacy] first, and THAT MAN OF SIN BE REVEALED, the son of perdition; who *opposeth and exulteth himself above* all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." (2 Thess. ii. 3, 4.)

This is the anti-Christ who is yet to arise, "whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." (2 Thess. ii. 8.)

Yes, this is to be the end of it.

To return to our examination of divinely-given priesthoods. When God, in the past dispensation, ordained an earthly priesthood and a ritual service, he left nothing to man's choice. The duties of the priests and Levites were defined with the greatest exactitude. One cannot read through the books of Moses without a feeling of astonishment at the *minute* directions as to everything pertaining to the service of God, and the functions of the priest as towards the Israelitish people. Even respecting the structure in which God would be worshipped, the apostle reminds us that "Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for see, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the Mount." (Heb. viii. 5.)

But the priests (so called) among you have neither building, nor ordinances, according to God's appointment! A spiritual search into the word of God cannot fail to prove to you that the ONLY RITUAL priesthood divinely sanctioned is that which was given to the children of Israel. And is it not evident that no priesthood can be acceptable to God but that which has been created by him? For how shall the priest know the mind of God as to how he would be served, unless the Lord himself provide the ritual?

You must, therefore, become Jews, or Jewish proselytes to be under a true earthly priesthood, and your priests must be of the descendants of Levi, for God will accept none other family in that order of priests.

We suppose the best thing that can be said for Church of England priests and their observances, is that they are *imitations* of that which was ordained under the old covenant. But consider, we beg of

you, how that in the following scripture everything of that character is set aside.

"If perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, [for under it the people received the law], what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being *changed*, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For he [Christ] of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda: of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident: for that a ter the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, who is made not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life"! (Heb. vii. 11—16.)

The establishment of the Melchisedec priesthood, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, has changed everything. In him the true priesthood exists in "the power of an endless life." Moreover, the PLACE for the exercise of priesthood is CHANGED also. God's way is, that his priests shall exercise their office in the place that he shall choose. The chosen place *now* is heaven. God's anointed priest, his own well beloved son, having been rejected by the world, the heavens have received him, "UNTIL the times of restitution of all things." (Acts iii. 21.) There is now no other place for the exercise of the priest's office. Jerusalem was the place of God's choice, but that is trodden under foot of the Gentiles. Yes, the priesthood of Christ, rejected on earth, has changed everything. It has changed you,—his followers, (if you be really trusting in Him,) from an EARTHLY to a HEAVENLY people. The Lord has no earthly people *now*, and therefore no earthly priesthood.

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a *new and living way*, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith," &c. (Heb. x. 19—22.)

With such an invitation from God to his dear children, (i. e. to all who through faith are cleansed by the precious blood of Christ) what can be the use of man-made priests?

But let us ask you to consider further, what was the actual end of the priesthood committed to men, even when ordained of God? Was it not the *Chief Priests* who led the Jewish people in that fearful cry, "Crucify him! Crucify him?"

Yes, the earthly priesthood was opposed to the heavenly—and so it is now. The priests of Israel professed to trust in God, but crucified his Son, and those who are called priests now, though professing to act in the name of Christ, are in reality his rivals!

We would be careful to remind you that the question of Salvation is not that with which we are dealing here. We are considering the Servants and the Service of God. No doubt many of your clergy are not only saved by faith in Jesus Christ, but have much love for the Lord. Yet the fact remains, that in the position they hold as priests, in respect to their title and office, they are the RIVALS of the Lord that bought them! For to take the place of a priest, as a Mediator between God and man, is necessarily a de-

mial of the *sufficiency* of the priesthood of Christ! This is truly awful.

We will not here dwell upon the enormity of those who profess to minister as priests among you, who themselves know not God nor Jesus Christ whom he has sent. Our object is to present to you the *entire contrariety of priestly institutions* to the mind of God. The very essence of priesthood is that of having a place of nearness to God, which the rest of his people have not. This is plainly shown in the account of the angel's visit to Zacharias.

"It came to pass that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without [outside] at the time of incense." (Luke i. 8-10.)

This is the true characteristic of a priest. He acts on behalf of the people *before God*, while they, the multitude, remain *outside*! You see how completely the character and work of our Great High Priest corresponds with that requirement. But, suppose one of the Scribes, not of the tribe of Levi, to have presented himself to the outside multitude of whom we have been reading, saying, "I also am a priest and will help you in your worship *outside*, while Zacharias is inside before God." Would the people have received him? Yet such a course would be far more reasonable than for men now to thrust themselves in between you and Our Great High Priest who has entered into the holiest *for us*. Doubtless there is a felt need of one who can present our prayers and offerings of thanksgiving to God in an acceptable manner;—of one set apart to minister for us before God, whose sacred office and character shall have a sanctifying influence upon our lives;—of one who should be able to help our infirmities, and lead us in true worship. Man cannot make a priest to answer these requirements. But God has provided one. And only one! "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." (1 Tim. ii. 5.) Oh, if you will but weigh the matter fairly before God you will consent to have no other priest than Jesus. An earthly priesthood *now* is an utter delusion; and the effect of going on with it is necessarily to bring darkness and sorrow to your souls. Remember—

"We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." (Heb. iv. 15.)

This one Mediator, this Great High Priest, the man Christ Jesus, who is also Son of God, and Lord, can meet all your needs, whereas an earthly priest can meet none of them. And be assured, if you will prefer the latter, you will know experimentally little of the blessing of the former. We do not imply that you will not be saved. If you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ you *are* saved. The question is, whom will you have for your priest? A man on earth with the assumed title, but without one word of God to sanction it, or the man Christ Jesus, the Great High Priest on the throne of God? You cannot have both. God's third order of Priests we hope to consider in our next.

COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL BY ST. JOHN.

BY THE EDITOR OF "PRECIOUS TRUTH."

CHAPTER II.

"There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." (ver. 1, 2.)

This seems at first sight a true recognition of our Lord's ministry. Yet what did it really amount to? He gave Jesus the title of Rabbi, but then Nicodemus bore that title himself! He had seen the miracles of Jesus, and had arrived at the conclusion that the worker of them was a teacher come from God! This, although true indeed, was not the point for faith to rest at. How it contrasts with the declaration of Nathaniel in the first chapter! That child of faith, who seems to have witnessed no miracle, acting only upon the testimony of Jesus, unhesitatingly exclaims, "Thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel." Nathaniel, who was little in his own eyes, at once recognised *the Son of God*. But Nicodemus was a Pharisee and Ruler, and he got no further than the perception of a teacher come from God. Even his faith as to this fails when put to a severe test. It is beautiful to notice how constantly our Lord dealt with those who came to him; according to what they professed. Sinners, who sought him in faith, owning themselves just what they were, obtained free forgiveness. While those who come with any kind of self-sufficiency were searched through and through by the living word. May this truth come home with power to every reader; for we have to do with the same Jesus.

Little did Nicodemus think when he decided to visit Jesus *by night*, that he was coming to **THE LIGHT**. Little did he think that in the presence of light divine, the darkness and ignorance of his own soul were to be exposed. But so it was.

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." (ver. 3.)

Here was a startling truth which all the learning and wisdom of the Jewish ruler was unable to cope with.

"Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" (ver. 4.)

Where was the faith which Nicodemus had professed in Christ as a *teacher* come from God? It was hard for a **RULER** to become a disciple.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

E. C., Blackheath, in our next.

Letters for the Editor to be addressed to 335, Strand, W.C.

To facilitate the obtaining of PRECIOUS TRUTH, packets will be sent post free to any part of the United Kingdom, by remitting, in advance, as follows:—Two copies for 3d., Five for 5d., Ten for 8d. Send Stamps. Address either of the Publishers as below.

Published for the Proprietor, by

Job Candlish, 335, Strand, London, W.C.
Arthur Hall, 25, Paternoster-row, London, E.C.
Smart & Allen, 2, London-church-yard, Paternoster Row.
George Galle, 53, Buchanan street, Glasgow.
JOHN EVANS, Printer, 335a, Strand, London, W.C.

PRECIOUS TRUTH.

"WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?"—(Rom. iv. 3.)

Arthur Hall, 25, Paternoster-row, London.]

[Job Candwell, 235, Strand, London, W.C.]

No. 16.]

JULY 1, 1866.

[One Halfpenny.]

TO THE CHRISTIAN READER.

"It is not for you to know the times and the seasons."

BELOVED,—

There is much talk in these days of the coming of the Lord. God has himself revived the expectancy in the souls of many true believers. Of this I have no doubt whatever. But the Devil is busy in raising false testimony about it. He sets men *calculating* days and dates, in spite of the Lord's words—

"It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." (Acts i. 17.)

The mind of our Lord Jesus Christ on this subject is abundantly manifested in his own sayings, and in the writings of the apostles; namely, that His followers should *always* be waiting and watching for His return. And it must be evident, on reflection, to those who are spiritual, that nothing could be better calculated to keep his people faithful during his bodily absence, than the absolute uncertainty as to when He would come again. They were to be in constant expectancy and watchfulness. Look at the warning words of the Saviour.

"Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. For the Son of Man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye, therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrow, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch." (Mark xiii. 33—37.)

Now, beloved, there are some who say that though they cannot know the day or the hour, they can find out the year. I believe the majority of those who thus seek to be wise above what is written, are *not intentional* deceivers. But Satan is using them, for all that. They fix their dates, and, of course, the time passes by, whereupon scoffers are *encouraged* in their unbelief, and weak christians are *discouraged* in their hope. Thus is fulfilled that prophecy—

"There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as from the beginning of the creation." (2 Pet. iii. 3, 4.)

But, dear christian brother or sister, be not *you* deceived. There is not a word in the scriptures to justify a calculation of the year, any more than the day or the hour. It is for us to accept in all simplicity that word given in the early days—

"Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven." (1 Thessalonians i. 9, 10.)

If eighteen hundred years ago Christians were exhorted to wait for Him, shall not we be in expectancy now?

Yes, wait for Him, watch for Him, our glorious Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. Look for Him *to-day*, and if He tarries and you remain here, look for Him *to-morrow*. And if He comes not for many years, still watch for Him day by day. Come He will. And He has said—

"Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching." (Luke xii. 37.)

As a mere doctrine this would not help me: but as a living truth, held practically, it is of vital importance as to my christian walk and conversation.

"For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." (Phil. iii. 20, 21.)

Christians who persist in opposing the Lord's will, by endeavouring to pry into the unrevealed secrets of God, as to times and seasons, get first puffed up with their own conceits, and end by bringing shame upon themselves and the holy name they bear. I thank God that, in infinite wisdom and love, he has hidden the *time* from us. But I also praise Him for reviving the true hope of the church in our days. The wise and foolish virgins (i.e. believers and nominal christians) have all slumbered and slept—but the midnight cry has been heard, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh"—and those who are spiritually wise are going out to meet him. Do you ask me, which way? I answer, "They are going forth to him *outside the camp*, bearing his reproach." This is no easy task. It is no light thing to turn your back upon the world and declare yourself no longer of it. But that, beloved, is what you must do, if you would *rejoice* in the belief that "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." You may be looked upon with contempt by your neighbours and friends, but you may quietly console yourself with the certainty of that portion which the Apostle Paul was waiting for, according to 2 Tim. iv. 8.

Let us then, in meekness and grace, repeat the midnight cry to *all believers*. But it cannot be a welcome theme for such as obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. His coming means *judgment* for the *unbeliever*, though it will be *all joy* for the *faithful*. For there will be two phases of the Lord's coming, according to prophecy. The primary incidents are expressly described in the following scripture—

"The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and

the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we [any believers] which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1 Thesa. iv. 16, 17.)

Then will follow the fulfilment of another range of the prophetic word, connected with the second coming of the Son of God. This is most solemnly set forth in the following, as also in many other passages of Holy Writ—

"Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." (Jude 14, 15.)

Beloved, I pray you let these truths have their proper effect on your life. I am pressing upon you no party question. I only entreat you to believe your Lord's own words, and faithfully to watch for His coming.

If you have any difficulty in accepting that which is here presented, I will gladly explain further on hearing from you.

Yours ever in Christ Jesus our Lord,
And in patient waiting for Him,
THE EDITOR.

A MASTER OF ISRAEL WITH JESUS.

(Continuation of the Commentary on the Gospel by John.)

CHAPTER II.

"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (v. 5, 6.)

Here is a kind of teaching which the natural mind is unwilling to receive, until exhausted of its pride and self-wisdom. The flesh, or Adam nature, is utterly condemned as unfit and impotent. Unless born again, made a new creature, man CANNOT enter the kingdom of God. It is just simply impossible. But the Lord not only declares the necessity of the new birth. He also makes known the power by which it is accomplished. "Except a man be born of *water and the spirit* he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." There is no allusion to water baptism here. The burial of baptism comes *after* the new birth; and it must be evident to all spiritually-minded christians, on careful consideration of the scriptures, that the water of nature is quite powerless to produce any effect upon the soul. Our Lord's teaching is, that the re-creative power is *water and the Spirit*. This quickening water is the *water of the word*, (Eph. v. 26) as used of the Holy Spirit; by which believers are regenerate. This is plainly stated elsewhere—

"Of his own will begat he us *with the word of truth*." (James i. 18.)

We have here a declaration quite unmistakable, if we sit at the feet of Jesus. But there is a scripture which is, as it were, God's commentary upon our Lord's declaration to Nicodemus.

"According to his mercy he saved us, by the *washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost*." (Titus iii. 5.)

The new creation or second birth is very wonderful—altogether beyond the analysis of the natural mind. Jesus saw how incomprehensible it was to his auditor, and proceeded with his instruction thus—

"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst tell from whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." (ver. 7, 8.)

Men marvel with incredulity when told of God's spiritual work. Because the creature cannot measure the power of God in the UNSEEN operations of the Holy Ghost, he is prone to shut himself up in unbelief. But, the Lord, in wondrous grace, teaches, by an everyday illustration, that we must be satisfied to witness the effect, and believe, though we are unable to trace the course by which divine power operates in the soul. We cannot find out whence the wind comes or whither it goes. Neither can we analyse the operation of the Divine Word and Spirit in the soul of man, begetting a new creature through faith in Jesus Christ. In vain do men elaborate their arguments, and endeavour to prove that they know all about it. God proclaims salvation to all who believe in Jesus, and he declares all such to be new creatures in Him. Moreover, he makes known to us the power by which he works—namely, the Word and the Spirit. Beyond this man's research cannot go. Worse than useless are all his endeavours to be wise above that which is written. Let him first find the start point and the terminus of the wind that blows!

"Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?" (ver. 9.)

Alas! poor Jewish ruler, you began by saying you knew Jesus to be a teacher come from God—yet you doubt and question all he says! In spite of your fair profession, you stand convicted of unbelief. Nor is this all—as a leader of God's people you ought to have known God's ways. Old Testament Scripture did not indeed reveal as fully as Jesus was doing, the absolute need of new birth—yet doubtless it was made known darkly; it might, perhaps, be seen in some of the Psalms of David.

"He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever. His glory is great in thy salvation." (Ps. xxi. 4, 5.)

At all events we find that when Nicodemus demurred to the teaching of Jesus, with his "How can these things be?" our Lord reproved him for his ignorance as well as for his unbelief.

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a Master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto you, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen, and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you of earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you heavenly things?" (Ver. 10, 11, 12.)

Alas! for the ignorance and unbelief which shuts out the Saviour's testimony, even about earthly things. Jesus can tell us all about the heavenlies. Indeed, the heavens are open to faith. But first must come belief to the saving of the soul. Those who accept the testimony of Christ, as to the gift of salvation through the sacrifice of himself, have become, by divine power, new creatures. Their bodies are *as yet*

unchanged, but as to their spirits they are born again. Henceforth, if WALKING in faith, they may know all that God has revealed in his word, of heavenly things. By the time that Nicodemus came to assist at the burial of our Lord's body, he had doubtless begun to realise something of this. But at his first interview with Christ, he was slow to receive the truth, for pride and Phariseeism were in his heart. Yet Jesus in wondrous patience, continued his discourse—

"And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven." (ver. 13.)

Here was marvel upon marvel; but Nicodemus was silenced. We are not furnished with any further record of his doubts, though, as he afterwards remained in association with the sect of the Pharisees who opposed Christ, it is pretty clear that he still demurred to the revelations of his heavenly teacher. How many questions would arise in the unregenerate heart as to the possibility of this Son of Man being both in earth and in heaven! Yet no doubt the words of Jesus were working in his soul. He seems at length to have taken the attitude of a listener and a learner. For now the Lord begins to unfold the sublime but simple terms of that Gospel of Salvation, which has since been sent by Him into all the world.

FEMALE PREACHERS.

We have before us a pamphlet written by Mrs. Booth, entitled, "Female Teaching." This we have been specially requested to review, and as it is a subject upon which much misconception seems to prevail, we have for some time been desirous of bringing it under that searching enquiry, "What saith the Scripture?" This will put an end to all controversy, if we are really desirous of acting out the mind of God.

Mrs Booth has fallen into a mistake, in common with some recent writers in the *Revival*, and others, in supposing it needful to the vindication of Female Preachers of the Gospel, to prove the admissibility of Female teaching in the Church. This results from not sufficiently considering "things that differ." If a woman takes the place of an Evangelist, i.e. if she goes forth to preach the gospel of salvation, or invites sinners to hear her proclaim the glad tidings, the scriptures furnish no word by which a brother in the Lord could forbid her. She is answerable only to the Head of the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ; unless she be married, in which case she is accountable also to her earthly head, her husband.

In the light of the scripture narrative of the Samaritan woman (John iv.) we can understand a sister brimfull of joy at having found Christ, hastening away to make known the gracious Saviour, and urging all who will listen to her, to "come and see." This is the simple view of the case, as prompted by christian love, and we believe it is the only favourable way in which female preaching can be regarded. As a spontaneous burst of testimony, we doubt not

that a woman's proclamation of salvation by Christ after the manner of her sister from the well of Sychar, would be acceptable to God; but it is very certain that when our Lord sent forth *his* missionaries, he did not choose one female for the office. If a christian woman, having a desire to take service as an evangelist, were to consult us, we should press her to consider prayerfully the above fact, which speaks volumes. Yet we could not say but what the Lord might be pleased, in these days, to *shame* many of his men servants, by giving evangelist gifts to women. To her own Master she standeth or falleth.

Mrs Booth cites the case of Deborah, the prophetess, in her advocacy of female teaching in the church. But the lesson Deborah furnishes is this—Barak, whose place it was to lead the chosen band of Israelites against the enemies of the Lord, refused to go unless Deborah accompanied him, whereupon she replied—

"I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding, the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honour; for the Lord shall sell Sisera into the hands of a woman." (Judges iv. 9.)

This is certainly the rebuke we should have to take to ourselves if we had any thought of putting a woman forward as an evangelist. However, God forbid that we should judge another in this matter. We only utter a voice of warning.

"Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon [upon Jesus Christ, the only true foundation] he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire." (1 Cor. iii. 13—15.)

It is utterly vain to permit ourselves to be deceived by agitations and excited meetings.

"The flesh profiteth nothing."

Mrs Booth thinks that the natural sensibilities of woman render her a fitted instrument to proclaim the word of life. But it is very evident our Lord thinks differently. Paul had given to him "a thorn in the flesh," that he might glory, not in his natural capacities, but, in his infirmities. Conversion is not effected by exciting natural feelings and affections. If it were so, women should doubtless have the foremost place; but it is far otherwise. We are "born, not of blood, nor the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Let every brother and sister judge himself and herself in the light of the *written* word, as in the presence of Jesus, the *living* word. Take care that it is He who is working in you to will and to do of his good pleasure. Then go forth and do, and let no man say you nay.

Now let us look at the question of "Female Teaching." This is a very different thing to evangelising. The Scriptures show women most precious used as teachers, *outside* the assembly, but never *in* the church.

Whether we refer to Old Testament scriptures, or to the New, there is no deviation from the Lord's established rule, that in the assemblies of God's people, a woman is not suffered to speak. It is mere folly

and waste of time to reason or argue as to woman's *rights* or capabilities in this matter. As to *rights*, a believer (whether male or female) has *none*. That question is soon settled. As to any other consideration, such as possession of gift or qualification—everything must give way to God's *order*.

"Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak, but to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for women to speak in the church." (1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35.)

Here we are referred both to the Old and the New dispensation. Under each, absolute silence is enjoined upon women in the assemblies of God's people. We are sorry to find Mrs Booth and the *Revival* writers endeavouring to explain away the above scripture. But words must cease to be used as the exponents of our Lord's will, if the plain commands of the quotation before us can be evaded.

"Let your women keep silence," * * * "It is not permitted unto them to speak," * * * "It is a shame for women to speak in the church."

It is impossible to have expressions more definite for the guidance of those who are true-hearted. Nor is the foregoing the only passage to which we can refer. In the 1st epistle to Timothy, (the main object of which is to give directions respecting church government,)—women are again expressly commanded to be in silence.

"Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was the first formed, then Eve." (1 Tim. ii. 11—13.)

There is no room for a doubt as to what our Lord's will is in this matter.

As we have intimated, Mrs Booth's difficulties arise, in the first place, through not distinguishing between "preaching" and "teaching"—and secondly, (as to teaching,) through not noticing the contrast divinely made, in permitting women to teach and prophecy *outside* the assembly, though absolutely forbidding them to do so in the church. She consequently imagines there is discrepancy between the manifest injunctions of the scriptures we have quoted, and the instances of female ministry recorded in other portions of the sacred writings. But, accept the evident distinction we have pointed out, and all becomes plain enough. Look at the case of Priscilla, one who could instruct Apollos—she with her husband took the preacher *privately*, and instructed him in the way of God more perfectly. The same thing holds throughout the Bible. God uses women as servants, but it is always apart from His assemblies. Even Miriam, the sister of Aaron, is no exception to the rule. She was a prophetess, and had an important place given to her before the Lord. But when she and her brother in self-exaltation said—

"Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us?" (Num. xii. 2.)—

Thus arrogating an equality with God's specially

chosen servant, she was stricken with leprosy! Solemn lesson, written for our warning!

It is necessary to refer to one scripture more, respecting which the writer of the pamphlet and others, find needless perplexity. It is that in 1 Cor. xi.—

"Every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered, dishonoureth her head."

It is attempted to be argued that there is here a recognition of female ministry in the church, and that therefore the command in the 14th chapter of the same epistle, is a contradiction of what is taught in that just quoted.

In answer to this, it would suffice to remark, that it is simply impossible for one of the sacred writings to contradict another; and if that were not so, the *latest* command must be acted upon. But there is no need to avoid the difficulty in this way. The moot point of the passage quoted from 1 Cor. xi. is not whether a woman is permitted to pray or prophecy in the church, but whether she may do so anywhere, *with her head uncovered*. She may pray or prophecy apart from the assembly, but she is to have her head covered. Of course she will also pray when present in the church, but she must be covered, and she must pray silently, as did Hannah, the mother of Samuel, in the tabernacle. Respecting such women as had the gift of prophecy, they were not to use it in the church. True, the prohibition is not stated in the 11th chapter, *but it is in the 14th*.

"The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion," &c.

A woman, if she had prophetic gift, must, when prophesying, have her head covered. As to fitting opportunity for the exercise of the gift, the Lord would furnish that apart from the assembly, as in the case of the daughters of Philip, the evangelist; see Acts xxi. 8, 9.

In conclusion we will refer once more to the 14th chapter of 1 Cor. In connexion with what the apostle had been enjoining upon the saints, and following close upon the verses commencing, "Let your women keep silence in the churches," &c., he adds—

"If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." (ver. 37.)

If we are true to the Lord we shall find in this a full deliverance out of every perplexity. Happy they who in simplicity keep his commandments.

"If any man will no His will he shall know of the doctrine," &c. (John vii. 17.)

"HELPERS OF YOUR JOY."—(2 Cor. i. 24.)

A contributor to PRECIOUS TRUTH would be glad to know where his "help" would be welcome for a week or two during the summer, if the Lord should graciously give him opportunity. He desires to labour both in preaching the gospel, and in helping Christians by means of Scripture meetings, and lectures, where there is convenience. "The love of Christ constraineth us." (2 Cor. v. 14.)

HEAVENLY WISDOM IN A LOWLY ONE.

(Matt. xxvi.; Mark xiv.; John xii.)

Oh, to desire the honour which cometh from God only! "not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth." Woman was several times honoured by the Lord Jesus. There was the Syro-Phenician, for her importunity and humility;—Mary Magdalene, deeply concerned and self-forgetful, the first to hear and see the Lord in resurrection life, and to be his messenger while He ascended to the Father;—and Mary of Bethany, commended to believers, for all time, for special discernment of the truth, and for acting upon it, in unsparring love.

While the Apostles, to a man, were intent on thoughts of the kingdom, a lowly woman, "swift to hear, slow to speak," discerns THE TRUTH, that Jesus came to die—"to be led as a lamb to the slaughter." Gathering from what fell from his lips, that he should suffer, at the hands of sinful men, but that, though He should die, his "flesh would not see corruption," for, as He said, He "would rise again the third day," she came beforehand to anoint His body to the burial. Mary, with love-quickened eye, discerned in the gathering, ominous clouds, that the climax of man's wickedness was at hand. So manifest was the malignity in high places, that her Lord could no more walk openly; indeed, the chief priests and Pharisees had given commandment that "if any man knew where he were, he should show it, that they might take him." More than this, she was enlightened by the Lord's own words. Jesus having returned to Jerusalem and resumed public teaching, leaves the city towards eventide (Matt. xxiv. 1, 2), and discourses privately with the disciples on the Mount of Olives, which was on the road to Bethany (xxiv. and xxv.) Then, probably on the way to Bethany, the Lord Jesus said plainly—

"Ye know that after TWO DAYS is the passover, and the Son of Man is betrayed to be crucified." (xxvi. 1.)

These words, which produce from the disciples no recorded remark, were doubtless heard, directly or indirectly, by Mary, and led her to instant action, for the anointing of the Lord Jesus took place that night at supper.

If, indeed, He was so soon to die, then Mary knew that then was the time to bring forth the hoarded ointment. Poured *now* on head and feet, the odour of that plentiful and precious perfume would hover about his sacred Self to the last, even to his place of sepulture.

That this *was* her object, comes out in all the three Gospels in which the circumstance is narrated:

"In that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial." (Matt.)

"She hath done what she could; she is come to anoint my body to the burial." (Mark.)

"Let her alone; against the day of my burying hath she kept this." (John.)

How her act contrasts with that of Nicodemus, the learned ruler-disciple! Oh, the things

that are hidden from the wise and prudent, but revealed unto babes! Mary honours the Lord in life, knowing that no embalmment would be needful for His Incorruptible, Holy Body. Nicodemus honours not, while honour is called-for and desirable, that is to say, while His Lord lived, and was looking for individual recognition of His Messiahship; but when Jesus is dead, then Nicodemus does that which a spiritually-taught woman could have told him was, (as regarded its practical necessity,) an act of unavailing homage and mistaken zeal; for where was the need of his hundred-weight of spices for Him who, on the third day, would rise again?

Equally striking is her act when contrasted with the conduct of the disciples at the supper at Bethany. Not only is it the fact that not one among them is found to applaud the expressive deed, but some of these very men, who by their official position and personal attendance on the Lord continually, possessed much higher advantages than Mary, deemed her expenditure of love a lavish waste! (Matt. xxvi.) How shameful!

"When his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste?"

"And they murmured against her."—Such treatment, the Lord Jesus could not allow; He knew the "purpose," if they did not. And though modesty can't speak, the Lord can; and she could commit the matter unto Him in whose presence she was, "as unto a faithful Creator." Oh, how faithful!

Men regard three-hundred-pennyworth of perfume as an honour too costly for Him who is about to give his life a ransom for many, themselves included. To what ignorance of the nature and work of Jesus prejudice and bad teaching may lead! and to what meanness, ignorance may lead! For the time, some of the disciples were betrayed into agreement with Judas. Christians may well seek grace to be preserved from begrudging aught that can, in a spirit of devotedness and love, be offered to the Lord.

And in what lay the cause of this great difference between Mary and the disciples? In this. While Nicodemus was a far-off disciple, hearing little and reasoning much, and the Apostles, hearing much, but through a selfish, colouring medium of prejudice and popular teaching, Mary sat—and delighted there to sit—at Jesu's feet and hear His Word.

How expressive, this posture, of childlike teachableness and reverence! How becoming in every believer, when listening to the Son of God, the Word! How far from Mary would be the thought of *reasoning* on her Lord's words! Ah! there is the secret of her deeper insight into His meaning. His simple words were sufficient for her; putting her own constructions on His words, she would not dream of. In this one principle lies the cause of the difference in clearness of spiritual discernment between brethren in the Lord. What the Word declares, in simple language, should be final; and where Scripture is silent nothing is to be received. Thus, clear and simple as the way is, how few, alas! there be that find it! One woman only, of all that heard the Lord speak on the subject, could receive

the fact that He should suffer at the hands of men, and rise again the third day.

"The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple." (Psa. xix. 7.)

Then, in the next place, what honour did her discernment of the mind of God enable her to put upon the Lord! Just the right thing at the right time. In this respect how much her conduct contrasts with Peter's, who, in his wilfulness, did such wrong things at the worst times, that we are sometimes amazed, and see how far "zeal not according to knowledge" may take a real disciple. When the Lord first spoke clearly of His death, we read—

"Peter took Him, and began to rebuke him"!

Rebuke His own Master! Then, anon, in the garden he has recourse to his sword, as though he could possibly prevent that which the Lord would not avert, or hinder that which the Lord said would be! With Mary it was enough that the Lord had *said* it, and she acted accordingly—acted on it, as a solemn and settled fact. When the mind accepts a truth thus, it is capable of receiving further light upon it; and so, while the disciples are "afraid to ask Him" of that saying, and remain in willing darkness, looking away from a dreaded statement, there is no saying how much further explanatory truth was not vouchsafed to the receptive Mary, to take the barb from the wounded heart, and to cause her to apprehend that the death of her Lord was in mysterious accordance with prophetic truth, and that it would work to the glory of God and His Christ. We would apply here the word:—

"To him that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundance."

In return, how great was the honour which the Lord was enabled to put upon Mary! While He openly rebukes the disciples, and says, "Let her alone; why trouble ye the woman?" He presents her to all the world, for all time, for imitation and honour. The Lord ever returns *more* to us than He has received *from* us, and that, too, even down here. (Mark x. 29, 30.) In this case, also, it was payment, as it were, in *kind*; for the Word had settled, that—

"A good name is *better* than precious ointment." (Eccl. vii. 1.)

In accordance with the declaration of the Master,

"Verily, I say unto you, Whosoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her"—

—it is beautiful to see that, when John is writing his gospel, he is led, the first time he mentions Mary of Bethany, to characterise her as *that* "Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair." It is pleasant, as we write these lines, to feel ourselves acting in accordance with the Lord's will, while we thus render "honour to whom honour" is due.

"The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance. (Psa. cxiii. 6.)

Happy Mary, highly honoured! and happy those who have fellowship on earth with such as thee, who love, and reverence, and act upon the plain meaning of the Word of God.

PRIESTS TO GOD. — PRIESTS OF THE PRESENT DISPENSATION.

LETTER II. TO BELIEVERS IN THE ESTABLISHMENT.

Now consider the third order of priests revealed in the Word of God. These are thus spoken of in Rev. i. 5, 6:—

"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us *kings* and *priests* unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

Who are these whom Christ has made priests? Are they clergymen? Have they a college degree, and a ceremonial of words called consecration? Is it in any such way they are made priests to God? Beloved, all you who believe in the Lord Jesus are priests, cleansed and consecrated by the precious blood of Christ. The weakest and most ignorant follower of Jesus Christ is a priest unto God, equally with the most profoundly-taught christian who ever lived!

Blessed be God, his priests (believers) are made such by him who hath loved us. Not because of our learning or wisdom, or for anything that is of us—but because he hath **LOVED US!**

Now, observe the speciality of the true christian priesthood. It is *Godward* only! The Levitical priesthood was both towards God and towards man. So also is the priesthood of Christ. The Melchisedec and Aaronic priesthoods are both sacrificial and mediatorial. They present offerings on behalf of God's people; and they act in blessing for God towards his people.

"And Aaron lifted up his hand toward the people, and blessed them, and came down from offering of the sin offering, and burnt offering, and peace offerings." (Lev. ix. 22.)

But christian priesthood has no earthly status. We are priests **HEAVENWARD**, that is, unto God only. For it is evident that we cannot be priests for the unconverted—neither can we act a priestly part officially towards one another, seeing that all who believe in Christ have an equal priestly standing. Therefore, Scripture declares we are—

"An holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by *Jesus Christ*." (1 Pet. ii. 5.)

The mediatorial priest is Christ; we offer through him. There is no singling out, no training, no ordination service, no distinguishing marks or titles, nothing in which flesh can glory. We are all sinners saved by grace—all bought and cleansed by the same precious blood. In the character of priests to God, we have nothing to do with the world, neither with those who are of it. Soon it will be seen what we are. But God esteems us now as—

"A chosen generation, a *royal priesthood*, an holy nation, a *peculiar people*; that we should show forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light: which in times past were not a people, but are now *the people of God*: which had not obtained mercy, but now *have* obtained mercy." (1 Pet. ii. 9, 10.)

Can anything be plainer than the declarations of these scriptures? No man on earth can truthfully act the part of priest for men. All true believers are

priests to God, but towards men none of us can be more than witnesses for God, lights in the world, testifiers of Jesus, holders forth of the word of life, living epistles known and read of all men.

Our priesthood is like our kingship—No christian takes up the kingly title, neither can he truly do so that of priest. We are both kings and priests; but it is to God. The Lord has given us both titles, and in his own time he will establish us in them. Meanwhile, Faith is quite content to wait for the display of this amazingly high calling until the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.

Here we leave this part of our subject for the present, but with an earnest entreaty to you, dear brethren, to sift out *the truth*. If you disapprove of aught we have written, please write to us, pointing out that wherein you think we err, and we promise you, the Lord permitting, that your representations shall have our most earnest and prayerful attention.

For such dear children of God (i.e. believers) who occupy the official place of priests among you, we desire to express deep sympathy. We are convinced they have been betrayed into the acceptance of a false position. At the same time, we solemnly warn them that faithfulness to the Lord who has bought them, requires that, at ANY sacrifice, they should come out.

"Behold, the Judge standeth before the door." (James v. 9.)

"OIL" AS AN EMBLEM.

E. C., Blackheath, writes—

"I often thank the Lord for having led my attention to some of the great truths of his word to which your little paper directs attention, especially that of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believer. May I beg the favour of asking whether you consider our Lord's words in Matt. xxv. 4 stand connected with this interesting truth?"

We do NOT think our Lord is speaking of the Holy Ghost in Matt. xxv. 4. Our impression is that it is TRUTH which the wise virgins take in their vessels with their lamps. It cannot be said in any sense that a Christian TAKES the Holy Spirit—and he could not recommend the foolish virgins to BUY that which is the gift of God. On the other hand, TRUTH is a procurable thing. We are taught in the Scriptures to "Buy the truth and sell it not." (Prov. xxiii.)

No doubt, in Holy writ, oil is generally a type of the presence, or operations, of the Holy Spirit. But not always; as may be readily seen in the following passage.

"Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent Oil." (Psalm cxli. 5.)

We are led to connect with the foregoing, the latter part of the address from the Lord Jesus Christ to the Church at Laodicea—

"I counsel thee to BUY of me gold tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed * * * * and ANOINT thine eyes with eye SALVE that thou mayest see," &c., (Rev. iii. 18.)

We think these scriptures indicate a special character of truth, which the wise virgins carried in their vessels,

—namely, such truth as leads to watchfulness and preparedness for the coming of the Bridegroom.

The subject is deeply interesting, and if space permitted we would gladly enter upon it more thoroughly, but trust these few remarks may be helpful. May we be careful to keep our Lord's words **ABIDING** in us.

HOUSEHOLD BAPTISMS CONSIDERED.

In the New Testament, several households, or families, are mentioned as having been baptized. Some Christians there are who find in this fact an argument for Infant Baptism (so-called). They infer that there were infants in one or other of these households, which infants, they suppose, were baptized with the adult portion.*

In the first place, let us observe, it is *all* supposition, *all* inference on their side: there is not a word, or passing allusion, that can possibly be said to show that a single infant was actually present in either of the households said to be baptized. Not only is it so; but every fair inference is to the contrary. Inferences, if they may be drawn at all, will all point to the conclusion that there could not possibly have been ANY infants in the households under consideration.

First, it is evident that infants do not necessarily enter into the composition of a household: that a household may be such without there being infants in it. How many families around us have no very young children in them; indeed, nothing is more common than to see advertisements for lodgers, with the clause inserted, "Families with young children declined."

1. Let us consider, first, Acts xvi. 14, 15—

"And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard, whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide. And she constrained us."

To infer that there were infants in this family, where none are mentioned, is to do so in the face of half-a-dozen inferences to the contrary; the first of which is, that Lydia was not married at all; or, if she ever had been married, was, at the time referred to in this passage, a widow. The reader will see no husband is mentioned; on the contrary, Lydia says, "Come into MY house." Strange language this would be for a married woman! And she pressingly invites them, without any reference to the will of the supposed husband. Surely a married woman would rather intreat her husband to do the honours of pressing hospitality upon strangers! Can any instance to the contrary be given from the Word. The Shunamite consulted her husband, and first secured his concurrence, with regard to the reception of a prophet, and he an aged man.

Again, not only does she say "Come into my house," or home, but the souls in it are spoken of by the Holy Ghost as "*her* household," positively implying the absence of a male head.

That Lydia was either unmarried or a widow, is clear from the fact that she is introduced to us trafficking on her own account. Was she a widow, carrying on the business of the deceased husband, or a single woman who had always maintained herself free from marriage? Moreover, she is said to have been of Thyatira, a place, it appears, noted for the art of dyeing. This place was across the sea, and she may have been only a travelling merchant, not abiding long in any one place. In this case, the presence of young children is very improbable.

Regarding her therefore as a widow or unmarried, what

* Mr Barnes, the well-known commentator, says of the baptism of Lydia's household—"Here is strong presumptive proof of the baptism of infants. It is not intimated that the household believed. On the contrary, it is strongly implied that they did not (!!) but that they were baptized because she believed."

would her household consist of? a few servants, and, perhaps, grown-up daughters. Being a pious woman, for we read that she worshipped God, i.e. was a devout proselyte, we may infer the probable character of her household, and that they should have been with her at the prayer meeting, and received the truth with her, or that she should have taken it home, imparted it to them, and then have presented herself with them for baptism, is, in either case, most natural. We incline, however, to the former thought, and think her acceptance of the truth may have greatly helped in leading them to decision. Where then, we ask, is there the least room for the inference that there may have been infants in this household or family?

2. Let us next examine the case of the jailor and his family. "And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to ALL that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, BELIEVING in God, WITH ALL his house."

This case is very simple: it is distinctly said that the word was SPOKEN to ALL and that ALL believed. Infants, therefore, are clearly excluded here.

3. The next case is equally simple; it is that of Stephanas. "I baptized also the household of Stephanas." (1 Cor. i.)

Now in the place where this reference occurs there is nothing to enable us to certify the maturity of the members of this family; but the Holy Ghost has not left us to mere conjecture even here. For before the Apostle closes this self-same epistle, he is led to make such a passing and parenthetical allusion to this family as settles the question.

"I beseech you, brethren,—(ye know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the MINISTRY of the saints.)—That ye submit yourselves unto such, and," &c. (1 Cor. xvi.)

Thus the household which is said in the one place to have been baptized, is in the other place said to have been addicted to the service of the saints, that is, capable of adult action.

4. In the case of the household of Cornelius the facts are very strong. In the first place (Acts x. 2), the whole family are said to have "feared God;" 2ndly, to have heard the word, and received the Holy Ghost (x. 33, 44), and 3rdly, baptism was administered to those only who were capable of yielding a voluntary obedience to it as a commandment (x. 48.)

THE ANOINTING IN BETHANY.

We think the narratives recorded in Matt. xxvi., Mark xiv., and John xii., are different accounts of the same event. We know there are difficulties in reconciling the three passages, but we think the points of identity are numerous and weighty, and, as we have, in a previous article in this number, assumed this identity, we thought it due to the reader to submit to his judgment the facts of the case:—

I.—DIFFICULTIES IN RECONCILING THE THREE PASSAGES.

1. In Matthew and Mark, it is said to have occurred in the "house of Simon the Leper;" but in John we read that "Martha served." This, it is true, is no contradiction, and it may have been that Simon was a relative or intimate neighbour. Either fact would be sufficient to account for Martha serving.

2. The name of the woman is not mentioned in Matthew and Mark, but only in John. When those earlier gospels were written she may have been living, a reason for avoiding personal notification which did not probably exist when John wrote his much later narrative.

3. The evangelists Matthew and Mark mention the ointment as poured only on the head, while John only mentions the feet. But we must remember John seldom repeats what the others had already written, and the greatest part of his gospel is taken up with what they have not noticed. Nevertheless, we think the expression used in John xi. fairly includes the anointing of both head and feet. "It was that

Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair." There is no weight in these difficulties.

II.—THE POINTS OF IDENTIFICATION.

1. The scene in all three gospels is in Bethany.
2. The time is the same in all, that is to say, a few days before the crucifixion.
3. The motive and intention of the woman are said, in all three narratives, to have been the same.
4. The rebuke to the disciples is couched in much the same terms.
5. Thoughtfulness for the poor is the reason offered by the disciples in all three gospels, for disapproval of the conduct of the woman.
6. The expressions "ye have the poor with you always," and "me ye have not always," occur in all three narratives.
7. The value of the ointment is identical in Mark and John,—"300 pence."
8. In Matthew and Mark the material of the vase are also identical, that is, alabaster.
9. In Mark and John the ointment is the same, that is, "ointment of spikenard."

Weighing these nine reasons against any difficulties, we think our readers will arrive at the same judgment as ourselves that the narratives had reference to one event, and that Mary who sat at Jesu's feet was the honoured woman.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. G., HANTS.—We pray the Lord Jesus to abundantly bless you in your place of abode, keeping you, dear brother, in great humility and dependence upon Himself. With regard to your suggestion, see our answer to W. H. H., No. 8.

Letters for the Editor to be addressed to 335, Strand, W.C.

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[Job Caudwell, 335, Strand, London, W.C.]

No. 17.]

AUGUST 1, 1866.

[One Halfpenny.]

TO A FOLLOWER OF THE REJECTED CHRIST.

BELoved IN THE LORD,—

It seems to me needful sometimes to justify the simple but lovely salutation “Beloved,” as addressed to ALL who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well—the completion of the title, “in the Lord,” as written above, proves its absolute fitness as applied to every true Christian.

A brother or a sister in the Lord may often find in this little paper words of severe rebuke respecting unfaithfulness, in reference to associations based on traditions of men. Yet there is not one real christian, however he may feel offended by such plain speaking, to whom I cannot say,—I truly love you in the Lord.

And thus it comes to pass, that there is true joy in being able to pen a few words, monthly, of exhortation and encouragement to you, dear christian reader, merely regarding you as in Christ, and *therefore* “Beloved.”

I have open before me the 13th and 14th chapters of John’s gospel. The hour had come—Jesus was to depart out of this world unto the Father. Having loved his own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end. What a joy to know of the constancy of the love of Jesus! His disciples fail in many ways—all of us do so, more or less—but his love changes never. He took us up when we loved Him not, and He knew all that was in us, and how far we should deny Him or forsake Him. But having loved us, He loved us unto the end! How excellent is the love of Christ! Indeed, it passeth knowledge. Dear brother, dear sister,—that precious love is yours and mine. It is not only for us, but it is ours. Oh, how it rejoices our poor weak hearts, if we repose in that love. We want faith so to lay hold of the love of Christ, as to be able to *abide* in it. Let us not be satisfied with a passing experience of that wondrous love—far less with a mere belief in its existence. We want to *know* it abidingly.

How does the Lord show his love in the Scripture before us? He washes the disciples’ feet. It was the feast of the *passover*. In the purposes of God, the followers of Jesus were already under the shelter of his blood. Now He washes their feet. Amazing truth! Who can say he has fully estimated that wondrous stoop of grace in the Son of God? A voluntary manifestation of humility, only exceeded by his own sublime act in humbling himself in obedience unto death, even the death of the Cross.

There was Judas yet with the other disciples;—not only Peter who would deny his Master with oaths

and curses, but the Traitor also, who would sell his gracious Lord for thirty pieces of silver. But Jesus washes their feet notwithstanding. There was no cessation of grace and love on his part, though He knew all, and who should betray Him. Oh, blessed Lord, who would not be servant of thine? Well may we adore thee, and long to behold thee, thou who lovest us thus. After Jesus had washed their feet, Judas went out, his wretched heart unsoftened by that last and touching act of grace he had experienced with the rest. The Lord had endured his traitorous presence, and had dealt with him as with the others. But now the testing time was come; Satan, who had long been working by covetousness in the heart of Judas now took possession of the one he had made his own. “Satan entered into him!” Oh, what an awful sentence! And then at a word from Jesus the betrayer went out; and it was night! Well may we wonder how the deceiver could have prevailed over Judas to leave the light of truth and love, that he might give himself up to treachery and darkness! But he had worshipped the idol Covetousness till nothing could stay his lust for money! Satan had thus got entire possession of him. He went out, “and it was night.”

What a relief when the traitor was gone! Jesus immediately began his last loving exhortations, full of heavenly wisdom and light. He is going away for a little while. They are to love one another—“By this,” said He, “shall all know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

Beloved,—Is not this a precious characteristic of discipleship? “We *know* that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren.” Oh, may you and I respond more thoroughly to the new commandment so oft repeated by our blessed Lord while yet upon earth. The next incident in the narrative is Simon Peter’s declaration of readiness to lay down his life for the sake of Christ—this is met by the Master’s warning—

“Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow till thou has denied me thrice”!

Who can doubt the sincerity of Peter? He meant all he said, but he did not know himself. Oh, may we ever mistrust *self*, and watch and pray lest we enter into temptation. Peter’s boasting and self-confidence must be cured by his being suffered to come under the power of Satan for awhile. Alas! how many disciples of Jesus have to suffer a like experience, because they will not walk in humility, and mistrustfulness of self!

Simon Peter heard the warning and would have to

undergo all the Lord's words implied. But does this affect the love of Jesus towards him? Not at all. He changes not. He knew all that was in them, those eleven feeble followers who heard his words. He knew they would all forsake Him in the hour of trial. Did He reprove them for such weakness and want of love? No; the theme of his discourse is, the manifestation of HIS OWN love, not the absence of love on their part. His next words, after speaking of Peter's denial, are—"Let not your heart be troubled"! He was going to the Father. There was the path of faith before them down here. There was coming failure on their part too;—but his reassuring words are—"Let not your heart be troubled." Reason would say, how could they be otherwise than troubled under such circumstances? Where were they to find consolation? They were to trust in Him—they were to find in Jesus not only a Saviour from wrath, but a deliverer in every time of trouble. Nor was this all; He would have them by faith look on to the end, and know beforehand that He was going to prepare eternal mansions for them, and then He would come again and take them to Himself, that they might never more lose the joy of his presence. So He says, "Ye believe in God; believe also in Me." They should trust Him as God. Shall we say, it was difficult for them: they had known Him as "the man of sorrows;" they were yet to witness his unspeakable acquaintance with "grief." But for all that, He was the living God, and they were to believe in Him as such. Only thus would they be able to take up the power of his assuring words—"Let not your heart be troubled." So He presses upon their poor weak faith (addressing Himself specially to Philip), the truth of his wondrous union with the Father.

"Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words I speak unto you I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me He doeth the works."

I cannot here dwell upon the remarkable assimilation of these two things, words and works, in the above sentence, but it is worthy of deepest thought. What I am looking at, is the tale of the Lord's unchangeable love to his disciples, not only to those to whom He was speaking, but to all who should believe on Him through their word, as the 17th chapter shows.

They would lose his bodily presence, but He would be with the Father, and his abiding in heaven would bring them untold blessings. In short, He would do whatsoever they should ask in his name. Moreover, he would send them the Holy Ghost the *Comforter* to abide with them for ever. Nor should his own presence be wanting, though unseen, to those who really loved him; and such loving ones should also know fellowship with the Father.

"He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

Again—

"If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

Amazing truth! Amazing love! Alas! how few

experience it! Why is that so? Because the promise is conditional.

"If ye love me, keep my commandments."

"He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me."

"If a man love me, he will keep my sayings."

Professions of love will not do. There must be living reality in our love, if we would know *abiding* "fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." Our love must be *proved* by *doing*. Not by doing things taught through the traditions of men. But by doing the things that Jesus has said—holding to his words and keeping his commandments.

After these special promises of personal manifestation to any who shall ACTIVELY respond to his love, our blessed Lord resumes his unconditional assurances of grace to all his followers.

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you. *Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*"

Here is a present portion, beloved, for you and for me. The Lord addresses us as ONE,—you, and me, and all believers. He does not say HEARTS, but He speaks in the singular number, and twice in this chapter He does this!

Oh! may you and I, and all who believe in Him, realize the force and deep meaning conveyed in that word. We *are* of one heart, though practically we cease to realize the blessed fact whenever we suffer the flesh, the world, or Satan, to work in us. May we, too, know more fully than ever that perfect peace which Jesus has left for us,—the peace which was his while a stranger on earth. And from this, may we go on to know those PERSONAL manifestations of his love which He has promised to any one who, really loving Him, gives proof of the fact by doing His will, according to His Word.

In mysterious, but eternal union with you,

And with the risen and glorified Jesus,—

Your Christian Brother, THE EDITOR.

CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATES;

How should we deal with those in Error?

WE have received the following letter from a dear brother, belonging (denominationally), it seems, to the exclusive section of "the Brethren," respecting the unscriptural BAN put upon certain "Brethren" who have taught erroneous doctrine. This letter we publish at full length, with our reply, praying the Lord that the consideration thereof may be blessed to many souls.

[To the EDITOR OF PRECIOUS TRUTH.]

"Kentish Town, June 18, 1866.

"DEAR BROTHER,—

"I have been charged with, and nearly excommunicated for giving the right hand of fellowship, or rather bidding God-speed, to one who (it is said) has departed from the doctrine of Christ, (2 John 9,) the one in question being a most loving soul, who preaches Jesus fully, but also teaches the 'non-eternity of punishment.'

"Now, it seems to me, that as 'Brethren' we are all on fire as

to judging, but most deplorably cold as to loving one another. I do not say we should not judge; neither do I say I am decided as to this very solemn subject, for I confess my soul has been greatly troubled about it for years. When I look into the word, (I speak honestly) I am confounded; on the other hand, when I see the abhorrence in which [doctrinal error] is held by so vast a majority of God's children, I am again at a loss to know how to judge. I respect both sides, and therefore hold my peace. Should I therefore be troubled and dealt with in judgment, simply because I sit with, talk with, and perhaps sympathise with Brother B.? I know he loves Jesus, however he might err in judgment.

"I certainly think, as long as I preach and teach without giving offence, I should be left alone. As to all interference with our inmost difficulties, it is only likely to cause more trouble to the almost broken-hearted church. I have been severely dealt with upon the ground that I am seen in company with one whom they say 'tramples under foot the Son of God,' &c. (!) Now, what have we to do with one who walks, talks, and acts consistently, and deals in love with all who confess that Jesus is the Christ? We read in the word, 2 John 9, "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God;" now what is the doctrine of Christ? I take it to be the Atoning work of Christ; therefore the Unitarian is the man with whom I am to deal, for he denies the Lord that bought him. Can I class brother B— with this one? It is very different to have to deal with a sinful walk, that is plain; but not so with defective judgment. There was one who was living in fornication; one who was not working for his living; these are, no doubt, to be dealt with; but to make them, and dear Muller, of Bristol, one, is our fault—and a most serious one it is.

"There is, however, one passage in Rom. xvi. 17, which speaks of those who cause divisions, and they are to be marked and avoided; nevertheless, even this seems to require great discriminating power.

"I leave this with the Lord; do what seems to you to be most to his glory; give this communication a place, or destroy it. But believe me

"Yours Sincerely, in the Coming Jesus,
"G. R. G."

ANSWER.—Those who have ventured to censure you, and have come nigh to passing sentence of excommunication, are entirely without Scripture warrant.

As you rightly apprehend, an assembly of Christians must deal judicially with any in their midst who commit gross sin. But as to errors of judgment and doctrinal heresies, a Church has no power. On the contrary, the word written to one of the most disorderly Churches of the early days is—

"I hear that there be divisions among you, and I partly believe it: for there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." (1 Cor. xi. 18, 19.)

Thus we are not left in ignorance as to what the mind of the Lord is in this matter. God had not only foreseen the evil, but declares by his servant that he sees a *needs be* for its permission. Not that heresy, or schism, is other than evil; not that it is to be glossed over; but the Lord permits it to come in that "approved ones may be made manifest."

Now comes the question what are we to do with those who bring in unscriptural doctrine? The answer is very obvious. As the Lord has *not* given us power to act judicially with such, we must pray Him to do so for us. We may be assured he is not Head of the Church in vain. Those denominationally known as the "Brethren" have experienced much blessing in consequence of owning practically the Headship of Christ when they meet for worship. How is it

they forget the aspect in which the Lord presents himself in the first three chapters of "the Revelation" as the One who exercises judgment in the midst of the churches? Herein is the whole secret. We have to learn by experience, as well as doctrinally, that we are *really dependent* upon the Head of the Church in all cases where He has not given us power to act upon our own judgment.

For our part, we are quite convinced that where a few Christians, "approved ones," wait upon the Lord in prayer faithfully, respecting doctrinal evil, they will ever find He is *mighty to deliver*. But while there is an assumption of power maintained, while "brethren" will *arrogate* judicial authority, which the Master in infinite wisdom has withheld from them—grief and scandal must inevitably result.

On the supposition that the Brother you speak of were still among "the brethren" denominationally, there would be no power among you to excommunicate him for teaching the error of the non-eternity of punishment. If, then, he could not be dealt with judicially by "Brethren," those must be very ignorant of the will of the Lord, who venture to chide you for being in the accused one's company. Of course we do not mean to infer that your censors are *generally* ignorant of the Lord's will. Quite the contrary; no doubt they are deeply taught in the word. But on this particular point the leaders of "exclusive brethrenism," and all who co-operate with them, are quite dark.

We say this believing that they act with unsoiled consciences. For to sit in judgment without scripture warrant, manifests of necessity, either *ignorance* of the truth, or *unfaithfulness*. We are conscious of the gravity of the charge we thus make against many *dear brethren in the Lord* who are *mighty in the Scriptures*, and who, as *the Lord's servants*, are widely owned and blessed.

Let us candidly look at the Scriptures on which they rely, in support of their proceedings, as disciplinarians. We take the passages in the order in which you quote them.

First, 2 John 9. This is considered the stronghold of your leaders.

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."

Now, the "*doctrine of Christ*" is clearly set forth in the context. It is, that "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." If a man denies this, he is an antichrist. The Apostle says—

"Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist."

It is to warn against such that this brief epistle is chiefly directed.

We should think that even the severest judges among you will not venture to affirm that where they have exercised the assumed power of excommunication for erroneous doctrine, any one of the accused parties have denied that "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh!"

The warning of the Apostle John to the elect lady and her children, in his second epistle, is confined to the above characteristic of the spirit of antichrist. This will be manifest to the true-hearted enquirer on reference to the 4th chapter of the first epistle of John. There he warns believers generally in the same language. He says—

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God.”

Here you have precisely the same teaching as that quoted from the second epistle. There is nothing about error in doctrine, or heresy. That which is furnished is a plain direction as to how the spirit of antichrist is to be detected. This is the case in both Scriptures—and the *uninitiated* might well wonder why learned “brethren” should prefer to cite the Apostle’s words to a woman respecting the conduct of her household, rather than take up the same doctrine from the *epistle general*. But the preference is easily understood by those who know what *misuse* is made of it. The “Exclusives” lay hold of the words—

“If there come any man unto you, and bring not this doctrine [i.e. the doctrine previously set forth, namely that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh], receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.” (2 John 10, 11.)

They assume that herein is given authority to excommunicate heretical teachers!

In effect, the Apostle writes to the elect lady thus—“Keep antichrist out of your house, neither receive him, nor bid him God speed.”

While the violent construction the “brethren judges” put upon his words, is this—“If any christian shall teach in an assembly of believers, doctrine which the leading brethren consider erroneous, let him be excommunicated without mercy, and with him, all who show christian pity or love.”

In short, while Scripture tells us to *shut out* antichrist, exclusives tell us to *turn out* mistaken believers!

Has ever the word of truth been more tortured than in this misapplication of it by “Brethren”?

Let the prayerful christian again look at the General epistle of John for confirmation of what we have set forth. What is the characteristic teaching of the chapter from which we have quoted? After warning against the spirit of antichrist, what do we find? The most powerful exhortations to christian love!

“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son, to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, *we ought also to love one another.*”

And so all through. If a brother has wandered from the truth,—will a display of vindictiveness, or even uncharitableness, bring him back again? Should not that be our object, the restoration of every mistaken or betrayed believer? How is this to be accomplished, if a faithful one is not to be permitted to speak to his erring brother? Of course, there is danger—error may spread by intercourse. But then the Lord knows the danger, and he permits it, that

faith may be tried. All the rules and severity devised by christians, cannot prevent heresy. Nay, all such devices have the direct tendency to *increase it*. It would be easy to prove this from the experience of the brethren themselves.

Let us now examine the other scripture relied upon for absolute exclusion.

“Now I beseech you brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such, serve not our Lord Jesus, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. For your obedience is come abroad unto all. I am glad, therefore, on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil. And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.” (Rom. xvi. 17—20.)

We have quoted here too much for “exclusives,” but only enough for vindicating the truth. There is nothing here about excommunication. If we see Christians causing offences and divisions, contrary to Scripture, by good words and fair speeches deceiving the hearts of the simple, for their own selfish purposes, serving their own belly and not the Lord Jesus Christ—we are to avoid such, that is, as to companionship; a faithful follower of Christ must avoid those who evidence such characteristics. We are to follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with *them* that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart.” (2 Tim. ii. 22.)

Here our course is made plain. But we are neither to anathematise nor cast out the selfish and unfaithful ones. We are simply to avoid them. Then we must notice, too, that the mind of the Lord, revealed to us in the word of God, on such themes, leaves us to act individually *in the exercise of a conscience taught in the Scriptures*. This is the only safeguard. Those pointed out to be avoided by *obedient* Christians, are such as “cause divisions and offences *contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned.*” Here is responsibility to *know the truth*, that we may act it out, as in the sight of our Lord. A mere bigoted adhesion to the dictum of leading brethren, however greatly gifted or deeply taught, is a sorry evasion of the responsibility laid upon us to *know the truth*, as it has been imparted by the Holy Ghost.

Indeed, the onus which thus rests on each member of the body of Christ cannot thus be got rid of. We ought to *know the truth and live it out*, fearing neither the frowns of the world nor the hard speeches of our brethren. It is the lack of this stedfastness Christward, which operates to make “exclusive brethren” a compact body, and elicits a spirit of bigotry instead of love. One sad result of this has been to bring the very highest range of truth, with which they have been pre-eminently blessed, into disrepute. The failures of the party are laid upon the truth. We say it with sorrow; but the fact is so. The spirit of tyranny manifested by “exclusive brethren,” in defiance of Scripture, has made the very name of “Brethren” a byword. Oh, that all would ponder the concluding words of our quotation from Rom. xvi., “*Be simple concerning evil, and the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.*”

Oh, may we judge self constantly and closely; may we judge *gross sin* when discovered in a brother, by solemnly excluding him from Christian fellowship, until, guided by the word of truth, we can see the way to his restoration. And for the rest—Let us be “*wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.*” We may mourn over every failure; but, oh, let us not despise, much less persecute, an erring brother. On the contrary, may we take the Lord’s example, and seek to wash a disciple’s feet. Finally, let us really trust our Master to *deliver* us from all evil.

There is surely deep meaning in that declaration—“The God of *peace* shall bruise Satan under our feet *shortly.*”

It is our purpose, if the Lord permit, to address a few words in love to “the Brethren” in our next, pointing out, as the Holy Spirit may give us light on the Scriptures, the manifest way in which *the Lord* overrules, in cases of doctrinal difficulty, if He be trusted. [We have no sympathy with the error referred to by our correspondent.]

EVE, AND THE BRIDE OF CHRIST.

ON the first day of Adam’s life, he was, for a time, *alone*. “And the Lord God said, It is not *good* that the man should be alone; I will make him a help, meet for him.” Eve being created, and brought to Adam, God contemplated his work at the sunset of that sixth day, “and, behold, it was very good.” After her creation, the command was given, “Be fruitful, and multiply,” &c. Eve’s creation, therefore, primarily illustrated the *grace*, or goodness, of God; and, secondarily, as the future “mother of all living,” she was the expression of his *purpose*,—namely that the earth should be peopled. It is in the first of these aspects we desire to contemplate the creation of Eve; and as a special type of that crowning development of *GRACE*—the *Church*, the *Bride* of Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, having “loved the Church, and given Himself for it,” is, at present, as the exalted God-Man, Christ Jesus, *alone*; patiently waiting for His Beloved, preparing a place for Her; and God—(Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,)—are engaged in the wondrous work of calling out from a fallen world, baptizing into *ONE BODY*, and gathering to the Lord Jesus, His *ELECT BRIDE*. Shortly, she will be called into manifestation in the heavens, and, seated with Him upon His throne, be for ever the object and the display of His unchanging love.

This amazingly glorious manifestation of Sovereign *grace* is fully revealed to faith in the Epistle to the Ephesians.—

“Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the *hope* of His calling, and what the *riches* of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding *greatness* of His power to us-ward who

believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in *CHRIST*,—(when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His *BODY*, the *FULNESS* of Him who filleth all in all,)—and you who were *dead in trespasses and sins.*”

In Ephesians iii. the glorification together of Christ and the Church is called “the mystery,” and is stated to have been, “from the beginning of the world, hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ, to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” This “mystery,” specially committed to Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, to be made known by him, seems to have been revealed, generally, to the “holy apostles and prophets [of the Church] by the Spirit,” (ver. 5); and is also presented in the Revelation. In Eph. v. it is still further brought out:—

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the Church: and He is the Saviour of the Body. Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it: that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by 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. So ought men to love their wives, as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church: for we are *members of His Body, of His flesh, and of His bones.* . . . This is a great *mystery*: I speak concerning Christ and the Church.”

Not only was this wonderful “mystery” unrevealed to the prophets of Israel, but the Lord Jesus Himself did not unfold it before His death. He took, indeed, as a minister unto Israel, a high range of gracious speech—

“Behold, my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.” (Mark iii. 34, 56.)

But the revelation of the mystery of “the Bride of the Lamb,” “the Lamb’s Wife,” was reserved—reserved for the Church Herself, being a truth which primarily concerned Her. Oh, what glory, what blessedness must be put upon and possessed by the Church, in order that She may be a worthy Consort of the Most Worthy One, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, “without whom was not anything made that was made!” “Fair as the moon,” will She be, “and terrible as an army with banners!” And oh, the solemnities and universal rejoicings on the nuptial day!—

“And a voice came out of the throne, saying,—Praise our God, all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying,—Alleluia: for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him, for the Marriage of the Lamb is come, and His Wife hath

made Herself ready. — And to Her was granted that She should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." (Rev. xix. 5-8.)

It will be blessed even to be present as a witness!—

"And he said unto me,—Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.—And he said unto me, These are the true sayings of God."

"How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"

Let us now look into this deeply interesting subject in detail. In the first place, Eve prefigures the Bride of Christ in deriving her existence from Adam. As her husband said of Eve, "This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh," so it is said of the Church—"We are members of His Body, of His flesh, and of His bones." In itself, how unsightly was the rib from Adam's side! with no inherent beauty or fitness, how little likely to become a fair and noble woman! And so, looked at apart from and out of Christ there was nothing to recommend us; "we were children of wrath, even as others." But who thinks of the rib, when he remembers in whose hands it was? As passive, also, and powerless were we; "while we were without strength, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly." But, to rightly understand our calling, we must not look at ourselves apart from Christ, but as "accepted in the Beloved," as "chosen in Him before the foundation of the world." Seen in Him, the Church was dear, very dear to the Father, and lay hidden near the heart of the Son of God, to be manifested in due time.

Again, as "a deep sleep" from the Lord fell upon Adam, in order that Eve might have a being; so with the Second Man and his Heavenly Bride. He tasted of death for us that we might live through Him. Having risen from the dead, we are said to be also "risen with Christ," and the Church is seen, in the view of God, and in a measure by the eye of faith, to be "sitting together with Christ in the heavenlies." (Eph. ii. 4.) How grandly has that word been fulfilled—

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much [oh, how much!] fruit."

Again, as Adam said—

"She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man;"

—so are we called "Christians," because we are of Christ. Oh, may we delight in and reverence that simple name, and decline all names that are of men; a better name we shall not bear, even in glory.

Just as we see Adam naming the creatures, and placed in the garden to dress it and to keep it,—that is, *fully engaged in work* before he possessed a spouse, —so the Lord Jesus could say before the Church had a separate being—

"My Father worketh hitherto and I work."

For Him too, as Man, there was not *then* found a "help, meet for Him;" the Son of Man had not then slept His "*deep sleep*."

Then, again, we see that as Adam was made in the image of God, and Eve in the image of both, —so the Lord Jesus Christ is the "*brightness* of His glory, and the *express image* of His person," and when the Church is manifested she will be seen, "in His *likeness*," "fashioned like unto His glorious body," having been "predestinated to be conformed to the *image* of God's Son."

Again, as God's will was made known to Adam before Eve was created, her knowledge of the mind of God was derived from her husband—(a principle in measure still holding good, 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35.) So, in Christ, the Church possesses One who is acquainted with the counsels and commands of God. Oh, how we ought to hang on His lips!

"I have given unto them the *words* which Thou gavest Me." "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days *spoken* unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things." (Heb. i.)

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which GOD GAVE unto Him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass. (Rev. i.)

The Garden was a divinely-prepared place. So is the Church's place on high. It was planted "Eastward" (or Godward, towards the Sun, the fountain of light and glory,)—and in "Eden," which means *Pleasure*, and the place of the Church is the presence of God, where there "is fulness of joy," at whose "right hand there are *pleasures* for evermore."

Again, as Eve was associated with Adam in the universal dominion which was given to him,—so the destiny of the Church is to sit with Christ upon His throne, to reign with Him before Whom "every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father." And as Adam, endowed with superior discernment, gave names to all the creatures, and would afterwards communicate those names to Eve,—so, who can tell the revelations of His doings, who "made the worlds," and who "calleth the stars by their names," remain to be received by the Church from Him when "for ever with the Lord!"

"Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless." (2 Pet. iii. 14.)

UNFAITHFUL DEALING WITH THE SCRIPTURES IN "THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER."

TO CHRISTIANS IN THE STATE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

(Continued from No. 16.)

BELoved,—Let us consider the arrangements made in the Book of Common Prayer for reading the Scriptures. *Ostensibly*, the plan laid down by the framers of your Liturgy provides for reading through, once a year, the whole Bible, *except the Apocalypse or Revelation*. But, as the portions (called lessons) are eked out for the 365 days, while in *practice*, they are read only on 52 days, out of the 365, viz., on Sundays, it follows, that (even allowing for what are called saints' days) about one-seventh part *only* of the word of God is really read in the hearing of those who attend your services. Think of an

honest-hearted Christian, who, on the supposition that the Prayer Book means what it says, should present himself daily where this orderly course of Scripture is provided to be read. Six days out of the week he would find the door shut!

The provision for a daily reading of the Scriptures being so thoroughly disregarded, it follows, in practice, that the portions read each Sunday are necessarily presented without continuity, under the iron rule laid down, so that their purport is either obscured or lost. And the result is, that the *grossest ignorance* prevails as to the true import of the Word of God.

But now we want to know why the Apocalypse or Revelation is *excluded*, not only in fact, but even *theoretically*, from the services of the so-called Church of England? Beloved, look for yourselves, lest you should think there is any misunderstanding on our part about it. The following are your stated arrangements, copied verbatim—

“The New Testament is appointed for the second lesson at morning and evening prayer, and shall be read over orderly every year thrice (*i. e.* on the supposition that the clergy and the people attend both morning and evening the whole 365 days of the year) besides the Epistles and Gospels; except the Apocalypse, out of which there are only certain proper Lessons appointed upon divers feasts.”

These “proper lessons” are the first and last chapters of the Book, and 16 verses of the 19th chapter! Never was the mind of Christ more flagrantly opposed, than in this excision of nearly the whole of that one Book of the Scriptures, *given expressly by Himself*. Yes, such is the solemn fact, that the Revelation is given by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, as received from God, and sent through John to the churches. In it the Lord has made known to his blood-bought people, the fulness of God’s purposes with respect to themselves, and also his counsels as to the world.

In the first chapter is revealed the happy condition of believers on earth now, as kings and priests to God, through Jesus Christ, though still called to suffering for awhile. Also in the opening chapter the Lord himself is seen in *power* and glory. In the 2nd and 3rd chapters we have messages and warnings to seven local churches, who represent the whole of Christendom in failure and weakness. All are dealt with by warnings, remonstrances, threatenings, and promises. At the close of each address, every individual Christian (“he that hath an ear”) is required to hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches. The close of the third chapter shows the last state of that which *calls itself* the Church on earth. It has become neither cold nor hot, and boasts itself that it is *rich* and increased in goods, and has need of nothing. The Lord declares he will spue it out of his mouth! Solemn warning! soon to be fulfilled.

The 4th and 5th chapters of the Revelation enable the Christian, by faith, to take his stand in heaven, that he may see there the fruition of God’s purposes in grace. There the faithful one may behold his own destined place, and hear the same song he will sing. And learn, too, that the song in chap. v. 9, to be sung in heaven, is nearly the same that is put into our mouths on earth, as given in chap. i. 5.

The 6th chapter begins to unfold what will take place when the history of the Church on earth is finished, *i. e.* when all true believers have been taken away, and the professing thing (which remains for a little while) has been rejected by the Lord *with loathing*—like something nauseous vomited out of the mouth. The latter part of the chapter is a confirmation of the prophecy of Jesus in Matthew xxiv., and shows how *literally* the judgments there described will have their fulfilment *upon earth*. Look at these words—

“And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, *hid themselves in the dens* and in the *rocks of the mountains*; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?” (Rev. vi. 16, 17.)

In the 7th chapter we see angels of God commissioned to seal, or make safe, a remnant of His chosen people, the Jews, and after that is seen a great multitude of all nations. These have come through great tribulation, as the 14th verse shows. The chapters which follow present the awful judgments of God to be poured out upon the earth. In the 9th chap. ver. 6, we read—

“In those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.”

We just name these few passages to indicate the course of the prophecies of the Apocalypse. Deep and mysterious as many of the judgments are, others are quite plain and unmistakeable. The 20th chapter shows what is to take place upon earth, after the wrath of God has been poured out. Satan is to be bound for a thousand years, the first resurrection is to be *completed*, and the risen ones enjoy their millennial reign with Christ. At the end of that period Satan is to be permitted to work again for a short season. He will go forth once more to tempt the nations, and will bring about rebellion against God. These desperate sinners will be suddenly destroyed by fire from heaven. The end of the chapter shows the final judgment—the great white throne, and the dead small and great standing before God. Chapters xxi. and xxii. show God’s glorious new creation. The latter part of the last chapter is full of warning for the Christian; it is also full of encouragement for him. He is taught above all to look for the Coming of the Lord—“Behold, I come quickly,” is the essence of it all. Believers are to watch for “*the bright and morning Star*,” even the Lord Jesus Christ. And the faithful ones respond, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”

This is the Book, of all others, which the compilers of Anglicism have endeavoured to blot out, except two chapters and part of a third! This notwithstanding the following declared blessing, in the first chapter, pronounced upon the faithful reader of the Book!

“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things that are written therein: for the time is at hand.” (i. 3.)

Then, as has been already pointed out, to each of

the seven addresses contained in the 2nd and 3rd chapters, there is this requirement from the Lord—

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches!"

Finally, there is this solemn warning with which the Book closes—

"If any man shall take away from the words of the Book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and the things which are written in this Book." (xxii. 19.)

What an awful thing to set at nought these warnings!

But we need be at no loss to understand how it comes to pass that the mind of the Lord Jesus Christ, as to this Revelation, is disregarded by the episcopal system.

The Apocalypse teaches unmistakably, that worldliness, and self-seeking, and the prostitution of sacred things, are most hateful to the Lord. It pronounces the world to be under judgment: and the wrath of God not only as ready to be poured out upon the earth, but the very character of His judgments. Above all, it reiterates continually, that the Son of God is to be immediately looked for, as the rewarder of all who believe, and the righteous judge of those who believe not.

"Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." (xxii. 12.)

This applies to both classes: He will reward indeed every true believer for each work of faith and labour of love. And he will reward the unbelieving sinner also. But *how* shall he reward those who have not obtained forgiveness of sins through faith in His name during the days of his rejection?

"Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." (xxii. 15.)

"The wages of sin is death."

"Their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

Yes, it is thus the mind and purposes of God are revealed in that blessed Scripture, called the Revelation, or Apocalypse; how can such a revelation suit those who own an earthly potentate as the head of their Church?—of those who have sold the sacred name of Christ, who have made merchandise of his cause and his people?—of those who have prostituted that which is called the Church to the world and its statecraft?

We may be well assured that those who *knowingly* have fellowship with such a state of things, whether they be christians or whether they be mere hypocrites, have no relish for the Revelation of God respecting the judgments to come.

No—the doom of all things ecclesiastical, not only of Rome but of every other order, is too plainly written for them in the following words—

"I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power, and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For *all nations* have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed

fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE, *that ye be not partakers of her sins*, and that ye receive not of her plagues." (Rev. xviii. 1—4.)

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A. B. C., CHESHAM.—The misuse of John vii. 39, to which you allude would be indeed surprising, if we were not pretty well accustomed to witnessing the perversion of divine truth. The assertion of the writer you mention, that "the Holy Ghost who had always been given, departed from the earth when the Lord was here, in order that the Lord should give Him, once more, on his ascension to heaven,"—is disproved, not only by the passage you quote, John xx. 22, but we have exact testimony from the Lord before his crucifixion—"I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever: even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." (John xiv. 16, 17.) In the above Scripture the then presence of the Holy Ghost is declared. He dwelt with them then—hereafter he would dwell in them. This it was which our Lord made the subject of promise. The translators of the authorised English version have not been explicit enough in merely inserting the word *given* in John vii. 39. The reader should be required to understand the sentence thus—"The Holy Ghost was not yet (*given as an Indweller, nor in the special office of the Comforter, and Leader unto ALL truth*) because that Jesus was not yet glorified." Write again if you think further explanation is needed.

J. H., BARNSBURY.—We are glad, dear brother, that the article in our last on the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the folly of attempting to ascertain times and seasons, was acceptable to you. May that event be looked-for with joy by us all continually, as the Lord meant it to be. We expect to be able in our next to present a further thought with which we have been blessed, and which has greatly quickened us in the feeling that the Coming of the Lord draweth nigh indeed. There is nothing so calculated to strengthen our faith and patience, as the recollection that "we know not the day nor the hour" when we shall see our dear Lord face to face. We commend this to you, dear brother, when you are, as you mention, "much cast down."

P. F., Upper Berkeley-street; J. J. M., North Brixton, in our next.

Address Letters for the Editor, care of Printer, 335, Strand, W.C.

CHRISTIANS in the Neighbourhood of the Strand are invited to the Scripture Reading Meeting at 335a, side-door, Monday, at Seven.

Also to the meetings for Prayer at the above Christian Meeting Room. on Monday and Wednesday midday, from $\frac{1}{4}$ past 1 to 2.

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PRECIOUS TRUTH.

“WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?”—(Rom. iv. 3.)

Arthur Hall, 23, Paternoster-row, London.]

[Job Caudwell, 335, Strand, London, W.C.]

No. 18.]

SEPTEMBER 1, 1866.

[One Halfpenny.]

TO THE CHRISTIAN PILGRIM.

BELOVED,—How wonderful it is that God should have made the mystery of his will known to us poor feeble creatures, redeemed sinners! Yet, alas! how little we enter into that which he has so graciously revealed. It matters not, though we be ever so ignorant concerning the things of this world—God would have us to enter into the deep things of *His word*.

It is sweet to notice in the opening of the Epistle to the Ephesians, which unfolds the amazing purposes of God, respecting Christ and the Church, that the simple bases of the revelation made to them are—first, the eternal purposes of God in and through Jesus Christ;—secondly, that they had trusted in Christ after they had heard the word of truth, the gospel of their salvation;—thirdly, that they were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit;—lastly, that they were so living a life of faith that the Apostle could say,

“Wherefore I also after I heard of *your faith in the Lord Jesus*, and *love unto all the saints*, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers.”

What, then, in brief, where the qualifications of these Christians, that Paul should be led to open up to them a knowledge of the exceeding riches of God's grace? Was it that they were wise according to the wisdom of this world? or that they had unusual capacity to understand God's purposes? or even that they were specially gifted as members of the body of Christ? No. They believed unto salvation, in common with all christians; they were sealed in Christ Jesus with the Holy Spirit, which is true also of all believers. But they were also exemplifying in their lives, both “faith in the Lord Jesus, and **LOVE unto ALL the saints**.” This last important condition of the Ephesians, was that in which they differed from many of the followers of Christ;—and it is, alas! because of the lack now of that simple, practical christian walk, that so many, whom the Lord loves, are so little able to enter into his mind.

Of course, these dear christians at Ephesus needed enlightenment; but they were in the condition to receive it; and so the Apostle prayed for them,

“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenlies; far above all

principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come: and hath put all under his feet, and gave him, the Head over all, to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”

Beloved,—We have in this prayer a statement of the wonderful things God has accomplished in and through His beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ—and we poor believing sinners, are taken into these accomplished purposes in and through Him. Our Saviour (blessed for ever be His name) has done the work, **ALL** the work. He has made the purchase; he has paid the price. We, the riches of his inheritance, had to be redeemed. True, God had in the certainty of his purpose given us to his beloved Son before the world was; but Satan came in and got possession of us, and we were led captive by him at his will. Therefore “the mighty One, the Son of God himself, must needs deliver his own, and must pay the redemption price, even his own precious blood! And he has done it. He loved us, with a love stronger than death. He gave himself for us! We were in the place of sin; he took the responsibility for us: yea, “He bore our sins in his own body on the tree!” We were under sentence of death and judgment; He took both judgment and death for us! Well may we trust in thee, blessed Lord, and love all thy saints!

The mention of thy name shall bow
Our hearts to worship thee;
The chiefest of ten thousand thou,
Though chief of sinners we.

Beloved,—can you take up the prayer of Paul? You must have faith and love; then you can “pray the God of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, to give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation”—i.e. that he may give you a conformity of mind and spirit, by which you may spiritually enter into the “hidden wisdom” and revelation which God has given by His Holy Spirit to all who believe. For it is needful to remember what I have before stated, that one of the requisites for those who would enter into the mind of God, is,—that sealing in Christ with the Holy Ghost. The most profound **MENTAL** research of the unregenerate, though aided by all the accumulated learning of ages, is utterly futile when brought to bear upon the mysteries of God's word. God has given his revelation to *faith* only, and the natural man cannot enter into anything beyond the plain declarations of the gospel. A poor sinner under condemnation can but listen to **THE GLAD TIDINGS**, and believe in the risen Jesus, and so accept freely forgiveness of sins and everlasting life. But having

so received of God's free grace, we receive also the wondrous, ADDED gift, the gift of the Holy Ghost. He is with us, IN US, to guide us into ALL truth. None but He can so guide us. Of course, I do not say that gifted christians cannot teach us, help us, exhort us, and comfort us. (God be praised for all who are HIS true-hearted servants.) But the Holy Spirit of God alone can guide us into ALL truth!

A servant of the Lord, however dear, however gifted, however trusted, can only impart that which he has received; and he has received only IN MEASURE. He may not be possessed of that truth which my soul may be most in need of. The Holy Spirit of God only can guide me into ALL truth.

I beseech you, Beloved, ponder this deeply, and act upon it; not with the thought of being made self-sufficient thereby, but contrariwise with a conviction of entire dependence upon God.

"For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." (1 Cor. ii. 11.)

How astonishing to find that eighteen hundred years after this was written, thousands, not only of the men of the world, but Christians also, are bent upon obtaining heavenly wisdom out of human resources! Yet God's provision is plainly declared for the children of God:

"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual." (1 Cor. ii. 12, 13.)

Thus, Beloved, our God has furnished the Great Essential to our entering into, and knowing his mind; and, in answer to prayer, He will conform our spirits, according to the new life which He has given us, that we may KNOW, and enter upon by faith, not only our standing as sons of God, but also our place in association with the Head of the Church (i.e. the Assembly of God), even in the Heavens where Christ sitteth at the right hand of the Majesty on high. In the purpose of God, and in the accomplished work of Christ, and by the sealing of the Holy Spirit, we are established there as surely as we shall be when VISIBLY displayed there as the riches of the glory of the inheritance of our Lord Jesus Christ: as when, "in the ages to come," God shall make a display of "the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us through Jesus Christ." (Eph. ii. 7.)

And now I say, to my own soul, Have you faith and love, that you may know all this, and be SURE of it, accepting all now, and waiting and watching till faith shall be wanted no more, but all the promises of God shall be realized by sight, and taste, and touch, and hearing? Through grace, I answer, Yes. I want MORE of "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him." I pray for it; I pray the same thing for you also, dear brother, dear sister. May you, too, pray the same thing in the name of Jesus, our beloved Lord. So shall we obtain. But, oh, let us never forget that the prac-

tical requisites on our side are—a living, MANIFEST faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints. If these are not in practical operation I believe our prayer must be in vain. In such case, all that is declared in the Scriptures as to our inheritance, and the riches of our Lord's inheritance in us, will be little understood, and will furnish us no joy down here. But that our prayer may be effectually answered, may we, Beloved, be found in meekness, faith, and love, unto the end.

Your's, in true brotherhood,
In Christ Jesus our Lord,
THE EDITOR.

THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH.

In our May Number, article "a Scene near Bethany," occurred the following passage:—

"While the Lord Jesus is abiding beyond Jordan, Lazarus is sick, and a message to that effect is sent to Him. But Jesus abode 'two days still where He was.' And to whom do the hearts of believers (lingering here in the Valley of the Shadow of Death) turn, when their dear ones are suffering, and separation seems probable?—to the Lord in the glory. We know that if He were to come, who is our Life, sick ones could not die. But Christ Jesus is still abiding his two days (or two thousand years?—the Lord knows)." "A day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

Though we thus made a suggestion that these "two days beyond Jordan" may have reference to the two thousand years now passing, we desire most carefully to avoid leading the reader to the thought that the Lord will not come till the two thousand years are *finished*, and consequently not in our time, and in the fear that such mis-impression may have happened to some of our readers, we have been led to offer the following remarks. We ought to have said "About two thousand years?—the Lord knows." Far be it from us to attempt to fix times and seasons in the remotest degree. But our own anticipation of the Lord's return is greatly quickened—not slackened—by the suggested meaning. And for this reason.

According to the Jewish mode of reckoning, two days might be two *whole* days, or *one* whole day and a *part* of another. Thus, it is true, that our Lord Jesus Christ was buried *three* days, although he was actually interred only a *part* of the sixth, the *whole* of the seventh, and a *part* of the first day of the week. So that the "two days," in the above passage, according to this mode of speech, are both expired and expiring.

Then we may, indeed, say in our hearts—"The coming of the Lord draweth nigh." And hear Jesus saying—"Watch ye, therefore; for ye know not the day, nor the hour when the Son of Man cometh."

A PREFIGURATION OF THE VARIOUS TESTIMONIES TO CHRIST.

(COMMUNICATED.)

Much to the blessing and comfort of the writer's own soul, he has been led to see in the 1st chapter of the Gospel by John a miniature presentment of the whole grand result of the manifestation of God in the flesh. The Son of God is introduced to His people as the Lamb of God, the result of which introduction is the bringing into association with Him of four individuals, in whose persons and circumstances we may see the whole of his subsequent redemptive work prefigured, embracing four of God's earthly dispensations. The coming event is here seen casting its shadow before. We beseech the reader therefore to look into this question, not as a curious one, but with the reflection—"Known unto God are all his works from the beginning."

Not vaguely, or only now and then, did the prophets of old witness of Christ, and some of them spoke of his sufferings and the glory which should follow. "To Him give all the prophets witness." In the person of John the Baptist this testimony was brought to a close, and was presented in its most emphatic aspect. And why? Because the Messiah had arrived—there he was! John cried—

"*This is He, of whom I spake There standeth One among you whose shoes' latchet I am not worthy to unloose.*"

In keeping with a characteristic of the old Dispensation, John had been furnished with a *sign*—the descent of the Holy Ghost in bodily shape upon the Coming One.

"Again the next day after, John stood and two of his disciples; and looking on Jesus as he walked, he saith: *Behold the Lamb of God.*"

From the beginning—ever since sin had been introduced—the Prophetic Testimony had not spoken of God in grace as *resting*, or as *settled*, but as *proceeding* with a purpose. Neither did John, the last of the prophets; on the contrary, he points at the Son of God—*walking*—proceeding with a purpose, that purpose being self-sacrifice—the *Lamb of God walking*.

"Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the World!"

From Adam to John had God's intention been announced, and in the vestments of the Levitical arrangements the Cross was wrapt and dimly presented. When "God manifest in the flesh" is therefore seen, it is as the Lamb walking—walking to the place where He might lay down his life, put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

"Lo, I come to do thy will, O God!"

That same Jesus was indeed a King, was indeed a Prophet; but the first thing needed by a sinful world for its ultimate permanent blessing was—one to rule or teach—but to bear its sins. This was his great object at that time: we see him therefore walking from Nazareth to Calvary, with face steadfastly set towards Jerusalem, there to accomplish his decease.

This aspect of a lowly suffering One was that in

which the Messiah was to be first seen by the people of Israel, and He is therefore so presented by the Baptist. The importance of John's testimony, short-lived as it was, in inducing faith in Christ before the crucifixion, cannot be over-estimated. The upper classes were fully aware that he witnessed that Jesus was the Christ, and were awed to silence on one occasion by fear of the question—"Why did ye not then believe him?" and to the end of our Lord's life great numbers resort to Him and believe in Him, because "all things that John spoke of this man were true."—(John x.)

I.

Now, I believe that in the person of Andrew is presented all those of Israel who, during Christ's life, believed the prophetic testimony of John, and followed Jesus. It is true, they but dimly apprehended Him as the Lamb to be led to the slaughter, (Isa. liii.); they were rather occupied with Him as the Prophet to be raised up like unto Moses, (Deut. xviii. 18): the language of their hearts is rather "*Rabbi, where dwellest thou?*"

The nameless one who followed along with Andrew, in consequence of John's testimony, represents, as I believe, those of God's people who, in consequence of the prophetic testimony in previous ages, "saw Christ's day and were glad," but who, sleeping with their fathers, had no *name* among the living when the Shiloh appeared.

"Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto Him, Rabbi, [Ruling-Teacher,] where dwellest thou?"

The spiritual, in Christ's time, sought to be with Him; they are encouraged, like Andrew, and follow. Like him, too, they rested in His presence; they rested satisfied with Him as the true Messiah. To them his invitation was (in view of the violence being offered to the kingdom, and to Himself the king, Matt. xi.)—Come unto Me, and I will give you rest. Such as trusted in Him were gathered to Him, "as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings." All this is beautifully prefigured in Andrew and the other resting with Jesus beneath the roof where He lodged.

The hope of Israel was earthly—a king and a kingdom—they are therefore represented in the scene before us by one having an earthly name. Andrew means a *stout or strong man*. "It was about the tenth hour" when they heard John speak and followed Jesus; in this is shown that it was late in the day with the dispensation represented by these two. "That which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." (Heb. viii. 13.)

II.

While Andrew represents spiritual Israel before the Cross was erected, and who believed in Jesus primarily through the testimony of John, Simon, son of Jona, represents those of the circumcision, or Jews, who would believe in the Lord Jesus Christ after his resurrection through the testimony of those who had companied with the Lord during his life.

"Andrew first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah."

Now, from the Acts of the Apostles, we know how the Andrews who had followed the Lamb of God confined their testimony to their own brethren, Israel. Such we see aptly represented in the passage before us by Simon, which means *he that hears or obeys*; those of the Jewish nation who at Pentecost and subsequently *heard* the preached word, and yielded the *obedience* of faith, are represented by Simon being brought to Jesus. But another name of Simon is put before us in this passage: it is, Simon, the son of Jona—the son of a Dove, which prefigured that such believing ones would be born again not only by the preached Word (*heard* and *obeyed*), (Jas. i 18; 1 Pet. i. 23—25;) but also through the operation of the Holy Ghost, one of whose symbols is the *Dove*. Therefore, as Simon represents those who would have a *NEW* birth, (higher in character than the spiritual renewal of the saints old, of which David speaks, Ps. li.) he receives a *NEW* name in this John i. viz. Peter (Greek) or Cephas (Hebrew), a *Stone*. Here we see Simon standing before Jesus as his Lord, receiving from Him a new name; the Lord acts as if risen and glorified, a Prince and a Saviour, receiving and re-naming his own. Now, as *Lord* he *was* chiefly regarded by the believing part of the Jewish people represented by Simon, son of Jona, while, as we have shown, those who are represented by Andrew, and who followed Him in his life, did emphatically behold Him as the *Lamb*.

The consideration of the new name here given by our Lord to Simon, leads me to quote that notable passage—Matt. xvi. 15—19:

“He saith unto them, ‘But whom say ye that I am?’

“Simon Peter answered, ‘Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.’

“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter (*Petros*, a *Stone*), and upon this Rock (*Petra*) I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.’”

The idea has been expressed that this meant that the Church would be established in connection with the ministry of Peter, whose prominent usefulness at Pentecost and subsequently lends a feasibility at first to such a construction. But looking at the original words, the reader will perceive between them an important difference. The word Peter (*Petros*) means a *Stone*, a piece of rock, such as a man might hurl, and consequently not large enough to be built upon. The Divine Son is therefore the *Petra*, or *Rock*, and as Son of God, Peter had just confessed Him. Now, all who believe in the heart and confess with the mouth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, like Simon, verily become Peters, i.e. “living stones” (1 Pet. ii. 5), and are “builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit.” Now, this building together did not commence till the Lord was risen and glorified, that is to say, on the day of Pentecost. How deeply interesting it is, therefore, to see Simon Barjona, who represents, in the scene we are considering, believing Israel brought to Jesus, receiving a name true *THEN*,—and true then for the

FIRST time,—that believers should be *Stones*, living stones, so built together and sealed into one Body, or church, by the Holy Spirit of promise, that the gates of hell (Hades or Death) should not prevail against it! To the natural sense, believers die; but Faith says, No; they cannot, they are living stones, and, more than that, are built together into one body, and will shortly be manifested as such, the “gates” being thrown open by Him who holds “the keys of hades and of death.”

It is noticeable that Simon, unlike Andrew, is not introduced before us, by the Holy Ghost, as influenced by the testimony of John, though John did witness that Jesus was the Son of God. Our Lord says the fact was revealed to Peter by the Father. Now I think that here is shown the fact that to Israel at Pentecost (represented in John i. by Simon) the Divine Sonship of Jesus would be revealed directly by God the Father. He was raised from the dead by *the glory of the Father*. By reference to Acts ii. the reader will see that the resurrection is the sum and substance of that primal discourse by which the Holy Ghost pricked three thousand to the heart. It is the great fact urged upon the Jew all through the Acts. In the full blaze of this glorious fact, the testimony of John, though occasionally referred to, appears like a star in the morning sky.

In this 1st chapter of John's Gospel, Simon does not, unlike Andrew, testify to others of Christ; and so we see that the testimony of believing Israel to unbelieving Israel, as a distinct thing, was to come to an end, (which it did in the destruction of Jerusalem and perhaps the death of James the son of Alphæus, the writer of the Epistle). The believing circumcision were utterly unequal to regard the middle wall of partition as broken down, although charged by Christ Jesus to preach the Gospel to *every* creature. The Lord Jesus Christ has, therefore, practically, as well as spiritually, to break down the middle wall of partition Himself, and make of twain (Jew and Gentile) one man. (Ephes. ii. 15.) This He does, 1st, by the vision to Cornelius, and the corresponding vision to Peter, accompanied with a positive command to go to the Gentile ruler; 2ndly, by the men of Cyrene and Cyprus who are pressed to preach to the Gentiles at Antioch, Acts xi.; 3rdly, and chiefly, by the conversion of Paul and his call to the Apostleship, (a chosen vessel to bear His name unto the Gentiles,) one who was not associated with spiritual Israel before the Cross, nor with believing Israel after Pentecost, but called by direct personal act of the Lord. I think Paul, and the Gentile testimony in general, are presented in the person of Philip in this John i. Thus, I see prefigured, not only the future silence of the believing circumcision as a distinct testimony, but its being followed by another testimony.

III.

“The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.”

The whole three are of Bethsaida, (house of fishing or fruits,) indicating that all testimony would pri-

marily issue from the Jewish stock, even that which, in the person of Paul, was to be most powerfully uprootive, or rather supersedive, of Judaism. They are all three of Galilee, indicating that their testimony concerning Christ would be regarded by both Jew and Gentile as issuing from people of insignificant standing and origin.

But, the reader may say, if Philip represents Paul, how is it he addresses himself to Nathanael? In this fact I see the analogy I am considering further borne out, for Paul soon after his conversion bore earnest testimony to Israel, and to the end, in spite of his being sent to the Gentiles primarily, testified of Christ to Israel. So ardent is his desire for Israel, that he would that he were accursed for their sakes. (Rom. ix. 3.) Though emphatically the Apostle to the Gentiles, yet, wherever the Lord opened a door, he rejoiced in preaching Christ to the Jew first; indeed, the words of the Lord to Ananias are—

“Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.”

Now, the fact seems to me, that Philip's testimony to Nathanael—Paul's testimony to Israel—is still alive, is still cherished and presented by the Gentile churches, Paul's own flocks, as it were, or issue in the faith. By and bye, (shortly it may be,) Nathanael (guileless ones among the Jews) will receive the testimony; and then, “all Israel shall be saved. The importance to the true-hearted Jew, now and in the day to come, of the Epistles of Paul, specially those to the Hebrews, Romans, and Galatians, cannot be over-estimated, for there is so much in these writings that bears on Jewish truth, as contrasted with, and as foreshadowing the truth as it is in Jesus. Of late years, the Lord Jesus Christ, by the powerful working of His Holy Spirit and Word, has greatly intensified and cleared the testimony of the Church, both as to present salvation to every one that believeth, and also as to the future hope of Israel. Some dear brethren are inclined to overlook the importance of the New Testament Word to Israel when the Church is withdrawn from the earth. But as containing narratives, discourses, and revelations showing that the substance in the Gospel answers most intimately to the shadows of the Law, I think that the New Testament, now held forth to the Jew, and by guileless ones received, will be in that day eminently serviceable and deeply interesting. Take the New Testament out of the hands of the Jew in the day to come, and what would he have to show him that all has been fulfilled, but a scanty outline of traditional statement? How much there is in the three first Gospels, and specially that of Matthew, that has a primary reference to the “kingdom.” Will all that Divine truth fall with the disappearance of the Church, to whom, indeed (as the *Church*), much of it was not at first given? Nay; verily, the Word of the Lord endureth for ever.

The testimony of Paul to Israel, perpetuated now in and by the Gentile churches, and received by guileless Israelites then and now, is exactly the testimony of Philip to Nathanael;—

“We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph.”

Here is no reference to signs and miracles, not even to the then living witness John, but simply to the *written Word*, and this, whether read or heard, is now the basis of all testimony. In it, again, we see no reference to the kingship of Christ, but to Jesus in humiliation, simply as he was and seemed to be. Believers now take part with a rejected Christ in his humiliation. So, also, Paul, who ever referred to Moses and the prophets, and determined to know nothing, as an Evangelist, but Christ and Him crucified. Again, Philip says, “Come and see,” and our call now is to individuals, and in the day to come it will not be Israel, as a nation, but as a repentant remnant who have come, as individuals, to look for Christ.

IV.

As will have been gathered by the reader, I consider that in Nathanael is prefigured guileless Israel, from the call of Paul to that period referred to by our Lord as the “hereafter,” (ver. 51,) when Nathanael (the repentant remnant of the Jewish nation by and bye) “shall see Heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon [epi, in the time of the office or government of] the Son of Man.” Though “blindness in PART hath happened unto Israel,” yet they are still God's earthly people; as Paul says, “God hath NOT cast away his people.” (Rom. ix.) Israel is still to be reverentially regarded as the Nathanael, *the gift of God*, to the EARTH; therefore, the *Gentiles* of the millennium are not separately represented in this beautiful analogy in John i. They are dealt with in Nathanael; “in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” This word, though primarily fulfilled in Christ, is secondarily true of the restored Israel.

“If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead!”

At present, their aversion to regard the claims of the Nazarene is fitly represented by Nathanael's exclamation—“Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” But His people will be willing in the day of His power; and when like Nathanael they see Him they will exclaim—“Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel!”

Verse 47 says, “Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him; Philip is not mentioned; agreeing with the fact of the disappearance of the present testimony from the scene in the latter day.

As to the prophetic meaning of the words—

“Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee:”

I would offer the suggestion that, as the fig tree symbolizes earthly blessing (Zech. iii. 10), the fact may be here expressed that while, before the testimony of Paul, God's eye was on them as his earthly people, to whom pertained earthly prosperity, yet that since that time, as a nation, they are no longer under the fig-tree—in the place of earthly blessing.

[The writer would be thankful to hear from any dear brethren to whose spiritual judgment the foregoing, or any part of it, may not commend itself, on a second perusal. A letter to the Editor will reach him.]

STARTLING TRUTH.

(A DIALOGUE.)

CHRISTIAN ENQUIRER.—I have heard preachers try to enforce the doctrine of salvation by a great variety of arguments, but what you have stated in your discourse, as to an actual judgment impending over this world, is quite new to me.

EVANGELIST.—Yet few things are spoken of in the Scriptures more plainly and emphatically.

ENQUIRER.—Will you name some passage to which I can readily refer?

EVANGELIST.—To several, if you please. I would not wish you to accept on slight evidence, statements which seem novel to you. Look first at Matt. xxiv. 29 and 30.

ENQUIRER.—Yes, there I read, “Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” That is, certainly, a very striking declaration; but I have heard it said we are to understand it spiritually, or else that it is a prophecy of the general Judgment at the end of the world.

EVANGELIST.—I know it is the fashion to comment upon the scriptures in that way—and it has invariably been thus with some who would fain get rid of truth which does not suit them. But the declaration you have read was spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ just before he offered himself as an atonement for the sins of all who should believe in him. The words mean what they convey in the most literal sense, and it is himself who is thus to come to judge the world.

ENQUIRER.—But there seems nothing to show that the passage may not refer to the general Judgment at the end of all things.

EVANGELIST.—You will find abundant evidence in the context, which proves that the final judgment is not here spoken of. Indeed, the word of God does not at all warrant the prevalent teaching of a general Judgment. The scriptures foretell several judgments. 1st. There will be the judgment of the world at the coming of the Lord, after a period of fearful tribulation has passed over the earth. Then the Lord Jesus will take to himself his great power and reign; whereupon the world will have a thousand years of happiness. After the close of the Millennium, Satan will be permitted to go forth to tempt the nations, upon which some will rebel, and punishment will suddenly overtake them. Fire will come down from God out of heaven and devour them. Here we have a 2nd judgment. Afterwards comes the final judgment—The great white throne will be seen, and from the face of Him that sits on it, the earth and the heaven will flee away. Then the dead small and great will stand before God, the books will be opened, and the dead will be judged. I am now quoting from Rev. xx.

ENQUIRER.—But if *all*, small and great, will then

stand before God, surely that will be a general judgment.

EVANGELIST.—You have misquoted the passage—on reference you will find it does *not* say *all*, both small and great, but, “*The dead, small and great*”—this makes a wonderful difference.

ENQUIRER.—But does not that expression necessarily include all mankind? Even scripture declares, “Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”

EVANGELIST.—The sentence of death has indeed passed upon all, but, marvellous to say, all christians (i. e. true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ) have, through faith, been so brought into union with him who has triumphed over both sin and death, that they are already delivered from death and from condemnation. Thus the Lord Jesus declared to Martha (see John xi. 26,) “Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.”

ENQUIRER.—You surely do not consider that to be *literally* true. Belief does not appear to have saved any from death since the day those words were spoken.

EVANGELIST.—Indeed, the declaration of Jesus is literally true. From the time that promise was made till now, not one believer in Him has really died, though many thousands have fallen asleep.

ENQUIRER.—Do not those expressions signify the same thing.

EVANGELIST.—Nay, they are widely different. When the soul of an unbeliever departs, he is dead in the most horrible sense of the term. But when a believer dies (I use the expression after the manner of men) he simply falls asleep in Jesus—and finds that word of Paul to be most blessedly true, that “to depart and be with Christ is far better.” Until the coming of the Lord, he remains a disembodied spirit in happy repose—but when that joyful day arrives, his body, which was sown in corruption, will be raised in glory. Death will be swallowed up of life.

ENQUIRER.—But I understood you to say just now that “the coming of the Lord,” means judgment for the world.

EVANGELIST.—So it does. But it has a prior meaning, which is,—blissful deliverance for every true christian, whether fallen asleep, or found waiting and watching.

ENQUIRER.—Well, what you are saying is most astounding.

EVANGELIST.—Yet to every declaration I have made, you will find a “Thus saith the Lord.” Turn to 1 Cor. xv. for the verification of all I have now advanced. I will read to you from ver. 51. “Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we [christians] shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we [believers who shall be found alive] shall be changed.”

ENQUIRER.—I see you introduced a few words parenthetically. Are you justified in doing so?

EVANGELIST.—Yes, because you will find a full

confirmation of them in the latter part of the 4th chap. of 1st Epistle to the Thessalonians.

ENQUIRER.—May I then understand these scriptures to imply that if I am a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, not only may I cease to *fear* His coming to judge the world, but that His coming will be a most joyful event to me, an event, too, which may come to pass at any moment, so that for aught I can tell, I may pass from this sorrowful world without even seeing death.

EVANGELIST.—Yes, that is all most gloriously true. For, as you seem to comprehend, the coming of the Lord has, if I may so express it, two stages. First, he will descend into the air to receive and reward (according to their works of faith and love) all his redeemed ones. And then he will come “with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment.” (Jude 14, 15.) All this you will find abundantly confirmed, now that your eyes are opened, if you search the scriptures prayerfully and spiritually.

ENQUIRER.—You have indeed made me happy. I hope another time to ask you more about the coming judgment for the world—but just now my heart is too full of wonder and praise to dwell upon that theme.

NOTE.—The Editor will be glad to receive communications, setting forth any difficulties christians find respecting revealed truth, to be answered as above.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR DISCIPLES OF CHRIST IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND (SO-CALLED)

RESPECTING

“THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER.”

(CONTINUED.)

BELoved,—Did you ever read the preface to the above-named book? We suppose not. Yet it would be well for you to do so. We admit you will find it weary work to wade through it; but we think it should startle you when you discover therein the spirit in which the book itself was put forth.

You may, however, think it is not of much moment what is written in a preface, and therefore shun the task to which we have invited you. Let us then ask you, without going further into the matter, to reflect upon the following sentiment expressed in the very first paragraph, “Particular forms of Divine worship, and the rites and ceremonies appointed to be used therein, are in their own nature *indifferent* and alterable.” What! the manner in which God is to worshipped a matter of indifference? Many a heathen would blush to give utterance to so profane a thought.

But we pass to the next consideration offered in the opening of the book, namely, the regulations for reading the Scriptures. First, there is a special provision that the Psalms, or rather, we should say, the Prayer Book version of the Psalms, therein called the Psalter, shall be read through once every month. Now, of all the Books of the Old Testament the Psalms are most bewildering if presented to the unconverted; and even to the Christian, if unspiritual in walk, or if untaught in dispensational truth. We hope to examine this more closely in our way through

the Prayer Book, when that portion comes under review. But in the meantime, we beg dear Christians, to understand that the Psalms belong essentially to the Jewish dispensation. They speak of the trials, joys, and general experiences of a godly Jew. They, in many instances, anticipate the sufferings of Christ, and they call down vengeance upon the enemies of God and of Israel. A well-taught Christian may read them *reflectively*, with great profit. Many passages, too, pourtray his own case as a pilgrim; the 23rd Psalm for instance. But the New Testament Scriptures are those which are given for the Christian's *practical guidance*. And many of these are in marked *contrast* with Judaism.

The very basis of the Christian dispensation is **FORGIVENESS**—in contra-distinction to the spirit of *vengeance* which God displays in connexion with the Jews. “Ye know not what spirit ye are of,” was said by our Lord Jesus Christ to his earliest disciples. And it must be said to thousands who profess his name now. His servants desired to call down fire from heaven upon a village of the Samaritans, because they received Him not. This was thoroughly Jewish, and the Lord reproveth them in the above words. Contrast with the thoughts of his followers, His own unspeakably gracious prayer at the cross, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

You cannot have a fusion of Judaism and Christianity. The latter is a dispensation of *free grace*, (*undeserved mercy*.) The former displays God's righteous judgments. This distinction will, we trust, engage our thoughts further, as we proceed. But we hope enough has been said to show how *especially unsuitable* is the portion of the sacred writings referred to (the Psalms), for utterance continually from the lips of the ignorant. And we have no doubt this one most mischievous and unholy practice has gone far to produce the pitiable confusion which prevails in men's minds as to the *present* purposes of God.

BELoved,—In commencing the consideration of your formularies, the first difficulty which strikes the intelligent reader is this—For whom are these forms of prayer provided? Are they for unforgiven sinners, or for those who have received salvation through faith in Jesus Christ? As a matter-of-fact, we know that your Prayer Book is used indiscriminately, by believer and unbeliever alike. But does not this strike you as necessarily offensive to God? Those who truly (i.e. in heart) believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are not only pardoned but justified, no longer heirs of wrath, nor even left on neutral ground, but are adopted into God's family.

“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.” (Rom. viii. 16.)

While, on the other hand, unbelievers are under the wrath of God—

“He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. . . . He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.” (John iii. 18, 36.)

Can anything be more flagrantly opposed to the mind of God than for those who are *his children* and those who are *his enemies* to use the same prayers?

Now look at the opening exhortation, commencing with the words, "Dearly beloved brethren." To address this phrase to a mixed audience, composed of converted and unconverted, is a mere formality, at best. Then how can any sincere confession come from an unbeliever? God does *not* call upon unconverted sinners, as such, to confess their sins; but He calls upon them to confess *Jesus Christ*.

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Rom. x.)

It is through faith in Jesus Christ that God forgives a sinner. On the other hand, the Lord does call for confession from his children,—those who are his children by adoption and grace.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John i. 9.)

This is addressed to believers only. From such, God receives true confession. His children are invited individually to enter into their chambers, and confess all their sins and failures, realizing by faith that they do so to One who is the Searcher of hearts. To confess sins in this way is a very different thing from a mere confession of *SINFULNESS*. If a child of God confesses his *sins* to his Heavenly Father, there will be sincerity, contrition, and an earnest purpose to walk thenceforth more circumspectly. While a mere acknowledgment of sinfulness may be uttered glibly enough by the most impenitent sinner. Of what value, then, is that formal confession of sinfulness which your Prayer Book provides for you to repeat twice a day? If you had transgressed against an earthly sovereign, or even against an earthly parent, could you have the heartlessness to get a stranger to write you out a *form*, confessing yourself in general terms a miserable offender, and could you venture to read it over twice a day for a twelvemonth in the hearing of your offended king or father? Would not such a course prove a man to be a thorough hypocrite? It is evident that he would thereby add a thousandfold to his offences! Is it not truly awful, then, to deal with God in a way which would be palpably and grossly offensive to men?

Next, we come to that which is headed "The Absolution or Remission of Sins, to be pronounced by the Priest alone, standing, the people still kneeling." This is a manifest attempt to copy that which was given to the Aaronic priesthood, which has nothing whatever to do with the Christian dispensation. As an imitation of that which God ordained for his ancient people Israel, it is utterly wanting in its first essential. Aaron had not only to confess the sins of the people but he was to offer sacrifice to God. The epistle to the Hebrews clearly shows this—and of course the books of Old Testament Scripture abundantly prove it also. The *contrast* to all *imitation priesthood* is the Christian's great High Priest,

"Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once when he offered up himself."—Heb. vii. 27.

It is untrue to say, in the words of your priest's 'Absolution,' that "Almighty God, the Father of our

Lord Jesus Christ, hath given power and commandment to his ministers to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins." Where is it so stated in the Scriptures?

Having pronounced the so-called Absolution, your priest goes on to say, "wherefore let us beseech Him to grant us true repentance." So the people are supposed to have confessed their sins, "with a pure heart and humble voice," and the priest has pronounced remission of sins, and now you are to ask for "true repentance"! What are we to say to this? We will leave *you* to pass judgment.

Next you are invited to pray God to grant you His Holy Spirit! Yet Scripture declares that you who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ have received the Holy Ghost.

"What? know ye not that your body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God?"—1 Cor. vi. 19.

Oh, that you would accept what the Lord teaches you in his word, instead of following the confused jumble of thoughts and phrases strung together for you by men who, however zealous towards God, (as doubtless they were who constructed your Prayer Book,) yet had but recently emerged from the superstitions of the dark ages, and were only beginning to see through the blinding influences of Romanism.

You who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are indeed "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." As for those who believe *not* in the only Saviour, the answer to all their petitions is—"Why do ye not believe?"

W. H., Yorkshire.—We pray the Lord, according to your wish, that you may be enabled to stand fast in the liberty with which Christ has made you free. No doubt you may find much opposition; but you can say, through grace, that you are already more than conqueror through Him that loveth you. It is a sure word that—"All who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Blessed be the Lord who has so fully warned us in his word beforehand, and thereby prepared us for the conflict. Go on, dear brother, in simple faith in the Lord's sufficient grace being supplied in answer to prayer, also in the full light for our path furnished in his Word, and of the sure guidance of the Holy Ghost into all truth.—Respecting Scripture Meetings, you will find our thoughts pretty fully expressed in No. 3 of this paper. May the Lord graciously open a door, and give you much grace and patience. Our contributor who offered help will not be able to travel your way at present, having been led into Norfolk. He would have been glad to visit you, had it been in his power.

J. S., Newcastle.—Such letters as yours are very encouraging. We thank God for the many (though comparatively few) who now rejoice in the light of the truth as it is in Jesus, though it compels them to forego much that is tempting to the natural mind, including that seductive snare of Satan—Ritual Worship. May the midnight cry (of which you speak) gather strength, till all who really love our Lord Jesus Christ shall be found (it may be so) "outside the camp, bearing his reproach."

P. F., J. S. J., J. J. M., pressed out. Also a paper on the further consideration of Discipline in churches of the saints.

Published for the Proprietor, by

West End—JOB CAUDWELL, 635, Strand, London, W.C.
City Agent—ARTHUR HALL, 25, Paternoster-row, London, E.C.
Smart & Allen, 2, Loudonhouse-yard, Paternoster Row.

JOHN EVANS, Printer, 385A, Strand, London, W.C.

PRECIOUS TRUTH.

“WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?”—(Rom. iv. 3.)

London:—Job Caudwell, 335, Strand.

Smart & Allen, Londonhouse Yard, Paternoster-row.

Arthur Hall, 25, Paternoster-row.

No. 19.]

OCTOBER 1, 1866.

[One Halfpenny.]

TO MY NEAREST KINDRED IN CHRIST JESUS.

BELIEVED,—Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ,—You are of my nearest kindred. We are alike born again, of the operation of God. “Born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.” (1 Peter i. 23.) As thus begotten, what is our relationship? We are of one family in Christ. “For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.” (Heb. ii. 11.) Alas! how little this relationship is valued. Alas! how little understood. But if accepted in faith, oh, how precious! There is a *seclusion* of the household of faith which has appropriated the title “Brethren” distinctively, and which repudiates fellowship with children of God, who do not comply with the regulations of that party. I allude to this, merely because one feels hampered in using a term, when speaking of the family of God, which has come to be, in some minds, significant of narrowness, as respects heavenly things. Our Lord, however, allows no such exclusiveness. He owns all his disciples as of the nearest kindred.

“He stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!” (Matthew xii. 49.)

What failing ones there were in that little company who followed our Saviour during the days of his earthly ministry! Yet he was “not ashamed to call them brethren”! And I thank the Lord, there are many little companies of christians who in all simplicity call themselves “Brethren,” and own all believers as of “The Brotherhood.”

Blessed Lord Jesus! may thy “blood-bought ones” drink more deeply, in these last days, of thy spirit; that they may manifest love, and gentleness, and grace; that thus after Thee, and through Thee, they may glorify God.

Now, I want to enquire, beloved, how it is, that the divine relationship which belongs to all who, through faith in Jesus Christ, have become children of God, is but little understood? How is it that the charge, or exhortation, “Love the Brotherhood” (1 Pet. ii. 17), is passed over without a thought of its deep significance? What is this Brotherhood? Is it a circumscribed party to which we have been introduced by men? Nay, dear christian. It embraces every living member of the living Christ of God. I think of many among those Brethren who entertain hard and bitter thoughts against other redeemed ones, who “walk not with them.” But they are of “the Brotherhood,” the true brotherhood, both the unloving ones and the un-

loved of their brethren. Remembering this, faith says, “Let me not dwell on their unlovely thoughts; they do own the *one Lord*, though they have strange notions as to the way in which they are to exemplify the *one body*; they have many right desires, and are generally earnest in seeking to know and do the Lord’s will. But above all, I think of them as sanctified in Christ Jesus. Now I *must* love them.”

Oh, what a joy to be able to look with the eye of faith! Then we see things and persons as our heavenly Father sees them; and then we have peace. But I think of other christians—some there are in Romanism (God knows whether there be not many there), believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, who groan under the bands and fetters in which they suffer themselves to be enslaved; I say suffer themselves to be enslaved, because under no circumstances ought a christian to bear any yoke than that of Christ; better die a thousand deaths, if that were the penalty, than live under such a gross imposture. Well, I love those dear ones—they need love and pity—God loves and pities them. I could not go where they go, nor in many things do what they do. I shudder at the dreadful defilement of their garments, but they are sanctified in Christ Jesus—they are of *the Brotherhood*—they are to be loved. There are many others, too, who bear sectional names—they ought not to say I am of Paul and I of Apollos, but as believers in Christ they are of one “Brotherhood,” and all to be loved. Again, I think of some who have fallen into sin, of worldly-minded christians, of backsliders and prodigals—of such, too, as think that, having obtained salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, they may now live to themselves, forgetful of that word of tender exhortation—

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, *holy*, acceptable to God, *your reasonable service*; and be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” (Rom. xii. 1, 2.)

I think of the many snares into which Satan has beguiled the Sheep of the flock: of the many wanderers who have strayed from the fold. I sigh for the day of deliverance, when each of those I have enumerated shall, through grace, recall to mind the Father’s house. ~~Many a chastening have they received, and more they may have to endure ere they return—with bitter tears and wounded sides will many come in. My heart yearns over them in their afflictions—unlovely they are to sight now, but regarding them as believers in Jesus Christ, Love goes out after them and owns them as of the one Brotherhood; while Faith looks on to the end, to behold them as “sanctified in Christ Jesus.”~~

"Love the Brotherhood." Not merely a little circle moving in our own neighbourhood or of our own habits and station—but that vast aggregate comprising the household of faith. Yes, love them all, not because of what they are in themselves, but as discerning what they are in Christ. Troublesome, and wayward, and vexing, many of the members may be now; a little while, and they who look so ugly or unlikely, will be transformed—we shall see them as God sees them in Christ. Beautiful! Oh, how beautiful!

"Now are we the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear [i.e., we cannot see with our eyes] what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (1 John iii. 2.)

Yes, even the most ill-shapen member is to be conformed to the likeness of Christ.

Beautiful we ought to be in each other's eyes now, as those who see with the eye of faith. There is not a christian on earth, however failing, who is not precious in God's sight; let us then seek to love all whom the Lord loves—yes, "Love the Brotherhood," the entire Brotherhood.

And now I want to press for a moment, a few thoughts about the activities of love. It is a precious thing to feel love welling up in our hearts, as stirred by the Word of God—but oh, beloved, let us take care that it produces practical results.

"Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." (1 John iii. 18.)

I think of many dear ones in the Lord, who become known to me from time to time, in sickness and poverty, who need ministering to by those who have "this world's good." I could give you the names of two or three, that you may visit them and help them, as the Lord may give you grace. Will you let me?

It would be easy to ask you to contribute to a charitable institution, but *your Brethren* ought not to be dealt with in that way. I want you to *visit* the fatherless and widow in their affliction—that is the Lord's way. It may be you are already engaged in such practical work. Blessed be the name of the Lord that many are up and doing. But if you have yet held back, I pray you think how dear these tried ones ought to be to you in Christ; think of their eternal relationship of nearest degree. Listen to my appeal, accept the call.

"Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward." (Mark ix. 41.)

Remember, I am not dealing in generalities—I offer you work precious in the sight of the Lord.

Yours ever, in patient waiting

For the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,
THE EDITOR.

THE PRAYER BOOK CONSIDERED.

TO CHRISTIANS IN THE STATE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

(Continued from No. 18.)

DEAR BRETHREN,—We now have to pass in review the use of that which is denominated "The Lord's

Prayer." This is introduced not less than four times, and on many occasions even more frequently, in the course of your prescribed morning service. Yet the Lord Jesus, in framing that prayer for the disciples, accompanied it with this special caution—

"When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them, for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him" (Matt. vi. 7, 8.)

How completely this warning is disregarded! Then what a lack of intelligence there is as to the meaning of the petitions the Lord put together as a model to help his feeble followers; for instead of superstitiously repeating a form of words, christians ought to remember that the Saviour said, "*After this manner pray ye.*" And it is the more needful to notice this, because a little consideration will show (to those who are willing to be taught of God) that the special characteristics of the prayer dictated by Jesus *at that time* were adapted to the *then* needs of those to whom it was given. A careful reader of the New Testament Scriptures will find various prayers in the Acts, and in the Epistles, but would search in vain for any allusion to the one which christians call "the Lord's prayer," and which they commonly consider is for universal use and for all time. How is it that the churches named in the Scriptures were not instructed to use it? For the simple reason, that after Jesus had suffered, and put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, the circumstances and needs of believers were altered. Instead of being taught to pray that our Heavenly Father would forgive us *as* we forgive our fellows, the glorious truth is now declared that God *hath* for Christ's sake forgiven us. (Eph. iv. 32.) We are to forgive not in order to be forgiven, but because we *are* forgiven. Instead of praying, "Thy kingdom come," the christian ought to know that God "*hath* translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." (Col. i. 13.)

When "the Lord's prayer" was given, believers were waiting for the kingdom. And not only the disciples, but the Jews generally, were expecting the kingdom of God. Witness the following, among many other passages shewing this.

"As they heard, Jesus added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because *they thought* that the kingdom of God should *immediately* appear." (Luke xix. 11.)

Just before the commencement of our Lord's public ministry on earth, John Baptist proclaimed "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." Jesus himself and his few chosen servants did in fact represent the kingdom of God at that time. But because God's chosen people Israel would not repent, the kingdom was not *displayed* in glory. When the Lord sent forth the Seventy, whom he had appointed to go before his face into every city whither he himself would come, he commissioned them to heal the sick (as a sign both of his grace and power) and to "say to them, the kingdom of God is come nigh to you." (Luke x. 9.)—But the kingdom of God thus presented could only be discerned by faith, and the faithful ones were but few. Even then (as Israelites) their desire was that the Lord would display his kingdom in righteousness and majesty. Thus it

was that, even after our Saviour had died and risen again, the inquiry of his disciples was—

“Lord, wilt thou *at this time* restore again the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts i. 6.)

There was no lack of intelligence on the subject, on the part of those who made this inquiry; (any who think otherwise are sadly ignorant of God’s purposes.) It is evident the Master recognised their true apprehension of God’s revealed will, though his reply rebukes their impatience.

“He said unto them, It is not for you to know the *times* or the *seasons*, which the Father hath put in his own power.” (Acts i. 7.)

But it must be noted here, as indeed in every case where the kingdom of God on earth is spoken of, it is the people of Israel who are primarily concerned.

Now, christians are not taught to look for the kingdom, but for Christ. To the early Gentile converts it was said—

“Ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven.” (1 Thess. i. 9, 10.)

The difference is of the utmost importance. When the kingdom of God is displayed in power—when the Lord Jesus Christ takes to himself his great power and reigns, we who trust in him during these days of his rejection, are to “*reign with him.*”

“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, that we may be also glorified together.” (Rom. viii. 16, 17.)

“For if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him. If we suffer we shall also reign with Him.” (2 Tim. ii. 11, 12.)

These are not vain words, but mean just what they express, though the faith of christians generally is too weak to enter into the wondrous truth they convey.

All this is quite different to and far above, the expectation of the Jews, though theirs was, and will be again, a glorious calling, even to be the first and greatest nation on earth, under the righteous reign of Christ.

The christian’s prayer is written at the end of the Revelation. In answer to our Lord’s announcement “Surely I come quickly”—our prayer is, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” (Rev. xxii. 20.)

The Lord’s coming for his bride, (the assembly of God,) will *not* bring about the *immediate* setting up of His kingdom on earth. Read John xiv. 2, 3; also 1 Cor. xv. 51—54, and 1 Thess. iv. 15—18, in proof of what we have stated. The kingdom of God cannot come until all the faithful (i.e. believers in Christ) of the present dispensation have been caught up “to meet the Lord in the air.” After that, there will intervene the day of tribulation on earth. Then will come the kingdom of God in power and glory.

“Then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.” (Luke xxi. 27.)

That this is the true interpretation of the petition “Thy kingdom come,” is proved by that which follows, namely, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” A moment’s reflection will show that “God’s will” can

only be done on earth as perfectly as it is done in heaven, when the Lord Jesus Christ shall come to reign over it in righteousness, and Satan shall be chained in the bottomless pit.

Beloved,—How many, out of the thousands who repeat these petitions continually, ever trouble to inquire what they are asking for? Are not the words repeated over and over again as a mere superstition, without any intelligence as to their import, or any desire of the heart accompanying them? What an awful mockery of God! The Scripture declares that “the letter killeth”; and so it must be in this case. In fact, when the prayer is answered fully, it will be destruction to unbelievers.

“The Son of Man shall send forth his Angels and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.” (Matt. xxiii. 41—43.)

It is marvellous to find intelligent men holding the foolish thoughts they do about the words we are looking at—“Thy kingdom come.” We one day heard a clever man of the world (one who, we understand, goes to church as it is called, very regularly) speaking of the death of some one he had known—his expression was, “he has gone to kingdom come!” We believe it is not at all an uncommon thing with many to speak of death by that phrase. What a contradiction of terms! But the worst of it is there must be an utter want of sincerity in offering up the petition while the thought remains that it means death. Who, of the multitudes who repeat the words, have any desire for death? The sorrowful truth is, that the prayer is used without spiritual intelligence; and as respects the multitude, it has become a mere superstition. There is a redeeming consideration, namely, that it is repeated by many out of reverence for Him who dictated it. But the Lord would never have us to use words which do not flow from the heart, even though his own words; and these cannot come from the heart if those who utter them attach no intelligent meaning to what they ask of God. Consider that word to the Corinthians—

“God hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.” (2 Cor. iii. 6.)

The mere utterance of words is worse than vanity, if these do not express spiritual desires.

We have another thing to remark in furtherance of what has been advanced—namely, as to the concluding sentences of the Lord’s Prayer—“Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory.” While the few faithful Jewish disciples of Christ were thus given to confess that “the kingdom, the power, and the glory” belonged to God, the rulers of the nation rejected the Son of God, and declared before Pilate, “We have no king but Cæsar.” (John xix. 15.) We see by this striking contrast that there was some value *during that day* of the ascription to God of “the kingdom, the power, and the glory.”

But of what force are such expressions from the lips of those who are very well content with the world under the usurpation of Satan? Soon, however, will

the dominion of Satan cease, and that triumphant sound will be heard—

"The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." (Rev. xi. 15.)

But first it will be, Woe to all such as know not God and who have not obeyed the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We thank God that we are now writing for those who *have* obeyed the gospel, and who love the name of Jesus. To you, beloved, we address one consideration more—and it ought to have great weight with you. At the close of our Lord's ministry, when the Jewish nation had been tested, and had rejected their king, our Saviour no longer taught his disciples to pray as Jews, nor did he furnish them with any set petitions. No—at that time he gave them very different instructions as to prayer. His words were,

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, *Whatsoever* ye shall ask the Father *in my name*, he will give it you!"

In using that which is called the Lord's Prayer, you neither ask what you want, nor with spiritual understanding, nor in the name of Jesus! Do suffer the word of exhortation. Abandon the traditions of men and the misapplication of sacred things; learn what the will of the Lord is, and do it.

"*Prove all things*; hold fast that which is good." (1 Thess. v. 21.)

GLAD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY.

List! sinner, while I speak of HIM who died,
The Just One, for the unjust, such as thou.

When man had sunk in Ruin's direful gulf,
And Death was gathering beneath his pall,
In deepest darkness, all 'in Gentile lands,
CHRIST came, partook of Flesh and Blood, and died;
Died in our stead; propitiation was
Thus made for all the world, that every one
Through HIM eternal life might have, and be
From Sin, and Death, and Hell for ever saved.

Ah! what could'st thou have *known* of God—thyself—
Or of the future world, if Christ had not
A Light become for thee, and Gentiles all?
What *more* than they, our fathers, roaming woods
In search of prey? The sunshine and the dew
Did not communicate to *them*; nor stars,
Which to the pious Jew (possess'd of truth
In part) not silent were, or without voice.
Thou great is *thy* responsibility!

Oh, then, to Jesus turn, the Son divine:—
The Light of this dark world He is; trust thou
In Him, and thou shalt have the Light of Life.
He who by Prophets spake of old, now speaks
To thee and all the world by His own Son.
"This is my well-belov'd Son: Hear Him!"
Alas! the many thousands who have liv'd
In disobedience to *this* word of God,
Which from the glory excellent was given.
No thund'rous threat did this accompany;
But Moses, man of God, of old had said—
"HIM *shall* ye hear;—who not, shalt be cut off."
Behold the Jews, dispers'd throughout the earth;
Cut off, and cast aside, from favour great.
And why? Not for the blood on Calvary shed.
That, fully, freely was forgiven to them.

But for rejection of the preach'd Word:
Though not till thrice ten summers had been told!
Did Vengeance issue forth and scatter them?
Ah, Gentile sinner, this is now thy day;
But, oh! how like the Jew of old art thou
(And other Gentiles) slighting Mercy's call!
Soon will a like rejection fall on thee,
For similar,—yea, and far more flagrant sin,
If thou refuse to hear and trust the Lord.

Oh, what a word!—That "God so lov'd the World,
That He did give His well-belov'd Son,
That whosoever would believe in Him
Might PERISH not, but sav'd for ever be."
Oh, awful fact express'd in this dread word—
Where worm ne'er dies, nor fire is quench'd for aye!
Destruction from the glory and the face
Of God—a never-ending night of death—
A dissolution 'twixt the soul and God.
No beaming sun above, nor even star
Of hope in the dark firmament of Hell!
No breezes wafting health across the realms
Of that sad place; nor liquid draught to slake
Unceasing thirst; nor rest for feet that track
The Pit that's bottomless; (oh, mystery
Unveil'd, a myst'ry still); nor sleep to close
The eyes that fain would respite find from woe.
If God but shut thee from His presence out,
Then woe unutterably great is thine.
At present He endures thy sin and thee;
But not for long: sin and the sinner must
Be swept from out the presence of the Lord.

What if the sentence is so long delay'd,
Think not, unsav'd one, thou hast nought to fear.
Behold the LAMB!—Immaculate by birth;
Most holy, harmless, undefiled, and good:
Could He escape the wrath of God 'gainst sin?
Ah, no! though in the very sight of God
Wholly unblemish'd, both *within*, *without*;
Yet as He took the sinner's place and sin
Upon Himself—He needs must be consum'd.
How, then, shalt thou escape—*unholy* thou,
Within, *without*? No door of possible
Retreat was for HIM found, though sought with tears,
And sweat, and agony, and blood, from HIM
Who is the Infinitely Pitiful.
Would *tears* of *thine* avail in that dread day
When thou shalt stand before His throne with all
Thy sins upon thee!—thou, who might'st have wash'd
In the appointed flood, and cleans'd been?
Ah, no! Then flee; the Cross thy only hope.

Oh, wondrous cleansing power of that shed blood!
Which from the day of Pentecost hath freed
From sin's foul taint so many, and which now
Forgiveness all around is bringing those
Who (mov'd by faith and deep-felt need) to it
Resort! It cleanses all who come, yet keeps
As pure and efficacious as when shed
On Calvary's Cross. Try it, Dear Soul, at once;
And purged be, in God's sight and thine own.

Oh, sin of sins! when Mercy proffer'd is,
And is esteem'd scarce worth a thought! which cost
The greatest gift of God to purchase, even
Messiah's life, who nothing ill had done.
But thus, vain man, doth lightly hold and cheap,
Most other gifts of God, most freely giv'n.
The air we breathe, the food we eat and drink;
The clothes we wear, that health of body, too,
Which much enhances every other gift;
And sleep, that great reviver of our strength;
The sky above, most fair, with clouds begarnish'd;
Sunshine that millions cheerful makes and glad:

And hill and dale, and rain and dew, and things
Beneath, above, and all around the earth ;
All, all, enjoy'd by unregen'rate man :
All *giv'n* and nothing first deserv'd or claim'd.
God knows and gives what's needed ere we ask ;
Nor quick withdraws for base ingratitude.

Thus is Salvation giv'n to Faith ; with no
Demand for money's worth—for priceless 'tis.
Thou hast it as a *gift*, or not at all.
Think not, Dear Soul, to earn it, then, by aught
That thou canst do, but humbly, gladly take,
As air you breathe, free from the hand of God.

Turn not away from one who lifts in love
Expostulation's voice. The word is Christ's,
And he who turns from it doth turn from HIM.
Oh, then, beware. The precipice of Doom
Exists,—the Vortex of Destruction yawns,—
And thou it dost approach. When 'tis too late,
Thou mayest view the gulf, with horror, turn,
And shriek,—“ Oh, oh ! what will become of me ? ”
Flee, then, oh, sinner, flee ; nor look behind ;
Till Calvary thou hast reach'd, and safety found.

(NB.—The preceding paper, with additions, will be printed as a 4-page
Tract, price 8d. per 100. Address to the Editor.)

IF YOU HAVE FAITH ABOUT JUDGMENT, HAVE ALSO FAITH ABOUT SALVATION.

(A DIALOGUE.)

BYSTANDER.—Your discourse this evening has, I
confess, produced a solemn effect on my mind. It ap-
pears very plain from the passages of Scripture you have
quoted, that the Lord Jesus Christ, who once came in
humiliation, to suffer and die, is soon to come in power
and glory, as the one appointed by God to be the
judge and ruler of this earth.

EVANGELIST.—Yes. Nothing can be more clearly
declared than that. God has fixed upon both the day
and the man for the judgment of the world ; and this
quite independently of, and long before, the final
judgment of the dead, as described in the 20th chapter
of the Revelation.

BYSTANDER.—Does the New Testament anywhere
speak of that solemn event in the precise language you
have now used ?

EVANGELIST.—Yes. If you will refer to Acts xvii.
you will find it at the conclusion of Paul's address to
the Athenians on Mars' Hill. The Apostle declares
that the times in which God indulgently passed over
men's ignorance of himself had then come to an end,
and that he now commands ALL MEN *everywhere* to
repent ; and for this reason—“ Because he hath ap-
pointed a day, in which he will judge the world in
righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained ;
whereof he hath given assurance unto all, in that he
hath raised him from the dead.”

BYSTANDER.—So, then, the resurrection of Jesus
Christ must be accepted as proof of that which is de-
clared in the passage just repeated, as to his coming to
judge the nations upon earth ?

EVANGELIST.—Certainly. And Acts i. shows how
closely the two events are connected in the purposes
of God. At the time the Lord Jesus was taken up
from the earth “ his disciples looked stedfastly toward
heaven as he went up, and behold two men stood by

them in white apparel ; which also said, Ye men of
Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven ? *this same
Jesus* which is taken from you into heaven, shall so
come in *like manner* as ye have seen him go into
heaven.” (ver. 10, 11.)

BYSTANDER.—What I understand you to enforce
from this is, that the very Jesus who was crucified on
Calvary, and who ate and drank with his disciples after
his resurrection, and was then taken bodily from earth
to heaven, will, at the appointed time, come from
heaven to earth again.

EVANGELIST.—That is it. More than eighteen hun-
dred years have passed over since that declaration was
made, and its fulfilment may be very near at hand. The
Lord declared that “ the gospel must first be published
among all nations,” (Mark xiii. 10.) not that all would
believe, but that men should be left without excuse.
And now I suppose the gospel has been carried every-
where, and mankind *are* without excuse.

BYSTANDER.—Are there other signs given by
which we may know of the nearness of the second
coming of the Lord Jesus ?

EVANGELIST.—There are ; but it is not needful to
our present purpose to examine them. The question
for you to decide is, how it will fare with you if the
Lord should appear in your lifetime ?

BYSTANDER.—Well, I confess I do not expect that
solemn event to occur in my day. I think there will
be many signs before the Son of God will be seen
coming in the clouds of heaven.

EVANGELIST.—Yet Scripture abounds with warnings
as to the suddenness with which judgment will over-
take the world at last. “ As it was in the days of
Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man.
They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they
were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered
into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them
all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot ; they
did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they
planted, they builded ; but the same day that Lot went
out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven,
and destroyed them all. *Even thus shall it be in the day
when the Son of Man is revealed.*” (Luke xvii. 26—30.)

BYSTANDER.—That is wonderfully precise language
certainly ; and I am convinced that it will come to pass,
because I know that declaration was made by the Lord
Jesus Christ himself. But after all—what would you
have me to do ? I have heard from time to time a good
many sermons, and am quite willing to go to a place of
worship, and all that sort of thing ; but there seems
something wanting which I cannot lay hold of. I fear
if the Lord were to come now I should be condemned.

EVANGELIST.—Then let me tell you that you are
just in the condition of soul to receive salvation ; be-
cause, at this present time Jesus has not taken his seat
as the *Judge* of self-condemned sinners ; on the con-
trary, he has ascended into heaven as the *Saviour* of
all such, if they believe in Him.

BYSTANDER.—It is this requirement of belief or faith
in Him which puzzles me so much. I cannot help
thinking that a man must become religious before God
will save him ; and I think I have heard many ministers
say as much.

EVANGELIST.—But, if you consider that to be the way of salvation, why have you not tried it?

BYSTANDER.—I have tried it many times, and always break down; so that I have given up in despair.

EVANGELIST.—Did you ever come to a decision in your own mind as to what amount of religiousness would be necessary to secure salvation?

BYSTANDER.—No, I never thought of proposing such a question as that. I don't think any man could answer it.

EVANGELIST.—So you own, then, that all your efforts, even if you had been able to continue them, never would have delivered you from fear of judgment?

BYSTANDER.—Well, I suppose the best of men have to pray for forgiveness, and it seems to me that no one can tell whether he is forgiven or not until he dies.

EVANGELIST.—Now see what a labyrinth of difficulties you get into by following your own plans, or rather the traditions of men. Having tried man's way and proved it to be a failure, is it not time to attend to God's way, and put that to the proof?

BYSTANDER.—I would most willingly do so, if I only knew how.

EVANGELIST.—You told me just now that you consider the prophecy, as to the coming judgment for the world, true, because the Son of God has declared it. Why not accept as equally true what he has said about salvation?

BYSTANDER.—Tell me what he said.

EVANGELIST.—“God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

BYSTANDER.—But was that spoken by the Saviour himself?

EVANGELIST.—Yes, they are his own words as recorded in John iii.; and the Lord confirmed them after he had suffered on the cross. Before he finally ascended into heaven, he gave this broad commission to his disciples: “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” (Mark xvi. 15, 16.)

BYSTANDER.—But if the way is so plain, how is it that a few only accept it?

EVANGELIST.—Because it is God's way, and men prefer their own. Thousands, alas, disregard altogether the question of eternal life or misery. Other thousands endeavour to find the way of salvation by their own works, as if God had not made his will known; while only the few, comparatively, listen with earnest hearts to what the Son of God has declared, and through faith in Him, obtain everlasting life.

BYSTANDER.—Well, I ought to have understood this before, but thank God it is all clear now.

EVANGELIST.—What is it you see so clearly?

BYSTANDER.—That Jesus saves believing sinners who can't save themselves.

EVANGELIST.—And do you now believe in Him?

BYSTANDER.—I almost fear to answer. Yet I feel I must fall on my knees, and say, “Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.”

EVANGELIST.—To that I cry Amen—and praise the Lord.

WORDS OF LOVE TO “THE BRETHREN.”

(Commonly known as Plymouth Brethren.)

BELOVED,—We ask you to consider well the letter published in No. 17 on the subject of exclusion for doctrinal error. We are not personally acquainted with the writer. Now, of course there are many of you who understand little or nothing of the divisions, bitterness, and strife, which have come in among you from time to time. And we know very well the tendency on the part of the majority to settle down contentedly with what they have attained to. It is hard to think we are in any respect wrong, and harder still to own it. Yet Scripture gives no favour to the thought of “finality” while we are yet down here. We must, in the present condition of things, be ever pressing forward. We ought not to decline the voice of warning and exhortation in the word of God, as though we had attained to perfection.

Well, beloved, there is a stretch of faithfulness to which you have not attained. The progress required of you is towards greater simplicity, and a closer observance of the Lord's mind as revealed in the scriptures. Surely you ought not to object to this.

Those were bright and happy days that some of you remember in years bygone, when you were really a feeble few. It is in your power, each and all of you, to recover the happiness of the first days—but *not while you hold together as a confederacy*. Why will you not search the scriptures and see whether any countenance is given there to the banding together of assemblies. In the word of God each assembly is dealt with apart. They are designated simply by *locality*. An epistle is sent to the Church at Ephesus, another to Smyrna, another to Pergamos, and so forth; and all the writings are for those who have ears to hear. But the griefs and troubles of one assembly are never made the basis of judicial action in another. Nay, unless it be gross sin, it is not dealt with coercively even where it occurs. Failure of every character (except sins which law would take account of) is to be treated as amenable only to moral power. That is to say—the Christ-like life and conversation of those who “cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart” is to bear down the evil. The scripture, faithfully used in rebuke, exhortation and building up, is the only power put by the Lord in the hands of those who in any way consider themselves his servants. He gives no authority to His undershepherds to expel any. Nor does he give such authority to the Church, (except in cases of immorality.) Such a power was given to the Apostle Paul, but there are no apostles now. Yet the Lord gives permission to his faithful ones to *withdraw themselves*—avoiding those, as to intimate fellowship, “which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine” taught by the apostle to the Gentiles. As to the extent of separation, or the frequency of it, individual souls must seek to be constantly exercised in “the Word,” and in earnest communion with God himself.

Look at our Lord's message to Thyatira (Rev. ii. 24); he speaks not only to the assembly there but to others, who, it would seem, had separated themselves

because the church permitted Jezebel's doctrines. "But unto you (the Church) I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine," &c.

We pray God that all his children may understand his Word.

And this brings us to reflect upon the need of dealing with our gracious Head, as the very present Lord of any local church wherever it may be. Present, not only in name but in power, if we in faith own His presence in power, and pray him to deal with unfaithfulness.

Beloved,—It is a joy to us to speak to you as to those who know experimentally, as well as by revelation, the happiness of being gathered in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and seeing in Him, by faith, the object and the leader of true worship. May you all be led in grace a little further, and own Him as the one who alone is able to exercise governmental power in the assembly.

It is a dreadful thing to make difference of doctrine, or anything, in fact, short of gross sin, the ground of exclusion from the Lord's table. When our Saviour first gave the bread and the wine, as the memorials of his body broken, and his blood shed for us—the disciples he had around him were foreknown as those who would afterwards forsake him and flee—and one of them was warned that he would *almost immediately*, and three times over, deny his gracious Master! And who were those with whom the Lord broke bread immediately after his resurrection? The two weak ones who journeyed to Emmaus, whose faith in Jesus had sunk so low, that they could only own him as a prophet,—and one in whom they were disappointed, for they had "trusted that it had been he which *should* have redeemed Israel!" How does our blessed Lord deal with them? He reproves them, expounds the Scriptures to them, thereby making their hearts burn within them—then he breaks bread with them, and in that act makes himself known to them! Oh, what a lesson of love! May we all learn it. How exactly all this agrees with what is written in the epistles to the Corinthians.

We would remark here with reference to the Lord's institution of "the supper"—that He himself had first spoken a word to *the traitor*, which caused him to go out. This, we believe, he will ever do if we faithfully wait upon Him. It is seldom that we have discernment enough to detect a Judas (the eleven did not understand the betrayer);—but if we can discern such an one, we have no power to expel him. The Lord alone has authority, and will *at the proper time*, tell traitors to go. We see this in the word by the apostle John—

"They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." (1 John ii. 19.)

They were not excommunicated—but they *went out*; surely the Lord caused them to go.

In conclusion,—Let us say again that all we invite you to is, conformity to our Lord's will and ways, and a patient waiting upon Him, in the faithful earnestness of prayer, that he may in his own allwise and gracious way, *and in his own time*, and from time to time, make manifest his power in the behalf of those who seek to walk

through the wilderness, "as seeing Him who is invisible." Surely the pilgrimage is nearly over. We are, as it were, almost within sight of the everlasting home of glory. Oh, for a heart to be more like Him who was "less than the least of all saints." May the response in our hearts to the Lord's promise—"Surely I come quickly," have the effect of withering up all human pretensions and contrivances.

We desire to think for a moment of any one of the least of your gatherings, and say—"Give up the griefs and burdens connected with the judgments upon Plymouth and Bristol, and all such sources of variance—Give up the distinctive use of the term "Brethren," which has become sectional—Be content to be Christians—Own no authority but the Lord and His word—Yet submit yourselves to one another in grace and love—Let your fellowship be based upon the mind of Christ as stated in John xiv., Acts ii. 41, 42, and Heb. x. 23—25.

And may the Holy Ghost lead you into all truth, and to a watchful waiting for the coming of the Son of God from heaven.

[The reader is here referred to our answer to 'W. P.' next page.]

BAPTISM, NOT A MODE OF OFFERING.

Commenting on the Baptism of Lydia and her household, Mr ALFRED BARNES, the popular commentator, (having assumed, without any ground for so doing, that there were infants or unregenerate persons in this household,) justifies Infant Baptism (so-called), on the following principle:—"It was the offering of her [Lydia's] family to the Lord.... they were baptized on the faith of the parent"!!

Now, it is clear, that a Christian parent is not at liberty to "offer his family unto the Lord," except in a manner which is acceptable to the Lord. Of course, parents can pray for their children, and pray always; but it is impossible for them to perform any act of dedication for them. We cannot know what is acceptable to the Lord by guess-work; everything, therefore, of the nature of a sacred act we must look for in the Scriptures. If this so-called "offering" is not to be found appointed by God in the Word, we may be sure that it is not only not "acceptable unto the Lord," but most contrary to his mind and will. Let any Christian parent among our readers who desires to be clear on this subject, peruse the exhortations to parents in the various epistles; he will not find the slightest reference to this "offering of children to the Lord;" nor are the children, to whom exhortations on other subjects are addressed, ever reminded that they were so offered. It is therefore to be branded—A TRADITION OF MAN.

Under the Jewish Dispensation all "offerings" unto God were distinctly detailed by Him. How else could man possibly know what was acceptable to God? There we find not only the things to be offered, but the manner, the person, and the place. Under the present dispensation nothing of either kind is provided. As we are called to "walk by faith, not by sight," we see nothing further for the Christian parent than the presentation of children to the Lord in the arms of faith, patiently ministering the Word, and leaving Baptism until there is clearly Faith in the Lord Jesus.

But even under the Law, with all its other offerings, there was no such thing as parents "offering their children unto the Lord." God claimed the firstborn male child; there was therefore no liberty to "offer" or withhold. The only liberty possessed in the matter, was the option of redeeming the child by a lamb. If not so redeemed, the child became a priest. With regard to the other children, nothing was directed except that all males were to be circumcised.

In the case of Hannah, the mother of Samuel, devoting her firstborn to the service of God, there is something approaching the nature of an "offering," because she, by her vow, deliberately shut herself out from the privilege of redeeming him. But how different her case to that of any Christian parent!

Samuel was the firstborn; God claimed the firstborn. God makes no such claim now, either of firstborn or others.

There was no priesthood then, There is no priesthood now, to of which Samuel could become receive and train up children one. "offered" to the Lord.

This phrase applied to the Baptism of Infants is, when closely examined, seen to be a gross absurdity, and something worse. Do those infants so "offered to the Lord," become the Lord's, in any higher sense than they were before their so-called baptism? If they do, that is, if they become members of the Church or Body, where is the necessity of faith? Under this supposition, members are introduced into the Body who have not faith! an awful denial of the Scriptures. If infants said to be thus "offered to the Lord" in baptism do not become members of the Body, but remain just as they were when born into the world,—then we have an "offering" made and not accepted—an offering made and rejected—just the result we might expect from such an unscriptural proceeding. Cain's "offering" was rejected; and so was the strange fire of Dathan and Abiram; and so, it is sad to think, must the so-called "offering" of unregenerate souls to the Lord—a meaningless, wicked thing—a turning upside-down of God's order.

This perversion is further evident in the latter clause of the above quotation from Mr Barnes. He says—"They were baptized on the faith of the parent." From previous searchings of the Scriptures, our readers will have seen that the meaning the Holy Ghost gives us of Baptism in Rom. vi. and Col. ii. is that of "burial with Christ." So, then, to be "baptized on the faith of another," is, in the light of Scripture, *being buried because another person is dead!* How painful to think of the numbers of believers who profess to hold such contradictions as though they were God's truth!

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. P., Kent.—I hope to show you that the view you hold respecting exclusion for erroneous doctrine is a mistaken one. There is a tendency in us, if we are not expressly watchful about it, to take up a theory, and then endeavour to appropriate Scriptures wherewith to work out what we consider a logical result. Your course of logic in this case, as I understand it, is, "Heresy is leaven, leaven is to be purged out, therefore the person who holds the leaven must be purged out." But then there are different kinds of leaven, and these are to be dealt with differently. In the case of sin *in the person*, the body, the temple of God—as in 1 Cor. v. *the person*—must be put away; leaven of this kind is not to be dealt with inside the assembly, we must put away the wicked person. But this is the only kind of leaven (i.e., actual sin, lawlessness, as detailed in v. 10) which can be so dealt with scripturally. Questions of doctrine can and ought to be settled *within* the church; the weapons we must use in all cases of evil doctrine, must be spiritual, not carnal. Prayer, and a faithful application of the Word of God, added to faithful, loving walk, in those that are spiritual—are the divine means furnished for getting rid of such leaven and retaining the member. If the evil becomes too strong for us, we may *purge ourselves out* (2 Tim. ii. 20), but this is a very different thing to purging out the teachers of false doctrine. You seem to account it the same thing. But surely it does not require much consideration to see that there is all the difference between turning a person out of a house and walking out yourself.

Now let us look at the other passages of "the Word" cited in your paper:

Gal. v. 9.—Does it not strike you as most remarkable that though we have here the very same expression as in 1 Cor. v. 6, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," there is no such word to the Galatians as "put away from among yourselves that wicked person." On the contrary, the Apostle says, "he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment," and "I would they were even out off which trouble you." Certainly if there were any power in the assembly to put away teachers of false doctrine we should find it stated here—the Galatians would have been exhorted to purge out those judaisers, as the Corinthians had been commanded in the case of the fornicator. But you search the epistle in vain for any such teaching. The Apostle was evidently looking to the Lord to come in in judgment—and the Word of God, in rebuke and exhortation, is that which is applied to get rid of the evil.

1 Tim. i. 20—Hymenæus and Alexander. The Apostle had power to deliver those to Satan. The assembly has no such power. Paul did not write to the church to put out these men as he did in the case of the wicked person at Corinth. It was

an instance of evil which could only be dealt with by the extraordinary power of an Apostle, or by the Lord himself.

Rev. ii. 14—There is not a word here about expelling persons—and surely there would be if that were the right way of getting rid of the evil. On the contrary, the whole church is exhorted to repent.

Next, you appeal to our Lord's address to Thyatira in the same chapter. Here again we find no word about putting out the false teacher; the Lord gave her space to repent, and though she had not repented, judgment was spoken of as yet future. But in our Lord's epistle to this church there is a most remarkable addition—"Unto you I say, and *unto the rest in Thyatira,*" &c. So it is pretty evident there were some who had purged *themselves* from the assembly, because they would not tolerate the horrible doctrine. I think I have now weighed all your appeals to the Scriptures, and there is not a single passage which is not completely against your theory. Yet let me say, dear Brother, that I for one would not endure false doctrine in an assembly of christians. If the evil became deep-seated, I should have to leave it.

J. S. J., Northwich.—We certainly sympathize with you, dear brother, respecting your very trying bereavement. Yet, surely, you should seek to have entire faith in the goodness of God. However dark and mysterious the way in which your dear son was removed, he was not overtaken without the foreknowledge of our gracious Lord. When Samuel conveyed God's solemn message to Eli, the denunciation of coming judgment upon him and his sons was received with meekness and resignation. Eli said—"It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good." As followers of Christ, we ought to exceed in this respect the falling priest of Israel. We are taught, not only to be resigned, but to *thank* God for all things, even for afflictions. May you have grace to do so, for Jesus Christ's sake.—Further remarks in our next.

W. H. H., DERBY.—We are very thankful for your zealous and loving efforts to extend the circulation of PRECIOUS TRUTH. We know it must have been no light work for you to induce so many as 52 persons to take our little paper regularly. The Lord abundantly reward you, dear Brother. It will rejoice you to know that we now receive abundant testimony that our labour of love is owned as profitable to many souls. May other dear labourers in our Lord's vineyard be encouraged by your example to obtain subscribers, as we are assured, that very many who would be greatly refreshed by the reading of our little monthly, do not yet know of its existence. If our Saviour accounts the ministry of a cup of water, in his name, precious, how much more the making known to thirsty souls a running rivulet from the fountain of truth!

NB—Several Communications stand over.

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West End—JOB CAUDWELL, 335, Strand, London, W.C.
City Agents—ARTHUR HALL, 25, Paternoster-row, London, E.C.
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PRECIOUS TRUTH.

“WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?”—(Rom. iv. 3.)

London:—Job Caudwell, 335, Strand.

Smart & Allen, Londonhouse Yard, Paternoster-row.

Arthur Hall, 25, Paternoster-row.

No. 20.]

NOVEMBER 1, 1866.

[One Halfpenny.]

TO THE CHRISTIAN PILGRIM.

BELOVED,—I suppose there are few circumstances more fruitful of Christian failure, than forgetfulness of the fact that *here* we are called to strangership and pilgrimage.

Look how this is urged upon us by the Holy Spirit, in the 1st Epistle of Peter—

“Dearly Beloved, I beseech you *as strangers and pilgrims*, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.”

The word here translated lusts, simply signifies “desires,” fleshly desires. If I were to desire to make a fortune (to use a common expression), that would be a natural or fleshly desire, and it would war against my soul. If I were to desire to attain to an important place in the world, or to be sumptuously kept or dressed—These would be fleshly lusts or desires, and would war against my soul. Yet such desires are very natural, and in themselves would not be sinful, but for the fact that they belong to a condition of things which is under God’s judgment. The Christian pilgrim ought to know, *because* the word of God declares it, that such desires are encumbrances and hindrances, if permitted.

“They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. *For the love of money is the root of all evil*: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” (1 Tim. vi. 9.)

But not only so—The very desires themselves war against the soul. Why? Because they practically deny the Christian calling. The followers of Jesus ought distinctly to understand that they are no longer of the world. God has given them an inheritance, not on earth, but in heaven. In the world they are *strangers*, and need only enough for a pilgrimage journey, which may terminate any moment.

Suppose it were made known to a person in London, say a poor carpenter, that some one in Scotland had given him a large estate and great riches. It is likely that if he were to tell his neighbours, they would not believe him. But if he had faith in the fact, he would set off on a sort of pilgrimage, working with his hands as he went along to provide food or clothing, till he came to his inheritance. This is just a figure of the true Christian calling.

“Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.” (1 Tim. vi. 8.)

Christians listen to such truths and accept them theoretically. But, alas, how many in daily life

practically deny them! The result is, weakness of spirit, doubt, fears, despondency. One may hear of earnest christian men from many pulpits confessing to occasional doubt as to their acceptance with God. Why is this? Because they have not *practically* accepted pilgrim life upon earth. If they had, they would not be where they are. They have conformed to natural or fleshly desires, in taking a place before the world. They lust after (I speak of the majority) greater honours and increased emoluments—and these lusts war against the soul. I know that many true believers among those of whom I am speaking, seek to keep their spirits uncontaminated. There is a constant internal strife with such, between their spirit’s desire for *conformity* to the pilgrim calling and their actual *denial* of it, through *not abstaining* from fleshly desires, which war against the soul.

I merely name this as an instance, without desiring to press it specially against a class.

“Be not deceived: God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” (Gal. vi. 7.)

Such as will sow fleshly desires, must needs reap conflict against their own souls.

We see the true pilgrim calling exemplified in Abraham. God gave him *earthly* promises, and yet He suffered his faithful servant to die without receiving the inheritance! But Abraham was content to wait until, *in resurrection life*, God should fulfil his promises. And He will fulfil them *literally*.

“By faith Abraham when he was called to go out *into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance*, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he *sojourned* in the land of promise, *as in a strange country*, dwelling in tents [tabernacles] with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God

“These all died in faith, not having received the promises [i. e. the fulfilment of them], but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.” (Heb. xi. 8 and 13.)

So strict was Abraham in maintaining this strangership-calling, that when his wife died; though he desired to bury her in the promised land, he would not accept as a gift a parcel of land from the men (the sons of Heth) who held possession of that part of it. He would receive not a foot of the land as a gift from man; but would wait until God should give it, according to His promise. Meanwhile he would pay, in the current coin of the merchant, *for sufficient for a burying place!*

In contrast to this, we have the history of Lot—who, though accepted of God and saved, forgot the pilgrim calling, and *settled down* in sinful Sodom.

There he became great, and had a seat with the rulers in the gate of the city. But,

"That righteous man dwelling among them, [the wicked of Sodom] in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds." (2 Pet. ii. 8.)

Thus it was with Lot. He had abandoned *strangership*—and accepted unholy *citizenship*; and though (doubtless, because he came out originally by *faith*, with Abraham) he was accounted righteous, yet because he would not abstain from fleshly or natural desires, he found them at war against his soul—"He vexed his righteous soul from day to day."

Alas, how many there are who do so now!—But this was not all; for when God visited Sodom in judgment, Lot had to flee for his life, *leaving some of his relatives behind him in that doomed city*, who, through his unfaithful example, were too entangled with the sin of the place to listen to his words of warning when he urged them to flee "from the wrath to come."

Has not all this a voice for christians in these days?

Then think of our Lord's words—"Remember Lot's wife!"—How was it with her? She came away with her husband and daughters; but her heart was not free from the sinful city; she looked back, and was turned into a pillar of salt. And there are many pillars of salt now. Christians who have been delivered out of Sodom, but who in heart look back.

Beloved,—Have you taken up the pilgrim calling? It is the only one in which you can know *permanent* happiness with God, down here.

It is not only as to the world's amusements, conversation, politics, and its ordinary ways as apart from all thought of God, which, as a christian pilgrim, you are to have your heart estranged from—but from its religion also. It was the false religion of the Jews—(*i. e.* surface-work without heart) which kept the scribes and pharisees of old at a distance from the Lord Jesus. They hated *Him*, because he was *pure and simple Truth*. But they loved long robes, and parade of words in prayer, and self-display, to be seen of men. And how did the "Searcher of hearts" wither it all up?

"Jesus said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but *God knoweth your hearts*: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." (Luke xvi. 15.)

Surface-work is not only vain, but *abominable* in the sight of Him with whom we have to do. Beloved—For us, then, be the path of faith, the walk of *strangership* in the world. The whole scene is under judgment, as Sodom was. Lot, who was in the city, did not know of impending doom till the last moment. But, Abraham, the faithful pilgrim, knew before, and in calm security (because in the way of God's choosing) was engaged in communion with God, and pleading not for himself, but for others!

In conclusion,—The power to keep us in pilgrim ways, is to be found in spiritual, prayerful study of

the word of God—and especially in the revelation of the promise—

"Behold, I come quickly, and my reward with me, to give every man according as his work shall be"

"He which testified these things saith, Surely I come quickly."

May we with gladdened heart reply—

"Even so, come, Lord Jesus. (Rev. xxii. 12 & 20.)"

Yours in christian love, and in patient waiting,

THE EDITOR.

TO MR. J. N. DARBY,

(OF THE "EXCLUSIVE BROTHERN.")

"Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father."

(1 Tim. v. 1.)

DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST,—I am anxious to bear the above passage of scripture in mind while addressing you. I do regard you as a father in "the household of Faith," one who has been much used of our Lord, and I "esteem you very highly in love for your work's sake," to the full extent that your labours can be recognised as of the Lord. But, dear brother, you have made grievous mistakes, and these have produced bitterness and strife among dear christians to such an extent, that I cannot refrain from intreating you to review and change your judgment on the points hereinafter submitted.

My attention has been specially directed to a paper "On Ecclesiastical Independency," published in the August number of "The Bible Treasury"; and though it bears no signature, your style is too well known to admit of any difficulty in fixing upon the name of the author. Of course there is a bare possibility of being mistaken in attributing said encyclical to you; but as you are unmistakably identified as the leading promulgator of the doctrines therein set forth, there needs no apology from me for addressing you personally on the subject.

Let me say, at the outset, that if by your expression, "ecclesiastical independency," you intended only to rebuke those who invent ecclesiastical systems, in *independency* of the New Testament scriptures, I should have nothing to say against its use in reprobation of all who expose themselves to its implied censure. But the object of your writing is to maintain a doctrine even more opposed to revealed truth than that of "ecclesiastical independency."

You assert that the judicial action of one assembly of christians is binding upon all other christian assemblies. Nor is this only a theory with you, for you have, as far as you possibly could, unhappily enforced it. Yet any true-hearted enquirer ought to have no difficulty in detecting that you have not a vestige of the "inspired word" to support you. In your paper, which I have before me, consisting of nearly six long columns of type, you are free to apply parental authority, magisterial power, and "Freemasonry," to help out your argument; but you make only one appeal to scripture, and that in an incidental way.

Now let us look at a few facts.

The only passage in the word of God upon which you and those who co-operate with you have based your claim to, and exercise of, judicial power, is that of the 5th chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians. It is this passage which you passingly allude to, as I have said. Let us see what the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians.

"It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit have judged already, as though I were present, him that hath so done this deed. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

"Your glorifying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out, therefore, the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened of sincerity and truth.

"I wrote unto you in an epistle not to keep company with fornicators: yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person."

Here, dear brother, we have an instance of positive crime, such as would not be tolerated among the unconverted—"such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles."

Now, what is the course pointed out to the church at Corinth as that which they ought at once to have adopted? They ought to have manifested a godly sorrow, "that he that had done this deed might have been *taken away* from them." But in this the assembly had failed, and therefore they received a positive command to *put away* the wicked person.

But do we not see in the opening comments of the chapter the true resource of any assembly when evil becomes manifest among them? It is not excommunication which is commended, but such a sorrowing before the Lord, as that He may take the offender out of the way, if unrepentant.

I do not say that in cases of manifest sin an assembly is not to act upon the command given in 1 Cor. v. If we have failed to apply the first remedy, I suppose we must have recourse to the second. Well, what in this case is laid down for us? The local assembly when gathered together in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the spirit of the apostle to the Gentiles, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, (not in any power inherent in the church,) are to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord, Jesus.

Now we can test the way in which you and those

who think with you, have endeavoured to carry this out.

Yourself and some of those who meet with you, have assembled in London, on certain occasions, to judge occurrences at Plymouth, Bristol, Guernsey, &c.—and without anything of the spirit of the apostle, and in your own strength, not in the power of our Lord Jesus Christ—have adjudicated on points of doctrine!

There is no parallel between sin, in the ordinary sense of the term, and doctrinal error. Neither does the command given to Corinth to deliver to Satan a wicked fornicator in their midst, afford a basis upon which a few christians in London are to deal with whatever they may consider evil, in distant cities.

The course you have followed is as unreasonable and unscriptural, as it would have been for the church at Corinth to take upon themselves to pass judgment and execute sentence upon the judaizing teachers of the Church at Galatia!

If scripture were entirely silent respecting doctrinal error, there would perhaps be some excuse for your having made the mistake of dealing with it in the same way that sin in the person is to be dealt with—though even then it would be inexcusable for an assembly in London to assume power with respect to evil developed in the church at Plymouth. But the word of God affords ample guidance in all cases. As has been already pointed out in this publication, with respect to the evil working among the Galatians, the apostle uses the very same expression as in 1 Cor. v. 6:—

"A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." (Gal. v. 9.)

The false doctrine in the church at Galatia, and the sin in that at Corinth, are both called leaven—but they are leaven of different character, and are to be differently dealt with. You talk about sophistry—Can there be a worse sophism than to attempt to deal with all kinds of evil under one sentence, because all evil is called leaven? The sabbath-breaker was to be stoned, under the law of Moses; yet a covetous man was not sentenced to death, though condemned as a transgressor. They had both brought leaven into God's assembly, but only one of the two kinds of leaven involved sentence of death. And the distinction (in the scriptures which apply to the present dispensation), between evil doctrine and sin in the person, are as marked as the different degrees of transgression in the Old Testament.

If a wicked person, a wilful sinner, be found in an assembly of believers, no true-hearted christian would oppose the carrying out of the sentence of delivery to Satan, in the solemn manner recorded in 1 Cor. v. But if in the same assembly there be one who has fallen into error of doctrine—say, if you will, a false teacher—you have no sanction from the Word of God for dealing with him in the same way.

I have already referred to Gal. v. in connection with the expression "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." There is no exhortation in that instance to put away that wicked person, but there come an ejacula-

tion from the apostle—"I would they were even cut off which trouble you"!—showing that the church had no power to *put away* in such a case.

In fact, your assertion "There is judicial *authority* in the Church of God," needs very much qualification. Whatever is done in a christian assembly authoritatively, must be "with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ," and it is simply impossible for you to have that power when acting otherwise than according to the *plain teaching* of His word.

There are two ways of deliverance from doctrinal evil. Either you must entreat Him, who only has *the power* to come in as a Saviour. Or, if the lump become leavened, you may withdraw yourself.

"Now we command you brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and *not after the tradition which he received of us.*" (2 Thess. iii. 6.)

To argue, as some of your *disciples* do, that excommunicating another is the same thing as withdrawing yourself, is, you will admit, sheer nonsense.

If 2 Thess. iii. 6, is thought to be not sufficiently conclusive as to the individual withdrawing from an unfaithful assembly, the well-known passage in 2 Tim. ii. is decisive.

You, dear brother, I doubt not, acted scripturally, in withdrawing yourself from the assembly at Plymouth, when you had judged it to be irremediably leavened with false doctrine. (I offer no opinion here as to how far you yourself were clear of participation in that evil.) But when you set up a judgment seat in London, and carry out a course of coercive measures, not only with respect to the individual teacher complained of, but extending to those who heard him, and those who received those who had heard him, or any who had intercourse with receivers of those who heard him, and so on, *ad infinitum*, it needs no great discernment to detect the unscriptural labyrinth into which you have been snared.

With respect to power in the assembly—you say "The question is one of competence, not of infallibility"! But the two really go together. Where there is true exercise of power, there is infallibility, because it is the power of Our Lord Jesus Christ. You consider that because of the assured presence of our Lord Jesus Christ where two or three are gathered together in his name, there is of necessity sanction given to the exercise of judicial power. But Scripture nowhere says this, nor anything like it. What has the Master put in connection with his declared presence, in the oft-quoted passage, from Matt. xviii.? Is it competence to act with judicial authority? Nay; it is added to certify *the power of unity in prayer?*

"Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

There is nothing here about competency for executive judgment.

We see a solitary instance of availing of the Lord's

power in the excision of the wicked person at Corinth; but that was a clearly-defined case of sin, and there was the spirit of the Apostle to guide the judgment of the assembly.

To endeavour to put the halo of the Lord's presence upon whatever two or three, gathered in his name, may do, is either grievous error or awful wickedness. A thousand things have been done in his sacred name, which have not the sanction of His word, and therefore not of his presence. The day will soon declare all such doings to be wood, hay, and stubble. I will just notice the concluding words of 1 Cor. v., because you seem to consider they convey a recognition of what you call, "the judicial authority of the Church of God." Competence to *judge* evil *does not* imply power to execute sentence upon it. There is a competency in a christian assembly to *judge* every kind of evil, but as to *how they are to deal with it*, they must be guided by the Scriptures. In the instance of gross sin—God's Word is, "put away from among yourselves that wicked person;" but with respect to the leaven of false doctrine you have no such word, nor anything approaching to it.

Among men, a jury is competent to judge crime; but it has no power either to pass sentence or to execute it. Only in the case of murder, does a jury know beforehand what the sentence will be. If the prisoner be found guilty, judgment of death must follow. But in all cases, the sentence is pronounced, not by the jury, but by the Judge.

A christian assembly is in similar position to that of a jury. It is competent to judge, as to fact; but the Lord alone has power to pass sentence.

Thus, then, I am compelled to adjudge, that the confederacy of which you, dear Brother, are the recognised leader, is unmistakably an "Ecclesiastical Independency." For it assumes a power which belongs to the Lord alone, and acts in *independency* of His word. Moreover, it distards, and almost anathematises, thousands of God's dear children who refuse to bow to its unscriptural decisions. This, too, notwithstanding its pretension to be the upholder, *par excellence*, of the doctrine of the Oneness of the Body!

A word as to how far one assembly is to recognise the judicial action of another. This is very simple, after the appeals already made to scripture. The assembly at Bristol should not, and would not, receive the fornicator put out at Islington. But the same assembly might, and most likely ought to receive one whom Islington had, acting under a false assumption of power, excluded for error of doctrine.

Here, for the present, I leave this subject—only assuring you that any reply of yours, if based upon an unsophisticated dealing with the word of God, shall have full recognition in this paper, if the Lord delay his coming.

I hope to address you again on several other topics; but in the meantime subscribe myself—

A member (through grace) of the
One Body of Christ,
and

YOUR FELLOW SERVANT.

A PREFIGURATION OF GOSPEL TIMES.

Perceived in John vi. 1-21.

[COMMUNICATED.]

In the above passage we are presented with the Lord Jesus Christ Feeding the Five Thousand and Walking on the Sea. While these events were of special interest to those primarily engaged in them, I am convinced that one of the objects of their being recorded, was to show us, in miniature, what the Lord Himself would again do, on a grander scale, in subsequent times. Thus, a true *analogy* is a pictorial prophecy, and though not possessing the importance of a doctrine, it must not be undervalued. In the interpretation of analogies may we have grace to restrain the workings of the imagination, and seek to be led of the Spirit into all truth. "He shall take of mine, and shall show unto you."

In the Feeding the Five Thousand, I consider is pre-shadowed Gospel times among the Gentiles, and the desire that would be evinced by the Gentiles of putting worldly honours upon Christ, by allying Church and State. The people, in the narrative before us, being fed by our Lord, sought to take Him by force, and make Him a king. And so worldly professing Christendom, perceiving that temporal advantages might be wrought out of Christianity, willingly tendered outward allegiance to those who assumed to be the representatives of the Lord on earth, which they, unlike the Lord Jesus, were very ready to receive. This scene, with its lessons, I now desire to present, leaving the second part (the Lord Jesus walking on the sea, or the Church's path and the Church's hope) till a future occasion, if the Lord permit.

In John v. the Lord Jesus Christ is presented to us in Judea, where the Jews seek to stone Him, because He has healed a helpless sick man on the sabbath day. This same spirit developed itself afterwards in their opposition to Stephen; they stoned him, accusing him of speaking of the *customs* being changed which Moses had delivered.

This (like all persecution of the members) was regarded by the Lord as persecution of Himself—"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME?" Immediately after Stephen's rejection, we have the calling of the Gentiles. Answering to this, the Lord in the chapter before us has left Judea, and proceeded to Galilee. Not only so, but He has crossed the Sea of Galilee, and entered the country of a swine-feeding people—a mixed and low caste race.

"After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias."

Here, then, I see "the Word" going forth to the Gentiles. It is generally admitted that the sea in Scripture is often symbolical of peoples, and nations, and tongues. It is noteworthy, too, that the *Gentile* name of the Lake is used in this passage, and in this alone in all the New Testament!—"Tiberias."

"And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased."

How true this was of the early history of the Gospel! What "great multitudes," far and near,

professed the faith ("followed Him") during and immediately after the miracle age! The spread of the profession of Christianity, as we all know, was astonishing, and this, too, while Judaism still existed. This is shown in the 4th verse—

"And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh."

The phrase used by the Holy Ghost in this verse shows, I think, that Judaism would cease to have the divine sanction at the period contemplated in the analogy, that is, the times of the Gentiles—it is "a feast of the *Jews*," not a feast of the Lord.

While the Jews, who have rejected the Lord Jesus, are deeply interested in their feast, "a great company" have resorted to Him, though a despised and rejected one. This indicates, as I have said, the development of Christendom, as the third verse further proves—

"And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples."

Here the Lord Jesus is foreshadowed as risen and ascended, and sat down in the place of power, and, virtually, believers seated with Him. Christendom of the Gentiles readily admitted the resurrection, and professedly gathered to Christ. And they were, and still are, fed,—i.e. the truth is preached, his own truth, Himself as the True Bread which came down from heaven.

But the truth as it is in Jesus is only received by the multitudes in a fleshly way (like loaves and fishes). Gospel truth heard by the ear, is received with a passing pleasure only, and excites a desire to outwardly patronise the giver! They sought (ver. 15) to "take Him by force and make Him a king." How wonderfully all this has come to pass in the history of the preaching of the Gospel! Great multitudes in the world have given an assent to the truth, and their assent has been strengthened by the experience of temporal advantages in a hundred ways which they see has resulted from it. They say, "Christianity is a good thing. Under it, nations grow wealthy and peaceful; they enact just laws and form benevolent institutions. We like to rest in its presence; unlike the morally arid regions of heathendom, 'there is much grass in the place.'" It is but meet, men consider, that they should return favours with honours, dimly anticipating a continuance of favours in the future, as a result of such allegiance in the present.

Oh, what shame the Church has brought upon herself in having countenanced such false expectations in worldly men by receiving emoluments and temporal honours at their hands! In the scene before us, the Lord Jesus "straightway constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side." (Mark vi. 45.) Dear believing reader, if you are still going on with some established system of arrangements in which the world's partisanship, and money, and respect, are proffered and accepted—nay, it may be, even courted!—see in this, that the Lord Jesus would have you get away from such a state of things, though it be to take to an untried sea. He bids you, Go; He is your Lord; you are not your own, you are His.

May He at His Coming find you, dear brother, dear sister, out there upon the waters, in company with other faithful ones, (if it be the Lord's will,) watchful, by His grace, in the darkness, and as the wind will be contrary unto you—"toiling in rowing." (Mark vi.)

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel [unbeliever]? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

DARKNESS AND LIGHT.

(Fragment of a Dialogue between CHRISTIAN WORLDLYWISE and CHRISTIAN ALLEFAITH.)

CHRISTIAN WORLDLYWISE.—I do not agree with you as to your anticipations of evil to come for this world, and that soon. Everything is tending in the contrary direction. Christianity is being spread everywhere, and we see the result of it in advancing civilisation and universal progress.

CHRISTIAN ALLEFAITH.—Dear brother, the essential difference between us is this: you judge things by the superficial gauge of sight, while I test them by the unerring standard of faith.

C. W.—But I appeal to Facts.

C. A.—And I appeal to Scripture.

C. W.—I do not see what the one has to do with the other. I affirm that the world is advancing in art, science, learning, civilisation, and christianity.

C. A.—And I affirm nothing but what I find in the Word of God, which is this—"Love not the world, neither the things in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father but of the world. And the world passeth away and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." (1 John ii. 15-17.)

C. W.—Yes, that is very figurative language, and I dare say any clever Bible student would give us the true interpretation of it.

C. A.—My dear Brother, it needs no interpretation. A christian is to receive it just as it is written. Faith is the only thing wanted when dealing with the true sayings of God.

C. W.—Yet you must admit there are many things written in the Scriptures which cannot be understood literally.

C. A.—There are some things described in visions and revelations by figures, and there are dark sayings by parables and prophecy, which the unlightened cannot comprehend; but the declarations and precepts of the Word of God are direct and unmistakable, if only we are willing to hear what the Lord God has made known by inspiration of His Holy Spirit.

C. W.—Well I can't see with you. I revert to my

former proposition—that the world is making great progress, and my wisdom is to make the best of it while I am here.

C. A.—And I revert to Scripture, and declare to you that "the whole world lieth in wickedness." Or as others translate the Greek, "the whole world lieth in the Wicked One." (1 John v. 19.) And again, in more solemn language, if possible,—"The friendship of the world is enmity with God. Who-soever therefore will be a friend of the world is *the enemy of God.*" (James iv. 4.)

C. W.—But, for all that, I suppose we are to do our best; and if the world will improve itself, that cannot be very wrong; nor can I shut my eyes to facts. I look at things as they are.

C. A.—That is to say, you look at them with the natural eye. Now, the Pharisees of old appeared externally very devout and righteous men, even zealous for God, *in their own way.* But what was our Lord's estimate of them? "Ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but are within full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness." (Matt. xxiii. 27.) Thus it is with the so-called *Christianised* world. It may to some extent have put on a whited surface. But it is a *sepulchre* for all that—and the Word of God pierces beneath the coating of white, and shows that which is within is not only unsightly, but positively loathsome.

C. W.—Well, I cannot see the object of taking such gloomy views.

C. A.—Without those gloomy views, as you call them, it is impossible to walk in separation from the world, according to the will of God. There may be many dear Christians who do not fully understand the extent of the condemnation which God has pronounced upon the world. But every *true* child of faith says Amen to the declarations of God's Word. Meanwhile, until those divine declarations are not only comprehended, but *acted upon*, there will be defective Christian walk, and the Holy Spirit will be grieved.

C. W.—As far as I understand the condemnation of the world by God, I am ready to say amen too. But I think all such condemnation is future, and that in the meantime we are all to do our best to improve it. I suppose you do not, on principle, object to improvements altogether?

C. A.—No. What I object to is, that you, as a believer in the Son of God, should persist in estimating things according to the appearance they present to the dim perception of unaided reason; whereas the Lord would have you to prove all by the unerring test of His word.

C. W.—I cannot understand you.

C. A.—That is because you have not implicit confidence in the word of God.

C. W.—Indeed you misjudge me. I quite believe in the inspiration of the Scriptures, and endeavour to regulate my life principally by them. I have been always taught to look upon the Book of Proverbs, for instance, as affording practical instruction, specially suited for our present condition on earth.

C. A.—The reason you prefer Old Testament instruction, to such as is contained in the New, is, that the former promises earthly prosperity, and the latter the reverse. The writings committed to the Israelites were written for the guidance of an *earthly* people. But the gospels, the Acts, the Epistles, and the Book of Revelation, are God's special provisions for his *heavenly* people, whom he has chosen to be associated with the sufferings and rejection of Christ on earth, and has also predestinated to joint heirship with him in glory. "To you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake. (Phil. i. 29.)"

C. W.—Do you mean to tell me that I must give up reading the Old Testament?

C. A.—God forbid that I should tell you any such thing. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable," &c. Suppose two sons—their father writes to them from a distance, a letter for each; but he encloses the two under cover to his most beloved child; with this remark—"It will be profitable for you to read what I have written to your brother, but be sure you attend to what I have expressly laid down in my letter to you."

C. W.—I see the force of your illustration. But, to go back to your previous remark—Do you consider a christian ought to invite suffering, by putting himself in opposition to the world?

C. A.—No, indeed I do not. But he ought to act out faithfully what God requires of him as a forgiven sinner, and as His child, by adoption.

C. W.—What would you have me to do?

C. A.—I would have you to place implicit reliance upon all the declarations of the Scriptures—First, as respects yourself, that you may live according to 1 John iii. 1—3, in constant expectation of being taken by your Redeemer to dwell with Him in heavenly glory;—Secondly, as respects the world—that you should behave towards it, as knowing beforehand that God has pronounced sentence upon it, and will soon put it in execution. As conscious, moreover, that you, though only a sinner saved by grace, are to sit upon the throne of the Lord Jesus when the nations upon earth are summoned before Him for judgment.

"Wherefore he saith, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

Hitherto you have slumbered with those who are in the darkness of death, with those who are "dead in trespasses and sins."

"See then that you walk circumspectly, not as a fool, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be you not unwise, BUT UNDERSTANDING WHAT THE WILL OF THE LORD IS!" (Eph. v. 14—17.)

FURTHER MISAPPREHENSION OF SCRIPTURE, MANIFESTED IN

"THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER."

TO CHRISTIANS IN THE STATE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

(Continued from No. 19.)

Respecting the words, "*world without end.*"

The *priest* has to say at the conclusion of each Psalm, and at several other specified points of your

"Service," "*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;*" and the people have to answer, "*As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be; world without end.*"

Whatever the meaning conveyed by the expression to the minds of intelligent believers, it is evident that the ignorant and unconverted must consider it to be equivalent to a declaration that the world will not have an end.

Yet, according to scripture, the world will have an end, and that soon.

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.*

"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be, in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.

"Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

"Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; [i.e. consider that while the Lord waits, salvation is offered to all who hear the Gospel, and is received by all who believe in Jesus Christ] even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned [i.e. untaught in the truth] and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction!" (2 Pet. iii. 9—16.)

We have quoted from this epistle of Peter at some length, and trust it may operate as the inspired word should do in every heart. It completely overturns all thought of the stability of things here, and shows that God will be glorified, *not* in leaving this present evil world without end, but, on the contrary, *by bringing it to an end*, and that speedily.

The aggregation of mankind, called the world, under the influence of Satan, will come to an end at the coming to it of our Lord Jesus Christ. Judgment and destruction will sweep over the scene. The earth itself will pass away at a later day.

Yet, beloved, the announcement should bring no ungodly fear to any one who loves our Lord Jesus Christ. We who trust in Him are already safe, as accepted in Him.

"When Christ, our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear *with him in glory.*" (Col. iii. 4.)

But what should be the result of this security which it is given us to enjoy *now*, by faith? Surely one effect ought to be to induce us to reject whatever professes to be religion, but which, on examination, proves to be contrary to the word of God.

Till this be done you must not expect *settled* peace, though everlasting life is *ASSURED* to you.

We now come to the adaptation of the 95th Psalm, in the "Morning Service." Here we have another instance of mistaken appropriation of Jewish truth. The first few verses of this psalm may be truthfully

repeated by any of God's people; but in no sense can a *miscellaneous* congregation say in truthfulness to God—"We are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand." It was, however, true of the children of Israel, for whom the Psalm was written. Look at the verses which follow the above. Were those *your* fathers who tempted God in the wilderness, to whom God swore in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest? No. The people spoken of are plainly the Israelites whom God brought out of Egypt; whose carcases fell in the wilderness because of their *unbelief* and hardness of heart. Where are the descendants of that people? Scattered in all the world, under God's severe judgment, until the time of restitution.

What folly (alas, it is worse than folly) to use words however beautiful, which are meaningless in your lips, though most appropriate for the Jewish people in days bygone.

Next in order is the "Te Deum Laudamus." Alas, the second sentence is lamentably untrue. Does all the earth worship God as the Father everlasting?

If you declare that the Son of God has opened the kingdom of God to all believers, why pray that he will number his redeemed ones with his saints in glory everlasting? He has already done this.

Is it true of a mixed congregation that they magnify the Lord day by day? And can any true-hearted Christian venture to boast in God's presence that he does so!

"We worship thy name: ever world without end." What does that mean? Why do you cry to the Lord to have mercy upon you? Do you, or do you not, believe the words of Jesus—

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

You know this is truth, for we are only addressing ourselves to believers. Yet are you not in heart rejecting the truth while you cry with the unbeliever, "O Lord, have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us"! Why conclude with "O Lord, in thee have I trusted: let me never be confounded"? The word of God declares—

"He that believeth on Him [Jesus Christ] shall *not* be confounded." (1 Pet. ii. 6.)

Are you not repudiating the precious utterances which God has given you in the scriptures?

(To be continued, D.V.)

LABOURS OF LOVE.

In the Editor's letter for October there was an appeal made to the christian reader to put in practice "visitation of the fatherless and widow in their affliction." Special opportunity was offered in certain cases known to the writer.

We have received a reply from one, (only one!) asking for the addresses of needy christians. This application is from a dear sister in the Lord, who is, we believe, an employè in a gentleman's family. Her letter will be found in "Answers to correspondents."

Now, doubtless, the majority of the readers of PRECIOUS TRUTH are of "the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised to them that love Him." But we cannot but grieve that of the hundreds who

welcome our little paper monthly, *only one* has enquired what she could do for tried and afflicted members of the "One brotherhood."

If we were willing to follow the usual plan of opening subscription lists, no doubt funds would flow in to meet the needs of such as we might plead for. But we have no heart for being made a channel for the mere dole of charity.

What we want is, *active* christian love displayed toward members of the "household of faith." And we insist, above all things, that our Lord's way is that *only* which results in blessing to giver as well as receiver.

"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them; otherwise ye have *no* reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you they have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy *left* hand know what thy *right* hand doeth: that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." (Matt. vi. 1-4.)

These are the instructions of Him who, as he said, "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." And who has taught us, both by precept and example, that we may follow in his steps.

In case the suggestion made in this paper was not understood, the desire of the writer is to afford opportunity for personal ministry, to those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, by furnishing to such the names and addresses of needy and afflicted children of God—that they may be used for blessing, either in actual visitation, or by *direct* correspondence, as the Lord may give them grace. Any dear christians who may feel stirred by this appeal, are invited to address a few lines to "the Editor of PRECIOUS TRUTH," who will gladly reply with an account of such cases as may be known to him.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus how he said it is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts xx. 35.)

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

E. C. writes—"My dear Brother in the Lord—I have just read your sympathising appeal on behalf of our Lord's dear suffering ones. I am not able to visit, but would be most happy to forward a small parcel to one of such. Will you kindly favour me with an address.—Yours in the Lord Jesus, E. C."

[We trust you received our few lines under cover, in which we furnished the names, &c. of two suffering saints. May the Lord abundantly bless you with all spiritual blessings, through Jesus Christ our Lord.]

J. H., BARNBURY.—We cannot put the poor one's wants before our readers in the form of an advertisement to send relief for her to yourself. Our desire is to bring the Giver and the Recipient together, either by personal visitation or correspondence through the post. If we should have the opportunity of seeing you and her personally, then we might be able to mention her case among others to any correspondents who write to us, seeking the sweet privilege of ministering to the Lord's dear ones.

NB—Several Communications stand over.

Address Letters for the Editor, care of Printer, 335, Strand, W.C.

CHRISTIANS in the Neighbourhood of the Strand are invited to the Scripture Reading Meeting at 335a, side-door, Monday, at Seven.

TO OUR READERS.—We ask brethren and sisters in the Lord to order a few numbers monthly, and take some pains to lend them about. If done to the Lord in faith, you may thus be dispensers of much blessing.

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Published for the Proprietor, by—

West End—JOB CAUDWELL, 335, Strand, London, W.C.
City Agents—ARTHUR HALL, 25, Paternoster-row, London, EC.
Smart & Allen, 2, Londonhouse-yard, Paternoster Row.

JOHN EVANS, Printer, 335a, Strand, London, W.C.

PRECIOUS TRUTH.

“WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?”—(Rom. iv. 3.)

London: — Job Caudwell, 335, Strand.

Smart & Allen, Londonhouse Yard, Paternoster-row.

Arthur Hall, 25, Paternoster-row.

No. 21.]

DECEMBER 1, 1866.

[One Halfpenny.]

TO A HEAVENLY CITIZEN WAITING IN A DOOMED WORLD.

BELOVED,—In my last letter I offered you some thoughts about the Christian pilgrim's journey. It is evident, in the light of scripture, that our condition down here is of the most transitory character, and that provisioning for the journey is to be regarded as “from hand to mouth.”

“Take no thought for to-morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself; sufficient for the day is the evil [i.e. trouble, care,] thereof.”

But there is another line of truth, glanced at in one of my letters some months ago, which is most needful for the cutting off of the affections from this present evil world and the transfer of the same to things above, “where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.” I allude to the sure doom which the Word of God pronounces upon the world in which we now dwell.

Of course the *natural* tendency of our heart is, to regard “*the things that are seen*,” but *faith* is called upon to act in the power of things *not* seen. We are children of faith. Our very life is consequent upon the declarations of Scripture—

“Born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the *Word of God*, which liveth and abideth for ever.” (1 Peter i. 23.)

Then, as to the journey—

“We walk by faith, not by sight.” (2 Cor. v. 7.)

How shall we do this? By taking heed to the “word of God.” Herein faith finds sure guidance respecting all the ways of God.

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.” (Ps. cxix. 105.)

In the bright shining of that light I know how to estimate the country through which I am passing, and the people who dwell there. I see why the sentence has gone forth from the Holy One. I know that He has said—

“Let the wheat and the tares grow together until the harvest, and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.” (Matthew xiii. 30.)

The unbelieving do not understand this parable; but faith can fully enter into its meaning—

“He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom [i.e. the children of *faith*]; but the tares are the children of the wicked [all who in *unbelief* of Christ follow the tempter]; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world [i.e. the end of this age or dispensation]; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world [really, the end

of this period.] The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of *His Kingdom* all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear let him hear.” (Matt. xiii. 37—43.)

Thus, while men vainly think there is very little difference between the tares and wheat, and that the field (the world) is now beginning to present a very satisfactory appearance, God has pronounced beforehand a very different verdict. Jesus, the ordained Lord of all, will send forth his angels to gather out of *His Kingdom* all things that offend. Yes, the Kingdom is His, both by right of creation and by purchase. He has gone to a “far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.” (Luke xix. 12.) Return He will, and take possession.

“I saw in the night visions, and behold one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.” (Daniel vii. 13, 14.)

Scripture abounds with declarations of this glorious reign of Christ upon earth. Alas! how few believe that these prophecies will be literally fulfilled. Satan has long deluded the hearts of christians into the thought that God has no purposes respecting this earth. Multitudes go on with the foolish conceit that the present course of things may continue for thousands of years. And now that, in these last days, some stir has been made towards the recovery of a right apprehension of truth—the Deceiver has persuaded many that the world is to improve gradually till it ripens into the Millennial period. But the solemn truth is—*it is ripening for harvest*. A harvest of devastation, and bloodshed, and wrath from God, with regard to the “tares.”

“He that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle *on the earth*; and *the earth was reaped*. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle *into the earth*, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast into the great winepress of *the wrath of God*. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse-bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.” (Rev. xiv. 16—20.)

“Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints to execute judgment upon all,” &c. (Jude 14, 15.)

"The Lord Jesus shall be revealed *from heaven* [not in heaven] with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thess. i. 7, 8.)

Do you ask, beloved, how this affects us, seeing that *we have* obeyed the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that we have abundant assurance from Scripture that we shall be taken out of the scene *before* the day of vengeance? Believe me, it affects us in many ways. If you were living in a house which was declared to be plague-stricken, and which the authorities had doomed to be destroyed by fire, I suppose you would not only make your own escape, but you would also solemnly warn all the other inmates, to flee from the double danger of the plague and the fire. We are left in the world as testifiers for Christ and of Him.

"God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained." (Acts xvii. 31.)

We are walking through a world under doom, even as Noah was in his day. Could Noah settle down into careless indifference, or have part in the planting and building of those times before the flood? Nay; year after year he continued to do what God had commanded him. The people doubtless looked upon him as a poor *crack-brained* fool. But he had got the word of God for it that judgment was already ordered, and he kept on with his work, testifying of the wrath to come. And it came! When Noah's work was complete the judgment fell.

And thus it is to be at the coming of the Son of Man. He has given his faithful ones a work to do—it will soon be finished. Then He will take all who believe in him in this day out of the world, even as Noah was taken out of it and was shut into the ark. And the awful day of earth's tribulation will immediately follow. "In a *moment*, in the *twinkling of an eye*" will the loved ones of Jesus be joyfully taken away—and then, apparently, without further warning—the day of wrath will begin down here. Warning has been uttered from time to time for more than eighteen hundred years. Yet mankind suffer their ears to be stopped by Satan, the god of this world. He now puts forth his sweetest blandishments. He gives oratorios, and sacred concerts, and ritualism, and religious ceremonies, and vestments, and pomps and shows, and shams innumerable.

"Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light, and his ministers as the ministers of righteousness." (2 Corinthians, xi. 14, 15.)

Thus they cry "Peace, peace." But the word has gone forth—

"The Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape." (1 Thess. v. 2, 3.)

Surely, dear Brother, dear Sister, as realising all this, we ought to avoid in our walk and conversation, everything which might help to mislead the poor infatuated creatures around—keeping ourselves always as servants that wait for their Lord.

We have indeed according to the Scripture, a—

"Sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a *light that shineth in a dark place*, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." (2 Peter i. 19.)

May we treasure all these words as very precious until that day.

Yours, in hope

Of the promised coming of our Lord,
THE EDITOR.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THINGS NEW AND OLD."*

DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST,—In the October number of your valuable paper, we find among the answers to correspondents a statement which will not bear the test of scripture.

We copy your "answer" verbatim as follows:—

"A YOUNG SISTER, TRIGNMOUTH.—1 Corinthians, v. 12, 13, is perfectly conclusive as to the responsibility of an assembly to judge evil. The fact is, if an assembly refuses to do so, it is not a christian assembly at all, and we should not remain in it one hour, or sanction it in any way, even though composed of real baints of God. To say that an assembly is not responsible to judge evil, whether in doctrine or practice, is to say that God and evil can dwell together, which is, in our judgment, very great wickedness indeed. There may be weakness and ignorance. Christians may be dull in perception, slow and sluggish in action; but the moment they deny their corporate responsibility to judge evil, it is downright corporate antinomianism. If an individual were to take such ground in reference to his own personal walk, what would you say to him? And wherein lies the difference? Is the body less responsible than an individual member?"

Now, we confess we are sorely grieved to have to differ with you; for we gladly bear witness to the high character and truthfulness of your writings. We feel confident that it was in the spirit of a member of the exclusive party of the Plymouth Brethren, rather than as the editor of "Things New and Old," the above answer to "a Young Sister" was indited.

You say "If an assembly refuses to judge evil, it is not a christian assembly at all." This interpreted into "exclusive Brethrenism" means, that a christian assembly is required to eject any who teach, or countenance those who teach, anything their party designates false doctrine.

The misappropriation of 1 Cor. v. 12, 13, is fully exposed in the letter to Mr. J. N. Darby which appeared in the last number of this paper. It is, therefore, needless for us to travel over that ground again. Our design now is, by direct appeal to the "word of God," to refute your assertion, (namely, "that if a Christian assembly refuses to judge evil it is not a Christian assembly at all.")

The church at Galatia did not cease to be a Christian assembly, though it had received teachers of grossly false doctrine!

* "Things New and Old," a little monthly magazine, price one penny, published by G. Morrish, 24, Warwick-lane. Most of our readers are doubtless well acquainted with it. To those who do not know it, we may say, it is rarely that anything appears in its pages save a most faithful presentment of truth. But the exception before us shows how needful it is to "Prove all things." (1 Thess. v. 21.)

At Crete, where Titus was left to "ordain elders in every city," the apostle testified—

"There are many unruly and vain talkers and *doers*, specially they of the circumcision: whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies." (Titus i. 10—12.)

Here was leaven indeed! Does the apostle declare that the churches in Crete had ceased to be christian assemblies? Nay, he leaves Titus to "set in order the things that are wanting, to ordain elders," &c.

Does he command the false teachers to be expelled, as in the case of the fornicator at Corinth? Nay—He says—

"This witness [their own prophet] is true. Wherefore *re-buke them sharply*, that they may be sound in the faith." (Titus i. 13.)

This is the remedy given of God. A very different thing from cutting off the poor failing ones, or declaring the assemblies to be *Unchristian*.

Now let us consider our Lord's words to one or two of the Seven Churches of Asia.

To the church at Ephesus the Lord Jesus said—

"I know thy works and thy labour and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience," &c. (Rev. ii. 2, 3.)

Not, "thou has excluded them"—but, "thou hast tried them and found them liars, and hast borne and hast patience." The assembly had acted faithfully; they had proved these pretended apostles, and had found them false, and put them to shame, but they could still *bear* with these who had been untruthful, as to remaining in the assembly, though they would not endure their pretensions. At least this appears to us the meaning of the words in the third verse. Certainly there is nothing to lead to the thought of expulsion.

So also as to our Lord's message to Smyrna.

"I know thy works and tribulation and poverty (but thou art rich), and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. ii. 9, 10.)

Not a word about excommunicating the blasphemers; but the truehearted ones were to suffer.

It seems to us that the spirit of all the addresses in Rev. ii. and iii. is in accordance with this. Confusion and wickedness had come in, and the assemblies had no power to expel—but they had "the sword of the Spirit;" they had prayer, and they had the Lord Jesus in their midst! These were their resources. Moreover, in the instance of Thyatira, faithful ones appear to have availed themselves of the alternative of separation, because the evil was too strong for them. At any rate, it is evident that our Lord still addressed them as *Christian Assemblies*; even where there was sin of the most dreadful character, as found in Thyatira; yea, even down to Laodicea, where the

Head of the Church appears to have been shut out.

Thus, dear Brother, your assertion is proved to be utterly baseless. You have fallen into the common error of your denomination—that of confounding judgment with execution. A christian assembly is indeed required to judge all evil, just as each individual is enjoined to do so. God forbid that we should countenance or afford any cloak for evil. Let us hate sin, and seek to get rid of it, *in whatever way the word of God appoints*, according to its character. But let us care for those who are overtaken by a fault, and let us not deal with any as *enemies* who are believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

To take up your own thought as expressed at the close of your paragraph. An individual christian judges his sin, confesses to God, and is cleansed from all unrighteousness. It may be, however, that the Lord will first put him under discipline; but he is never cut off—he is always a member of Christ. So with a faithful christian assembly. When leaven is detected, confession is to be made to God, intercession also for the offender. He may have to be dealt with by rebuke from the word of God; he may even have to be avoided, as to intimate fellowship, for a time. But he must never be cut off from the Church, unless his sin be of such immoral character as would not be excused by the unconverted; such wickedness as is specified in 1 Cor. v.

And in that case, it is not merely turning a member adrift, but solemnly delivering such an one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh. We are convinced that if an assembly seeks to apply faithfully the resources God has given them, the Saviour will come in, in delivering grace. The Lord has *not* given power to the church to exclude on points of doctrine, nor does any misapprehension of truth on the part of an assembly of believers, alter the fact that they are a christian assembly. In truth, it is an absurdity to affirm that a gathering of persons having vital faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, can be anything but a christian assembly. Their existence as such is dependent, not upon their truthfulness doctrinally, but upon that divine operation which has, by the Holy Ghost, brought the living members into union.

"For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body." (1 Cor. xii. 13.)

I entirely exonerate you from all charge of wilful perversion of Scripture. Your fault is, in common with Mr Darby and many others, that you will not listen to truth from outside your own party. It is this which compels us to deal somewhat severely with "exclusive Brethrenism."

The very existence of the "Plymouth Brethren" confederacy, is based upon an unscriptural course of reasoning, as we have already shown in this paper. The failures which attach to it, any christians might have fallen into. We can sympathise with those who make mistakes; but we must rebuke those who refuse to listen to the word of God.

Notwithstanding, we highly esteem you as a much-honoured servant of our master, and as one who really loves (party prejudices apart) all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Ed. P. T.

A PREFIGURATION OF GOSPEL TIMES.

Perceived in John vi. 1—13.—(Continued from our last.)

[COMMUNICATED.]

In order to present the reader with a few other subordinate considerations, I quote the rest of the passage from John vi.—

"When Jesus then lifted up His eyes, and saw a great company come unto Him, He saith unto Philip,—

"Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?"

"(And this He said to prove him, for He himself knew what He would do.) Philip answered Him—

"Two-hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little."

"One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto Him, 'There is a lad here which hath five barley loaves and two small fishes; but what are they among so many?'

"Jesus said, 'Make the men sit down.'

"Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks, He distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes, as much as they would. When they were filled, He said unto the disciples, 'Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.' Then they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets."

In a previous treatise on John i. (see page 135), I was led to regard these two apostles introduced in the above scene, Andrew and Philip, as representing Testimony, or Ministry, before and after the Cross. Simon Peter, (the representative of the former testimony under a new phase at Pentecost,) is also introduced, passingly, in this John vi., but, as in John i., he is silent, and for the reason I there suggested, viz. that the believing circumcision, as a distinct testimony in the earth, would come to silence. It is remarkable, too, that Philip and Andrew are again presented to us in the 12th chapter of this same gospel, as mentioning to Jesus the desire of the Greeks to see Him. The consideration of these two passages in John vi. and xii. greatly strengthens in my own mind the analogy I was led to put forth on John i. In John xii. the Greeks apply to Philip, (who represents the future testimony among them,) but he proceeds to honour him who stands for the then-existing testimony or ministry—Andrew, and, together, they take the matter to Jesus!

Again, take the passage before us. Here, in a scene so evidently foreshadowing *Gentile* times, Philip is the only apostle addressed by our Lord! And do we not here see in Philip the special failing of Ministry generally in Christendom?—i.e. a constant consideration of what natural resources are needful to cover the contemplated ground. Is a large city to be evangelised?—the thought of the modern Philip is to arrange machinery to raise "a two-million-fund," though confessedly even that will only suffice for "every one of them to take a little." Oh, how the Lord Jesus has "proved" and is proving the Philips of Christendom! The power of money is the one thing regarded, on all hands, as needful, in order that the people shall be spiritually fed!

Brother in Christ,—In contemplating the spiritual needs of the multitude, be not bewildered, as Philip was, but remember the exhortation of the Lord Jesus,

"Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth labourers into His harvest,"

And seek to be yourself at His command, in any way, however humble.

Andrew, (as the Jewish Ministry before the Cross,) indicates in his answer their conscious possession of truth sufficient for their personal satisfaction, but has no thought of its sufficing for the nations. This attitude of the Jewish mind is too well understood to need further remark. We refer to it, in passing, because it confirms our thought of the representative character of Andrew, as seen in John i., vi., and xii.

In the *five* barley loaves we see a loaf for a thousand, implying a sufficiency in the preached Gospel to meet the spiritual needs of all; that is, that the atoning value of the sacrifice of Christ is infinite.

"He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world."

This truth is professedly received by the nations; they receive it, but only in a carnal way.

The *two fishes* seem to me to indicate that the Lord Jesus has not only presented the True Bread—

("The Bread which I will give is my Flesh")

—for *Life*, but has added much that will be for the *glorification* of his saints, of the *two dispensations*—the present and that which is to come. E.

THE CHURCH'S PATH and THE CHURCH'S HOPE.

(John vi. 14—21.)

In the proportion that the desire of patronising the Lord Jesus Christ, after a worldly fashion, exists in a professing church, in *that* degree, I believe, it will be found that the Lord practically withdraws His presence, till, as in the Church of Laodicea, He is *outside* and knocking.

The spirituality of a Church can only result from His presence being felt in power. The degree of this spirituality must not be inferred from the external exhibition of a certain kind of showy work. The professedly religious Jews cast largely into God's treasury, but the widow's mite outweighed their gifts. So, in this our day, there may be much giving to the poor, the widow, and the orphan, and also for the purposes of buildings and ministries, which may spring from a desire to honour Christ by increasing endowments in His *Name*, the motive being to permanently build up and give Him the kingdom! But in the light of the passage before studied, we see the Lord really withdraws from worldly partisans.

"Then those men, when they had seen the miracle which Jesus did, said, 'This is of a truth that prophet which should come into the world.' When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take Him by force, to make Him a king, He departed again into a mountain himself alone." (14, 15.)

The Lord would also have his servants withdraw:

"And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea, and entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum." (Ver. 16, 17.)

In this word *evening* is seen (as I think) a failure on the disciples' part. In Mark we read that the Lord, upon perceiving the design of the people, *straightway constrained* His disciples to get into the ship, and to go

over before Him to the other side. They ought, therefore, it would seem, to have embarked while the Lord "sent the people away." (Mark vi.) Instead of which they linger till *after* the Lord has departed, and at "even" go down to the shore. The Lord knew it was not good for His disciples to remain there; He knew their danger of mistaking partisanship for discipleship. Had they obeyed with promptitude, they might have reached the other side of that sea of eight miles wide by the time night had well closed in or before the storm had arisen.

Dear believing reader,—It is now late,—is it not? in the history of the Church on earth, and late also with many individually, to get away from intimate fellowship, in worship and work, with the unconverted: but better late than not at all.

And what is the path which the Lord would have His people take? Across the Sea—through the nations of the world, the sea symbolizing "peoples and nations." Christians are exhorted to regard themselves as strangers and pilgrims, passing through the world, not of it, but desiring the other side.

Now, as "the whole world lieth in the Wicked One," the path of the Lord's servants is across or through the realm of Satan, the god of this world, who rules in the hearts of the children of disobedience, that is, those who will not receive the testimony of Jesus as His servants pass through. Now, how vividly does this scene represent Satan's realm! It is night; Satan is the Prince of Darkness. The "wind was contrary;" he is the Prince of the Powers of the Air. Whatever waves of the world's opposition may dash against us, let us ever remember that it is the powers of Satan—the winds—which have raised them.

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness on high." (18)

Let us look through the opposition in the flesh to the prime cause—Satan, but remember, for our consolation, that "He that is for us is greater than He that is against us," and also that Jesus is looking at us from the mountain. The World's waves in the path of duty are much more to be desired than the World's smiles, secured by lingering where the Lord Jesus would have us not.

"And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them. And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew."

In this path on the sea—the path of mystery, darkness, faith, opposition to Satan, patient endurance of the World's buffetings—what is our hope? That Jesus, who sees us "toiling in rowing," will come to us on the waters. It is interesting to think that in the attitude of the disciples in rowing their faces were turned to that coast on which the Lord remained. Doubtless if there was not the *expectation* of His coming, they had the *wish* He had been with them. But it is noticeable, that the Holy Ghost introduces the words—"And Jesus was not come to them," after stating that they had gone on to the dark sea, as if His coming to them, even under those circumstances, ought to have been their proper hope and expectation.

Then, beloved, let us keep on 'rowing'; the Lord

is at hand. Rowing is expressive of earnest *individual* and *united* action—striving, and striving *together* "for the faith of the Gospel"

Believing reader, Are you at the oar? Keep there. Is the wind contrary? Pull harder. The Lord has said, Go over; preach to *every* creature. What if failure has come in, and we are not across. Still, keep to the oar, and keep on the watch. The Church's distance in her work is left indefinite; it is not revealed whether it is "five-and-twenty, or thirty furlongs;" the Lord knows.

"So when they had rowed about five-and-twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship; and they were afraid. But He saith unto them, 'It is I; be not afraid.'" (Ver. 19, 20.)

The disciples might well fear; it was God who was approaching. He whom we look for is our God as well as our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Let this thought quicken our desire to "be found blameless at His Coming."

"But He saith unto them, 'It is I; be not afraid.' Then they willingly received Him into the ship, and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went." (21)

With what joy shall *we* receive Him when *we* see Him! An end, then, to the storm and the strife, the darkness and the toil!
E.

TRADITIONS OF MEN.

A DIALOGUE.

ENQUIRE.—What do you consider the first requisite on the part of a sinner desirous of obtaining salvation?

EVANGELIST.—The one essential is, a patient, simple hearted *attention, to what God has declared*. There are two great dangers to a soul who does not know the way of life. First, *the traditions of men*;—secondly, the natural thought, that the individual has *something to do* which may render him worthy of salvation.

ENQ.—Let me ask—how is an ignorant person to distinguish between "the declarations of God," and what you call the traditions of men?

EVANG.—The declarations of God concerning salvation are all plain and emphatic, as found in the New Testament scriptures;—thus "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that *whosoever believeth in Him* should not perish but have "eternal life." (John iii. 14-15.) The gospel, or glad tidings, sent into all the world, *after* the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, will always be found of this unequivocal and simple nature.

ENQ.—What is the general character of men's traditions, such as you would contrast with scriptures like that you have named?

EVANG.—Traditions, in our day, always present Jesus Christ *and something else*. They are not content to let *the whole* work and merit of salvation rest upon the Son of God.

ENQ.—Will you name some special traditions of the character you have thus given generally?

EVANG.—Yes. There is difficulty, however, in selecting from the multitude. The Romanists, or

followers of popery, teach that salvation depends somewhat upon Jesus, but very much upon the Virgin Mary, also upon Priests, Sacraments, Saints, &c., &c., all considered needful as helps.

ENQ.—So that there can be no comfort while on earth from the knowledge of salvation obtained?

EVANG.—No. Nor, according to the lying dogmas of that persuasion, can the uncertainty be always removed at death, but the soul may be left in purgatory for an uncertain period, until *mercenary* and *impious* priests have repeated an indefinite number of vain words, which they call prayers.

ENQ.—Well, it is wonderful how men and women with any brains at all, can be deceived by such palpable impostures. But I suppose there are other traditions taught which are not so gross as those of the Romish church?

EVANG.—Yes, there are the semi-romish traditions of the (so-called) Church of England, which teach (among many other errors) “Baptismal regeneration.” This, in simple language, means, that the name of Jesus AND a little drop of water sprinkled on a baby’s face, make it “an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.”

ENQ.—But I understand the majority of the clergy repudiate that doctrine.

EVANG.—The greater shame to them for swearing fealty to a system which their conscience will not suffer them to teach. But the fact is, it is taught in their own hearing continually; nor is that all—a clergyman in examining each candidate for “confirmation” must require such to repeat “the catechism,” wherein the doctrine of “Baptismal regeneration” is elaborately set forth in language quite unmistakable.

ENQ.—What about confirmation?

EVANG.—That is another tradition, entirely of man’s invention, without the least sanction from the word of God. But I must refer you to a treatise on the Book of Common Prayer, continued from month to month in PRECIOUS TRUTH, for a more elaborate examination of the “State Church” of England. Its traditions are legion.

ENQ.—But do not many of the clergy preach the true gospel from the pulpit?

EVANG.—Yes, and I am thankful that the word of God is found to be stronger than men. But, alas, for the infatuation which leads them to keep souls in bewilderment, by teaching them through ritualism, that they are to be saved by prayers and observances, while in their sermons they contradict that doctrine by proclaiming Jesus Christ as the only Saviour.

ENQ.—Are there any traditions commonly taught which are not so grossly opposed to truth?

EVANG.—Yes. Many teach Jesus Christ AND Baptism, as essential to salvation.

ENQ.—I thought you yourself insisted upon Baptism.

EVANG.—As an act of required obedience *after* salvation *has been received* through faith. Not as a pre-requisite, nor as having to do with salvation in any way whatever.

ENQ.—I see that you insist upon the *entire* dependence of the soul upon Jesus Christ for salvation, without any aid or addition.

EVANG.—Yes, that is the point. It is Jesus Christ *the only Saviour*—and *all who believe* in Him are *the saved*. “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, “for it is the power of God unto salvation to *every one* “that *believeth*.” (Rom. i. 16.)

ENQ.—But do not some men teach that you cannot believe unless you are one of the elect?

EVANG.—Yes. This is the most subtle tradition of all. It is “Jesus Christ AND electing grace.” Now, the scriptures plainly teach that God does elect, from time to time, according to his own will. But this doctrine is *not* put by God in conjunction with the gospel of salvation—those glad tidings which are to be proclaimed in the name of the Lord Jesus, during this dispensation, to every creature.

ENQ.—How do you account for the prevalence of of this “election” teaching? It is adopted among many popular preachers.

EVANG.—It generally results from that predominant spirit in the natural mind *which seeks to account for everything*. In this mind preachers are apt to handle the “word of God,” as if they were *masters of it*; whereas in fact *it is our master*.

ENQ.—I do not exactly understand you.

EVANG.—If I take up a Book of History, Science, Music, &c., I may, by diligent study, make myself master of its contents. But I can never accomplish that with the Bible. Therein is the revelation of *the mind of Infinite God*; and as I have only *the mind of a finite creature*, I can never become master of it; though it behoves me to understand it, *and to be in subjection to whatever is taught therein*.

ENQ.—That seems to me a most correct view of the subject. But what results do you draw from it?

EVANG.—That God’s truth is to be used in the way in which He has given it. That man is not at liberty to chop it up and make doctrines of it, according to his feeble thoughts of what is right, and therefore that, as God has been pleased to give the bright and precious gospel of salvation, *during these Gentiles times*, to *whosoever* believeth in Jesus—it is to be absolutely declared *in that way*, untrammelled by any other doctrine, however correct such doctrine may be *in its proper place*.

ENQ.—I must say it is a very valuable thought that the word of God should be solemnly regarded in that way.

EVANG.—Yes. To bring any kind of doctrine, (however correct in itself) into combination with the plain statements of scripture, respecting *free forgiveness* and *eternal life* accorded to *every one that believeth* in Jesus—must mar the truth. There is a solemn warning against the misuse of scripture at the end of the second epistle of Peter, which I trust many in these last days may take to heart.

“The longsuffering of our Lord is (*i. e.* brings “about) salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul “also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath “written unto you. As also in all his epistles, speak-

"ing in them" of these things; in which are some "things hard to be understood, which they that "are unlearned (*i.e.* untaught spiritually) and "unstable, *wrest*, (*i.e.* they twist, distort, or pervert, "from their true place and application) as they do "also the other scriptures unto their own destruction." 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16.

UNDERSTANDEST THOU WHAT THOU SAYEST?

REFLECTIONS UPON

THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER.

TO BELIEVERS YET IN "THE ESTABLISHMENT."

(Continued from No. 20.)

BELIEVED,—We come now to "*Benedicite*." Have you read it? We pity the bewilderment of any reflective ones who, having read, endeavour to reconcile it with the declared truth of scripture that "the whole world lieth in the wicked one," and that he is the god of it. How is it possible for mankind generally, in company with the lower animate creation, as well as the inanimate, to be praising God under such circumstances? A time will come when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea." But judgment must first purge the scene; and there must be the personal presence of the Lord Jesus Christ—Then shall all creation praise him. Any such "canticle," as the "*Benedicite*" used in the present day, ignores the entire testimony of the Word of God as to the condition of "this present evil world."

Next in order is "*Benedictus*," a passage taken from the first chapter of the Gospel by Luke. The words were spoken *prophetically* by Zacharias, and are, of course, essentially Jewish in character. The verses, as abstracted from their place in scripture, are quite unsuited for Gentiles. In truth, the prophecy in its full meaning takes up, not only the first advent of Christ on earth, but the second also. You may say, "After all, it is truth."—Indeed it is; but truth misapplied is very bewildering, and may be destructive.

Thus it is with the misappropriation of the One Hundredth Psalm, which follows. Who are God's people and the sheep of his pasture? It is little short of blasphemy for unbelievers to say they are so. The Psalm was written for the Israelites. Christians (*i.e.* true believers) can repeat it too, though not exactly suited for them; but a mixed congregation in using it are both "deceiving and being deceived."

What do you think of the Apostles' Creed? It was never written by the Apostles. Therefore its very title is an imposition. Then, Jesus, the Saviour of sinners, suffered, not under Pontius Pilate, but under the wrath of God, as sin-bearer for his people. To Pilate he said

"Thou couldest have no power at all against me unless it were given thee from above."

The blessed Lord was delivered "according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." Pilate was indeed the instrument of unrighteousness

in committing the Holy One to those who thirsted for his blood. But to assign as the reason for the death of Christ, that he suffered under Pontius Pilate, is untruth in disguise. The Son of God offered himself as a spotless victim. Of his own will he delivered himself to his murderers: having previously declared that he would lay down his life for his sheep,—that no man took it from him, but that he had power to lay it down and take it again.

It is not true that our Lord Jesus descended into Hell. Why make ignorant people and children say so? Many intelligent christians may understand that the true meaning is Hades, but the majority do not. The expression *descended* also gives altogether a false thought. Jesus said to the dying thief on the cross—"This day shalt thou be with me in paradise!" Does "descended into Hell" convey the same idea or anything like it?

What do you mean by "The Holy Catholic Church?" There is really no such thing in existence. How can you say you believe in it? There is the Church of God, which consists of all believers in Jesus Christ, whom the Holy Ghost gathers out, *in separation from the world*. A very different thing to an *universal* or Catholic Church. The Scripture says, "The Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved." (Acts ii. 47.) This is no more like an universal church than this "present evil world" is like the "kingdom of heaven."

Have you any definite idea about "The Communion of Saints?" You say you believe in it. Do you know it is a thing for *practical experience*, not an object for faith? You might as well say you believe in benevolence! Read the second chapter of "The Acts," verses 41 to 47. You will see there what communion *with saints* is. Then turn to 1 John i. which teaches us what the communion of saints is, *Godward*. You may also get further spiritual teaching on the subject in 1 Cor. x. 16; 2 Cor. vi. 14; xiii. 14. Communion is, in fact, a loving, faithful, christian, intimate fellowship with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and with our Brethren in Christ. It is to be kept, according to the word of God, in *constant exercise*, and not merely to be "believed in."

There is one thing more we would press upon you, respecting the sentences of this "*Creed*." Just ask yourselves why you repeat these expressions of belief? Do you really mean to parade them *boastingly* before God? He knows your hearts and how much *real faith* there is there without your telling Him. The proceeding itself is totally *unscriptural*, and quite *opposed* to the true spirit of meekness befitting the followers of Jesus. Then what an awful thing if you are declaring to Him what, *in any respect*, you do not believe! But, above all, what fearful wickedness for you to countenance the repetition of this *formular*y by those who, in their hearts, do not even comprehend, much less believe, its assertions! Yet you know well this is the case with the *thousands* who every Sunday mock God with these words! Alas! as with Israel of old, so with many christians now, it is through the people of God that the name of the Lord is blasphemed.

TO THE UNCONVERTED.

"He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be cut off, and that without remedy."

The sinner unforgiven here—a sinner e'er
Remains: a heart impure will e'er be his.
Let him that's filthy,—filthy still remain.
Time is the place of change, and time alone.
Then know, O man! as thou dost live and die
Thou liv'st again. If thou thy will rebellious
Dost now prefer to God's, so wilt thou then,
Though forc'd, on bended knee to bow, and Christ
Confess as Lord—as devils do—and tremble.

But were it true, that suffering and woe,
With an enlarg'd view of all that's lost,
The baseness and the folly of all sin,—
Could soften souls to weep, and sigh, and grieve
Over their past impenitence of heart;—
'Twould be of no avail, because a gulf
Between the saved and lost is ever fix'd.

But sorrow true not often is produced
By pain. Sin's sad results alone are mourn'd.
Then in thine heart say not, "I can repent
Hereafter, when I stand before the Judge."
Thine heart deceitful is: list not to it:
Think of that primal murder, Cain;
Though by the voice of God Himself condemn'd,
Yet from his lips no sigh repentant came
For that most shocking deed, by which he laid
His own sweet brother writhing in his gore.
"My punishment is more than I can bear,"
Was all he said—a selfish sinner still.
Thus with the lost. In Revelation's page
We read, how some on earth blaspheme the Lord,
And wail, and gnash their teeth; but ne'er repent.
So Dives rich, of Abraham a son,
In torment lifts his eyes, and importunes
For slight alleviation of his woe:
But all in vain: he then proceeds to plead
For warning to his kindred yet on earth.
Failing to serve himself he thinks of them.
And this was all: no sigh for sin as sin
Against a pure and ever-blessed God.
The gold by fire is purged, and freed from dross;
But fear nor pain the soul can purify.
[Unsav'd one, view such fix'd state with awe!

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Address Letters for the Editor, care of Printer, 335, Strand, W.C.

J. W., ISLINGTON.—Respecting 1 Peter iii. 19—we believe the word "prison" may have a double significance. The spirits spoken of were imprisoned in the world, under sentence of death. In the days of Noah the world was just a prison house, holding doomed criminals, upon whom the judgment of God was about to be visited. If you think of a murderer in the condemned cell of Newgate prison, you have there a figure of the spirits in prison in the days of Noah. Yet while the Ark was preparing, the Spirit of Christ by Noah, through God's longsuffering, preached to them of judgment to come and salvation by means of the Ark. But they believed not. Secondly, they are now in prison, awaiting judgment at the last day, and as this was the case when Peter wrote his Epistle, this latter interpretation is most generally received.

R. R. BREWER-STREET.—It is with much pleasure we have read your declaration of unsectarian views. May the perusal of the back numbers of our little paper which you have ordered, strengthen your desire to "hold the Head," and in life testify of the unity of the body, by "endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." Respecting the various received translations of the scriptures, we think the authorised version is the best, though it has some faults, as all others have. If practicable, it is well to have several versions; and when difficulties arise, compare the various translations, making notes of your own, as to the effect of the different renderings, when tested by the context. Your geographical question, it is

quite out of our line of things to answer. As to your query about newspapers. There is not one we can recommend, least of all that which is called "The Christian World." This paper is calculated to intoxicate readers with its sickly romances; its sentimentality, and its worldly-wise liberality. Its special characteristic is, to cry "Peace, where there is no peace." The paper referred to affords one of the most efficient aids to Satan in lulling the world into a false security with its surface Christianity without Christ. The only brotherly advice we can give you on this subject is, "Give the newspapers up altogether." You are evidently conscious in your own soul of the harmful effect of such reading. Directly our interest is stirred by the things of the world, we forget that we are citizens of heaven, called to walk down here as strangers and pilgrims. "Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth; for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." (Col. iii. 2, 3.)

J. G., MONK'S ELEIGH, writes as follows—

"A poor believer at Monk's Eleigh, in Suffolk, who for many years has been a member of a 'Benefit Society,' wishes our advice as to whether its right, or not, to continue to subscribe to that society. He can ill afford to spare the money out of his small weekly earnings, and has a large family to support.—P.S. PRECIOUS TRUTH is indeed precious to some few souls here."

We think our brother would do well to give up the society. It is evident failure of faith for christians to remain in such institutions. No doubt consciences are continually brought into exercise by the Word of God about it. But let it be of faith, if the tried one does give it up. Can he trust the Lord who has bought him with his own precious blood? Of course, the fact of the subscription being abstracted from the present supplies for his family needs, is an additional reason for withdrawal. Do not, however, press him to act upon your faith, dear brother, but refer to the Scriptures, such as Matt. 6. 34, Phil. 4. 6, 1 Pet. 5. 7, 2 Cor. 6. 14; then leave it to conscience.

W. D. W., HEREFORD.—We quite sympathize with the warm feelings you express on behalf of one who stands so high in your estimation. But there is really no room for the charge you make against us of implying censure with reference to Mr. N., or anyone else, personally, (unless it be Mr. D.) in that paragraph on page 150. There surely can be no doubt that heretical doctrine was taught at Plymouth, and that such doctrine was published by Mr. N. If this be a statement of fact, it carries censure with it. Beyond that, we have no thought of charging him. On the contrary, we are free to say that their treatment of Mr. N. has been, and is, a standing disgrace upon Mr. D. and his followers. The proceedings taken by them, we have repeatedly shown to be quite untenable when judged by the Scriptures. As to the scandal and entanglement in connection with the Plymouth heresy and its consequences, we quite despair of ever knowing the whole truth and the right apportionment of blame to the actors in the unholy strife, until "the day shall declare it." Would that all parties would break up their confederacies, and be content, as local assemblies, to be guided by "The Word" only. Thus would bitterness cease, and brotherly love abound. We think with you that Mr. N. is most praiseworthy in not reviling again those who have made themselves his enemies.

N.B.—If any reader has any difficulty in procuring our paper, write to the editor: 335A, Strand, London, W.C.

RECEIVED—C. P., and a "Constant Reader." too late.

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Published for the Proprietor, by—

West End—JOB CAUDWELL, 335, Strand, London, W.C.
City Agents—ARTHUR HALL, 25, Paternoster-row, London, E.C.
Smart & Allen, 2, Londonhouse-yard, Paternoster Row.

JOHN EVANS, Printer, 335A, Strand, London, W.C.

PRECIOUS TRUTH.

“WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?”—(Rom. iv. 3.)

London: — Job Caudwell, 335, Strand.

Smart & Allen, Londonhouse Yard, Paternoster-row.

Arthur Hall, 25, Paternoster-row.

No. 22.]

JANUARY 1, 1867.

[One Halfpenny.]

TO THE CHILD OF GOD.

BELOVED,—How mysteriously are we circumstanced! How profoundly mysterious is our very being, as Children of God! Ere yet we were regenerate we may have been able to say with the Psalmist, “I am fearfully and wonderfully made,” (Ps. cxxxix. 14.) But now that we are “born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Pet. i. 23,) how amazing is our condition and existence on earth! Though we have a new nature, yet we have also the old. Though we are sons of God, having the Spirit of adoption, he who leads us to cry to Jehovah as “Father,” yet you and I often groan and say, “I know that in me, (that is in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing,” (Rom. vii. 18.) But, beloved, our portion is sure.

“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.” (Rom. viii. 16, 17.)

And what is the present consequence of this joint-heirship with our Saviour? The answer is, “Suffering.” Our Lord Jesus Christ came to suffer—and you, dear brother, dear sister, are also called to suffer. The continuance of the verse last quoted shows how intimately we are bound up with Christ Jesus our Lord, both as to suffering on earth and glorification hereafter.

Of course, there is no thought of our being part-takers of the suffering which our Redeemer endured for us on the Cross. In those hours of darkness and death, we never could have a part. May our thoughts be filled with reverential awe at the remembrance of them.

But our Lord Jesus suffered *for righteousness' sake* continually, as a sojourner on earth—and for the like cause we must needs suffer also—for, we, too are pilgrims, and the world is against us. Now, *endurance* may come upon us, either through the maintenance of our call to sanctification and holiness, or it may result from confession of the name of Christ—

“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.” (Phil. i. 29.)

In either case, blessed are ye. Our Lord pronounces a distinct blessing for those who endure for righteousness, (i. e. the doing of that which is right in the sight of God,) and another blessing to those who are afflicted in consequence of personal faithfulness to himself.

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. v. 10.)

This has a very special application to the Jewish

dispensation, both before Christ had suffered, and as looking forward to the day of tribulation yet to come. Because God hath called his people Israel to walk in righteousness (as he does us also), and in a day of evil the righteous necessarily suffer.

Certainly the above blessing is for us as well as for them, but it is our peculiar privilege to accept all suffering as in connection with our calling in Christ Jesus. When a christian persists in acting righteously, it is because he has life in Jesus.

But I think there is much significance in the change from the expression *they*, in the above beatitude, to “*ye*” in the following—

“Blessed are *ye*, when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely *for My sake*. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven.” (Matt. v. 11-12.)

We who suffer for Christ's sake are to be rewarded in heaven. Those who, before the Saviour was personally known, suffered for righteousness' sake, belong more especially to the *kingdom* of God upon earth. For the prayer of the true-hearted of Israel, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” will yet be fully answered.

Notwithstanding that all the promises are true of us who are *joint-heirs* with Christ, (for He is to inherit all things,) yet many will, through righteousness (the righteousness of faith) have a place in the kingdom upon earth, when Christ comes to reign. But, according to the clear teaching of the scriptures, we Christians are to reign *with* our Lord *over* the earth.

Let me explain, lest my reader should be stumbled, that the righteousness which God accepts as fitting for the kingdom of heaven, is “the righteousness which is of faith.” In the present dispensation (i. e. since the “showing forth” of the Son of God) “the righteousness which is of faith,” centres in Him. But before the coming of Christ, the righteousness which is of faith, rested upon the word of Jehovah, the living Word *not having yet been “made flesh”* to dwell among us. “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.” This is the character of the saving faith previous to the Christian dispensation. But God has now made himself personally known in Jesus Christ, and therefore, in our days, faith unto salvation must have the Lord Jesus for its object. He has said, “*No man cometh to the Father but by me.*” In the day to come, when the “king of kings” (Our Lord) shall come forth, and take to himself his great power and reign—it will be seen that he has been pleased to associate with himself on his own throne *in heaven*, those who, *believing in Him*, have

suffered in association *with Him* during these days of his rejection on earth. While other hosts who are also counted righteous through faith, but are not of the Christian dispensation, shall have honour and power and glory *upon earth*. Jesus said

"Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. viii. 11.)

Those christians have poor thoughts of the coming day of glory, who do not recognise the continually declared truth of scripture, that our Lord's kingdom will include both earth and heaven.

"Jesus saith unto him [Nathanael], Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." (John i. 51.)

How emphatic! The Lord repeats the words "of a truth, I say unto you." Beloved—to our joy unspeakable, all must be fulfilled.

But now we wait, in the place of suffering—and we suffer because we are in union with Christ Jesus our Lord. I believe that whatever we have to endure, His desire is that we do so for his sake. We should be perfectly righteous in all our ways for his name's sake; and if we suffer for it, it is because we are doing his will. If we endure chastening at the hand of our Father, it is because we are sons, and it is through Jesus we have the adoption of sonship. And if we have reviling or persecution in consequence of frankly owning the name of Christ, or as bearing testimony for Him—it is especially suffering as in union with Him. In either case, "Happy are ye." But if actually bearing persecution for his sake—"Rejoice and be exceeding glad."

Oh, what a mystery! Oh, how wonderful, that the word of our God should so operate in us, as to make us actually triumph while enduring affliction, because eternally united to Jesus Christ our Lord!

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Cor. iv. 17-18.)

Oh, the many precious inducements which our Lord has given us in the Scriptures that we may fight the good fight of faith!

Beloved,—May the remembrance of our joint-heirship with Christ, not only as to the kingdom soon to be revealed, but also as to the sufferings of this "little while," constrain us to faithfulness. Whatever the trial may be, if, fortified by the word of God, we can regard the grief distinctly as fellowship in suffering with Christ here, because we are destined to fellowship with him in heavenly glory—the sting and pain of sorrow will depart, and we, in measure, like the apostle Paul, shall be able to rejoice in the midst of afflictions.

"For" [he says] "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed *in us*." (Rom. viii. 18.)

And let us never forget that we are not to wait for

fellowship in suffering; but if free from personal trial, we are to "Take up the cross," and we are to "Bear one another's burdens." (Gal. vi. 2.)

Moses is especially praised of God in that he "chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God," than to enjoy the attractions of Pharaoh's Court. (Heb. x. 25.)

Then, as to the endurance of our Lord Jesus Christ—apart altogether from the atoning work of the Cross. He was pleased for our sakes to endure a life of sorrow, affliction and temptation—

"For it became him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, *in bringing many sons unto glory*, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." (Heb. ii. 10.)

He stedfastly set his face to go up to Jerusalem, *enduring all He encountered by the way*, as well as the agony of Gethsemane and the Cross, at the end of the journey.

May you, beloved, have your face stedfastly set towards the heavenly Jerusalem, meanwhile seeking grace through your "great High Priest that is passed into the heavens," that you may endure and overcome by faith. Remember that word by the apostle—

"God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed towards his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do show the same *diligence*, to the full assurance of hope, unto the end. That ye be not slothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises." (Heb. vi. 10-12.)

The perpetual enjoyment of the bright hope set before us, can only be maintained by *diligent* going on with fellowship in the sufferings of Christ. By the activities of faith and patience, we are to enter into (inherit) the exceeding great and precious promises given to us by our God. Soon, faith and patience and hope, will be needed no more—we shall be taken out of the place of endurance—all darkness and mists shall roll away—we shall be changed into the likeness of our Redeemer—and He himself will reward us with eternal glory, *according to our work*.

Yours in the love of Christ Jesus our Lord,

And in patient waiting for Him,

THE EDITOR.

THE JEWISH "EVENING."

In the article in our last, on John vi., "The Church's Path and the Church's Hope," I inferred from the disciples not going down to the sea till "*Evening*," that there was on their part, a want of promptitude in fulfilling the desire of the Lord. It has been thought that this inference is hardly justified, because Matthew says it was "*evening*" when the multitude sat down to be fed. I was aware of this, and ought to have explained that the Jews had an early and later "*evening*," the former beginning at three in the afternoon, the latter at sunset. This is evident from the account by Mark (who writes, when the multitude sat down, that the "*day* was far spent,") and Luke (who writes, "When the day *began* to wear away.") This explains Matthew's "*evening*" to be our "*afternoon*," and ought, I think to have been so rendered: *because*, after the multitude had been fed, and the Lord had dismissed them, and gone to the mountain, Matthew adds—"*And when the evening was come* He was there alone," having previously said it was '*evening*' when the multitude sat down! The word in the Greek is the same in both places, but is explained by the fact that the Jews had an early and later evening.

E.

TO MR. J. N. DARBY.

(LETTER No. 2.)

SUBJECT—THE "ONE BODY."

DEAR BROTHER. — A remark in the "Bible Treasury" of Oct. last, leads me to address you upon the above subject. You say, we are corporately responsible to maintain unity. Scripture does not say so. I have no doubt the thought got deeply seated in your mind when, years ago, the Lord in his rich grace led yourself and others to come out from the mixed systems of the Establishment and of ordinary Dissent; and I am free to express hearty thankfulness for the great blessings which have resulted from that act of faithfulness. You are truly entitled to much honour and esteem, in that you had a foremost place in breaking the fetters of tradition. Moreover, I own an entire coincidence in your desire that the unity, declared in Scripture, should be acknowledged and felt by all christians.

But, dear brother, there is deep need for you to reconsider the theory you have held, as to collective responsibility respecting the maintenance of the unity, and also with regard to the way in which the unity should be expressed.

When the movement of separation from the sects commenced, and multitudes of christians began to gather in true unity; namely, by assembling themselves simply in the name of the Lord Jesus, and when they afterwards grew into an organised confederation, it looked as though there would be a return of the visible oneness of the very first days.

I do not wonder that you and others should have been carried away with that pleasing thought—and as it has been imbibed, I am not surprised at the tenacity with which it is held. But, on examination, it proves to have been based upon fallacious appearances, and not upon the word of God. Scripture does not in any way teach us to expect, on earth, a return of a visible expression of the unity of the church in these last days. Prophecy shows us exactly the contrary, even the strifes and divisions which we sorrowfully experience. Yet the exhortation rests upon each individual believer, "Endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

The Word tells us, "There is one Body." (Eph. iv.) It is of the Creation of God. It is maintained by divine power. Neither infidels nor believers can, in any way, affect its actual existence. It consists of all believers in Christ Jesus, who by the Holy Ghost are united to one another and to their Living Head. One could not speak upon this doctrine to any christian more enlightened than yourself.

The difference between us arises directly you say there is responsibility upon any one member or aggregation of members to bring about a display of that unity.

The divine teaching is, that we are to "endeavour to keep the unity (not of the body,) but of the Spirit, in the bond of peace"!

Now, the entire range of truth comprised in the Epistles to the churches, shows that this unity of the Spirit is to be kept, not by aggression, but by con-

cession, not by domination, but by manifestation of love. Everything is to be done in grace. Even the Apostles who had power, used it in grace. They never cut off others for opposition to their will. If it was the Corinthians, some of whom were despising Paul in his absence, he writes to them in all the varied expressions of love, entreaty, exhortation, remonstrance, warning and rebuke—but neither for false doctrine, nor any other disorder found in that most disorderly assembly, does the apostle propose excommunication; save only in the case of the wicked fornicator, who was to be solemnly "delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." The power which this most earnest servant had received, he told them was for *building up*, not for destruction. He says—

"Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to *edification and not to destruction.*" (2 Cor. xiii. 10.)

So in the case of the Galatians. Language can scarcely be stronger, than that used by Paul to these Christians for having received false doctrines. He even goes so far as to utter the aspiration—

"I would they were even cut off which trouble you."

But he gives the *Church* no sentence of excommunication to execute upon them. In like manner the Apostle John, writing to Gaius, says—

"I wrote unto the Church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore if I come I will remember his doeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words, and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth out of the Church!" (3 John, 6-10.)

Notwithstanding the pride, self-will, and actual *malicious* prating against this Apostle of Christ, Diotrephes gets no sentence of excommunication, no more than the gainsayers at Corinth or Galatia. Though, as I have said, apostolic power was still in the Church, and had it been the right thing to do, the assembly would undoubtedly have received command to cut off the delinquent.

But further: In Paul's farewell address to the Ephesian elders, (Acts xx.) he warns them, not only of wolves from without, but that of *their own selves* should men arise, *speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.* Yet what does he propose as a remedy? Does he say, "Preserve the unity of the body by cutting off the perverse teachers?" Nothing of the sort, but,—

"Brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to *build you up*, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." (Acts xx. 32.)

The truth is, that directly you begin to deal in judgment for erroneous doctrine, (call it "false" doctrine if you will) you condemn yourself. And it is most remarkable, and deeply solemn, that you, dear brother, who have been so fearfully severe towards others, are yourself now pointed at as a teacher of heresy. I think it possible, with respect

to the error of doctrine charged against you, that you are now judged by some with undue severity; but this is the natural consequence of having yourself assumed the judgment-seat.

"Who art thou that judgeth another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand." (Rom. xiii. 4.)

Now, what I want to press is, that the very essence of unity is conformity to Scripture. You say it is conformity to the present leading of the Holy Ghost. This thought seems to have been the foundation of Irvingism.

The leadings of the Holy Ghost are uniform. Christian assemblies have the Inspired Word to guide them. The Holy Spirit gives a right apprehension of "the word" to such as wait upon God, in faith and meekness. But he alters nothing. The only appeal is, "What saith the Scripture?"

This absolute requirement of adhesion to that which is written, strips off all power from men, and brings them into the place of subjection and dependence. It is therefore generally most unwelcome. But it is the only possible manifestation of Christian Unity.

It seems far easier, and gratifies the natural pride of the heart better, to bring the powers of judgment into exercise on every emergency. Thus, though there may have been much sincerity, and true, earnest prayer for the direction of the Holy Ghost, when you have attempted to make the decision of One Assembly binding upon others; it was impossible to have your desire answered, because it was contrary to the revealed counsels of God. Consequently there was failure in the very foundation of your procedure. *Your assembly had no divinely constituted power.* In fact, if in any one of your meetings, however gathered, there had been found a teacher of false doctrine, you had no power to take a single step in the way of his excision; to do so would be to go beyond the written word, and Scripture gives you no authority to cut off such a one. How totally incompetent were you, therefore, to deal with teachers in distant assemblies! If I am wrong here, the question may be easily determined. Where in the Word of God is judicial power committed to the Church? It is of no use appealing to 1. Cor. v. I have already shown that the Corinthians had only to follow a prescribed course, in cases of sin clearly defined. And Christians now have no difficulty in following the same instructions in like instances of wilful sin. But the question of doctrine has nothing whatever to do with that which is insisted upon in that scripture.

I know that many dear Christians shrink from probing the wound down to the bone in this way. They fear that the door may be opened for licence and confusion. If the Church has no authority, who can preserve order? Nay, but the assembly can carry out whatever is committed to it in the Scripture. There is all the difference between acting out what is plainly taught, and enforcing decisions arrived at without divinely constituted authority.

But is there no power in the midst of the Church? I answer—Yes; The Living Lord is in the midst,

in power, as He shows Himself in the three first chapters of "the Revelation."

In conforming ourselves to Him we shall find the unity of the Spirit. Whatever responsibility there may be respecting the unity of the Body, it rests upon each individual; upon yourself and myself, and upon every separate member. Failure comes in as soon as Christians follow aught, except "It is written." All the bitterness and strife arise through not "holding the Head, from whom all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." (Col. ii. 19.) The power is all of the Lord "The body is of Christ." (Col. ii. 17.) It is not at all a question of corporate responsibility. You think it is, dear brother. I ask you for Scripture to support your doctrine! It cannot be found. But wherever a Christian is faithfully holding the Head according to His word, that one is "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit."

With respect to the truth of the presence of the Lord in Christian assemblies: There is always danger of its being held as a *doctrine*, and ignored as a *fact*. Unbelief here, as ever, is the great hindrance to the manifestation of His power. It is, however, certain that if there be a living confidence in the presence of the Lord Jesus, where two or three are gathered in His name, and if there be a prayerful waiting upon Him when the manifestation of His power is needed, whatever may be the evil to be dealt with, that power will surely be felt. But let none presume to act in His name, or in the name of the Holy Ghost, apart from His Word.

In presence then of true power and the divine unity, away with confederacies and patch-work unity (so-called) which presents really nothing but rags and tatters.

Yours in Christian love,

A FELLOW-SERVANT.

MR. W. H. DORMAN'S REASONS FOR TERMINATING HIS ASSOCIATION WITH MR. J. N. DARBY.

One of the most faithful and gifted teachers lately among the exclusive Plymouth Brethren, has recently withdrawn from that association. It is of Mr Dorman we now speak. Mr Percy F. Hall has also separated on the same ground as the first-named brother. Both have published statements* of the cause of rupture; and we may hereafter refer, more particularly than now, to the details of the griefs which constrained them, for the sake of faithfulness to our "One Lord," to liberate themselves from the entanglements of the party.

Mr Dorman tells us that he has been associated with Mr Darby and "the Brethren" no less than 28 years. It is, therefore, no light matter which could effect a severance of ties which have endured so long. Indeed, his ground of complaint is a most grave one. But a more serious iniquity has long existed which ought to have brought our Brother to

* "The close of 28 years of association with J. N. D.," &c. By W. H. D.—London: Houlston and Wright. "Grief upon Grief." By P. F. H.—Same publishers.

his present decision years ago. This comes out clearly in the following extract from Mr Dorman's book, though it does not form any part of his primary charge. To our thinking, however, this, which is but named, as it were, parenthetically, exhibits, by far, the greater evil. The words are calculated to bring shame in the face of every Teacher among the party.

"I cannot any longer pursue to 'the tenth generation' people who have no more to do with Mr. Newton's doctrine than I have, nor any more leaning towards it—merely because they cannot endorse Mr Darby's decree, issued 18 years ago, as to the way in which the evil must be dealt with if they would maintain themselves in his association. My heart has been withered by the necessity of schooling christians—young and old, ignorant and well-informed—in the mysteries of an act of discipline of eighteen years' standing, and in endeavouring to show the present bearings of 'the Bethesda question' and 'the neutral party'—hateful phrases as they have become. At first, of course, all this was pursued as necessary to the maintenance of purity of doctrine and of 'a true Christ' amongst those who took part with Mr D. in his position, and principles, and acts; and I honestly thought it so myself. But this guise is now utterly and rudely stripped away."

THE TRUE BASIS OF CHRISTIAN MEETINGS.

The following is precious testimony by Mr Dorman as to Christian fellowship:—

"In all this, however, it is not to be supposed that the Word of God has failed. It is far otherwise. It is sufficient for all times, and it is the true wisdom of the humble-minded christian to trust it for this time—and to trust nothing else. The principle upon which the brethren were originally gathered together is a true one, and therefore cannot fail. It is this: 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.' But this is at the utmost possible remove from that association of affiliated societies into which they have degenerated. What possible correspondence is there between a company of Christians, or ever so many companies—meeting simply in the name of Christ, pretending to nothing, but counting on his presence as the spring and security of their blessing when so met, and that of an immense ecclesiastical ramification, which is everywhere subject, and in all things, as to its order, doctrine, and discipline, to Mr D.'s decrees? enforced by a ubiquitous, unseen spiritual supervision, from which as there is no escape, so is there no appeal? The one is as wide and free as the gracious heart of Christ can make it: and as available too, where there is faith and humility enough to trust it. The other is as narrow and sectarian, and as hard also, as the domination of man can desire it."

CAUSE FOR MUCH THANKFULNESS.

Since our notification that we had received but one response to our appeal for aid to suffering Saints in London, a brother in the Lord has most lovingly ministered to all the specially tried ones known to us. The same dear brother has sent £5 for the purpose of advertising "Precious Truth," as he feels earnestly desirous that it may be more generally known among Christians.

A dear sister in Windsor (personally unknown to us) has also sent relief to one of those most needing help; and likewise a brother in North Devon has kindly responded. We are much cheered and thankful in making these announcements.

BREAKING OF BREAD.

What does it mean?

To the believer in Christ Jesus, the act is an outward testimony of faith. By it, the true Christian expresses his unshaken conviction that his Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ, gave His body to be broken for the sins of those who now break the bread in remembrance of Him.

The Son of God who died for all poor sinners who trust in Him, was pleased to ordain this act, as a perpetual reminder of His priceless sacrifice for them.

As to the frequency or infrequency of breaking of bread, He left it to the love of His cherished ones to decide. Its voluntary observance commenced when the Church was founded on the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost; and will doubtless continue until the entire assembly of believers shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.—"For as often as ye eat this 'bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He 'come.'" 1 Cor. xi. 26.

It is in the 10th and 11th chapters of the first Epistle to the Corinthians that we get a true insight into the character of this precious Christian ordinance. For though that which is presented therein has much in common with the accounts by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, of the original institution of the Lord's Supper, by Jesus Himself, on the very night on which He was betrayed, yet this Scripture is to be specially noted by us as recording how the ordinance had been given afresh by the Lord Himself, to Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles.

There is deep significance in its having been given again, after His resurrection, by the Head of the Church. It is handed to us thus as entirely divested of all that specially appertained to the Jewish economy. For that divine order of things was owned and maintained by Jesus, until the people crucified their King.

The Apostle says expressly—"*I have received of the Lord*" that which also I delivered unto you. That the Lord Jesus "the night in which he was betrayed took bread; and when 'he had given thanks he break it, and said, Take eat: this is 'my body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of 'me. After the same manner also [i.e. giving thanks,] he "took the cup when he had supped, saying, This cup is the "New Testament [*the instrument of his will, see Heb. vii. 22, and "Heb. ix. 16] in my blood. This do ye (as oft as ye drink) in remembrance of me."* 1 Cor. xi. 23-25.

This clear account of our Lord's will, as to His Supper, was originally given, we see, to an assembly of Christians in great disorder. They (the Corinthian converts) were using this memorial of the death and will of their Lord in a most licentious and profane way. They sinned most grievously in that respect, and had to be severely rebuked by the Apostle. Since that day Christians have commonly erred in the very opposite direction. Without dwelling upon the delusions about transubstantiation, as taught by papists and others, our remark is sufficiently proved by the pretensions of Clericalism generally. The assumptions of the Clergy, whether of the priestly order or otherwise, necessarily involve an implied need of something to be done or said on their part to add an official sanctity to the Lord's Supper.

But it never did, and never can, require any kind of dignity or status on the part of any partaker of the bread and wine, save that which the least of all believers has in Christ Jesus.

No dignity is needed to consecrate, or distribute, or fulfil any act whatever in connection with the Lord's Supper.

Any company of believers (few or many) who meet *anywhere*, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, are competent to give thanks, and break the bread and drink the wine, distributing the same among themselves. But then, the scripture before us shows most solemnly that each individual is required to perform the act with an *exercised conscience*, as being directly responsible to the Lord.—“Let a man *examine himself*, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.” (1 Cor. xi. 28.)

A christian should not refrain from the bread and wine because he has a sense of unworthiness. On the contrary, the sincere judgment passed upon *self* as unworthy, brings him to the very condition for entering into the worthiness of Christ, in which he is accepted by God. Let a man examine, scrutinise, or judge himself, then let him eat and drink, giving true thanks to God for his unspeakable gift.

For what does the significant act of breaking bread set forth, if it be not that by his sins the believer had part in breaking the body of his Lord? How inexpressibly solemn is this thought! We can therefore call by no weaker phrase than *presumptuous officiousness*, aught that interposes between the saved sinner and his God, in the act of commemorating the sacrifice of Christ.

And what shall we say of the pitiable ignorance of any who dole out to their deluded followers, a piece of bread cut with a knife, when the word of God insists upon the true act being that of *breaking bread*? Is it not evident that, with thousands, the observance of what they call the sacrament of the Lord's supper, is a mere superstition? Instead of looking into the Scriptures to see what God's mind is about it, they accept the traditions of their priests or clergy, just as their forefathers followed the miserable superstitions of the druids or other heathen pretenders.

There is, indeed, a wide difference in degree as to the mixture of tradition and truth commonly used in connection with the Lord's supper. But all are wrong who do not recognise an absolute equality of standing before God as partakers of the bread and wine. If the most gifted of the Apostles were one of the two or three gathered in the name of Jesus to show forth the Lord's death, he would be there but on a par with the weakest believer—just a poor sinner saved by grace. However, notwithstanding all the fearful confusion—we can say, Thanks be to God who hath caused the light of truth on this sacred theme, to shine into the hearts of many of his ransomed ones. There are now, not only in this country, but in other lands, many little companies of true followers of Jesus Christ, cherishing His word and his name, who come together to break bread on the first day of the week, just as the early converts did when Paul visited them. Just look at Acts xx. 7. “Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to *break bread*, Paul preached unto them,” &c. The disciples came together on that day to *break bread*. Whether the Apostle were there or not, the breaking bread was the special object before them. When Paul came, they were of course, glad to hear him preach. But whether there were preaching or not, their Lord had risen on the first day of the week, and the disciples therefore came together on that day, to show forth His death.

There is no command restricting the Lord's supper to that day—but the early christians saw the appropriateness of the first of the week as the day on which our Saviour rose triumphant over death; that also in which he was pleased to show himself on two occasions in the midst of his disciples.

But while insisting upon the primary importance of breaking of bread on Lord's day as an outward act, we desire most earnestly to press a few words of warning upon all dear brethren in Christ, who rejoice in the liberty wherewith he hath made them free.

The exclusive party of the Plymouth Brethren have made the Lord's Table the basis of Christian fellowship—and we fear many others have followed their erroneous example. They speak of receiving such an one to the Lord's table. It is not a question with them as to whether a believer should be received into Christian fellowship; but whether he can see their “ground of gathering.”

If the candidate appear to some two or three arbitrary examiners (from whose verdict there is no appeal), sufficiently indoctrinated, he is proposed in a most elaborate and formal way, as desiring to be received to the Table. Note the definite article *the*, used above, as our exclusive Brethren hold the odd notion that they only are in possession of the Lord's table!

Now all this, both practice and theory, as followed by these dear christians, is simply Anti-scriptural. “Breaking of Bread” is one act among many to be observed by Christians in fellowship. True Christian fellowship is based upon the declared truth, that all believers are made members one of another, by a divine act totally independent of human control.

The spring of *practical* Christian fellowship is love. It is not a question of our being merely agreed to do a certain thing in a special way. We are brought into union that we may love one another, and in true fellowship wait upon the Lord, learn of Him, and seek to do all things which are well pleasing in His sight.

Consider the first days—“They that gladly received His word [the preaching of Peter] were baptized [immersed]; and the same day there were added about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers.” Acts ii. 41-42.

They believed, they were baptized, then they continued where the Lord had placed them—in true union. They continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers. So in continuance, to the end of the sacred narrative. There was no power of election in assembled believers, (i. e. the church) nor even in the Apostles, as to who should come to the Lord's table. As soon as a man or woman was born again through the preached word, such an one was immersed (baptized) in water; thereby setting forth in figure that he or she had been passed through the death of Christ into life with Him—

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come with condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” John v. 24.

The believer having exemplified or testified, (by submission to Baptism,) of the wondrous passage from death to life, provided for him through the power of God in Jesus Christ, and now made effectual to him through faith—was received into fellowship by his brother christians, not as a question of choice, but as a matter of course. It was not man's work at all, but, “The Lord added to the church daily, such as should be saved.” Acts ii. 47.

Thus made a member of the one body of Christ, by divine power, none could question his right to break bread.* It would be as reasonable to dispute his title to fellowship in the Apostles' doctrine or to fellowship in prayer! God's order is unchanged since those first days. A christian belongs to the Church of God—and the order of God's word is, that he is to *judge himself*. A brother in the Lord may exhort or admonish him if needful; but, as to breaking of bread, such brother has no power to say—Yea or nay.

This, however, makes *self-judgment* the more imperative. And it is a fearful thing for any to partake of the bread and wine without searching his own soul before God.

“He that eateth and drinketh unworthily [i. e. unjudged by himself], eateth and drinketh condemnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.” 1 Cor. xi. 29-32.

* Of course he could be delivered to Satan for the destruction of flesh, in case of gross sin. That is another question.

THE FEEDING OF THE FOUR THOUSAND.

[We have received a letter from N. B. S. and have submitted it to our dear brother who supplied the paper, "A Prefiguration of Gospel Times," and here insert his reply.—Ed.]

DEAR BROTHER,—I offer the following thoughts in answer to your query, but do not insist on this interpretation. I am glad you judge what is said.

The truth preached to the multitude, and professedly received by the nations of Christendom, is equal to the needs of all. Its substance is—"Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." I see in the five loaves for the five thousand such a corresponding likeness of numbers as to justify the interpretation that a *sufficiency* to meet the needs of the case is the idea presented by a loaf to a thousand. Surely there is a coincidence between the number of the loaves and the thousands, and a parallel coincidence between the needs of the multitude and the offered blessings of the Gospel. You say this is an "instructive idea," but is not quite satisfactory—because "in the case of the feeding of the four thousand there were seven loaves." Why was it not four loaves? Doubtless, because the Holy Spirit presents a different line of truth. While the Five Thousand prefigure Gospel times, I think the Four Thousand present restored Israel—a multitude (or thousand) gathered by the angels from each of the four winds of heaven.

"And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." (Matt. xxiv. 31.)

Then will they see and welcome the Lord Christ. Hence, while the Five Loaves present a *sufficient* Gospel for the multitude, the Seven Loaves prefigure the Heaven-given Bread, the Son of God, to be again the portion of God's earthly people Israel.

"My Father giveth you the True Bread from heaven. For the Bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." (John vi. 32, 33.)

Many of our readers already understand the number SEVEN to symbolize that which is Divine made VISIBLE. He whom the heavens have received will be again SEEN by Israel, who will then, like Thomas, no longer disbelieve, but accept Him, and be satisfied with Him as the "Bread of God."

"Seven" as a symbol of the heavenly things made visible may have some association with the Pleiades or Seven Stars of Job and Amos. In connection with Divine appointments and visions, we find that, (because used in sacrifice, and therefore foreshadowing Christ,) the clean animals were received into the Ark by sevens. The Church, called to show forth the mind of God, is represented by the Seven churches of Asia, and symbolized by the Seven golden candlesticks or lamps burning. So, too, ministry in divine things has for its symbol Seven stars in the Lord's right hand. The presentment of divine wrath is "seven angels having the seven last plagues." (Rev. xx. 1.) The Holy Spirit is symbolized by "seven lamps of fire burning before the throne." (Rev. iv.) The Lamb of God is also *seen* in vision having seven

horns and seven eyes. Even Satan, as he has usurped and received from his angels and men DIVINE honours, is seen as a dragon having seven heads and seven crowns. I have made these references that the reader may judge the assertion that Seven is a symbol of Divine objects rendered Visible, and that the Seven Loaves prefigure a Visibly re-given Divine Bread.

All the circumstances in this latter scene indicate the Lord Jesus Christ in power on a recently-suffering earth. He has just previously healed great multitudes, on a mountain, "and they glorified the God of Israel." (Matt. xv. 29—31.) He then calls His disciples unto Him, and says He has "compassion on the multitude," because they had been with Him "three days, and had nothing to eat; and divers of them come from far, and He commanded the people to sit down."

How expressive is all this, too, of the condition of Israel when the Lord again comes to the earth! They will have come to an end of their own resources, will be ready to faint, and many will have come from far. The chosen earthly servants, too, in that day will be slow to believe what the Lord can do, according to that word—"When the Son of Man cometh shall He find faith on the earth?"

But all this will not take place till after "three days." These three days, I think, mean *three thousand years* (complete or incomplete). The Holy Spirit says by Peter, when referring to the coming of the Lord, that "a day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." Again, the Lord Jesus says, "Abraham saw my DAY, and was glad." This doubtless refers to the THOUSAND years' reign of Christ. I think, therefore, that in many passages a day prophetically presents a thousand years.

Reference to pages 104, 134, of this paper will show my grounds for believing that the two thousand years now passing are indicated by the "two days" during which the Lord tarried beyond Jordan (beyond Death) before He came to raise Lazarus (the sleeping ones of the Church). But as two days, according to Jewish mode of speech, need not be two *complete* days, so these two thousand years need not be two complete thousand years. Therefore, we know not the day nor the hour that the Son of Man cometh.

Now the "three days" of these passages in Matt. xv. and Mark viii. are not to be regarded as including the Church's "two days," because the Lord says "The people have now been *with me* three days," whereas the Jewish people, *as a people*, are not now with Him. But the Church's parenthetical period is to be dropped. We then go back to the period when the people had their origin in the call of Abraham, and find that it is as nearly as can be known Two Thousand years before their dispersion. Here, then, we have two days. To these we must add the period (thousand or part of a thousand) following the Church's withdrawal, (when a remnant of Israel will turn to the Lord their God,) and we have the "three days." This latter period is called "the *day* of small things" (as regards penitent Israel),

and "the day of vengeance" (as regards the unbelieving). (Zech. iv. 10; Isa. lxi. 2; 1 Thess. i. 6—10; Rom. ii. 5.)

My judgment therefore is, that when the Lord is seen again and rejoiced in by His earthly people, the third thousand years—the third day—will be more or less entered upon. God gave their fathers manna, and their carcasses fell in the desert, through unbelief; God gave them the True Bread from heaven—a pure unleavened loaf; they turned from it, are spiritually again in Egypt, away from the Father, having only wretched husks which the swine (the unclean Gentiles) eat. But again will the True Bread—the Sevenfold Loaf—be given, and this time received with humble joy, but not till the descendants of Jacob have come to an end of themselves and their resources, "have nothing to eat, have been with Him three days, and are ready to faint."

I quote here the following passage in confirmation of this interpretation—

"Come, let us return unto the Lord: for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight." (Hosea vi. 1, 2.)

The Lord also said that "the third day He should be perfected." This word must surely include His earthly glory, and therefore be a prophetic word, uttered, as it was, to the worldly Pharisees for Herod.

"Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected." (Luke xiii. 32.)

Of this nature, also, is that word—"Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up." Primarily fulfilled in His Resurrection, and now held by Faith, it will be manifested to Sight before the unbelieving Jews in the third thousand, or third day, from that time. Within the same period (fully reckoned), we may also suppose that other House of God, the Temple at Jerusalem, destroyed through or by the wilfulness of the Jews, will be re-built under the Second and Greater Solomon.

Referring again to the feeding of the Four Thousand, we see that that which remains is also "SEVEN baskets full"—a DIVINE supply VISIBLY stored—stored in Jesus, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." I think the TWELVE baskets gathered up on the previous occasion, indicate that Israel (the Twelve tribes) are provided for, when they turn again, and how they will come into blessing after the times of the Gentiles (the Five Thousand). For it is very important to notice, that, in the order of time, the Five Thousand are fed before the Four Thousand, the former in Matt. xiv. and Mark vi. and the latter in Matt. xv. and Mark viii. E.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Address Letters for the Editor, care of Printer, 335, Strand, W.C.

T. R., IRELAND.—We can quite appreciate the difficulty you have respecting our letters to Mr Darby, and to the Editor of "Things New and Old." But you do not attempt to refute what we have stated. The whole question is this—To what extent has the Lord Jesus committed judicial power to the

Church? He has not authorised us to exclude a believer who holds what we may consider heretical doctrine; and we can effect nothing but mischief by assuming a power which our gracious Master has, in perfect wisdom, reserved to himself. The passages you cite from the epistle to Galatians, clearly prove that the Church had no power to cut off the evil workers. The apostle appeals to God about it, as a question of judgment.—To the assembly he administers remonstrance and reproof. 1 Tim. i. 20 is a statement of what apostolic power had done. If any have that power now, let them exercise it in any like case.

The case you imagine of one standing up in a Christian assembly to teach Pantheism, is a mere extravagance. He would be rebuked and silenced by the whole church.

The writer remembers some time ago one or two wild Irvingites who used to trouble a little meeting of Christians who came together over the Scriptures. One of them in particular was very persistent, and came many times, endeavouring to introduce false and visionary interpretations. We were compelled to rebuke him often, but with little effect. At length we said this to him.—If you do not at once cease this perverse course, we will close the books and pray to the Lord to put you away. This had the desired effect. His visits ceased at once, for he feared an appeal to Him who has all power in heaven and earth.

The consideration you suggest that Mr D.'s party may say, "See what the opposite doctrine leads to!" does not weigh with us in the least. We are contending neither for nor against a party, but for the truth.

We are open to be convinced of whatever is in "the word;" but any course of reasoning or policy, apart from Scripture, we eschew, let the result be what it may.

C. P.—We quite agree with the tenor of your communication. Our present object, however, in our addressing our brother Darby, is to show his followers the untenable position their leader has assumed, and into which he has drawn them, rather than that of sifting the undercurrent of erroneous doctrines found perhaps in some of his writings. But we thank you for the hints contained in your letter, and may hereafter refer to them. We confess to a fear of seeming to press unduly one who has been used perhaps more than any other teacher in our day, in arousing Christians to a consciousness of their high-calling in Christ Jesus.

THE EDITOR would be glad to hear of suitable Employment for a dear young brother in the Lord, who has sustained an injury in the left hand, but can write well; has been used to teach the elements of education. Commended to the prayers of saints.

TO OUR READERS.—We ask brethren and sisters in the Lord to order a few numbers monthly, and take some pains to lend them about. If done to the Lord in faith, you may thus be dispensers of much blessing.

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FEBRUARY 1, 1867.

[One Halfpenny.]

TO THE CHILD OF GOD'S ADOPTION.

Beloved,—The special word I have for you this month is “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things [the needful things] shall be added unto you.” (Matt. vi. 33.)

I feel assured that our Lord was telling out PRIMARY truth FOR ALL HIS FOLLOWERS when he uttered these words.

There is a principle of deepest moment involved in the above charge. Alas, the rule with Christians has been to ignore that principle entirely.

The natural man, of course, seeks the best positions, and the greatest abundance he can obtain, of the things which please the senses. Money represents all such gratifications. Hence covetousness is the great idol of the day. It is the prominent sin of Christendom.

Scripture classes this amongst the grossest evils.

“Mortify your members which are upon the earth—fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness which is idolatry.” (Col. iii. 5.)

Now, it is just in the proportion that our hearts are occupied with thoughts of self-gratification, that “the kingdom of God and his righteousness,” lose their proper standing with us. The Lord Jesus Christ has told us to give these the first place as objects to be sought, and followed after. Such counsel is completely contrary to the claims of nature, notwithstanding that the old Adam in us, is very willing to go on with religion of a certain order.

For instance—it seems very proper to any well-ordered mind (speaking after the manner of men) to devote one day out of seven to sacred subjects—provided the other six-sevenths of the week may be unscrupulously appropriated to the gratification of the carnal mind. Is this giving the kingdom of God the first place?

Is it not true that thousands who own the name of Jesus are satisfied with this miserable arrangement?

Beloved,—Let us tell such, plainly, that they have not learned the first lesson in christian walk.

Blessed be the name of the Lord, He will not accept a second place. No, not even for a little while, much less for six days together.

I believe, dear brother, dear sister, that we need to get this lesson thoroughly stamped upon our hearts. Let it be a companion-desire with us, to make all our doings the subjects of submission to God. If in my daily calling, or in the midst of my family and friends, my thoughts cannot revert to the Lord without bringing shame upon my face—then it is evident that “the

kingdom of God and His righteousness” have not their proper place with me.

A faithful christian will seek to do ALL to the glory of God—“whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do.” (1 Cor. x. 31.)

That which we all are slow to learn is, that nothing can be done by us, nay, not even thought of, apart from our God. Each one of us can say with the Psalmist—

“O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compasseth my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hades, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.” (Ps. cxxxix. 1-12.)

I thank God that this is so. I praise the Lord that neither myself nor my ways are out of his sight for a single moment. One would fear to say this, knowing that “in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing,” but that I know also that I am “accepted in the Beloved,” and that “as He is, so are we in this world.” (1 John iv. 17.)

In the consciousness of these declarations of the inspired word being absolute truth, I can rejoice in the omnipresence of God; and in his special presence with me as an adopted child of his grace.

Of course the thought is sometimes trying, yea, if one is consciously walking after the flesh, unendurable. But if the affections are rightly placed—If I am seeking FIRST (before I listen to any desire of my heart) the kingdom of God and His righteousness—then let the remembrance of the presence of the Lord abide with me.

As having a being in the world, in common with the rest of mankind, I was created for the glory of God, and of Christ. All things are made and sustained by Him and for Him. (Heb. ii. 10.)

If then it be my place, as an item in this vast, visible creation, to glorify Him, how much more so as one “born again,” “begotten by the word of God,” “created in righteousness and true holiness,” and waiting to ascend to the House of my Father and God?

Oh, the dreadful unbelief of heart which is manifest in so many christians, in accepting the theory of christianity and rejecting its vitality.

That Prophetic word is fulfilled—the solemn warning respecting the “last days,” the “perilous times.” It was foreknown that among other dreadful characteristics there would be these prominent features—

“Men shall be lovers of their own selves . . . Having a form of godliness, but *denying* the power thereof.” (2 Tim. iii. 2—5.)

“From such,” adds the apostle, “turn away.” They are not fit companions for a child of God.

Beloved,—At any cost, stand apart from evil. Nothing but a complete cut with the world, and all its religious ways, can avail for a true-hearted child.

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” (2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.)

As to the trials which follow upon faithful walk,—We may always count upon the fullest sympathy, and sustaining grace of our Great High Priest. For we are told that,

“In all things it behoved Him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest.” (Heb. ii. 17.)

Then as to the needful things of daily life. “Having food and raiment let us be therewith content.” (1 Tim. vi. 8.)

The question with which to try *self* continually is, am I not craving after something beyond a present sufficiency?

If, on the other hand, we are possessed of more than enough, let us, with heavenly wisdom, use it for the glory of God, instead of laying up store for self, as our natural hearts will prompt us to do. The Lord is looking for manifestations of living faith in us! Do we trust Him?

Let me say, once more, we cannot really act, nor even think, apart from our ever-present Lord. We may foolishly put away this truth from our memory, and reap, as we are sure to do, the bitter consequences. But the solemn, yet joyful fact, remains in its integrity.

“Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” (1 Cor. vi. 19-20.)

Beloved, we are translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son, while the world is still under the dominion of Satan. Let us then walk as those who know this by faith. May the words of Jesus abide in us.

Yours ever,

Looking for the Lord from heaven,

THE EDITOR.

THE JOY OF DELIVERANCE.

Oh, joy extatic from that rescued host
Of feeble Israelites, on Red Sea shore;
So lately press’d by fiercest foes behind,
And in their front the wide and pathless sea!
But, dangers past, they sing, in triumph, loud!
Thus joys the sinner from pursuing conscience sav’d,
And from the deep Red Sea of wrath to come.

THE LAME MAN AT THE BEAUTIFUL GATE.

[COMMUNICATED.]

“Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. And a certain man lame from his mother’s womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us: and he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping, and praising God.” (Acts iii. 1—8.)

In the healing of the Lame Man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, is presented, I think, the Grace of God coming to the Jewish people, and lifting them up, from the condition in which they were by nature—*helpless* and, through their recent rejection of the Messiah—*beggared*. The Lame Man healed may also expressively present the SPIRITUAL standing and condition of those who were on that occasion added to the Church.

I therefore consider that the scene, the hearers, and the discourse in this chapter contrast very strikingly with those of the previous one. In Acts ii. the hearers of the Pentecostal address of Peter are expressly stated to have been “devout men out of every nation under heaven.” These devout ones heard Galilæans speaking to them in their own tongues! It is true, there were undevout hearers present, who are addressed as “men of Judea, and dwellers at Jerusalem,” and whose mockery is first silenced. Peter then addresses the whole audience as “Men of ISRAEL.” Now, in the phrase “Then *they* that gladly RECEIVED his word,” I think the Holy Ghost intimates that those who believed did not comprise ALL who were present. Thence we may fairly infer that this first ingathering of souls to Christ were chiefly (if not wholly) of these “devout men out of every nation under heaven,” who were amazed and filled with wonder at the special sign so peculiarly adapted to impress them.

It is true, the *national* sin of the crucifixion is laid on their consciences, (as well as upon those of the mockers present.) They could not be even strangers in Jerusalem without knowing what had come to pass there in those days, Luke xxiv. 20. But most of them, I believe, were not present in Jerusalem at the time of the crucifixion, and therefore not PERSONALLY IMPLICATED in that crime. Their sin consisted in not *indignantly repudiating* the act of the Jerusalem Jews and their rulers. Is it credible that those whom the Holy Ghost styles “devout” were the very same who cried “Crucify him”? What can devout mean, except spiritual? If spiritual, how? except by water and the Spirit? (John iii. 5.)

Therefore, I have no doubt but that, as the Lord, during his earthly ministry, gathered such devout ones to Himself as were resident in the land, so this was the first great ingathering of the devout who were resident *out* of the land, but who, being found,

in faithfulness, keeping the feast in the City of the Great King, were the first of the dispersed among the Gentiles to be brought into blessing.

These spiritual children of faithful Abraham were such as had been born again, (or, as the margin reads, "born from above,") of that Spirit whose operations are compared by our Lord to the wind that bloweth where it listeth, with the nature and necessity of which spiritual renewal Nicodemus, as a taught Jew, ought to have been acquainted. Being born again, they "saw" and "entered into the kingdom of God," when the word was preached unto them. (See John iii.) These "devout men, out of every nation under heaven," thus formed the first ingathering of the 'other' sheep not folded by the Good Shepherd before His death, but who, as given to Him by the Father, were on His heart, and of whom He said, "Them also I must bring, that there may be one fold and one Shepherd." The Lord's words are—"OTHER sheep I HAVE." These words, I suggest, must refer to spiritual sheep then in existence as such,—not to such as were, at that present time, in their sins, and consequently (as Gentiles) "children of wrath," and as fleshly Jews, "of their father the Devil." To these latter, the Lord Jesus Christ says emphatically, "YE ARE NOT OF MY SHEEP." This passage is no reference to any "doctrine" of election, as some have supposed, but to their then present spiritual condition.*

Although very many of the unspiritual of the Jewish people were converted to the faith after Pentecost, I believe that these gathered in on the day of Pentecost were from among the "Sheep"—"Israelites indeed," belonging to the Father and given to His Perfect Servant. Continuing to follow that other shepherd, Moses, they were not then, when the Lord was speaking, of 'that' fold. They had not heard His voice, and could not follow.

"Ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep [true spiritual Israelites] hear my voice [having been born again through the Written Word, they necessarily received the Incarnate Word;] and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all." (John x. 26—29.)

As born again from above (John iii.), of the Father's will, through the Word of truth (James i.) and the operation of the Spirit, they were the Father's; "Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me." "All Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine." As "DEVOUT MEN," these foreign Jews were the Father's, and as given to Jesus, and known by Him, He thus, at Pentecost, converts, or turns them to right notions of Himself—(this was the repentance that He, Prince and Saviour, was exalted to give),—and gathers them into the One Body.

* I am not urging that the Members of the Body gathered from among the Gentiles were not in the Lord's mind when He spoke of the "other sheep." We are indeed His sheep, inasmuch as the very highest relationship of the Church must include all lower and lesser ties. What I see is, that Shepherd is a Jewish, prophetic term, and had a primary reference to God's earthly people.

O Caiaphas! thy word prophetic, quickly was fulfilled, indeed!—it was "expedient," truly, that that lowly One "should suffer," not only that that "nation perish not," but that, as the exalted Great Shepherd of the Sheep, "He should gather into one all the CHILDREN of God that were SCATTERED abroad." (See John xi. 49.)

This class of devout Jews and devout proselytes is to be noticed throughout the Acts, and wherever the Apostles went, the word was carried to the Jews first, not only from the principle of precedence to the Jew, but to test them, as the fan in Christ's hand, detecting the chaff, and that, at the same time, the wheat might be garnered, the true sheep folded, the "scattered children of God gathered" into the One Body—a prolongation of Pentecostal work.

But in this third chapter of the Acts, we see the Grace of God coming forth, and lifting the fleshly Jew into blessing, he being at the time really as helpless and hopeless, spiritually, as the Gentile. Those of the people of the Jews who were not already spiritually renewed, were as really as the Gentiles, by nature and from birth, *lame* from the womb, like this cripple; "born in sin and shapen in iniquity." The Jew was also dispensationally reduced to *beggary*, and blessed were they who were led to ask alms of the Lord Jesus Christ through his servants.

From a human point of view, by their rejection of the Messiah they had lost all; from the divine point of view, Christ had "become the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth." The Temple was still standing, with all its arrangements; the morning and evening lamb were still sacrificed; but in reality it had all come to an end. The shadows were valueless because the substance had arrived. Jerusalem had ceased to be the place only where men ought to worship. The place of worship had then been transferred to the heavens, and to that higher and holier place there was but one door of entrance—a *Beautiful Gate*, in truth—The LORD JESUS CHRIST, the Door, the Rent Veil, than through Whom no man cometh unto the Father. Oh, the delight of entering the Father's House through that Beautiful Gate!

Very near to God, even close to the Beautiful Gate, (wide open to receive them,) were the people of the Jews at this time; but, little as they thought it, they were really outside, lame, and dispossessed of all earthly rights and pre-eminence, at least for the time.

[It is not a little remarkable, that, in the beginning of Paul's ministry, as well as Peter's, the taking up of the Gentile by Grace should have been shown forth in much the same way. I refer to the healing of the cripple at Lystra, a man "impotent in his feet, who never had walked." Both cases show the desperate condition of Jew and Gentile, alike, utterly beyond creature help.]

But what did Grace give the Jew? Not restoration to the earthly national preferential position over the Gentile which they had possessed by birth and promise. The return of their rejected King could alone bring *that*; the place of special blessing, as a

place, must ever be where He visibly is. Hence the thought of there being a visible kingdom of God now on earth, into which the children of believers can be baptized, (!) is, I judge, unscriptural, and therefore baseless. Take the simple term; a kingdom can only consist in the visible presence of both king and subjects. The subjects alone cannot constitute a kingdom, nor the king alone. When Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews, was on the earth He could say, "The kingdom of God is within [or among] you." The king was there, and his subjects were there, and consequently the kingdom. The conventional calling of Jesus "Our Lord" cannot make professing Christendom into His kingdom. The unregenerate are in the kingdom of Satan. A special feature of the "kingdom" is that the angels will be sent to gather out the tares first; (Matt. xiii) the special feature of this dispensation is the Lord's coming to gather out the Church first. Two kingdoms cannot co-exist at the same time in the same place. Believers being "not of the world," but "risen with Christ," and "made sit together in Him" know Him as ruling in their hearts, and the present characteristics of the kingdom of God—"righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Rom. xiv. 17.) I judge, therefore, there is no kingdom now, as a visible thing.

The Jews ought to have welcomed their king, but as they persisted that they would "not have this man to reign over them," He took His departure into a far country to receive for Himself a kingdom, and to return, and establish it. Until He returns, personally, in power and great glory, the earthly hopes and promises pertaining to the kingdom are set aside. Grace did not then restore the kingdom to Israel.

Hence Peter says, "Silver and gold have I none." In Abraham they had possessed both; by Joshua they had received the land flowing with milk and honey; by David deliverance, and by Solomon glory. But the Lord Jesus Christ sends not to his subjects on earth the lost earthly thing, but remission of sins and eternal salvation. Though the Holy Ghost speaks of Jesus as raised up and sent to bless them, it was "by turning every one of you from your iniquities," and giving with this, entrance by faith into the holy place not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, whither Jesus, their forerunner, had gone, to appear in the presence of God for them. This was presented in the recently lame man entering with Peter and John into the Temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. Thus did Grace give to believing Jews joy in God, entrance to the place of worship and blessing, removing entirely inherited hindrances and disabilities through sin.

This interpretation—that God is dealing in these two chapters, first with the spiritual Jew, and then with the Jew as he was by nature, is confirmed by a general comparison of the discourses delivered to them. And, secondly, by the numbers respectively brought in. *Three* is generally regarded as a Divine number, the Godhead comprising Three persons; so we see the number of those gathered in on Pentecost, who were already on Divine ground, was Three Thousand. *Five*, as we saw in considering the feed-

ing of the Five Thousand, where Man as man is brought under the preaching of the Gospel, is a Human number, Man being a *five*-sensed creature; agreeing with this, the number added to the Church on the second occasion was Five Thousand. J.E.

NOTE.

Does not our Lord, in the following passages, indicate the same two classes of Israelites—true sheep gathering to Himself, lost sheep after whom He goes?—the first, born from above (John iii.), and the second, receiving life direct from Himself. In these Scriptures, and the interpretation above presented, I simply see the previous Divine action on the human soul (under the Law, Psalms, and prophets) interweaving with the first introduction of Grace and Truth. But let the reader prove this for himself.

"My Father worketh hitherto and I work. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will. . . . That all should honour the Son even as they honour the Father. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life. As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." (John v.)

"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out; for I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of him who sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day." (John vi. 37—40)

"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." (John vi. 44, 45.)

CHRISTIAN EASE-ALL and CHRISTIAN ACTIVE-FAITH.

A DIALOGUE.

CHR. EASE-ALL.—It seems to me, Christian Active-Faith, that you are over zealous. Every man to his own calling. I have my responsibilities in my business and in my family, and I think matters would go queerly with me if I gave much time to what you call "labours of love."

CHR. ACTIVE-FAITH.—That is to say—you have got your own purposes to serve—you consider you have a right to do the best you can for yourself and family—you desire to obtain as much ease and comfort for yourself as you possibly can, and finally, when this world cannot be indulged in any longer, you expect to go to heaven.

CHR. EASE-ALL.—I confess the way you sum up my feelings seems rather harsh. Yet, in the main, I suppose what you say is pretty near the truth. It is but natural to care for one's own, and then as to the final result, you know that attainment to heaven does not depend upon our doings, but upon faith in Jesus Christ.

CHR. ACTIVE-FAITH.—I am glad to find you are

clear as to the way of Salvation. It is pleasant to hear you mention the name of the only Saviour of sinners. Yet I am constrained to tell you, that you are an enemy of the Cross of Christ.

CHR. EASE-ALL.—That is not true—for I really do believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

CHR. ACTIVE-FAITH.—I do not doubt your belief. But for all that, I tell you, you are an enemy of the Cross of Christ.

CHR. EASE-ALL.—Why, what do you mean? How can a man who is saved through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, be yet an enemy to his Cross.

CHR. ACTIVE-FAITH.—It does seem marvellous indeed—yet such is the fact. Turn to the Epistle of the Philippians, (iii. 18, 19.) “Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ; whose end, destruction, whose god is their belly, and who glory in their shame, who mind earthly things.”

CHR. EASE-ALL.—Surely you do not mean to apply that Scripture to me. I have always understood the Apostle to be speaking of unbelievers.

CHR. ACTIVE-FAITH.—Nay, it is of precisely the class of Christians of whom you confess yourself one. The Apostle did *not* weep when UNBELIEVERS made a god of their belly, nor because the mind of such was taken up with earthly things. Nothing better can be expected of the unconverted.

CHR. EASE-ALL.—But it says, “Their end is destruction.” Now I have heard you insist, in the language of Scripture that, “He that believeth hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.”

CHR. ACTIVE-FAITH.—That is true indeed; and the passage I have quoted from “Philippians,” is true also. While we are yet in these mortal bodies, there is still capability of feeling the power of destruction. Thus the saints at Corinth were commanded with respect to the incestuous fornicator found in their midst—“To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the Spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” (1 Cor. v. 5.)

CHR. EASE-ALL.—I do not understand that.

CHR. ACTIVE-FAITH.—You would understand it if you were spiritually-minded.

CHR. EASE-ALL.—What is the meaning of “*The destruction of the flesh?*”

CHR. ACTIVE-FAITH.—The flesh is a principle in us, of the corrupt Adam Nature, which is always prone to evil. In the 8th chap. of the Epistle to the Romans, it is called “*The carnal mind, enmity against God.*”

CHR. EASE-ALL.—It seems to me that there also the Apostle speaks of those who are not in the faith.

CHR. ACTIVE-FAITH.—Indeed you make a great mistake. Paul, one of the most devoted servants of our Lord, recognises this principle as existent in himself. “I know that in me (that is, *in my flesh*) dwelleth no good thing. (Rom. vii. 18.)

CHR. EASE-ALL.—And does not the rest of the passage show, that the writer thereof, and conse-

quently we also, are unable to overcome that principle of evil in us?

CHR. ACTIVE-FAITH.—No. At the end of the chapter deliverance is found in Jesus Christ. The whole passage shows that, while the man, who has spiritual desires, is contending with his fleshly or carnal nature, *in his own strength*; he experiences constant failure, and cries out, “O wretched man that I am who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” As soon however, as he reverts to his standing in Christ Jesus, he finds instant deliverance, and gives thanks to God.

CHR. EASE-ALL.—Still, such an one is evidently liable to incessant warfare. And therefore it seems to me we must after all be content to go on as morally as we can, attending to our religious duties, and hope for the best.

CHR. ACTIVE-FAITH.—The answer to that, from Scripture is, “Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” (1 Cor. vi. 19-20.) To live a life of “*Do the best you can for yourself*,” is a constant appropriation of that which is not your own. It is, in fact, to rob God.

C. E.—That is plain speaking—And I give you credit for putting your thoughts in an unmistakable way.

C. A.—I speak the truth in love. And the subject is too solemnly important to admit of my being less emphatic. In the language of the Apostle. I tell you of these things, “*even weeping.*”

C. E.—Well, I must yet think the passage you referred to in “Philippians,” is for the unconverted.

C. A.—But I can show you by another Scripture you are mistaken. In epistle to Titus I read as follows, “One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, “The Cretans are all liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. This witness is true. Wherefore *rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith.*” (Chap. i. 12-13.)

C. E.—That certainly seems conclusive as to the possibility of believers exposing themselves to similar severe language to that before quoted. — But now I should like to understand more clearly the force of those words, “Whose end is destruction.” I cannot comprehend how the end of a christian can be destruction, and yet that his soul shall be saved.

C. A.—I will endeavour to explain it to you. Now that you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you have a twofold nature. You have a new nature, after the Spirit of Christ, which desires holiness and conformity to the will of God. You have also the old fleshly nature, or Carnal Mind, which is “*enmity against God*; for it is not subject to the law of God, *neither indeed can be.*” (Rom. viii. 7.)

C. E.—What, then, am I to do with this intractable spirit of evil?

C. A.—Mortify it. That is just the reverse of pampering it. You are called upon continually to say, “No” to the desires of the Carnal Mind. The flesh pleads for you, “*Do let me take it easy.*” But in the energy of the Spirit of Christ, you have to say, “No.”

C. E.—Well, I feel that on this point you are right. But I wish you to return to the question of destruction.

C. A.—That which I have just stated, pertains to the subject. The Carnal or fleshly nature has to be destroyed. As far as retributive justice is concerned, it is judged and destroyed already. Therefore the Scripture says "Our old man [the fleshly nature] is crucified with Christ that the body of sin might be destroyed, [i.e., that sin in us might be destroyed bodily] that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin." (Rom. vi. 6-7.) Thus, God has wrought deliverance for us. Therefore we are called upon to appropriate, by *faith*, the power of it. So it is added, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin." (Rom. vi. 11.)

C. E.—I can understand and agree to it if the subject be active sin.

C. A.—And if the Carnal Mind, which is enmity against God, is permitted to be in activity, what is that but sin?

C. E.—That seems so, indeed.

C. A.—Now, unless you conform yourself to the condition in which God has placed you through the death of Jesus Christ, unless you mortify your fleshly will and desires, and so follow up in detail the great victory of the cross, you will have to learn in another way what destruction is.

C. E.—That is the alternative I want to be enlightened about.

C. A.—I can only indicate this in a spiritual way. We are not under law; therefore the Word of God does not now apportion his dealings after the legal spirit, which accorded a certain penalty in proportion to the transgression.—I shall quote two or three Scriptures and leave you to ponder them. "If ye live *after the flesh* ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit *do mortify the deeds of the body* ye shall live." (Rom. viii. 13.)

C. E.—Is it not the believer and the unconverted in contrast here?

C. A.—No. It is the portion of Christian experience in the body, down here; either practical life, or practical death. I pray you to study the context carefully. Next I refer you to that word which, let me remind you, is addressed to Christians only. "Every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." (1 Cor. iii. 13-15.)

C. E.—I thought this referred only to the work of the ministry.

C. A.—I am convinced it takes up the whole Christian life from the time you realised faith in the Lord Jesus. Let me add to the foregoing, the solemn Word in the 11th chap. of the same epistle—

"If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." (1 Cor. xi. 31-32.)

Lastly, I invite you to consider Our Lord's address to the Church of the Laodiceans and weigh especially the following—

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would that thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous, therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." (Rev. iii. 15-20.)

THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER.

TO BELIEVERS IN THE ESTABLISHMENT.

Beloved,—We have nothing special to remark as to the few sentences which follow the "Creed," except the prayer, "Take not thy Holy Spirit from us." To you that believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, God has already given you assurance that you are "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession." (Eph. i. 13, 14.) The Lord Jesus has purchased you with his own precious blood, and God has put the seal of His Holy Spirit upon the purchase until the purchaser shall visibly take possession. Thus your prayer is one of supererogation.

But how can the unbelievers, with whom you are associated, pray with you? Can the Holy Spirit of God abide with them? He is the *Holy Ghost*, and they hate holiness! "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness," &c. (See 2 Cor. vi. 14—18.)

We have little to say about the "Collect for Peace," except that if *the priest* who utters it be an unbeliever, as is often the case, it is an awful thing for him to say, "We, surely *trusting* in thy defence," &c.

We pass over the third collect, and the prayers on behalf of Royalty. It is right to pray for the Sovereign and all in authority; (see 1 Tim. ii. 2.) Yet we cannot help questioning the value of the *forms* provided, seeing that in former times they have been used with reference to the most profane and licentious, equally with the devout and virtuous.

As to the prayer for the clergy and people—beyond the fact that it concludes with a petition for God's blessing, we think it would be impossible to define what desire is intended to be expressed by it.

The next form, called "a prayer of St. Chrysostom," contains a mis-statement of most serious consequence. God has *not* promised "that when two or three are gathered together in his name, he will grant their requests." What our Lord Jesus Christ has said to his followers is—

"I say *unto you* [speaking to disciples only] that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name [the name of Jesus Christ] there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. xviii. 19, 20.)

All depends upon the two or three being gathered *in faith*, in the name of Jesus, and in the assurance of His presence. To make the passage apply in any way to a miscellaneous congregation of unconverted

as well as converted persons, and to drag it in at the end of "*common supplications*," is a flagrant perversion of truth.

Then as to the quotation which follows (from 2 Cor. xiii.)—How can "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be evermore," with the unbelieving? The words in Scripture are addressed to *believers only*.

This constantly-manifested effort to sweep away the broad distinction, made by God, between the children of wrath, and those who are his own dear children through faith in Jesus Christ, is the awful sin common to Anglicism and Popery.

We turn now to the "Creed of St. Athanasius," repeated on special occasions as part of the Morning Service. It is headed, "*Quicumque Vult*"—being the first phrase of the composition, expressed in Latin. Let us look at this a little in detail.

"Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith. Which faith, except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the Catholic faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; neither confounding the persons, nor dividing the substance."

Beloved,—Who was Saint Athanasius that you should permit his "great swelling words of vanity" (2 Pet. ii. 18) to be imposed upon you? There is no such thing as a catholic faith. How can you keep a catholic faith whole and undefiled? Where is the possibility of defiling faith? The true faith of a christian has brought him into everlasting life. He can neither defile it nor perish everlastingly. But this spurious catholic faith, is defined as, "We worship one God in Trinity." Faith is not worship. True faith leads to worship; but it is not the same thing. Though many may have the true faith, there may be but very little true worship.

The Scriptures say nothing about "worshipping one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity." The prayer of the Lord Jesus in the 17th of John's Gospel, gives the correct thought about Christian worship—

"Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." (1—3.)

The word of Truth teaches all who believe in Jesus to know Him as God, and by knowing Him to apprehend not only the Son but the Father also.

"If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also; and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

"Philip said unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

"Jesus said unto him, Have I been so long with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?" (John xiv. 7—9.)

It is thus we are to apprehend God, as the object of our worship. The Holy Ghost, though indeed very God,

does not present himself to us for worship anywhere in the New Testament. According to the rich grace of God, He has given his Holy Spirit to *INDWELL* believers, during this dispensation. Wonderful to say, He is with us in *FELLOWSHIP*. He teaches us to know God as our Father, and Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as our Lord. "No man calleth Jesus Christ Lord but by the Holy Ghost." By the leading of the Holy Ghost, christians become worshippers of the Father and the Son. Of course, it is a profoundly solemn truth, that we christians have thus God with us always. But we ought to apprehend it and rejoice in it. We are they "which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." (Phil. iii. 3.)

Those who are unregenerate shrink from these thoughts, and, as far as they can, they drag you, beloved brethren, down to their level. Satan endeavours to blind you to the fact that God has made you a living temple. The Father of Lies would have you worship according to the incorrect notions of Athanasius, or any mistaken teacher, rather than according to the leading of the Holy Ghost, who has made the will of God known in the Scriptures, and now indwells the followers of Jesus, that in that blessed name they may "cry, Abba, Father." (Rom. viii. 15.) We do not raise any question as to whether Athanasius were a believer or no. We think he was; but when he put together that string of sentences which you have been content to repeat after him, he was following his own imagination, and not the truth of God.

You ought not to wonder at this. Paul distinctly warned the elders of Ephesus—

"Of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." (Acts xx. 30.)

What ought you to think, beloved, of the man who in this creed tells you that each of the three persons of the Godhead is *INCOMPREHENSIBLE*, and then proceeds to give a definition of what they are?—And then he brings you to this sapient conclusion, that—

"There is one Father, not three Fathers, one Son, not three Sons, one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts."

Are you any the wiser for the intervention of Athanasius? Can you get a true understanding about God in any way but from his own word? The first part of this "*Quicumque Vult*," concludes with

"He therefore that will be saved, must thus think of the Trinity."

Is that true? Are men to be saved by thinking of the Trinity according to the mind of St. Athanasius?

Compare the words of Jesus,

"The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." (John vi. 22—24.)

This is the Gospel of Salvation.

(To be continued, D.V.)

WHAT WILL IT PROFIT?

Men, heart and soul, pursue their darling good,
 Whate'er it be: upheaping this and that,
 Like ants industrious. But now, bethink;
 Although *thy* anthill grow, and wide extend,
 Absorbing all the world, what profit would
 It be to thee, if thou thy soul shalt lose?
 What—but a lasting monument of shame?
 (Like Babel's Tower to those who sought by it
 To reach heaven's gate! Or like the man,
 With barns new-built, expecting years of joy,
 But call'd by God—"Thou Fool!") Then pile not up
 Shame and confusion to thy soul for ever!

The Second Man—(oh, how unlike the first!)
 Unstained kept Himself, and able was
 To save the ruined ones He found in sin.
 Adam, so far from helping, soon became
 The partner in the guilt and shame of Eve.
 As lowly Son of Man, while here on earth,
 Reading the hearts of anxious sinful ones,
 He freely did, and unsolicited,
 Pronounce their sins forgiven. Much rather now—
 The Cross long since endured, sin borne away,
 Ho now exalted Prince and Saviour is,
 Having all power in highest heaven and earth,—
 He to the uttermost can save the lost.

Lift, then, to Jesus Christ the eye of faith,
 And say, "Thou truly art the Son of God;
 "The only Saviour, all-sufficient hope
 "Of those who trust in thee: In thee I trust—
 "In thee exalted now at God's right hand.
 "My Saviour, keep me evermore near thee."
 His eye meets thine—and by his look of grace
 Healing, new life, a righteousness divine,
 On thee are all bestow'd, and, happy thou,
 Thy place henceforth is heaven, as He hath said—
 "And where I am there also ye shall be."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Address Letters for the Editor, care of Printer, 335, Strand, W.C.

"ONE PERPLEXED" says—"May I ask you to reply to the following enquiry in the pages of PRECIOUS TRUTH? It is one which I believe is exercising many dear saints. Is the doctrine put forth in Mr Darby's 'Sufferings,' pages 26 and 36, Scriptural?"

We have not read the book referred to. But if we may judge from the extracts we have seen, it is evident that Mr Darby has been led astray. Mr Dorman, who has made great personal sacrifice, for faithfulness' sake, and whose verdict may therefore be the more readily received, says, respecting J. N. D.'s suggested third class of sufferings:—"These doctrines took their rise, not from any direct Divine revelation containing them at all, though this is the only admissible ground of any doctrine. But this is not even pretended as their basis. They were originated simply to meet an intellectual necessity. . . . But for a prophetic theory and the exegesis of the Psalms, neither in the case of Mr Newton nor Mr Darby, would they [the third class of sufferings] ever have been thought of."

We recommend you to read carefully "The Close of 20 years' Association with J. N. D.," and we think you will have no difficulty in deciding which of the party at variance is contending for the truth. It is enough for us, knowing that the New Testament Scriptures contain everything appertaining to Christian doctrine, to feel assured that as we are not taught there anything about a third class of sufferings, we may quietly dismiss all such theories as inventions of the enemy. And this, without going at all into the argument in support of such supposed discoveries, and wholly regardless of the question as to who it is that has introduced them.

J. C. jun., Kensington.—Thanks for your kind letter and the publications you sent us. Our object, however, is to vindicate truth, rather than persons. Those who are at all faithful as

servants must expect persecution. And we must look to have our faults exposed unsparingly. But, in the midst of it all, we can commit ourselves to Him that judgeth righteously. Our Lord himself was both misunderstood and reviled. And He has taught us, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you *falsely* for my name sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven."—Let us, however, be watchful that they cannot speak evil against us truthfully. Mr N.'s doctrines are not all to be commended.

E. H., Farnham.—Why do you wish us to spare the institution called the "Church of England"? Be assured, it is because you yourself have been unfaithful. We gather this from your letter. It is just because we have the pilgrim-spirit, notwithstanding what you say to the contrary, that we point out the abundant evils of the abovenamed system. You have entirely misunderstood the bearing of our remarks. If the "Church of England" consisted only of unbelievers, we should have nothing to say to it. It is one of the World's Churches; therefore we, as pilgrims passing through the scene, would merely warn those going on with it, to flee to the Lord Jesus, the only refuge from the judgments soon to overtake the world, with all its religious contrivances.—But because there are *fellow-pilgrims* there, we lift up our voice, and warn them of the evil. We tell them they are going on with things which, in the light of Scripture, are manifestly opposed to the will of God and of Christ. We tell them, from God's Word, that "Satan is transformed as an angel of light, and his ministers as ministers of righteousness." We warn them, that the judge is at the door; we entreat them no longer to help the Devil to deceive the hearts of men. And for this we get reproach from Christians. Well, we expect that; it is matter of very small account that we be misjudged. Only may the word pierce home according to Heb. iv. 12. The Lord give you to see, dear sister, that the subtle evils with which Satan has beset the Christian path in these last days are not to be dealt with otherwise than with the severity of God's Word.

W. H. H., Derby.—We are thankful, dear brother, that you have spoken your mind fully and freely, as to what you consider the better way of presenting truth. Your remarks have our careful and prayerful attention. But we still see the need of using the Word unsparingly against all we witness in Christian practice contrary to the will of God. We are not writing for those only who want comfort, but also for those who need reproof. Even an apostle, giving way to the false teaching of his brethren, had to be rebuked to his face. Remember, it is the Word of God which judges everything; our words are quite powerless. All we do, is to seize hold of unfaithfulness, whether in a system or the teaching of an individual, and bring it under the keen edge of the Sword of the Spirit. This we hope to continue, as the Lord may give us grace, till He himself shall come.

"A CATHOLIC."—A brother in the Lord using this signature recommends us to publish a tract devoted to the exposition of "false ecclesiastical principles and practices." We hope to have opportunity to take up the suggestion, if the Lord will. Meantime we suggest that our correspondent use among his friends, "The City of Confusion," a new edition of which is in the press.

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Published for the Proprietor, by—

J. F. BATEMAN, 22, Paternoster-row, entrance in Ivy-lane.
 West End—JOB CAUDWELL, 335, Strand, London, W.C.
 City Agents—ARTHUR HALL, 25, Paternoster-row, London, E.C.
 Smart & Allen, 2, Londonhouse-yard, Paternoster Row.

JOHN EVANS, Printer, 335A, Strand, London, W.C.

PRECIOUS TRUTH.

“WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?”—(Rom. iv. 3.)

London: — J. F. BATEMAN, 22, Paternoster Row, entrance in Ivy Lane.

No. 24.]

MARCH 1, 1867.

[One Halfpenny.]

CHILD OF GOD.

BELOVED.—Once again I desire to speak to you of “the love of God.” How marvellous that this is a tasteless subject to any of Adam’s erring children! But, oh, how sad to think it should ever be a slighted theme with those who know God through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord! Yet, alas! there are but few, if any, who can say they *abide* in His love!

I am not raising a question of any true Christian’s confidence in the existence of that love. One cannot believe in the Lord Jesus Christ without recognising the love of God in the gift of his dear Son. But in that unspeakable gift, our God has manifested his love as taking in the range of the whole world.

“God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

This is, of course, the first lesson of divine love received by you, my brother, my sister. It forms, indeed, the basis of every manifestation of God’s love towards us. And, doubtless, the feeling of the regenerate heart is correct in considering every blessing comprised in the gift of Jesus. Yet our Father has been pleased to make known his love to us in many ways. We had no sooner learnt His love in salvation by the sacrifice of His only-begotten Son, than we found the extent of His love for us was not to stop short of the adoption to sonship.

“Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God!” (1 John iii. 1.)

Oh, what amazing truth is here! Alas, how little cherished by those to whom it is declared!

Yes, beloved, this is the character of the Father’s love to us. He calls us his sons; he declares that this relationship to himself is now actually ours.

“Beloved, *now* are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” (1 John iii. 2.)

Is it a light matter, this special manifestation of divine love, to you, to me? Is it only an accepted theory?—a doctrine?

Nay, beloved, we know it is actual fact!

Well what is the consequence of holding this revealed love as a living reality?

I answer—It fills me with hope; not a vague, indefinite hope, but a bright, burning expectancy!

And what is *the* hope, *my* hope, *the true hope* of every believer who understands the “exceeding great and precious promises” given to all who now believe in Jesus?

“The hope,” “the expectancy,” is, That “He may appear, and that we may be like him,” as we shall be when we see him as he is! Yes; this is the glowing desire of my heart—*To “see Him as he is.”*

In measure, I can “joy [rejoice] in God” now, for He loves me. And it is “because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us,” that “*the hope*” maketh not ashamed. (Rom. v. 5.) It is a confident hope, not one to be ashamed of. I am *sure* my hope will not be disappointed! How can I be sure of this? Because the Holy Ghost given to us is the earnest, or pledge and proof, by which our God has certified to us, that all his promises, in Jesus Christ, are yea and Amen. (See 2 Cor i. 20-22.)

When, of old, God was pleased to make promise to Abraham—to show the *immutability* of his counsel—he confirmed it by an oath, and, “because he could swear by no greater, he swore by Himself, saying, *Surely* blessing, I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.” (See Heb. vi. 17, xiii. 14.)

The record of that Scripture is given for our encouragement. The promises given to us are fully certified in the same way—the bare promises and the *Surely* added—“that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.”

But beyond this, Our Father has given to all his adopted children, (to all who trust in Jesus during these days of the world’s rejection of Him)—the *Seal* of His Holy Spirit!

And this holy certification of our sonship, is not only a seal, but an anointing; not only a most comforting and blessed reality. but a living and active witness.

“As many as are *led* by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

“We have received the spirit of adoption, *whereby* we cry, Abba, Father.

“The Spirit itself *beareth witness* with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” (Rom. viii. 14-16.)

“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” (Rom. viii. 26.)

Jesus said unto his disciples—

“When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he will show you things to come.” (John xvi. 13.)

“Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us!”

He *abideth* with us—the Holy One, the Spirit of our

God, the Comforter! The seal of our Father's love; and the active manifestation thereof! "The love of God shed abroad in our hearts!"

Oh, may you and I, beloved, listen *intently* and always, to the leading of that indwelling and abiding Witness of the love of our Father and of Jesus Christ our Lord. May we suffer nothing to turn us aside from the way in which the Holy Spirit would have us go. He will lead us in the steps of Jesus; He will reveal to us our Saviour and Lord; He will show us of our joint-heirship with Him, who is to inherit all things; He will tell us of the Father and the Father's house; He will show us "things to come!"

May His benign and holy influence spread in the hearts of all who are redeemed and cleansed by the precious blood of Christ! Finally, may all the children of God be filled with the "one hope," so that every believer may be able to say, simple-heartedly, yet fervently—"We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." (Phil. iii. 20, 21.)

As this hope spreads—and it is spreading rapidly—Christians will find their hearts necessarily estranged from the world and its ways. The true hope is certain to produce immediate effects.—

"Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (1 John. iii. 3.)

Just as my *hope*, of being changed into the likeness of Christ, is fervent, will my desire be strong and my effort earnest, now (through God's grace) to be conformed to His mind as revealed in the Scriptures. The Holy Ghost *will take thence*, of Jesus, the living Truth; and show unto me.

And should I not long to behold him? Yes, let all I learn from His Word increase my desire. This is its proper effect—to fix my affections on Him. He is my Lord. "He loved me and gave himself for me."

I am learning the lesson of the love of God—of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Yet even now, I look on to the end—and know that I shall know it fully in glory.

But, thanks be to God, for the knowledge of His love which I possess already. Blessed be His name for all the evidences thereof. However much I may wonder in my soul, as I write, that it should be so—yet I have the evidence—and I can say it joyfully and quietly—"God loves me."

And while I wait, what is to be the effect of that wondrous love? I know there ought to be one prominent result; namely, an earnest manifestation of love toward all who are His.

"Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." (1 John. iv. 11.)

Divine love—perfect love—is our standard, and however we fail to come up to the measure, let us at least cherish the desire of attaining to it.

"He that saith he abideth in him [Jesus Christ] ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." (1 John. ii. 6.)

Oh, what a walk to have set before us poor,

foolish, feeble "sinners saved by grace!" Yet there it is; God has set it before us, and he knows us thoroughly. Ah! we want to be reminded more frequently that we were poor sinners of the Gentiles; "children of wrath, even as others," "aliens," "strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world!" (Eph. ii. 3 and 12.)

Such, beloved, was my condition, and yours.

If this were oftener in our minds, there would be less need for frequent use of the exhortation at the end of Eph. iv.

"Grieve *not* the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, *tenderhearted*, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

A word, in conclusion, on the theme of our "one hope." The Holy Ghost, the Comforter, leads our hearts continually to the happy expectancy of the coming of our Lord—

"The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come."

Beloved,—Do you say, "Come"?

Our Lord puts the same "Surely" to his promise to come *quickly*, which God was pleased to add as an oath to the promise he gave to Abraham!

Yes, that is His word—

"Surely I come quickly!"

"Amen. Even so, Come, Lord Jesus." (Rev. xxii. 20.)

Yours ever, in the mysterious and perfect Unity of the One Body.

Ed. P. T.

LINES ON AN INFANT DAUGHTER'S DEATH.

I saw my darling child at gray of morn;
Restless with pain, and toss'd, and trouble-torn.

* * * * *

I knelt; my God I pray'd to take her soon;
Arose,—went forth,—return'd,—and found her gone!

This surely is but sleep! the ear bend low!
Can this be breathless death?—'Tis even so.

We know Thou takest, Lord, what we most prize,
That we from earth may turn to heav'n our eyes.

Our God, we yield to Thee whom Thou hast given;
And ours She still will be though now in Heaven.

* * * * *

O Lord, our hope's in Thee, (and hope we have:)
Thou hast the key of Death and of the Grave.

"Come, Jesus, come," the Spirit saith and Bride;
"Come, Jesus, come;" that death no more divide.

Oh, joy, to see Thee then (for me once dead),
And—fondly clasping me—the child that's fled.

* * * * *

Yes, then, in beauteous shape, radiant with light:
Melodious, happy voice—eyes glancing bright.

O Lord, who willeth not the loss of one:
We pray, those left behind may follow on.

Deliv'r'er only Thou; the eye we raise;
And wait till Thou dost save, and fill with praise.

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST—
IN THE SPHERE OF BROTHERHOOD.
[COMMUNICATED.]

"I will declare Thy Name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in Him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me." (Heb. ii. 12-13.)

These passages from the Old Testament, quoted into the Epistle to the Hebrews, are deeply interesting, because they show that the Eternal Word (to whom be glory for ever and ever) looked forward with satisfaction and joy to the period of His incarnation and sojourn (in humility) among the sons of men! (Amazing grace!) Being quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures, we must look for their primary fulfilment (even in resurrection-life) in association with Jewish truth.

The first is from the Psalms—

"I WILL DECLARE THY NAME UNTO MY BRETHREN: IN THE MIDST OF THE CONGREGATION WILL I PRAISE THEE. (xxii. 22.)

Having taken on Him [hold of] the seed of Abraham (to whose children according to the flesh the epistle is written,) the Eternal Word, by the Spirit, is heard, in this passage, rejoicing in anticipation of *brotherhood* with the children of Israel, of whom He was, with whom He went up to Jerusalem to worship and, while in private life, doubtless, in the synagogue listened to the Law, the Psalms, and Prophets read every sabbath day. Though His own received Him not, and He had to lament that a prophet was not without honour save in his own country and among his own kindred, yet, as perfect Man, the Lord Jesus Christ had all the highest and tenderest natural affection for His brethren according to the flesh, evidenced, so especially, when, like mourning Jeremiah, He wept over their coming calamities.

When we think of the Nazarenes wondering at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth, and of the Lord Jesus unfolding the love of God to fleshly Nicodemus, and preaching in the towns and villages of Israel, how vividly we realize fulfilment of the words—

"I will declare thy Name unto my brethren."

And when, again, we think of our Lowly Jesus (during the period embraced between His twelfth and His thirtieth year,—a subject one and faultless) travelling up to Jerusalem, with those that went, singing the songs of Zion, going and returning (as was the custom) as well as when arrived at the Father's House, how equally interesting is the fulfilment of the other part of the word quoted in the Hebrews:

"In the midst of the church [or congregation, assembly] will I sing praise unto Thee."

But that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and flesh was, by the ministry of John the Baptist, *declared* a failure, and, by the non-acceptance of his testimony, *proved* to be a failure. Hence was it demonstrated (though not so declared, while as yet man was under

trial on the ground of works) that the objects of God's grace *must* be born again (John iii.) and so be brought into a *kindred* nearness to Jesus in a higher respect than that of the flesh. Such Israelites showed their spiritual relationship to the Lord Jesus, by hearing the word of God at His lips, and sincerely carrying it out. As a condemned thing, the lower Abrahamic brotherhood was practically dropped on our Lord's entrance upon His public ministry.

"Who is my mother, or my brethren? And he looked round on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother and my sister, and mother." Mark iii. 33.

These "were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." In John xvii. the Lord Jesus, referring to these spiritual brethren, says:

"I have manifested thy Name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word."

On that same night, the Lord sang a hymn or psalm (probably not the only time) with these representative ones of the spiritual brotherhood, thus fulfilling this word in a second sense.

But its chief fulfilment began when the Lord Jesus arose from the dead, lingered forty days about the disciples, "speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God," and will be continued when He comes again to earth. Taken with the context, this passage will be seen to be, primarily, a *resurrection* word—

"For dogs have compassed me:
The assembly of the wicked have enclosed me.
They pierced my hands and my feet:
I may tell all my bones:
They look and stare upon me.
They part my garments among them,
And cast lots upon my vesture.
But be not Thou far from me, O Lord:
O my strength, haste Thee to help me.
Deliver my soul from the sword;
My darling from the power of the dog.
Save me from the lion's mouth:
For Thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.
I will declare Thy Name unto my brethren;
In the midst of the congregation will I sing praise unto Thee."

"I WILL PUT MY TRUST IN HIM."

This is quoted from Psalm xviii. 2, and, like the preceding, may be seen to have a triple bearing. First, we see the Lord Jesus Christ walking in full, continual confidence in God. Oh, the amazing grace! the completeness of the laying aside of His glory, in thus entering into the sphere of dependence and receiving all at the Father's hands! "He humbled Himself," not only thus in His everyday walk, but "to death, even the death of the cross!" That death of concentrated ignominy—for you, for me—because it was the will of God. May we ever have the deepest reverence when considering what the Holy Ghost has given to us on this sacred subject, and speak of it with bated breath.

Trust implies the confidence of dependence, and will be brightest when exercised under circumstances

the most overwhelmingly adverse to the senses. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." This was the quality of the Saviour's faith, even when He cried "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

I apprehend that the Lord Jesus laid down His life when He gave Himself (as He did) into the hands of sinful men, a really passive victim, voluntarily as powerless as a sheep, so that He would not have lifted a finger to save His own life. Was this not, morally speaking, "laying it down"? Until His hour had come His enemies could not touch Him: they tried, but a word, a look, a movement of His will, and their efforts were paralysed. But all this was changed at the Cross. Think of those words—

"This is *your hour* and the *power of darkness*."

But when Satan had tried His utmost, he found no possibility of shaking His faith.

"The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me."

And so, having borne all, and finished all, he cried with the loud voice of conquest, and commended His spirit to the Father, giving up the ghost.

When thus laying down His life, the Lord Jesus trusted that God would not leave His soul in hades, neither suffer His flesh to see corruption. Thus we see the Saviour's *trust in God*—perfect in walk, in suffering, and in death.

In Heb. v. 7, 8, we see how He who could have delivered Himself (in a personal sense), yet cast Himself on the Father—

"Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered."

Let us look at the context, in the 18th Psalm, that our impression may be deepened of the *reality* of our Lord's surrender (Son of God, though He was) into the hands of sinful men, in order that we may see His perfect faith in God who was with Him, and was able to deliver His "darling from the power of the dog."

"I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength.
The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer;
My God, my strength, in whom I will trust;
My buckler, and the horn of my salvation; my high tower.
I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised;
So shall I be saved from mine enemies.
The sorrows of death compassed me,
And the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. (!)
The sorrows of hades compassed me about:
The snares of death prevented [rose before] me.
In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God:
He heard my voice out of His temple, and my cry came before Him, into His ears.
Then the earth shook and trembled." (&c.)

Thus, in the light of the context, I think, in a most emphatic sense, this second member of the interesting triplet in Hebrews ii. is also a *resurrection* word.

"BEHOLD, I AND THE CHILDREN WHICH THE LORD HATH GIVEN ME."—(Isa. viii. 18.)

The ground of creation, as such, justifies the term "children" in reference to the creature, but only so long as he keeps his first estate, (or when, by Divine grace, he regains it). Heathen poets may sing, in their spiritual darkness,

"For we His offspring are;"

But let not the unregenerate appropriate (as they sometimes will do) the expressions of God's Fatherhood, and lull their consciences to false expectations that a *father* would not doom them to everlasting burnings. The *Gentiles* are never, in the Word of God, treated on the ground of children; but as "aliens." Children, indeed—"of wrath." But respecting the Jew, God said:

"I have nourished and brought up CHILDREN."

Adam is called "son of God," as being made in "the image of God;" but a wilful unbeliever can no more claim this honour now, than the fallen angels, though they were once numbered among the "sons of God, shouting for joy." Let the unconverted know assuredly that his relation towards God is that of *creature*—creature in sin. (Dreadful fact!)

But the "children" in the above passage does not include even fleshly *Israel*, but only the spiritual, the born-again ones, who were the Father's, and were given, like Laban's sheep, to his Holy Servant Jesus. That this third part of the passage in the Hebrews has a fulfilment in regard to *these* "children," is sufficiently evident from this passage—

"While I was with them in the world I *kept* them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost."

Spiritual ones in Israel will again, in the day to come, be taken up as the "children," in the times of the sealing of the 144,000, I judge.

When we think of "all Israel saved" in that day, after the Lord Jesus Christ has come in power, what a glorious fulfilment of the word—

"Behold, I and the children which God hath given me."

And how is this apprehension deepened, by the thought of the Lord, at the First Resurrection, raising from the dead, and presenting with Himself before God, the multitude of saints who passed away before the call of the Church! How emphatic and appropriate, in resurrection-light, will be the Jewish title of "Everlasting Father" with reference to the Lord Jesus, as the one who will raise them from the dead!

It will be seen that I have made no reference to the bearing of these passages upon the times and circumstances of the Church. But as it is our privilege to know the Lord in our midst when gathered in His name (Matt. xviii.), and to know ourselves, when worshipping by faith, in the holiest of all (Heb. x. 19) all the preciousness of these passages in Heb. ii. may well be easily laid hold of by us spiritually.

STRICKEN FOR OUR TRANSGRESSIONS.

(TO THE UNCONVERTED.)

Oh, reader, say not thou—"Such splendid means
 "Of justifying man, were very well
 "For sinners great; for me 'tis needed not."
 Evil is evil still, in sight of God,
 Whether, in sight of man, 'tis great or small.
 In view of Him with whom thou hast to do
 Nothing is great, nor anything is small.
 In water-drop he can create a world:
 Or hang and roll one in a firmament.
 Man's finite mind doth rest on strange distinctions,
 Finding a balm for conscience in the sins
 Of others being greater! Stop! who says they are?
 Art thou thy judge? Have others had the means
 Of knowledge and of good which thou hast had?
 Oh, let the sentence of the Judge, ere yet
 He takes his awful seat, impress thee deep—
 "All, *all* have sinn'd, and *all* have come of glory."
 Then thou, and I, by *nature*, have no hope.

Thou mayst have heard—"Ye must be born again!"
 Satan insinuated (watchful foe)—
 "You see, 'tis something God alone can do."
 Notice—These words were spoke to Pharisee,
 Trusting his works and lineage as ground
 Of hope and expectation from the Lord.
 If thou, like him, art resting on these things
 This word's for thee—"Ye must be born again."
 That this new life the sinner Jew might have,
 To him the Lord then spoke (and speaks to thee)
 Of faith in Him, as Son of God and Man,
 As *lifted up*, like serpent made of brass,
 That whose looks to Him might perish not.
 Oh, blessed, gracious word, fulfilled twice:
 For Him, Faith first sees lifted on the Cross,
 Then, rais'd to Heav'n, with all things 'neath His feet.

All hindrance is on *thy side*; none on God's.
 Hath Satan (subtlest of the subtle, bad)
 Whisper'd, that—"If ordain'd thou art to life
 Eternal, well: if not, then nought avails."?
 In hell, no doom'd soul able will be to say
 "I never could believe and have eternal life."
 Thou canst believe thy father, mother, friend:
 Oh, then, believe what God and Christ have said,
 And HOLY SPIRIT permanently writ:
 That all the world before God guilty is;
 And consequently thou: but having laid
 Sin's heavy load on Jesus Christ, God can
 Be just, and yet the sinner justify.
 As proof—Behold, the Lamb of God on high!
 Sin borne away, the Saviour lives again.
 Whom thus the Judge Himself shall justify,
 Who shall condemn? No one; in heav'n, or earth, or hall.

PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE EXAMINED

WHICH SEEM TO GIVE JUDICIAL POWER TO THE CHURCH.

I.

"Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault . . . if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." (Matt. xviii. 16-17.)

The word "church" means "assembly, congregation of called-out ones," and is applied in the Word to assemblies Jewish, Christian, and Gentile. The character of the assembly must, therefore, be determined by the context. Some have thought the "congregation" in the above text must be the synagogue—a word which also means "assembly". We

think, however, the Lord refers in this passage to the "twos or threes" of verse 20 in the same chapter, who were gathering, or about to gather, in Christ's name. We receive it, therefore, as a broad command, having force in that day, in this day, and in the day to come.

This passage cannot be taken as giving any judicial power to assemblies, for the following reasons—

1. The Church is called upon to judge, but the sentence, which is fixed by the Lord himself, is to be executed by the aggrieved complainant: "Let him be unto *thee* as a heathen man," &c. Other members of the church might so treat the offender, but it would be in their *individual* capacity, as before the Master. There is not a word here to justify *corporate* action. This position is strengthened by considering

2. What was the nature of the punishment which was to be inflicted? To this we answer—*Avoidance in private life*. This is proved thus—

"Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them." (Acts. xi. 3.) "Before that certain came from James, he [Peter] did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself fearing them, which were of the circumcision." (Gal. ii. 12.)

Peter thus treated his Gentile brethren in a way which only justified by the grossest contumacy.

3. The passage merely means: Not to invite to *my* table and not to go to *his*. It is a grievous mis-interpretation to take it as giving power to put from the *Lord's* table! If an assembly exerts power over the table, it becomes practically *their* table. For the church to put from the Lord's Table an obstinate offender, who will not, in the matter of a private grievance, bow to their judgment, is really to remove him from the solemn place of *self-judgment*. 1 Cor. xi.

4. If it be said that being treated as a heathen man and a publican meant being put out of the synagogue, we reply that we know of no Scripture to justify the thought. On the contrary, in Luke xviii. we see a publican in the Temple itself. It does not appear that the Jews considered it defiling to sit in the same building with sinners, and listen to the Scriptures or exhortation; for the sinner-woman had no difficulty in getting into the Pharisee's house to hear Jesus, nor does Simon think of putting her out. Heathen men even, as such, though prohibited from the Temple, seem, from Acts xiii. 42-44, to have been under no such disability with regard to the synogogue. The one was man's house—the other, was God's. I press, therefore, that there is nothing in this passage to justify the claim of power to put away individuals, and how much less the same power to put away whole assemblies?

FAITHFULNESS TO "BRETHREN."

[The following is copied from the opening address of a pamphlet issued by Mr W. SPURGEON, West Street, Sheffield, (to be had of him, price 4d.)

This little book is written in the same spirit of Christian love and meekness as that by Mr Dorman, to which we have previously referred. Though the theme is that of the persistent wilfulness of Mr Darby's party, the wrong-doers are dealt with

in the language of entreaty and forbearance, rather than that of denunciation, notwithstanding the heinousness of the offences pointed out. In fact, as in the case of Mr Dorman, the correspondence quoted by the writer tells its own tale. On one side is seen, in the series of letters, the spirit of bigotry and intolerance, and on the other, the manifestations of grace and gentleness.

"Brethren" are solemnly responsible to weigh well these serious remonstrances, and to remember that—"The Lord will judge his people."]

TO THE SAINTS OF THE VARIOUS ASSEMBLIES IN
FELLOWSHIP WITH MR. J. N. DARBY.

Your practice of excommunicating *Assemblies of Saints* began with Bethesda.* When is it to end? You were led to it not by any Scripture direction or example, but by a circular signed J.N.D. Many in fellowship with you at the time would not join in this course, because they saw it to be contrary to the Lord's will. Failing to obey J.N.D.'s requirements, they were counted unfaithful to the Lord, and were also peremptorily and summarily "cut off." You are solemnly asked—Was this right in the sight of the Lord?

Satan seeks to bring about that which is an abomination to the Lord, "discord among brethren." Thus he mars their testimony, and makes them to hinder, instead of helping one another. He prevents, too, by the same means, that which is so beautifully set forth in Psalm 133. And the "wiles of the devil" are still effective. Saints now—as of old—are corrupted and seduced by his subtleties, and turned from the "simplicity that is in Christ." He can still present himself as an "angel of light," and his servants as "ministers of righteousness." Faithfulness to Christ was the plea urged by J.N.D. to induce brethren to pursue the course he pointed out for them. He was greatly and rightly honoured for the service he had rendered to the Saints, and for his devotedness to Christ. This led to over-confidence, and his direction was followed without testing it by Scripture. All will admit that Peter, the servant and apostle, was as devoted and as much to be honoured as J.N.D. But the Lord had to say to Peter—"Get thee behind me, Satan; thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men." And Paul had to "withstand him to the face," because he "walked not uprightly," and the "truth of the Gospel" was in danger. In those things Peter was to be blamed, though greatly honoured and loved and delighted in for his many excellences, by his Lord and by the saints. Satan could have him, and sift him, and use him. It need not be thought therefore that J.N.D. was out of the reach of Satan. Desiring to mar their peculiar testimony against sectarianism and division, and to lead a multitude astray, would he not seek to turn aside a "chief standard-bearer"? Eighteen years have passed since the course he prescribed was entered upon, my brethren; and the sad fruits of it are around you on every side; and every day you are more and more loudly challenged as to the position of antagonism to the "holy and beloved" saints of God in which you find yourselves. The question is—

*T of a meeting-place of "Brethren" at Bristol.

do you occupy this antagonistic position to your brethren through the "wiles of the devil," or have you been guided into it as you profess, and as probably most of you believe, by the Spirit of God? Do you excommunicate *assemblies of saints* in obedience to any direction of the Word of God, or have you been led to it (unwittingly) by the "commandments of men?"

Many voices have been raised against you of late. Abundant evidence has been offered to show that you maintain a wrong position, which Scripture condemns—that you misjudge your brethren whom, instead of loving, as the Lord enjoins, you practically shun and despise—and that you are governed by "principles" that are opposed both to grace and righteousness, and that are not in accordance with the truth of God. Voices from without have been raised in loving and earnest remonstrance. And now from within, from among yourselves, from those you love and honour, and who have loved and served you in the Lord for thirty years, there arise voices,—voices of solemn warning, of affectionate entreaty, of unflinching and faithful testimony, as to your wrong position and procedure to your brethren, and as to the evil, corrupting, Christ-dishonouring doctrine (like Newton's, but worse), that is in your midst—propounded by J.N.D., and consented to and defended now by some of your chief leaders. Since the letter last in the following series to J.N.D. was written, the pamphlets of W. H. Dorman and P. F. Hall have appeared. A momentous responsibility rests upon you in regard to all that they set forth. How will you treat it? Surely and solemnly, but in a clearer and louder tone, it echoes the Lord's oft-repeated word to you, "Consider your ways!" It is now a question of Christ and of the Cross with you, and not of your brethren only. Surely, beloved brethren, you will not, for *consistency's* sake even, be careless any longer.

THE WORD "DEVOUT."

A dear brother in the Lord has furnished me with his difficulties in receiving the interpretation (put forth in our last) that the foreign Jews gathered into the One Body on the day of Pentecost were really spiritual men. For myself, I have no doubt they were, because they are said by the Holy Ghost to have been—"DEVOUT." Our brother's first difficulties arise from certain expressions in Acts ii.

1. Is it not said—"Whom ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain"?—Truly, but this must be regarded in a *national* and general sense, as Pilate said—"Thine own *nation* and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me." Surely Pilate did not mean that every Jew in the land had laid violent hands on our Lord. It was *national*, inasmuch as individuals in numbers from all classes had engaged in it, and no voice was raised against it, not even the apostles', till endued with power from on high. That "devout men" should have come up to Jerusalem, have heard of Jesus of Nazareth, and what had been done to Him, without perceiving in Him the Messiah, is a crowning proof of the necessity of the descent of the Holy Ghost.

As Peter is addressing more especially the spiritual part of his audience, he alludes to the Divine action in the matter: "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." This has reference to the act of Judas, who said to the chief priests, "What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you?" They had sought how they might take

Him, but could not find how to do so; then Judas appeared before them. This act of the traitor was shown before, both in the Psalms and by our Lord, which is the sense, I judge, of the expression "determinate counsel and foreknowledge," (primarily, in this passage.)

The apostle Peter then says, "Ye have taken;" this was the national part, done under the authority of the nation's representatives, and in acquiescence with the solemn declaration of the nation's high priest that it was needful for the safety of the nation. Having taken Him by the aid of Judas, the Jews then slew the Lord by substitute, as Peter says—

"And by wicked hands have crucified and slain." This is the *Gentile* part. Your applying these words "wicked hands" to the "devout men" in common with the rest of the Jews, is a very natural mistake. A better translation is—"By the hands of sinners," that is, of Pilate and his soldiers. Those whom the Holy Ghost says were "devout," depend upon it, were really so.

2. But, you say, may not "devout" simply express zeal, and be applicable to a zealous heathen, as in Acts xvii. where Paul says to the Athenians, "As I passed by, and beheld your devotions." Here, again, dear brother, is a mis-translation. The margin reads, "The gods that ye worship." A still better rendering is—"And beheld the things connected with your worship," as *ta sabasmata* include shrines, images, altars, &c. Thus you will see the wrongness of the word "devotions."

3. Now let us look at the various places where the word occurs. I find the word "devout" used nine times in the New Testament, and all occur in the writings by Luke; also that this evangelist uses *three* different Greek words thus translated by our one word "devout." It may greatly help us, therefore, to look at the different instances where the Holy Spirit has used the very word in Acts ii. The word here translated "devout" is *Eulabeos*, and occurs three times. (A) "And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him." (B) "There were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven." (C) "And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him." Now, dear brother, if the word "devout," in two of these cases, is applied to spiritual men, ought we not so to regard it in the third? Webster's definition of the English word may well be accepted—"Yielding a solemn and reverential attention to God in religious exercises, particularly in prayer; pious, sincere, solemn."

4. In three other instances the word translated "devout" is *Eusebeos*,—a word equally denoting true spirituality, as will be seen from the following. (A) "There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway." (B) "A devout soldier." (C) "And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight."

5. We now come to the third term translated "devout." It is *Sebomenos*, and is also used in three places. (A) "But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts." (B) "Therefore Paul disputed in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him." (C) "And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few."

This latter word means simply a "proselyte, a worshipper of the true God," but born a heathen. Although I think, in all these three last cases, they were truly spiritual persons, yet it is not needful to my position to contend for it, seeing the word is essentially different from the word used in Acts ii. But I may say, in answer to your special objection—"Would truly spiritual women help to raise persecution?"—first, it does not appear that these devout women ever heard Paul preach; and, secondly, have we not known of "weaker vessels" among the regenerate, being ill-informed, carried into wrong movements by zealous ones of the other sex?

"LO! I AM WITH YOU,"

The following letter has been perused by us with deep interest, as an illustration of the Lord's words, "My strength is made perfect in weakness." The Lord Jesus bless it to your soul, dear reader.

St. —'s-road, Aug. 14, 1866.

MY DEAR BROTHER IN OUR RISEN LORD,—

I was so pleased to have a letter from you. Many, many thanks for it; and now, I, a poor broken pitcher, would look to the Lord for grace to write, as a self-emptied one, to the praise and glory of my God. (2 Cor. iii. 6.)

This day I have been for four years and 10 months always lying on my back, stretched upon a bed of languishing, softly—oh, so softly!—pillowed on my loving Lord's breast. My Gentle Shepherd has taken me by the hand, and made me to lie down in green pastures. He has led me by still waters. Exquisitely tender and loving have been His dealings with me, His weak, sick child. With sweet, unwearied patience and forbearance, He has, in changeless and unchangeable love, borne with me, sweetly upholding and strengthening me, fondly whispering unto me—My child, rest in my love.

Oh! how unsearchable are the riches of grace treasured up in Christ! All ours richly to enjoy. It is the Holy Spirit's blessed office and delight to reveal Jesus—His work and person to our hearts—what He has done for us, and what He is still doing, and is for us now in the presence of God, and also what we are in Him, as accepted in Him—the Beloved—our standing in Him, as "quickened and raised together with Him, and made sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." "Of God are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us Wisdom and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption." Precious beyond measure are these blessed truths when they are known in a practical and experimental way. How sweet to faith is the glorious fact of our oneness with Christ in resurrection life! It was, as I have told you before, the seeing this by the revelation of the Holy Spirit, through the Word, that I, who for years had been in sad bondage and spiritual darkness of soul, was in one moment brought to rest in perfect peace in Jesus. I was black in myself, so black I could not be worse; but oh, glorious discovery, in Christ, in Him, I was fair and comely; and I, dear brother, in the desperate pride and foolish ignorance of my heart, had dared to think that *in myself* I might be otherwise than black! What a sad mistake!

It was with deepfelt joy and humility of heart that I looked off from self—vile, hateful self—adoringly to gaze on the matchless person of my precious Jesus.

Very fondly did He press His wearied wayward child to His heart of love. No word of upbraiding fell on my ears; but deep was my anguish at the thought of those wretched years of unbelief. He has wiped away, oh, so gently, the tears from my eyes, and hushed me to sweetest rest in Him—in his own loving presence. His smile of love is upon me, and he fondly bids me rest in His *unquenchable love*! My dear brother, how inexpressively blessed it is to be basking in the sweet unclouded sunshine of our Heavenly Father's countenance, in Christ, the Son of God's love. It is in *Christ* the Father rests with infinite delight, and complacency, and he would have us, in communion with him, do the same—be occupied only *with Him*; our affections and thoughts centred on *Him*. "He is the chiefest among ten thousand. His mouth is most sweet; yea, He is altogether lovely! This is my Beloved and this is my Friend."

I deeply feel for the beloved children of God in London at the present moment*, and for you, my Brother, beloved in the Lord, and I pray our dear Lord to keep you and them in perfect peace. "Thou wilt keep them in perfect peace whose hearts are stayed on Thee, because they trusted in Thee." "My grace is sufficient for thee," saith the Lord, "for my strength is made perfect in weakness." The Lord, in the riches of His grace, keep us both and all His loved ones closely abiding in *Him*—looking off unto Jesus.

If you see dear Mrs C——, thank her for kindly writing to me. I hope to write to her soon. Please give her my

[* The time referred to was the last distress through Cholera.]

warmest Christian love. Accept the same for yourself and your dear sister and niece.

Your Sister in the changeless love of the Coming One,
MARY L.—

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Address Letters for the Editor, care of Printer, 335, Strand, W.C.

R. R., BREWER STREET.—Many thanks for your communication, and the encouragement contained therein. Respecting Mr. Baxter's Book about Louis Napoleon—We consider the writer totally mistaken. The Antichrist foreshadowed in Scripture is not likely to be found in an European Monarch. Analogy would certainly lead us to look for the rising of the man of Sin in the midst of the Jews, and in their own land. There must first be a gathering back of some of the people, and the erection of a Temple at Jerusalem. We do not think that any prophecy can be found to favour the idea of Antichrist arising as one already possessing power, or apart from the Jewish people. Is it not evident that Antichrist, to be successful, must needs have the apparent surroundings of the true Christ?—We think the book in question is calculated to do much harm. Such attempted explanations of the prophetic Scriptures invariably bring shame upon their authors, and lead men to discredit prophecy altogether, when the predictions of commentators prove fallacious, as they invariably do. The order of truth presented in 2 Thess. ii. shows that "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering unto him," *in the air* (according to 1 Thess. iv. 17) must precede the manifestation of the Man of Sin. It is therefore utterly wrong for Christians to be occupied with earthly signs. The Lord's purposes respecting the Church must be fulfilled, before the accomplishment of prophecy on earth, as to Israel and the nations. At least this is according to the light we have upon the Word of God.

W. B. S.—Your very lengthy communication has been perused by us on two separate occasions, that we might not hastily decide upon our answer. We cannot however accept the views you press upon us. It would entail the necessity of our repeating the contents of papers which have already appeared in "Precious Truth," if we undertook to answer you in detail. The point at issue is capable of being settled very briefly. You think an assembly ought to excommunicate a brother for teaching heretical doctrine. We say that to do so is to assume a power which the Lord has not committed to the Church. You adopt the usual arguments of "the exclusives" in support of your views, and they appear very feasible until they are thoroughly sifted. Then they fail utterly. Christians ought never to submit to any assumption of authority which cannot be established by *direct* appeal to Scripture. This should be accepted as a principle. If the Lord has given power to the assembly to put away a brother for teaching or holding false doctrine, let the passage of Scripture be cited, and we will bow to it.

If however, as we maintain, the Master has retained all power respecting such cases in his own hands, every effort to amalgamate the directions of the Word in 1 Cor. v. with the teaching of Gal. v. must prove worse than futile. Depend upon it, dear brother, the Church has sadly failed in the non-recognition of the *Active* power of our Lord Jesus Christ in the midst of the assemblies. Let us endeavour, in faithfulness and love, to do whatever he has commanded us. But let us be equally careful to refrain from encroaching upon his own sacred prerogatives. You say there is unholiness in the thoughts expressed in our article on "The Brethren." We believe you misapprehend us. Though Christians have not power to execute judgment upon a Brother who may be found teaching heresy, we would none the less maintain the holiness of God's house, and refuse to tolerate evil. If need be, we must withdraw from fellowship with those who defile. It may be a partial, or an entire separation in walk, just as the case may require. There is, however, all the difference between permission to withdraw oneself from a house and power entrusted to us to turn another person out. You are mistaken in supposing we would exclude from "The Table" an unbaptized believer. We have no power to exclude. Scripture does not speak of receiving to, or excluding from the Lord's Table. *Receiving into Christian fellowship* implies more

than communion in "Breaking of Bread." Those in *recognised fellowship* ought to be faithful to the Lord's plain commands. Happily there is no practical difficulty about it. If a little company of Christians are agreed to act in conformity with the words of their Lord, the least that can be expected of anyone wishing to company with them is, that he or she should conform to the *first act of obedience* required in the Christian walk of faith! Yet, if a believer were to thrust himself, *unrecognised* upon such a fellowship at the breaking of bread, and claimed his right to participate, he must act as he will—the responsibility is his. The Lord's Table is pre-eminently the place of *self-judgment*, in contra-distinction to the thought of recrimination and exclusion. If the brother will not judge himself, the Lord will judge him. 1 Cor. xi. 31-32.

W. P.—Accept our sincere thanks for your encouraging communication. May the Lord bless and prosper your efforts in spreading the knowledge of his truth. The price of Mr Dorman's pamphlet is one shilling—that by Mr Hall six-pence. (Houlston and Wright, Paternoster Row.) We consider the former by far the most profitable reading, and are sorry it was not produced at a smaller cost.

J. C., jun., KENSINGTON.—In the extract we gave from Mr. Dorman's book there was no intention of reiterating the charge of heresy against Mr N—, nor have we any such purpose now. Yet, according to your own showing, he did circulate tracts which created feelings of anxiety and alarm, and which he in consequence withdrew *for reconsideration*. May we ask whether that course resulted in a positive denial of the doctrines attributed to him? And if so, in what pamphlet is such denial to be found?—Our remark that "Mr N.'s doctrines are not all to be defended," was induced, not by any extracts from his writings quoted by others, but by the pamphlets which you yourself sent us. We have no desire to say more than that what we have read has produced an unfavourable impression of Mr N.'s soundness as a teacher. However the Lord alone is his judge and ours, and the day will declare the counsels of our hearts.

W. S.—We acknowledge, with thankfulness, your very acceptable communication. It affords us much comfort to receive the words of encouragement with which, through the Lord's grace, many loving correspondents now favour us. Your letter, written with such evident spiritual intelligence, causes from our heart another note of praise to your Father and ours, who has wrought so wondrously for us and in us through Jesus Christ our Lord. We have the same desire with yourself to devote some space in our little serial to a consideration of "The books of the Bible." It is only through having had our time much taken up in various ways that we have not already commenced a series of papers on the subject. If the Lord shall tarry, we trust soon to do so. You are mistaken in supposing the Editor to be a Reverend. He follows an avocation which in social rank is not much above that of Paul and his companions. [See Acts. xviii. 3.] Moreover, the above title specially pertains to the clergy, whose standing is altogether unscriptural. To accept such a position would be to destroy the testimony of "PRECIOUS TRUTH." As to a place of meeting for reading the scriptures, &c., if you will furnish your name and address, we shall be happy to name one or two in your neighbourhood.

[Letters received from J. H. Jun., A. G., and J. W. L.]

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Wherever possible, we advise friends to procure "Precious Truth" through a bookseller, as the safest course. When ordered through the Post, address—"Proprietor of Precious Truth, 335A, Strand, London, W.C." or the Publisher.

Published for the Proprietor, by—
J. F. BATEMAN, 22, Paternoster-row, entrance in Ivy-lane.
West End—JOB CAUDWELL, 335, Strand, London, W.C.
City Agents—ARTHUR HALL, 25, Paternoster-row, London, E.C.
Smart & Allen, 2, Londonhouse-yard, Paternoster Row.

JOHN EVANS, Printer, 335A, Strand, London, W.C.

PRECIOUS TRUTH.

“WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?”—(Rom. iv. 3.)

London: — J. F. BATEMAN, 22, Paternoster Row, entrance in Ivy Lane.

No. 25.]

APRIL 1, 1867.

[One Halfpenny.]

ALWAYS A CHILD.

DEAR CHILD OF GOD,—Once again I take up my pen, to address to you personally, a few words of divine love. I think of you as a child—always a child. How sweetly had “John the beloved” learnt the lesson of perpetual childhood! He himself wrote in the spirit of a little child. His language, though full of deep truth, has yet the stamp of childhood’s plainness and simplicity, and those for whom he furnished his epistles are always “children,” “dear children,” “little children.” As to continuance and progress in the knowledge of God, he could address himself to some by the title of fathers, and others were young men and strong. (1 John ii. 13-14.) But he speaks to all these, in company with those who were babes in Christ; and they are all “dear children,” “little children.”

Ah, beloved, we want to know more of this spirit of childhood; the happy, confident, yet humble spirit of a “little one,” neither knowing how to provide for *self*, nor seeking to do so. *Content*, yea *happy*, in the provisions of the *Father’s* house, *what-ever they may be*. And as to felt *needs*, just asking and having.

Thus it is, in measure, with you and me, beloved. Thus it ought to be always.

It is the simple basis of discipleship, this childlike mind. The word spoken by our Lord to those about him was—

“Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. xviii. 3.)

And having entered the kingdom by faith, as children, we are to walk in the same spirit. In this character of humility alone, are we able to follow our Lord upon earth. In our fallen Adam nature, pride springs up long before we have attained to years of discretion. And in the world, pride is considered a very proper quality. So that if a person were to arrive at maturity without it, such a one would be looked upon as very contemptible indeed. That is the order of things where Satan reigns. But in “the kingdom of God’s dear Son,” it is far otherwise.

There the new born (or regenerate) person begins in childlike docility, and the stages of youth and fatherhood, so far from being periods for the growth of pride, should be marked by even a deeper humility. When Paul declared, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners,” in meekness of spirit he

added those memorable words, “*Of whom, I am chief.*” (1 Tim. i. 5.) This matured servant had had the very highest honours conferred upon him. He had received special revelations which were not made known though the other apostles. He had seen the Lord in his glory. Yea, he had been up in the third heaven. But now that he was tarrying down here on the earth, he was still “the chief of sinners!” Paul was, indeed, great in the estimate of all who are able to judge according to the mind of the Divine Master. And the reason was, that through grace, he was enabled to *humble* himself.

“Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as a little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. xviii. 4.)

Beloved,—Do you pray for a spirit of meekness, and the robe of humility? Those only who cultivate these qualities, the Lord delighteth to honour. Nor do such look for exaltation on earth, they are content to wait for an incorruptible crown. The lowly christian walk in the world ends in eternal honour and glory. While, on the other hand, every manifestation of pride must of necessity terminate, sooner or later, in humiliation and *shame*.

Wisdom declares there are seven things which are abomination to the Lord; and the first in the list is, “*A proud look!*” (Prov. vi. 17.)

First and last then, the distinguishing walk of a true christian is the spirit which characterises a *dear child*.

Moreover, we see that a believer can always thus be addressed by a brother in Christ, on the ground of the “common salvation.”

“I write unto you, dear children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name’s sake.” (1 John ii. 12.)

This is the basis of fellowship or communion with saints. I who write to you, am a sinner saved by Jesus. And I address myself to you as one who, but for the lovingkindness of the same Saviour, would be “without hope and without God in the world.”

“I write unto you because your sins are forgiven you for his name’s sake.”

That which I write, just now, is an epitome of the Holy Spirit’s message by John the beloved, in the 1st and 2nd chapters of his general epistle.

The disciples had seen God manifest in the flesh, they had heard and touched him. They have declared Him to us, that we may have fellowship with them, and consequently with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. We are to know God as having come to us in perfect love. The Son came to seek, and

save, and keep us. He came in every respect as the full expression of God's love to us. He has made known *His* Father to us as *our* Father. All this is communicated to us that our *joy* may be *full*.

"God is light."

It is worse than vain for one to say he has fellowship with God, while walking in darkness. If a Christian is hating his brother, he is walking in darkness. (See chap. ii. ver. 6.)

On the contrary—If we walk in the light, that is, in simplicity and *truth*, then love abounds; we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin. We enjoy full consciousness of this, and rejoice that it is effectual for every believer. If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no 'good thing.'" (Rom. vii. 18.) But then I judge it, I do not consent to it. I do not deny its existence, I am not innocent. But I desire to be true-hearted, to be in the light, and not to hide the faults which I detect in myself. True-heartedness leads me to confess all to God, to keep back nothing. "If we confess 'our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our 'sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'" Precious consequence of a saint or a sinner coming to the light, i.e. to God—just as he is. Only act simply and truly, as a child who owns its fault to a loving Father. As surely as I confess, so surely will God forgive and cleanse me from all unrighteousness. Such are the pure and perfect ways of him who is "Light." Though I am an adopted son, His word tells me I am a sinner, and if I say I am not I make him a liar. Awful thought, indeed.

Now though, as to what you are of yourself—you are a sinner, yet you are a child of God, accepted in the beloved. Therefore, dear child, "sin not." Hate sin, avoid it, judge it. In short, take God's side about it, even against yourself. We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous—He is also our propitiation—in Him we find favour. He makes our approach to God propitious—we are received lovingly. We know Him because He has made himself known unto us. But do we know Him practically? Do we show that we understand Him? Can I prove to myself conclusively that I know Jesus Christ, the righteous? Yes. I know it by keeping his commandments.

"HIS COMMANDMENTS ARE NOT GRIEVOUS."

On the contrary, they are precious. By this I know that I know Him. Do I desire to abide in Him? Then I desire to walk even as He walked. There is the old commandment, "To love;" There is the new commandment, "To walk in the light." That is our calling. We are the children of light—It is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is past and the true light now shineth. The flesh, which was in darkness, is crucified. Through the rent veil, we, as regenerate children, have access to the pure unshuffled light. Now, this is known to faith; soon, we shall be there bodily—where darkness cannot come.

Dear Child—"babe," or "young man," or "father"—whatever be the stage of your spiritual growth—but especially if you be of the second or third class—

"LOVE NOT THE WORLD."

The world has many phases, many attractions. There is Pharaoh's court, and there are many grades, from that point to the habitations where men revel in the contents of their flesh-pots with their leeks and garlic. However fair the attraction—however palatable the enticements—"Love not the world." You are in it, you must use it—but take care you do not *love* it. You cannot love both it and God.

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

If you suffer your affection to rest upon the world or its things, you will lose consciousness of the love of God.

"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."

There is no qualification here. Let us ever be watchful, beloved, as to that upon which our love is permitted to rest. To love aught of this world is to take part against God.

"Friendship with the world is enmity against God!" (Jas. iv)

This puts us in our right attitude as heavenly citizens. Here—strangers and pilgrims.

"The world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

May we be whole-hearted *doers* of His will, and increasingly so, till the Lord shall come!

Hoping to conclude this train of thought in my next, if the Lord shall tarry so long,

Your's ever,

In Christ Jesus our Lord,
E. P. T.

THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER.

TO CHRISTIANS WHO TRUST TO ITS GUIDANCE.

("Quicumque Vult.")

BELIEVED,—If you have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, you have eternal life through Him. He says, you have "passed from death unto life."

"If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." (Rom. v. 10.)

This is the language of inspiration as to the question of your salvation.

Now, as to the mystery of the "Incarnation."

Scripture says it is a mystery—and true believers are profoundly conscious that it is so. Yet the writer of "Quicumque Vult" pretends to give you an exact analysis of "God manifest in the flesh!" Moreover, he says, it is necessary to everlasting salvation, that you believe the incarnation to be that which he defines it!

Such presumptuous dealing with the Infinite, may impose upon *superstition*, but the word of God alone can produce *true faith*. Look, then, at what we are taught by "the Spirit of truth"—

"Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." (1 Tim. iii. 16.)

How shall we hope to grasp and define that which the inspired apostle declares to be, beyond controversy, a great mystery?

Happy the simple hearted who, in faith, say amen, to the declaration of the word of God; and repudiate all man's attempts to scrutinise that which is far too profound for the capacities of the creature.

Yet God has been pleased to make known to us the instrumentality by which "the Word was made flesh." Scripture furnishes ample instruction for the most intelligent faith, though it baffles the prurient curiosity of the *carнал* mind.

Compare the vain utterances of Athanasius, with the sublime yet simple and inspired language of Luke the Evangelist—

"The angel answered and said unto Mary, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (Luke i. 35.)

Now listen to the response of faith—

"And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." (Luke i. 38.)

Athanasius teaches you to repeat that which is just sufficiently near to truth as to render it exceedingly dangerous and bewildering. Of this character is that which he has set forth respecting the resurrection. The Lord Jesus Christ is, indeed, the ordained judge of all mankind. Yet it is *not* true that at His coming "all men shall rise again with their bodies." The word of God tells us that the first display of his resurrection power will be manifest by calling his church up to himself *in the air*. (See 1 Thess. iv. 17, and 1 Cor. xv. 51-52.)

We ought ever to bear upon our hearts the following words (spoken, of course, to believers only)—

"Christ loved the Church [i.e. the assembly of God], and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by 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. 25-27.)

Such is our Lord's purpose about us who believe in Him during this dispensation. We are of the order of the first resurrection.

"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection." (Rev. xx. 6.)

Our Lord will afterwards come to judge the nations upon earth. Then, during a thousand years, He will reign with his saints in glory, over the world.

"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." (Rev. xx. 5.)

Finally, the dead who have died in their sins, will stand for judgment before the great white THRONE. (Rev. xx. 11-12.)

Beloved,—Why will you still dishonour the Lord by countenancing such traditions as those of Athanasius? He says, (and you have been content

to repeat it) that except a man believe faithfully the string of sentences which he calls "the Catholic faith" (!) he cannot be saved!

Is that true?

How can you believe a catholic faith? It is nonsense. Beloved, you believe in Jesus Christ the Son of God; and—

"These things have I written unto you who believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." 1 John v. 13.

To the writer of "Quicunque Vult" we may well apply the Lord's answer to Job—

"Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?" (Job xxxviii. 2.)

THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST.

"CHRIST... a Son over His own House, whose House are we."

[COMMUNICATED.]

Let us consider, with the Lord's help, a most important subject—the Judgment Seat of Christ.

The Scriptures clearly teach that every believer will have to give an account of himself to God, and at the same time and place receive the fullest praise and reward from the Lord, for every act of faith and labour of love.

The first fact is settled by the following Scripture:

"Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men."—(2 Cor. v. 9-11.)

Other parts of the Word of God—(see Acts x. 42; xvii. 31; 1 Pet. iv. 5)—show clearly that the Lord Jesus Christ will judge ALL men, both regenerate and unregenerate, but it is Christians who are specially referred to in this passage from 2nd Corinthians. The Apostle Paul is writing to believers, and he says "we must all." Paul's design, in that chapter, is to press upon the Corinthians that they, like him, should so strive to live unto Christ, that they should be accepted of Him, that is, acceptable servants, and know it, both now, in their consciences, and hereafter at the Judgment Seat of Christ. The question of salvation is not raised, but of practical walk.*

* It is sufficient here briefly to state that Scripture presents three strongly-marked periods of judgment—That of the Church after being caught up to meet the Lord in the air, 1 Thess. iv.; That of the nations upon earth, at the Lord's subsequent coming to reign on the throne of his father David, Matt. xxv.; That of the Great White Throne, Rev. xx. The Lord Jesus Christ is seen as judge in all three, according to his word—"The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." That it is, in Rev. xx., the Blessed Son from whose face the earth and the heaven flee away, is evident, because the same Divine One who sits on the throne tells John to "Write," and reveals himself as the "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end." Just as it is true, that "Without him was not anything made that was made;" so it is from him that they flee away. In the meantime, it is He "who upholdeth all things by the word of his power," for "by Him all things consist." (Col. i.)

In Romans xiv. the Holy Ghost presents the same truth—

"We shall all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."—(Rom. xiv. 12.)

Now there is abundant evidence in both these epistles (as well as in his others) that the Apostle Paul rejoiced, while he wrote them, in having eternal life in present possession. The object and design, therefore, of our standing at Christ's Judgment Seat cannot be to determine *who* is to be saved and *who* is *not*. That is settled down here.

"He that believeth in Me *hath* everlasting life."

We *have* passed from death unto life, and we *know* it, if we love the brethren. "Now are we the sons of God," and by the Holy Spirit we say, "Abba, Father." We who had Adam to our father, now rejoice, as "new creatures in Christ Jesus," in the Fatherhood of God.

"Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures." (Jas. i. 18.)

Neither can the object of the Judgment Seat of Christ be the settlement and infliction of *punishment*. Every thing of the nature of penalty for our sins was endured by Jesus on the Cross, when he "*finished* the work that the Father had given him to do," including the bearing of our sins—all of them—"in His own body on the tree," making for us "an *end* of sin by the sacrifice of Himself." ALL our sins were fully atoned for by our Lord Jesus Christ, when He was "made a curse for us." By faith in Him, we are "justified freely from all things from which we could not be justified [cleared] by the law of Moses." We who believe in Jesus receive in the Second Man a DIVINE righteousness in the stead of that creature innocency we lost in Adam.

"HE IS UNTO US RIGHTEOUSNESS."

Being thus started afresh, with, and in, a new and divine life, how appropriate that we should be held responsible for all our actions in that new life! Therefore, as man in Adam was placed under trial, but fell, so, as new creatures in the Second Man, we are left for a season, if needs be, under trial. But as, when standing alone, in Adam, man fell, so it must be a principle inwoven in our souls, that we cannot stand except by communion with, and by the imparted grace or strength of, our Living, Ever-present Head.

"Strong is the Lord, and in the power of His might."

In order *not* to fall, we must realize an union as intimate as that of the Branch in the Vine. If I cease to abide, by communion, in Christ, I cease for the time being to remember myself as a poor strengthless branch. But so long as I abide in Christ, I know myself a branch,—know that I cannot bear fruit of myself, am not deceived by my evil heart, feel that "in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing, and know that Christ's strength is made perfect in my weakness.

Now our failings and sins are most graciously

provided for in the heavenly priesthood of Jesus. Nevertheless, sin is not contemplated in the Word of God as a necessity, or *something unavoidable* during our regenerate state. On the contrary, as looking forward, the Christian should seek so to abide in Christ, and keep His words abiding in him,—so to walk in the Spirit and in the consciousness of being "risen with Christ,"—as to be kept from sinning.

"Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not."—(1 John iii. 6.)

"Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." (Gal. v.)

"Reckon ye yourselves to be *dead* indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. xvi.)

While this standard is to be kept, *prospectively*, before the soul, yet when we turn, and glance *retrospectively*—it may be only for an hour,—then,

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

Men may not have detected anything wrong in us, and our heart may not condemn us;—happy state! but doubtless it would if we knew all about ourselves, as God knows us. Such is our frailty while associated with the old nature, that, to our natural mind, it would seem impossible to live and walk entirely in the new. Hence the experience of the Church is proving to itself and angelic beings the absolute need of the doing away of every relic of the old Adam nature, which will be accomplished by the Lord at His Coming. That regenerate persons could possibly sin at all—much less, grossly—after having all their sins forgiven, saved from hell, sealed with the Holy Spirit, and made heirs of glory everlasting, is convincing proof of the utter ruin of our natural hearts.

Thus I see the necessity and design of the Judgment Seat of Christ—to bring out *how far* we have stood and acted in the New Life, with the view, also, (as I think) to the justification of the Lord in his dealings with all and each in the matter of "reward."

"So then, every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

Now this "giving account," (let the reader judge,) will relate to our *misdeeds* while believers, and will not include any *services* of ours.* As taught to call ourselves "unprofitable servants," we feel that silence concerning service is ever more becoming. Both the passages I have cited from the epistles to the Romans and Corinthians are warnings from *wrong doing*. For it will be indeed grievous to have to condemn ourselves in any respect, before the Lord. In the light of His presence, we shall see all things clearly, and hasten to confess and condemn all that was not of faith. In the presence of the JUDGE nothing can be hidden.

"Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." (2 Cor. vi.)

All that was of the nature of true works of faith and labours of love will be graciously owned by the Master, even to the gift of a cup of cold water to a disciple, which will in no wise lose its reward.

* I gather these conclusions (for myself) from the general tenor of Scripture, rather than from any precise statements.

"For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which you have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: that ye be not slothful." (Heb. vi. 10, 11.)

"Then shall every man [believer] have *praise of God*."

Praise our poor doings! how exceedingly gracious of our dear Lord! especially when we remember it was He who wrought in us both to will and to do. God is Love. Blessed Jesus, I see nothing but *reward* from Thee.

"Behold, I come quickly, and my *reward* is with me, to give every man *according* as his work shall be." (Rev. xxii.)

"To us belong shame and confusion of face," that we have done anything of our own wills, apart from Thy will.

It is true, 2 Cor. v. 10 does say, that every one may *receive* the things done in the body, whether good or *bad*; but this "receiving" for the "bad" can only be understood in the negative sense of "suffering loss,"—that is to say, lose a measure of reward.

Such is the graciousness of our Lord and Master that He will put reward upon *everything* He possibly can. Servants are exhorted thus—

"Be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as *the servants of Christ*, doing the will of God from the heart; with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men; knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he *receive* of the Lord." (Eph. vi.)

And each will rejoice in the other's reward—

"Or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it." (2 Cor. xii.)

So, then, beloved—

"The day shall declare every man's work." (1 Cor. iii.)

Nothing of the nature of work but what was of faith, wrought in our subject-hearts by Himself, will stand for ever and ever.

Hence the believer who is going on with nothing that is of faith, but everything of the flesh,—his

"END IS DESTRUCTION."

That is, in view of the Judgment Seat of Christ, nothing will be left that the Lord can reward.

"They themselves shall be saved, *yet so as by fire*."

Therefore, beloved, are we not every day adding to that which the Lord will own, and put reward upon, or doing things which He will have to pass over with silence and without a smile, while we give an account of ourselves to Him? As it seems to me, we are either "laying up treasure in heaven," or "*suffering loss*." Wherefore, let us "*redeem the time*."

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

How sorrowful to us, while tarrying down here, to know that many dear children of God around us

will awake up in the light of the Lord's presence (if not before) to the traditions of men which they are now mistaking for God's truth. Still more sorrowful to us, is the case of those who, though they were illuminated, have persisted in going on with things contrary to God's simple Word.

Beloved, if these positions commend themselves to you, as according to God's Word, let them sink deep into your heart.

ALL THAT IS OF MYSELF, I MUST OWN.

ALL THAT IS OF THE LORD, HE WILL OWN.

And now, what is our resource?

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

There it is, beloved. He who confesses his sins, judges himself, and condemns all the wrong he is conscious of. He voluntarily arraigns himself before the Judgment Seat, and that also, really (by faith) in the presence of his Lord. He *antedates*, as it were, the Judgment Seat. At least, so it seems to me. I cannot help thinking that a genuine confession in faith, brings such a real cleansing, that *such* offences will not be among those brought out at that Great Day. Upon our free and full confession down here, we receive, in my judgment, from Him who is "faithful and just" such a complete putting away of our sin—such an entire clearing and cleansing that we shall not have to confess a second time offences so dealt with. A second confession would involve a sense of uncleanness; but upon our confession the word is "*cleanse from ALL unrighteousness*." Fellowship leads (or should lead) to confession, and confession brings cleansing. See 1 John i. Hence the great importance of seeking to be watchful and quick to detect by the word of God, and the Holy Spirit's help, all that is done amiss, and, upon confession, receiving its blotting out. Thus the Christian may go on, building up nothing but what will lead to reward from the Lord at his coming. *That is*, becoming "rich towards God."

But, then, it must be a *genuine* confession really to the Lord: *such* a confession as we should make, by and by, in the Lord's *visible* presence, accompanied with that same abhorrence of the evil which we may suppose we should truly feel at that day. Thus we derive a PRACTICAL, OR EXPERIMENTAL, as well as a JUDICIAL cleansing.

"The path of the righteous shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

And even our past failures may (if we are rightly exercised by the remembrance of them) be among the all things that work together for good, to conform us to the image of God's dear Son. J. E.

SPECIAL NOTICE.—It has been discovered that a number of letters have been intercepted by a shopman at our Strand publisher's. We fear some communications from our readers may not have reached us. If it has been so, our correspondents will accept this as an explanation. If any order has not been attended to, please address the printer at once.

PRESUMPTION IN THE UNBELIEVING PUNISHED.
Acts xix. 13—20.

(Passage read and considered at the Scripture Meeting held at 335A, STRAND, opposite Somerset House, Monday, Feb. 25.)

Exorcists were men who pretended to drive away demons, or evil spirits, by adjuring them, in the solemn name of God, to depart. The above passage shows that unbelieving men had really no such power over Satan and those that are his. If Satan at any time appeared to give way, it was only that he might work his subtleties the more completely around men's souls. In the name of Jesus, Paul had been making havoc, at Ephesus, of the enemy's power over man, so that from Paul's "body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them." Here was real power, to which the spirits silently succumbed. Much cause, therefore, had they to hate the name of Jesus. When, therefore, the evil spirit was adjured in that name by Sceva's sons, he could have treated the summons with quiet disdain, considering the persons from whom it came. But pent-up anger seized the opportunity of venting itself, and crying, "Who are ye?" the man in whom the evil spirit was "leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded."

But now, mark the wisdom and goodness of God! this very refusal to honour the name of Jesus when presumptuously used, is made a means of bringing great glory to that holy name: "And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified."

Not only so; but great numbers of those who had been the special servants of Satan were graciously translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son: "Many of them that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men; and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed." (18-20.)

Thus the impolitic anger of Satan opened his victims' eyes to his real murderous malignancy, and greater inroads than ever were made on his domains.

In this narrative, we see that the carnal mind, which is enmity against God, can, and does often act from its own evil impulses, apart from Satan; for this act of the sons of Sceva could not have been instigated by Satan, else would his kingdom have been divided against itself. It is not necessary to account for all wickedness by referring it to Satan, for the human "heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" God only.

The special wickedness, on this occasion, seems to have been that which has been, alas! so often repeated—men of *no* faith presuming to take upon themselves the "cure" and care of souls in the name of Jesus! Sceva's sons were men of some standing: they were born priests, the sons of a chief among the priests; it was their profession, too, thus to be opposed to the spiritual enemies of mankind: they went about in the exercise of their profession, which is the simple meaning of "vagabond Jews,"—wandering Jews, who were exorcists. (The word "vagabond" is so used by Cain.)

In the light of this passage we may well see that no creature considerations or claims—much less money-making!—can justify the attempt on the part of the unconverted to serve souls in the name of Jesus. Such will bring upon themselves, (it may not be in this world,) mischief and humiliation, as in the case of Sceva's seven sons. Solemn, indeed, is it to think of these presumptuous men, face to face in the other world with those whose souls they took upon them to serve. Punishment must follow the use of the name of Jesus for worldly ends.

In the burning of the books of magic, we see faith in Jesus producing a voluntary confession of the sins of our unregeneracy, and a willingness to burn the fruit of our misdeeds. It was remarked that, in a somewhat similar way, it was the Christian's duty to confess his sins to God, condemning them to the flames of self-judgment, for if we do not do so now, we shall probably have to do it, as willingly as these did, at the judgment-seat of Christ. (See article on this subject.)

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Address Letters for the Editor, care of Printer, 335, Strand, W.C.

F. H., PENTONVILLE.—We are thankful for the opportunity given by your very gracious letter, to answer the difficulties you present on the subject of Water Baptism.

First, as to the thought your brother pressed upon you when he joined the Baptists, viz., that "immersion is a visible entrance into the Church." We do not wonder that you rejected such teaching, inasmuch as it is nowhere to be found in the Scriptures.

Immersion is not a Church question. A Christian Assembly may have a special exposition given to it, as to the thing signified by baptism. (it was thus expounded by the Apostle Paul in writing to the Romans and the Colossians;) but practically, a church has nothing to do with the act itself. Subjection to Water Baptism is (or ought to be) required of each believer by the servant of the Lord who may have made known the glad tidings of salvation. It does not follow of necessity that he himself must be the baptizer, (see 1 Cor. i. 14—17), as it is evident that any christian can perform the act of immersion. Faithful servants are commissioned by our Lord Jesus Christ thus—"Go ye and disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. xxviii. 19.)

A careful examination of the dealings of our Lord's disciples in executing his commands, shows, that wherever the gospel was received in faith, water baptism followed as a matter of course—entirely apart from any consideration as to whether the convert would or would not be joined to a visible church.

In the instance of the eunuch, (Acts viii.) we see clearly that a believer was baptized, simply because his Saviour had commanded it. This was, of course, true of all, but in his case there could have been no thought of its adoption as a visible entrance into the Church, because the convert was returning to Ethiopia, where, as a Christian, he would be alone, at least until the glad tidings had spread to others where he dwelt.

So, in our days a person might hear the Gospel and receive salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, and then learning his Lord's command that such as believed were to be baptized, he would have nothing to do but to submit to immersion at once, entirely irrespective of the question as to where he should afterwards find Christian communion. He might even be so placed as to have to walk alone with God, like his Ethiopian brother.

As we have said, the Scriptures do *not* teach that baptism was the vehicle of adding members to the Church, but, "The Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved." (Acts ii. 47.)

Each one who believes in the Son of God is added to the Church by the Lord himself. The Church is the body of Christ, and therefore neither man, nor the act of man, can add to it. Baptism is an individual expression of obedience. It has its significance, which the believer may have to learn in submitting to the act itself, or after its performance. But compliance with the command, may be, at the onset, nothing but a manifestation of the obedience of faith. The Lord has surely a right to expect obedience from us. He, *after his resurrection*, and as having received all power in heaven and earth, was pleased to lay this injunction upon his servants. He has never revoked it, and it is impossible for man to disannul it.

II.

The above answers the second section of your letter, wherein you doubt "whether water baptism was ever meant to apply to the Gentile Churches." That which you add, as to immersion "being like all ceremonial ordinances, and therefore belonging especially to God's people the Jews," will not bear examination. The Ethiopian was not a Jew, neither were Cornelius and his household Jews, nor the Philippian jailer and his household, nor the Ephesians to whom Paul communicated the knowledge of Baptism to the Lord Jesus. (See Acts xix.) nor Gaius and the household of Stephanas named in 1 Cor. i.—not to enumerate many others spoken of specifically in connection with baptism, who clearly were all Gentiles.

Now, as to the consideration of the heavenly calling of the Church, and its consequent exemption from earthly types and

ceremonies—though we in the main agree with the thought you express, yet it is impossible to accept your absolute application of it to the excision of water baptism from the duties of Christian life; and if you carry the argument to its ultimate, you will find you will have to give up the Lord's Supper as well as immersion!

The truth is that neither "Baptism" nor "Breaking of Bread" can be regarded as types or ceremonies in the sense in which we use those terms as applied to Jewish observances. The character of the types given to Israel was, that of shadowing forth good things *yet to be accomplished* in the person of Christ, and their ceremonies could not go beyond "*purifying the flesh*," and that, as it were, but for a moment.

In contrast with all Jewish rites, the two observances given to Christians, show forth *accomplished facts*. In water baptism we show that we are dead, and in breaking of bread we show forth the death of our Lord!

And again, in contrast with Jewish ceremonies; neither the Lord's Supper nor Immersion are accepted with a view to accomplish anything by way of benefit for ourselves. But in both we testify of that which Christ has effected for us. The Bread and Wine have no power; neither has the water of Baptism. The Lord has, however, given both the one and the other. Faithful ones accept them, and act them out, thereby testifying that they *love Him*. "*If ye love me, keep my commandments.*"

Communion with God is consequent upon our being dead with Christ, and our walk in newness of life with him. Hence the force of putting Baptism, the figure of burial, between the Old Adam period of a person's history, and the Christian walk in the new life which we have in the Second Adam, the Lord from heaven!

Next you quote from the epistle to the Colossians. "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the elements of the world, why as though living in the world are ye subject to ordinances?" we have only to add the completion of the above sentence—"after the commandments and doctrines of men," to show that this has no application to Baptism. If it applies to immersion, it must also take away the Lord's Supper! But the whole context shews that the Apostle was remonstrating against the acceptance of carnal ordinances. This is confirmed by the consideration of 1 Cor. xi. 2, wherein the same writer says, "Now I praise you brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you!"

Divine ordinances are to be kept by those to whom they are given, whether of the one order to Israel, or of a new character to Christians. Such as were given to an earthly people were carnal in character, while those given to a heavenly people are necessarily spiritual. Hence baptism testifies that the old man is dead!

You rightly remark, "Typical ordinances" had, attached to them, the most minute and precise directions as to the manner of their performance, yet Baptism has none!"

The distinction is exactly in accordance with the difference you yourself have ably pointed out between Israel as an earthly people, and Christians as a heavenly people. In dealing with *the flesh*, God's commands are exact in every detail. But in communicating His words to those who are *spiritual*, our Lord has left much to be understood *by faith*. His directions for Baptism are certainly as specific as those for Breaking of Bread! Your difficulty, as presented above, effectually destroys the one you previously suggested, namely, that of considering Baptism as Jewish. If that were its character, you would be correct in looking for most minute directions as to its performance. But, as you do not find that condition complied with, this ordinance is evidently *not Jewish*; it is for those who are neither Jew nor Gentile, being *dead* to the world. Now, as to the gospel first preached at Jerusalem, being that of "the Kingdom" (Acts iii. 19, v. 10, &c.,) and your remark "It was fitting that such a gospel, to such a people, should have been accompanied, not only by the sign of water baptism, but other Jewish rites and ceremonies;"—

We must again refer you to our Lord's command to *disciple and baptize among all nations*, (Matt. xxviii. 19 and Mark xvi. 15 and 16,) and the consequent practice of baptism by all the early converts, both Jew and Gentile, men and women.

You specially note, that "the Holy Ghost came upon the

Gentiles *before* water baptism, but on the Jews *after*." (Acts ii. 28, x. 44, xix. 14.) Whatever else may be signified by that divine course of action, this at least is seen, that the Gentile believers did *not*, in that day, argue that because they had been baptized by the Holy Ghost, baptism by water was not intended for them!

As to the passage, "John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." (Acts i. 5.) The significance of this surely cannot be that which you have supposed—namely, the presentment of "type and antitype." We cannot see that John's baptism was in any way typical of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. It rather presents a contrast. John's baptism set forth, death and judgment confessedly deserved! while immersion by the Holy Ghost expressed forgiveness and life in possession, with God's seal set upon it!

III.

Your application of the third verse of the 6th chapter of Romans is, we think, an evident mistake. The baptism spoken of there is, that of immersion into death. Now the Holy Ghost does not baptize us unto death! God forbid. On the contrary, the baptism of the Holy Ghost brings the many *living* members into the unity of one body in Christ. Believers were immersed into the death of Christ (through the faith of the operation of God,) before the descent of the Holy Ghost. The death of Christ was as efficacious a deliverance for the one hundred and twenty believers waiting at Jerusalem *before Pentecost*, as for the thousands who were converted afterwards!

Faith accepts the death of Christ as one's own death, but because He, in his great love, took the *reality* for us, faith gladly receives the consequent *figure*, viz., that of immersion in water.

In short—Though the term baptism is used both with reference to immersion in water, and immersion by the Holy Ghost, the two have nothing in common. A believer in the Son of God is, through the death of Christ, dead as to the old man, and has received the gift of life in his risen Lord. And this surely would be equally true even though God had not chosen to add to the gift of his Son, the gift of the Holy Ghost also! How then can the baptism of the Holy Ghost be immersion into death?

You then say—"When I see that by my union with Christ "through immersion into his Spirit, and that by virtue of that "union, God sees me as dead and buried and risen again with "Him, to walk in his newness of life, it is most blessed."

Scripture does *not* teach this. You were not united to Christ in Death, but in life. It is simply impossible to see you "in "that union as dead and buried and risen again with him." The death and burial are long past and done with. In them, the Saviour stood for you, and faith has (as to consciousness) immersed you into them; but there was no union there. Union pertains to life. God sees you as alive in Christ, and only as alive (i.e. if we understand anything of the Scriptures), for "He is not a God of the dead, but of the living."

The inference you draw from the passage cited from Col. ii. is completely overthrown by the context. You quote as follows—"Ye are complete in Him..... In whom ye are circumcised with circumcision made without hands"..... Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him—". Here you stop, and are consequently content to remain under the impression that the operation is effected by the immersion of the Holy Ghost!

But now, look at the passage in its entirety—

"Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him *though the faith of the operation of God*, who hath raised him from the dead."

Here we see that it is *faith* (and not the baptism of the Holy Ghost) which is the link which brings us into the death and resurrection of Christ. Water baptism merely signifies that faith accepts the accomplished facts.

In conclusion, you quote Col. ii. 16—"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath."

IV.

Are we to understand that, in your mind, you would add to the above list of things respecting which a man is not to judge

us, the Lord's institution of baptism? If so, would you extend it to breaking of bread also? And if not, why not?

But again the context delivers us from all difficulty. The 17th verse, referring to the things named in the 16th, says—"These are [were] the shadow of things to come; but the *body* [substance] of Christ."

It is impossible, therefore, to insert Christian baptism, as a shadow of things to come, because it does not signify things to come, but things PAST!

v.

On the subject of not suffering any to "break bread" who have not submitted to water immersion—you have evidently misunderstood us. Will you kindly look at our answer to W. B. S., in the last Number of PRECIOUS TRUTH? Where we begin to differ (on this subject) is, in refusing to recognise the Lord's table as the centre of gathering. It is made so, practically, by many dear Christians; but the position is unscriptural. The Lord himself is the true centre. "Breaking of bread" is an act incidental to communion, and is not even put first in order, according to the word of God: see Acts ii. 41, 42. The order given in that Scripture is (after faith), first Baptism, second Doctrine, third Fellowship, fourth Breaking of Bread, fifth Prayer.

Christians who lovingly desire to conform to divine order, surely may be permitted to *walk together* in practical fellowship. Now, if a fellow believer, (known to be such) who ignores baptism, seeks to join them in the act of breaking bread only, they answer, naturally, "Why do you not show forth the Lord's death *with those who walk with you*?" If he declines to answer that question, and asserts his right, as a Christian, to a place at the Lord's table, the assembly has no power to exclude him. But surely he will have to answer for it. Whom is he seeking to please, himself or the Lord? The assembly has not received him, neither has it excluded him. He certainly would not, in such a case, be discerning the Lord's body. He must judge himself about it, in the light of that solemn Scripture—the 11th chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians.

J. H. jun.—We regret the difficulty which some of the country booksellers, and consequently some of our readers, have in getting "Precious Truth." You complain that it is often near the middle of the month before you obtain it. We assure you it is seldom so late as the 28th of the month prior to the date of publication, when the various publishers mentioned on this paper have their regular quantity of copies delivered to them for the coming month. We expect to issue the April No. on the 26th March. Our printer will make special inquiries of the firm you mention. Any back Nos. you can get (if in no other way) by addressing the printer, Mr Evans, 335A, Strand, London, W.C.

A. G. CLEVEDON.—We are glad you wrote to us about the difficulty in securing a supply of "Precious Truth." We trust our friends will address the proprietor in all cases where there is not facility for obtaining our little paper, especially such as kindly take the trouble of circulating it in their own immediate neighbourhood. Accept our thanks for your kind words of encouragement, and for your efforts to introduce our little messenger of truth.

J. W. L., St. AGNES.—We are thankful for the freedom of your strictures upon such papers in "Precious Truth" as do not commend themselves to your judgment. That which you urge upon us has had our careful consideration—Yet we believe it is quite according to the example of our Lord, and of all his true servants, to rebuke unsparingly whatever may have been introduced by men in contravention of the Word of God. You must not expect any alteration in the tenor of our paper in this respect. We are glad you appreciate the editor's monthly addresses.

W. A. B. writes as follows:—"Kindly send me 28 'Precious Truths' for this month—I enclose stamps." The paper on "Breaking Bread" has been of service to myself, and is spoken of by one who has been 28 years in Christ, as very precious. We love your little paper, because in it Jesus only is seen—no man after the flesh, but the second Adam, and those who are his in the new Creation.

W. S., ISLINGTON.—In our last we inadvertently omitted to notice your kind offer of the loan of the book mentioned. Accept our sincere thanks, but we desire to set forth only such thoughts as may be suggested from the sacred scriptures. We shall gladly furnish information as to where you can meet over "the word," if you will give a full address. Your second communication received with thanks. We hope to answer it in our next.

A. M. F., LONDON.—We are much refreshed by such communications as yours. There is in your letter the warmth of true christian love which makes itself felt. The Lord bless you in your desire to make known his glorious truth. We do not agree with all you say about sending the unconverted to hear our brother S. But from your point of view we at least sympathise with your thought. If the Lord tarry, we may yet have to resume our examination of our brother's unwise teaching.

A CATHOLIC.—We print the following letter, as received under the above signature, for the sake of the emphasis given to the subject in question. May we suggest to our correspondent that the Romanists have very much defiled the word "catholic:" Like many other terms, it has come to be accepted as conveying a sense the reverse of its true import. A second communication received from this writer, stands over.

"Dear Brother in our Lord: Your answer to 'W.B.S.' March, commends itself to my own judgment and conscience. There is no such thing as receiving to the Lord's Table, or putting away from the Lord's Table. A person confessing the name of the Lord Jesus Christ is received into the fellowship of the saints; if needs be for wickedness, he is separated and put away from that fellowship. Nothing can be more unscriptural and gross than the opinions current on this matter, and on how false doctrine (held or taught) is to be dealt with or met. I think you might embody what you have had taught you from God by Holy Scripture in a two or four-page tract, under some such title as—"How false doctrine should be dealt with, (whether taught or held) shown down from Holy Scripture, the sole rule for all saints."

Respecting the suggested tract—the matter shall have prayerful consideration; but we are inclined to think that if those who would be able to circulate such a paper, will distribute PRECIOUS TRUTH instead, it may be even more acceptable, and readers will therein find the subject reiterated from time to time.

E. H., FARNHAM.—Your second letter quite confirms the impression produced by the perusal of the first. You have evidently striven with convictions from time to time. Happily, in the instance of baptism you were faithful. But you remained in the establishment, notwithstanding its false doctrines on that very subject—until the vicar gently pushed you out. Yet, though we speak thus plainly, we think of you as a dear sister in Christ. We have to say very hard things sometimes to christians who are dear to us. All are dear to us indeed, who believe in Jesus Christ our Lord. When Peter was rebuked to his face he was not the less loved by his brother Paul. Your quotation, "Give none offence, neither to the Jew, nor to the Gentile, nor to the Church of God," is quite misplaced when used as a bar to exhortation and rebuke where there is unfaithfulness. The servant of the Lord is expressly called to "*Reprove, rebuke, and exhort.*" Moreover, the Church of England (so-called) belongs to neither of the classes named in the scripture you refer to.—We pray in our heart, that these few words may not have the effect of still further *freeing* your christian love. It is, indeed, cause for sorrow, if our first reply had that result. Our earnest desire is to convey to you the warmth of love. We have true sympathy for your bodily affliction, and attribute much of the chilling character of your letters to that cause. God bless you, and give you to know more fully that He is "Love."

NB—Several Communications stand over.

Published for the Proprietor, by—

J. F. BATEMAN, 22, Paternoster-row, entrance in Ivy-lane.

West End—JOH CAUDWELL, 335, Strand, London, W.C.

City Agents—ARTHUR HALL, 25, Paternoster-row, London, E.C.
Smart & Allen, 2, Londonhouse-yard, Paternoster Row.

JOHN EVANS, Printer, 835A, Strand, London, W.C.

PRECIOUS TRUTH.

“WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?”—(Rom. iv. 3.)

London: — J. B. BATEMAN, 22, Paternoster Row, entrance in Ivy Lane.

No. 26.]

MAY 1, 1867.

[One Halfpenny.]

THE BIBLE.

WHAT IS IT? AND WHO IS IT FOR?

Many dear Christians seem to regard the Bible as a miscellaneous aggregation of truth without any particular order. It is commonly handled as a mass of plastic material, which may be moulded and fashioned at will, to further any end which can be characterised as religious. While the “*world of intellect*” also appropriates this precious book, and uses it as a public flower garden, from which every one may have leave to pluck a bouquet if he please—or respecting the arrangement of which, any may find fault without scruple.

How few (alas) understand the momentous issues of all which is written in the sacred volume! May the consideration of the questions proposed above lead some, at least, who have thought lightly, either of the manner, or the fact, of God’s communications in the Scriptures, to rejoice hereafter that we have called their attention to the divine structure of the Book which contains the Oracles of God.

WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

The volume which passes among us by this name, is a collection of books—divided, as we know, into two great sections, called the Old and New Testaments.

Unlike mere human compositions, the books of the Bible, are, as to their character and purposes, interwoven one with the other, and yet are quite distinct, each book or portion having been written for a separate and well-defined object, yet each and all leading up to one grand result, namely, the overthrow of Satan and all his, and the manifestation of God and the objects of his counsels, in glory.

Many themes are taken up, by the way; or, as men would say, incidentally—But, “known unto God are all his works from the beginning.” (Acts xv. 18.)

This is a truth which the Bible student ought to have indelibly fixed upon his mind. It is calculated to bring us into subjection to all that God has revealed.

In looking through the Scriptures, and tracing the various dispensations which have succeeded one another, we are made witnesses to the truth that sin brings destruction upon each successive order of blessing which God has set up in the world.

The history of man begins in innocency in the garden of Eden. But sin brought a curse upon the ground, and death upon the creature.

God had, however, in his gracious purposes, fore-

ordained a way of redemption, by the sacrifice of His only-begotten Son, who was to be revealed, in the appointed time, as “the Lamb slain (i.e., fore-ordained in that character) from the foundation of the world.” (Rev. xiii. 8.)

In anticipation of that costly sacrifice, Jehovah was pleased to accept the offering of Abel’s firstling of the flock, because it was a manifestation of *faith* on the part of Adam’s fallen son. And from that day until now, God has accepted all who come to Him in *faith*. “Without *faith* it is impossible to please him.” (Heb. xi. 6.) Alas, in the sacred records, how brief is the list of those who by *faith* have pleased God!

In paradise, man had given up the thought of pleasing God in the way of innocency. And when, in a sin-stricken creation, Jehovah made known the path of *faith* as the only way of access to Himself—and consequently, the only road to happiness—how few (by comparison) is the number of those who have sought to walk therein!

After the death of Abel, *faith* endured in a narrow line from Seth to Noah. But in the days of the latter, only the eighth generation from Adam, of that order, the earth had become full of violence, and God pronounced judgment upon it. Yet Noah was, in mercy, made a preacher of righteousness, during the many years he continued (*in faith*) building the Ark. (Heb. xi. 7, 1 Pet. iii. and 2 Pet. ii. 15.)

At length, however, sin brought its bitter consequence, destruction. The flood came and swept all away, except the one family which was saved by *faith*.

Again and again, on this side of the Deluge has God made known in various dispensations, the acceptable way of *faith*; and also the inevitable destruction which overtakes all who will not walk in that way. In each dispensation God begins with blessing, but has to close the period with judgment!

We do not stay to verify this fact now, but it will be evident to all who read the Bible in *faith*, such having the Holy Spirit of God to lead them into all truth.

Even the thousand years of earth’s blessing, which will follow the fearful day of tribulation now approaching, must end with fire poured down from heaven upon rebellious nations. (Rev. xx. 8.)

Thus is made known to *faith* beforehand, the close of this world’s history. *

* We learn in Revelation, chap. xxi., that the present visible heaven, and the earth on which we now dwell, will finally have passed away. There shall be a literal fulfilment of that word—

We have sketched, very briefly, one line of testimony only. Yet it extends from "Genesis" to "Revelation." A perfectly uniform record of God's grace and judgment. Of man saved, if accepting mercy in the way of faith; and of man irretrievably ruined, if he continue in rebellion.

This may suffice to show, in one way, the perfect consistency of the sacred writings called the Bible.

Now, we desire to consider separately, these two grand divisions of the book—namely, the New Testament and the Old.

The New Testament stands first in order for Christians.

As poor sinners of the Gentiles, we had no title to the oracles of God; but as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, all the Scriptures are given to us, and are profitable. Yet where should we, as Christians, begin to learn of God, if not in those Scriptures which specially impart to us a knowledge of Christ and the Church?

The books of the Old Testament tell us, in types and shadows, and prophecies, of a Saviour who was yet to come. We read these retrospectively, and see what a glorious hope it was, though little understood. But "the Gospels," "the Epistles," and "the Revelation," place the believer on totally different ground. These blessed books tell of the Saviour who has been here! They tell us "the atoning work is done"! The Christian has not, after the manner of Israel of old, to wait for one to bear his stripes and make atonement for sin. No, God be praised, we are on this side of the Cross, and have not to look for a suffering Saviour, but for our triumphant Lord, to whom all power is given in heaven and earth!

What we want, therefore, is a knowledge of Him.

In the Gospels we see the reflection of Himself—we have His walk, His ways, His teaching, His purposes, His promises, His hope, His love. We have especially His Cross, His resurrection, and His commands.

In the Epistles we learn the fulness of God's counsels as to our high calling in Christ. In these writings we are taught the place which the Church has in divine purpose, as of heaven and not of the world. And we have therein constant incentive to walk here as heavenly citizens in a strange country.

In the "Revelation" we are furnished with God's purposes about the world. The Lord speaks to us

"Thou Lord in the beginning has laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands. *They shall perish*; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same and thy years shall not fail." (Heb. i. 10-12.)

Then the *saved ones*, gathered out of this present scene, will inhabit the new heaven, and the new earth, wherein there will be no sea. Some will have their place in the heavenly Jerusalem, some on the new earth (at least we so understand "the word.") Heaven and earth will be in perfect harmony. The tabernacle of God will be with men; and consequent joy unspeakable will endure for ever. (See Rev. xxi. 1-6.)

as he spake to Abraham of old about the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Many other things are therein made known to *faith*. We have but glanced at some, to show the importance of being filled with wisdom from the books of the New Testament.

(To be continued, D.V.)

To those who love the Lord Jesus Christ, but who are yet following the Forms of the Church of England (so-called)

BELOVED,—Let us, as before God, now examine—

THE LITANY.

This form of supplication commences—

"O God the Father, of heaven, have mercy upon us, "miserable sinners."

If you are praying to God as your Father, can you be *miserable sinners*? What! adopted into the family of God, and yet miserable sinners!

The word *miserable* means—

Very unhappy, very poor or mean, very low or despicable, abject, or forlorn.

Is it very consistent with the general demeanour of those who assemble in your places of worship—this profession of being miserable sinners? Where are these very unhappy, mean, despicable, forlorn ones? Are they the men and women of the world who lounge on their well-cushioned-seats, and keep their feet daintily perched upon hassocks? These are thinking how long and tedious the so-called "service" (?) is, and wishing it over, that they may enjoy an *INTELLECTUAL* treat from the pulpit; or they are meditating schemes for increasing riches, or of gratifying themselves with some new pleasures! We shall all agree that these are not miserable, according to the true definition of that word, although they well might be, if they knew the awful position in which they are before God!

We may remark, however, in passing, that perhaps such as we have described are at least exempt from the sin of hypocrisy. The majority of those who flaunt their satins and jewellery, in family pews, would disdain to repeat the phrase "miserable sinners," although they consider it all very well for the clergyman, the clerk, and the school children to do so. They will remind you that the two first-named are paid for what they do—and as to the poor children, they know not what they say, and repeat just what they are taught.

Again we ask, then, which are the miserable sinners?

Let us consider the case respecting you who believe in the Son of God. Upon what pretext do you present yourselves to the Father of mercies, as "miserable" ones?

I hear the Lord Jesus saying to you:

"Blessed are ye." (Matt. v.)
 "These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." (John xv. 11.)
 "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." (John xvi. 24.)

Such were His words to His disciples before He suffered. And after the Saviour had ascended

to the Father—what do we find as the language of inspiration?

"As many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." (Rom. viii. 14, 15.)

"The kingdom of God is . . . righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Rom. xiv. 16, 17.)

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." (Rom. xv. 13.)

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." (Gal. v. 22.)

It is in this strain, beloved, that we are now addressed by our God. It would be easy to multiply quotations, if our space would permit. But we will only ask you further, just now, to get stamped upon your hearts this one following passage—

"Blessed the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold trials; that the trial [testing] of your faith (being much more precious than of gold that perisheth), though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, YE LOVE; in whom, though now ye see him not, YET BELIEVING, YE REJOICE WITH JOY UNSPEAKABLE AND FULL OF GLORY!" (1 Pet. i. 3-8.)

Is this the true portion of believers? Has the last Scripture we have quoted any weight with you? Do you believe it to be the word inspired by God? If so, we ask you, how you can venture absolutely to deny such boundless love as is therein declared to you, by praying to God to have mercy upon you as miserable sinners?

We have given you abundant messages of divine love, to show that, as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, it is not only your privilege, but also your duty to REJOICE in Him.

"Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice." (Phil. iv.)

And now we ask you whether there is a single passage to be found in the Sacred Volume to justify you in praying for mercy as miserable sinners? If you can find one, we will examine it faithfully. But we tell you, it is simply impossible for you to produce a sentence in the New Testament to warrant the attitude you assume. Perhaps you will think of the publican's prayer in the parable. But his case was in no way akin to yours. He knew not Jesus, the Saviour of sinners. It had not been said to him, as it has been to you,—

"God has begotten us again to a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance . . . reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation."

The poor publican was on different ground, for Christ had not died and risen again! It is that wondrous death and resurrection of the Son of God which has altered everything!

The publican had all the weight of his sins resting upon his conscience, so that he could not venture to look up. True, he had a hope in God's mercy, as he smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me

a sinner; but he knew not the precious blood which cleanseth from all sin. It had not been proclaimed to him, as it has to us who now, through grace, believe in the risen Saviour:

"You being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Christ, having forgiven you all trespasses." (Col. ii. 13.)

Of course there were poor sinners forgiven by our Lord, even before he died for them. He gave the cavilling Jews to know that the Son of Man had power on earth to forgive sins. But it was in the glorious triumph of His resurrection that he sent forth the full and free proclamation of his love and salvation for his poor rebel creatures. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark xvi. 15-16.)

It was in the power of this proclamation that the Apostle John could say to all believers—

"I write unto you, dear children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake." (1 John ii. 12.)

How is it to be henceforth, dear brethren? will you still follow the traditions of men, which, as of old, make the word of God of none effect? Or, Will you act upon the pure and soul-rejoicing truth which God our Father hath given us?

But we have another word from the first sentence of your Litany to press upon your attention.

Have you decided in your hearts what quality of mercy it is for which you pray? We can only conclude by the sentences which follow, that the desire intended to be expressed is, for the mercy of God which delivers from judgment! Now, to you who believe in Jesus, "the word" expressly says "by his mercy he saved us." (Titus iii. 5.) This mercy, for which you ask, has already been given!

Is it not base ingratitude thus to pray continually for that which God declares he has bestowed upon you freely? And then, as to unbelievers who use these stereotyped petitions—The answer to their cry is, "God has made known his way of mercy; but you will not accept His way, and until you do, there is no mercy for you. Why do ye not believe?"

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Rom. x. 9.)

But, to return to you who believe in Jesus—you are expressly told that you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the spirit of adoption who leads you to know God as your Father! Yet you assume to be still under wrath!

You are like unto criminals who have received a free pardon, whose prison doors have been thrown wide open, who have moreover received in writing assurances of favour from highest majesty; but who, notwithstanding, still insanely cling to the bars of their prison house, and keep up a continual cry for that mercy which seems to have been extended to them in vain!

Alas, alas! Believers and Unbelievers, you are all mocking God, for you do not believe that which He has said! We admit that the majority do this in

ignorance. But such ignorance is inexcusable. It is a repetition of Israel's sin—and of that people the Apostle Paul testified.

"I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, *but not according to knowledge*. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." (Rom. x. 13.)

The result of their determined ignorance was, that they were scattered in all the world; and their descendants are a living monument of God's estimate of willful blindness.

So, too, the world's churches—Rome and her daughters—are to receive judgment. Professing christendom, the modern Babylon—after that the living members of the Church of God have been taken away—must be destroyed. We do not speak here of the destruction of the nations; but of the carnally-constituted religious systems which prostitute the name of Christ.

"For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies." "How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." (Rev. xviii. 3 & 7.)

And in connexion with this, what saith the scripture to you, beloved?

"Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." (Rev. xviii. 4.)

PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE EXAMINED

WHICH SOME REGARD AS GIVING JUDICIAL POWER TO THE CHURCH

"A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject (*paraitou*), knowing that he that is such, is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself." (Titus iii.)

A correspondent says, "I believe Titus iii. 10, 11 teaches us to cleanse ourselves of false teachers. "I have always thought it a direct teaching."

As it is not the first time this passage has been so urged, we commend to our readers the following considerations.

1. This injunction was *not* given to an Assembly, nor even to apostolic elders, but to Titus, acting at Crete for the Apostle Paul.

"For this cause left I thee in Crete—that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee."

Where is the man who has any such functions?—Let him claim the powers given in this epistle.

2. But the word "reject," in this passage, does not mean putting away from the assembly, as is generally supposed, but removing from the eldership, having reference only to Titus's special work. That this word never has the force of "excommunicate," will appear from other passages where it occurs:—

"But refuse (*paraitou*) profane and old wives' fables." (1 Tim.)
 "The younger widows refuse (*paraitou*)." (1 Tim. v.)
 "Foolish and unlearned questions avoid (*paraitou*)." (2 Tim. ii.)
 "Se that ye refuse not (*paraitousathe*) him that speaketh." (Heb. xii. 25.)

Thus we see Timothy was charged to deal with the younger widows as Titus was charged to treat obstinate heretics. Surely the younger widows were not to be refused fellowship! They were to be refused (*paraitou*) from the office of deaconess. These seem to have been elder sisters in receipt of assistance from the assembly, and who, in return, served the church in any possible way. In like manner, Titus was charged to reject (*paraitou*) from the office of elder such as persisted, after the first and second admonition, in teaching heresy. As neither the power of appointing nor rejecting elders has been given to assemblies, we must look to the Lord in the midst, who has retained the power in His own hands, to drive out the "wolf," or to silence the speaker of "perverse things." See Paul's charge to the Ephesian elders (Acts xx); but what was to be their resource? GOD, and the Word of His grace.

We think it will be admitted, therefore, that the passage in Titus does not refer to 'excommunication' or "putting away," at all, or to any form of church-power.

THE BREAD AND WINE.

How peculiar is the way in which we are taught in 1 Cor. x. the significance of "the cup of blessing, and the bread which we break." It is not to be overlooked that this passage of Scripture commences by pressing upon our attention the truth that ALL who were delivered out of Egypt were "baptized to Moses in the cloud and in the sea."

Why was the apostle anxious that the saints at Corinth (with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord,) should not be "ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea?"

As it is thus insisted that all the redeemed out of Egypt were baptized to Moses, what inference can be drawn for Christians, but that they all should be baptized to the Lord Jesus? And why is this fact presented before "the supper" is taken up, if we are not to see in it that baptism is the *first step* for the believer?

"By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land." (Heb. xi. 29.)

So too—

"They that gladly received his word were baptized." (Acts ii. 41.)

Having been baptized to Moses—

"They [the Israelites] did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of the spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."

So, the early Christians, having gladly received the word, were baptized, and afterwards—

"Continued stedfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." (Acts ii. 42.)

The divine provisions for the people under Moses did not, however, keep them from sin. "They lusted after evil things; they became idolaters, as it is written, the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play!" Alas, how many Christians are idolaters according to that definition!

Other wickednesses are enumerated in the chapter before us, but idolatry is the most dwelt upon. Then it is said, "All these happened unto them for ensamples [types]: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come!" Yea, to worship or be in subjection to aught but the living God, is idolatry.

Is there not abundance of idolatry even in connection with that which should be recognised as the Lord's table?

First the Papist, with his miserable fable of transubstantiation, worships that which should be bread, but which he calls a wafer.

Other denominations bow down, with superstitious reverence, either to the bread and wine, or the so-called priest who administers them.

And lastly, *exclusive brethren*, submitting to the dictum of their leaders, gather to "*the table*," instead of to their living Lord!

We ask the reader to ponder prayerfully every verse of our chapter; and then say whether we are raising a needless note of alarm.

After the solemn warnings adduced from what befel the Israelites in the wilderness, it is added—

"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

Then follows a word of encouragement, but still most expressive of constant danger, and then—

"Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as unto wise men; judge ye what I say." (Verses 14, 15.)

Why this caution? Why this careful judgment? Because of the subtilty of the danger! Satan is ever at work to cheat saints into some demonstration of unholy zeal. If he can only get them to invent a test (*really an idol*) for the non-worship of which they can cast out their brethren, alas, how he triumphs!

Indeed, this has ever been so from the first days, and, sad to say, the practice is rife now. It was so in Israel.

"Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified." (Isaiah lvi. 5.)

It is easy to do most unholy violence in the sacred name of the Lord.

Now we come to—

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?"

Whence, then, is our title to that cup and bread? Surely from our Lord Jesus alone!

Who has power to grant or withhold them? The Lord alone! We search in vain for a single text of Scripture to justify either the reception or rejection of a believer, *by man*, as to communion in the body and blood of Christ!

"Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord."

It is thus the divine word interposes to protect the sanctity of our Christian feast. Can man add to the efficiency of that protection? The Scripture of which our chapter forms part, assumes that all who together partake of the bread and wine are not only

members of the body of Christ, but one *in fellowship together* as of *one mind* and one spirit. See the first chapter of the epistle, verses 9, 10.

In the *one loaf* provided for an assembly to break, we have the symbol of the unity of the *one body*—

"For we many are one bread, one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread." (Verse 17.)

It would be quite a misapprehension of the truth to recognise, in the loaf we break together, a figure only of the particular assembly who break it. And it would be just as foolish to limit the thought to a theoretical unity of any confederation of assemblies. We are to regard the *one bread* as the presentment of the *one body* of Christ. *All* who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are partakers of himself, "the true bread which came down from heaven." So *all* Christians ought to break bread, discerning in the one loaf upon which the eye rests, that they *all are one* in Christ Jesus, however scattered, however hindered.

— Strange to say, Mr Darby's party of "the brethren," teach a doctrine about the unity of "*The Table*," instead of the unity of the "*One bread*." To those who know how deeply the leaders of that party are versed in truth generally, it is quite staggering to have their "*TABLE*" theories tested by Scripture. They have, as Mr Dorman admits he had, so practically imbibed the thought of Mr Darby's infallibility, as to pass unquestioned, doctrines which a babe in Christ may overthrow, if he will but faithfully compare them with the "inspired Word."

But that, unhappily, we know it to be the fact, we confess we should be unable to credit the existence of such an infatuation as that which possesses our brethren, "*the exclusives*," respecting "*the table*." But we have to record it, simply and soberly, that they actually maintain the superstition that *they only* are able to spread a table in the name of the Lord, and that any table but theirs is the table of devils!

It is humiliating to make such a statement respecting christians endeared to us in so many ways, so much so that we could almost desire that our charge against them should be discredited. Our true hope is, however, that they may be aroused to look at *the truth*, and shake off the shackles which bind them, even the "traditions of the elders."

What does our scripture say about the Lord's table?

We have noticed how that the first part of the chapter warns against the more subtle forms of idolatry. Now, all who need the admonition, are cautioned against the grosser mixture of idolatrous things with those which our Lord has made sacred. The 18th verse is in unison with that passage—

"Both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified, are all of one." (Heb. ii. 11.)

It would seem that the Corinthians were knowingly partaking of things offered in sacrifice to idols (study the entire context), and they were admonished against such profanity, by being reminded that they were called to *practical sanctity*, because partakers of the Lord's table! By eating of things sacrificed to

idols they were having fellowship with devils! It is declared to them therefore that they cannot go on with such things and with God also.

"Ye cannot drink the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?"

Nothing can be more manifest than that the passage before us applies to a condition of things which no longer obtains in this part of the world.

It is also quite plain that the "*Lord's table*" is a table anywhere spread in the recognised sanctification of the Lord's name and presence!

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Address Letters for the Editor, care of Printer, 335, Strand, W.C.

EVIL DOCTRINE—HOW MUST WE DEAL WITH IT?

M. L. O., Belfast.—We thank you very much for your communication, which is written in the true spirit of Christian love, though you disapprove of the thoughts we have expressed on the subject of exclusion for doctrinal evil. Just look now at the following sentence which we quote from your letter:—

"You will admit, dear brother, that if you have taken a wrong view of this subject, you have done and are doing an awful amount of mischief to the Church of God, as well as to your own soul; while, on the other hand, if you have taken a right view, there are many of God's dear children, who are now walking in a lonely, trying path, who might be enjoying all the sweetness of communion and fellowship with those who are dear to their souls as a right hand or a right eye."

We think this last happy conclusion you arrive at, *as possible*, ought at least to induce you to re-consider carefully the judgment we have heretofore set forth on the subject. We will, however, endeavour to answer the points you raise. You refer us again to the words of the Apostle Paul, "Do not ye judge them that are within," &c. (1 Cor. v.)

We have fully pointed out that *judgment* is one thing, *excommunication* another. Moreover, the subject in the chapter named, is *moral evil*, not the leaven of false doctrine. The two kinds of leaven are fully brought out in the epistles to Corinthians and Galatians, and the remedy in each case is totally different. The morally *wicked person*, at Corinth, was to be delivered over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh—in fact, the *man* was to be *purged out*. The word to the Galatians was quite different; in their case the *doctrine* was to be *purged out*. How was this to be done? Not by cutting off the persons, but by *instilling truth* into them *afresh*. So bad was their case that the Apostle had to say to them, "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain"! Yet he continues his remonstrances with, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, I desire to be present with you," &c.

The fact is, as soon as you begin cutting off for erroneous doctrine, there is no knowing who will be left. This the exclusive brethren have abundantly proved; and if they were faithful to the mistaken principle adopted, they would end by cutting off their leader, Mr Darby himself. To deal with the leaven of doctrine in that way, will not stand the test of a single Scripture.

We are convinced that it is a *rare thing* to find a Christian free from error in doctrine. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened"! (Matt. xiii. 33.) Again, the Lord said to his disciples, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." (Mat. xvi. 6.) And that leaven is explained in verse 12 to be the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Such leaven did manifest itself in them, but did Jesus cast them off? Nay, his way is to reprove, and instil truth—that the leaven may be driven out, and the disciple healed! Do please try and separate in your mind the remedies provided for the two kinds of leaven, moral and doctrinal. The scriptures maintain a marked distinction. They are both *evil*, and we are not to consent to either, but we

must seek to get rid of them in a *Scriptural way*, each according to its order. As to doctrine, who is there that can affirm he holds the *whole truth of Scripture* according to God?

We do not know a single Christian on earth whose judgment we could trust *implicitly* on all points!

Paul could be trusted fully, because he had been in heaven and saw things from a heavenly standpoint. But the Apostle Peter could not be relied upon in the same way—"He was to be blamed." The apostle James and those with him also *dissembled*. (Gal. ii. 11—13.)

This answers your difficulty respecting Hymeneus and Alexander. With a clear conscience Paul could deliver these false teachers to Satan. But I do not think he would commission his beloved son Timothy to do so! I doubt whether in that day, much less in ours, any but "the apostle to the Gentiles" could be entrusted with such awful power. We think it evident he did not confer such authority upon any individual, and certainly not upon any of the Churches.

Respecting the gifts conferred upon Timothy—In the first epistle, "*by prophecy*" with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery"—and in the second epistle "by the laying on of the hands of the Apostle;" whatever was given he was not to neglect, but to stir up. That he had no commission given him to *excommunicate* is evident, for he himself is exhorted as a weak one. "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." (1 Tim. iv. 16.)

The very thought of excommunication, as generally held, is a fallacy. Scripture never stops short of delivering over the condemned one to Satan. It is an easy thing to *expel* an erring brother from a Christian assembly—but if believers know what they are doing, they will find it a very different matter to undertake to *deliver one over to Satan!*

It is to be done; it *must* be done in the instance of *moral guilt*, if of the kind set forth in 1 Cor. v. But what heart-breaking work it would be in such a case, if Christian love were operating in the Church!

But where is the assembly to be found so free from the leaven of evil doctrine, as to deliver a mistaken brother to Satan for speaking out some delusion of his heart, which many perhaps may indulge in secret? If you permit Christians to exercise their carnal judgment, some will be ready enough to carry out their thoughts about excommunication; but only insist upon having the sentence executed which was meted out, by apostolic power, to Hymeneus and Alexander; and we ask where are they who will take the responsibility. Mr Darby and a few zealots with him might pronounce that awful delivery of a brother to Satan; but if so, righteousness would require that they should deliver over *themselves also*, inasmuch as their judgment itself would be an evil doctrine, because unscriptural.

You say, you "Do not know any Scripture which teaches us to wait on God to judge and put out for evil doctrine." Neither do we; but we know that the Lord teaches us to wait upon Him in every difficulty. Where we have clear guidance from "the Word" we must take care to act it out; but there are a thousand difficulties in which the living Lord himself, is our only resource. We have to learn our own weakness and His strength. The introduction of evil doctrine tries believers in that way. By prayer, by constant and faithful use of Scripture, and really trusting our great Deliverer, we believe such evil will soon be put out of a little assembly of faithful ones, or the false teachers will themselves take their departure.

"They went out from us [the antichrists], but they were not of us, for if they had been of us they would have continued with us: but they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not of us." (1 John ii. 19.)

We quite sympathise with your sensitive spirit which shrinks from tolerating evil in any form. Don't tolerate it: let any who hold false doctrine know that you have no fellowship with them in it. Let us all have our spiritual judgments fully exercised in the word of God, and keenly alive through the monitions of the Holy Ghost. But let us fear to wield the sword in execution, even in defence of our Lord and Master, remembering his own words,

"Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." (Matt. xxvi. 52.)

If the evil in an assembly will not succumb to the faithful use of God's word, and faithful walk in ourselves, then a true-hearted believer must separate himself. "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." (2 Tim. ii. 19.)

WHAT CONSTITUTES A CHURCH ?

C. P., East Moulsey.—We thank you very sincerely for your truly encouraging epistle. It is cause for much praise to him who hath created us in Christ Jesus, when we are able to speak to one another in simple brotherly candour.

We have no thought of advocating the formation of churches, if by that term an *organisation* of any kind is implied. But if the word Church be accepted as synonymous with Assembly, in speaking of a meeting of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, then we certainly do recommend Christians to come together in fellowship as "Churches." We quite appreciate your fear that such assemblies may get puffed up with pride, and consider themselves as "the Churches," and finally, repeating "the Brethren" mistake of becoming confederate, take to themselves a place as "*the Church*." But we do not think there is much danger in that direction. The pretensions of Rome, and those of the "exclusive Brethren," have made *man's* attempted maintenance of a *visible* unity so odious, that, humanly speaking, there is little likelihood of a repetition of it. But in any case, we must never be deterred from pursuing the right path through apprehension of the possibility of eventual deviation. Enough for us to advocate, and do, whatever we see to be according to the mind of God *to-day*, without a care as to what may eventuate *to-morrow*. "*The Lord is at hand, be careful for nothing.*" May this truth be present with us in all we suggest or adopt.

We do not see that a local Church or assembly has any right to control, or dictate, to Christians who do not seek fellowship at the place of meeting. Nor ought one assembly to feel aggrieved if another should be held in the next street, or even in the next house. Neither, in such case, would one Church have any justification for interference in the internal arrangements of the other, or for insisting upon uniformity of doctrine. There might be much intercommunion, but it should be all in grace, not of necessity. Each assembly would have to look to the "one Lord," as much unimpeded by the neighbouring Church, as though the distance from Corinth to Rome was interposed between them. Such assemblies must take the true ground of *sufferance*, in contrast with the coveted place of *power* which has been sought for by all the sects of Christendom. They must be careful to have "that mind in them which was also in Christ Jesus, 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*," &c.

This is not new to us, dear brother. There was—and, thank God, there is even now—in many places, among various sections of "the brethren," the true spirit of Christ actuating local assemblies. Wherever there is failure, we believe it will be found to result chiefly from incorporation with other churches, meeting (according to the accepted phrase,) "*upon the same ground.*"

As to the various denominational bodies, we have no need to pronounce whether in any sense they can be called Churches. It is evident, however, that they do not consider themselves as assemblies of believers. The very fact that preaching the gospel of salvation to a congregation, is considered a necessity on all occasions, proves that any such meeting is not a Church according to the true significance of the word.

Doubtless a local Church properly comprises all true Christians in the district. Perhaps only a few of them may be in fellowship together, in the way the Lord would have them; others unhappily are "unnoqually yoked together with unbelievers," in opposition to His word. As a fact, the first named few are a *Church* or assembly of the followers of Jesus; while the others are *units out of place*. Alas, many of them do not know their proper calling, and we accordingly sorrow over rather than blame them; but the position they occupy in relation to the local Church or Churches is just as we have said, that of *units out of place*.

On the subject of Mr Darby's method of receiving to and putting away from "the Exclusive Party," otherwise called by them "*the Table*,"—no wonder you could get no answer from our misguided brother to your enquiries. Any reply he might have given would be self-condemnatory.

It is wonderful that so many intelligent and spiritual Christians as are numbered among Mr Darby's followers, can suffer themselves to be kept in bondage to theories and practices which are utterly untenable when brought to the test of the Scriptures? And this, notwithstanding that, on all subjects apart from the errors of their leader, they own the "inspired word" as an infallible guide!

Where can any justification be found in the New Testament, for their assumption of the guidance of the Holy Ghost in their judicial sentences of excommunication? There is no such position recognised in any of the Epistles to the Churches. Even in the instance of the judgment demanded of the assembly at Corinth, it is "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, *and my spirit*, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan," &c.

Here we are shown the need of having, in any such judgment, the spirit of "the Apostle to the Gentiles;" but the sentence is not at all associated with the name of the Holy Ghost! Nor do we think the name of God's Holy Spirit is anywhere in the Sacred writings linked up with judgment upon saints. On the contrary, is not His holy and blessed ministry among us always in grace? So that, (thoughtlessness apart,) to attach the name of the Holy Ghost to any such judgment as the "exclusive brethren" have arrived at, is little short of blasphemy!

As to the pretensions of the party generally, we repeat your words—"Conceive for a moment the assumption of being *THE ONE ASSEMBLY*, having the Holy Spirit to direct it,—the temple of God, bound to act in the Spirit by the Word—[See "Bible Treasury," April, 1867]—I say, conceive such an "Assembly not having yet arrived at a conclusion concerning "Baptism!! Is it conceivable that simple, and alone desire to "please God, can have led to such looseness?"

BAPTISM AND BREAKING OF BREAD.

F. H., Pentonville.—We are truly thankful for the earnest love manifest in your second letter, and accept in simplicity your assurance that you desire to be conformed to the Lord's will about Baptism. We cheerfully, therefore, resume the subject with you. It seems to us, however, that you really have exhausted your difficulties when you say, "If I, not discerning "water baptism to be the Lord's mind, should be baptized, to "me it would be sin."

Where can you find scripture to warrant such a thought as that? How are we to know the Lord's mind? Even by accepting, and *doing*, the things which he has said. "If any man "will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." (John vii. 17.) This is a divine principle upon which the believer is required to act. And the teachings of Scripture on the subject of baptism are most exactly based upon it. As we have already remarked, there was no explanation given, respecting baptism, to those upon whom it was enjoined, *until after they had submitted to it*. Believers were commanded to be baptized, and they were baptized, as a matter of course. *Afterwards*, in writing to the churches, the Apostles were permitted to explain the deep meaning of the ordinance.

Depend upon it, dear brother, the Lord's way is, first *child-like*, unquestioning obedience to His commands, and then an intelligent apprehension of their importance. The natural mind is prone to reverse the divine order. Hence the confusion and difficulty which prevail.

You say, many of our arguments are potent, and you weigh them as such. Does not this admission leave you without excuse?

You do not like our reply concerning breaking of bread. We are sorry you do not; but why not point out wherein you think us in error?

In reference to 1 Cor. x. 16, 17, "The Table" is not presented as a figure of unity, though the Bread which we break is. Do not think we are differing with you about

phraseology merely. The truth brought out in ver. 20, about "the Table," is quite apart from the question of unity. Well, the one loaf represents the many members of the one body, quite irrespective of the question of where those members are to be found, or even that of their moral walk. The wicked fornicator, delivered over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus, was yet represented as a member, by the "One Bread;" though he had personally forfeited his right to recognition among his brethren. So we believe, dear brother, that the "one loaf" you last were permitted to break, represents the writer of this, in common with all the members of the body of Christ; and likewise, in the "one bread" of which we partook through grace, last Lord's Day, you were included in its presentment of "the unity." But in all this, the question of experimental Christian fellowship, remains untouched.

As a fact, surely we must be all agreed that, those will walk most happily in practical fellowship, who accept the Lord's commands *implicitly*. To follow Christians who elect to be conformed in *certain things only*, we neither can nor should deny any Christian privileges; but they who walk in the obedience of faith may very fairly say, "We do not wish the elements of disorder introduced among us."

Suppose a Christian holding the tenets of the *Society of Friends*, were to seek fellowship in worship with you. You, knowing that such repudiate both baptism and breaking of bread, would naturally reply to him, "Dear Brother, as a member of the body of Christ, you have a right to join with us in worship; but when we show forth the Lord's death, those who know you, will feel grieved that you dishonour our Saviour by refusing the bread and wine which He has graciously given us to partake of in remembrance of Him. There will thus be hindrance to full fellowship. If you will not conform to that which is clearly the mind of the Lord, according to Scripture, will it not be better for you to meet with those who think about these things as you do?" We ask you to apply this to the question of communion with unbaptized believers. May we not leave the case thus?

J. C. A., Hull.—It is a solemn thing to take such a case into your own hands. Your letter expresses a fear that your course will be condemned. "If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things." You are in the Lord's hands. If you are acting in the Spirit to his glory, he will sustain you; but if the flesh be yet unjudged, the Lord is Lord, and knoweth how to chasten. May you have grace to consider the past in the light of Heb. x. 30, 31.

AMICUS.—If we could spare the needful space, your communication should have insertion, though we should take the liberty of altering the word "Darbyites." We hope, as opportunity may serve, if the Lord delay his coming, to steadily press upon the consideration of Mr Darby's disciples the actual proceedings of our brother and those confederated with him. They are, however (apart from the grievous spirit of bigotry which possesses them), very dear Christians, and we therefore seek to avoid the use of a name which seems to savour of enmity. — We entirely sympathise with you in grieving over the fact that so many beloved ones in Christ, who continue in the ranks of the above party, are totally ignorant of the sinful course taken by their leaders in the excommunication of assemblies.

J. H., Monk's Eleigh.—We quite agree with you that the practice of "*Congregational singing*," that is, a mixed multitude of believers and unbelievers joining in hymns of prayer or praise, is very sad to witness, and manifestly contrary to the mind of God. The Lord's way is ever to separate those who are his from those who know him not. It is through Christians commonly shutting their eyes to this foundation principle, that the confusion which prevails in Christendom is perpetuated. It is in vain to look for any remedy in the way of *Corporate* reform. The only deliverance is in the power of the individual believer. It is that of separation from the mixture, and standing apart in faithfulness to the Lord, content to company with the few who "call on the Lord out of a pure heart." We are

not surprised, however, that the number is small whose faith is sufficiently strong to make this practical protest against the evil complained of. Faithfulness always requires self-sacrifice. It is not easy "to go forth unto Jesus, *outside the camp*, bearing his reproach." (Heb. xiii. 13.) But this is what the Christian is called to do in this day, and happy are they who thus follow the counsels of their Lord.

J. C. junr., Kensington.—It is very evident that in you, dear brother, Mr Newton has a very zealous advocate. But we fear that your feelings have been too keenly aroused, through the excessive denunciations heaped upon your *friend*, to admit of your judgment being exercised dispassionately. We are forced to this conclusion from the impatience manifested in your letters against any calm examination of that which is charged against him.

We must decline, at present, to entertain any other point of doctrine held by the writer in question, until you show us that he has, in *terms*, recanted the views he set forth in the tracts which you say were withdrawn for re-consideration. It is understood that Mr N.'s teaching was to the effect, "that our Lord Jesus Christ, as a Jew born, was in the place of distance from God, and was under necessity, by a life of conformity to the law, to work himself into a position where God could meet him," and, "that he was subject to inflictions from God in his lifetime, apart from the sufferings of the Cross." We merely repeat from memory (subject to correction) that which we have heard charged against him. Now, the only way to remove the imputation, is to produce the tracts to show that they are free from such dreadful errors. If that cannot be done, the only other course for Mr N. is to state distinctly that he now unreservedly withdraws and repudiates such teachings, as unscriptural. Until that be done, any defence of himself, such as the letter from which you quote, is absolutely worthless.

We must add that, in our estimation, any Christian against whom such a charge, as that referred to, is laid, is inexcusable if he offers anything less than a full and emphatic contradiction of it; and such a one is totally unworthy of being listened to as a teacher.

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PRECIOUS TRUTH.

“WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?”—(Rom. iv. 3.)

London: — J. B. BATEMAN, 22, Paternoster Row, entrance in Ivy Lane.

No. 27.]

JUNE 1, 1867.

[One Halfpenny.]

TO THE WISE, YET CHILDLIKE DISCIPLE.

(Continued from the April number of “Precious Truth.”)

BELoved,—In continuance of the thoughts suggested from the 1st and 2nd chapters of the general epistle of John—I would remind you that we have had in review, in my former letter, the sinfulness of our old Adam nature, and the divine remedy for its misdoings. Also, God’s thoughts about the world, and our call to strangership in it.

Next in order for consideration, comes the spirit of antichrist.

This is at least as effectual a foe to the child of God, as either of the first-named evils.

Consider, beloved, that while the naturally sinful tendencies of our carnal nature cause us to groan—and the blandishments of the world, with its fashions and vanities, are used by the adversary to make us forget our sonship; on the other hand we are beset with *antichrists*, who seek to draw us into *religious associations*, which are not according to the Christ of God.

“Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.” Ver. 18.

Where is our remedy in such a state of things? Surely it is, to remember we are “*little children*,” and so wait upon God and His word in the name of Jesus.

Strength only will be found when we know our own weakness. Then we are glad to wait upon the Lord for deliverance. We are powerless to overthrow antichrists, or exterminate them. They are an intolerable evil, and we are neither to co-operate with, nor submit to them. But we can only deal with them according to the mind of Christ. By our walk and conversation we can give them clearly to see that we are not actuated by the same spirit. The youngest child in the faith can do that.

It is not a question of being profoundly taught in the Scriptures.

All ought to drink deeply and continually of the word of God. But the youngest Christian who has been taught his calling as a child of God, is enabled, by the Holy Spirit’s quickening power, to detect the spirit of antichrist.

“Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.” Ver. 20.

This, be it remembered, is said to “*little children*.” It is not that they have yet entered into all which God has revealed. But they have the *spirit of wisdom abiding in them*, and if they follow His leading he makes them quick to detect the spirit of error.

It is not that they can dispense with teachers. Children have still to be taught in the truth, and to acquire heavenly knowledge. But that which they have by the Holy Ghost is—power to *test* the spiritual character of men and doctrines.

They that they are of antichrist seek position and power *on earth*. But they that are led of the Holy Ghost care only for the place reserved for them *in HEAVEN*.

Moreover, though we are called to be ever increasing in true knowledge, (while waiting the time when knowledge itself shall vanish away, and we shall know even as we are known), it ought to be understood by every “*little child*” of grace, that as holding the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, he is thereby furnished with a protection against antichrist.

“I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.” Ver. 21.

Here, again, it is power, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God, to discern between that which is false and that which is true.

There is also a detective character in the primary doctrines which all Christians ought to hold.

The truth, received by all believers in the first days, was this—

That Jesus is the Christ.

That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.

That he was seen of Cephas (Peter), then of the twelve: after that he was seen of five hundred brethren at once: afterwards he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of Paul also, as of one born out of due time.

That if Christ be not risen, then is preaching vain and faith also is vain. That if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

That as in Adam all die, even so in Christ, all those who believe in him shall be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterwards they that are Christ’s at his coming.

That as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

Behold I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead (in Christ) shall be raised incorruptible, and we (who may be alive) shall be changed. For this corruptible must put an incorruption, and this mortal put an immortality.

The above is paraphrased from the 15th chapter of the 1st epistle to Corinthians.

This is the truth to deliver us from antichrists. If we are holding ourselves in expectation of the “glorious appearing of the great God our Saviour Jesus Christ,” the spirit of antichrist will be quite powerless to seduce us.

You see, beloved, that the Holy Ghost builds us up in a HEAVENLY religion, and teaches us to know

our place in heaven now by faith, in anticipation of the day when our looked-for Redeemer will take us there bodily.

In contrast with this—the antichrists always endeavour to substitute an EARTHLY religion, or a compromise between the flesh and the spirit to suit the carnal mind. We all NATURALLY crave after a ceremonial worship, such as God gave to his EARTHLY people Israel. Our eyes and ears desire to be gratified; while the body submits to an outward worship. Mere nature is, of course, attracted to the richly-built and decorated edifice, with priests in flowing robes performing their assumed functions—to the sound of the organ, or other musical instruments, and to an ornate liturgy. All these things gratify the natural man and excite his emotions.

Antichrist takes advantage of this, and accordingly DRAGS DOWN many of the inconsiderate children of God from heaven to earth. That is, as to their experience, hopes, and conversation.

True religion, as now taught of the Holy Spirit, is in CONTRAST with all that. The natural senses are rather humbled than gratified by it.

Worship is no longer a question of rivalry between the Mountain of Samaria and God's earthly City, Jerusalem. (See John iv. 20, 21.) But—

"They that worship the Father must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

The praises of the lips must be accompanied by the right desires of the regenerate heart, or it is all worse than vanity.

The writings of the apostles show that TRUE Christian worship (if judged by the carnal mind,) has no attractions. Its two ordinances are of the most meagre and humiliating character. The first of these, namely Baptism, shows that the NATURAL man, as formerly pertaining to the believer, is, through faith in the operations of God, BURIED with Christ. The FLESH, therefore, it is evident, cannot be permitted to bring in its inventions, and so glory before God. The Christian is accepted in a NEW nature. Oh, that this were understood.

The second ordinance, namely, that of "The Lord's Supper," sets forth that, by the breaking of the body, and shedding of the blood of the Son of God, the true believer is, as a sinner, forgiven and cleansed, and made a member of the Body of the risen Christ of God.

The unattractiveness of such observances is displeasing to the "old man" even in many Christians; and is held in utter contempt by the unregenerate.

So that even when baptism is submitted to, it is often made a showy ceremony. And the tendency is, with respect to the Lord's table, to surround it with accessories altogether foreign to its Scriptural simplicity.

We are, however, to remember that Christ is the *rejected* of the world, and is not to be gratified with its hollow professions and services. Nor are we to imitate any of its carnal worship.

"Let us go forth, therefore, unto him outside the camp, bearing his reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come." (Heb. xiii. 13, 14.)

And as to doing the things which accord with the heavenly calling of his PECULIAR people—

"By him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.

"But to do good, and to communicate [i.e. dispense blessing, temporal and spiritual] forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." (Heb. xiii.)

Beloved—Truth is very precious; it is given us to know and to practise.

"Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." (Eph v.)

There are, indeed many antichrists—we are not able, I repeat, to put them down—but we have heavenly wisdom, and the anointing of the Holy Ghost, wherewith to detect and AVOID them.

Yours ever,

(Waiting for the coming of the Lord,)

E. P. T.

THE BIBLE.

AND

The true Standpoint from which to study it.

In considering the books of the New Testament, the attentive reader cannot but be struck with the apparently *unsystematic* way in which Truth is presented. This applies with special force, if the Scripture student is looking for an instituted order of religion at all suited to the NATURAL man. In reading the Old Testament, it is easy to follow, in thought, the Tabernacle and Temple worship given to the children of Israel. But nothing of that kind can be found as pertaining to the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As there are no CARNAL institutions ordained of God, in the New Testament Scriptures, it has been unwisely considered that Christians must in some measure *imitate* the methodical services of the Mosaic dispensation. But the practical adoption of this thought has necessarily resulted in the confusion which abounds throughout Christendom.

The truth is, that the purpose of God, during this present dispensation, is *not* to set up earthly institutions, but to gather out from a condemned world a people who, *by faith*, cleave to His beloved Son, who was *by man rejected and crucified*. Jesus, "the Son of the Blessed," was once on earth to PROVE men and their institutions, and they were all weighed in the balances and found wanting.

The world is now, therefore, under judgment. That is to say, judgment is pronounced, and will soon be executed upon it.

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night." (2 Peter iii. 8-9.)

Meanwhile, the Son of Man, seated on the throne of God, as a Prince and a Saviour, *draws up* to Himself, where He is, all who trust in Him. Believers are rescued from the coming judgments, as Enoch was before the days of the flood.

All this, by the goodness of God, is now beginning to be generally understood by Christians. But it is needful to have it clearly in our minds in contemplating our calling as disciples of Jesus Christ. For it is evident that if we, believers, are expecting to be translated from earth to heaven, and that the world will surely be overtaken suddenly by the wrath of God, we shall easily understand why all religious arrangements made for us while here, according to the provisions of the New Testament Scriptures, are of the most temporary character. The word of God furnishes us with provisions for the passing hour, but we may reverently say, they are all "from hand to mouth."

When believers, in the first days of the Christian dispensation, sold off all their possessions and laid the money at the apostles' feet, it would have been a fine opportunity—speaking after the manner of men—for building up a permanent system! But the disciples knew well that nothing pleasing in God's sight could now be established on earth, until the Lord Jesus should come again and execute judgment that He might afterwards establish His own reign on the earth, in righteousness.

It is wonderful that men so little regard the solemn fact that the Son of God was rejected and crucified by the world!

It is especially the rejection of Christ, first in His own sacred person, and then in the testimony and persons of his followers, which leaves unbelievers exposed to the wrath of God.

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John iii. 36.)

Wonderful to say, the Scriptures do not seem to denounce vengeance upon the world for having crucified "the Son of the Blessed;" for Jesus, who is indeed rich in mercy, prayed—

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Oh, what an amazing thing it is, that "the Father of mercies" could endure, for the sake of poor sinners, to see His well-beloved Son nailed to the accursed tree! Yes, God permitted this dreadful deed on man's part, and has LEFT it UNAVENGED! But that which the Lord will not permit is, that His word should be disbelieved. To refuse to believe a man is to charge him with being a liar; and the rejection of God's testimony is regarded by Him in the same way, and is absolutely INTOLERABLE.

"He that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son." (1 John v. 10.)

Thus, everything now depends upon "believing." Many of the Jews who had rejected the Saviour when He was living in their midst, and who perhaps joined in the cry, "Crucify him, crucify him," yet believed at the preaching of Peter and the others, and were saved! Thus it is now. Men whose hearts are wicked enough to put to death the Holy One of God, if they hear the Gospel, and believe in Jesus, are saved!

The Gospel being preached and believers being

saved, their destiny is totally changed. They were children of wrath; now they are children of God. They have commenced a *new* life by the obedience of faith, and they are to live now continually in the obedience of faith. They begin by vindicating God, confessing, in the face of the world, the name of Jesus, His rejected Son. Now they are to live in constant expectation of ascending up *where He is*. And as they love Him whom they have not yet seen, so they are to "set their affections on things above," although those things are not yet visible.

This is the secret of Christian faithfulness. It is the acceptance of promises, and walking in the power of unseen realities.

If this be understood, it is easy to comprehend why the writings of the apostles ignore all thought of building temples and instituting ceremonial observances. Such things are altogether inconsistent with the attitude of those who are taught by their Redeemer,—

"Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord." (Luke xii. 35, 36.)

If a loving subject were about to emigrate to a distant land, whither his lawful king had retired because his subjects had rebelled against him, he would not, while waiting, take part in the plans and politics of the insurrectionists. It might be that fellow-emigrants, intending to depart with him, would urge that, until the ship were ready, he might as well go on with the ways of the rebels, if only to avoid singularity. The faithful one would, however, say—"Nay, I submit to the authorities which now exist in this rebel land, and I do whatever my duty may require; but my heart is with my beloved sovereign, over the seas; his ways are my ways; I conform myself to him and to the directions he has given me, while waiting here. I am only waiting, and shall soon depart."

This is exactly the position of a true Christian—always "waiting to depart." And while waiting, occupied in doing the things that are pleasing in the sight of the Lord.

But there is another feature of truth much insisted upon in the teachings of the New Testament, which also sheds great light upon the unceremonial character of the Christian religion. We allude to the way in which the ritual worship instituted under the Mosaic economy is declared to have served its purpose and come to an end.

"Let no man judge you in meat or in drink [margin, for eating and drinking,] or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days; which are [or were] a shadow of things to come: but the body is of Christ." (Col. ii. 16, 17.)

So, in the 8th chapter of Hebrews, verse 5, it is said the priests under the law serve as "a shadow of heavenly things." And again, in Heb. x. 1, "The law having a shadow of good things to come," &c.

It is evident that the substance being come, "God manifest in the flesh," we have no longer to do with shadows. Speaking of the Levitical priesthood, and the tabernacle and the sacrifices which were ordained

of God, the divine commentary is—

"The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing; which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed until the time of reformation. But Christ being come, an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us [believers]." (Heb. ix. 8-12.)

"Christ being come" has altered everything. Whereas before that time God was pleased to accept an *imperfect* worship—now, all who approach Him must be *perfect*, because he has provided that perfection for them in Christ. Believers are "accepted in the Beloved." Their Great High Priest has obtained an entrance for them, open now to faith, within the holiest of all.

Of course, *mere reason* can never grasp this. The natural mind deals with things that are seen. But those who are spiritually taught are glad to discover that in Christ himself they have all the requisites of worship in *perfection*. The highest religious services ever offered on earth, even though appointed of God himself, were but shadows of Christ. Now that he himself is known to faith, who would deal any more with shadows?

In the Gospels by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, we see the shadows fading away in the presence of the living substance, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He had come, the Light of the world, and all ought to have rejoiced in the bright reality of His presence.

But Israel and the world preferred shadows,—yea, they preferred darkness. They rejected the true light and shut Him out; they cast Him out and crucified Him. But even now there is a way of access to him, by faith, and those who know the true light, and the narrow way, ought no longer to abide in darkness.

Arrived at this point, as those who are brought into the light, we shall hope, if the Lord shall delay His coming, to look more in detail into the books of the New Testament.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

"Christ our passover is slain for us: therefore let us keep the feast," [or holyday, *see margin.*] 1 Cor. v. 8.

We have in this text a clear indication of God's mind about "the cup of blessing which we bless, and the bread which we break," in commemoration of the Lord's death, for though the 5th* chapter does not speak expressly of the Lord's supper. Yet the meaning of this Christian ordinance may, by that passage, be made very manifest to those who are spiritual.

When the Israelites were to be delivered out of

* The "Supper" is specifically taken up in the 11th chapter of 1 Cor.

Egypt, the paschal lamb was slain, and the blood of the victim was instrumentally used to protect God's chosen people from destruction. But the *body* of the animal was made a "feast" for them. And ever after that night, (when the Egyptians fell under the destroying angel while their bond slaves were saved through the interposition of divine grace,) the delivered people were to commemorate their deliverance by annually *feasting* upon the passover lamb. The blood had done its work once, and was needed no more. Henceforth the passover was ordained as a *feast*.

In the Scripture we have quoted, Christians are taught that Christ our passover having been slain for us, we, like the Israelites, are to keep a feast in celebration of our deliverance. And ours is deliverance from bondage far worse than that of Egypt, and from a taskmaster (Satan) more potent and hardened than Pharaoh.

It is true that our feast in its highest sense must ever be a spiritual one. We do, in fact, feast upon Christ himself. As we drink in the word of truth, the Scriptures—as we feed upon the bread from heaven, even all the word of God—as we rejoice in the wine of the fulness of Christ, entering, by faith, into His perfections and glory—we really keep the feast and holyday of our passover.

But our Lord has been pleased to give us an external ordinance expressive of the spiritual feast we enter into by faith.

In the bread we break, we are to discern the Lord's body broken for us, and in the poured-out wine his precious blood shed for the remission of sins.

Now, the important feature to bear in mind is, that we break the bread and drink of the cup *because we are saved*.

Alas! how many partake of the bread and wine in the vain hope that such a performance will help them to be saved!

It is wonderful how any one can fall under the power of such a superstition.

What folly it would have been for the Israelites of old to have eaten the paschal lamb in the hope that they would be saved in consequence of so doing!

The *blood* was the instrument of their salvation; and the *blood* of the *Lamb of God* has brought salvation to all who believe in Him. They ate of the lamb because God had redeemed them. And we partake of the bread and wine *because we are saved*, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The feast of the passover was a *thankful remembrance* of God's delivering grace. So, in giving us the bread and wine, our Lord enjoins all who believe in Him to eat and drink, *GIVING THANKS* in *remembrance* of Him.

Christians when breaking bread together, in commemoration of the Lord's death, *in that act* virtually say this:—"We are *happy*; our sins are *put away*: our God has given us salvation. The body of Christ our Lord was broken for us; for *His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree*, (1 Pet. ii. 24.) We are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, (1 Pet. i. 19.) We are set apart—*sanctified* by Him;

we are perfected for ever, (Heb. x. 12—14.) Therefore we render thanksgiving to God—'I will praise Thee for ever, because Thou hast done it; and I will wait on Thy name, for it is good, before Thy saints.' " (Psalm lii. 9.)

This is the attitude which glorifies God—that of accepting thankfully all He has done for us.

As to the thought of "sacrifice" which may in any way accompany the breaking of bread—we can only recognise the SACRIFICE of praise. Our commemoration of the Lord's death is thanksgiving *in action*. It is setting forth, in a visible act, the beautiful ascription of praise in the first chapter of the Revelation.—

"Unto Him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

As we have seen, this manifestation of thankfulness for salvation received, has a special expression in our rightly partaking of the Lord's supper. But the sacrifice of praise ought to be ascending from Christians continually.

We have no desire to appropriate the verse quoted at the commencement of this paper, as applying at all exclusively to "breaking of bread." On the contrary, the significance of the passage belongs to the whole of our Christian life. The believer says, "For me to live is Christ." Now to live Christ, is to live a PERPETUAL HOLYDAY, a continuous feast.

Life with us ought to be a continual stream of thanksgiving, through Christ our Lord.

"By him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name. But to do good, and to communicate [dispense blessings] forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." (Heb. xiii. 15, 16.)

Praise to God and the dispensing of his gifts are the two Christian sacrifices.

"In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." (1 Thess. v. 18.)

"As we have therefore opportunity let us do good unto all, especially to them who are of the household of faith." (Gal. vi. 10.)

Again, this happy condition, in which we are to abide, according to the mind of God, is manifested in that word—

"Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for ALL things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Eph. v. 19, 20.)

This should be the normal condition of all who love the Lord Jesus Christ. Their coming together to show forth the Lord's death, is to be regarded as a special manifestation of the spirit of praise which abides in them for ever.

In regarding Israel's passover as a figure of our Christian feast, it is well to remember that our Lord was pleased to make the one flow out of the other. Yea, the very UNLEAVENED bread eaten at the passover supper is that which our Lord used to signify to us his broken body. Then it was *after* supper that the Master dispensed the wine-cup to his disciples.

Thus, we thankfully feed upon the bread which

came down from heaven, and consequent upon that feast, we find in our hand "the cup of blessing," the occasion of renewed thanksgiving.

It is always with thanks to God we are to break the bread, and again with thanksgiving we are to drink the wine.

"Happy they who trust in Jesus,
Sweet their portion is and sure."

JAMES, THE SON OF ALPHÆUS.

[COMMUNICATED.]

[It may be the fact, that the Epistle of James was written before the higher revelations concerning the call of the Church, were given. For aught that appears in the Word, it may have been written the earliest of all. The general impression is—that it was written very late in the apostolic period; under this impression, the writer offers the following remarks.]

Although James, equally with the rest of the Lord's Apostles, received the command to preach the Gospel to every creature—to go to *all nations*, yet we never find him *out* of Jerusalem! He is there in Acts xv. Gal. ii. Acts xxi. and it would seem by the expression "twelve tribes scattered abroad," that his epistle was also written from Jerusalem or Judæa.

While it would not become us to judge how far this devotedness to his countrymen was according to the Lord's mind, (or the contrary,) it is evident to me that it shut out from his contemplation those higher aspects of truth revealed to Paul, and continually taught by that Apostle. We cannot say James had not received those higher revelations, through the writings, or from the personal fellowship of the Apostle to the Gentiles; but it is reasonable to suppose, that if Peter, (who was more at liberty from Judaism than James,) admitted that there were in the Pauline writings things hard to be understood (2 Pet.), that James would have admitted the same; and it is clear that the difficulty in receiving the revelations given to Paul *would be in proportion to the Jewish tendencies of the reader*—tendencies which were so strong in James that his epistle is more like the Lord's teaching before the Cross, as a minister to the circumcision, than that of a teacher in the Church of God, and an Apostle of Christ crucified. I desire to press this very strongly upon the reader, that James takes in his epistle very much the same ground (*as a teacher*), that we may suppose he would have taken before the Lord had suffered, reflecting the Lord's own moral teachings. I also think that, at the period of writing his epistle, he was still looking, as in Acts i., for the restoration "*of the Kingdom to Israel*."

There is nothing in James's epistle, or in his address to the elders in the Acts (xv.), to indicate that he rose any higher than the expectation of this national restoration, the legitimate Jewish hope. The doctrine of the "middle wall of partition" broken

down, and souls gathered through the preached word, and baptized by the Holy Ghost into the One Body, (i.e. the call of the Church,) nowhere appears in that epistle. Believers from Gentilism are nowhere taken up even as "brethren," much less as members of the One Body. It is true that, in Acts xv. James does admit the divine teaching given to Peter, that the Gentiles are no longer to be considered "common or unclean," in a ceremonial sense, and he deeply rejoiced in Gentile believers coming into blessing *with the Jew*, (Acts xxi. 20,) as it was foretold they would,—“Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people,”—a word that will, indeed, be fulfilled in the times of the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, in Millennial days, when Mount Zion shall have become the *joy* of the *whole* earth. This was the plane of James's spiritual vision and the level of his teaching. At least, we have no evidence in the Word of his taking the higher range of truth involved in the building of the One Body, composed of both Jew and Gentile, having its place and hope in the heavens.

James's address in Acts xv. strongly confirms this view—that he simply held that the Gentile would share in Divine blessing with the Jew :

“And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon [Simon Peter] hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.”

James seems to have considered that Jewish Christians might circumcise children, and go on with the Law just as they did before they believed, (Acts xxi. Gal. ii.); the only real difference being—the belief that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah and a confidence in His return, their old standing as God's favoured people being regarded as thus confirmed and perpetuated to them. James takes up the “twelve tribes scattered,” (it seems to me,) not as sinners saved by grace through faith,—but as God's people, for whom indeed Messiah had been cut off, not for Himself. I am convinced he laboured with the one object, of proving to his countrymen that Jesus was the Christ, and as believers were more and more added to the assemblies,* and as that generation was not to pass away, he knew, without terrible judgments coming upon Jerusalem and the stiffnecked Jews (Matt. xxiv.), so he could comfort believers with the assurance that the coming of the Lord drew nigh, that return having to be preceded by a purgation of judgment.

Thus I am obliged to think that James was occupied with the Jewish hope of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to the earth, to reign in righteousness on the throne of His father David. This is the

* In Acts xv. the elders with James say to Paul—“Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe!”—literally, how many *tens* of thousands.

“gospel of the kingdom,” and was, of course, true; but the call of the One Body has intervened, through the failure of Israel as a nation. But after the call or translation of the Church or Bride to her place in the heavens (1 Thess. iv.) then will James's line of truth be resumed, and the return of the Lord to the earth become the one hope of believing Jews and Gentiles.

Had James's mind been occupied with the Call of the Church it is strange he has made no reference to it in his epistle; is it not?

My views of James's standpoint as a teacher, are further justified by the absence in his epistle of these other important doctrines found in the epistles of Paul to the churches. (1) There is nowhere in it a simple broad statement of the Gospel of the Grace of God—salvation to everyone that believeth.

2. The Holy Spirit, also, is not referred to by James, either in regard to His person or office, as Sealing, Indwelling, Leading, and Teaching the saints. This is not remarkable, considering that the Holy Spirit's special work has reference to the formation of the ONE BODY.

“In whom, after that ye believed, ye were sealed by that Holy Spirit of Promise.” (Eph. i.)

While, therefore, Paul takes the high ground—

“Walk in the Spirit [i.e. in the leadings of the Holy Spirit], and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh;”

James's range is—

“If ye fulfil the royal law, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, thou shalt do well.”

James has a keen eye for the workings of the old nature in believers, and strenuously denounces them; Paul urges us, as new creatures and a heavenly people, to reckon ourselves “dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

The Apostle Peter, who moved more about among the Gentile brethren, is seen, in the Word, to be more lifted above the Jewish aspects of truth than James. It is not clear to me that his first epistle is addressed to Christians generally; but his second is evidently so addressed. Nevertheless, his apprehensions of the coming of the Lord are rather those of His coming to the earth in judgment than His coming into the air and calling the Church up to Himself. This wonderful antecedent event, we may well suppose, was in his mind, when he refers to the things in the writings of “our beloved brother Paul” hard to be understood. (2 Pet.)

The Apostle John is exalted and spiritual in his teaching; he ignores earthly distinctions; enlarges on our being sons of God, and our being changed at the Lord's coming into His likeness; and is very full and clear on the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. Nevertheless, there is evidence in the “Galatians” that at first even he was devoted to the circumcision.

Supposing the reader has not followed me in everything I have advanced, he will doubtless admit that truth will ever be revealed in *proportion to faithfulness*. Paul was most faithful to the Lord's command of going to all nations; and consequently, he has the highest honours, is caught up into the third

heavens, receives the most exalted revelations, and is honoured in having to present the highest truth. All that James says is true—most valuable truth—but it is uttered from an earthly and Jewish point of view. As the Lord overruled and brought special good out of Paul's persistent going up to Jerusalem, so, doubtless, the Lord overruled for good James's tenacity to his countrymen and his country's hope: but whether it was most in keeping with His command to begin, but not to *stop* at Jerusalem, may allowably be doubted.

It may also be regarded as certain, that if converts are left on low ground by their teachers, they will be hindered themselves and hinderers of others. We cannot take lower ground than God has given us without injury. Jerusalem became a source whence issued teachers who greatly troubled the brethren. Not apprehending the setting aside for a time of the national hope, they pressed the brethren from among the Gentiles to receive the mark in the flesh of national favour—circumcision! So, also, how true it is that Christians who have been brought up under Law will be unable to teach others any higher truth.

From these considerations we learn, too, the importance of our giving primary heed, as Gentiles, to the letters to the Gentile churches by the apostle to the Gentiles, who received truth afresh directly from the Lord for us. J. E.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Address Letters for the Editor, care of Printer, 335, Strand, W.C.

W. S., ISLINGTON.—We give your letter entire, the subject of enquiry being one of great importance.

"DEAR BROTHER.—I trust you will not think the following question trivial or idle, as I believe it enters very largely into much of the *unwritten, floating theology* of many believers.

It is the teaching (if I am not greatly mistaken) of the word of God, that his people are "born from above"—"created anew in Christ Jesus"—"begotten again by the word of His truth"—having a new nature—the seed of God—implanted in their souls.

The Spirit of God also dwells in their hearts—and by His gracious loving ministry this new nature is fostered and cherished, and grows stronger, and becomes more influential in spite of the *old nature*, which remains corrupt, as before.

Now just as our bodies require food—so does this, the new nature, require nourishment. This, in His grace, Jesus is pleased to supply in His *own person*. He is the true bread—the living bread—the hidden manna. (John vi.) We eat him and live by him. His flesh is meat indeed, His blood is drink indeed.

Now, our hands supply our material bodies with the food set before us—so *faith* brings to our souls the hidden manna, the living bread.

Hence, the more we act by faith in Christ, the more will our souls be nourished by Him. I write, however, dear brother, to ask your thoughts as to the relation of all this to the Lord's Supper.

I suppose that our taking the bread and wine is a symbolical expression of the fact that we are of the number of those that eat the flesh and drink the blood of our precious Saviour.

But at the moment of receiving the elements, do we partake of Christ in a manner different to that in which we do at other times? Do we THEN eat His flesh and drink his blood more truly, or in a greater measure?

Many of God's children, by their prayers and expressions,

have impressed me with the idea that *they think this*,—and young disciples especially, look for some peculiar manifestation of the comforts of Christ *just at that moment*, expect "to feel His blood flow"—to feel "precious drops bedewing their souls"—"to realize the living bread actually nourishing them," &c., &c.

Now is this right?—or

(1.) Except as our faith is in happy, lively exercise, and then Christ is consciously fed on; He is not communicated to the souls of His people any more *then* than at other times.

(2.) The joy that should be looked for is the joy of obedience—the joy of remembering Jesus gratefully, humbly, and with a contrite heart—not any strange mysterious emotions connected with Christ, received in a *fuller* and more manifest manner than at other times, when the bread and wine are received.

A word or two from you, dear brother, would be of value. Dear Christians often speak of not getting on at the Lord's Table—making [certain happy feelings—not practical obedience—the first thing to be looked to.

I fear lapsing into a cold rationalistic, meagre, Zuinglian view on the one hand, and into a superstitious one on the other—but, although my thoughts are very different from those of many, I have earnestly sought light from His word.

Your late "precious" article took up the *doctrinal* side of the question. It is on the *experimental side*, that for myself and others I respectfully ask your judgment.

Your loving brother,

W. S."

ANSWER.—We quite coincide with you, that there is no justification for the thought of special blessing being contemplated in the act of partaking of the Lord's Supper, as though the bread and wine were really Christ.

There surely ought, however, to be full communion with the "Head of the Church" on the occasion. And if that be so, we need not say, there will be much conscious happiness in the believer. We are convinced that the true reason of so much disappointment being felt by Christians at the Lord's Table, arises from the practical selfishness of heart, in which many seek communion in the body and blood of Christ.

Breaking of bread is the commemoration of our Lord's SELF-SACRIFICE, and should be accepted in a spirit of SELF-FORGETFULNESS.

If we have really first SCRUTINISED (examined) ourselves; we shall be glad to take refuge in Christ, to think of Him only, and thankfully show forth his death, till he come.

It is not a little remarkable, that the Gospel by the Apostle John, which gives the believer that profound truth to which you have referred in the 6th chapter, is silent on the subject of the commemorative feast which our Lord instituted on the night in which he was betrayed! Should we not learn from this that the disciples of Jesus are to feed upon him by faith *continually*, and not only on special occasions.

Very touching is the way in which scripture speaks of "the supper." Our Saviour himself simply reminds us of *His* body and *His* blood shed *for us* for the remission of sins! Then he adds—oh, how graciously, as knowing how often we should forget him—"Do this in remembrance of me!"

He does not promise a special blessing for those who accept the token of his amazing love for poor lost sinners! Alas, for the selfishness of our hearts, that cannot be content to utter *thanksgiving only* when contemplating the perfect love of God!

So also the Apostle Paul. He reproves the Corinthians for their selfishness—they were making "the supper" an occasion of self-gratification. He reminds them of the Saviour's perfect grace. It was on the very night on which he was betrayed, that the Lord provided us with the bread and the wine. Then he says the Lord *gave thanks*, and we are to *do the same*. "After the same manner [i.e. GIVING THANKS] also the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood; this do ye [give thanks] as oft as ye drink of it, IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, show ye the Lord's death till he come."

May we not paraphrase the inspired teaching thus?—"Don't seek to gratify self. Judge yourself, that you may love Jesus wholly. Be full of THANKSGIVING to God for his unspeakable

gift. Think upon Jesus, and the gift of HIMSELF for you. Show forth the Lord's death, for it was THE LORD who died for you. Finally, think of his return. By faith, you have looked upon his death; soon you shall behold his glory!"

The individual believer is truly included in the one loaf; but his individuality ought to be forgotten. He should joy in the unity of the many members of the body of Christ, represented by the one loaf. But the great thing is, to get rid of self, and REJOICE IN THE LORD.

N. B. S.—We truly rejoice to hear that the testimony maintained by your little assembly, is, through the Lord's grace, still in activity. May you be preserved, together with the loved ones in Christ Jesus in fellowship with you, in patient steadfastness. "In due season we shall reap, if we faint not." We believe that the twos or threes gathered out in the name of the Lord Jesus, and continuing to meet in simple confidence in his assured presence, are very precious in the sight of Him who hath loved us, and given himself for us. The weaker we feel, the greater the demand upon our faith, and consequently the more fully is our Lord glorified in us.

Respecting the paper on Matt. xviii. 15—17, in our No. for March, we do not think that the effect intended to be wrought in an erring brother who wilfully rejects the representations and remonstrances of the faithful is to bring him back to first principles. The 6th chapter of the Hebrews shows you cannot do that. After Peter had denied his Master, it was not by preaching the Gospel to him that he found restoration—but it was remembrance of the KNOWN LOVE of the Lord Jesus which broke him down. The Saviour alone could deal with him. We believe this is the true result of withdrawing from personal fellowship with a rebellious Christian. He cannot endure long without sympathy; and finding his brethren have been compelled to shrink from his naughtiness, he feels his isolation, and is glad to confess, and to seek restoration at the hands of his wounded Redeemer.

We think that a brother walking in unrighteousness, though for a time to be regarded as a publican, is yet to be dealt with in perfect grace. It was in that way our Lord was associated with publicans and sinners. He could meet with them, in grace, and eat with them, that he might do them good, but he could not have fellowship with them in their ways. So, too, we are to be ever ready and watchful to restore an erring brother, but so long as he is opposed to righteousness we cannot companion with him. He may even, alas! through wilfulness, eat and drink at the same table; but in that case he is eating and drinking condemnation to his own soul. We must leave him in the Lord's hands. It is very solemn.

We think your friend's suggestion that the offence being named to the church implies that "the local assembly must take the matter in hand," can only apply in so far that all the members are now to act in the same way as the specially aggrieved brother; they must all henceforth avoid personal fellowship with the offender.

Many thanks for your kind wishes and prayers.

ADELPHOS, Hants.—We think if you will weigh carefully all we have said respecting Mr Darby and his party, you will not be able to arrive at any other conclusion than we have as to the mistaken course adopted by them in executing judgment upon their brethren.

In answer to your specific enquiries—1st, As to receiving those who desire communion.—

Before considering whom you may receive, it is needful to enquire, "Unto what do you propose to receive them?"

"The Brethren" answer, "We receive them to *The Table*." But this is not acting according to the Scriptures. The Lord's way is, *Receive them to your heart*.

The thing to decide is, not whether you will permit them to *Break Bread with you*, but "Can you receive them to your bosom in true Christian love?" If fellowships were conducted upon this divine principle, many perplexities which now hinder would vanish away.

"Him that is weak in the faith receive, but not to doubtful disputations"—or, as the margin reads, "Not to judge his doubtful thoughts." (Rom. xiv. 1.)

This is not receiving to *the Table*, but to Christian fellow-

ship (see context). We commend the entire chapter to your prayerful consideration.

Scripture furnishes no catechism by which to test a brother's attainments. The only admissible questions are, whether he be obedient to the faith, and whether we have hearts of grace to receive him *in love*, for Christ's sake. If one who is *flagrantly opposed* to truth should desire fellowship with you, you would reply, "I cannot receive you *in love*; I consider you are acting as an enemy to my Master, and while you continue thus, I must doubt the sincerity of your confession of faith." This would apply to anyone holding *false doctrine* of the character set forth in the Scripture to which you refer, viz., the 2nd epistle of John.

But it would not be truthful to reject a Christian because he had been under the teaching of Mr N., for he, certainly, does "confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." Although the brother named has been a teacher of grievous error, yet those brethren have been quite false, both in principle and action, who have endeavoured to confound his misconceptions with "the Antichrist" indicated in the second epistle of John.

2nd. You enquire as to the method adopted by "the Brethren" of visiting, by delegates, any candidate for communion and proposing him one Lord's day, receiving him the next, &c., &c. You say, "Is it Scriptural?" We answer, "Certainly not." Moreover the whole scheme is utterly *wanting in heart*. We are convinced that many dear Christians are kept out of fellowship through the adoption of those miserable formalities. Young believers require above all things, the practical evidences of love—such love as is ready to go after them and care for them, and *build them up* in their most holy faith. Instead of this, you have the cold, systematic, parade of a formal examination and publication of names! How many have waited weeks, and even months before they have found any response to their desire for fellowship! And how many *crave* after the affectionate intimacies of brotherhood, who feel themselves altogether unequal to the ordeal of a theological examination!

You may well say, "There is too little of the *practical abiding grace of the Christ* within."

It is sad indeed to read of the unseemly disturbances you recount as taking place at your meeting. Far better for those of you who shrink from such God-dishonouring ways, to meet apart. You need not be afraid of the charge of schism—there is no schism in departing from a merely human organization. On the contrary, it is of the true unity of the Spirit to stand apart from strife and confusion. We, ourselves, love and hold the unity of all who hold the one Head, because we are outside of all confederacies.

J. C., London.—If we had more space at our disposal, we would willingly insert your gracious and loving epistle. We much fear, however, that the doctrinal errors of both the brethren you name have carried them beyond the reach of gentle and brotherly remonstrance. There must be a continual appeal to the "Sword of the Spirit" to be in any way effectual. We gladly respond to your invitation to pray for them, and for all saints. Pray for us. And may we all bear in mind the solemn warning—"Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

NB—Several Communications stand over.

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J. B. BATEMAN, 22, Paternoster-row, entrance in Ivy-lane.
West End—JOB CAUDWALL, 335, Strand, London, W.C.
City Agents—ARTHUR HALL, 25, Paternoster-row, London, E.C.
Smart & Allen, 2, Londonhouse-yard, Paternoster Row.

JOHN EVANS, Printer, 386, Strand, London, W.C.

PRECIOUS TRUTH.

“WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE!”—(Rom. iv. 3.)

London: — J. B. BATEMAN, 22, Paternoster Row, entrance in Ivy Lane.

No. 28.]

JULY 1, 1867.

[One Halfpenny.]

TO ONE OF THE JOINT-HEIRS WITH JESUS CHRIST.

BELOVED,—“*It is more blessed to give than to receive.*” We have it from the Apostle Paul, that these are the words of the Lord Jesus—and we are told “*we ought to remember them.*” (Acts xx. 35.) It is very precious to be reminded of these words of Jesus,

The *capability of giving* is essentially of God; for all things are His. In His great lovingkindness to you and me, beloved, our Father has made us partakers of this high prerogative. He has honoured us with the *more blessed* position of being givers! We who had nothing, and were ready to perish!

In Old Testament times, God ever placed *His people* in the happy condition of being able to *give*. It might be after the manner of Abraham, or Jacob, or Joseph, or David, or the poor widow who cast her two mites (all her living) into the treasury of God’s house at Jerusalem.

But you, beloved, are not only of God’s people; you are a son or daughter of the Lord Almighty. “Now are *we* the sons of God.”—And we are to walk in the footsteps of the only-begotten of the Father. It is from the meek and lowly Jesus, we learn that “*it is more blessed to give than to receive.*” Nor have we this teaching in His words only, but also in His ways. “*He went about doing good.*” (Acts x. 38.)

How aptly and simply those words express the loving activities of that “*poor man,*” who became poor that we might be made rich. Through Him, we are rich in faith, and heirs of glory. But, even now, because we trust in Him, what honour he puts upon us in this present scene of groaning and sorrowing! He deals with us as he did with those who loved Him while he was on earth—for He is “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.” When he would feed the hungry multitudes, he said to his disciples, “Give ye them to eat.” This he said to prove them; but he afterwards enabled them to do as he had commanded. He knew they would be apt to think that they must comply with His requirement from their own resources! They had therefore to learn that lesson, “Without Me ye can do nothing.” But as soon as they saw how impossible it would be for them to meet the need of the hour, the Lord took the scanty supply which happened to be at hand, and putting His blessing upon the same, enabled *his disciples to give* a superabundance to the fainting thousands!

Thus it is ever with our gracious Redeemer. We have only to wait upon Him for supplies, get *His blessing* upon that which we have, and then His word is, “Freely ye have received, freely give.”

In looking at our Lord’s ways, we see that He not only incites us to be the *blessed* dispensers of His gifts. But, in unspeakable grace, He also takes the place of receiving from us! Truly it was no small honour put upon Simon the Pharisee when the Lord consented to dine at his table. And it was even *more blessed* for Zaccheus to receive those gracious words, “Make haste and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house.” Again we see a *more blessed* one in Martha, the sister of Lazarus. And again other *more blessed* ones in the “women who followed Jesus,” and ministered to him of their substance. What a scene! The Creator and sustainer of the world, voluntarily disrobed of his glory, and not only consorting with poor sinners, His fallen creatures, but accepting at their hands the supplies of His passing necessities, in the position he had taken as a homeless stranger.

He came to His own and proved that His own knew Him not. But as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in His name! Yes, practically to become sons of God, by taking up His mind and His ways. Like Jesus, we too are to go about doing good.

Nor are we shut out from the very highest place of the *more blessed*, occupied by those dear women who ministered personally to their Saviour when on earth. For though the meek and lowly Jesus, as the risen Son of Man is now seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, he has many poor disciples in the world; and he says whatever we do to them he regards as done to Himself!

Beloved, I ask my own soul and yours, “Do we really understand this? Do we that know all who believe in Jesus during this present dispensation, are members of His body, of his flesh and of his bones?” (Eph. v. 30.)

It is an overwhelming thought. Who can fathom it? Yet it is true, and I love to think of *all Christians* as members of that “one body,” however poorly I may act my part as having a place in the mighty mystery concerning Christ and the Church. (Eph. v. 32.)

My Brother, my Sister—There are members of that body of Christ now suffering from hunger, as Jesus suffered when he sojourned here below. He accepted the lowly attitude of receiving the ministries of those who loved him; and now he has left many in a similar condition of trial. How far are you and I occupying the *blessed* position of ministering to them?

Delightful, indeed it is to learn of Jesus, both how to give and how to receive. To witness His gracious ways in all the circumstances through which he passed, and to notice the manifestation of divine grace he caused to flow out from others. But are we imitating Him? *In any measure* are we imitating him? If so, truly

blessed are we—Jesus said so, and we shall know it; both now, in keeping His commands, and soon in that place where every man's work shall be made manifest.

"Behold I come quickly, and my reward with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be." (Rev. xxii. 21.)

It will soon be too late to desire the opportunities of doing good which are now within our reach.

"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." (Gal. vi. 10.)

It is mournful to think of the many believers left unknown to, and uncared for, by their brethren and sisters, though of the same family of God, and bought with the same precious blood of Christ. Many true Christians are suffered to end their earthly pilgrimage in the workhouses! *It is a common occurrence.* Others are in receipt of parish allowance, and others again are left pining in the direst straits. I am uttering no exaggerated sentiments, but am speaking of facts!

May we all be fully occupied in deeds of love towards the members of the body of Christ.

The Lord make you fruitful in every good word and work, to the praise of his name, and your own unspeakable joy.

Yours ever,

A lover of the Good Shepherd, and of all his flock,
E. P. T.

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS RESPECTING THE LITANY, IN THE "BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER."

It is to those who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ our words are addressed, for all such are beloved for His name's sake.

As to the second sentence of the Litany—

"O God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy upon us miserable sinners."

In what sense is the Son of God here addressed as "Redeemer of the world?"

The name of our Lord, given before his birth, was Jesus—i.e. *Saviour*—"for," said the angel, "He shall save his people from their sins."

Who, then, are his people? Those who have, and those who do, and all who shall, believe in Him.

Is he the Redeemer of the world? The purchase price, even his own precious blood, was indeed sufficient to redeem all. But the scriptures teach us that the infinite sacrifice is efficacious only to those who trust in Him. And how few, comparatively, are these! Those who testify of the truth as it is in Jesus have still to exclaim, as of old, "Who hath believed our report?" The number is lamentably small.

To us who are saved, through faith, the Scripture says—

"Our Saviour Jesus Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity." (Titus ii. 13, 14.)

Is that true of the world? Is the world redeemed from all iniquity? Is it not, on the contrary, most solemnly evident that "The whole world lieth in

wickedness?" (1 John v. 19.) Satan is the god of it, and the Son of God is rejected.

Of those who are Christ's, He has said, "They are not of the world even as I am not of the world." (John xvii.)

What can be the effect, upon the unconverted, of using this phrase, "Redeemer of the world?" Does it not of necessity blot out the vast distinction between those who believe and those who believe not, a needful separation, which the Bible invariably maintains?

But now look at the beforenamed expression in connection with the petition, "*Have mercy upon us miserable sinners.*"

If the world be redeemed, why this prayer for mercy upon miserable sinners?

Be assured, beloved, you have no justification from the word of God for such glaring inconsistencies.

Then as to your next sentence—

"O God the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, have mercy upon us miserable sinners."

Here we have another specimen of man's vanity, and his wretched attempt to be "wise above that which is written." As we have already remarked, in a previous number of this paper, the Holy Spirit of God does not present himself, when worship is in question, as a person separate from the Father and the Son. But He is the blessed one who incites believers to true worship. He leads us to cry *Abba, Father*; and also to adore Jesus as our *Lord*. We appeal to the Scriptures—

"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, 'Abba, Father.'" (Galatians iv. 6.)

Then—

"No man can say that Jesus is *the Lord*, but by the Holy Ghost." (1 Cor. xii. 3.)

This is no theoretical question, beloved. It is of deepest moment to those who would worship God "in Spirit and in truth."

Seeing that the Scriptures were written under the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, surely he has rightly instructed us in the way in which he would have us regard His holy person?

Let us not be misunderstood. We feel, in speaking on this subject, we are indeed on holy ground. Who can explain the mystery of the Godhead? Who can speak of the infinite condescension of God in *indwelling* believers by His Holy Spirit?

We do not attempt in any way to solve that which *infinite wisdom* alone can comprehend.

All we desire is that, as sons of God, you should attend to, and act upon, that which the Spirit of God teaches, rather than follow the teachings of men.

Now not only does the Holy Ghost not present himself as the object of worship, or as one of whom we are to ask mercy, but he is *with* God's people in pure grace. He himself is given to believers, as the token and seal of God's love.

"Hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us." (Rom. v. 5.)

How can you pray to one who, in *infinite love*, is

dwelling in your hearts, to "have mercy upon you as miserable sinners?" Is it not cruel ingratitude thus to contemn your Father's manifested love?

We need not dwell upon your next paragraph, for if you are wrongly crying separately to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, you are equally in error in your prayer for mercy to the Holy Trinity. We pass on to that which follows.

"Remember not, Lord, our offences, nor the offences of our forefathers; neither take thou vengeance of our sins. Spare us, good Lord, spare thy people, whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious blood, and be not angry with us for ever."

Here is another sample of the thorough misapprehension of the Christian dispensation constantly manifested by those who compiled your Prayer-book. We allude especially to the thought of vengeance for the sins of our forefathers.

In God's dealings with his earthly people Israel, he does indeed visit the sins of the fathers upon the children.

We do not enter into the question here of why that should be so. Enough for us that the Lord has so revealed his ways towards that people, and that he has *not* so revealed his ways towards us.

A believer in Christ Jesus is delivered from his *old standing* before God, and he will never suffer *vengeance* for his own sins, much less for the sins of his forefathers.

That beautiful promise is fulfilled in us who believe:—

"I will put my laws into their hearts and in their minds will I write them, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." (Heb. x. 16, 17.)

However little this is *understood*, because of the traditions of men, yet, happily, God is true, and *the fact* for us is even *according to His word*.

We may remark, however, that this merciful forgetfulness, on God's part, of sin and iniquity *as such*, does not prevent him from chastening us, as our faithful *Father*. He will deal with us down here in chastening, *because we are sons*. (See Heb. xii. 7.)

We are, therefore, to pray to God our Father for manifestations of his loving-kindness. But the Holy Spirit never leads us to cry to him as to the God of *vengeance*. Vengeance is for enemies, not for sons.

The last part of the sentence quoted from your Litany is, however, even worse than the first.

Only think of the confusion involved in those words—

"Spare us, good Lord, spare thy people whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious blood, and be not angry with us for ever."

How can the Lord be angry for ever with those whom he has redeemed with his own precious blood?

The sacred word declares that

"The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son; cleanseth us from all sin."

And in a thousand ways forgiveness is assured to you as those redeemed by that precious blood.

Moreover you are not only forgiven, but also justified.

"Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. v. i.)

We again entreat you, therefore, to rely upon the safety you have in Christ Jesus, and no longer dishonour his finished work and priceless love, by bowing your hearts to the traditions and superstitions of men.

THE CHURCH—THE WOMAN: AS DEPENDENT.

In a previous paper, entitled "Eve and the Bride of Christ," I was led to present the truth, taught in the Ephesians and Revelation, of the Church of God being the Bride of Christ, "the Lamb's Wife;" and that this mystery of Christ and the Church was foreshadowed in Adam and Eve. [See page 129.]

Now in Genesis ii. we read—

"And Adam said, This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh."

In Eph. v., when referring to Christ and the Church, the Holy Ghost uses much the same language as to the Church's origin and gives the same reason for Christ's cleaving to her:

"No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church: for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh"—

Adding, that we might not suppose he was referring to the *earthly* union—

"This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church."

Now we remember that the Eternal Word (to whom be glory for ever) left *Father* when He came forth from God, and left *Mother* when He forsook Israel, of whom, according to the flesh, Christ came. With this people He had a place by birth, when "made of a woman, made under the law;" and a place, too, that He might have *kept*, had He so willed, or had it pleased Him to have asked angels of His Father. But "the Seed of the Woman" forsook all, both Father and Mother that He might cleave unto the Church.

[The nation of Israel, in this character, seems to be presented to us in Rev. xii. as a Woman crowned with twelve stars, who gives birth to a heavenly man-child.]

With regard to the words "they two shall be one flesh,"—at present, "our life (our eternal life) is hid with Christ in God:"—the rib, the Church, is not yet presented out of the Second Man. This will be when he comes, "the Lord from Heaven,"

"Who shall change our vile body and fashion it like unto His own glorious body, by the power wherewith He is able to subdue all things unto Himself."

Then will that be true to sight and feeling which is true to faith now—

"THEY TWO SHALL BE ONE FLESH."

At present it is a spiritual oneness—"baptized by one Spirit into one body;" Then it will be a visible

oneness: "When we see Him we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

"Like Him,"—a body like His,—which could manifest itself to mortal eyes, "the doors being shut," and then "vanish out of their sight:" and yet possess flesh and bones, as they saw Him have. Such will be the bodies of the saints "when we are "like Him:"—"they two shall be one flesh."

Let us now consider the Church, waiting for this redemption of the Body. If we are to be manifested as the *Woman*, let us walk now by faith as the *Woman*.

1. A special characteristic of the woman is *self-insufficiency*—dependence—dependence on the man. Knowing this, the Lord Jesus has graciously assured the Church of His constant presence, that being the most comforting fact for a woman to know. Indeed, the Lord has specially alluded to the weakness, in point of numbers, in which spiritually-minded believers may expect to find themselves. I believe the Lord will keep His dear ones in small assemblies, if they are watchful of His will, in order to accustom them, as the Woman, to lean on Himself.

Any "two or three" members of the One Body and the Head form an assembly or church. They may feel, in addition to their weakness of numbers, weakness of gift. Well, let them rejoice in the Lord, and prefer the dependence of the Woman to anything approaching the self-sufficiency of a man. His strength is perfected in our weakness, because when weak we lean on Him, and then—oh, how we are upheld!

Let churches know there is a special *safety* as well as a special assurance of *blessing* to the "two or three gathered together in Jesu's name." For when numbers increase, (although we rightly rejoice in sinners saved and saints induced to walk by faith in the Lord's presence,) still, we have learnt the tendency to rest in a plenitude of spiritual gifts, rather than in the blessed presence and perfections of the Head.

Another thing, besides increase of numbers, which greatly endangers an assembly's really continuing to walk as the Woman—dependent on the future Husband and present Lord, is—the *presence and continued ministry of specially gifted brethren*. But, it may be said, Are not spiritual gifts from the Lord? Yes; but not necessarily for single assemblies only; they may be of such a special character as to be suitable "for the edifying of the Body" in general. (Read Eph. iv. 11—16.) Hence such servants may well be watchful for doors of ministry elsewhere, lest the saints who love them learn to lean on them. I am referring here to such eminently gifted teachers as Apollos.

[In looking at the systems of Christendom, we see these two things notably lost sight of. There we behold a continual straining after large assemblies, on the avowed principle that *small* assemblies are not self-supporting, and are not to be favourably regarded, because they get into debt and difficulty! Such assemblies take it for granted that blessing must come through an expensive machinery of

buildings, paid pastors, &c. But the Lord has not said so. On the contrary, He has given the assurance of His presence as the one thing to be rejoiced in by those gathered in His name. The true woman delights, not in circumstances, but her Beloved.

"My Beloved is mine, and I am His."

What efforts will be made by many to retain the services of a favourite pastor! and what annoyance, rising to anger at his ingratitude, if he persist in leaving them! Alas! that it is so.

"Little children, keep yourselves from idols."]

The good Lord work graciously in all our hearts, and lead His people to *prefer* those circumstances of outward weakness which tend to keep us walking, as assemblies, by faith in the Son of God—for if we associate blessing with numbers or the presence of a gifted brother—"are we not carnal, and walk as men?"

Let the reader note that the church of Philadelphia—the only one of the Seven churches with which the Lord finds no fault—is characterised as having "*little strength*,"—a true woman. (Oh, to be "blameless before Him in love," and found "blameless at His coming.") While the church which is furthest gone into corruption (Laodicea) is the one which has most of what the world calls good and great. (Rev. iii.)

Was not the falling away insensibly from dependence on the Lord, the character of the failing in the Church of Ephesus?

"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." (Rev. ii.)

And yet to this church was given most fully, in its epistle, this blessed mystery of Christ and the Church.

Beloved, our safety does not lie in the possession of high truth (like the Ephesians,) or those who can teach it (like the Corinthians); but a true desire to "cleave unto the Lord with purpose of heart," as Barnabas (that "good man, full of faith and the Holy Ghost") exhorted those who were first called *Christ-ians*. If in any degree or manner we cease to cleave unto the Lord, in that degree do we fail to bear that holy name—indeed, we "*deny*" it. This did not Philadelphia.

Has the reader sufficiently noticed that the Holy Ghost has given commendation to gatherings in believers' houses?

"Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus; who have for my life laid down their own necks, unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Likewise greet the church which is in their house." (Rom. xvi.)

Here Aquila and Priscilla are at Rome. The same practice of gathering in their own house believers to the Lord is alluded to in the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, when they seem to have been at Ephesus—certainly in Asia.

"The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church which is in their house." (1 Cor. xvi.)

In Philemon's house was also a church—

"Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon, our dearly beloved and fellow-labourer, and to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellow-soldier, and to the church in thy house, grace to you, and peace, &c."

Our impression in reading this salutation is that Philemon and his wife Apphia had been moved by the Lord to open their house to certain saints, and that Archippus was a servant of the Lord who felt a special call to minister there. This impression is confirmed by a passage in the Epistle to the Colossians, in or near which city it is probable Philemon lived, because of the reference to Onesimus as "one of them." (Col. iv. 9.) In that Epistle, the Colossian church is charged thus—

"Say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it." (Col. iv. 17.)

Here is a servant referred to, and evidently not usually assembling with the church in Colosse, because that church receives a message for him; clearly, therefore, having a comparatively humble service (speaking after the manner of men) in Philemon's house; and he is to be exhorted to "fulfil it."

The next and last reference to a church in a house, is that in the house of Nymphas.

"Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house."*

And now, beloved, what does the Spirit, through these passages, say unto us?

That if a brother and a sister, with others, meet to the Lord, as a church, in their own house, there is liberty so to do; but neither that, nor anything else, should be done, without a full impression that it is the Lord's will, after much united prayer, searching of the word and their own hearts. If opened so, it will be a door of the Lord's opening, and let them be assured, no man can shut it, or shut out blessing, for Jesus is there.

2. That if a brother and sister in the Lord are so led to gather souls in their own house to the Lord a neighbouring assembly or assemblies are not to be disturbed with thoughts of the oneness of the Body being broken (!) or of the impropriety of two tables, but they are to lovingly acknowledge them, and "salute" them, and rejoice to hear of any gathering to the Lord in weakness of numbers, knowing that blessing must ever flow forth to those who have faith to be cast upon the Lord.

3. That the oneness of the churches in the Word, is nothing like a confederation of assemblies, but *love*—"the bond of perfectness"—the *tie* of unity. For the Holy Ghost shows us not only Colosse saluting the church in Nymphas' house, but the church in Aquila's house saluting Corinth.

These gatherings in believers' houses were not existing in bye places, but in large cities in which there were already churches. No fears of irregulari-

* The term used in these places is "church," not "saints;" and cannot be construed to mean "family," but "assembly," for all the purposes of an assembly—"worshipping God in the Spirit, rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and showing forth his death in the breaking of bread till He come." "Ecclesia" is the word used in these four places, which means "assembly of the called-out."

ties are expressed. In these days of confusion and evil, believers may well avail themselves of the freedom with which the Lord has made us free—free in respect of times, places, numbers, and ministries,—and gather to Himself,—

"Holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." (Col. ii. 19.)

We have seen much reason to rejoice that the Lord is bringing His Church into the same blessed condition it was in as described in Acts ix.

"Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied. And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all quarters."

So we, in these days, have rest from those persecutions which have swept over the Church. We are being edified or built up, in our most holy faith, adding to faith much knowledge. We apprehend Jesus as our Lord and our God—who is now walking amidst the golden candlesticks (his assemblies) as One with eyes of fire and feet of melting brass, and at whose Judgment Seat we must all give an account of ourselves. Not only so—"walking in the fear of the Lord," but we walk "in the comfort of the Holy Ghost." The Holy Ghost is the Comforter—Paraclete, or, as the word is also translated, *Advocate*. He advocates to our souls the claims of Jesus, as our Saviour, Lord, and God. By means of the Word of God, the Holy Ghost comforts us with thoughts of all that the Lord Jesus Christ is, has done, and will be to the Church, and the Church to Him. By Him, too, we cry, Abba, and worship the Father. We are thus "walking in the comfort of the Holy Ghost."

And what else do we see in this Acts ix.?—the multiplication of assemblies. "Then had the churches rest—were edified—*multiplied*. And we do hear of assemblies, weak in numbers, rising up around us.

And what then? Why, Peter, as representing the higher spiritual gifts given for the edification of the Body and the service of the saints, is introduced to us by the Holy Ghost—"passing throughout all quarters."

This was the practice not only with the apostles, but with those servants of the Lord who possessed special spiritual gifts for watering the churches with the refreshing water of the Word—precious truth. Take for instance Apollos. Unarmed with apostolic, or any authority, yet he was greatly used for blessing. Doubtless the unity of the Church in the early days, was maintained by this facility of ministry, in all and each assembly, of certain gifted servants whose praise was in all the churches. They were special "bands and joints" of the body, it seems to me, by whose "passing about throughout all quarters" assemblies were kept in communion with one another—not in confederation, and by whom, as well as the resident elders, the Lord ministered nourishment to the body.

Archippus is given to an *assembly*, to watch over the sheep, become acquainted with them individually, and feed them. Apollos is given to the *Body*, to be

a blessing to the churches. Sometimes Apollos gets in the way of Archippus; keeps in an assembly too long. It grows in numbers under his glowing ministry; and the walk of faith in the Lord is endangered. Of course, no rule can be laid down; we servants must seek to be so in communion with the Lord as to be quick to discern his will; and may it be our great desire to be nothing, that Jesus may be all in all.

What did Paul long for in contemplating visiting the Church of Rome?—going as an Apostle with authority? No; but as a teacher and a brother.

“For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.” (Rom. i. 11-12.)

“That I may come unto with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.”

Sometimes servants may be found in the providence of the Lord ministering to “two or three,” when it would be more agreeable to their natural wishes to be serving two or three score or hundreds. But oh, it is of prime importance that the churches be kept walking in a full dependence on the Son of God, who loved us and gave himself for us, (not in a confidence in the flesh.) This practical confidence in Jesus, present to bless His saints, like other virtues, must be tested and proved and exercised.

Sectarianism may offer insuperable difficulties to true servants getting a free intercommunion with the Lord’s people; this does not alter the fact, as to what the Lord’s mind is. And some may think the thought we here put forth calculated to encourage busybodies. Well, the Lord is our keeper. “Letters of commendation” were found needful to servants passing about. With these Apollos himself was provided. (Acts xviii. 27.) “Let no man think more highly of himself than he ought to think.”

The Lord give us understanding in all things; and grace to walk as the Woman—rejoicing in our dependence upon His blessed self: to whom, with the Father, be all glory now and for ever, Amen.

CAN FAITH SAVE HIM?

Such is the question which has startled many a Christian reader of the Epistle by James, and that because it seems so contrary to the teaching in the Romans:—

“Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.” (Rom. iii.)

Before examining James’s question, let me first remind the reader of what has been advanced upon some of the special features of his epistle and upon his standing as a believer and teacher.

The passage in James’s epistle in which occurs this question—

“CAN FAITH SAVE HIM?”

is a reference to future *Judgment*, but *not* the “Judgment seat of Christ” for the Church in the heavenlies, which was enlarged upon at page 189. *That*, as I have shown in our last number, was above James’s

standpoint as a teacher. The judgment-scene he refers to is that of *the nations* upon earth, at the Lord’s coming to the earth. This revelation he had received from the Lord’s own lips, and in that passage we see judgment does turn—not on faith, but *Works*.—

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say to them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat:” &c.

James would also well remember the Lord’s teaching on another occasion—

“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that *work* iniquity.”

Thus, with regard to the judgment of the nations upon earth, and the Jews with them, *faith* is not called in to decide, but *works*.

As holding the Jewish hope, and addressing those who had got no higher, it was natural that James should take Matt. xxv. as his standpoint. He therefore says—

“So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be *judged* by the law of liberty.”

That is, the law of love, in contradistinction from what he calls the “royal law,” the kingly command given by God, when He was “king in Jeshurun,” —“Thou shalt,” &c.

James continues—

“For he shall have judgment without mercy who showed no mercy, and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.”

Though left at liberty to act from *love* rather than *law*, James would have believers to understand they were not delivered from the consequences of inaction. As “Judge of all the earth,” the Lord at his coming to the earth will look for and demand that species of conduct which will justify, in the face of all the earth, His bestowment of mercy upon such as will receive it. To those who will be rejected in that day, God’s dealings in mercy with some, and in judgment with *them*, must be justified by the production of genuine fruit, and so, every mouth shall be stopped. When earth is the scene of judgment, works must be produced—something that an earthly people can take cognisance of—*something that can be seen*. This was James’s sphere of discernment, as a Jewish believer and a teacher of Jewish believers. And so he says, “Can faith save him?”

But Paul’s standpoint being the Church, the One Body, called out of the world, to be a heavenly people, for ever associated with the Lord Jesus Christ in His heavenly glory, to the eternal rejection of those who now hold a place and power in the heavens, that apostle regards that which justifies sinners now in the view of *angels*. Satan knows that God has stipulated all to faith—“to him that believeth.” When faith is discerned in the heart, the holy angels rejoice and the Accuser is silenced.

Blessed be God! we who have faith have also peace, because we know that our having faith justifies God in giving to us eternal life and justifies us in the view of the powers in heavenly places. But in faith there is no merit; it comes by hearing, and there is no merit in the creature believing the Creator.

Thus, James, looking at justification at a judgment scene on earth, naturally insists upon the importance works, as justifying, before all, the bestowment of of mercy to some.

"What profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what profit?" (James ii.)

Not to the supposed case of distress, but to the one who said he had faith, and who, having opportunity of showing it, neglected to show it, and to do that which could be produced in evidence at the Coming of the Son of Man in power and great glory.

"Even so faith [of such an one] if it hath not works is dead, being alone."

The whole passage was a searching word to those Jews who said they believed Jesus was the true Messiah. It may also be pressed on nominal Christians now. The only faith that God regards "worketh by love," to God and man.

NOTE.—It has been feared that I jeopardise the inspiration of James's epistle in these two articles upon it.

Not at all.

Is not Apostolic inspiration spoken of thus in John's Gospel?—

"He (the Comforter, the Holy Ghost) shalt teach you.

"He shall bring to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you."

"He will show you things to come."

"He shall take of mine, and shall show unto you."

James teaches truth which he was taught by the Lord Jesus Christ; and in his epistle is no truth unfolded by the Holy Spirit subsequent to Pentecost. Now, as he truthfully and fully presented the Lord's moral teachings under the *reminders* of the Holy Ghost—therefore his epistle is inspired.

THE RESTORATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER— PURE AND SIMPLE.

It may interest many readers to know that the restoration of "Breaking of Bread," according to the simplicity of the early days of the Church, was first brought about some forty years ago in *Dublin*. The instruments specially used by the Lord were Mr J. N. GROVES and Mr BELLETT, both of whom now sleep in Jesus, after having fulfilled a greatly honoured course down here. It was the first named of these beloved saints who suggested that Christians should again meet simply in the name of Jesus, as of old, and show forth the Lord's death in breaking of bread, till He shall come.

We believe it was not until some years afterwards that Christians met in the same simple way at Plymouth, and other places in the West of England. It is therefore evident that any pretension to being the original party, or the supposed presentment of the unity of the body, as urged by Mr Darby and his followers, is utterly wanting both as to fact and spiritual reason.

It may be well to state also, that Mr J. N. Groves was in his lifetime quite opposed to Mr Darby's arbitrary proceedings, and wrote most lovingly to warn the latter of that which has most sorrowfully come to pass in the erection of his system of spiritual tyranny. Respecting this, Mr Dorman justly says, "It is an immense ecclesiastical ramification, which is everywhere subject, and in all things, as to its order, doctrine, and discipline, to Mr Darby's decrees! enforced by a ubiquitous, unseen spiritual supervision, from which as there is no escape, so is there no appeal!"

We will not dwell upon so sorrowful a theme. Our only object in speaking of it here, is to warn believers, that they suffer not themselves to be robbed of the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free.

Far better to be weak than strong. The Lord Jesus says, "Behold I have set before thee an open door and no man can shut it, for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name." Rev. iii. 8.

There is a danger of falling from the happy consciousness of the potency of the name of Jesus, and the power of his word.

Many who have experienced the strength of the Lord in the time of their weakness, have, alas! resigned that happy state to become strong in their own devices. Such will soon know how great has been their loss.

"Behold I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast that none take thy crown." Rev. iii. 11.

Thus saith the Lord!

Dear fellow pilgrims—Wherever there are two or three of you meeting in the name of Jesus—surrender your liberty to no man, neither to any confederation of men. The Lord is faithful. Suffer him to bring you through *in weakness* that HE may be glorified in you. See 1 Cor. iii. 21-23. Gal. ii. 4-5. 2. Cor. xii. 10.

"Christ's precious blood was shed,
His body bruised for sin;
Remembering this, we break the bread,
And, thankful, drink the wine.
Lord, let us ne'er forget,
Thy rich, Thy wondrous love;
Our theme of joy and wonder here,
Our endless song above.
O may Thy love constrain
Our souls to cleave to Thee!
And ever in our hearts remain
That word, "Remember Me."

"REJOICING IN TRIBULATION."

—, Essex, March, 1867.

MY DEAR FELLOW-SUFFERER,—Since the arrival of your welcome letter, I have been hindered in giving you an account of my affliction. In my fifteenth year the God of love laid His afflicting hand upon me. At the first, I had bad legs, swollen very much and very painful, so that for some weeks I could scarcely walk across my room. I then took to my bed, and took some medicine, which pained me from head to foot, and blisters came upon my hands and feet, some of which

turned purple and some black. Those who saw me said they never saw the like. My doctor said I could not live. Then I had a very sore throat, which was burned inside with caustic. At the same time my right cheek swelled very much, with intense pain, a knot as large as a nut forming in it, which the doctor said was a cancer, and which was twice cut. Leeches and many other means were also applied, but with no benefit; it still kept swelling; my right eye was closed for a long time. My cheek was then burnt, and the whole middle dropped, so that my teeth could be seen. It was then burnt every second day for a long time, without stopping the disorder; the doctor said, "It must have its course." I was expecting every day and hour to be my last. I languished and languished in spite of all the doctors' drugs and skill.

But Jesus, the most wonderful Physician, possesses unknown power and skill. He can wound, and He can heal; He can bring low, and He can raise up, yea, from the brink of the grave. No disorder can baffle Him; He possesses all power.

Now, my dear fellow-sufferer, I was kept to my bed for a year and a half, or more. Then my Divine Physician rebuked the raging of my complaint, and raised me up, so as to enable me to walk again. It was said, it could be compared to nothing but raising the dead to life; and when one of my physicians was informed of it, he would scarcely believe it; but with God all things are possible.

I have had a lock-jaw for near ten years. Last June it got so bad that I could get no food through my teeth. My doctor then tried to force my mouth open, but could not. Then they drew four teeth. This was done under the influence of chloroform. My doctor said I should not get over it. But the Father's time was not yet come, for after this I got about again, but soon was to be prostrated again. I have now entirely kept my bed six years and five months. My complaint now lies most inside: I suffer much with my heart; I suppose it is palpitation. I am sometimes almost deprived of my senses by it. My gracious God has shut my mouth, he has nearly closed up my throat, he has taken one cheek: let Him do what seemeth Him good, and I will praise His holy name. I can smile at ten years' affliction, and say it is mercy and love. Sweet affliction, blessed affliction, which brought me to my blessed Saviour's feet.

Now, my dear afflicted friend, it was six years the 2nd of last January since I ate a piece of solid food: the things I live upon are milk, the yolk of an egg, and a little baked flour, beaten up together and then strained through a piece of close net; nothing but suction now. Few days have rolled by out of six years without hunger, but I have rejoiced under it, counted it as nothing, and sometimes forgotten it all. I would not, if I might, change places with a creature on the earth without my Lord's command. I am no more tired of my position now than I was the first day. True I have had the thought, "What can I be spared so long for?" but these thoughts are quickly dismissed, and in come these: "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in Thy sight; Thine own purpose do I love and Thy gentle hand. I will lie still, and in affliction's furnace adore Thee for Thy matchless love and goodness, which has crowned all my life."

Now, dear fellow-sufferer, the Lord has in His own love laid us on the bed of languishing, and He has taught us that which is in Himself—His love to us, and has taught us what we are in ourselves hell-deserving sinners, but made saints of God in Christ, children of God through faith in Christ Jesus, the sin-atoning Lamb, who has made full atonement for our sins by His own precious life-blood shed on the cross, and now (all praise, all glory be to our risen Lord!) the one blessed channel through which flow pardon and peace and every blessing.

Now, my fellow-sufferer, I heartily sympathise with you, and may the Lord greatly support you in your great suffering. May you daily bask in the sunshine of your Saviour's presence, and know much of His holy, tender sympathy; He delights to sympathise with all His suffering people who cleave to Him by faith. Though He is crowned with glory and honour, His watchful, tender care is ever over His own. How soothing and consolatory is this! and oh, what a glorious prospect have we! Soon we shall be housed in our Father's glorious mansions, and sing for ever of redeeming love.

Farewell in Jesus, till we meet around the throne of God's glory! and believe me to be, your true and affectionate fellow-sufferer and sister in the bonds of our dear Redeemer's love,

H. A.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"ENQUIRERS," Kentish Town.—On the subject of convenient places for performing the Lord's command of Baptism. Some of the public baths are available at certain periods on payment of a stipulated amount. Or an ordinary long bath may be hired, and is quite effectual for the purpose, provided it be of sufficient capacity to admit of the entire person being immersed. There can be very little doubt that the early Christians used an ordinary bath in the house. We believe there will ever be found some *simple means* within reach, if believers will but ask the Lord to provide. For He never gives us a command without furnishing the means of being obedient to it. The mischief is, that many Christians like to make a parade about it, and are not satisfied with the bare efficiency of "*enough water to cover the body, and that in any convenient place.*"

S. H. S.—We very much respect your reverence for the ordinance of baptism, and thank you for your criticism on our remarks. We still think, however, that the Scriptures speak of it only as a figure. Of course the blessing of which an obedient believer is conscious results from faith; but it must be faith in Jesus Christ and His word, not faith in immersion. Look again at Col. ii. 12. You will see it is, that we are *raised up with Christ through the faith of the operation of God, not through faith in baptism.* Baptism shows the thing in a figure. It can do nothing more. You were raised up in Christ *before you were immersed*—baptism illustrated the fact. The blessing you felt afterwards was *the consequence of obedience*, for "In keeping His commandments there is great reward." You having been put under water, if considered apart from the thought of obedience, would not have caused you to feel blessing.

We are only anxious that truth may be set forth as in the word of God. We would not weaken a single sentence that is written there. As to making application at a Baptist Chapel—we could not ourselves do that with a good conscience—for if one does not approve of their system, we certainly ought not to avail oneself of their property. Yet we do not desire to judge others in such a matter. We have known cases where Christians have gone to these denominational chapels and have said, I desire to be baptized for conscience sake; but I do not intend to join the sect called Baptists. And those ministering have unconditionally granted the request.

With respect to dresses—any left-off suit of clothes will do, whether for male or female. We need not take much trouble about dressing a body for burial?

G. R., a Protestant.—You have a great deal yet to learn from the Bible. That book neither recognises the Protestant Church of England (so-called) nor the Catholic Church of Rome (so-called.) The churches spoken of in Scripture are assemblies of believers in Jesus Christ. Each church is recognised by the name of the city or place where such believers were found; and sometimes the Epistles by Paul speak of the church in the house of a certain Christian. But to talk of a church of an entire kingdom, like that of England, betrays a total misapprehension of the inspired word of God.

If you will think calmly of the fact that the so-called Church of England was not invented till the wicked reign of Henry the Eighth, we trust you will see how foolish it is to talk about its being "the House of God." Where was the House of God previous to the reign of that Monarch? If you would know what the House of God really is, you must prayerfully study the Epistles of the New Testament. We ask you to test all we say month after month, by the Scriptures, and in a short time you will no doubt begin to see, that the House of God is being built up of living stones destined for heaven, and that it has nothing to do with political organisations, either Catholic or Protestant.

Published for the Proprietor, by—

J. B. BATEMAN, 22, Paternoster-row, entrance in Ivy-lane.
West End—JOB CAUDWELL, 335, Strand, London, W.C.
City Agents—ARTHUR HALL, 25, Paternoster-row, London, E.C.
Smart & Allen, 2, London-house-yard, Paternoster Row.

JOHN EVANS, Printer, 335a, Strand, London, W.C.

PRECIOUS TRUTH.

"He that is Spiritual judgeth all things." (1 Cor. ii.)

London: — Published for the Proprietor by J. B. BATEMAN, 22, Paternoster Row, entrance in Ivy Lane.

No. 32.]

NOVEMBER 1, 1867.

[One Halfpenny.]

"THE COMFORTER, THE HOLY GHOST."

By this gracious title does the Lord Jesus speak of the "Promise of the Father,"—the promised Spirit of Truth. Jesus, the Father's Promise to Israel, had been given; but He was about to go away, yea, it was expedient that He should go away, in order that the Comforter—the Second Promise of the Father—might come.

"Nevertheless, I tell you the truth, It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." (John xvi.)

Oh, how expedient it was—for them, for us! in how many ways! True Christians possess the Spirit's Personal Divine Presence the world over. Oh, that we may value it more! that we may know—*know* a Divine One abiding in us!

"I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you *for ever*; the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth Him; but *ye know Him*, for He dwelleth with you, and shall be *in you*." (John xiv.)

This precious assurance is confirmed to us.

"What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God?" (1 Cor.)

"Ye have an Unction from the Holy One . . . The Anointing which ye have received of Him abideth *in you* . . . the same Anointing teacheth you of all things." (1 John ii.)

I.—THE HOLY GHOST AND THE LORD JESUS.

Beloved, Let us regard the Holy Ghost as the disciples regarded Jesus? 1. When dear ones had the Lord Jesus in their midst, they could say, "Lord, *teach us to pray*." Have we recourse to the Holy Spirit in like manner?

"The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what to pray for as we ought." (Rom. viii.)

2. Think, too, of the Lord Jesus, in the midst of the disciples, *praying for* them. Then think of the Holy Ghost, given unto us, doing the same for us.

"The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

3. Think of Jesus, among them, in all *humility* and *patience*, washing their feet, teaching them, in that way, to be willing to do *anything*, in love, for one another; and specially to be watchful of opportunities of "speaking the truth in love," even as He had spoken the truth in love, and had cleansed them. "Ye are clean, through the word which I have spoken unto you." And how *patient*, also, the dear Lord was with them! "Are ye also yet without understanding?" (Matt. xv.)

In like manner, how wonderful is the *humility* and *patience* of the Holy Spirit with us! Jesus said—"I am among you as *one that serveth*." Is not this exactly true of the Holy Spirit *now*? Gentle as a nurse; leading and teaching the saints; bearing with us; His holy movings sometimes quenched, but renewing, on our contrition, the impressions of His will and the unfoldings of His mind. Never leaving, never forsaking; ever encouraging, comforting, strengthening, upholding! We perhaps "grieve" the Spirit, as the disciples grieved Jesus, but how true of both—

"Having loved His own which were in the world, *he* loved them unto the end." (John xiii.)

In the visible absence of the Lord Jesus, we are, in a blessed sense, committed to the personal patient oversight of the Comforter, the Holy Ghost,

"By whom we are sealed until the day of redemption."

5. Then, again, if the disciples had any difficulty in apprehending the truth, they could go to Jesus, and say, Lord, what might this parable be? (Luke viii.)

So, too, *we* have the Holy Ghost to lead us into all truth. Have we any difficulties, therefore, in our reading of the Word of God? let us not go to man, but let us wait upon the Holy Spirit given unto us. He may, indeed, bless us through one another—but let us not *lean on*, or *look to* one another. It is for us to be cast on Him, and leave it all to Him, to meet our spiritual needs, directly or indirectly, in His *own* gracious way, and in His *own* time.

"For what man knoweth the things of a man, *save* the spirit of man that is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the *Spirit of God*. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; *that we might know* the things that are freely given to us of God." (1 Cor. ii. 11, 12.)

Is He not the Author of the Word, for that which we have He either directly inspired or brought to the Apostles' remembrance. Now, as the Author of the Word, He surely is best able to unfold its meaning.

Just as the Lord Jesus unfolded the Old Jewish Scriptures, so we have the Holy Ghost, sent down from heaven, to unfold to us both Old and New.

How wrong would it have been for the disciples, when the Lord Jesus was with them, to have taken their difficulties to a Rabbi! They never thought of doing so. But they told them to Jesus. As, for instance, "How say the scribes that Elias must first come?"

Let not our enquiries be curious, as were theirs, sometimes: "Lord, are there few that be saved?" For let us remember that the special object

of the presence of the Holy Ghost in us, is to take of Christ's, and show unto us. (John xvi.) He will graciously, if we are led by Him, keep our minds filled, not with unprofitable questions, but with Jesus. As the Lord Jesus honoured the Father; so now, the Holy Spirit honours the Lord Jesus—

"He shall glorify me."

In proportion as we honour the ministry of the Holy Spirit, shall we be blessed, indeed.

"Them that honour me I will honour."

Oh, that the thoughts we have hitherto received from men may be subjected to the test of the Word of God, in full dependence upon the Holy Spirit's guidance!

Ah, have not some of us been afraid to do this, sometimes? How liable we are to receive pet theories, and hold to them upon human authority, because others hold them who are thought to be somewhat! As it is said of the disciples—

"They feared to ask him of that saying." (Luke ix.)

So we sometimes go on, like them, in wilful ignorance, lest our favourite dogmas be disturbed!

But let us, beloved, not be afraid to ask the Holy Spirit, to show us by the Word, "whether these things [the things that we have hitherto held, and the things that we hear] are so." He will bear us, "as on eagles' wings." He is "the Spirit of Truth," and cannot lead us astray. Leaning on our own understanding, and following our own imagination, will lead us wrong;—then let us not do so. The natural mind in our fellow-believers may lead them wrong;—then let us take heed how we hear, as the Lord has admonished us. (Luke viii.) There is no safety, except in bringing everything to the Word and the Spirit.

Thus we have considered that there *was* a Divine One on earth, and there *is* a Divine One on earth.

II.—THE HOLY GHOST, THE ONLY TEACHER.

"The Anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same Anointing teacheth you of all things, and is Truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him." (1 John ii. 27.)

In the Word of God, we have the "all things," and we are responsible to know all that is *there*. Just as, in regard to *walk*, the Scriptures assume that "we walk even as" Jesus walked; so in regard to *knowledge*, it is assumed that we "know all things" (ver. 20) that are revealed.

Now, in the passage last quoted, the Holy Anointing is said to teach us "*of*" the all things—that is, He unfolds the Word of truth. If, therefore, I have a Divine Teacher, ever present to unfold the Word, it is clear that I "need not that any man teach" me. *This*, indeed, is what this same epistle insists on.

Now, this was *not* said while as yet the Word of God was *not* completed. It *is* said in that which was, we may apprehend, the *last* written. Till that time believers *did* need men to teach them, and teachers were given.

But "that which is perfect" being come, (as

was shown us in our last,) let us not, beloved, call any man our—

Teacher;

—for One is our Teacher, even the Holy Spirit of Truth, and all of us are His *learners*.

No man can teach me anything *but what is in the Word of God*. If, therefore, a man can bring me only what is in the Word, and if I am responsible to *know what is there*, how can any man be my teacher? A Teacher is someone who brings something that I do not know. But, having the complete Word, we "know all things," as that Word declares.

Ah, but someone may say, "May not the Spirit on any one occasion, unfold the '*all things*' more to one than to another?"

Granted: and let him who has *so* received of God "quench not the Spirit," but "speak the truth in love." But even *then*, such an one would speak from morning to night if the Holy Spirit given unto us did not *show us* that it *was* the truth. Man's words fall to the ground, powerless for instruction, *unless the Holy Ghost deigns to use them*.

May dear ones, therefore, receive it *clearly* and hold it *strongly*, that the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, is—*The only Teacher of the saints*.

Directly or indirectly, now that "that which is perfect is come," He is the only Teacher of the saints. May we continually seek to be led of Him, to *perceive and hold fast, to receive and prove* the truth. And thanks be to God our Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord, for "the earnest of the Spirit."

III.—THE HOLY GHOST AND "MAN TEACHERS."

The teachings of the Spirit are, first of all, for our individual good; "the husbandman must first be partaker of the fruits." It is, however, the will of God that we should express that which we are enabled by the Holy Spirit to perceive will be to the glory of the Head, (who is present in the midst,) and to the good of souls.

But in our desire to freely give that which we have freely received, care should be taken that great first principles are not lost sight of, for we may, in our desire to be useful, *deny* (practically) both the Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Ministry of the Holy Ghost!

For instance,—

If saints in fellowship, who should meet always in the name of Jesus, come together regularly, on certain fixed times, to hear expositions of the Word from one of their number, they *do*, for the time being, *ignore the headship* of the Lord Jesus Christ and, with that, the *ministry* of the Comforter, the Holy Ghost. It matters not what the expositions are called—sermons, discourses, lectures—given in vestments and pulpits, or out of them. *The result is the same*.

For the time being, *man* is gathered to—not the Lord.

For the time being, *man* is looked to, by the saints, to decide the portion of truth to be brought out—not the Lord.

For the time being, the Church the Woman *dictates* to the Lord through whom She will receive His favours!!

These remarks apply to the case of a *brother in fellowship* regularly lecturing or discoursing to Christians in fellowship, that is to say, the *church*. Not that we would disparage *lecturing* under all circumstances. In these days, when the dear sheep of the Lord suffer such grievous evils through being fed on the bad food of man's traditions, it *may* be, indeed, productive of much good, to give lectures or expositions of the more excellent way, to *miscellaneous* audiences. *Man* may well endeavour to remove *man's rubbish*.

But when such efforts have been blessed—if we *continue* to lecture or sermonize the saints, who *have been taught*, with us, to *hold the Head*, is it not, surely, to hold one thing in theory and another in practice?

Oh, how subtle Satan is! there is no end to his snares! What more natural thought than that those who have been used of the Lord to our conversion from sin, or to un-bandage our eyes to the errors and the evils of men's systems of religion—what more natural thought than that they should, of course, be needful to our furtherance in grace!

Beloved, our growth in grace is (primarily) our affair, for which we are each responsible. My brother cannot do it for me.

"Beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. ii. 5-8.)

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." (Jude i. 19-20.)

We have thus intimated the conviction that the practice of lecturing or discoursing to the saints is practically ignoring the headship of the Lord Jesus and the ministry of the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Spirit's blessings must be restrained where the Lord Jesus is dishonoured, and Satan will have special opportunities of working mischiefs.

Some of those mischiefs are—

1. The *natural* abilities of leaders are more liable to work unchecked, and plausible, but unscriptural views will (more probably) be adopted.

2. As the lecturer, or teacher, is generally more or less revered by the church, there will be a tendency to receive what is said by him, *without proving it*. Where the ability is great and the reverence strong, it will come to be *more natural ability* addressing *natural* ability.

Now, *natural* ability is sure to go wrong when handling the things of God. Satan is more than a match for all the intellect in the world.

What has been the consequence?

Heaps of error, traditions in abundance.

These have not been introduced by the church, but by the so-called gifted teachers and leaders in the church.

Oh, that we would cease from man! Oh, that dear ones would understand that "natural gift" and

"spiritual guidance" are two very different things! The former, Satan can get at, and clothe himself before it as an angel of light; the latter is from the Holy Spirit of Truth, who will bless us with His sweet unfoldings in proportion as we hold the Head, present in the midst of two or three gathered together in His name, and are lowly before Him.

Is it not time that we had "no confidence in the flesh?" That is, *confidence in natural ability*, when possessed by ourselves or others.

Let our confidence be in God—The Comforter, the Holy Ghost.

We point to the abounding disorder all around, and lay it all to the *charge* of the *accepted* teachers of the saints. The *world* has had no share in it; *they* taunt you for it. The *sheep*, (poor simple ones!) who look up to you, have not done it. And God is "not the author of confusion, but of order."

Then, who's to blame?

You, and *you alone*—found, in the pride of intellect, the ready tools of the Arch-Intellect—Satan. Unwittingly, your hands are soiled in the Impostor's service! Oh, fie, shame!

You love the sheep, you love the Master—do you? and affect to *regret* the disorder which you, as one of a class, have done?

Then, teach the saints, by example and precept, that *you* are no teacher—that the Comforter the Holy Ghost, is the *only* Teacher of the saints, through and by the Written Word.

Have you been blessed in your soul with an unfolding of the Word?

Have it to yourself, till you can bring it out *without endangering* the prerogatives of the Lord the Spirit.

For when the time of the lecture or discourse arrives—How do you know that you will be in the Spirit?

How do you know the truth the saints most need?

How do you know that the Spirit, who divides "unto every man severally as He will," would not rather use another member of the body?

Man-Ministry has dreadfully *de*-creased the ministry of the Holy Spirit, as well as the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ (as was shown us in our last.)

IV. —BOOKS.

It may be said—"Why do you, conductors of *Precious Truth*, issue expositions of the Word? "If there is danger of the saints accepting what is *spoken* without proving it, is there not a similar danger of their accepting what is *written*, without proving it, and of regarding *you* (and other "writers) as teachers, as well as the Spirit?"

We have, indeed, been exercised on that point. *If all believers* were this *day* walking by faith in the Lord's presence and the teaching of the Indwelling Spirit, it would be a mighty advantage if all written expositions were suppressed *to-morrow*.

But what about those who are *not*? who are still in the meshes of man's traditions? who, instead of knowing that "where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty," (2 Cor. iii.) need to be taught, like the Hebrew saints, "which be the first principles of

the oracles of God"? The very same reasons which render it our duty to exhort and entreat mistaught believers to be reconciled to God's thoughts when we meet with them in *private* life, make it also our duty to address such *through this* medium, finding it in our possession, in God's providence. We thus stand on much the same ground as the lecturer addressing a *miscellaneous* audience—a very different thing to a brother in fellowship regularly lecturing or discoursing to the saints. What is this latter?

Why it is—Coming into the Lord's presence—

and standing with back upon him!

If the Lord Jesus says "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I",—how dare any one to take the headship of the meeting?

A writer and a reader do not come together in the name of Christ. Besides, an article can be 'proved' sentence by sentence—can be taken up and laid down a dozen times. But you cannot stop a so-called "teacher." Again, the affections are not so likely to warp the judgment of a 'reader' as of a 'hearer,'—if the writer keeps *anonymous*.*

Does the dear reader walk by faith in the Lord's presence and the ministry of the Holy Ghost, our ABIDING TEACHER, bless the Lord, by whatever means it was brought about?—Human-ministry *can do no more*. "Hold fast that thou hast, that none take thy crown." This JOURNAL is not for you, but for those who remain *where you* and *we were* but a short time ago, it may be—following *man*, but "we have returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls." At His feet we may well desire to listen to Him only; we may well care to *read nothing but the Word of God*. To us, beloved, "that which is perfect is come."

Oh, that there were none of man's rubbish to hinder poor believers from apprehending the truth in all its fulness! *then*, this and similar journals would not at all be needed. But you may well be concerned about them, and if you cannot get at them personally, distribute our journal, with prayer. And the Lord bless you, and us.

IV.—A SUGGESTION AND AN EXPOSITION.

Finally, beloved, let us read the Epistle of the Lord Jesus Christ to Pergamos. What did the Lord detect in that church?

That church had in it those who held evil doctrines, and the members of the assembly were allowing the evil to remain undealt with, and not using the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, against it. And what was the evil?—False Teaching. There

* On the subject of writing anonymously, we may well learn another lesson from the precious 1st epistle of John. While the "Gifts" are in the Church, the Holy Ghost recognises them by *name*; the Church receives their writings in *their names*. But man-ministry coming to a close, the Holy Ghost suppresses the name of the *last* writer, and the epistle of John addressed to the whole church goes forth anonymously. We judge, by the Spirit, that it *was* uttered through John—and that is all. Surely, this ought to settle the duty of our writing anonymously, if we think it our duty to write at all. The use of Initials will soon cease to be anonymous, and glory will accrue to MAN for what God may have given!

were those who held "the doctrine of Balaam" (the expediency of alliance with the world), and those who held the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes—which, I am impressed, means the doctrine of *clergy and laity*. *Nicolaitanes* seems to be made up of *Nico*, "to overcome," and *laos*, "the people." These latter words occur in the following—

"When a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome [*nico*] him." (Luke xi. 22.)

"Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John xvi.)

"Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." (Romans xii. 21.)

"A peculiar *people* (*laos*) . . . which were not a *people* (*laos*), but are now the *people* (*laos*) of God." (1 Pet. i.)

Who have been the "overcomers" in the church? by whom have the *people* of God been "overcome"? Has it not been by the clergy? Then, is "the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes" that doctrine which teaches the brethren to look up to man? which brings the saints into subserviency and spiritual prostration to the so-called "gifted," "taught," "ordained."

And where does this thought about there being *other* teachers in the Church beside the Holy Ghost—where has it led so many of us who are otherwise deeply taught?—Most of our readers know that we could mention the initials of several brethren who receive from thousands at this present time a deference due only to the Apostles of the Lord!

The thought of the need of man-teachers is a specious form of the *clergy-and-laity* doctrine; that is, "the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, *which thing*," says the Lord Jesus Christ, "*I hate*." He hates that which causes so much positive dishonour to 'the Comforter, the Holy Ghost.' And shall not *we* hate it, too?

Yes; and to encourage us to overcome this subtlety of Satan—this popular doctrine (we care not what terms you use—*clergy, ministry, leading brethren*, and the like)—the Lord of all says—

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Are you spiritual? The Holy Spirit says to *you*:

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."

"*Will I give.*"

Then it is the Holy Spirit who gives to eat. He it is who, in the absence of the Lord Jesus Christ, *gives to eat*. Let us trust Him. He will daily, while we (the family of God) are tarrying down here in the wilderness,

Gather manna FOR us and *Give* TO us.

He knows where *the manna* is; that is to say, the portion of the Word of God that is suited for us. It is "*hidden*" to us and to others—*not* to Him.

What is the white stone, with the name on it known only to ourselves? Is it not the conviction in our own bosoms of the love of Christ to us each personally? So that with Paul, we each can say of the Lord Jesus—

"Who loved ME, and gave Himself for ME."

To Him with the Father be praise continually for the gift of "the Comforter, the Holy Ghost."

"A PERFECT MAN."

(Eph. iv.)

[We have been led to the following article through some of our readers expressing a difficulty in receiving the exposition entitled—"That which is Perfect is Come." That difficulty we have taken to the Lord for ourselves, and put the result before our readers.]

"But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. . . . And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a Perfect Man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. That we, henceforth, be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive. But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

Some have interpreted the phrase—"unto a perfect man"—in the above scripture, to mean—

Unto the Church glorified with Christ,

arguing that the Church is to look for Gifts till then.

For ourselves, we have several difficulties in receiving this interpretation, which we desire, in much love, to humbly submit to our brethren.

1st. The language used by the Holy Ghost is not THE perfect man, but "a perfect man." We understand it as having, not a future, but a present meaning. Paul, writing to the Ephesian saints, says the Gifts were given—"Till we [Paul and them] all," individually, "come unto. . . A PERFECT MAN, unto the measure of the full stature (morally and spiritually) of Christ," "walking even as He walked." (1 John ii.) Paul adds—"That we be no more CHILDREN," so that some, with himself, had already arrived at the perfectness to which he alludes, and when ALL had, then the Gifts would be no more needful, believers simply "speaking the truth to each other in love."

2nd difficulty. As scripture must interpret scripture, what other scripture speaks of the Church hereafter with Christ as a glorified Man? Is it not rather the Lamb and the BRIDE?

3. But, (perhaps says a brother,)—Does not the Scripture reveal the mystery of the Church being the Body, as well as the Bride, and may not this mystery of the Head and the One Body be referred to in the above expression—"to a perfect man"?

We think not. First, because we cannot find that the emblem of Head and Members or Body is ever used with reference to the Lord Jesus Christ and the Church as glorified together.

This latter emblem is only used when reference is made to the Divine union and co-action of Christ and believers NOW—DOWN HERE—teaching, as this precious emblem does, the duty of subjection, the fact of dependence, the blessedness of vital union and of being the objects of ceaseless care.

But let the beloved reader prove whether this emblem is used in a temporary, earthward sense only.

"Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ and make the members of an harlot?" (1 Cor. vi.)

"Which is [now] his body." (Eph. i.)

"That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel."

"Edifying of the body." "Increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love." (iii. and iv.)

"He is the saviour of the body [nourisher and cherisher of the church. Just as a man cherishes his own flesh] . . . even so the Lord the church; for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." (v.)

But the emblem used in the Word to set forth the relationship of the Church to Christ, when glorified together, is "The Bride, the Lamb's Wife." Not the Body.

This meets the difficulty which many of us have had in holding together the two "mysteries."* And some have endeavoured to show that the Church is not the Bride, but the Body, and that saved Israel is the Bride.

We regard the emblem, therefore, of Head and Members as expressing present, not future, union and action through us (believers) on earth. Indeed, it is a higher emblem of the more wonderful union of Christ and believers under THIS dispensation as compared with the union which existed under the Old. Then, it was Vine and Branches: now, it is that—and something more.

When the Lord Jesus gave his disciples the Vine emblem, He was still on earth; the Root and Stem were still in the earth. But now, in bodily presence, the Lord is withdrawn; and the more appropriate emblem is, not the Vine below, but the Head above. We are called to abide, not in the Vine Visible, but in the Head Invisible.

All the members enumerated in the 1st Corinthians express action and ACTION only; none are indispensable to the VITALITY of the Body—ear, eye, small, foot, hand. The mouth, for instance, as receiving food, is indispensable to the vitality of the body. To speak of a reputed spiritually gifted brother as a "mouth" (as has been done in our hearing) is simply untenable. For suppose a so-called "teacher's" ministrations are not possessed, then, how would the members fare without a mouth? But let those testify to the grace of Christ who, in faithfulness to Him, have had to walk apart.

We press this figure of the "Body," therefore, as setting forth an earthly aspect only,

"Our life is hid with Christ in God."

The Church is not manifested apart from Christ. The true and only Church is not seen and known. The Church is now like Eve, before her separate existence; she was IN the Man, and was taken out of the Man. Of us it is written, "we ARE members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones."

"But, when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we appear WITH Him in glory."

"So shall we be for ever WITH the Lord."

As a visible fact no longer in Him, but as the Church the Woman, one—for ever one—WITH Him.

* The word "mystery," as used in the Scriptures, does not mean something hid, but something that was hid but now revealed.

He will, indeed (our dear and blessed Lord), remain the HEAD, but in the same sense that—

“THE HEAD OF THE WOMAN IS THE MAN.”

But *now*, while believers are down here, Christ is the Head of the Church, “which is His *body*.”

4. Thus we feel difficulty in harmonising OTHER Scriptures with the interpretation that the phrase “A PERFECT MAN,” means *the glorified assembly of God in union with the Lord Christ*.

But a special difficulty arises out of the PASSAGE ITSELF.

It is this. James uses the *same* phrase, and he TWICE uses it with regard to practical walk: and he gives it most clearly the simple meaning which we say it has in the above passage in the Ephesians.

Now, why should the phrase when used by Paul mean something very different?

“Let patience have her *perfect work*, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.” (i. 4.)

“If any man offend not in word, the same is A PERFECT MAN, and able also to bridle the whole body.” (James iii.)

In the original, the phrase is the same—TELEIOS ANDROS. We must press this fact upon the beloved reader; the Spirit of TRUTH speaks to us by *both*.

But further, *teleios* we cannot find ever used with reference to the Church glorified, but always to MORAL PERFECTNESS.

The Lord Jesus thus uses it twice—

“Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.”

“If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell that thou hast,” &c. (Matt.)

Paul uses it in this sense a number of times—

“Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that *are perfect*.” (1 Cor. ii. 6.)

“Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand *perfect* and complete in all the will of God.” (Col.)

“Not as though I had already attained, or were already *perfect*, but I follow,” &c.

“Let us, therefore, as many as be *perfect*.” (Phil. iii.)

“But strong meat belongeth to them that are of *full age*—(*teleios*, perfect).” (Heb. v.)

Thus we see that “a perfect man,” was contemplated as *possible* now, down here.

We find the word sometimes applied to principles, facts, and things: but never to glorification, thus—

“Perfect will of God.” “When that which is perfect is come.” “Perfect law of liberty.” “Perfect love.”

One of the most important places where this word is used is 1 Cor. xiv. This passage conclusively settles its simple application to moral perfection down here:—

“Brethren, by not children in understanding; howbeit, in malice be ye children [or rather, babes]; but in understanding be *men* (*teleios*, that is to say, *perfect*.)”

James’s “perfect man” is simply a self-controlled man, able to bridle his tongue—more especially in the assembly, occurring, as it does, directly after the exhortation, “Be not many masters” or *teachers*,* as the word in the original is rendered in Acts xiii. 1; 1 Tim. ii. 7; 2 Tim. i. 11.

Paul’s “perfect man” is one who has “put on the Lord Jesus Christ,”—one who is being “conformed to the image of God’s dear Son” by the “all

* James wrote *before* “that which is perfect had come.”

things which work together” for *that* special good, (see Rom. viii.); or, as in Eph. iv., (which we are looking at,) he is “a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

The Lord Jesus was indeed “perfect.” Now HE IS OUR STANDARD. To the JEW it was said—“Be ye perfect, (*teleios*), even as your Father in heaven is perfect.” But to us who believe in Jesus it is said—

“He that saith he abideth in Him OUGHT HIMSELF SO TO WALK, EVEN AS HE WALKED.” (1 John ii.)

To this perfectness, the Gifts, as the Lord has shown us, were given to bring up believers from heathenism and Judaism.

“Be ye followers [or imitators] of me, even as I am of Christ.”

“Warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man *perfect* in Christ Jesus, whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working which worketh in me mightily.” (Col. i.)

Paul does not say, “present to Christ,” but “present perfect in Christ Jesus”—perfect as followers of Christ—in all the moral perfectness of Jesus Christ. It does not mean that Paul might present believers “perfect” in the glory. The Lord Jesus will present the Church unto himself; (Eph. v. 27.) Paul strove that he might *then* present—at that time—every man as apprehending the faith in its unity, or entirety, and as possessing a knowledge of the Son of God, and practically conformed to Him. Think of the newly-converted Philippian jailer and the proud Jew but recently going about to establish his own righteousness, brought to believe in Jesus—and having no New Testament! They needed “Gifts,” indeed, to bring them to the understanding of the mystery of Christ and the Church, and to the knowledge of the *Son of God*, and to conformity to the *Man Christ Jesus*.

This is the simple meaning of the above passage in the Ephesians. This perfectness of believers was the AIM and OBJECT of the Gifts, Christ being their STANDARD.

But now that “that which is perfect is come,” we are each responsible to know all the mind and will of God, having the Scriptures in our hands and the Holy Ghost to unfold them. Spiritual Gifts, being no longer needed, have “vanished away.”

We are each responsible, not only to know the truth, but to “speak the truth in love,” so that we all may be “knit together in love,” and “grow up into Christ in all things.”

The Apostle John, who, writing last of all, regards the Church as having no further need of Gifts, also takes it for granted that believers “walk even as Christ walked,” “who hath left us an example that we should follow his steps,” and who, at all times, spake the truth, and oh, with what love!

We conclude with passages from the 1st Epistle of John, and humbly exhort our brethren to seek to be frequently led of the Spirit into this valuable, last-written, and very precious epistle:—

“Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.”

“Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not.”

“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”

"SERVE GOD ACCEPTABLY."

"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire."

I.—ATTENDANCE.

This Scripture is specially suitable as the basis of an exhortation to an attendance at meetings at the times appointed. For our own souls' sake, it is better to be a little earlier than the time for coming together, in order to engage in silent prayer and communion with the Lord. And, let it be remembered, that for the assembly's sake, every member is bound to take every care to be in the Spirit on coming together, in order to be really helpers, and not hinderers, one of another.

Is it needful to give up anything, in order to be in good time? Then let our willingness to give up be quickened by remembering what we have received—

"A kingdom which cannot be moved."

Then we may well desire to "have [hold fast] grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear."

Now, coming late is neither "acceptable" to God nor man. Neither is it "reverent;" acting so with respect to an earthly personage would be felt to be very *ir-reverent*.

Then we see that we are to serve God, not only "acceptably and with reverence," but with "godly fear." And that because

"Our God is a consuming fire."

Though we have come to Mount Sion (not Mount Sinai), yet, as regards the flesh in us, God is ever the same—a consuming fire! If anything of the flesh is upon us, the presence of God will be felt to have a burning effect—burning off from us all that is of the flesh.

Now, indolence is of the flesh, and if it be allowed in us, we must feel the consequences. But if we be going on with that which is according to God—then there is nothing about us that is *consumable*. Happy are we, then, when our hearts condemn us not.

But let us not judge one another in regard to this matter: the Lord knows all unavoidable hindrances.

It is blessed to think of Jesus in this respect. As He was wont, "He went early to the temple." Let us hold fast grace, beloved, to "walk as dear children unto all well-pleasing."

II.—GIVING.

2. How UNACCEPTABLE, also, is the practice of sending, or aking round a box, after the breaking of bread, to every member of the church! The thought which leads to this practice is, doubtless, this—"Everyone in fellowship ought to give something; so let us afford every member an opportunity if so doing."

Very true; but if the box for the church's offerings be placed at the door, so that all who come in and out must see it, he needful opportunity *will be given*.

But passing a box round a meeting says more than—"You ought to give." It says, practically, "We expect you to give," and everyone feels that if he did not give those who sit next could know it. Thus, an element of constraint is introduced.

The consequence is—The *freeness* of giving—that beautiful thing—is sadly marred. "Giving" is a fruit unto God; but now we mar the delicate bloom on the fruit by our rude saling with it—don't we?

By this practice, "giving" as a *duty* is pressed at the expense of *freedom*. Where this is the case, payments resemble *taxes* more than *freewill offerings*, and the church is made a place for the payment of taxes—Poll-taxes; that is, something *per head*!

The principle is true—That we ought to give according to our ability. But who can tell the "ability," or pecuniary means, of his neighbour? There may be no "ability," at the time, where we little think it. Suppose the Lord has recently it may be on the way to the meeting—made a special call for our means. In such a case—and many others—a certain sling of shame may press a gift—no, (we should rather say,) Tax, or Tribute.

Brothren, Let Caesar take tribute, and Caesar only.

But some may say—Oh, if we left it wholly to consciences we should not get enough to meet our liabilities."

Ah, is that it? You take such heavy expenses upon you that you cannot walk by faith in regard to meeting them! Oh, let us commit our affairs to the Lord, and He will meet the assembly's needs in His own way. "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Then, let us "walk by faith, not by sight" in this matter, and "serve God acceptably."

BOOKS RECEIVED.

"A SECOND WORD OF WARNING to the recent Converts in Ireland on the peculiar doctrines of Mr DABBY and Mr NEWTON. Paul, Paternoster-row. 4d."—With this pamphlet we have received a letter from the author. Neither of the conductors of PRECIOUS TRUTH has any personal acquaintance with, or experience of, the "Brethren's" troubles, and we feel that the late Editor dealt sufficiently with the subject.

Our own souls, we may say, have been refreshed by certain of our brother's remarks on the inconceivable magnitude of the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross—remarks which we may be led to transfer to our columns.

"THE RIVER OF LIFE."—A series of papers utterly mystic, based on fanciful interpretations of Old Testament Scripture—most grievous.

"LIGHT IN THE DARK VALLEY." S. W. Partridge. 2d.—A truthful tract, eloquent; rather too eloquent. The power of truth is weakened when we attempt to assist it by a stream of rhetoric. The attention is apt to be caught by *our* beauty, rather than *its* force.

We regret the writer does not seem to be quite clear that the Christian's "living hope" is the "appearing of the great God, our Saviour Jesus Christ." He who is waiting for the Lord from Heaven is indeed delivered from the bondage of the fear of death.

"ELECTION AND EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT."—On this latter subject we think we shall do well to simply hold in its natural meaning the text—"Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels. . . . These shall go away into everlasting [AIONIOS] punishment, but the righteous into life eternal [AIONIOS]."

"The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks." *We* "are but a feeble folk," and take shelter in the rocks and fortresses of God's Word, which endureth for ever.

"IS IT HONEST TO ABIDE A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND?" Macintosh. 1s.—A laborious attempt of a true partisan of the English Establishment to justify its liturgies and practices. We require Scripture for everything; this writer gives us *logic*. Take, for instance, the following—

"The Bible is truth; the Articles accord with the Bible; therefore, the Articles are truth."

"The Articles are truth; the Prayer-book accords with the Articles; therefore, the Prayer-book is truth."

By this logic, the Bible, the Articles, and the Prayer-book are proved of equal weight and value as standards of truth!

Are they?

May the writer learn with us that "That which is perfect is come."

"SIGNS OF OUR TIMES."—First article very good. We do not fall in with the interpretation put forth in this pamphlet, that the sixth vial is now being poured forth. And think this pamphlet is one of a class whose tendency is to work up a morbid wistfulness concerning dates—an excitement that may result in a disastrous re-acton.

ERROR.—In our last, page 242, col. 1, ten lines from bottom, for "past disappearing," read "fast disappearing."

GATHERING TO THE LORD.

"10, E—Row, London.

"DEAR BROTHER,—Perhaps it will be cheering to my brethren who meet in the name of the Lord to know that a few Christians have lately come out from the systems of the present day, and meet in a brother's house. We are about eight in number. We believe we are led of the Holy Spirit, and if we are to meet elsewhere, *the Lord will open a door.*

We meet on Lord's Day morning for reading the Scriptures, and in the evening for Worship and Breaking of Bread; and on Tuesday evenings for reading the Scriptures. We can, indeed, say the Lord has greatly blessed us. If it was ever needful that Christians should come out from the apostate systems, it is now. God bless all who are honouring Him, and who are jealous for His Word and Truth. May we be firm, is the prayer of yours truly in the Blessed Lord, G. C. G."

[Conductors' Note.—It is very natural, Dear Brother, to desire a larger place to meet in. Our views have been fully expressed recently on that point. We indeed regard the following things as desirable—

1st. That the room should be easily accessible from the street.

2nd. That the outer door should remain open during the meeting.

3rd. That a simple bill or tablet should announce to passers-by the times of meeting.

4th. That the brethren would do well to seek to be led to a spot near at hand, at which to preach the Gospel and invite Christians to the Scripture meetings.

Desiring simply the glory of the Lord, we may well desire, earnestly and confidently, a room sufficiently suitable. Two parlours with folding doors, in a brother's house, is what most naturally directly suggests itself to the mind.

We do well, indeed, to desire *not* to shut ourselves up to ourselves. At the same time, we can do nothing of ourselves; but must wait upon the Lord, to be guided and helped of Him. Until He gives us what we think to be better, we must "be content with such things as we have." And thankful, too.

During the winter season, more especially, it would be a most suitable arrangement, if you, and other small Christian fellowships, meeting like yourselves in your neighbourhood, were to hire a schoolroom or hall, say, for one preaching meeting a week. Then, if souls are converted, receiving them into fellowship in your own houses. Hired halls and large places, we remain convinced, are not the safest and best for fellowship of saints, however useful they may be for occasional UNITED TESTIMONY to the world in preaching the Gospel with the power of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.

The dear Lord glorify Himself in you, in us, in all. Amen]

OUR CORRESPONDENTS AND OURSELVES.

Address Letters for the Conductors to 335a, Strand, London, W.C

J. B.—Dear brother, If we will refer our difficulties to our brethren, instead of taking them to the Lord and searching the Word for ourselves, do we not deserve to remain in doubt and darkness? How often, when we have been consulting our brethren, has the Lord allowed us to come away, with our difficulties quite unsettled! We have been thus obliged to take them to Him, and have found, to our sweet experience, where our strength lieth—even in the HEAD, kept unborn of of the glory due to Him. He, "of God, is made unto us WISDOM," &c. (1 Cor. i.) Do let us hold this Practically. We know a man in Christ who had a difficulty of a social nature like your own—only last week. Remembering the precious assurance of the Lord, "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven," this brother went to another dear brother in fellowship, and interested him in his case. The two knelt down and asked the Lord to graciously give light from His Word. They arose, and after a little patient waiting the perplexed one was led to a passage. This was read, and, during its reading, light was poured upon the perplexed one's mind *like a flood*, that met his case in all its bearings. Oh, the blessedness of walking according to the Word! The Lord bless you. "Ye have no need that any man teach you."

H. L. R.—We thank you, dear brother, but cannot use your kind communication. We are refreshed at the evident joyfulness with which you contemplate the Coming of the Lord.

J. S.—The days are indeed, as you say, "dark, pitchy dark," with regard to the World and the Professing Woman. But for this we are prepared by that word which tells us things will wax worse and worse, "deceiving and being deceived." We long, more and more, to see the dear Lord, face to face. And we feel a confidence that it is so with dear ones generally. But what we do also long for is—that the Real Church, the True Woman, may be found blameless at His Coming, ceasing to be *wilful*, to prefer Her own will to the Lord's. Willfulness in turning away from the Word, when ministered, is very painful; if so to us, how much more to the Lord! Yet His love changes not! let not ours, towards those that are His. We are called to fellowship with Him "in enduring all things." He never ceases, either, in washing the Church with the water of the Word; in this respect, also, may we have fellowship with Him, with all patience and longsuffering. But it is His work, not ours. If He uses you or us, in any measure, to the blessing of saints, to Him be all the glory. If our efforts at any time fail, or rather *seem* to fail—nevertheless, He is glorified in us. To Him be all glory for ever and ever. Amen.

T. C.—Very dear brother, the Lord is pleased and is glorified when dear ones hold fast grace under affliction. "Many are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all." "No chastening for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous, nevertheless afterward it worketh the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them who are exercised thereby." Our afflictions are often blessed to others also. We join in your prayers that blessing may abound towards the dear children of God, and that all may be brought into a patient waiting for the Morning Star. Amen to that prayer, doubtless says every reader.

READER, Torquay.—"The Link Broken" is published by Houlston and Wright, 3d. We should like to hear from you.

J. C. A., J. H., C. R. still postponed.

NOTICE.—In regard to our suggestion that one of the larger and better kind of biscuits would be found a readily-available form of unfermented bread for a small gathering, a remark has reached us, that almost all biscuits are fermented. Upon enquiry, however, we find that this is not the case. But anyone can tell for himself. If the body of the biscuit is spongy and light, *then* ferment has been used. But if it be of a close solid character, even though there be "air-blisters" on the surface, *then* it is unfermented.

UNFOLDINGS OF THE WORD OF TRUTH.—Being selected contributions to "Precious Truth." 1s. Cloth. 160 pp. A NEAT GIFT BOOK. CONTENTS—

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BATEMAN, PATERNOSTER ROW, HEYWOOD, STRAND

Published for the Proprietor, by—

J. B. BATEMAN, 22, Paternoster-row, entrance in Ivy-lane. West End—HEYWOOD & Co., 335, Strand, London, W.C. City Agents—ARTHUR HALL, 25, Paternoster-row, London, EC. SMART & ALLEN, 2, London-house-yard, Paternoster Row. Dublin Agents—McGLASHAN & GILL, 50, Upper Sackville-street.

Printed by JOHN EVANS, 335a, Strand, London.

PRECIOUS TRUTH.

"He that is Spiritual judgeth all things." (1 Cor. ii.)

London: — Published for the Proprietor by J. B. BATEMAN, 22, Paternoster Row, entrance in Ivy Lane.

No. 33.]

DECEMBER 1, 1867.

[One Halfpenny.]

"HITHERTO."

"Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mispah and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." (1 Sam. vii.)

With this number is finished a volume of this Journal, consisting of 33 numbers.

It was with no desire of ours that the conducting of PRECIOUS TRUTH came into our hands. But as that has occurred, we hope to continually look to the Lord to *help us*, as He has *hitherto*.

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Eph. vi. 12.)

We are not teachers. We should be sorry any more to speak of the need of teachers, as though the Holy Ghost needed the helping out of man!

We are only responsible to speak our simple convictions before the Lord, and pray you to read our pages simply as the testimony as a brother.

Recently the dear Lord has given us much *man-leveling* truth. Unto the dust must man be brought before God can be exalted.

"Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

N.B.—Copies of the Title Page and Contents of Vol. I, can shortly be had for binding up, gratuitously, by Subscribers, on application to Brother Bateman or Messrs Heywood & Co.

"WAITING."

The Church is waiting for the Lord from heaven (1 Thess. i.) Saints departed are sleeping, resting in Jesus, waiting for us. (1 Thess. iv.) Saints of old, sleeping with their fathers (1 Kingsii. 10), are waiting for a "better country, that is, a heavenly," (Heb. xi. 16.) After the withdrawal of the Church, a contrite remnant of Israel, believing that Jesus was and is the King of the Jews, will wait His return (Zech. xii.) Yea, even now the whole earth is waiting and groaning to be delivered from the evils resulting from Satan's sway (Rom. viii. 22, 23)

In a very different sense, lost souls, "spirits in prison," are awaiting the judgment of the "great white throne" (1 Pet. iii. 19; Rev. xx. 12). Lost angels, having sinned, and being "cast down to hell, and delivered into chains of darkness," are waiting, "being reserved unto judgment" (2 Pet. ii. 4). This place seems to be the "deep," into which the "Legion" craved not to be sent.

"THE SEVEN STARS ARE THE ANGELS."

"The Seven Stars are the Angels of the Seven Churches: and the Seven Candlesticks which thou sawest are the Seven Churches." (Rev. i.)

DEAR Christian Reader,—What thought have you hitherto held as to what is the meant by the Stars or Angels? Have you received any one of the current doctrines? They are, all of them, unsatisfactory. Let us look at each of them, before we present that which, we are confident, is the true interpretation.

1. First, then, the most common doctrine is, that the "angels" of the churches are "the ministers of the churches." This is the meaning which the translators have themselves supplied, and inserted in the italic chapter-head or contents of Rev. ii. But while thankful to them, (but chiefly to the Lord the Head of the Church,) for their labours in rendering the Scriptures into the common tongue, it becomes us to remember that there *are* things "hidden from the wise and prudent, but revealed unto babes." And *this*—may be one of them.

"Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, the Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain. Therefore *let no man glory in men.*" (1. Cor. iii.)

Now this first interpretation—that the "angels" are "ministers"—necessarily leads to *glorying in men*. It is impossible to have the idea that we have an "angel" among us without glorying in him.

But, again, this custom of having one man as a "minister" in each church, is nowhere to be recognised in the Acts of the Apostles or the Epistles to the various churches. This practice *may* have—nay, *must* have—arisen very early *after* the apostles' time; but the *fact* is denied by none, that no such practice as a *one-man ministry* was set up, and recognised, and its perpetuation provided for, by the Apostles.

On the contrary, what is seen is plurality of elders and liberty of ministry. Saints should, therefore (being desirous of acting according to the blessed Word of God) gather to the Lord—gather together in His name—and depend upon Him to *minister* to them by the Holy Ghost through whomsoever He will. This is "walking by faith, not by sight."

This way of meeting simply in the name of Jesus, in full confidence in His assured presence, had been utterly lost to the Church many centuries before the

translators' time, and though the last half century has seen its revival, to the blessing of myriads, (praise the Lord!), yet vast numbers of Christians are still in ignorance of its preciousness.

Such dear Christians, therefore, like the translators, are obliged to *accommodate* these words—"angels of the churches"—to suit *their* notions of *ministry*! and say that "the angels of the churches" are "the ministers of the churches."

In another section of this article we show that such a gracious servant of God as Paul himself cannot be regarded as "an angel."

2. While, therefore, we *cannot* receive the teaching on this passage of those who hold *wrong* (that is, *unscriptural*) thoughts on the subject of "ministry," difficulty is also felt in receiving the interpretations of some who hold *right* ideas about "ministry."

These latter interpretations, to which we refer, are—
(A) That "the angel" is the *Spirituality* of each church;

[To this exception is taken, because it is a *non-personal* term, whereas the term *angel* is mostly personal, and *personality* is again and again attributed in this case. "Spirituality" is an *abstract quality* or *thing*, not a person. Now you cannot write to a *thing*. But the word is—"Unto the Angel of the Church of Ephesus write—"

(B) By some, the *Spiritual members* of each church, (viewed as united in one) are regarded as the angel;

[To this we object, because the *oneness* of believers is the oneness of the *body*, not of the spiritually-minded only; we *are* one, whatever the condition of heart and life. No *other* Scripture justifies the thought of one part of the Church being the "angel" to the other part. The "spiritual" part of each church cannot be the "angel," but are rather those who are individually addressed, at the end of each of the Seven Epistles in the words—"He that hath an ear to hear." These are the *Spiritual members* of each Church. If they be a part of the Church, they cannot be the angels of the Church, because the "stars" *must* be regarded as *distinct* from the "candlesticks," but this hypothesis confuses the two.]

(C) Guardian *angels* from heaven, deputed to take care of each church.

[This view is founded upon such texts and facts as these—"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto them who shall be heirs of salvation?" "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him." "Their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." And in the book of Daniel, the Angel Michael is seen as the great guardian of the Jewish nation. Now, in all these and other cases, the angels, because they "excel in might," are seen to be used in a *physical*, soldierly, or servitor sense—*never* are they brought before us in the Scriptures as those who possess truth from God for us. They were, indeed, used to convey *messages* from God to individuals, but man was never encouraged to regard them as *standing depositories* of truth. Indeed, this interpretation—that the Seven Epistles were addressed to the Seven Churches through a Guardian Angelic Spirit, if practically taken up, would go far to override that Scripture which declares there is but *one* mediator between God and man, and might very naturally lead to that reverential regard for the angels of God which was foreseen and forbidden.]

PAUL HIMSELF NOT A "STAR."

Before we enter into the consideration of the right interpretation, let us altogether dismiss the claims of man to be identified with the "angels of the churches" by the following section.

The control exercised over the Stars or Angels is *complete*—they are *in the Lord's Right Hand*.

Can it be said of any one, or more, members of any church, that *he*, or *they*, have been thus *completely*, and *at all times*, *voluntarily* under the *control* of the *Lord Jesus Christ*, Head of the Church?

Of course, it cannot. This consideration should have great weight with us, in leading us to look away from ourselves for the Angels of the Churches.

If any brother in the Lord could be regarded as a *Star*—*Paul is that man*. Yet who would claim for Paul such a complete and continual subjection to the Lord as is implied in the emblem of a star *in the Lord's right hand*? Take, for instance, his final journey up to Jerusalem.

It becomes us, indeed, to speak very carefully when weighing the conduct of an Apostle of the Lord, and we desire so to do. With respect to Paul, the Apostle to us Gentiles, we hope we reverence him as much as any, for all that the Lord did by him and in him, but with the Acts of the Apostles in our hands, we may well doubt whether that journey was *directed by the Lord Jesus Christ*, and we perceive that the truth we are here considering, concerning man not being the Stars or Angels of the Churches, demands a passing attention to this passage in Paul's course.

Doubtless, "our beloved brother Paul" thought and felt that he had good motives for going up to Jerusalem—such as: a love for the poor saints, zeal for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, and a readiness to die for Israel's sake. But the best motives do not justify any course for which we have no distinct permission. (Oh, that we may all learn that lesson!) For aught that appears in the Word, Paul's project of going up to Jerusalem arose, (almost unwittingly, perhaps,) in *his own* heart and mind, and was pursued by his *own will* and *wish*.

In the beginning of his Christian course, Paul naturally had desires towards Jerusalem, and fostered thoughts within himself that he was just the servant for the special work of preaching Christ to the Jews. He even presses upon the Lord Jesus Himself these views of his personal fitness! The Lord having appeared to him, said—

"Make haste, and get thee out of Jerusalem; for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me."

To this requirement, Paul answers, almost in the language of remonstrance!

"Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee; and when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him!"

This reasoning is met by a *peremptory* command—

"Depart, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles."

Thus Paul, at the first, like the rest of the Apostles, clave to Israel. But the Lord Jesus, for the sake of us who were among the Gentiles, broke him away.

What was his final return to Jerusalem—but natural desire, in a most gracious man, at last, *having its own way*?

It is almost the only failing recorded of Paul, in whom the Lord was so greatly glorified—but *a failure it clearly was.*

For are not the facts these?

The Lord gave a command—"Depart—far hence," and *He never revoked it.* This, the will of Christ concerning him, was revealed to him through Ananias at his baptism, and confirmed by the Holy Ghost when he was separated to the work with Barnabas. Under such circumstances we should expect that Paul would not leave his work among the Gentiles without *express permission.* Now this seems to have been the case with regard to his *first* journey up to Jerusalem after his call to the Apostleship. Referring to *that* occasion, Paul says,—

"I went up *by revelation.*" (Gal. ii.)

But with regard to his *last* journey, he went up *against revelation,* the Holy Ghost warning him from time to time that it would cause personal hindrance with his apostolic work, and when, at last, he had reached the borders of Palestine, the Holy Spirit gave an emphatic utterance of disapprobation.

"Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre; for there the ship was to unlade her burden. And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days, who said to Paul, through the Spirit, *that he should not go up to Jerusalem.*" (Acts xxi.)

As Paul did not bow to this utterance of the Spirit, nothing remained but the pronouncement of *judgment* through Agabus—*indefinite imprisonment,* which the disciples (finding they could not turn him from his purpose) are obliged to acquiesce in with a sigh—"The will of the Lord be done."

Christ was indeed glorified by Paul's testimony, as He always is, whether it is received or not. But where was the good to souls resulting from it? The Lord knew that they who had rejected Him would reject Paul: and so He said, "They will not receive thy testimony concerning me."

So, all the Holy Ghost has recorded is—an enraged populace, a trembling Felix, an almost-persuaded Agrippa,—*but no soul saved.* Even the Church, whose poor he went to relieve, only had their burdens increased through additional persecution excited by his presence. (See Hebrews x. 34.)

The Holy Spirit made known the mind of the Lord. Those who think these remarks groundless must shut their eyes to the above simple Scripture—that the Spirit intimated at Troas that Paul should *not* go up to Jerusalem. Most certainly, as regards *conduct,* it was possible for *Paul* to fail as well as Peter, whom he had to reprove to his face.

The Lord had called Paul to the apostleship of the Gentiles. And for what did he leave his Christ-appointed work? That he "might carry alms to his own nation." (Acts xxiv.) Now, was not this leaving apostle-work for deacon-work—work which any two or three of the good men who were travelling with him might have done—men whose praise was in all the churches? The course taken by the Apostle is altogether very surprising.

And mark the result! As if left to himself, see

him, with shaven head, adopting an unworthy temporising policy, and yielding to Pharisaic pressure!

And when in prison, we hear no midnight hymns as at Philippi. At the latter place, he was in the path of duty. But the castle at Jerusalem was made, on that night, by Paul's reflections, a gloomy prison-house indeed. But the dear Lord met his fears and regrets by a specially gracious word.

"Be of good cheer, Paul; for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome."

Yes; but in custody of the Gentile power. He bore witness at Rome, and, perhaps, at *Rome* only. The Holy Ghost never presents him again as being at liberty, going about his legitimate work, preaching the Gospel in regions beyond, and confirming the churches.

That the Lord (who always shows Himself stronger and wiser than Satan), brought blessing to souls and glory to Himself out of the failure of His very dear servant, is freely admitted. Our only object here is to show that it *was* a failure; and thence to prove that no Gentile believer can claim, for himself or others, that which we cannot claim for *Paul himself*—to be *a star in the Lord's right hand,* that is to say, *a light-giver always consciously under the Lord's control.*

We must look away from the church for the *angel of the church.*

As so much difference of view exists on this subject, we may well desire to be led by the Holy Spirit into this part of God's Word for *ourselves.*

In the first place *angel* means "messenger,"—"revealer," and is generally in the Word a messenger from God.

Who is the messenger from God in the Church of God? who is the Revealer from God in our midst?

"THE COMFORTER, THE HOLY GHOST."

He is the Sent-One or Messenger in this dispensation.

"If I depart, I will *send* Him unto you." (John xvi.)
"Hear what the Spirit *saith* unto the churches."

Can it be true, therefore, that the—

HOLY GHOST IS THE STARS [REVEALER], THE ANGELS
[MESSENGER]?

This is the interpretation we are most happy in holding. That there *are* difficulties in it, we frankly confess. But for ourselves, we may say, in all good conscience, we believe the Lord has graciously shown us through them all. Let us proceed to look at these difficulties in order.

CONCERNING THE TERM "ANGEL."

Now, let it be clearly understood, this word has reference to *office,* "messenger," without respect to the *nature* of the one who fulfils that office. So that *even God,* when He comes down from the Invisible Jehovah, *takes this title.*

"The Lord (*Adon*), whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the *Messenger (Angelos)* of the Covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord (*Jehovah*) of Hosts." (Mal. iii.)

"Behold, I send an *Angel* before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of Him, and obey His voice, provoke Him not; for He will not pardon your transgressions: for *my name is in Him*. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries. For mine *Angel* shall go before thee and bring thee into the Amorites, and will cut them off." (Exod. xxiii.)

"In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the *Angel* of his presence saved them." (Isa. lxiii.)

In other places, the Divine One who came down into gracious dealing with man is called "the *angel* of the Lord" as well as "*God*," both terms being sometimes used in the same passage indifferently for the same person: thus—

"Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro . . . and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. And the *angel* of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire And when the Lord saw that He turned aside to see, *God* called unto him." (Exod. iii.)

So, too, while we read in Exod. xx.

"*God* spake all these words, saying,—"

In Acts vii. this Divine One is spoken of as the *angel*—doubtless, the Eternal Word.

"This is he [Moses] that was in the church in the wilderness with the *angel* which spake to him in the Mount Sina and our fathers, who received the lively oracles to give unto us."

And so, in other passages.

"And the *angel* of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord." (Gen. xxii.)

"And the *angel* of God spake unto me in a dream, saying, Jacob; And I said, Here am I." . . . "I am the *God* of Bethel." (Gen. xxxi.)

"The *Angel* which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads." (Gen. xlviii.)

"And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? And the captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so." (Joshua v.)

"And the *Angel* of the Lord appeared unto him [Gideon] and said unto him, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour. And Gideon said unto him, Oh, my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then has all this befallen us? . . . And the Lord looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?" (Judges vi.)

The following passage in the New Testament is remarkably similar to the above from the Old. In Acts viii. 26 we read—

"And the *Angel* of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, arise, and go toward the south."

In the 29th verse the expression is changed—

"Then the *Spirit* said unto Philip, go near, and join thyself to this chariot."

"The *Spirit* of the Lord caught away Philip."

As the latter command is only a continuation of the former—is "*the Spirit*" in the latter the same

person as "the *angel* of the Lord" in the former, as in the Old Testament Scriptures above quoted?

It is not our object to prove that angels were always God: no, no. In a multitude of places they are clearly creature-spirits. Thus, the three that appeared to Abraham (Gen. xviii.) were "the *angel* of the Lord" (that is, one person of the Godhead) and two angels or creature-spirits.

Our desire is merely to show any who are stumbled at the interpretation that the "*Angel*" is the Spirit, that the same word is assumed in grace by that Blessed One, who, leaving the Light Inaccessible, appeared, of old, to mortal sight, and even touch. See Gen. xxxii. 24—32, where Jacob wrestled with Him—wrestled with *God*, "had power with *God*," not in wrestling—trying that, he came off lame—but he prevailed in obtaining a blessing and a royal name.

There is nothing lowering to the nature of the Spirit to be termed "*Angel*" by the Son of God, than there is for that Divine One to be termed "*Angel*" by the Spirit of Prophecy when reference is made in the Old Testament to His coming to do the will of God. In both cases, the word is simply and strictly true and applicable—*Messenger* or *Representative*.

"SEVEN" MEANS PERFECTION.

But some may say—The Holy Spirit is *one*; how then can a *plural* emblem—stars, angels—be used to show forth the nature of the work or office He has graciously taken?

To this it is replied, For the same reason that the Church, which is *one*, is represented by *seven*—seven golden candlesticks. SEVEN, as we were shown at page 169, sets forth, in the Scriptures, *perfectness*, divine completeness. The Church of God is perfect in His sight.

"By one offering he hath *perfected* for ever them that are sanctified." (Heb. x.)

The Holy Spirit is a *perfect enlightener*—the Seven Stars; He is the *perfect messenger*, therefore is He called the Angels of the Seven Churches. And the Seven Candlesticks are the Seven churches, or the One perfect Church.

So far as the saints are concerned, the Holy Spirit is, *personally, perfectly* present in every church, in a practical sense. Therefore He has a sevenfold *personal emblem*—angels of the seven churches. In each of the Seven Churches he was regarded as being really as Present as if he were *there*—in that one—*only*. Thus a *seven-fold personal emblem* simply sets forth his *omni-presence*.

But the *seven*, in emblem—are *one*, in person. This is rendered very clear by Rev. xxii. 16:

"I, Jesus, have sent mine *Angel* to testify unto you these things in the Churches."

Who is testifying in the churches? The Spirit.

"He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the *Spirit* saith unto the Churches."

"He shall testify of me."

In Rev. v. we seem to have a wonderful reference, emblematically, to the same Holy One.

"And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the Seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth."

Here the Holy Spirit is presented in active association with the Lord Jesus Christ, but in a *different* dispensation to our own. In this Rev. v. the Church is presented *above* in the glory, while worship and praise ascend from all *below*. It seems, therefore, to bring before us the earth in Millennial days, and we are led by the above expression "Seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth," to remember the words of the prophet Joel, which will then be *fully* fulfilled.

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon ALL FLESH; and your sons, &c... also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit."

Now, He is the Angels in the Seven churches: *then*, the Seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

Again, in a purely heavenly scene, (Rev. iv.) we read—

"And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the Seven Spirits of God."

Again—

"Unto the Angel of the church in Sardis write: These things saith He that hath the Seven Spirits of God and the Seven Stars."

Thus the Seven Stars, the Seven Angels, and the Seven Spirits of God, are the Holy Spirit—emblems of the Holy Spirit in his *different* relationships. The first is *heavenly*—the two latter *earthly*, having reference to his earthly work and attitude. Just as the words "sword of the Spirit" are an emblem for the Word of God.

A SPECIAL DIFFICULTY DEALT WITH.

A difficulty in receiving this interpretation may present itself in this fact—

If the Perfect Angel of the One Church is the Abiding Spirit, how is it that He receives words through John, and not directly from the Lord Himself? John is commanded by the Lord to "write," and to write to the Angel.

In looking at this fact, let us weigh the following:

1. The apostolic order was instituted *before* the descent of the Holy Ghost.

2. The Apostolic Ministry, though personally transient, was Divine. God ever honours that which is of Himself.

3. The Lord, therefore, takes up the *prior* Ministry (in the person of John), and which was about to vanish away, to present words to the *final* and *abiding* Ministry, (the Spirit,) which should be *lastingly* presented by Him to the churches.

Then, again, there is the Scripture—

"He shall not speak of [from] Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak."

This is doubly true: First, with regard to the

Apostles, in showing them new truth, according to the will of Christ; and, secondly, in *not* revealing new truth to us, but unfolding that which is *written*. Now, if it is a matter of fact, that the churches have an Abiding Heavenly Messenger in them, to unfold and press the truth upon them, and who was to remain as the Lord's Representative *after* the Apostles,—how appropriate that the word, addressed to the churches in the "last time," when the Gifts had all but passed away,—how appropriate that the word *then* given should have been given to the Angel! It is thus addressed to Him in His *Church-aspect*—as the Sent-One in the churches.

Not to have addressed them to Him, would have been to have ignored the presence of a Divine One—One to whom the churches, in the absence of the Lord, are committed.

"Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." (Eph. iv.)

When the Apostles departed, all ordinations "vanished away," all human under-shepherds ceased. Members of the flock have been blessed to one another, as the Spirit, by the Lord's will, may have used them. But the only Leader now of the sheep is "the Comforter, the Holy Ghost," the Angel who is now with the Church in the wilderness. Suppose the Lord Jesus were to send an Epistle to the Church now—who is there to whom he could address it, who could take the duty of pressing it on the saints? There are no Spiritual Gifts or Ordained Ones to take the responsibility. Then, it surely, would be addressed to his own Divine Representative, the Spirit, the seven-fold Perfect Angel.

Now this was just the condition of the Church when John, the last of the Apostles, was shut up in Patmos. "That which is Perfect" had come; Gifts had "vanished away;" the Church was committed to the Spirit, and called to walk by faith alone, and not to look to, or lean upon man. To Him, therefore, are the Seven epistles addressed, without whose ministry, to press them upon the souls of the saints, they would have fallen, as a word without power.

Of the Apostles, the Lord said—

"I have given unto *them* the words which Thou gavest Me."

But the last Apostle being about to depart, he is directed to write important words to the Abiding Angel of the Church for continual application by Him.

Into whose hands have all the apostolic writings been put?—Surely, into the hands of the Angel of the Church. Just as the Old Testament came into the hands of the Lord Jesus; so, the New Testament (and the Old) have come into the hands of the Angel—the Spirit, to open unto us.

"The Anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; . . . the same Anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth." (1 John ii.)

In the light of this whole interpretation—(which we are persuaded is a true unfolding of the Word by the Spirit, according to the will of the Lord Jesus, to whom be all glory for ever!)—how perfectly and simply do the commencement and ending of each of the seven epistles harmonize!

In the commencement of each the Spirit is addressed by the Lord as *He* sees Him—the *Angel*—in His Church-relationship.

But in the ending, He is introduced to *our* regard as—the *Spirit*.

“Unto the *Angel* of the church of Ephesus write—”

“He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the *Spirit* saith to the churches.”

Thus the epistle to each church was to be rehearsed or *reiterated* to all the churches, by the Spirit: and so they are, having become a part of that Word of God which is “the Sword of the Spirit.”

Each of the seven epistles details the condition of each church, its work and failures, and is addressed to each church *through* the Angel to which each church is committed—the Holy Spirit. The Apostles vanishing away (John being the last) the Holy Spirit was the only and sufficient *Representative* of Christ to whom the saints were left in charge. It is solemnly committing the saints to the care of the Perfect Seven-fold Angel.

Thus, it will be seen that the Holy Spirit has graciously accepted the *place of Messenger from God*—keeping, leading, teaching the Lord’s blood-bought ones in His personal absence, and doing this *under the will of the Lord*, the Head of the Church, and through the Written Word.

“He shall not speak of [from] himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak.” (John xvi.)

This is a very wonderful thing, and is akin to the subjection (when He became man) of the Eternal Word to the Father:

“I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father that hath sent me.” (John v.)

This truth of the voluntary service of the Holy Spirit is needful to a constant apprehension of the Lordship and Headship of the Son of God, our ever-present Saviour.

When we gather together, it is *not* to the Holy Ghost, *but* to the Lord Jesus, to be blessed by Him, as He sees needful, *by* the Holy Spirit *through* the Word of God. Thus the Holy Spirit is the *Angel*, or *Messenger*, by whom the Lord sends *messages* to us of grace and truth in each church. Or, to use the other emblem, the Spirit’s rays are our *Star-light*, in the absence of the *Sun* of Righteousness, to guide us through the night of our pilgrimage—“but the night is far spent, the day is at hand.”

It is very important to thus see clearly the place or attitude of the ever-blessed and glorious Persons to whom we are referring, or else there may be *confusion of person or office*, and we may address the Spirit when we ought to address the Father or the Son. The Holy Spirit being here to glorify Christ—being here in wondrous grace—is never directly addressed, in the Scriptures, either in worship or prayer. He, indeed, helps us to cry, *Abba, Father*, (Rom. viii.), and to abide in the Lord Jesus (1 John ii. 27), but does not lead us to address Himself personally, and we shall *not* do so if we are guided

by the Word. We feel that such an act would be ignoring the relation of Head and Members, but the Holy Ghost is here to glorify the risen Jesus; He does not, therefore, take any glory to Himself: and as surely as we are led of Him, He will keep us “holding the Head.”

BRIEF STATEMENT OF THIS ARTICLE.

1. That *man* cannot be the Stars, the Angels.
2. That the term Angel or Messenger has been often assumed by God.
3. That the *only* Messenger in the Church is the Spirit.
4. That the plural emblem, Seven, indicates qualities only possessed by the Spirit—inherent light, omnipresence, a Perfect Messenger.
5. That, being in the Lord’s Right Hand, indicates a completeness of subjection to Him, which no man has ever shown.
6. That the Spirit (in His *Church Aspect*), as being *really personally* in the Seven Churches, was the *One* to be addressed as having the office of *receiving* and *unfolding* the Word.

“SONS OF GOD.”

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the *sons of God*, even to them that believe on his name.” (John i.)

A “son of God” must indeed be “a perfect man.” It will be noted that the power to become a “son of God” is *given to all* who have received Jesus into their hearts, by faith, as their Saviour, no reference being made to the action of ministry as necessary to lead to that spiritual perfectness of life, which is what is meant by “becoming sons of God.”

Some brother has written an answer to the article in our last—“A Perfect Man,” in which he says—

“The argument of the abovenamed writer is virtually this, that a Christian who is in possession of a complete volume of the Scriptures is ‘a perfect man,’ according to the expression in the 4th Chapter of Ephesians!”

Now, our “argument” there is *really* this—

“Paul strove that he might *then* present—at that time—every man as apprehending the faith in its unity, or entirety, and as possessing a knowledge of the Son of God, and practically conformed to Him.... This is the simple meaning of the above passage in the Ephesians. This perfectness of believers was the AIM and OBJECT of the Gifts, Christ being their STANDARD.”—P. 248.

The Scriptures regard the man who holds the faith in its entirety (or unity) and who is living by faith in (or *practical intimacy with*) the Son of God, and who is, in life, “walking as He walked”—I say, the Scriptures regard such an one as “a perfect man.” If he is *not* perfect, let the writer say *in what* he is *im*-perfect.

But while others can find no fault with such an one, yet, in his own consciousness, he would be far from feeling, or taking the ground of, *perfection*. Our brother has taken us to mean *perfection*, when we have meant *perfectness*, or maturity, or “throughly furnished.” The “manhood,” or “strong meat” stage of growth has the same import as the phrase “a perfect man.” It simply means maturity. A “son of God” means a practical exemplification of our sonship, which we have “received power” to give, and the Scriptures assume that we shall.

These two things are brought together in the Epistle to the Philippians. There Paul says to the whole Church—

"Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded."

But immediately before he had said :—

"Not as though I had already attained, either were *already perfect*; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus."

Here we see, that, while conscious of possessing, with others, that *perfectness* which knowledge, faith, and experience give, Paul was not at all conscious of *perfection*. Nor can we be.

We refer the reader to the 17 Scriptures quoted on p. 248 of our last, and also to the one quoted from John i.

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."

"THY CANDLESTICK."

"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." (Rev. ii.)

A dear brother takes exception to a recent exposition put forth in this journal on the letter to the Church of Ephesus. We have again proved the matter prayerfully before the Lord.

The thought has been generally held that the emblem of candlestick sets forth the fact that each church is to be regarded as, *corporately*, presenting spiritual light around it, in the locality in which it assembles.

We doubt very much whether this is a Scriptural thought. The Lord sees believers in any city as *one*, as a body, or corporation; but if believers walk by Scriptural rule, the world should only know of the existence of the Church through contact with its *individual members*, "Among whom ye shine as lights,"—not a light (candlestick) corporately.

The fact is, these emblems—stars, angels, candlesticks, set forth *invisible* facts which come under the cognisance of the Lord *only*.

While the Church in a city is the Lord's candlestick—seen to be such by Him, and *not* by the world, the Church itself in that place may have a *visible* candlestick of its own, as the expression used by the Lord indicates—

"Thy CANDLESTICK."

A Candlestick, or Lamp, is that which is looked to as affording light.

Now it is an indisputable fact that one of the earliest, and one of the most injurious snares into which the Church was led by Satan,—and a snare most easily fallen into,—is that of unduly honouring instruments of blessing, and coming gradually to look to the *often-used* members of the body—for *light*. Wherever this is the case, such so-called gifted ones become the church's lamp. Where this has come to pass, the Lord sees it needful (both for correction and instruction) to come in and remove—

"Thy Candlestick out of his place,"

—the "place" which he (or they) have received at the hands of others, in an assembly, or associated assemblies.

This *removing*, which the Lord does *occasionally* in His providential dealings with churches, will be done completely, and for ever, at His Coming: as he says—

"Or else I will come unto thee quickly, and remove" &c.

And not until His Coming will very many discover to their shame, that they were going on (through ignorance, perhaps) with their own candlesticks. "Surely, I come quickly." (Rev. xxii.)

This exposition is in harmony with the offence indicated by the words—

"Thou hast left thy first love."

Surely the Lord is the "first love." Some have said this means "love to the brethren."—This makes the Church's "first love" to be herself! A woman's first love—*herself*! Surely the first love of the Church the Woman is the Lord Jesus! What can leaving the first love be, if it does not mean leaving the Lord by faith, to lean on the arm of flesh?—that which the Church did so early, has continued to do so generally, and, we fear, will continue to do, in a measure, till He come and remove them all from their man-given places.

"Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." But, oh, that dear ones all, in every place, may receive the warning to "repent," and that all others will walk with watchfulness.

Light in us, or from us, as *individuals*, dies out if we do not hold fast grace. This is true too, of an *assembly* or church in any city. Supposing, for a moment, that the "candlestick" does express a corporate spiritual light shed by it *around* and *in* its locality. We can only conceive of that light or candlestick being removed by its *ceasing* to be *spiritual*. This would be a natural result.

But with regard to the "candlestick" of Ephesus, its removal is caused—*not* by internal decadence—but by power acting from without the church.

Now, the common thought is that power came in and *disbanded* the Church of Ephesus, so that it *no longer shone there*.

But this would be rather a misfortune to the *World*, than a punishment to the *Church*. It is no *punishment* to have to *shine elsewhere*!

We feel, therefore, convinced that while the Lord's candlestick is the Church, the expression, "Thy candlestick," means that which the Church has come to look to for light, and which will be removed "out of his place" at His Coming.

THE HOPE THAT PURIFIETH.

(1 John iii. 3)*

O Lord, *Thou* hast declared,
"Behold! I quickly come!
Hold fast my Word, that I may say
My Servant true,—Well done!"

O Lord, *Thou* hast declared,
"Behold! I quickly come!
Thy garments keep unspotted clean,
That I may say: Well done!"

O Lord, Thy Word it is—
"Behold! I quickly come!
Go, help the poor and fatherless;
And soon I'll say: Well done."

O Lord, *Thou* hast declared,
"Behold! I quickly come!
Watch thou and pray, for saints most dear,
That I may say: Well done!"

O Lord, 'tis Thine own Word—
"Behold! I quickly come!
Your brethren freely each forgive,
And soon I'll say: Well done."

O Lord, we wait for Thee;
For Thou wilt quickly come,
And Satan fall, bruised 'neath our feet;
All things by Thee—Well done!

* "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

UTTERANCES OF A FAITHFUL ONE.

It was a sweet reply a woman once made upon her death-bed to a friend that asked whether she were more willing to live or die? she answered, "I am pleased with what God pleases." "Yea," said the friend, "but if God should refer it to you, which would you choose?" "Truly," said she, "if God would refer it to me, I would refer it to him again." Ah, blessed life, when the will is swallowed up in the will of God, and the heart at rest in his care and love, and pleased with all his appointments!

I have seemed to see a need of every thing God gives me, and want nothing that he denies me; there is no dispensation, though afflictive, but either in it, or after it, I find I could not have done without it. Whether it be taken from me, or not given to me, sooner or later God quiets me in himself without it. I cast all my concerns on the Lord, and live securely on the care and wisdom of my heavenly Father. My ways are in a sense hedged up with thorns, and grow darker and darker daily; but yet I distrust not my good God in the least, and live more quietly in the absence of all, *by faith*, than I should do, I am persuaded, if I possessed them all.

I think the Lord deals kindly with me to make me believe for my mercies before I have them. The less reason hath to work on, the more freely faith casts itself on the faithfulness of God. I find that while faith is steady, nothing can disquiet me, and when faith totters, nothing can establish me. If I tumble out amongst means and creatures, I am presently lost, and can come to no end; but if I stay myself on God, and leave him to work in his own way and time, I am at rest, and can sit down and sleep in a promise, when a thousand rise up against me; therefore, my way is not to cast before hand, but to *work with God by the day*. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." I find so much to do continually with my calling and my heart, that I have no time to puzzle myself with peradventures and futurities.

OUR CORRESPONDENTS AND OURSELVES.

Address Letters for the Proprietor, to 335a, Strand, London, W.C.

R. C.—Read Eph. i. 22, 23, in which you will see that the true church is the One Invisible Body of Christ, into which all believers are baptized by the Spirit. Members of the One Body, or true church, are therefore to be found in and out of all the Denominations.

W. C. B.—I am not led further into that subject just now; but shall keep your note at hand.

J. H.—Faith exercised in the statements of the Word of God apprehends the Church as the Bride. Many other facts yet future are held by faith, and are spoken of as *realities*, though not yet true to sight. Thus faith is the *substance* of things hoped for. By it we substantially realise and enjoy what is not yet possessed.

And so we say the Church is the Bride mentioned in Scripture, though, to speak exactly, we might say, The Church will be the Bride. I do not think it is Scriptural to say "We are one by one married to Jesus when we are brought to believe." Is there any mention of marriage, or of bride or bridegroom, in the "Song of Solomon?" The Church may not be contemplated there at all: but the Jewishisation in Millennial times. It seems to me rather a prophetic celebration of the attach-

ment of the King of Israel to His beloved Zion, in the day to come.—The rest of your letter, dear brother, may be inserted in our next.

J. C. A.—I have no light as to the spiritual reason for the prohibition of swine's flesh to the Israelites, and think that that prohibition was removed at the introduction of Christianity. See Rom. xiv. 14. But the command in Acts xv. 20, to abstain from things strangled, and from blood, is yet in force, because given to Noah, father of the Gentiles, before the Law of Moses, (Gen. ix. 4,) and confirmed by the Apostles in Acts xv.

F. J. B.—You think, dear brother, that the passage in Eph. v. "For we are members of His body, His flesh, and His bones; for this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh,"—does not teach that our blessed Lord left the Father in glory and the Mother [the people of Israel], to cleave unto the Church.

You think this passage is, primarily, a re-affirmation of the law given in the beginning; which was, that as Adam and Eve were one flesh, so a man on marrying was to be willing to leave father and mother. So, now, because believers are members of Christ's body, of his flesh, and of his bones; therefore, a Christian man is to see a reason why, on marrying, he should leave father and mother and cleave unto his wife.

We quite agree with you, dear brother, that the re-affirmation of the law given at the beginning is the *primary* bearing of this passage. But still we do see that, in a very interesting sense, this ordinance holds good with regard to Christ and the Church. The Lord Jesus said—

"I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; Again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father."

The manifestation of the Church being in abeyance, the marriage is only apprehended by faith, and the Lord is again with the Father. But we think we may allowably apprehend that the Heavenly union will be similar to the Earthly, in regard to this Divine requirement, twice insisted on—viz. "leaving," in a sense, "father and mother."

ADELPHOS.—Expect to give our readers the former part of your letter in our next.

In a recent number, (June,) a remark was made that "in consequence of Paul's faithfulness in obeying the command to go to all nations, he received the highest revelations," &c. It would have been more correct to have said "*foreseeing* his faithfulness," as it would seem from 2 Cor. xii. 2 that he must have received those higher revelations before he was sent forth from Antioch.

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Printed by JOHN EVANS, 335a, Strand London.

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London:—Published for the Proprietor by J. B. BATEMAN, 22, Paternoster Row, entrance in Ivy Lane.

No. 34.—VOL. II.]

JANUARY 1, 1868.

[One Halfpenny.]

EYES LIKE UNTO FIRE and FEET LIKE BURNING BRASS.

"Unto the Angel of the Church in Thyatira write: These things saith the Son of God, who hath his Eyes like unto a Flame of Fire, and his feet like fine brass [copper]." (Rev. ii.)

"EYES like unto a Flame of Fire" are on us, and on all. "Our God is a consuming fire."

Israel, as a nation, knew God in fire: at Sinai, at the Dedication of the Temple, and on Carmel. Individuals, also, have so known God—Adam, Abraham, Moses, Gideon, Elijah.

Now, we are called to realize, by faith, that "Our God is a consuming fire."

God was known to Israel as *Jehovah*, and as *Jehovah* only. We know God as the Father, whom Jesus hath "declared,"—and we know God in Jesus, "God manifest in the flesh."

Now, as all power in heaven and in earth is committed unto the Son, He being the *executive* of Divine Justice, we know *Him* to be "a consuming fire."

In remembering His graciousness, as Jesus our Saviour, let us not forget His gloriousness as the Son of God.

III.—WE BELIEVE IN THAT WHICH JOHN SAW IN PATMOS.

To the Apostles' care, the Lord Jesus Christ had committed His believing ones. Peter, as representing the rest, had received the command, thrice repeated, "Feed my sheep," being assured, at the same time, that he would have to suffer for the glory of God. In due time, he *did* suffer and pass away. And the others also.

But in the case of John, a special exception was made—he was to glorify God in another way.

"If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"

John was still tarrying, when, lo! *the Lord came*—came to His servant in the sea-girt prison. Though John was on the earth, yet he was cut off and isolated from it. (In such a position, spiritually—"in the world, but not of the world"—may we all be found, by the Lord, at His coming.)

With the last apostle so shut up, the churches were bereft, *then*, of apostolic care and authoritative supervision, and being called to walk by faith in the Son of God, they needed being assured that *His* eyes as "a flame of fire" were on them. Human authority in the Church had come to an end, which made it all the more needful that the *Lord's own authority*

* *Brass* is a mixed metal, of comparatively modern invention, and in all probability unknown to the ancients.—CALMET'S DICTIONARY.

should be specially enforced upon faith. Hence John is directed to write in a book what he sees and hears, for our faith to be exercised upon. To *him* it was all true to sense; it was verily the *Lord*. He *saw* Him, and *heard* Him—*yea, felt* His right hand laid upon him.

In a bodily sense, this was the *last* visit of the Lord to the earth given us in the Scriptures. But John's testimony is received by faith, so that though the Lord is bodily far away in the third heavens, yet—as God—

"All things are naked and opened unto the EYES of Him with whom we have to do."

"In Him we live, and move, and have our being."

"Without Him was not anything made that was made."

"He that formed the *evn*, shall He not see?"

Faith says—"Yes, He who came down to Patmos, and was *seen* by John, is closely regarding His churches—having 'eyes like unto a flame of fire.' We realize Him walking in the midst of the Seven Golden Candlesticks."

The remembrance of this fact does us good. It increases reverence: when we are gathered together in His name, with Himself in the midst, we realize that we are, like Moses, on holy ground. It represses the flesh and the fleshly mind, in ourselves and others. And one most useful and necessary result of it should be—to direct our attention to the *Lord's thoughts about the Church*—to what He must, and does, *see going on among us, as churches*.

It had this effect on John. Spiritually, he was absorbed in "the day of the Lord"—the Lord's day of coming glory—that which Abraham saw, "and was glad," John being imprisoned for testimony—shut up far away from the haunts of men—there seemed little then for "our brother and companion in tribulation," except to look for the Lord from heaven. (May this be the effect of all our trials.)

"I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos [*deadly*] for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."

John saw *death* on all that was of earth, and his face was *forwards* and *away* to the day when the Lord would reign in righteousness, and His dear ones be no longer the victims of brutal persecution. But a great voice behind him called to him, and looking back to earth, he beholds—not a coming Saviour—but a *present Lord*.

And so, beloved, while we cherish thoughts of deliverance by the coming of the Lord, let us also

realize by faith an over-present One, who hath eyes "like unto a flame of fire."

"And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength."

In John's case, it was a *personal manifestation* to him, and as he was yet in the body, it withered him up. "I fell at his feet as dead."

But the Lord drew near to John, and bowed Himself in graciousness to His dear servant, prostrate at His feet, and laid His right hand—(that hand in which he had seen the emblem of the Comforter)—in *comforting* sympathy upon him. (Ah, He is "the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever.")

"Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

John receives no command to stand, or to look up at Him whose eyes were as a flame of fire. No; but in lowly attitude, with eyes cast down, (like Moses at the burning bush, receiving a commission to Israel,) John receives the messages of the Son of God to the churches. It is not till the Lord has finished delivering His messages that John looks up, and then—the Lord has vanished away. (See Rev. iv. 1.)

Oh, how lowly it becomes us to be before the Son of God! May we all know the withering-up of the Lord's presence; and, getting very low like John, He may graciously bow to our weakness and use us to His glory. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Let us not be afraid of the feet that burn like fine copper; they will not hurt anything but the old Adam, with its "lust of the flesh, lust of the eye, and the pride of life."

And what is the Son of God noting? Any "bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, evil speaking, malice"? —Sectarianism, lust of spiritual power, fellowship of believers with unbelievers, ignorance of the simple Word, confidence in man, worldliness, selfishness, pride? Ah, *He* knows. "The Lord will judge his people."

"THAT WOMAN JEZEBEL."

But what is the *special* evil which the Son of God notes at Thyatira?

"I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works."

We sought light from the Lord on this passage, and on the eve of closing up for the press were made happy with the following:—

JEZEBEL was—A Woman—a Princess—a Gentile.

As a Gentile, she clearly sets forth some who are of the world, as distinct from the Church.

Now, what part of the world is the most *attractive*—most like a woman?

Is it not the Moral, Intellectual, Accomplished?—Here, then, is the *Woman*.

2. Are not the same classes Powerful, Influential, Admired, Rich, proudly holding rule by right?—Here, then, is the *Princess*, becoming (when united) a *Queen*.

3. Again, though so attractive and amiable, such are still *outside* the Church—aliens from the commonwealth of spiritual Israel, not being "born again." Therefore, notwithstanding *all that they have*,—they are *Gentile*.

Therefore, the Moral, Intellectual, Accomplished of *the world* are Jezebel—the *Gentile Queenly Woman*.

Now, as, of old, "the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and took them wives of all which they chose," so *Jezebel*, being fair to the eye, had won upon the desires of the Church at Thyatira, and, neglecting the exhortation, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," they had pressed into fellowship with them some of the world's Moral, Intellectual, Accomplished ones.

And here we note a difference between the evil in Thyatira and that which the Lord sees in the previous churches—Ephesus and Pergamos. It is a difference *in degree*. Ephesus had left its *First Love*; in Pergamos there were those who were desirous of the favours of the World, and holding the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes (or the doctrine of the need of men-teachers); but in Thyatira, these *doctrinal* evils have developed into *positive* alliance with the World and the admission of unregenerate men to the place of Teachers!! And the rest of the Church had "suffered" it.

This class of persons who were allowed by the Church to bring in the worldly are those against whom Jude's epistle was directed:—

"For there are certain men crept in unawares, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness . . . Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and run greedily after the error of Balaam for reward—[The very same evil as was seen in the Church at Pergamos.]—These are spots in your feasts of love when they feast with you . . . These are murmurers, . . . having *men's persons in admiration because of advantage*."

The Moral, Intellectual, Accomplished among the World (that is, Jezebel) were *admired* "because of advantage." There were no princesses in Israel, so Ahab looked abroad. These "false brethren" were not satisfied with going on *without* the world's good and fair ones. How much would the "cause" prosper if they were brought in, with their cleverness and winning ways? And so they were brought in, treated as Christians, everybody hoped for the best, and birth was given to a numerous progeny of "professing Christians," who have Jezebel's image and likeness.

The Moral, Intellectual, Accomplished, having had power and honour in the world, naturally desire, and think they ought to have the *same* place of pre-eminence in the church. So we find the Lord says of Jezebel,

"Who calleth herself a *Prophetess*."

The thought of the natural man is—that his intellect is equal to dealing with spiritual things—that the mind of man can master the things of God. Jezebel having intellect, took the place of a prophetess—a revealer of the mind of God, and so she does to this day.

In heart she dislikes true prophets, and if there were any, she would persecute them, as did Jezebel in Israel. But the prophets of the church having all passed away, the Lord does not number persecution among her sins. In passing, we may note, that no divine order of ministry is referred to in these epistles to the churches—save that of the Spirit.

II.—THE CHURCH WAS TO BLAME; "THOU SUFFEREST."

But now, it was not *primarily* Jezebel's act and deed when she became a queen in Israel. It was Ahab's act. Yes, but the guilt must be carried still *further* back; it was one result of *Israel's* folly in desiring a *king*. That was Israel's leaving "the first love."

So, with regard to the Jezebel in the Church—*she* was not so much to blame as the Ahab who brought her in. But, then, there ought *not* to have been any worldly, influential christians in the assembly or assemblies at Thyatira—men who, having got swayed with the brethren, acted like Ahab. If the saints there had not have left their "first love"—if they had not have exalted man in some way, we may be confident Jezebel would not have been brought in. Oh, how ought churches "to cleave unto the Lord with purpose of heart!" *He* can keep us from falling. Then will it be with little assemblies beginning afresh on simple Scriptural ground, as it was with "the church which was at Jerusalem,"—

"Of the rest durst no man join himself to them." (Acts v.)

And if they do "join," the Ahab-ones will soon go out—*not stop* to introduce others who have Morality, Intellect, and Accomplishments for their only recommendation.

"They went out *from* us, but they were *not* of us; for if they had been *of* us, they would no doubt have continued *with* us; but they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us [not at all of us]." (1 John ii.)

The Church, not Jezebel, being primarily to blame, the Son of God, gracious as well as glorious, had given her time to repent, "and she repented not." She did not—she has not—awoke to the folly of professing and calling herself a prophetess. But more especially has she *not* repented of the mischief she has wrought. But still persists in doing the same!

III.—THE DOUBLE MISCHIEF WROUGHT BY JEZEBEL.

"Thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to *teach* and to *seduce* my servants to *commit fornication*, and to *eat things sacrificed to idols*."

And what is this mischief? Why, truly converted men have been taught by her to admire her, and to look to her, as a prophetess, for light and knowledge! Practically, she (Jezebel) has displaced the Holy Spirit, the only spiritual light-giver!! No wonder the Lord should be wroth with her, with a great indignation, for teaching believers (practically) to dishonour His gracious long-suffering Representative. *How many who have believed unto life are attending on the ministry of Unconverted Men!* men who are accepted teachers in the churches simply because they are men of moral character, having an acquaintance with Greek and Hebrew, of good education generally, and able to put matters together! Thus we still recognise the features of "that woman Jezebel"—viz. Morality, Intellect, Accomplishments. Her places of special power—*colleges, universities*; her more prominent servants—*professors, theologians*; at her disposal are—*degrees, titles, academic honours, livings, stipends*. She can boast of a tower of learned works, as high as Babel reaching unto heaven. She receives from her children ("professing Christians") a show of much affection—a *natural* affection, for "the world will love its own."

Thus she *seduces* souls, on their conversion, to trust her, to be fascinated with her, and to enter in *sinful union* with her. They are taught by her to do this, whereas they should continue to rejoice in Him who has saved them and is present in the midst of any "two three gathered together" in His Name, to bless them by the Holy Spirit through the Word.

Oh, this dreadful thing—*adultery*, believers uniting themselves with, and finding pleasure in, Moral, Intellectual, Accomplished men who have got into the place of teachers! "Cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils." Don't "deny the Lord that bought you,"—bought you with his own precious blood! Jezebel may be fair to look upon; "but favour is deceitful and beauty is vain;"—and oh, *her heart!* "deceitful above *all* things and desperately wicked!" Such, however fair, learned, and clever, is *every unregenerate man*.

Dreadful! to be deluded to think that it is proper and needful to be united unto such an one as Jezebel—*Proper*, because of her apparent goodness, power, and beauty; *Needful*, because of her supposed fruitfulness in adding unto the church! Oh, this is, indeed, doing "*evil that good might come*."

Whatever your sect or denomination—if your arrangements admit of unregenerate men getting into the place of teachers, you are "*committing adultery with that woman Jezebel*." And what arrangements can possibly be *free* and *safe* in which a mental standard and mental abilities are more or less regarded?

Ye adulterers!

"Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God!" (James iv.)

Jezebel's sin, the Son of God calls "fornication"—*that* is her sin, as one unmarried. But the sin of being united unto Jezebel is, *adultery*, because each church should regard itself *betrothed* or espoused "as a pure virgin" to Christ. (2 Cor. xi. 2.) And *betrothal* should be felt to be as sacred as marriage.

And now Jezebel has taught true believers not only to commit fornication, but also—

“to eat things sacrificed to Idols.”

Jezebel of old was a Zidonian princess, and her idols were therefore Baal and Ashtoreth. See 1 Kings xvi. 31; xi. 33. The emblems of these idols were the Sun and Moon.

These emblems also show forth the characteristics of the idols of Jezebel of this dispensation—namely, Power (*sun*) and Beauty (*moon*)—Jezebel's own characteristics. The idol always reflects the idolater.

Christians who are taught by Jezebel, and seduced to trust her as a prophetess, and to find pleasure in her, and think by her to increase the numbers in the church, will, alas! invariably be found relishing things offered to her idols. And what are her idols? that is to say, what are the *visible presentments* of her qualities (Power and Beauty)—What are the idols which she trusts and honours?

Gifted Men (Power)—*Fine Buildings* (Beauty).

These are only the *busts* of her images of Baal and Ashtoreth. Where she can do so with acceptance, she will present the *full-length* idols. Then we find, in addition to the above,—

A formal Charity (Power)—*Ornate Services* (Beauty)
Divine Claims (Power)—*Much Music* (Beauty).

Being trusted (by those who commit adultery with her) to give birth to numbers—these are her means of adding to the church! Unconverted ones brought by these means to profess and call themselves Christians are termed by the Lord, “her *children*”—an ungodly race, “holding the truth in unrighteousness,”—the shameful, bastard offspring of the adultery of Christians with “that woman Jezebel”!

Jezebel spreads offerings before her idols—that is, she advances *specious arguments* on their behalf. Those Christians who, smitten with her blandishments, are listening to her, receive and swallow what she sets before them, and so they are *taught by her* “to eat things sacrificed unto idols!”

They do not *worship* them. But it amounts to the same thing, for that honour is given to *things* which belongs to the *Lord*. For whereas the above idols are trusted to add unto the church, the Scripture says—

“The Lord *added* unto the church such as should be saved.”

“Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to *eat and drink* and rose up to play. . . . Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.” (1 Cor. x.)

“Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.” (1 John v.)

IV.—IMPENDING JUDGMENT.

“Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?”

Oh, that any who truly believe in the Lord Jesus in their heart, should be found “committing adultery with that woman Jezebel”—*taking pleasure in such a Harlot!* Oh, that the solemn warning of the Lord may come into their ears—

“Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, EXCEPT THEY REPENT OF THEIR DEEDS.”

Thus, the “Son of God, whose eyes are as a flame of fire,” will come in judgment, and Jezebel will be “cast into a bed.” By this is understood, that she will be rendered helpless with pain, overwhelmed with suffering, and unable to assist her deluded ones. She is only “cast into a bed,” and into tribulation, not killed. Many of the merely Moral, Intellectual, Accomplished, who form Jezebel the self-called prophetess, will survive the first tribulation, and will afterwards still further develop their iniquitous pretensions; for do we not see (further on in the Revelation) the present Jezebel surprisingly developed as “Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth”? (Rev. xvii.) Of course, this is understood as to take place AFTER the Church has been caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

As for the Christians who are “committing adultery with her,” of them the Lord says He will cast “them into great tribulation—except they repent.”

“*Except they repent!*” Oh, wondrous grace! As God sought to woo back to Himself Israel when they had gone “a whoring after other gods,”—so the Son of God seeks to win back His people to His own dear self!

Beloved, shall we not be more and more earnest; yea, tearfully solicitous—over these, our deluded fellow-believers? Remember the word by Jude:

“And of some having compassion, making a difference [for all are not mere professors]; and others save with fear, *pulling them out of the fire*; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.”

Beloved, pull them out! Be earnest in prayer to God; be patient in ministering the word; “freely ye have received, freely give.” Go to them—not into their assemblies—“pull them out of the fire.” We know that they *shall be saved*, (as many as believe in Jesus,) yet—“so as by fire.” (1 Cor.)

“The Lord shall judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God.” (Heb. x.)

“Wherefore *come* out from among them, and be ye *separate* saith the Lord and touch not the unclean; and I will receive you, and I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” (2 Cor. vi.)

“Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” (Rev. xviii.)

Come where? To Jesus. *Gather to Him*, though you be but “two or three,” for, He says,—

“Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them.” (Matt. xviii.)

Yea, if you be but *one*. Better far to follow the Lord by oneself, than to go on with those on whom are turned His indignant eyes, “like unto a flame of fire.”

Yes, that is a precious word to the solitary, who are cut off by their faithfulness from fellowship with others—

“I am the Light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” (John. viii.)

V.—THE FATE OF HER CHILDREN.

As for the poor deluded crowd of Jezebel's "children"—"professing Christians" (her children in much the same sense that the Lord Jesus meant when He said to the Jews, "Ye are of your father the devil,")—what does the Son of God say of them?—

"And I will kill her children with death."

Death—eternal death—is their portion: wretched souls. It will happen unto them according to the word of the Lord—

"If the blind lead the blind shall they not both fall into the ditch?"

"Kill with death" — awful word!—Death unto death! Killed finally, never to live again, in God's sense of life; they will exist—but in outer darkness.

And these "children" are attending so-called "places of worship," sitting at their mother's feet,—"that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess"—listening to her dulcet voice speaking "Peace."

"The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night, for when they shall say, *Peace and safety*, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." (1 Thess. v.)

They think they are in a safe road to eternity!

"There is a way which seemeth good unto a man, but the end thereof is death." (Prov. xiv.)

"Killed with death!" Oh, unconverted professor, satisfied with outward respect for religion,—oh, mere child of Jezebel,—this word from the Son of God, is of you!

These judgments upon Jezebel, her children, and adulterous Christians are set forth in the 2nd Book of Kings.

Thus dies Jehoram, last son of Jezebel,—

"And Jehu drew a bow with his full strength, and smote Jehoram between his arms, and the arrow went out at his heart, and he sunk down in his chariot." (2 Kings ix.)

"Killed with death!"

Ahaziah, king of Judah, of the seed of David, but found in union with Jezebel's house, and therefore representing adulterous Christians, is wounded on the same occasion, and flies.

"And Jehu followed after him, and said, Smite him also in the chariot. And they did so at the going up to Gur, which is by Ibleam. And he fled to Megiddo, and died there."

"Megiddo" means "a place of precious fruit," indicating the ultimate salvation of adulterous Christians, through the coming tribulation, but *only* with their life in their hands.

"If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Peter, iv. 18.)

Then follows the doom of Jezebel, which name means—"WOE TO THE DUNGHILL." Expressive word!

"And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her face and tired her head, and looked out at a window.

And as Jehu entered in at the gate, she said, Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?

And he lifted up his face to the window, and said, Who is on my side? who?

And there looked out to him two or three eunuchs.

And he said, Throw her down.

So they threw her down: and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he trode her under foot. And when he was come in, he did eat and drink, and said, Go, see now this cursed woman, and bury her: for she is a king's daughter.

And they went to bury her: but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands. Wherefore they came again, and told him. And he said,

This is the word of the Lord, which he spake by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel. And the carcase of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel; so that they shall not say, This is Jezebel." (2 Kings x.)

If Jehu is vividly severe, what of Him "who hath eyes like unto a flame of fire and whose feet are like unto fine brass burning in a furnace"?

The following is the conclusion of the message of the Son of God to the church at Thyatira, containing direction, promise of reward, and exhortation to listen to the Spirit. May the Lord Jesus Christ, in His own time and way, graciously unfold it to you and us, by the Holy Spirit, the Perfect Messenger. At present we have little light on it.

"Unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.—And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star.—He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Thus, in this article, the Lord has graciously shown us, as we believe,—Who "that woman Jezebel" is.—How she came in—Her mischief—The judgment of adulterous Christians—and Her children's doom.

"Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness." (2 Peter, iii.)

And now—

"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." (Rev. i. 6.)

LIGHT.

I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD, saith the LORD JESUS CHRIST.—He is the Light, because He is, as another Scripture saith, "the First-born of every creature," and *light* was the first thing made. "I am the First and the Last.

2. He is Light because Light is Good. "And God saw the light, and it was Good." And the Father saw Jesus, and He was good. "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased." "I am the Good Shepherd."

3. He is the Light, because Light is separate from Darkness. "And God divided the light from the darkness." And Jesus "was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." Light cannot unite with darkness, it drives it away in proportion to its strength. So it was with the Holy One of God. Satan, on the contrary, is the Prince of Darkness. To be sent to hell, is to be shut up to the presence of Satan (Darkness), to be shut off from the presence of Jesus—"who is Light and in Him is no darkness at all."

"THE LAST TIME."

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the *latter times* some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." (1 Tim. iv.)

"This know, also, that in the *last days* perilous times shall come." (2 Tim. iii. 1.)

"There shall come in the *last days* scoffers." (2 Pet. iii. 3.)

But John and Jude, writing much later, testify—

"Little children, *It is the last time.*" (1 John ii. 18.)

"These are murmurers. . . . Beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken *before* by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, how that they told you there *should* be mockers in the *last time*, who should walk after their ungodly lusts." (Jude.)

The above Scriptures are here quoted to establish the fact in our minds—that the Holy Ghost regards *two* periods in the Church's condition on earth;—a *first* time and a *last* time—an apostolic and a post-apostolic period.

With this needful preliminary remark, we proceed to further consider a manuscript written in answer to an article in the October Number of PRECIOUS TRUTH. Our brother writes—

"The Proprietor of '*Precious Truth*' further contends that the passage '*When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away*' (1 Cor. xiii. 10) has reference to the complete '*written word of inspiration*'!"

Now, the following is the substance of that which is there enlarged upon in a very full manner—

"The Spoken Word, ministered by the Gifts in the early Church, was to *fail, cease, vanish away*, as 1 Cor. xiii. shows. For, after all, the presentation of truth by man to man must always be partial and defective. Paul, identifying himself with the Gifts, says—'For we [Gifts] know in part, and we [Gifts] prophesy in part. But when *that which is perfect is come*, then *that which is in part shall be done away.*'

"That is to say, the presentation of truth by us, Gifts, shall be '*done away.*' Therefore, there are no '*Gifts*' now. And that because '*That which is perfect is come,*'—a *Perfect Mode* of receiving truth, instead of an Imperfect one.

"By which is meant—The *Perfect Word*, under the teaching of the *Spirit*, in the *presence* and under the *control* of the Lord. That is, the *perfect, or mature, condition of walking by faith* in the Son of God and the *presence and ministry* of the Holy Spirit through and by the *perfect or complete Written Word*. What more '*perfect*' *Modes* of receiving truth can be desired?" (Page 238.)

This question we still ask.

Will our dear brother please to note, that the testimony which we have been enabled to put forth, has reference—*not* to the '*written word of inspiration*' only; but to the *perfect mode* of receiving the truth. That is to say—the believer, holding the Head by personal communion, receives such truth as He pleases, by the Spirit through the *Perfect Written Word*, either heard or read. This is a *more perfect mode* than receiving truth by *word-of-mouth* from a fellow-man. Is it not?

Word-of-mouth teaching was of two kinds—

(1) That which came through *prophets*, direct from the Spirit, and (2) that of *teachers*, who repeated what they had previously learnt *from others*. Both kinds have wholly ceased, the Written Word being completed. The latter kind was specially liable to error, and to degenerate into *tradition*. The Word itself

shows the dangers attending this latter kind of word-of-mouth teaching—this knowing in part, which was to "*vanish away*":—

"Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die! yet Jesus said not unto Him, '*He shall not die;*' but, '*If I will that he tarry till I come what is that to thee?*'" (John xxi.)

Thus, we see where *tradition* or word-of-mouth teaching was leading to, even *before* the apostles had departed, and that it was needful for the Holy Ghost to correct one special misapprehension and corresponding mischief?

And how have all the mis-teachings arisen in the poor Church since? We say it with all the earnestness of solemn conviction—It has been caused by giving that weight to word-of-mouth teachings which they received—and received very properly—*before* the Written Word was completed.

While the apostles were with us, endowed with infallibility, they could correct any mis-teachings that might arise. In this consisted no small portion of their duty, needing constant vigilance. There is now no human authority to put down error, but we are all bound to abide in Jesus, to follow the leadings of the Holy Spirit through the Word;—and where will He lead us?—"into," or towards, "*all truth*," so that we shall be further to-day in the knowledge of the mind of God than we were yesterday. And, as regards ourselves, our simple duty is to *speak that truth in love*.

The above question, quoted from our October Number, is not at all taken up by our brother, who further says—

"And from this he argues that there are no longer any Teachers in the Church of God, because such are no longer required! This, he thinks, is confirmed by that passage in the General Epistle of John, '*The Anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you.*'"

Such is still that writer's testimony.

All that has been advanced is, that John contemplates the Church as dependent upon the Spirit, and the Spirit *only*; whereas Paul, (writing FOURTY years earlier) regards the Church, being then young, as needing Helps—Human Helps—from the Spirit, (Prophecies, Tongues, Knowledge,) whose Spoken Word had much the same weight *then* as the Written Word had afterwards.

How does our brother meet this position? Thus—

"It is true that believers have the Holy Spirit to lead them into *all truth*; but He works by making the members of the One Body to minister to one another—He '*dividing unto every man severally as He will.*'"

Here the writer explains the passage in John by taking us back to 1st Corinthians! There is an exhortation to "*rightly divide* the word of truth." Is it right, when considering a Scripture written in the *maturity* of the Church, to bring forward a Scripture written in the *infancy* of the Church, on a subject connected with Church-action? Is no allowance to be made for the *time and state* of the Church when a book is written? Such treatment of the Scriptures is very much like regarding the Spirit as making *no* difference in regard to the Apostolic and the post-Apostolic state of things! But it is shown in the

texts at the head of this article that John writes in the *last time*, and that Paul writes in the *first time*.

In the *first time*, the Spirit *did* indeed "divide to every man severally" as He chose; and what did He "divide," or bestow, around?—

"For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues; but all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." (1 Cor. xii. 8-11.)

It is clear that all this was a *temporary* and *exceptional* state of things. If *not* temporary, *where* are these Gifts now? It was clearly an *exceptional* state of things, because *new revelations* were bestowed by the Spirit through some of these Gifts, which is no longer the case.

But if we turn to the apostolic testimony uttered 40 years later, we find believers exhorted to depend upon the Spirit, and the Spirit only, in language so emphatic.

"The Anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; .. the same Anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth." (1 John ii.)

Jude, who also wrote in the "*last time*," equally ignores the need of teachers and gifts. Like John, he incites believers to take heed to the Word of God, and to personal watchfulness and spirituality.

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

This exhortation is kindred to Peter's—"Work out your own salvation," &c., and "Add to faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge;" &c.

If dear readers, do not see it, we are sorry for it; in the meantime, we offer our poor testimony.

If the First of Corinthians is to be pressed upon us, as applying now, then it is asked—Where are the Gifts there enumerated as Eye, Ear, Smell, Hand, Foot? Some will say—We have only one or so. But "one or so" members do not furnish a *body*! The Body (as a *visibility*) is no longer a fact, else we could discriminate the Eye, Ears, Smell, Foot, Hand (that is, see "*prophets*," "*tongues*," &c.) The Body as an invisibility is still true to *faith*, and faith leaves it all to the Lord to use whom He will.

The "letter" of 1st Cor. applies *totally*, or it does *not* apply *at all*. Oh, but, says one, it applies in *spirit*. Well, we will not object to that. But *that* is not what you *want*. You seek to press the *letter* partly and to *drop* it partly—to say that some of the Gifts remain, and some are gone! This will *not* do.

While the Church was young, there was a mutual dependence—a *visible* dependence; and believers were exhorted to recognise it. Even as the *hand* could not say to the *foot*, I have no need of you; so a prophet could not say to a discerner of spirits, I have no need of you. All who had not a certain gift—say that called "government"—felt the need of those who *had* that special gift. But this was to last only until the Church had reached its mature state of walking

by faith in the Son of God as He who can use whom He will, by the Spirit, with the Word.

The Gifts were needful for the Church in much the same way as are masters, pupil-teachers, and monitors, in schools for youth.

Why?—Because these latter have the needed *information stored up in themselves*.

This was the case with the Church, till the Word of God was completed and believers were *schooled up* to walk alone—to walk by faith—to take the Word, or listen to it (read or spoken upon), and know the Holy Ghost as their only Teacher.

The ordinary doctrine about Gifts would *take us back to school*, and—*keep us there!*

II.

But the writer, in his desire to show the need of man-teachers, further says—that while, indeed, we have the Spirit as our Teacher—"He works by making the members of the One Body to minister to one another."

To this, it is replied,—He *may*—and He *may not*.

We dare not limit the Spirit to *means* or human *instrumentality*. Indeed, it appears to us to be preposterous! Only admit that souls—you and we, dear reader—are in communion with the Head, and then think of the need of *human instrumentality to convey blessing!* At such a time, we are altogether beyond the "glass darkly," and are dealt with "face to face." Under such blessed circumstances, we repeat, with emphasis, the Spirit *may* or *may not*, administer to us *through another*.

It is admitted that He *does* use us to each other's blessing. But it is not according to the possession of "Gift," but according to our spiritual-mindedness and faith. For we must be both in the Spirit and delivered from thralldom to man. Granted *this*,—and what "dear child" may not the Lord take up?

Theory apart, as a matter of *fact* and experience, have we, dear reader, whether in the assembly or out of it, *always*—or even *most frequently*—received the most blessed and soul-stimulating truth through others? Who does not also know the preciousness of periods of silence? What more calculated to set the fleshly mindworking, than the thought of having a "gift"—of having *to do something?* The good Lord deliver us from all our bondage!

The Spirit *has* blessed, and *does* bless, us through each other; we have admitted this over and over again. But a brother's being used of the Spirit at any time to exhort one or more brethren, or to present the Word as it is laid upon his own heart or unfolded to his own mind, does *not* constitute him a *teacher*. He merely utters what the Lord by the Spirit has led him to—that is to say, *if* he is in communion with the Head, and has not come to the assembly posted up with a "subject." Such an one is simply *taken up and used*, the Lord presenting through him (by the Spirit) His own Word, to those who have the same Word and the same Spirit to cause them to receive the *uttered* meaning thereof.

But *this is not* the meaning of "*Teacher*" in the

New Testament. As years rolled on, a church, here and there, came into possession of a precious apostolic epistle. Consequently, in apostolic times, the *truth* possessed, relating to the Church, was mainly held *in the minds of believers*. Hence Paul exhorts the Corinthians to desire "gifts," even the highest next the apostleship, and gently remonstrates with the Hebrew saints thus—"When for the time ye ought to be *teachers*, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God."

Every man was bound to remember, and teach (by the Spirit's help) what *he remembered*, to convert as they came fresh into the Church. Because there were no Gospels, Acts, and Epistles, to put into their hands.

This accounts for the exhortation to the Hebrew saints.

But now, how different it is! Directly a soul is converted, the Word is placed in his hands, and He is assured of the Spirit's presence, as *his Teacher*. It is true, that while such an one is very young in the faith, the Lord may minister much to him through those who are older in the faith; but it is the Lord, by the Spirit, ever watchful over the sheep, that *does it—not they*. The Spirit is, therefore, the Teacher of the saints—and the Spirit *only*. And evil must result where otherwise is held.

The Spirit nowhere intimates that the Church would need Teachers after the Apostles' days. On the contrary, "that which is perfect" having come, that which was "in part has been done away," and we have "no need that any man teach" us, as was shown us in the article to which our brother replies.

Again, can we conceive *two* teachers, teaching the same truth, at the same time, to the same people? Of course not.

You cannot have a visible *person* and an invisible *person*, both present in the assembly, and *both*, of their own *wills*, teaching the *same* persons, the *same* truth, at the *same* time. Either God is using man, or man is acting of himself.

It is either *God*, or it is *Man*:
If it be *God*, then it is not *Man*;
If it be *Man*, then it is not *God*.

This will be equally true, whether that which is spoken be "things old" or "things new"—that is, *things* in the Word that have been previously unfolded to the mind of the speaker, but re-impressed on his mind by the Spirit—or *things* unfolded on the occasion of his speaking.

In God's presence, it is for man to be *nowhere* and to have *nothing* (in respect of offices, prerogatives, and gifts): then will God be all in all. We shall be silent, when such is His will—and speak, when such is His will,—and speak what is perceived to be His will.

The following is given as the order of time in which the various books of the New Testament are known or supposed to have been written, and is here

presented because of its connection with the foregoing subject—

The Apostles sent to preach, in the year	33
Matthew's Hebrew Gospel, for Jews, about	40
Epistles to Galatians and 1st and 2nd Thessalonians..	52
1st to the Corinthians	57
2nd Corinthians, Romans, and James's Epistle	58
Matthew's Gospel in Greek	58
Colossians, Philippians, 1st and 2nd Tim. Titus, Hebrews, Mark's Gospel, 1st and 2nd Peter, Acts —at or about the time of Paul's imprisonment..	62 to 65
Jude and 2nd and 3rd of John	90
Gospel by John, Revelation, and 1st Epistle of John	97

From internal evidence, it is clear that the Epistles of Jude and John were much later than the rest, for while Paul and Peter speak of the "last times" as *coming*, Jude and John speak of them as *having come*. By these "last days" was evidently meant the *close of the apostolic times*, with its special order of things in the Church.

John also alludes to the Word of God, as then complete—

"Ye know all things." (ii. 20.)

It is exceedingly important to remember the time and state of things when an epistle was written, and not to interpret John's General Epistle by Paul's to the Hebrews and Corinthians, on matters affecting what we may call—assembly-walk.*

* Those who have received the advanced views submitted in late numbers of this journal, (and, bless the Lord, we stand not alone) will, we hope, kindly bear with us, if we refer now and then, to the same matters, a second time, as in the preceding article, for others' sake. Our own justification is—That the Lord has graciously taken us up, as He has many before us, and laid upon us the responsibility of offering an advanced testimony. "The Lord be glorified," in us all, and may we be brought to be all of "one heart and one soul," and apprehend the *alone* ministry of the Spirit.

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Printed by JOHN EVANS, 335a, Strand London.

PRECIOUS TRUTH.

"He that hath an Ear to Hear, let Him Hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches." (Rev. ii.)

London: — Published for the Proprietor by J. B. BATEMAN, 22, Paternoster Row, entrance in Ivy Lane.

No. 35.—VOL. II.]

FEBRUARY 1, 1868.

[One Halfpenny.]

"BARNABAS, SON OF CONSOLATION."

(Acts iv.)

"And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul; neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed *was his own*; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

"And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed *Barnabas*, (which is, being interpreted, *The Son of Consolation*), a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet."

WITH the return to the simplicity of early times, one most important doctrine specially unfolded by the Holy Ghost is—

The Oneness of the Church or Body of Christ.

"There is one Body." (Eph. iv.)

"By one Spirit are we all baptized into One Body." (1 Cor.)

What a dreadful misnomer, then, to speak of "Religious Bodies"! The Scriptures know of but ONE Body—

"The CHURCH, which is his Body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. i.)

The Oneness of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ was blessedly felt and shown in the early Church—

"And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul."

This is still one of the first blissful feelings of the new-born saint. What a joy it is to hear a sinner (recently troubled about his sins) clasp one's hand, and exclaim—*Now I can call you—brother!*

"We know that we have passed from death unto life *because* we love the brethren." (1 John. iii.)

May we cherish inwardly and show outwardly this blessed brotherly love.

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." (Gal. v.)

"Add to your faith virtue: and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness *brotherly kindness*; and to brotherly kindness charity." (2 Peter i.)

Pilgrims walking together to heaven may well afford to share their loaves and coats on the road. Who can possibly be expecting glory on high and suffer himself to be greedy down here! Oh, it is a *luxury* to "have all things common"—to feel that what I have is as much my brother's as it is mine.

"Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty [the law of love], and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the *work*, this man shall be *blessed in his deed*." (James i.)

"It is *more blessed* to give than to receive." (1 Cor.)

II.

But brotherly love must not be indulged in as a *luxury*, because of the *happiness* which it produces. If it *is*, it will be capricious and variable. It must be cherished as a *duty*—a *delightful* duty, it is true; but, nevertheless, a *duty*—and a duty not so much to the Body, as the HEAD.

This aspect of the case seems very blessedly expressed in the conduct of Barnabas and others. They brought the proceeds of the sale of their property, and *laid them at the Apostles' feet*.

The Apostles (as visibly representing the *Head*, the Lord Jesus Christ,) were felt to be the *rightful disposers of all that was possessed by believers for the benefit of the One Body*. It was an expressive admission of the Lord's authority (in His Apostles) over ALL that they had.

There is a vast deal of wealth in the Church—abundance for all. The great evil is—its *non-distribution*. Believers too generally hold what they brought into the Church as though they still possessed *ownership* rights over it. Whereas the right thought is *stewardship*, the fact being that when we were *bought*, everything that we had, with ourselves, passed into the possession of another.

"Ye are not your own, but are *bought* with a price; *wherefore* glorify God with your body and with your spirit, which are God's."

As a Levite, Barnabas had received tithes of his brethren and had *paid* tithes to the family of Aaron (see Numb. xviii. 26—28); but as a Christian, he offers ALL to the Lord.

And here the remark may be made—There has much been said lately about "systematic beneficence," and "tithing property for the Lord."—Brethren, *that* might do for a far *lower* priesthood. But let us think of our great High Priest in heaven as *Lord of all*. As the Holy Ghost declares—

"He is Lord of all." (Acts x.)

This is true, *absolutely*. God hath appointed Him—

"Heir of *all things*, by Whom also He made the worlds; Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had, by Himself, purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high: being made so much better than the angels, as He hath, by inheritance, obtained a more excellent name than they." (Heb. i.)

But though all is His, He *exact*s nothing, but "*loveth a cheerful GIVER*."

III.—PRIMARY CAUSE OF THE EFFLUENCE OF LOVE.

To ascertain this, we must go a verse further back than the passage quoted at the beginning :

"They were all filled with the Holy Ghost." (Ver. 31.)

Love is the first fruit of the Spirit—

"The fruits of the Spirit are *love*, joy, peace," &c.

It is the Spirit, by whom we are baptized into One Body, who enables us to *feel* and *show* our *oneness*. The Church is just as much One Body as ever. When it is not *felt*, the fault is ours, and it is *not* felt when we are not "filled with the Spirit," as our brother Barnabas was—

"He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and faith." (Acts xi.)

But, then, we *ought* to be, as the exhortation still applies—"Be filled with the Spirit." (Eph. v.)

As a *fact*, ALL believers are "sealed," or *marked* with the Spirit, as Christ's own property, until He comes :—

"In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were *sealed* with that Holy Spirit of Promise." (Eph. i.)

"Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God by whom ye are *sealed* unto the day of redemption." (Eph. iv.)

This sealing of us is a part of *the Spirit's* work, and is a very different thing from *our* duty set forth in the exhortations—

"Walk in the Spirit."—"Be led of the Spirit."

Just as my old nature was led of Satan ; so, as a *new* creature, I am to be led of the Spirit.

Barnabas and our brethren of "the church which was at Jerusalem," were full of *love*, because "full of the Holy Ghost."

We are full of the Holy Ghost—or filled with the Spirit—when He has *full* power over us, to *move* us and to *lead* us—to move us to do the will of God and to lead us into all truth, through the Written Word. By this latter, *He* will press upon us the Lord's precious pattern of love :

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes, he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be made rich." (2 Cor. viii.)

He parted with a vast estate, indeed, for us poor sinners ! Shall we not have a moiety of His mighty love ? and

"Choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." (Heb.)

IV.—THE SPIRIT TEACHES THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS.

"No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost." (1 Cor.)

Brethren, there are no Apostles *now*. We cannot lay down our property at their feet for their disposal. No ; we walk by faith in the omnipresence and lordship of the Son of God. And at *His* feet we may be constantly laying down anything we have. And He will accept it—*accept it in His Members*.

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto ME." (Matt.)

It is true the Apostles ordained "deacons," of the church's choice, to deal forth the money, collectively raised. And though there can be no ordinations *now*, there being no Apostles, yet each church, [that is, all believers in any city or town,] may well select two or three or seven of its members, and request them to distribute unto every man as every man has need, from the moneys gathered at doors in boxes for the poor. There is *collective* giving and there is *individual* giving. But the lesson which the Spirit is pressing upon us from the Scripture before us is—

Individual and total devotement to the Lord,

—laying down that which we possess at *His* feet, to be used of Him in any way He may show.

To this devotement, the Spirit is ever prompting us : to "glorify God with our body and with our spirit which are God's." He, too, will *guide*, as well as *prompt*. So that, like the Lord Jesus himself, we may — "go about doing good, for GOD is with us."

This fact settles the attitude of those who are in want—They can *demand* nothing, but must look by faith to the Lord to lead a Barnabas (in the name of the Lord) or a Stephen (in the name of the Church) to *relieve* them.

This Divine guidance in doing good is extremely needful, considering all the hypocrisy that is abroad. Do any fear bribing impostors into the Church ? Nay, the "church which was at Jerusalem" had *no* such fear. If we feed the unregenerate, the Lord did the same ; spirituality of lip and life will keep them from attempting to come into fellowship, or it will soon drive them away. And suppose we are deceived by a hypocrite now and then : well, is it not still true ?

"For Thy sake, we are killed all the day long ; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter ! Nay, in all these things we are more than *conquerors* through him that loved us !" (Rom. viii.)

Let not Satan hinder us, beloved, from seizing any opportunities that may be afforded us of laying down property at the Lord's feet !

"He is *thy* Lord ; worship thou Him." (Ps. xlv.)

V.—DISUNION AND ITS RESULTS.

The church of God in any town or city is composed of ALL true believers in that city. When the Holy Ghost speaks of believers in any city, it is as the church (never churches) in or of that city, as Rome, Antioch, or Jerusalem ; but when the brethren in a province or country are regarded, then the plural is used, "the churches of Galatia," or Judea, &c. It is presumed, in the Word, that (where possible) believers go on in fellowship—not apart.

Believers in the Lord Jesus in any city may assemble in different places for convenience' sake, but, like the "church which was at Jerusalem," they should be all "of one heart and of one soul." That is to say, in close fellowship one with another, in mutual recognition, intimacy, and love. Were this the fact, cases of special distress among Christians meeting in any one street would be carried, in the Lord's provi-

dence, into the neighbouring streets, and special sympathy flow forth to the afflicted part of the Body. And without *systematising* (which is our great fear) we may safely say, the weak ones of the flock would be cared for *by the flock, generally*. But where there is no fellowship, there can be no intimacy or love.

Nothing is plainer than that the Body of Christ, the Church, ought to care for *its own*. It is equally plain, that its members possess abundance of the requisite means.

But what is the fact? Is it not this? We meet selfishly apart; we do not care to ascertain each other's cases of distress and mention them at the meetings for prayer, and commend them to the Lord and the saints, and ourselves to lay down our property at the Lord's feet.

Alas! Satan has so wrought among us, that Christian widows and their orphans have frequently to appeal to the world, and the poor and aged to seek parish relief! Painful failure in faith in *them* and love in *us*!

Instead of all true believers in each town apprehending and showing a family oneness, they go on apart as if they were so many distinct families! and allow the feeling of *independency* to grow up. But we are *not* independent; we are ONE BODY. And "Love [not rules and regulations] is the bond of perfectness."

Independency of spirit, as distinguished from the Oneness of Love, has wrought this—While some of the family are *surfeited*, others are *suffering want*! and how often would the Lord use us to ease His afflicted ones, if Satan had not so disunited us! And so the *Members* suffer on, and the *Head* with them! Painful thought!

"In all their affliction He was afflicted."

Let this go to the heart of the Church the Woman, —when a Member of the Body suffers, "My Lord suffers."

Besides this evil of Disunion, as contrasted with the Oneness of Love, Satan binds our hands with *Worldly Prudence*; a strong cord is *that*. Satan, winding it round, suggests, "You'll want it yourself another time; you should be prepared for adverse circumstances." The answer that breaks this cord is, "The Lord will come; I am not sure of anything else: I *know* the Lord will provide."

Then there is a special 'weight,' or hindrance, *Vain Show*, "the lust of the eye." It is wonderful what a "weight" some of us are contriving to carry with us! But "let us lay aside *every* weight." What does a pilgrim want with pictures, works of art, extra fine clothes and articles of plate, jewellery, &c.? —"Oh, but," says some one, "our pictures are on *sacred* subjects!"—Very true, but can the skill and fancy of an unconverted man help the faith of a saint? "Looking unto Jesus," *not* pictures. "We walk by faith, *not* by sight."

What shall we do, then, with all things not needful, but rather hindrances?

They "sold their possessions and goods."

Sell—sell; all that is not needful, *sell*.
And consider the blessed result. *None of them lacked*.

"Neither was there any among them that lacked."

If all is held at the Lord's disposal, to be given collectively with others, or individually in private, and if believers in any place, whether there be one meeting-room or half-a-dozen, are really, as a family, of "one heart and one soul," then will there be no lack, and *God* will be glorified in us.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye *have love one to another*." (John xiii.)

There's Christians' *debts*, too, as well as their *wants*, —debts incurred through sickness, &c. The debts of the members are *our* debts—the debts of the ONE BODY!

Brethren, let us haste back to *Jerusalem ground*. He who *so* set up His church cometh—cometh.

Apostles we cannot have; but we have their doctrine. To do *deacon*-work we can choose certain brethren, with prayer. *Other* ministries were not required *then*. An apostle possessed all the "gifts." Having their writings and the Spirit to "lead us into all truth," let us get back, in spirit, to Jerusalem ground. We cannot take ground higher or simpler.

Doing so, we shall not only find ourselves increasingly blest, but the Lord will also use us for blessing to others, for while Ananias and Sapphira are taken away, Barnabas is honoured of the apostles and used of the Lord very greatly.

VI.—BEHOLD, HE COMETH!

At the Lord's coming, **ALL** we have **MUST** be left. Left for whom? For the enemies of God, those whom we shall leave behind when we are caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Just as Jerusalem and Judea were taken by the Gentiles, so will all that is left behind come into possession of the children of this world. If Barnabas and the other brethren had not have sold their possessions, and houses, and lands, they would, in a short time, have had to flee from them with regret. So too, ye rich ones, "trusting in uncertain riches," and saying in your hearts, "My Lord delayeth his coming,"—"He will come in an hour that ye look not for Him," and you will have to *die* (like Ananias and Sapphira) to these things which, in part, *you are keeping back*. Happy, then, those who, like Barnabas, have sought grace to lay down **ALL** at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ, **HEAD** of the Church!—**ALL**, after "providing things honest in the sight of all men."

In the light of eternity, our so-called valuables become baubles. And yet they *are* valuables, for, let us remember, by their right use we secure the Lord's approval and a place in the loving hearts and happy memories of our fellow-heirs of glory everlasting!

"Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens which faileth not." (Luke xii.)

Oh, let us desire to be "sons of consolation"!

VII.—CAN A MAN GIVE UNTO GOD?—NO!

Israel in the wilderness applied its gold to two purposes—The Tabernacle, its furniture and vessels, and the Golden Calf. So now, we serve God—in *His* way or *our* way. God permits offerings *now* for the service of his *living* tabernacle—the Church, the members of the One Body, the “habitation of God through the Spirit.” He receives gifts for *that*, and that only, not for Himself. *He needs nothing.*

Oh, that those who are giving money, much or little, to the sustenance of the so-called “cause of Christ” could but see that they are feeding and clothing “that woman Jezebel, who calleth herself a prophetess,”—upholding that which (after the Church of God is gone) will be developed into the “Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth”! Yet how many think they are, in *that* way, “doing God service”! and applauding to the skies those who give largely! It is casting gold together to form a “Calf,” as in Exod. xxxii.

“Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light!” (Eph. v. 14.)

To think that the Lord needs *money to help Him to carry on His purposes of grace to man!* Monstrous! Is there anything like it in the Word of God? What do we see there?

The Church is nowhere charged with anything but the poor.

“Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.” (Gal. ii. 10.)

“If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged, that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.” (1 Tim. v. 16.)

To think the Lord has need of money! for *His* work!

“Thy money perish with thee!” (Acts viii.)

Jezebel needs it—the horse-leech, ever crying “Give, Give!” The Lord has need of nothing! —

save in the Members of the One Body.

And He suffers need *there*, that *faith* may be exercised in *them* and *love* in *you*.

But, says some one, “The Church must meet her own liabilities!”

Yes, but whoever heard of a woman taking liabilities upon herself that had a husband!

We feel confident, then, that if the Lord, the Head of the Church, sees it needful that a place of meeting should be possessed, *He* will open the heart of a Barnabas (or two or three), who will perceive His mind, and lay down their property at His feet. Till *then*, we must use what we have; if not money more—*Rooms in our own houses.*

In His own gracious way, whatever is needful,

“The Lord will provide!”

“I—I have set before thee an Open Door!”

Perhaps you think you could not get on so?

“Let God be true, but every man a liar!” (Rom. iii.)

We know you couldn't get on so, with your heavy rents, your gaudy buildings, and your salaried men!

—The Lord Jesus has not guaranteed to *provide* for these. Hence you must resort to Balls, and Bazaars, and Begging with boxes and bags, and contrivances sickening to think of!

Simpletons!

“Ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye yourselves are wise! For ye suffer, if a man bring you into *bondage*, if a man *devour* you, if a man *take of you*, if a man *exalt* himself.” (2 Cor. xi.)

Oh, brethren beloved, let us “hate even the garment spotted by the flesh,” as exhorted in the epistle of Jude. And what is all this, but the ways of the carnal mind? If the saints are solicited *pressingly*, or a box sent round, what is it, but making the saints *pay rent to the Lord*? Oh, how loathsome it must be in His sight!

ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA.

How strikingly the case of Ananias and Sapphira contrasts with that of Barnabas! What a solemn commentary upon that passage—

“If ye live after the flesh ye shall die.”

They had grieved the Holy Spirit of God by walking after the flesh, and Satan, ever watchful, seeking “whom he may devour,” had found an entrance into their heart, and filled it with a lie.

“Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?”

As Satan prevailed in Eden, so did Satan prevail over this man and woman, and so has he prevailed in part ever since,

“For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.” (Phil. iii. 18-19.)

Satan is a liar and a cheat. How many are his lies! and there are few more insidious than the *desirableness of money!*—of having means of our own to meet our future needs!

“But they that *will* be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” (1 Tim. vi. 9-10.)

SATAN'S LIES.

Your Lord delayeth his coming.

Store up for the future.

A man's own requirements come *first*.

The land is good.

Rest; take it comfortably.

Get on in life, then retire and serve God.

GOD'S TRUTH.

“He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.”

“The Lord will provide.”

“We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

“A waste howling wilderness.”

“Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.”

“Work with your hands—that you may have wherewith to give to him that needeth.”

All who are going on with Satan's lies are *earning* “death.” In the case of the unconverted, it is eternal death; in the converted, it is a *present death-state of soul.*

“The wages of sin is death.”

Satan knows he cannot work our eternal death, because "our life is hid with Christ in God." That which Satan works to produce, if he can, is a *deathened* state of spirit (temporary, but real)—to cause our spirituality to "die."

For what is Death?

Primarily, *Separation* (in the natural world, of soul and body—in the spiritual world, of the spirit from Christ). The results of SEPARATION are—*darkness, grief, injury, inaction, loss, decay.*

What is the eternal death of the damned?

Not annihilation—but separation.

"Everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord."

"Christ is our life." In proportion as I abide in Him, I live, "yet not I, Christ liveth in me." Now the Spirit teaches us to abide in Him; that is, to live. If I "walk after the Spirit," I shall live. I shall not know Death (that is, Separation, with its secondary effects mentioned above,) but I shall know LIFE—that is, Union, (both with the Head and the One Body,) and the secondary effects—*light, joy, health, activity, growth, power.* This is Life.

To go on in *this* life—and show its effects—is to "become" a "son of God."

"To as many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God." (John i.)

If we "walk in the Spirit," we are "sons of God." That is to say, we *present* our sonship to others and are *conscious* of it ourselves. The power to do this we received, when we received the Spirit.

It follows that if I "walk after the flesh," I do, for the time being, fall from my sonship—I "die"—I suffer the pangs of *separation* from fellowship with the Father and the Son; the Spirit being grieved, I lose the joy which He gives; and, (until restored by a groaning confession and the intercession of my High Priest,) I become incapable of *fruitful action.* This is death.

"If ye live after the flesh ye shall die, but if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

The present state of believers is here regarded.

Thus, in measure, all of us who believe in Jesus are always exemplifying Barnabas or Ananias—we are "walking" after the Spirit or after the flesh. If the former, then we live; if the latter, we die. If our sins are *not* sins unto death, we only feel the shadow of death. But if we yield to Satan completely, there is nothing to look for but complete *separation, cutting off, destruction, perdition,* all of which mean the same as *Death*—an end, temporary or final, to the believer's course down here. Mark what is said—An end to the believer's course down here, not hereafter.

If I sin, and am out of fellowship for a day, my course for that day is suspended—"I die." Unless we keep the body under, as Paul did, we are in constant danger. And oh, how dreadful if Satan "devour" us! that is, bring our testimony, as sons of God to an end, as he did in the case of Ananias.

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again

unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: but that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned."

"For if we sin WILFULLY, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth NO MORE SACRIFICE for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be that hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite UNTO THE SPIRIT OF GRACE?" (Heb.)

"Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away."
"There is a sin unto DEATH: I do not say that ye shall pray for it."
"If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." (1 Cor. iii.)

"AND GREAT FEAR CAME UPON ALL THE CHURCH, AND UPON AS MANY AS HEARD THESE THINGS." (Acts v.)

In the Word we are regarded *only* as what we ought always to be, practically, "sons of God."

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed [God's Word] remaineth in him."

"He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that Wicked One toucheth him not." (1 John.)

But if I sin, "I die," and for the time—long or short—as being *dead*, I am not a "son." Therefore, *for the time*, I am regarded as "not of God."

"Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." (1 John, iii.)

If we are "filled with the Spirit," like Barnabas, then shall we do well.

Thus we have seen, we are One Body—that all we have is the Lord's—that the Spirit teaches us to lay down at the Lord's feet that which, if kept back, breeds death.

"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." (Jude.)

THE EPISTLE TO THYATIRA.

(Rev. ii.)

Referring the reader to the truth the Lord graciously gave us last month, concerning "that woman Jezebel," (who represents mere learning and cleverness taking the place of teaching,) we desire to add a little light on the rest of the passage, God has given us.

Having threatened to cast Jezebel into "a bed"—dismay, helplessness, pain—the Lord then threatens to cast those—

"that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds."

These the Lord has previously called "His servants." Therefore, true believers in Christ are referred to. The means and the mode of their tribulation, we are not told; but we apprehend permission to afflict will be given to Satan, our enemy. As the Prime Mover in all evil, he is yielded to whenever sin is committed, and the Lord is practically despised. In the light of other Scriptures, therefore, we apprehend that he who afflicted Job will be allowed to afflict any of the Lord's people who, at His coming, are found in sin.

"Be not deceived: God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

At the Lord's coming, Satan and his host (who have power in the air (Eph. ii. 2), who are the spiritually wicked ones in heavenly places (Eph. vi. 12), will be, at the Lord's approach, pressed down into the lower regions of the air, immediately over the earth, previous to being cast down to the earth (Rev. xii. 9, 10), and the Church, the Lord's hosts, will be caught up through them. Thus, *host will pass through host*, and then—*conflict!* That is, Accusation on one side, and Self-Justification (or Pleading Guilty) on the other. Of course, nothing will be brought through but what is of God. Satan will not let us take into the Lord's presence aught that is "earthly, sensual, devilish." In those who are "blameless at His coming," Satan will find nothing to deal with, lay hold of, on the ground of which to dispute our passage to the skies. All that was not of faith he (and his angels) will seize and bring forward to prove that there is no claim to salvation, and if possible drag such sinning believers down to their own perdition and damnation. Therefore—

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

"Make your calling and election sure."

Those in whom "the Accuser of the Brethren" will find nothing (or little) will pass undetained into the Lord's presence. Those who are found in adultery with Jezebel will be dealt with at the rear of the mighty host, and pass through that which is intimated in other ominous passages besides this in Rev. ii.

First, in reference to one who builds on the foundation (faith in Christ), things which grow up from the old nature—"wood, hay, stubble,—

"Saved, yet so as by fire... the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." The day shall declare it. (1 Cor.)

And of one guilty of gross evil—

"Deliver such an one unto Satan [now] for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved [not from hell, but] in the day of the Lord Jesus." (1 Cor.)

Then, of the works of apostate Christians, it is said—

"Whose end is to be burned." (Heb.)

Thus, for ourselves, we apprehend that Satan will bruise the heel of the Woman's Seed. Wherever sin is found, "bruising" must follow. Were our sins laid on Jesus?—Then must Jehovah "bruise Him, and put Him to grief;" and the "seed of the serpent" were allowed to bruise His heel—his lower, or human part. Is sin seen upon the One Body, while in the body?—Then, "the heel"—that lower part—must be bruised in each and all, now or hereafter.

"But when we are judged [now, down here] we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." (Cor. xi. 32).

Satan has the power of "bruising" for sin. The Devil had the "power of death," and if we sin we return this power into his hands. Satan was rejoicing over Ananias before he was struck down.

But if we are avoiding connexion with Jezebel,

and going on with nothing but what is according to God, the comfortable assurance for us is—

"God will bruise Satan under your feet shortly."

Even those who (passing through the conflict) "suffer loss", will yet come off safe, as regards eternal life, "through Him that loved them." Nevertheless, "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God;" for though Satan may afflict, yet—"Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?"

At, or soon after this period, mere professing Christendom will be the subject of direful judgment:

"I will kill her [Jezebel's] children with death."

Having all come into the Lord's presence—then

"All the churches shall know [having just seen or felt] that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts."

Then is presented to us "the Judgment Seat of Christ."

"And I will give unto every one of you according to your works."

This is also referred to in other Scriptures—

"For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether good or bad."

After judging and rewarding his saints, the Lord returns to the earth, and at His return certain of them receive a special reward—

"And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the Morning Star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Here the Lord is seen coming to the earth. When He calls the Church, it is from the earth up into the air. "Then shall we meet the Lord in the air." But after that, the Lord will come down from the air, and we with Him, and while He will subjugate His foes in and around Jerusalem, He will send such as He mentions above, to fly through the air, all over the earth, "to rule the nations with a rod of iron," suppressing every thing contrary to God and His Christ.

This power the Lord says He has "received" of the Father.

"Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." (Psalm ii.)

Having received this power, the Lord will give it to whomsoever He pleases. And, let it be remembered, these vice-gerents of the Son of God will be seen in His likeness, "fashioned like unto His glorious body," that is, like Him "whose eyes are like unto a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass burning in a furnace."

Not only so: but as the dear Lord will be the blessed Morning Star to believing Israel, so will His saints, who will go through the air over the earth, be welcomed as the Morning Star by all among the nations who in that day will have received the Jewish testimony—"the gospel of the kingdom" or

the return of the Messiah. This, we apprehend, is the meaning of the wondrous assurance—

"I will give him the Morning Star."

These that overcome now will then be as *first* to some and the sweet *harbinger* of the bright Millennial Day to others.

Wherefore, beloved, seeing that our dear Lord has said such things, let us pray always for each other the prayer of Paul for the Thessalonians—

"That our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: 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." (2 Thess. i.)

GRIEF UPON GRIEF.

The following letter sorrowfully shows that a certain grievous bitterness is not, alas! confined to this side the Atlantic:—

Montreal, Canada, Nov. 25, 1867.

Dear Brother in Christ, I do indeed rejoice that our dear Lord has put it into your heart, and given you the grace to testify against the unhappy spirit of "judgment" [dealing judicially, or putting away] which has so grievously wounded many of His own loved ones, and my heart goes up to Him in earnest desire that He may enable you to continue this testimony. I pray also that your readers may not, by resting upon the man, put a hindrance in your way through dishonouring the Holy Spirit, who has been set forth as the guide and teacher of all God's children, in all places, until He comes. Only recently driven out of sect by the harsh censures of those who should follow in love an erring brother, I thought to have found fellowship with "Brethren," but, instead of this, I find myself shut out along with those whom the Lord has used to lead me into the liberty of His children—James Inglis, of New York, and Charles Campbell, of Philadelphia. This has been brought about by the visit to this country of a certain leading brother from England. From place to place where he has been, this evil spirit has followed, and in many, there are now two gatherings standing apart from one another. In this city the larger one is in sympathy with the influential brother alluded to, yet the Lord is graciously present with a few souls who meet to Him only. In other places, some who at first went with him are since exercised as to their course; and one brother in Ottawa City, who had been led to the extreme point, has seen his error, and applied to us to know what should be the rule of action in regard to those who may be holding error. Taking the Word, we replied from it, as discernment was given us; but as we seem to have still gone beyond that which you deem warranted, I enclose a copy of our letter, * asking you to judge it by the Word. We do desire to have an eye single for our Lord, yet the adversary often has success through his action upon the flesh, and also we fail to obey the injunction, "Resist." Oh, with what love and tenderness does the Lord bear with His dear saved ones? Yours in Him, W. H. R.

What shall we say to these things? The Lord probe and heal.

[* Copy of letter referred to.]

Montreal, April 7, 1867.

"Dear ———, Ottawa.—Your query as to our relations to 'believers in the Lord Jesus,' and attitude towards any such who may be in error of judgment, has had the prayerful attention of two or three among us, and I now pen the thoughts given, with the Scriptures on which they are based, and may the Lord give you grace to bear lovingly with the dear brother referred to.

"The first question coming home to us, as lost sinners saved by the precious blood of Jesus, and made heirs with Him of the inheritance, is this—

"Who are we to receive and recognise as fellow-heirs with us?"

"Unquestionably all who accept the record 1 John v. 9-11, and can testify to the assurance of verse 12, we are bound to receive, and can have sweet fellowship with them in this blessed truth, "Christ the centre"—the bond of union—attracting all who truly know Him.

"Who are we to reject?—

"Deniers of the Lord Jesus. 2 John x, and 1 John ii. 23.

"Fornicators, covetous, idolaters, &c. 1 Cor. v. 11.

[Yes. The Church must put such away till manifestly repentant.—E.]

"Causers of divisions and offences, &c. Rom. xvi. 17.

Surely the word "avoid" means "avoidance in private life," upon the principle that "Evil communications corrupt good manners," and also because we are usually regarded as agreeing with the practices and principles of those whose company we choose. But if a brother guilty of schism come into the assembly, he comes, professedly, not to us, but to the Lord; he is in God's Church. There is no sphere for choosing or avoiding. If we are influenced by that "charity which hopeth all things," we should regard his presence as probably indicating repentance. Putting him away would only confirm the schism, instead of healing. E.

"Those having the form, &c. 2 Tim. iii. 5.

[Here the exhortation is to an individual, showing from whom he, as an individual, should "turn away" or avoid. The assembly is not contemplated. If we hastily receive among us such as Paul describes, the Lord may let us bear the burden for profit's sake; but He is the deliverer.—E.]

"Sect-makers. Titus, iii. 10.

["Reject" in this passage is the same as "refuse" in 1 Tim. v. 11, in reference to "younger widows," and considering to whom these directions were given they both have an official bearing. Timothy was to "refuse" from the number of widows and Titus to "reject" from the eldership. See p. 198, vol. i.—E.]

"Those who love not the Lord. 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

"Preachers of another gospel. Gal. i. 8.

["Anathema Maranatha" seems to mean—"Let him be accursed; our Lord cometh." This curse is pronounced by an Apostle, and has full force wherever deserved. We see no connection with putting away. E.]

"Now passing from these distinct and emphatic directions of the Word, which admit of no compromise in regard to our attitude toward the persons indicated, (?) we should clearly be acting without authority, in separating from a brother because of some (to our mind) serious error which his judgment had accepted as being the truth. Our fellowship with a believer is in Christ, and how dare we deny this privilege to any of His saved ones?"

"Should any brother go beyond, and hold error,—or that which, in our judgment, is error,—we can have no fellowship with his error, for our fellowship is "in Christ with him." Yet we may not cut him off, except for that which the Word plainly commands. Our duty is simply to testify to him against his error, yet bear with him as a child of God. (Gal. vi. 2; Eph. iv. 2, 3; Col. iii. 13.)

"Exercising this spirit in the faithful discharge of our duty to a member of the family having claims upon us which we dare not ignore, it may be our happy privilege to fulfil the office set forth in Jude 23, and come under the blessing recorded in James v. 19, 20.

"Had we the grace to come together before the Lord, and judge these differences in His presence, instead of drawing asunder, and judging them in our own fleshly wisdom, how they would sink into insignificance! Having His mind, we should be made of one mind together in Him. Oh, dear brother, how all this failure around us should increase our longing for 'His appearing' who will put all right, and make gloriously manifest the perfect unity of His body. Hasten, blessed Jesus, that day. Amen. Dear brother, may He give you all needed wisdom.

"Yours, in Him,

Wm. R. H."

OUR CORRESPONDENTS AND OURSELVES.

Address Letters for the Proprietor, to 335a, Strand, London, W.C.

J. H. M., BROXLEY, writes—"Dear Brother, You seem very anxious to persuade believers to supersede the title "Brethren" by that of "Christian." I have looked in vain for anything like a warrant for this in the Word of God. "Brethren" is the blessed title imposed upon us, and constantly applied to us, by the Lord Himself. But the word "Christian" is evidently a stigma of heathen invention. When "the brethren" (John xxi. 23) were persecuted by the heathen it was expressly as "Christians" (1 Pet. iv. 16), the heathen knowing nothing of what the Spirit of God regards as true "Brethrenism," and denominates "Brotherly Love." May the Lord keep us from that carping spirit before which nothing is right.—Your brother amongst many brethren, thank the Lord for it."

[To this prayer we say, Amen. But if the term "Brethren" has got, in common speaking, to be applied to certain assemblies which practically take a sectarian attitude with regard to all other believers, what is to be done, if we feel called to testify against that sectarian conduct? The writer used of the Lord in the first article in this paper this month would not be received in fellowship—would not be acknowledged as a member of the One Body (!) — by many of the assemblies known as "The Brethren," or "Plymouth Brethren"! And why? Because he conscientiously holds the views expressed again and again in this journal, that except for moral evil and the "denial that Christ is come in the flesh," the Church has no power of "putting away." "Power belongeth unto God." He would be treated as "an alien from the commonwealth of Israel" because he holds these views on the subject of *Assembly-power*. Of course, the right thing would be to receive such an one as a "fellow-heir," and then—if thought needful—"admonish him as a brother" in private, or rebut with the Word any bad teaching in the assembly.

Look at the mischief wrought, as recorded by your fellow-correspondent, in the previous communication.

Such spiritual *Mastership* by "the Brethren" must be testified against. We are under the necessity, therefore, of pressing dear ones to use a name which ALL use, and which cannot possibly be mistaken for the *closest sect of the time*. When—in writing or speaking—there is no danger of mistake, we freely use the word "brethren," and love it.

The word "Christian" may be a term of "heathen invention," and to bear it was a cross. Has it become a cross again? Well, may we have grace to take it up, and follow Jesus, and know, and be known by, no other name.]

A. C. DALKEITH.—We know of no tract on the subject. May those forwarded be of use to you.

A. P., DUBLIN.—Dear Friend,—We have no agent in your city. You can get copies from our Printer or Publishers, or through local booksellers, who will order it regularly for you. If you are happy in getting a few readers monthly, we shall be glad. But we desire to have no anxiety about our circulation, but to leave all in God's hands; "Let Him do what seemeth Him good." We are very thankful for your prayer, that we may be "kept looking to, and trusting in, Jesus."

THE STARS ARE THE ANGELS.

W. C. B.—Dear Brother, What was your object in assuring us (in regard to the Article "The Stars are the Angels) of the disapprobation of some of our readers? Surely, not to make us uneasy or frightened! Well, the "conies," that "simple folk"—reference to whom lately seems to have amused you—when at all frightened, retreat, we suppose, to their shelters in the rocks. So we retreat to God's Word.

We have lately been obliged to do this very frequently, and to "one who sticketh closer than a brother," for solace under griefs inflicted by some much loved ones who have not received the *written* testimony of these pages. This we are not surprised at, for written testimony is often unavailing, while *spoken* testimony we have all found to be more successful.

Those dear ones have pained us because, looking at Scripture from a lower point of view, they cannot help differing from us.

But *you*—you, while speaking most dogmatically, do not press upon us a single Scripture! What do you say?

"The seven angels were clearly Christ's gifts to His churches—in the way of bishops or overseers, men qualified by the Holy Ghost to take the oversight of the flock."

Now, dear brother, this is based upon two assumptions:—

1. Where, in Scripture, is an elder termed "angel"?
2. Where, in Scripture, do we find a *single* elder—or supposed "angel"—placed by the apostles over a church?

They were *shepherds*, but in no sense *angels*.

But you persist that we have *men-angels* now!

"And every *proper* gathering has such an angel and messenger from Christ, in God's sight, though *we* may be foolish enough to disown him."

Dear brother,—We are foolish enough to *disown* what we cannot *discern*.

1st. Now, what is a "proper gathering"?—Ans. "Two or three gathering together in Christ's name."

2nd. Supposing that they "hold the Head," who is the only Heavenly Messenger they are spiritually conscious of, and desirous of looking to?—Answer. "The Comforter, the Holy Ghost."

The thought that the "star" is a brother or brethren (a part of the church or "candlestick") is utterly untenable. You might have a *spark* from a "candlestick," but a "star"—impossible!

Ah, dear brother,—a *spark* is very bright, but it *soon goes out*!

While you have not furnished us with *one* Scripture, *we* have furnished you with a goodly number in the article referred to. We refer you to that article again, and humbly ask any one to show us where he thinks we have "handled the word of God deceitfully." "The Judge standeth at the door."

J. C. A., HULL.—We do not at present fall in with your suggested "division of the New Testament into three portions—Matt. to close of Acts, truth for the Jews, under the Messiah; Romans to Titus, truth for the Church, the mystery as revealed to Paul; Hebrews to Revelation, truth for the remnant carried through the tribulation." It is to us much too arbitrary. As all the Scriptures are useful to us, so they will be to the remnant in the latter days; *some* will be specially useful to *them*, as some are to *us*.

RECEIVED.—"Living Faith," "A Touchstone for the Use of all Professors;" "A Spur and Encouragement to study Greek Testament;" "God's Unchangeable Word and Man's Ideas;" "Introduction to Gospels;" "The Lord's Coming;" "The New Reformation;" "Gifts of the Holy Ghost and Miracle;" "Not Water Baptism, but the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, the Baptism of Christ." We may be led to notice some of the above in the light of the Word.

Also letters from K. L., W. J. C., and C. R.

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Published for the Proprietor, by—
J. B. BATEMAN, 22, Paternoster-row, entrance in Ivy-lane.
West End—HEYWOOD & Co., 335, Strand, London, W.C.
City Agents—ARTHUR HALL, 25, Paternoster-row, London, EC
SMART & ALLEN, 2, Londonhouse-yard, Paternoster Row.

Printed by JOHN EVANS, 335a, Strand London.

PRECIOUS TRUTH.

"He that hath an Ear to Hear, let Him Hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches." (Rev. ii.)
 London: — Published for the Proprietor by J. B. BATEMAN, 22, Paternoster Row, entrance in Ivy Lane.

No. 36.—VOL. II.]

MARCH 1, 1868.

[One Halfpenny.]

OUR JESUS—THE JEHOVAH OF ANGELS.

THE following Scriptures present *our* Lord—our Lord Jesus Christ—as the JEHOVAH of Angels, the LORD of Hosts (to Him be glory for ever and ever!)

"In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, 'Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.' And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, 'Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.'" (Isaiah vi.)

In this passage it will be noted that the word "Lord" is printed in our Bibles in two ways—first, in ordinary type; and secondly, in SMALL CAPITALS. In the first instance—"I saw also the 'Lord' sitting upon a throne"—the original word is '*Adonai*,' which simply means 'Ruler,' while the word 'LORD' in the second and third instances in the above passage is in the original 'JEHOVAH,' 'The I Am.'

Now it is noticeable that *both* these words, in the above passage, are applied to the *same* person—and that Person is the Messiah *then* to come, afterwards revealed as the Eternal Word, who "was with God, and was God," "without whom nothing was made that was made." He is first spoken of as '*Adonai*'—then by both angel and prophet as 'Jehovah'.

Sometimes a distinction of Person is made, as in the passage,—

"The LORD [Jehovah, The I Am] said unto my 'Lord' [*Adonai*, Ruler], *Sit Thou at my right hand.*" (Ps. cx. 1.)

But in the above passage in the prophet Isaiah, both words are used in reference to Him—the 'LORD'—whom Israel was looking for, and whom Malachi said would suddenly come to His Temple.

Here, then, in Isaiah vi. He "who thought it not robbery to be equal with God" is presented as the worshipped of Angels. It is our Lord Jesus whose "train filled the temple"—the Thrice Holy One—the Jehovah of Hosts, to Him be glory for ever and ever!

This is He who "made Himself of no reputation, took upon Himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men," that he might, "with Himself, purge our sins." Oh, grace amazing, unspeakable, stupendous, inscrutable!

As a little babe, He was still the adored of Angels:—

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." (Luke ii.)

And so, too, when (as the first-begotten from the dead) He "was raised by the glory of the Father":

"And again, when he bringeth in [or, when He bringeth again] the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." (Heb. i.)

At the present time He re-possesses that glory which He had with the Father before the world was, "Angels, and authorities, and powers being made subject unto him." (1 Peter iii.)

And so, too, in the future, the Church being with Him, will behold His glory as the Jehovah of Angels, the Lord of Hosts—

"And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and blessing.'" (Rev. v.)

And our souls breathe out a deep—Amen, and Amen.

A PILGRIM'S SONG.

"Perfect love casteth out fear."

Lord of my Life! Thy constant love
 Attends me, night and day:
 At home—abroad—where'er I move,
 Thy care surrounds my way.
 Thy thoughts have tender been towards me
 E'er since I drew this breath:
 Nor will they fail, if (hush'd by Thee)
 I breathe my last in death.
 Unbought and undeserv'd love!
 Yea, unrequit'd, too!
 Which pardon gave, blest peace to prove,
 And mercies not a few.
 O Lord, I long to sing thy love,
 With thousands saved like me,
 Encircling Thee in bands above,
 With deepest extasy!

Be Careful for Nothing! Want Nothing!—We are thus exhorted in the Philippians, "Be careful for nothing." In order to become so, we are to make our requests known unto God, and then patiently wait and see what God the Lord will do. While in this patience we keep our souls, we really want nothing, that is, do not *crave* for it. "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Having asked of our Father, in the name—the precious name—of Jesus, and for His glory, let us be assured that the blessing is laid up in store for us, to be brought forth in due time.

"IS CHRIST DIVIDED?"
(1 Cor. i. 13.)

David.—James, I hope you have now made up your mind to join our Church.

James.—Indeed, David, I have thought a great deal on the subject; but the more I think of it, the more I am convinced that I should be committing a great sin by doing as you desire.

D.—A great sin! what do you mean? I always thought it was a believer's duty to unite himself with some particular denomination of christians.

J.—And I now clearly see it to be a believer's duty *not* so to connect himself; and that it would, therefore, be a sin in him to do so.

D.—Well, this is quite new to me: will you explain yourself?

J.—I regard it, then, as a sin for christians to be of different denominations at all. A very little attention to the New Testament will, I think, convince you that nothing is there more pressed upon saints than union and oneness of mind, and nothing more condemned than division. For instance:—we find the Holy Ghost, speaking through Paul, rebuking the Corinthians because every one of them said, "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos," &c., (1 Cor. i, 12; iii, 4.) Each was for setting up his own favourite teacher, calling himself by *his* name, and following *him*. Now, had not this spirit been checked at the commencement, it would, sooner or later, have issued in their dividing themselves into different sects even as it is at this day. And in John xvii, we find Jesus praying repeatedly to His Father that His disciples might all be *one*, even as He and His Father were *one*; that the world might believe that the Father had sent him. Now, I firmly believe, that were I to join any particular sect on earth, I should be doing that which is decidedly forbidden in Scripture—that which hinders union, and keeps up division.

D.—But has not God blessed all sects, and does not this show that He approves of them?

J.—You may just as well tell me that the Lord approved of Joseph's brethren selling him because He brought such blessings out of it; or that the murderers of Jesus did right because it brought such blessings to the world! You see, David, this sort of reasoning will not do. We see our gracious God continually bringing good out of evil; but surely this is no sanction of the evil. Such a principle will go to excuse, and even render meritorious, all sin. The fact of God's having blessed many of His devoted servants among different sects, whether of the Roman Catholic, or any other, proves the riches of His grace and long-suffering, but certainly does *not* prove such individuals in a right position; and a natural question is—Would not such have been greatly *more* blessed had they stood in no such connection? But is it not the constant complaint of God's most devoted servants that they see so little fruit of their labours, and might it not be well for them to enquire whether it may not be something in their position which hinders the blessing?

D.—But I have heard our minister say that sects did good by the *emulation* which they produce, thus exciting each other to greater zeal.

J.—It might be a sufficient answer to this, just to say that emulation is a work of the flesh (Gal. v, 20); and that we must not do the least evil even to bring about the greatest good: but I must at once deny that the rivalry of parties (that is, each party using all its energies to promote its own peculiar and exclusive interests) can be other than detrimental to the cause of Jesus. Such rivalry is a most evil thing in itself, and cannot be too much condemned, whatever good the God of all grace may bring out of it.

D.—But what would you have believers to do? would you have them separate from all other christians?

J.—By no means: you quite mistake my meaning. —Instead of separating from all Christians, I would have you more fully unite with them; and this, I conceive, you can only accomplish by leaving your sect and taking the simple position of a disciple of Jesus.

D.—But if I leave *my* church, I separate from my brethren.

J.—Not at all. Can you not perceive the difference between separating from a sect and separating from christians? I belong to no sect; and therefore feel myself at liberty to love all true disciples everywhere. Wherever I find a believer in Jesus, there I find a brother; I can meet him as a brother, I can pray with him, I can take sweet counsel with him, I can break bread with him in the Lord's name, resting on the promise, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. xviii, 20). I, as it were, say to myself, I am a disciple of Jesus; Jesus is my Master (Matt. xxiii, 8—10); He has given me His Spirit—this Spirit unites me to all the other disciples of Jesus. We are *one body in Him*—I would, then, call myself by no name but His. I would be united with Him and His members by no bond but the Spirit. We have "one Lord, one faith, one baptism," (Eph. iv. 5). Why should I take any name but that blessed one "of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named"? (Eph. iii, 15.) Why should I unite with a party—seeing I am united to the whole family—and thus place something between me and other members of this family?

D.—But there are so many differences of views among believers, that I cannot see how it is possible for those so differing to meet together as one church.

J.—Not possible! Then what does the apostle mean when he exhorts christians to be all of *one* mind—when he rebukes them for their divisions? what does Jesus mean when He prays that all may be one, that the world might believe that God had sent Him? Again, would I ask, is there *one* word in the New Testament to sanction believers being of different sects? and is there not very much to condemn everything like division in the Church? I would say, then, let believers meet together for communion simply as disciples: let them not merely speak against sectarianism, but let them break off all con-

nection with every sect; let them look to the Spirit to open the word to them; let them bow their souls down in obedience to it, and then there will be some hope of their becoming of one mind; for then will those who are wrong be brought into such fellowship with those who are right, as may, with God's blessing, be the means of bringing them out of error. If Christians, instead of making sects out of their differences, would stand together simply as saints around their common Lord, who has said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," and there wait upon Him to be taught by the Spirit; and together in all faithfulness would diligently and prayerfully search His mind in His word, and would, with one heart and one soul, earnestly seek to be brought into the mind of Jesus, they would be taking the most likely way to be made of one mind. I believe nothing is a greater instrument in Satan's hand of keeping up division, and preventing oneness of mind, than sects.

D.—But, supposing some of the saints were to separate from the different sects, and come together on such principles, would not this be just forming another sect?

J.—Where there are any human rules which would exclude from full communion any acknowledged disciple of Jesus, even the *weakest*, the body of Jesus is rent, and a *sect* is produced. And this, I believe, is what all the denominations do; and, therefore, they are all more or less sectarian in character. But where there are no such rules—where all manifested disciples are received simply in the name of disciples; and where, in all church-meetings, no hindrance is placed to the Lord nourishing, cherishing, and sanctifying, by the Spirit, through the Written Word, in His *own* gracious way (Eph. v.),—I see nothing to exclude one disciple of Jesus—nothing to *rent* His body; and, therefore, nothing *sectarian*. Into this blessed attitude may all believers be brought, to the glory of Jesus the Head of the One Body. Amen.

[The above Paper, along with two others on the same subject, may be obtained, in the form of a little book, of our Brother Bateman, price 2d.]

"THE ANGELS of the SEVEN CHURCHES." (Further considered.)

Glasgow, Dec. 12, '67.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—I have read with much interest the article on the "Seven Stars." Where there is among dear brethren so much diversity of opinion, I judge we are individually responsible to seek to be led by the Holy Spirit, our only Teacher, into all truth. Truly, the Spirit is our only Light through the Word.

"What I wish to draw your thoughts to is this—With regard to the Angels of the Seven churches, what was the thought (immediately) in the prophet's mind? There were real assemblies at Ephesus, &c. to whom the epistles were addressed. And there had been *real* messengers to carry this word from the Apostle, who acted therefore, in the character of apostolic delegation, such as none can lay claim to now. My conviction, therefore, is that these "messengers" were those that carried the letters to the several churches, who had an especial responsibility in that apostolic day."

[To the reception of this hypothesis, dear brother, we have various difficulties—

[1. Apostolic delegates, like Timothy and Titus, were not (according to the Word) set permanently over any one church. Their authority was temporary, representative, and diffusive (rather than local). What they did was really done for the apostles, and when their special missions were ended they returned to head-quarters (as it were) for further orders. Thus Titus was left by Paul in the island of Crete "to ordain elders in every city, and set in order the things that" were wanting. But Paul, writing to him, does not style him "messenger of the churches in Crete," nor does he regard him as permanently settled there. On the contrary, he receives directions to return to Macedonia: "When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis." Still later, Titus leaves Paul, and goes to Dalmatia. So with Timothy. They were *ambassadors* of the apostle, not *located* permanent authorities. Paul may write to them, for their personal guidance and exhortation, but he never addresses churches through them as their "angels."

[2. Again, your hypothesis requires *seven* manuscripts and *seven* apostolic delegates. But what do we read? "What thou seest, write in a book, and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia—unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna," &c. From this we see that the epistles to these churches were to go to them, one after the other, in one great manuscript, that all might read what was *sent to the rest*. Whether one, two, or more, apostolic delegates or messengers carried it, does not appear. "Seven" would have been a large number. But we cannot speculate.

[3. If these delegates were merely John's messengers, does it not strike you as highly improbable (to say the least) that the Lord should address these seven epistles to the persons chosen by John to carry them? Do we, in common life, address our letters to those *who carry them* (!)?

[4. If your thought is that they were *paramount* ministers, located over the various churches—then we say, there is nothing in the Word to justify it. But this is *not* your thought. You know, as well as we do, that *elders* were appointed in every church—not a single elder over any one church. A Diotrephes—loving to have the pre-eminence—might *assume* the predominance, but only at the expense of the condemnation of God. But you further say—]

"You have not, dear brother, taken up two special difficulties. 1. It is the Spirit speaking to the churches—does the Spirit speak to the Spirit?"

[Now, we have no difficulty here. John was *in* the Spirit and the Spirit in *Him*—that gracious One who is ever-present. But the Seven epistles were not, primarily, *from* the Spirit. They were not simply inspired, like other prophecies, in writing which "holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." They were given *direct from the Lord to John*, as much so as His words from the cross—"Behold thy mother!"

[John's having the Spirit does not make it the Spirit writing to the Spirit. No: it is the Lord who sends—sends by His servant John—but associates the messages with Him who had graciously taken the office of leading the saints by the Written Word into all truth—the Perfect Messenger possessed by each and every church. Your next difficulty is—]

"The angel seems to be responsible for the failure as well as the success: 'I know thy works,'" &c.

[Now it is true that the first person singular is used, but that does not show that it is the Angel who is addressed. It is the *church* which is addressed through the Spirit. And the church is addressed in the *singular number* because, in the Word, believers in any one place are regarded as *one*—One church, body, candlestick. If the Lord were to write to the church of God in your city of Glasgow, surely He might say "Thou," or "Thy," seeing it is one in His sight. That the *church* is contemplated and addressed (through the angel) in each epistle, is evident from the plural form of speech breaking out, now and then, when needful, as, for instance—"I will give to *every one of you*," &c.

"May the Lord advance His own precious truth, and may we sit as children at His own once-wounded feet. Your brother in Him, K. L." [To this we say, Amen.]

"SAVED" and "SALVATION."

THESE words in the Scriptures not only apply to deliverance from wrath to come, but to deliverance from the dominion of sin and Satan *now*. If we practically take up that which has been done for us—it is *salvation*. And what has been done for us who believe in Jesus? We *have* been translated "from the kingdom of Satan *into* the kingdom of God's dear Son." "We are not of the world," even as He is not of the world. While I walk in the power of this fact—realizing it, availing myself of all the blessings of it—it is *present salvation*; sin has no dominion over me, I am not in bondage to the world and its ways, I am delivered from the fear of death and from the power (for the time) of him who had the power of death, that is, the Devil.

In this *present* sense, the word frequently occurs—

"Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both *save* thyself, and them that hear thee." (1 Tim. iv.)

As having received eternal life, through faith in Christ Jesus, our brother Timothy was already *saved*, in the sense of deliverance from the wrath to come. But Paul here speaks of his *saving* himself and those who heard him. Save from what? Save from sinning, from mistakes, from falling and failing in many ways, and from going on in error.

This *saving* efficacy of the Word of God is again set forth in the second epistle to Timothy.

"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee *wise unto salvation* through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim. iii.)

So, beloved, we have the Scriptures in order that we may be "wise unto salvation"—not as fools, but as "*wise, knowing* what the will of the Lord is," seeking to go on with nothing but what is according to His mind and Word.

"Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to *save* your souls." (James i.)

Most certainly we must *know* the will of God (from the Word of God) before we can *do* it.

This state of *salvation*—that which we have been saved *from* and saved *to*—is enlarged upon in the epistle to Titus—

"Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing meekness unto all men. For we ourselves also *were* sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another (!). But *after* that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he *saved* us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be

made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men." (Titus iii.)

The "bath" of regeneration is one thing—even a *new* and eternal life, the gift of God through faith in Jesus. But besides *that*, there is the "*renewing* of the Holy Ghost." Is not this the daily working of the Spirit to conform us more and more to the image of Christ?

"Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is *renewed* day by day." (2 Cor. iv.)

"This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have *not* so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard Him, and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that ye *put off* concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and *be* renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye *put on* the *new man*, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." (Eph. iv.)

"Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is *renewed* in *knowledge* after the image of him that created him." (Col. iii.)

Thus, there is a "salvation" which, by the grace of Christ Jesus the Head, we can—have to—and are called to—"work out," a "salvation" which we can "receive," hold, and (by the same all-sufficient grace, enabling us to keep the body under) enjoy *now*.

"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, *work out* your own *salvation* with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Phil. ii.)

He it is who (being our life) *works in us* to save us from our sins, and to keep us in sanctification—*body, soul, and spirit*.

The One Body (the Church) while down here, (associated with the old body of sin and death,) needs a Saviour to *energise* or "work," in each and all, to "will and to do *His* good pleasure." Thus—

"He is the Saviour of the body." (Eph. v.)

"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might *destroy* the works of the devil," (1 John. iii.)—

—the works of the Devil in us—the tempers, principles, habits, "of the *old man*, which is corrupt."

Thus is fulfilled the word—"He shall *save His people* from their sins,"—as well as future punishment, *for* their sins.

"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: *receiving* the end of your faith, even the *salvation* of your souls." (1 Peter, i.)

"Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. vi.)

Thus we see the *Lord* and the *Spirit* work in us by the *Word*, to this end—our *practical present salvation* or *sanctification*. Then, beloved—

"How shall *we* [Paul, and the Hebrew converts, and *you*, and *I*] escape, if *we*—NEGLECT SO GREAT SALVATION?"

Solemn question for *us*, beloved.

But, by the grace of Christ—

"Let us go on unto perfection." (Heb. vi. 1.)

"Perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord." (2 Cor. vii.)

II.

As further showing that these words "Saved" and "Salvation" have a *present* bearing, let us look at Scriptures which speak of *other* things, as having a *saving* usefulness.

1.—HOPE.

Hope, truly, is exceedingly useful, as an anchor, in *saving* us from being driven hither and thither by fears and doubts, persecutions, and strange doctrines.

"For we are *saved* by hope.....if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." (Rom. viii.)

The hope that takes hold of the coming of the Lord *saves or protects* :

"And for an helmet, the *hope* [or expectancy] of salvation."

This living hope also *saves* continually from sin—

"Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (1 John, iii.)

2.—GODLY SORROW.

Godly sorrow, too, as well as hope, has a practically *saving* effect—

"Godly sorrow worketh repentance to *salvation* not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death." (2 Cor. vii.)

This is said to, and of, *believers* who had been led into wrongdoing.

3.—CONFESSION.

It will be important, in the next place, to consider the usefulness of *Confession* in furthering this practical salvation.

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be *saved*. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto *salvation*." (Romans x.)

"Justification" is through faith, and faith *only*.

"Being justified by faith we have peace with God."

"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." (Rom.)

That is the state in which God sees the sinner who is brought to trust in Jesus.

But suppose such an one, through various causes, does *not* come forward and *confess* Christ with the *mouth*. In this case, though "baptized by the One Spirit into the One Body," he is not visibly *added* to the Body. Consequently, he loses the benefits of fellowship; saints cannot pray for him in the name of Jesus, or visit him; he is sure soon to fall into doubts and difficulties, with no kindly hands to "*loose him and let him go*." Ask him, and you will find he is *not* saved—(neither in his consciousness, nor saved from his old thoughts, principles, sins.)

This *end* and *object* of church-fellowship seems to be intimated in that clause in Acts ii. which has caused so much discussion—

"And the Lord added unto the church daily such as *should be saved*."

—That is—from living in sin.

Again, after we become believers, the *saving* tendency of *confession* is very great. In every *new* sphere, when brought into contact with every *new* acquaintance, the wisest—safest course is to take an early opportunity of confessing Christ. Satan will hinder it, if he can. He will insinuate—"Don't be too fast; you may do or say something afterwards which will bring discredit on that name; so be silent."

The answer to this is—"If I am *known* to be a Christian, I shall feel bound to be more watchful, and therefore less likely to fall. I take sides with *Him* who is able to keep me from falling, and who, for His own glory, will do so."

Thus "confession is made unto salvation," or it furthers our "walk in newness of life."

Peter's thrice-dreadful fall in the high priest's house, is for ever a warning not to shrink from "confession."

Baptism, as a species of "confession," also operates in this way. An unbaptized christian is one who has not *confessed* Christ in Christ's own appointed way!!

4.—BAPTISM.

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be *saved*; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark xvi.)

In the next place, let us consider that, while the Holy Ghost has thus associated "confession" with *salvation*—the Lord Jesus Christ has associated BAPTISM with salvation. We would therefore say, most earnestly,—Dear one, believing in Jesus, have you been baptized "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"? If the dear Lord has said—

"*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*,"

—depend upon it that it is of very great practical importance—not in *saving* you from wrath to come, for "the *blood* of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanseth us from *all* sin"—but in *saving* you *now*.

Saving you from wilfulness.—Oh, if wilfulness—self-will—our having our own way—begin upon a matter so simple, where may it not end? How many who are wilful on *this* subject are wilful on *others* also! Alas! yes; who has not known such?

BAPTISM, as associated with Belief,—("He that believeth-and-is-baptized")—is a representative word. Representative of what? Of OBEEDIENCE *in toto*. As though the Lord said—He that *believeth* and *obeyeth*.

He that Believeth shall be saved from the *wrath* to come.

He that Obeyeth shall be saved *on the road*—saved from all the dangers which arise from SELF-WILL—saved from preferring Self to Christ!

It is true a believer *after* baptism may yield to Self. But, in Baptism, he *professed* (more or less publicly), to be *dead* to Self, and so desired that Self should be *buried* and *got rid of*.

When Self, therefore, works in us after Baptism, we *should* be able to say—No, I buried you in baptism; I must reckon myself dead to Self and alive to Christ.

Now, unbaptized believer (!) you have not this means of grace—this great practical means of salvation from the Old Nature. *You cannot say—*

“We are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” (Romans vi.)

Thus Baptism means—A complete practical surrender of the body, soul, and spirit up to Christ.

He who so walks—is saved.

Then, again, we need to be saved—not only from Self, but also *from man* and his reasonings on the Scriptures—or, rather his reasonings *away* of Scripture. How many who begin by receiving for commandments the doctrines of men on *this* subject, receive men’s doctrines on *other* subjects also! It is a great test for every young believer—Whether he will be guided by the simple Word of God or not. If the simple Word prevails, then and thereafter, it is (practically) *salvation*.

Men’s traditions are *defiling*. Like cobwebs, they are *filthy* to look upon. Dear one, unbaptized, May you, “strong in the Lord and in the power of His might,”—*sweep them away*.

“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” (2 Cor. vii.)

“The very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Thess. v.)

“Glorify God with your *body* and with your spirit, which are God’s.”

Perhaps you are doing *other* things to glorify God?

“This ought ye to have done, and not have left the other undone.” (Matt. xxiii.)

“Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.” (1 Samuel xv.)

Obey, therefore, dear one, and “go on your way rejoicing,” being *saved from an uneasy conscience*.

“For he that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”

“Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.” (1 Sam.)

Let no man sneer you out of it.

“I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded; but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.” (Gal. v.)

The dear Lord is very gracious towards those who *sin in ignorance*. Nevertheless, sins of ignorance entail loss—yes, great loss.

A dear youth (baptized a week ago) has just said that before baptism he found his thoughts going into the world, but that *after* baptism he *felt different*! Another, a believer of some years, but only just baptized, regrets exceedingly he was not baptized before; he assures us, he has had special joy in the Holy Ghost, and much increased light in

the Word of God. The Lord be praised! “He hath done all things well!”

And this felt blessing upon obeying the Lord in Baptism, is the experience of all we know—our own, too.

Satan knows full well the loss believers sustain, and as long as he can lead them to turn from Baptismal Burial he will; he will strive *hard* to do it; he will *quote Scripture* to do it. “But we are not ignorant of his devices.” He hates us and our dear Master, and works to do us mischief and to do our Lord dishonour; for we *dishonour*—yea, grieve—Him, if we follow our own wills:—

“Why call ye me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not the things that I say?” (Luke vi.)

Wherefore, beloved, “Cease to do evil, and learn to do well.”

Oh, the folly of some who say—“I was baptized when I was an infant.”

Foolish one and slow of heart to believe!

Did Jesus say—He that is *baptized* and believeth? is it not—“He that *believeth* and is baptized?”

God is the God of *order*. You would turn God’s order upside down, and make *disorder*. As a *child* of God, this is, surely, a “*superfluity of naughtiness*.”

“Wherefore, lay apart all filthiness [spiritual defilements, such as men’s reasonings and traditions] and *superfluity of naughtiness*, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls,”—from going on with things *naughty*.

Will any one say—“Oh, Baptism is not needful.”

True, it is not needful to salvation from wrath to come—we have said *that*.

As to what is needful as a *saving* means of grace—what does a poor silly sheep know about what is *needful*? Your *Shepherd*—the Great Shepherd of the sheep—knows better than you, you wilful one. And *He* has said—“He that believeth and is baptized shall be *saved*.”

Will you argue the matter when the Lord comes?

Ah, you know you won’t.

“Behold, I come quickly.” “Remember, therefore, how thou hast received, and heard, and hold fast, and REPENT.” (Rev.)

So be it, to the glory of God.

Does anyone think the foregoing severe?

Well, well—listen to a few words from the dear Lord himself (to whom be glory for ever!)

“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, *as it is* that loveth me, and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.” (John xiv.)

In the light of these many Scriptures, may we not apprehend the meaning of the following passage in James’s Epistle?—

“Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he that converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall *save* a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.” (James v.)

Surely, those here addressed as “brethren” were Hebrew Christians. The epistle, from beginning to end, can only be understood on this supposition.

Now, as Christians, James’s brethren had received “the gift of God, *eternal* life, through Jesus Christ

our Lord," and (as an *eternal* life) it could never come to an end, being "hid with Christ in God."

But remembering that *death* means *suspension of the believer's conscious spiritual union with God* (as shown us in our last), if we "*convert*," or *turn*, a *sinning* brother "from the error of his way" (as a pilgrim), "we save a soul from *death*"—from going on with that which works *death*, or soul-injury, soul-darkness, soul-loss, separation from fellowship with God, spiritual decay.

Moreover, says James, a brother who is enabled to turn another to conformity to the Word of God "*will hide a multitude of sins.*" A believer whose spirituality is dead must be continually sinning in the sight of both God and man. But if he be induced to obey the Word of God in practice, and receive it in principle, his course will be (so far) improved, and sins previously seen will be hidden—and no longer perceived upon him.

"Sanctify them through thy truth, thy Word is truth."
"Ye also ought to wash one another's feet."

May we ourselves be more and more sanctified unto the Lord; then will the Lord graciously use us to the turning of brethren "from errors of their way," and "*saving* souls from death."

"MAN IS BORN UNTO TROUBLE."

TROUBLE in the world proves that there is *sin* in the world, as certainly as the *shadow* follows the *substance*. From all points of view, trouble is fraught with mercy. When it is the direct result of individual transgression, it is a hindrance to further sin, and calls aloud, "Cease to do evil; be sure your sin will find you out."

But trouble is not only a *consequence* of sin—it is also a *corrective* of it. Therefore, the *more* the trouble, the *better* ought we to be and the more thankful.

Trouble is early needful, and "he who spareth the rod spoileth the child."

It is often needful, in severe degree, to plough up a sinner's heart and break down his wilfulness. And who has not seen God's strokes come heavier and heavier, till the foolish one is prostrate?

And blessed is it when, with softened heart, he begins to be *troubled* about his *sins*! This is a trouble that we may heartily pray that others may be brought into, that they may be saved from that *greater* trouble—Hell.

And when converted, *fresh* troubles begin, from within and without, so that, if "in this life only we had hope we should be of all men most miserable."

For our encouragement in bearing troubles that come upon us as disciples, we may well remember the list of worthies given in Heb. xi., and those who are *not* given—

"Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. . . . They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword :

they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy;) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." (Heb. xi.)

These are "witnesses"—a "great cloud;" they *witness* that, as *they* overcame, so may *we*: Therefore—

"Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." (Heb. xii.)

These "witnesses" of old kept the *end* in view. Thus Abraham saw the day of the Lord's glory and was glad; and so Job knew that his Redeemer lived, and that he would stand at the latter day upon the earth. Even the Lord Jesus, at his dreadful hour, kept the *end* in view.

"Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, 'Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?' And Jesus said, 'I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.' Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, 'What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye?' And they all condemned him to be guilty of death. And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to say unto him, Prophecy: and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands." (Mark xiv.)

But He *despised* the shame. Let us, therefore—

"Look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."

BOOKS RECEIVED.

"THERE IS ONE BODY." 10 copies for 5 stamps. Dixon: Stephen's Green, Dublin. The following extract indicates the character of this 8 pp. tract:—"If, as is true, the Holy Ghost dwells in each member and in the *whole* body, how must He be grieved by these divisions? And ought not we, as dwell in by Him, be grieved also, whether we think ourselves to be right or wrong in the position we hold? If I am bound, in accordance with scripture, to 'receive to the glory of God,' those whom Christ receives, if there be weak ones in the body, I should seek to strengthen them. 'When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.' If there be those that are sick, I should not cast them out, but should rather seek to restore them by the suited medicine. (Ezekiel. xxxiv, 15, 16.) If I know more than others, let me know this, that I am thereby responsible, in patient love, to teach them, as Christ's members, the way of God more perfectly. If I say, 'I will not receive you, because you do not agree with me about the body,' then I deny the one body of Christ, making the recognition of membership in it dependent upon agreement with me. If I reject them without Scripture, I supersede its authority by my own will and judgment, and displace the Holy Ghost, the power that enforces the authority of Christ over his own house. If we frame coercive rules, saying that none are to be recognised as the body of Christ but those who conform to laws which *we have ordained*, we intentionally form an enclosure which shuts out that which God has brought in—a proceeding which is not at all on the principle of the One Body and One Spirit."

"HINTS FOR THE FORMATION OF PRIVATE MEETINGS FOR PRAYER."

A copy of these Hints may be had on application to J. G., 9, Camden Hill Villas, Upper Norwood, London, S.

We think our brother would do well to advise that dear ones seek to be led of the Lord to a *portion of the Word*, at every meeting for prayer. It will greatly tend to spirituality, and to raise the thoughts to God. It is very needful to draw near,

not only with the feeling of our wants, but also in the spirit of worship. The Lord prayed—"Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy word is truth."

When we come together for prayer, it is into a position apart from the world—to God. The Word of God has a separating, or sanctifying influence. By the Word of God, also, faith is quickened, and by the Spirit's application of the Word we are taught what to ask for, and how to ask.

Our brother does indeed say, a portion of the Scriptures may be read. It seems to be referred to, however, rather as an allowable incidental, than a most desirable thing. We hope he will allow us to press it, as very needful, whenever possible.

These "Hints," also, seem to take it for granted that women may pray *audibly* in the presence of men. This is tantamount to saying—that the woman may lead the man! But "God is not the author of confusion."

"I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting." (1 Tim.)

"I suffer not a woman to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." (1 Tim.)

Is it not difficult to permit women to lead in prayer without endangering their sometimes "usurping authority," for may not a sister, by degrees, come to feel that she has *got to do something—something for the man!* Then we have the man dependent on the woman!

This matter of order is very simple if dear ones only apprehend that Christians *assembling* together make an *assembly*, or church, and the word is express—"Let your women keep silence in the churches." If prompted to pray (as doubtless they will be) let them pray in *silence*.

In every assembly, however small, the woman represents the Church: the man represents the *Lord Jesus Christ*, for the Head of the Woman is the Man, even as Christ is the Head of the Church. In the presence of the man, therefore, the woman is to be subject, even as the Church is subject to Christ.

OUR CORRESPONDENTS AND OURSELVES.

Address Letters for the Proprietor, to 335a, Strand, London, W.C.

THE WORD "CHRISTIAN."—S. B. writes—"I hold to the name 'Christian,' because from the peculiar word used—'called' (not *kaleo*, but *chrestmatizo*.) In other passages it seems to me it was Divinely given."

[We perceive Doddridge thinks with you in this matter, and we have looked at the passages he refers to as justifying his opinion that "the word denotes to be named by Divine appointment." They are interesting, but we cannot give an opinion. It is sufficient for us that the Holy Ghost takes up and uses the word. Surely, we can hold the *two* things—that *Man* gave the word, but it was according to the will of *God*. *Man* said of Jesus—*Nazarene!* but they only fulfilled the will of *God*. *Man* has called us *Christians*, but we may be very sure it is the special purpose of *God*.]

A correspondent writes:—"Dear Brother,—Is it right to have one's portrait taken? Is it right to have pictures? I am looked upon as too scrupulous. Am I too scrupulous, dear brother? The word of Truth says—'Set—set your affections on things above,' 'I shall be satisfied when I awake in His Likeness,' 'We seek a city.' Yours affectionately in the dear Lord."

[You have doubtless seen a remark or two in our last upon this subject. May we all keep consciences exercised in the Word, as is *your* conscience; may we desire, "as strangers and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." It is true, pictures or works of art are not a "lust of the flesh," but are they not "a lust of the eye?" And if so, does not the Word in 1st John apply? "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." The Word of God regards the believer as practically made-up of what he is going on with from day to day. May we all be going on with that (in motive and conduct) which *will last for ever*.

But we must not judge each other in this matter, or lay down a rule. If a believer says—"I do not *love* these things: I feel at liberty to have them in moderation." Well the Lord looks for all in *grace*—not from *law*. If we are happy in laying down our things at His feet, He smiles approval.

Then, again, it is one thing to keep a few of those things which were bought *before* conscience was exercised, and quite another thing to buy them *after* we have been enlightened, as there may be felt a difficulty in disposing of things so obtained.

May we all say to ourselves—What would Jesus do: "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ."

D., ISLINGTON.—"Will you please consider the following questions in a letter from a brother? 'At our Bible reading last evening the questions, as to the age at which the Saviour began to teach (1), and how long He taught (2), and at what age He died (3), were brought forward. Have you studied this? If so, please give me any light you may have.'"

[Dear Brother,—Question (1) is settled in Luke ii. 3—"And Jesus began to be about 30 years of age."

Question (2). If John's Gospel is consulted, it will be found that the Lord Jesus was present at Jerusalem 4 passovers, being crucified on the occasion of the *last*. This would give 3 full years. It is thought that He was about half a year ministering the Word before the *first* passover: if so, then the whole period of his ministry would be 3½ years, or thereabouts. For the 4 passovers in John, you might refer to ii. 13; v. 1; vii. 4. and xii. 1.

Question (3). Consequently, the dear Lord (who for our sakes became man) died in his 34th year—"cut off out of the land of the living," though "no guile was found in His mouth."

It is needful to beware of the dates at the tops of some Testaments. The practice of dating from the birth of our Lord commenced about A.D. 600, and it is supposed a mistake of 4 years was made—that it started from the *fourth* year instead of the *first* year of our Lord's life. Now, in some Bibles the reckonings are made from the *first* and in some from the *fourth* year. We have two before us (Bagster and Barnes): the first places the crucifixion at A.D. 29, the second at A.D. 33. The second, to be consistent, ought to call the present year 1872!

Those who see the date A.D. 33 placed against the crucifixion have been led to infer that the Lord Jesus was 37 years of age at that time, remembering the error of the four years. The date affixed should be A.D. 29, yet on consulting 6 copies only 2 put it A.D. 29, the rest were A.D. 33!]

A BROTHER asks;—"Can a Christian claim anything I have because he is a brother and needs it?"—On page 10 of our last we read—"They can demand nothing, but must look by faith to the Lord to lead a Barnabas or a Stephen to relieve them."

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No. 37.—VOL. II.]

APRIL 1, 1868.

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"BE AT PEACE AMONG YOURSELVES."

(1 Thess. v.)

Too often does the enemy, that Old Serpent, the Devil, lead us foolish pilgrims "to fall out by the way." He "wrestles" to do this, in order that he may mar our testimony, for who will hear those who are known to quarrel among themselves?

"The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace." (James iii.)

Would I be used of the Lord in sowing to the glory of God? Let me "Follow peace with all men;" and let saints generally "look diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; [as those do who strive] lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble them, and thereby many be defiled." (Heb. xii.) Strife is *defiling*, (is it not?) because as defilement spreads by contact, so those in contact, or fellowship with us, will generally *take sides* with those who strive—and so the strife *spreads to them*, and "thereby many are defiled."

"Where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work." (James.)

"If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." (Gal. v.)

—That is to say, the testimony and spirituality of those who strive is brought to an end.

In order to the maintenance of peace among us, it is very needful to take heed to that word of the Lord Jesus to us, His sheep—

"If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear, take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of one or two witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it to the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." (Matt. xviii.)

From this I am taught, that I am not to go and talk about a brother's wrongdoing to a *third* party, but first to go to him, and seek, by divine grace, to bring him to repentance. Unless I can go to him, and talk it over with him, in the spirit of meekness, with a view to his amendment or our mutual reconciliation—I must maintain *absolute silence*. If I gain him—there is an end to the matter; if I do *not* go, it is, then, confined within my own breast, and "charity covereth a multitude of sins."

How perfect are all Thy ways, Lord Jesus!

Disagreements often arise from mistakes, which, on a personal interview, are cleared up.

How quick we are to come to conclusions! "to judge from appearances!" how slow to make allowances! And then, instead of taking the matter to the

Lord in prayer, and then to the wrongdoer in private, we mention it to others—who *as sinfully receive it!*

"Now there is utterly a fault among you." (1 Cor. vi.)

May we henceforth, when a report of another is retailed to us, have grace to say immediately—"Have you been with that to my brother?"—And if the answer is—"Well, no; I have not," then let us say—"Then I cannot receive it."

We have just heard of a brother who had grace to conform to this word in Matthew xviii. When a complaint was being made to him against another, on one occasion, he suddenly stopped the complainant, and, drawing his arm under his own, he exclaimed, "Let us go to him at once!" But the other was not prepared for this, and before they reached their destination, he pleaded some excuse,—and there the matter ended!

"The north wind driveth away rain; so doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue." (Prov. xv.)

"Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall ascend into thy holy hill?"

"He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour." (Psalm xv.)

"Whisperers, backbiters," are among the sinners enumerated in Romans i. If I retail anything I have not proved, in the way directed by the Lord in the above passage in Matt. xviii,—it is a shame unto me.

"We do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying. For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as you would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbiting, whisperings, swellings, and tumults." (2 Cor. xii.)

That which is "whispered" is *sure to be carried*, by some one or other, to the individual whispered about,—and then—what an animosity will spring up!

"Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth."

Turn we to another aspect of the subject.

"Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

It was so, it is so, and, oh, how pleasant it *will* be, when—our pilgrimage over—we can no longer "fall out by the way," but shall for ever "*dwell together in unity!*" with our Jesus, Prince of Peace, blessed be His Name!

May we breathe more of the atmosphere of heaven *now*.

"Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

"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; as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." (Ps. cxxxiii.)

Note, beloved, to what brotherly union is compared. It is as "precious ointment" and as fertilizing "dew." It ascends as a grateful fragrance before God—and it descends, as dew, in blessing upon man. God is pleased, and man is blessed, by brotherly love continuing.

"For thy pleasure they are, and were created." (Rev. iv.)

And shall not we be so, too? Then, as regards blessing to man—

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (John xiii. 35.)

SIN AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST.

MANY of us have had difficulties on this subject. Let us together look at the Scriptures on it, and may we learn therefrom. First, it may be remarked, that the subject is very solemn, because of the almost invariable severity of punishment that follows *sin against the Holy Ghost*, whether committed by the believer or by the unbeliever. (The italics in the texts show the crime and its punishment.)

I.—BLASPHEMY.

"But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." (Matt. xii.)

As the Lord Jesus is no longer on the earth casting out devils by that Spirit which was given without measure unto Him, surely *this sin* of "blasphemy against the Holy Ghost" can no longer be committed. How near some *infidels*, who have lived since then, may have approached it, God only knows.

II.—RESISTANCE.

"And the Lord said, 'My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh; . . . I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth.'" (Gen. vi.)

"By which [Spirit] He [the Lord Christ, the Word] went and preached unto the spirits [now] in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, ["a preacher of righteousness," 2 Pet. ii.] while the ark was a preparing." (1 Peter.)

"Many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy Spirit in thy prophets: yet they would not give ear." (Neh. ix.)

"But they rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them." (Isa. lxiii.)

"Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been the betrayers and murderers." (Acts vii.)

Do not these Scriptures show that *resisting* the Holy Ghost is resisting the words of God as presented by prophets or preachers?—*resisting*, and generally with persecution?

This sin the unregenerate in enlightened lands ever have committed, and can, alas! commit still.

III.—DONE DESPITE.

"Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people." (Heb. x.)

While the two former seem to be sins in the unregenerate, *this* is the most serious form of sin against the Holy Ghost that could be committed by a believer. The word in the original means—"To offer a contemptuous outrage to."* Doubtless, the sin of *apostasy* is referred to. The Apostle Paul was writing to the Hebrew Christians, whose special danger was that of being induced, through fear of fiery persecution from their own countrymen, to deny their faith in Jesus as the true Messiah. Paul himself (as the unregenerate Saul of Tarsus) had been used of Satan to make many commit this sin.

"I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities." (Acts xxvii.)

While the apostate "trod under foot the Son of God," it is not said that he blasphemed against the Holy Ghost. No; the sin he committed, grievous as it was, was not the unpardonable sin. "Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him." The apostate did "despite to the Spirit of grace," not "blasphemy." That is, he acted in malicious defiance of the voice of the Holy Spirit, who called aloud to him, through conscience and the Word of God, not to count his life dear unto him, —to die rather than put His Lord to an open shame.

Such a sin, though pardonable in respect to the life to come, was not in *this* life:—

"For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." (Heb. x.)

As in the case of Ananias, the only thing that could follow "doing despite to the Spirit of grace" was judgment in this life:—

"Peter said, — 'Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? . . . And Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and gave up the ghost.'" (Acts v.)

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy, for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." (1 Cor.)

* Parkhurst.

Not that the Holy Spirit Himself ever acts in punishment; for "all judgment is given unto the Son."

"Vengeance belongeth unto Me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Heb. x.)

This latter word shows that the sin contemplated is one which *could* be committed by Christians—his "people."

This is further shown by the word in the verse before the above—"sanctified." In what sense could an unbeliever be sanctified by the blood? Those, therefore, who regard these strong passages in the Hebrews as meaning something which could not be done by one who had been truly converted, do greatly err: do they not? They regard these passages as inserted to frighten us into *cautiousness*!

Paul says "if we sin wilfully, after that we," &c. He does not exclude himself, even; but he rejoiced to know whose grace was sufficient to keep him from falling.

Nevertheless, these strong passages in Heb. vi. and xi. may refer to a form of sin that can hardly be committed now. They certainly cannot refer to ordinary backslidings, as we might term them. For backsliders are "renewed to repentance," and are recovered to the church; whereas these passages regard the sinner as *beyond* recovery in this world.

Is not this difficulty solved by the following view? A believer who apostatized in the *Apostle's days* actually went over to the *Lord's murderers*! and joined with them who cried "Away with such a fellow from the earth!" Now this is an aspect of apostasy which *cannot* be committed now, but which *could* be committed at the time Paul was writing, and by the people to whom he was writing—the *Hebrews of Jerusalem and Judas*.

Let us not explain away these passages, but refer them to the circumstances of those to whom they were written. How far "despite" can be done *now* "to the Spirit of grace," cannot be defined. But we may well apprehend that, in proportion to the "wilfulness" of sin will be the subsequent darkness and difficulty of renewal.

[It is true, John alludes to "a sin unto death," for the forgiveness of which we are not to pray. But does not this mean, that where we discern severe chastisement to be needful, in consequence of wilful sin, we are not to pray for such chastisement to be withheld? The dear Lord show us all these things.]

IV.—QUENCH.

"Quench not the Spirit; despise not prophesyings." (1 Thess.)

This is an exhortation to *Christians*, and, surely, cannot apply to the unconverted.

In the *first time* of the Church, before the word of God was completed, the mind of the Spirit was made known to the assembly through the gift of *prophecy*, which gift might be sought for and secured.

"Desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy." (1 Cor. xii.)

Those who had the gift of prophecy might perceive or receive truth from the Spirit, and, from some fleshly feeling, "quench" the impulse to speak:

and, consequently, the mind of the Spirit would not be made known!

Of course, now, in "*the last time*," the condition of things is altered, but the *principle* remains. We should now gather together to the Lord Jesus, and *wait until the fire burns*, (Psa. xxxix)—till we, who have "an ear to hear," receive a word by the Spirit from the Scriptures, by which word our worship may flow forth in utterance, or truth flow forth to the assembly.

Now if I repress the utterance of that which I perceive would be to the glory of God and the good of souls, I "*quench the Spirit*," though not in exactly the same sense which Paul means in the above exhortation to the Thessalonians, and that because I am not a "prophet."

Doubtless, if a believer stifle a true impulse to testify to the unconverted, of "sin, righteousness, and judgment to come," it may rightly be regarded as "quenching" the Spirit. But the above exhortation, we may well apprehend, has a primary application to our conduct in *the assembly*, because of the other exhortations with which it is joined:—

"Despise not prophesyings."

We may sometimes have to listen to a brother who has little education or natural ability, or he may have the special fault of being too wordy, and we shall be in danger of "despising," either him or his words. This we are exhorted *not* to do. May we bear with one another, even as Christ bears with us, and the Holy Spirit, too—poor, wretched things, that we all are.

It may be that the Spirit is seeking to minister to the less educated (humanly-speaking) by one of their own condition; then, shall I "*despise*" the Spirit's work? By no means. If I perceive that what is being said is *not* for me—does not enlighten or lift my soul up—then, let me sit, quietly "holding the Head," (Col. ii.) knowing that "*He doeth all things well*."

V.—GRIEF.

"Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." (Eph. iv.)

These words remind us of those other words concerning Israel:—

"How often did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert!" (Ps. lxxviii.)

Alas! like *that* people, how have *we* failed!

"And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness." (Acts xiii.)

And the Holy Spirit is suffering our manners now—our worldliness and lustfulness, our wanderings in heart and spiritual stupidity. And so did Jesus—

"O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?" (Mark ix.)

May all of us, then, be very watchful *not* to "grieve the Holy Spirit of God." Amen.

MESSENGER (NOT ANGEL) OF THE CHURCH.—Some of our readers may have noticed that Epaphroditus is styled "your Messenger," in Phil. ii., in reference to the Philippian church. The original word, however, is not "Angelos," but "Apostolos."

HAVE WE ANY "OVER US IN THE LORD"?

"Plymouth, Jan. 17, 1868.

"Dear Brother,—Since I read your remarks on "Gifts," I have been much struck with two portions of the Word, namely—Romans xii. and 1 Thess. v., which have perplexed me. In the latter passage we are exhorted to 'know them that labour' among us, and are 'ever' us in the Lord, and 'admonish' us, and to 'esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake.' PRECIOUS TRUTH is exceedingly precious to my soul, and it has weaned me from men, and I do not want to think more highly or give them the honour that is not due to them, but to the Lord. I have written to ask you if you feel free to express what you believe to be the mind of the Lord about these two portions? Yours truly in Christ. W. J. C."

Concerning the passage in Rom. xii.—to save repetition, let me refer you to page 240 in the Oct. Number of last year. Upon the remarks there made, nothing further is given us to add here. But concerning 1 Thess. v. we have been led out a little.

The Lord, by the Holy Spirit, graciously "ground" us, dear brother, in the Scriptures given to the church in "The Last Time." You have, perhaps, read an article under the heading, "The Last Time" in the January number, for which article we thank the Lord.

The Scriptures of "The Last Time," (that is, the epistles of Jude and John, and the Revelation,) are as *directly* and *primarily* addressed to *you*, and *me*, and all Christians *now* living, as was the epistle to the Ephesians directed to the Christians in *Ephesus*, &c. It is clear, therefore, to me, (before the Lord,) that we must be careful how we take exhortations and statements written to the churches in the *first* time, (or apostolic time,) and apply them under *our* altered circumstances.

Now, in the Revelation, dear brother, we are brought face to face with the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ is *now* in close association with His churches—walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. And what does He say unto us? He directs each of us having an "ear to hear," to hear what the Spirit saith, and the Spirit speaks to us by the Word of God. Thus I apprehend for myself, that it is *God*—and *God only*—with whom I have to do.

It may happen that I am in fellowship with a dear brother who, walking closely with God, has been taken up and used to my soul's blessing, (and that perhaps, frequently.) But does this make him to be "over" me in the Lord? Nay.

Such an one may feel himself to be a *servant* of the Lord Jesus Christ; he may *know* that the Lord has graciously used him in certain work, and his hope may be that He will do so again. But what is my brother's consciousness to *me*? *my* faith rests on my Lord, and I receive all from *Him*.

My brother referred to loves his Master, and desires that His Master may be glorified. At the same time, he feels that He can do nothing of himself: and that, unless his Master says "Do this," *he dare not lift a finger to do it!*

Thus, all is (*or should be*) done *now*, in this, "the last time," by the Lord in the *midst*, by the Spirit in *us each*, through the Word of His grace—and to Him be all glory, now and for ever.

But the ordinary thought of "gifts" is, that of

something lodged in one or more of our number, for which we are to be thankful. This may seem to be a little matter; but a little thing brought near the eye will hide the sun! And so this thought of "gifts" has more or less hidden the Lord; for do not some of us come together as it were, to *wait on supposed gifts*, rather than to *wait on the Lord*? so that if a certain brother is not present we are disappointed!

Let us all walk equally by faith in the Son of God, all equally look to the Spirit, all equally delight in the Word, all equally keep the body under, and we shall all feel delivered—fully delivered—from leaning on one another. Then shall we be fit and ready for the Master's use; we shall welcome opportunities of fellowship with saints anywhere; and we shall rejoice to follow the Lord, into any little meetings of "twos and threes" that He may open around us, for prayer, worship, or searching the Scriptures. To this happy condition of "walking in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Ghost," may we all be brought—that so we may be each and all taken up and used to the Lord's glory and each other's good.

Of course, during the *first* time, or apostolic age, it was all *very* different. *Then*—the Lord had deputed to the apostles that authority which He *holds now alone*; and the apostles, in their turn, gave a measure of their authority to others—*elders*. If you and I had been members of the Thessalonian church when Paul wrote to it, we should doubtless have felt bound to reverence those "over us in the Lord"—*the elders*—in the absence of an apostle, just as we should justly reverence Paul in the bodily absence of the Lord.

But *now*, just as certainly as the apostles were in the church once, so just as certainly *is the Lord in the Church now*. John "tarried till" *He came*; and when He came, John departed.

Just as, by the presence of an apostle, a church would feel fully provided for; so, in the spiritual presence of the Lord *in the midst*, and the actual presence of the Spirit *in each one* (who is not walking after the flesh), and the possession of the Written Word, surely the church is fully provided for *now*. Yes, indeed.

Not only *authority*, but *gifts* were *visibly* existent in the Church in the first time; but the only thing *now* is the ministry of the Spirit, in the presence and under the control of the Lord the Head.

Thus, I apprehend for myself before the Lord, that there are none to whom we should look as admonishers, —that there are none "over us" now—no under-shepherds, who have a specific work to do *for us*, for which we have "to esteem them highly."

When the Lord Jesus was upon earth, He was the *One Master* and all believers were brethren. (Matt. xxiii.) But the time came when "He ascended up on high, and gave gifts unto men." (Eph. iv.) These "gifts,"—apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors (or elders), and teachers—were *Masters* in the Lord's absence—"ambassadors for Christ . . . in Christ's stead." But the time came when *He descended again*

as He had dimly intimated to Peter, (John xxi. 22.) He descended to John in Patmos, and revealed Himself in close association with His churches—"walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks." Thus, in this, "the last time," He is *again* become our *One Master*, both in the sense of *authority* and *teaching*, (as represented by the Spirit). This truth we are presented with in Rev. i. ii. iii.

This truth is further manifested in the manner in which the apostles gradually dropt all titles of *mastership*. While Peter and Paul present their "apostleship" in their epistles to the churches, Jude simply styles himself "servant," and John is our "brother and companion in tribulation," and "John the aged," (translated 'elder.') Thus, if John is to be known no more except as a "brother," *who would wish to be anything else? who?*

Unless, dear brother, we divide between the Scriptures written in the first time and those written in "the last time," (as the Holy Ghost calls it, see 1 John ii. 18) we shall be frequently in difficulties. I have felt them myself, and have had to take them to the Lord. Take, for instance, those passages in the epistle to the Hebrews—

"Remember them which have the *rule* over you, who have spoken the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation,—Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

"Obey them that have the rule over you, and *submit* yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."

Let us take our stand, firmly, dear brother, on the Scriptures of "the last time," and interpret (by the Spirit's guidance) the Scriptures of the first time by the spiritual order of things *then visibly* existing.

But now, while in the Scriptures of "the last time" (that is, those of Jude and John), we have abundant exhortation to love one another—we have *no* exhortation to esteem any believers for their special position, gifts, or work.

Read John's 1st Epistle for yourself, dear brother. On this subject, there is the completest silence. And why? Because the Lord had *taken all things into His own hands*. (See Rev. i. ii. iii.)

I have gone to the Lord about this matter for myself, and am confident, dear brother, that you will do the same. May He be our all in all, and come—come quickly.

LOVE—ATONEMENT—GLORY—ETERNAL PRAISE.—This is the order observed in that remarkable song of triumph put into our mouths in Rev. i. "Unto Him that *loved* us, and *washed* us from our sins in His own *blood*, and hath made us *kings* and *priests* unto God and His Father; *To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*"

"**THY WORD** is a **LAMP** unto my **FEET**, and a **LIGHT** unto my **PATH**."—Let us hold it up, beloved; and be content to see a step or two before us; and go forward. Having moved that step or two, we shall find our lamp throws light a step or two further. And so, shall we go on safely, taking heed to our steps according to God's Word. The light of the lamp will be sufficient for the darkest time, and the roughest path. "But the night is far spent: the day is at hand." Bless the Lord!

"POWER BELONGETH UNTO GOD."

(Pa. lxii.)

The Lord Jesus Christ, being the **HEAD**, (loving, powerful,) it is evident that all authority must be centred in Himself, and the **CHURCH** can have *no* power of united Action (as a body), except as much as its Divine Head has given it. What he has *not* given, He has *retained*. What he has retained must *not* be claimed by the Members.

Christ has nowhere given the Church power to *appoint*, or select, its own *Pastors*. (Whoever heard of *sheep* choosing their own shepherds?) Each assembly is therefore bound to look to Him who is present in the midst, wherever "two or three are gathered together in His name," to care for and to nourish it in His own Divine way; that is to say, with the **WRITTEN WORD** by the **SPIRIT**—either directly to each individual soul, or indirectly through other members. (Please to read Eph. v. 25—30; Acts xx. 32; 1 Cor. ii. 13; 1 John ii. 27; Rev. ii. 29.)

Christ has nowhere given the Church directions to employ, or to make, *Forms* of Prayer for use when it assembles for fellowship with the Father and with Himself. On the contrary, He *has* provided for it in this respect—by the gift of the Spirit. (Rom. viii. 26, 27.)

To do these two things is to claim and use power which has *not* been given. It is not sufficient to argue by inference for these (so-called) Church Rights and Prerogatives. The Supreme and Perfect Word (given that the Christian may be *perfect*, thoroughly furnished unto *all* good works) must not be so dealt with. That power which is given to the Church by the Lord Jesus Christ, in the Word of God, can be claimed; and *no more*.

2. It is evident in the Scriptures that it *did* please the Head of the Church to give to certain twelve men (apostles) power in the *whole* Church, and (by means of the apostles) a limited power to certain men in *local* assemblies (Elders or Bishops.) It is evident, also, that, as it has pleased the Living Present Head that the Apostolic authority should cease in the Church, so it is His goodwill and pleasure that the *inferior*, *secondary* authority, which was *derived from the apostles*, should cease. This is clear from the fact that the perpetuation of an eldership, is nowhere provided for. The shallower streams of power necessarily dried up when the source (the apostles) disappeared. The Elders in each church represented the Apostles while they were absent travelling elsewhere. Indeed, until the church was scattered abroad there were *no* elders; there was no necessity for them. The Elders could be, and were, "rejected" from the eldership, by the Apostles or their delegates—and were amenable to them only. The power to *appoint* and the power to *remove* are alike withdrawn. (Read Acts xiv. 23; 3 John 10; Titus iii. 10; 1 Tim. i. 20.)

In the Revelation, we are presented with the Lord Jesus Christ, in close association with the churches, personally *resuming* that authority which He had (in measure) given to the Apostles, the last

of whom is presented at His feet "as dead," and who is never presented *in the Church* again.

The Son of God being in close association with the churches—"walking in the midst of the Seven Golden Candlesticks"—therefore,

"POWER BELONGETH UNTO GOD."

To all therefore, who claim authority or position in Assemblies of Saints, we feel obliged to say in faithfulness and love—you hold that which you have no *right* to hold, because those who gave it you, had no *right* to give it you.

Consider what you are really doing, assuming power and position in the presence of THE KING!

3. In the next place, Assemblies may equally act *beyond* the Scripture, if they take a *judicial* power which their Living Present Head has not given them. By this is meant—excommunicating, or putting away, individual members. [This aspect of the subject has been dealt with very fully in previous numbers. See Nos. 17, 19, 20.]

4. As gathered into the presence of the Lord—Infinite Patience and Perfect Love—it is evident that we should desire to deal with the Members of the Body *as He would deal with them*. Given, therefore, that anyone is really a brother in the Lord,—of the Household of Faith,—it follows that the Church can have no power to "put out" of the Lord's presence—out of the Lord's church—any but such as the Lord Himself would put out; that is, those whom He has given us power (in as many words) *so to treat*. The Church is the Assembly of God—its centre of gathering is the *Son of God*. If it were a human institution, then we might make our own laws and bye-laws. (This latter is, indeed, the case with many congregations, whose arrangements are settled by trust-deeds and subscriptions.) But for those who meet *simply*—who meet together *to the Lord*, to be ruled by Him, by the Spirit through the Word, it is clear that nothing should be done but what *He Himself* would do, in regard to that most serious act—excluding from fellowship, delivering over to Satan.

5. Such putting out of doors—delivering over to Satan—is pointedly in Scripture for the "destruction of the *flesh*." (1 Cor. v. 5.) No instance can be adduced, or precept found, for such an extreme course towards a brother in *error*, (that is to say, as exercised by the *Church*.) And the reason for this distinction in the treatment of spiritual and moral evil is evident. Spiritual evil is really that of which those *in the house ONLY* can take cognisance. Those who are without, really have no judgment, or status of judging, in the matter. *Spiritual* evil must, then, be dealt with *in the house*, by the ministry of the word, as in the presence of the Lord, and with the power of the Holy Ghost, with all patience and love towards the individual brother, and in full faith in the Lord, to recover him, or to remove, or to neutralise such an one's bad teaching.

The Word of God clearly enjoins upon us *three* ways of dealing with mischief—Avoidance of private fellowship; 2, Excommunication; 3, reproof, instruction, and correction in the Assembly. The first is

Individual action (1 Thess. v.), the second is Church action (1 Cor. v. 13), the third is the Lord's action on His own members through the Word by the Spirit (Eph. v.)

Even where serious errors are held, is not private rejection all that is enjoined (2 John 10), while as regards the church, surely the Great Shepherd will deliver His own sheep (1 John ii. 19) if they look to Him?

6. But with *gross sin* it is different; those who are "without"—outside the church, that is, the world—*can* judge of that and condemn it. Moral evil appeals to the conscience of the natural man—the "world." Therefore, in such sad cases, it has pleased the Lord to give power to Assemblies to put such sinning ones away—solemnly, in the Lord's name, forbid them to come to the Table of the Lord, in order that the world, who can *see* the evil, may also *see* the condemnation, and admit that sin is *condemned*—not *harboured*—in the holy Church of God, among the saints (i.e. holy ones). (1 Cor. v. 13.)

7. If such an one put away for *moral evil* comes into an assembly, there is no power of *forcible* ejection; "The servant of the Lord must not strive." Surely he would go out, if the Church rose as one man, telling such an one that his presence (as an unrepentant evil-doer) gives them grief! If he will not,—well, we must be cast upon the Lord till *He* remove him; we must *pray him out*. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." For "*Vengeance*," as well as power, "belongeth unto God." He *is* present "whose eyes are like unto a flame of fire"—and faith can trust Him.

8. Then, with regard to the Table of the Lord,—as Christians have no power to withhold that which is the *Lord's*, (except for fleshly evil,) it follows that the Church's responsibility is limited to requiring confession with the mouth and baptism. If a member of the assembly introduce a person as known to him to be a believer, no further ceremony is required. But as *real* fellowship must always be in proportion to *intimacy*, the brother who introduces a new comer might, for the assembly's sake, give two or three simple items of information—such as, where He has been before in fellowship, and how long. If any one come from a distance, and is an entire stranger, he should, for his own sake, be provided with a "letter of commendation." (Acts xviii. 27.)

But neither information nor letters can be *demand*ed by the assembly under threat of keeping from the Table till they are produced. The responsibility rests between the individual soul and God; the church has *no* responsibility where it has *no* power. The responsibility is the individual's before God. "Let a man examine *himself*, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup; for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh condemnation unto *himself*, not discerning the Lord's body."

If one come, and he be found to be not baptized, he should be exhorted not to break bread *till* he be

baptized, the Scriptural order being—*belief, baptism, breaking bread*. Baptism being readily administered, he need not be kept waiting more than a few days. But the church has no power to exclude an unbaptized believer from the Table of *his* Lord.

9. If a stranger come into an assembly, and endeavour to minister to or lead it, the assembly should surely be simply cast upon the Lord in the matter. If the brother be in communion with the Head, the assembly will soon perceive that (though a stranger) the Lord is ministering to it by him. But if the assembly is not happy about him, it must quietly wait on the Lord.

But if (instead of doing this) a brother rise, and, in the name of the assembly, ask the stranger whether he is *known* to any one present, and if a negative answer is given, *requires* the stranger to keep silence, is not this taking power into our own hands, when "power belongeth unto God"?

To this it may be said—"If you leave things open in that way, see what confusion would ensue!" Well, Faith says—"Never mind how much I am exposed to carnal fears, if my Lord—blessed be His name!—is *more* honoured thereby." Better to sit and groan for hours than *not* walk by faith in the Son of God.

10. If an assembly is troubled with the *forward and talkative*, who hinder and weigh it down—their only resource is the Lord, who will give grace "to speak the truth in love," and "in patience possess our souls." In seeking fellowship with the Father and the Son, we must wrestle, by the Spirit, through all hindrance, and "hold the Head," in spite of all that troubles us.

Although these bases have been put before the reader, yet it becomes us to act—not from rules—but to look to the Lord in *every* individual case, holding as the two first principles—*His* Presence, and that "Power belongeth unto God."

DIVERS QUESTIONS.

"Dear Brother in Christ,—I should be glad to know if I have rightly understood from PRECIOUS TRUTH, that only baptized christians should be received to fellowship?"

[Dear one in the Lord,—We thought we had, in various places, in PRECIOUS TRUTH, stated what we believe we have learned for ourselves from the Word—that saints have no power to debar an unbaptized believer from the Lord's Table, but we feel very strongly that such an one ought to be exhorted *not* to break bread *till he is baptized*. But if he will act contrary to Scriptural order, we have no power to prevent his breaking bread. "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat," &c. Our correspondent continues concerning—

WOMEN IN THE ASSEMBLY.]

"I read in 1 Cor. xi. 'But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered, dishonoureth her head.' Now, surely here we are instructed that the woman is to have her head covered when she prays or prophesies, which latter we see explained in chap. xiv. 3 as meaning speaking 'to edification, exhortation, comfort.' Now, if women were wont to pray and prophesy in the assembly in the apostles' days, why should they be hindered now?"

Yours in the Lord, C. C."

[2. With regard to your remark—Why hinder "women from praying and prophesying in the assembly?" the simple matter dealt with in 1 Cor. xi. is the question of women being *veiled* or *not veiled*, (so it seems to me.) But when Paul comes to the 14th chapter he says (without qualification) "Let your women keep *silence* in the churches, for it is *not* permitted unto them to *speak*, but to be under obedience."

In the church at Corinth there was a double error—

Women praying and prophesying—and, secondly, Women doing so unveiled!!

And Paul simply deals with the *second* and more flagrant aspect of this impropriety *first*. He afterwards takes up the other aspect of the wrong thing.

In this matter, we see one of the evils which arose out of the early Church's dependence upon "gifts." Women having the gift of "prophecy," and receiving truth *outside* the assembly, seized opportunities of imparting that truth when they got *inside*! Now if women taught of the Spirit *apart* from the church were forbidden *then* to retail that truth in the church, surely the principle applies *now*.

Your remark that the original word for "speak," in the above Scripture means *babble* (or "talk too much") will not help your position, because of the other words "keep *silence*," in the same sentence. Surely these latter words are strong enough! If "speak" admits of qualification, "keep silence" does not.

Though the language of the Holy Ghost is so clear, yet it is best to look for obedience *in grace*, not from *law*. Just as the Lord looks for silence and subjection in the Man—not from law, but in grace; so let the Man require silence in the Woman—in *grace*—"not from constraint, but of a willing mind."

Now, what is the view which will make a woman specially willing to fall in with the will of God concerning her—silence in the assembly? Is it not this?

That as the Man visibly represents Christ,

So the Woman represents the Church.

"For the Head of the Woman is the Man,

And the Head of every Man is Christ." (1 Cor. xi.)

When in the assembly, therefore, the woman may well feel that she is called to show the *man* (by covered head and silence) that he (*as a part of the church*) is bound to be silent and reverent in the *Lord's* presence, till really *moved to speak*.

Brethren may not be quick to learn this lesson from the woman—but *there it is before their eyes*, provided in the word of God. And a most important lesson it is. For the too great readiness and quickness of brethren to speak is a great hindrance to souls getting into fellowship, individually, with the Father and the Son, *by the Spirit*. It is *not* by our much speaking, *but by the Spirit*, that "we have access, through Jesus, unto the Father." (Eph. ii.)

With some of us it seems, sometimes, that whatever comes up in our minds must come out of our mouths! Whereas we ought to judge our thoughts, and discern in the light of the Lord's presence, whether they will help the assembly to rise to the *heavenlies*, or whether they are a handful of manna for our own souls *merely*. Speaking from our own experience, periods of silence in our assemblies are very precious—and *much too few*.

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath, for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

"If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." (James iii.)

"In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise." (Prov. x.)

As we have said, this important lesson of subjection is taught to the man by the silence and covered head of the woman.

[Readers are further referred to pages 119 (1866) and 220 (1867) of this Journal, where this subject has been considered.]

Our correspondent further asks: "Might not the places where the Scripture Readings and Breaking of Bread are held be put each month in PRECIOUS TRUTH, for the information of those who might wish to attend?"

To this we have several difficulties before the Lord. 1. Might

it not seem, to some, like attempting to build up a sect? ("Abstain from all appearance of evil.") 2. Ought not the sheep to be kept cast upon the Lord *alone* for such fellowship with saints as He sees best for them and most to His own glory? ("We walk by faith, not by sight.") 3. Might not such lists be used by "false brethren" by the aid of which to creep from one assembly to another, and fleece the flock? ("Be ye, therefore wise as serpents.")

MY JESUS.

I love when I am weary, and faint, and worn, and sad,
To spend an hour with Jesus, whose presence makes me glad.
I love, when tried and tempted, beset with doubts and fears,
To cast my care on Jesus, He wipes away my tears.
And when oppressed with sorrow, my heart within me dies,
When tempests round me gather, and waves of trouble rise:
When all things seem against me, in this dark vale of tears,
Oh! how one glimpse of Jesus will dissipate my fears.
I love to walk with Jesus, to lean upon his breast,
And hear him sweetly whisper, I—I will give thee rest.
Oh! what to me are trials with Jesus for my friend?
Tho' all things *else* are fleeting, His love can never end.
Should earthly friends prove faithless, and leave me one by one,
I know my precious Jesus will ne'er forsake His own;
But gently bear me onward through trials yet to come,
Until he lands me safely in heaven, my promised home.
Jesus, my only glory, low at thy feet I fall,
My Saviour, Friend, and Brother, nay more—*my all in all.*

[Copied from a cottage wall, Feb. 1866, author unknown.]

"WATCH THOU IN ALL THINGS."

(2 TIM. IV.)

DEAR BROTHER,—The little word "all" makes this exhortation apply to everything connected with our pilgrimage here. Are we all as watchful as we ought to be to keep up, what I would call,—*fellowship-unity*? This is, perhaps, more needful now than ever. Many dear souls have "come out"—separated themselves—from all that honours man and detracts from the honour due to Christ only, as the Head of the Church. And—blessed be God!—many are being "born again" in separation from this evil.

Now, what is the special hindrance to this precious testimony? Is it not our "fallings-out by the way"—both as fellowships and as individuals? We forget the Saviour's prayer—"That they all may be *one*, as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us: [to be a light, or testimony,] that the world might believe that Thou hast sent me." (John xvii.)

It is to be feared—by so many painful manifestations in the present day—that though we have come out, we have brought with us—"bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking," which so fearfully hinder that sweet fellowship, for which we inwardly sigh.

Oh, may we be led to *watch*, jealously WATCH, in these things, that we may detect where they exist, *first*, in ourselves, then in our fellow members, and seek earnestly—unweariedly—by prayer and supplication for the *grace* and *wisdom* needed, to "put them away from us, with all malice." What gracious tenderness, patient skill, firm wisdom, and inexhaustible love, we need, that we do not put *ourselves*, or *others*, away from sweet and precious fellowship, when we speak the truth, endeavouring to "be kind one to another, TENDER-HEARTED, FORGIVING one another, even as GOD for CHRIST'S SAKE hath FORGIVEN us." (Eph. iv.)

C. D.

Islington, March, 1868.

Address Letters for the Proprietor, to 335a, Strand, London, W.C.

J. B., Salisbury—In our next.
K. L., Glasgow, thinks that Acts ii. 47, might read—"The Lord added unto the church *such as were being saved*," implying a present progressive deliverance from sin.

R. C.—"Jesus and His disciples were together, and they said unto Him, Lord, show us the Father. Jesus said, He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father. Now, it is written in God's word, No man hath seen God at any time. Can you tell me how this is?"

[May you ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten you through the following or other Scriptures—

"Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness—God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." (1 Tim. iii. 16.)

"Who [the Lord Jesus Christ] is the *image* of the *invisible* God." (Col. i. 15.)

"The express image of his person." (Heb. i.)

From these passages may we not learn that Jesus meant that he who had seen Him had seen the *image* of the *invisible* Father.

The strong form of speech, to which you refer, was a peculiarity of the Jewish language. Do we not see another instance of it when the Lord says "This is my body." Surely He meant an *image* or representation of His body, which was about to be given for the life of the world. Is not this made clear by that other Scripture—"As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do *show forth* the Lord's death." An *image* shows forth, or *pictures* something else. Does it not? The Lord, when He became man, presented to man's view, as in a picture, all the glories and excellences of God. Therefore, in a sense, those who saw Jesus saw the Father,—they saw the Father *morally*, not *personally*.

May you and I sit at His feet, and not at man's, and learn of Him, by the Holy Spirit, through the Word; then will our "profiting appear unto all."

W. R. H., Montreal.—Upon further consideration, before the Lord, we would just suggest to you, dear brother, one thought in respect to excommunicating for error. Are not even those who "deny that Christ has come in the flesh" thus dealt with in the Word. In 2 John 9—11 we are exhorted not to receive such in *our* house, but that is no power to put them out of God's house—the church. In the first epistle by the same apostle, he assures us that if we are spiritual they will go out. The Lord "will purge His floor."

A Brother writes:—"I think that the Lord's people, in a great measure, fail to distinguish that *Christ*, in His future dealings with *nations* and the world, will receive *names* and titles, according to the offices which he may then sustain. When Jesus sits upon the Judgment Seat, then He will be called the *Judge*—named according to the work He is doing. Now He is interceding, and is, therefore, called an *Advocate*. Now He is called Jesus, because He is a Saviour. But who would think of calling Christ the *Advocate* when the days of long-suffering and grace are ended, and He comes to take vengeance? It is strange so many see Him as a reigning *King* now, before He takes to Himself His great power!—Yours, J. H."

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Printed by JOHN EVANS, 335a, Strand London.

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Published by J. B. BATEMAN, 22, Paternoster Row, and SMART & ALLEN, 2, Londonhouse-yard, Paternoster-row.

No. 38.—VOL. II.]

MAY 1, 1868.

[One Halfpenny.]

THE CHURCH—THE WOMAN: IV.—AS EXPECTANT.*

"Behold, the Bridegroom cometh" (Matt. xxv. 6.)

THE Church, as a Betrothed Woman, *expects her Beloved*. How *natural* and *proper* is this attitude of spirit! and how *unnatural* and *improper* is the reverse! To cherish the expectancy of seeing Him "whom not having seen we love," who "first loved us, and gave Himself for us," is at once to secure the purest joy—indeed, draughts of the bliss of *eternity* while we tarry in *time*.

And how it must please Him whose the Church is—to hear her singing in her heart—

"FOR EVER WITH THE LORD!"

Oh, that the dear Church of God—you, beloved, and I, and all believers—may thus continually "abide in Him"! Then "*shall we not be ashamed before Him at His coming*" (1 John, ii.): shall we? But, if we be found with the face turned towards the World—oh, no! far be it from us—we tremble at the thought of the shame that might well fill us at being found *not* abiding in Him at His coming.

And, beloved, we know not any moment "*when He shall appear*." He is *with us now* :—

"Lo, I am *with* you alway, even to the end of the age."

"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, *there am I* in the midst of them."

The first of these assurances is for the comfort of the *servant*; the second has reference to our *individual walk*; the third, to the *assembly*. But all show one thing—"God *with us*," our Jesus; our Emmanuel, "God *with us*." How blessed! Jesus *with us*!

But He does not *appear*—appear to us. Faith apprehends Him—and Faith only—and "rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory." He is "walking in the midst of the Seven Golden Candlesticks;" and at any moment, in the "twinkling of an eye," He will *appear*. Oh, how blessed to be found *at that moment* "abiding in Him!" Now, we "abide in Him" both when "our affections are set on things *above*," where He is, and also when, by faith, we realise Him down *here*.

And so, beloved, we may one moment be "sitting at Jesus' feet," and the *next*—*looking in His face*!

"And so shall we be for ever with the Lord!"

"The Spirit and the Bride say, Come."

"Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

JOHN—A TYPE OF THE CHURCH.

Our "brother and companion" John strikingly represents the Church of God in these respects—(1) *in name*, (2) *in experience*, (3) *in attitude*, and (4) *beloved*.

1. In name. "John" means "the *gift*, or *grace of God*." First, we are the *subjects of grace*, unmerited favour, and that from everlasting. In due time we received the "*gift of God, eternal life*, through Jesus Christ our Lord." In the sight of angels, how marvellously we poor ransomed sinners show forth the grace of God! We have, indeed, *individually*, received favour of God! And also *collectively*. For—

Secondly, let us remember that gift of God, even Jesus—which the Church has received. God has *given Him* (Head over all things) *to the Church*" (Eph. i.) How identified is this *second* gift of the grace of God—"Jesus"—with the *first* gift—"eternal life;" for "Christ *is* our life" (Col. iii.) We have received eternal life *in* Him and all things *with* Him!

"Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable *gift*." (2 Cor. ix.)

"Love so amazing, so divine,

Deserves my life, my soul, my all."

Then, thirdly, while we are the *subjects of grace*, we are also the *means of grace*; for we are the *gift*, or *grace*, of God to the *earth*, inasmuch as we "hold forth the Word of life," God "not willing [or wishing] that any should perish." (1 Tim. iii.)

2. And this leads to another respect in which "John" sets forth the Church: not only in name, but in *experience*, as the rejected of the earth. Behold John in the isle of Patmos, rejected of the world, "for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus." And this is, more or less, the experience of all.

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. iii. 12).

"Exhorting them [the disciples] to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts, xiv. 22).

Some of us may be feeling this bitterly. All of us who are spiritual "do groan"—pent-up in Patmos, cut off from the delights of earth. Well, what is our resource as shut up to the Lord—shut out from the world? Is it not, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!" Blessed trials that intensify our expectancy of the Beloved! And so, like John, our spirits are taken up with *the Lord's Day*—the great day of the Lord which draweth nigh.

3. This attitude of our spirits is just that in which the Lord put *John*. As we read—

* In continuation of Papers in Nos. for August and September, 1867; viz.—1. As Dependent; 2. As Veiled; 3. As Modestly Attired.

"If I will that *he* tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" (John, xxi. 22).

And so *we* are tarrying—not for death, but till He come, in bodily presence, from the highest heavens down into the air, the lower heavens, and we are "caught up to meet the Lord in the air;" we are tarrying till He *appear*—appear to sight—who really is always *with us*, blessed be His name!

"Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end" (John. xiii. 7.)

4. This being so, beloved, may you and I know the place of nearness—like *John, on Jesus' breast*, as one whom Jesus loves.

Each of us, as individuals, oh, how dear to the Lord! and all of us, as the Church—oh, how dear to the Lord!

"Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it" (Eph. v.)

Thus is the Church like John the Beloved—stamped, or named, *Grace—rejected—waiting—beloved*. Even so.

THE "HOUR OF TRIAL" COMETH.

"I will cast them into great tribulation." (Rev ii.)

To the Editor of PRECIOUS TRUTH.

"DEAR BROTHER,—While I can speak of the joy your journal has afforded me and others, I must also mention—(not for myself only, but for many of the Lord's dear people I am acquainted with)—that there have been recently some statements hard to be understood in the light of Scripture. You speak of adulterous Christians being cast into the tribulation, while those who are found faithful and blameless at Christ's coming will enter uninterrupted [unimpeded, unopposed] into the presence of the Lord.

"I cannot say you are wrong, but the Apostle Paul says—We (which I understand to mean ALL) which are alive and remain shall be caught up at the Lord's coming.

"As the remarks you made are so searching—almost alarming—I pray that the Lord will guide you in the matter, so that if your meaning has been mistaken, you may make it plainer. Yours in Him, even Jesus our Lord, W. J. C."

DEAR BROTHER IN THE LORD,—The truth is indeed "searching"—"quick and powerful, as any two-edged sword." We were startled, as much as you, by the truth which flashed from the sword in the presence of the Lord. But woe to any of us, if we withhold the truth through fear of man!

Dear ones, alas! may shut their eyes and ears to the testimony of man, but none can wipe out the words of God.—

"I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce *my servants* to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds" (Rev. iii. 20—22).

These last referred to are the Lord's "servants"—called so by Him, and therefore true believers engaged, more or less, in work for Him. But they are also living in *adultery* with Jezebel. In the January number we were much led out concerning Jezebel.

Who is Jezebel of this dispensation? Is she not *the unconverted* who have, by collegiate process, got into the place of *teachers*? Mark you, she is a *person*—not a mere *principle*—because the Lord says, "I gave her space to repent, and she repented not." All, who are going with *academical machinery* will have unconverted men (more or less) in the place of theological professors and ministers. Of course, some of the sects take more care than others to keep unconverted men out. But an academical course cannot be held as of prime consequence without ALL being exposed to the evil. We were recently shocked at hearing of the appointment to the position of a college professor of a clever young tutor who was well known by his father, family, and friends to be not in the faith! If you hold Hebrew, Greek, and Mathematics as prime requisites, you *cannot keep out* of the (so-called) ministry naturally able, but unregenerate men. Indeed, how many are destined to it, and trained for it, as a living, without any question of a change of heart! Thus, the mere book-taught (i.e. *Jezebel*) have supplanted the Holy Spirit! Remember, that sins against the Holy Ghost are specially condemned in the Word. Hence this threatened "tribulation."

Oh, that dear ones, everywhere, may become enlightened as to this abomination of *adultery with Jezebel*, and turn unto the Lord, cleaving unto Him, present in the midst, as their All-in-all! to teach them by the Holy Ghost, "whom God hath given unto all them that obey Him." (Acts v.)

It was not said—Adulterous Christians will be cast into "*the tribulation*;" by this term is usually understood the tribulation of the Jewish Remnant, referred to by our Lord (Mark xiii. 19, 20), and pictured forth (further on in the Revelation) as the Woman whom the Dragon tries to overwhelm with a flood [of persecution]. (Rev. xii.) The Church will be with the Lord while *that* is going on upon the earth.

Nevertheless, if the Lord Jesus Christ solemnly threatens *tribulation*, let us receive, as little children, what He says. But then the threat is uttered *on a condition*, and that condition is—"unless they repent."

Now let us, dear brother, think of Nineveh. The Lord's word by Jonah was—

"Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown" (Jonah iii.)

Surely this was no unreal threat. Of course not. But Nineveh repented, and God stayed His hand. It is true, Nineveh relapsed into great iniquity; and was again threatened through the prophet Nahum, and subsequently destroyed, 300 years after Jonah's time. Nevertheless the *first* threatened judgment was completely avoided by a timely repentance, to the praise of the mercy of God.

Now, shall the Church do less than Nineveh? Shall *She* be impenitent in view of the Gentile City in sackcloth? Nay!

"The times of this ignorance God winked at; and now commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Acts xvii. 30).

Oh, that dear ones will search the Scriptures, and see—if these things are so! And oh! if it be so, may we raise the Jonah-cry—yea, it *has* gone forth—and

shrink not, for the Lord delighteth in mercy, and has uttered this and similar threatenings that His people may be spared—the *ordeal of fire!*

“The fire shall try every man’s work” (1 Cor. iii. 13).

The truth ministered from the Scriptures by the Lord Jesus *now, before He comes, is water.* (Oh, what a shocking sign when the application of water is uncomfortable! and is repelled!)

“Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the *washing of water by 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” (Ephes. v. 25, 26, 27).

This is what He is doing continually—“cleansing and sanctifying the church with the washing of water by the word.” Now the words of a *threat* are like a *dash* of cold water—startling, but not hurtful. Being startled, shall we *run from the water?* Nay.

Now, dear brother, “washing” can only be done *with* the will of the one washed. And suppose some of us will *not* be washed? or when we are washed, we turn again to *the mire of men’s traditions?* or *worldliness?* or *wilful adultery with Jezebel?* What then?

Fire!

Purged we must be—by one process or the other? Which shall it be? Water or Fire?

The Water of the Word or the Fire of Tribulation?

In the desperate wickedness of that old heart which “is deceitful above all things,” we may choose the *mire*—may build up “wood, hay, stubble”—may feel it uncomfortable to be deprived of our much-loved surroundings—creeds, systems of worship, religious machinery, man-ministry, and, worst of all, “*that woman Jezebel*”—painted syren! But in God’s sight these surroundings are—*filth*.

“That which is highly esteemed among men is *abomination* in the sight of God.” (Luke xvi.)

Purged off it *must* be. Then let it be by water—the “washing of water by the word.” When we are purged we are responsible to go on and keep so.

“Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.” (Rev. iii.)

But you have a difficulty, dear brother, in holding this Scripture concerning “tribulation” at the Lord’s coming, because of 1st Thessalonians which says “we which are alive and remain shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.” Now when Paul wrote to the Thessalonians there was no such *evil* in their midst as there was at Thyatira; on the contrary, he is full of praise and thankfulness at their walk. He says they were “ensamples unto all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.” We do not hold the rod over *good children*; do we? Therefore is it that we do not read in this epistle of “tribulation” concerning the Church.

It is true, in the 1st epistle to the Corinthians we are assured we shall be “changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye;” but, then, Paul also speaks of a sinful one, desiring that his “spirit may be saved in the *day of the Lord Jesus*.” Saved from what—if there is nothing to be saved from? We

may be changed in a moment, and yet, having to pass upward, through the Great Red Dragon and his hosts, woe to us, if they find anything in us, unrepented of, unconfessed down here!

It is not till *after* the Church has arrived in the Lord’s presence that Satan is cast out from the heavens; for he continues to be the Accuser of the Jewish Remnant till overcome by Michael, the “prince,” or guardian angel of the Jewish nation. See Daniel x. 20 and Rev. xii. 10, 11.

“And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in *heaven*. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was *cast out into the earth*, and his angels were cast out with him” (Rev. xii. 7, 8, 9).

Then, consider, dear brother, the Lord’s word to Philadelphia—(precious assurance!)—

“Because *thou* hast kept the word of my patience, I also will *keep* thee from the hour of temptation [trial], which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth” (Rev. iii. 10).

You and I are anxiously desirous, are we not, dear brother, that the Philadelphian state of things shall prevail all around us—why? That all dear ones may be “kept from the hour of trial.” Then there is an “hour of trial”—*only*, as it were, an “*hour*”—to which ALL who are not found in Philadelphian simplicity and purity will be exposed! If not, where is the meaning of language? We cannot be “kept from” something of which there is *no danger!*

Oh, this is a sweet assurance of immediate joy at His appearing! May we earnestly labour and pray for the whole Church of God!

As to Satan and his hosts, being used in the “hour of trial,” to afflict any who are found in adultery with Jezebel at the Lord’s coming—we would ask, Who have always been God’s instruments of judgment to His own people?—*The Wicked*.

“*The Wicked, which is Thy Sword.*” (Ps. xvii.)

And so, when Jesus took our sin and was “smitten for our transgressions”—who was the Sword? was it not the Wicked One and those who were “of their father the Devil?” It was their “hour and the power of darkness.”

“Awake, O Sword, against my Shepherd, against the Man which is my fellow.” (Zech. xiii.)

Now where evil is held not *practically*—but only *doctrinally*—as in Pergamos, the Lord does *not* threaten tribulation; his word of warning is—

“Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them [the individuals who hold the evil doctrines] with the *sword of my mouth*”—the word of God used *piercingly*. (Rev. ii.)

But where there *is* evil—this dreadful evil of adultery with Jezebel—then “*the wicked is Thy sword.*”

Pray the Lord, dear brother, over this matter, and search the Scriptures for yourself. Who am I? only a “brother and companion in tribulation.”

Let us abide in Jesus; then shall we find *Him* a “strong tower” through “the hour of trial which shall come upon all the world.” Amen.

[The following letter has been addressed to a brother in London who a short time ago "accepted a call" to preside over a church, as its pastor. May the Lord accept the effort as a labour of love to His dear Name.]

"A GOOD MINISTER OF JESUS CHRIST."

(1 Tim. iv.)

"If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister [Greek, *deacon*] of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine."

DEAR BROTHER IN THE LORD,—

FROM this passage we learn that if a believer is "nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine," and "puts the brethren in remembrance of these things," he is "a good minister of Jesus Christ."

I need not tell you, dear brother, that the word "MINISTER" simply means *servant*—one who serves another. DEACON, primarily, means the same as "minister," that is, "servant;" as we read in John ii.—

"His mother said unto the servants (*deacons*), Whatsoever he saith unto you, do."

Thus, in a general sense, all of us who believe may cherish the desire to be "good deacons [that is, ministers, or servants] of Jesus Christ." At home, abroad; in business, in the assembly; writing a letter, eating and drinking, speaking to sinners, and lying down to rest—it is sweet to cherish the sentiment—*Jesus my Master*.

"Whatsoever he saith unto you, do."

That all of us are called to be servants, may be also evident from that *other* word—

"One is your *Master*, even Christ." (Matt. xi.)

From this it follows, that while we are all *brethren* with regard to each other, we may well feel that, as regards the one *Master*, we are all *servants*.

"Ye call me *Master* and *Lord*: and ye say well; for so I am." (John xiii.)

May you and I feel ourselves servants of the One *Master*, and desire to be "good deacons of Jesus Christ," prepared for every good work.

Now if we be, all of us, at the *Lord's* disposal, He may call us at one time to one thing, and at another time to some *other* thing. Thus I may be called at one time to *preach* the Gospel; at another time, to *visit* saints; at another time, to *speak* in the assembly. In the first case, I shall be doing *preaching-work* (work of an evangelist); in the second, *elder-work* (or pastor-work); and in the third, *leading* (in prayer or praise) or *teaching* (in the Word).

It may be that I am more frequently called to one kind of work than another—say, for instance, *preaching*; but that does not make me an evangelist, because the *Lord* may call me to *other* work to-morrow. But if I accept a position to preach the Gospel, I may be sometimes so engaged when the *Lord* would have me *teach* saints. We know many brethren, but we know of *none* who *have* not, or *may* not, be taken up of the *Lord*, or called, at some time or other, to do each of the three different kinds of work referred to above—*preaching*, *shepherding*, *teaching* or *leading* in worship.

You may say, dear brother,—But some brethren are more *gifted* for one thing than another, and does not this constitute them teachers, or preachers, or pastors, as the case may be?

I cannot admit the assertion or the inference. I do recognise differences of *natural* ability; but I cannot call these differences *spiritual* gifts, and I dare not limit the operation of the Spirit to the bounds of *natural* ability! (If you feel interested in this subject of "gifts," I would take the liberty of suggesting your perusal of the last seven numbers of a little monthly periodical called "Precious Truth." It is an important question. The ordinary doctrine of "gifts" does land us in *discriminatable* ministries; that is, *visibly*—*pastors*, *preachers*, *teachers*; and if—if we have them, you and others might well say—*Why not call them so?* But, dear brother, in the numbers mentioned the Scriptures are referred to to show that in this, "the last time," the *only* ministry is that of the *Spirit* through the *Word* under the rule of the *Lord* Jesus Christ, the *Head*.)

However, to resume the thread of the subject between you and me just now, dear brother, which is this—that *all service is carried on in communion with the One Master*, whose will, being perceived, is fulfilled by us, with His all-sufficient grace, and that the church has nothing to do with appointing or calling to *His* service.

The *acceptance* of a position to preach or teach in a certain place to a certain people, exposes "a good minister of Jesus Christ" to a second evil also. He is not only limited to certain *work* when perhaps the *Lord* would have him doing *other* work—but he is also bound to a certain *place* when perhaps the *Lord* would send him to *another*! Now, if the angel of the *Lord* say to Philip, "Arise, and go toward the south," how can he if he has engaged to meet the people of Samaria? So, now-a-days, if a servant have a sudden call, or perceive it to be *his Lord's* will that he should go somewhere, how can he, when the people in the big building will be looking for him?

With regard to *evangelist-work*, or preaching the Gospel, the word of God simply says—"How shall he preach unless he be sent?" If a brother among us is very frequently *sent* with a word from the *Lord* to the *unsaved*, God be thanked; let him have the special sympathy, presence, and prayers of his brethren. But let him not feel wholly *bound* to a certain *place*, for then he will not be free to serve the *Lord* elsewhere on an hour's notice. And let him not accept a position to preach regularly, for if he do, the people will *reckon* on hearing him, and man-homage will be the result. But, on the contrary, let him be careful to leave the way clear for the Spirit to use *other* members of the body to the glory of God, remembering that "God hath chosen the *foolish* things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the *weak* things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and *base* things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are *not*, to bring to

nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in *His* presence."

Those whose work has been most frequently that of preaching the Gospel, should be, of all servants, *the most free*. Now, *this* is the special work in which I hear, dear brother, the Lord has most frequently used you, to His own glory and the blessing of souls, praised be His name! Let my desire, therefore, that you may be disentangled from all yokes of bondage be pleasing in your sight, beloved in the Lord, though unknown in the flesh.

"I would have you without carefulness. . . . That you may *serve the Lord* without distraction." (1 Cor. vii.)

No sooner has a servant been specially used in the work of preaching the Gospel than Satan manoeuvres, through our carnal understandings, to get such an one bound to a certain spot and a certain people! And what is the result? Inevitable hindrance to the Spirit and worship of man; and then, barrenness, houghtiness, and a fall. If *bound* at all, let us be, like Paul, "the *prisoner* of the Lord;" let not *Satan* bind us with cords of subtle and specious expediency!

Do not say, I beseech you—"Our church is such a *sisse*, and composed of such a *class* of people, that they must choose a *human president*."?

Ah, dear brother—

"That which is highly *esteemed* among men is abomination in the sight of God." (Luke xvi.);

Shall we tie the children's hands lest they touch the fire? Is that God's way? Nay. Let them learn to rightly behave and rule themselves in the church of God—but there can be *no self-rule* where there is *no liberty*. Can there?

"A *human president!*" Ought not *He* to preside who hath said—"Wherever two or three [or two or three hundred] are gathered together in my name, *there am I* in the midst of them." If He be with us, cannot we trust Him to order the meeting for us? Yes, indeed, say Faith and Love.

"Dear Lord, we would delight in *thee*,
And on thy care depend;
To thee in every trouble flee,
Our safe unfalling friend.

When human cisterns all are dried,
Thy fulness is the same;
May we with *this* be satisfied,
And glory in *Thy name*.

No good in creatures can be found,
All, all is found in Thee;
We must have all things and abound,
Through Thy sufficiency."

Oh, He will preside in heaven! why not on earth? Faith apprehends the church now should be *modelled* like the church in the glory—*Jesus in the midst*, and we, *gathering around Him*, fixing the eye of faith on *Him* and the arms of love about one another.

Oh, dear brother, that you may retrace your steps! Or rather—"Give *Him* the glory due unto *His* name"—His *name*, as "Son *over* His own house, whose house [or household] are *we*." (Heb. iii.)

Suppose you have been used, with others, to bring

souls to Jesus. Well, when they gather, as the CHURCH, to *Him* in the midst, what more have you to do? Cannot you leave the responsibility of the sheep to the Shepherd, yourself a sheep? Will He not care for His own?

"No man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." (Eph. v.)

The church with which you are connected may be large. Never mind; fear not. A brother tells us he knows a church numbering 450 which is walking in this liberty with which God maketh His people free, blessed be His Name! And this is the attitude into which He is bringing His dear ones everywhere—because—

"He that shall come will come, and *will not tarry*."

Oh, dear brother—to be "*workers together with God*"! It must be so—or the reverse!

"He that gathereth not with *Me* scattereth abroad!"

"God forbid!"

To return, then, I am convinced, the most *Christ-honouring* way is to go on in communion as servants with the One Master, the upturned-eye of our spirit ever saying—

"*Lord, what wouldst Thou have me to do?*"

Then will He have all His work done—done by His grace—done by whomsoever He will. And our sweet experience will be—

"*THY SERVICE IS PERFECT FREEDOM.*"

While *we* are to know and feel ourselves Christ's servants, it is quite clear that He must know the work He wants done, and the servants by whom He would do it.

Now if an assembly of believers choose some one to do certain work for *them*, he clearly becomes *their* "servant-minister-deacon". There is only *one* species of work that is laid upon the church as a body, and that is—"to care for the poor." Each church is therefore justified in selecting certain brethren, and requesting them to disburse its bounty to the poor.

Let this be repeated. The church has power to choose servants-ministers-deacons for *temporal* work; but it has *no* power to choose *Christ's* servants-ministers-deacons for *spiritual* work.

Neither the church (nor any one man) has power to choose or appoint *pastors, preachers, or teachers*—that is, "good ministers of Jesus Christ." If it does so, they become the servants of *the church*; it does not follow that they are the servants of *Christ*. For how can one man make another man's servants? If one man cannot make another man's servants, how much less should man make *God's* servants?

The Church is as the Woman, the Spouse. Shall *She* make servants unto her Lord, in the presence of her Lord, without her Lord's permission? Surely not. On the contrary, how graceful to leave all to her dear, dear Lord, who doeth all things well!

If we *call* or *regard* certain brethren as elders, or

teachers, or evangelists—then shall we begin to depute to them certain duties, instead of looking to the Lord to work by whomsoever He will. Our attitude will no longer be—

“Here am I, send me.” (Isa. vi.)

Our attitude of soul will be—

There's Brother So-and-So,—use him.

And the effect upon brethren so regarded will be—That they will be busy in certain work because the church (as much as the Master) expects it of them!

“His servants ye are to whom ye obey.” (Rom. vi.)

If I do certain service at the church's call—then I am the church's servant.

Of course, when there were higher servants in the Church, they could, and did, make lower servants. Thus apostles or their deputies could choose or appoint elders or pastors. But as there are no higher servants, there can be no lower—that is, in the sense of a visible rank, or order.

The general ministry of all believers was the ultimate thought and intention of the One Master concerning us. Consequently believers were early and continually exhorted to it, in order that so the Church might be prepared to walk by faith, and not by sight, when the time came that all visible ministries should be dropped. (See 1 Thess. v. 11; Heb. x. 25; Col. iii. 16; Eph. v. 19, &c.)

There are those who say—“According to your views, the Epistles to Timothy and Titus are no longer of any special use.” Nay; they are most useful to all as many as desire to be “good ministers of Jesus Christ.” The great value of these epistles is—that they present to us the inner life of a servant as expressed to a servant. Do I desire to do elder-work and deacon-work, as unto the Lord and not unto men, then I receive explicit directions, for my private guidance, concerning the aged and younger widows, the slothful who will not work, the servants, and the rich, &c. I am exhorted to blamelessness, hospitality, vigilance, to be quiet, peaceable, “not given to wine, not greedy of filthy lucre,” &c.

Or to do preacher-work—then I read—“Endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ,” &c.

Or to do teacher-work—then I read—“If a man purge himself from these [profane and vain babblings], he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use,” &c.

Now, “of the things which we have spoken this is the sum” :—

That all of us are called to service.

That the Lord, present in the midst, is our Shepherd or Pastor.

That the Holy Ghost is our Teacher, teaching that which the Lord wills for the Church's nourishment, by the Written Word.

That (as regards work apart from the assembly) the Lord will lead His true servants to preach the Gospel and visit saints.

That the church (as a body) has nothing to do but to leave all to the Lord, by faith and prayer, with the single exception of choosing deacons for the poor.

I need not excuse the length of this epistle, the subject is so very important, it being to the glory of God.

The Holy Spirit has graciously taken the responsibility of “leading us into all truth.” And He will lead us, if we are really willing to be led of Him. May we be preserved from leaning unto our own understanding. That is a blessed assurance of the Lord Jesus Christ—

“He that will do His will shall know of the doctrine.”

That you and I may have (more and more) a will to do his will, as given to us in His word, and not our own will, to the glory of God, is the prayer of

Your fellow-“deacon of Jesus Christ,”

* * *

“BEATEN WITH RODS.”

(2 Cor. xi.)

THE following simple-hearted utterances of a Chinese brother will refresh the souls of many, we have no doubt. It forms a letter inserted with others in the 11th Occasional Paper of the China Inland Mission. (China is thought to be “the Land of Sinim” of Isaiah xlix. 12.) Certain brethren in England hearing of our brother Tsiu Kyo-Kwe's scourging, sent him a consolatory letter, to which he sends the following answer—

“These words are to the disciples who are in Jesus Christ: My desire is that through the blessing of our heavenly Father, richly bestowing his great grace, you may enjoy peace, and be preserved from sickness and calamity.

“Your younger brother has heard, through Mr. Taylor, the salutation of his brothers and sisters in Jesus our Saviour, and their words of exhortation and comfort. Your younger brother sends many thanks; these words he will remember as if engraven on his bones, and written in his heart. For he feels that although many hills and seas may intervene, and though personally unknown by sight, yet in very truth we are as the hands and the feet of the self-same body. Therefore, he ever prays for you, that our heavenly Father may strengthen your faith, that you may be able to walk according to the Gospel; while sojourning here may enjoy unspeakable grace, and hereafter the bliss of life everlasting.

“When formerly your younger brother, at the direction of Mr. Taylor, went to Mr. Nicol and Mr. Williamson, at the city of Siao-sæn, in the prefecture of Ziao-hying, to preach the doctrine of truth, and unexpectedly, was ill-treated by the Mayor of Siao-sæn, and punished with beating, he thought this truly is not real disgrace; though deeply painful, there is joy in it. For he remembered the words of Holy Writ spoken by Jesus, ‘Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven;’ and likewise the Scripture, ‘Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth; therefore, despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty: for he maketh sore, and bindeth up; he woundeth, and his hands make whole.’ These passages made him feel that, though weak, he must bear all with patience. He likewise remembered the words, ‘Wherefore, seeing we are compassed about,’ &c. (Heb. xii. 1-5.)

"Now your younger brother is with Mr. Taylor, preaching the doctrine; and some time ago went with him up the country to preach. Many have heard the truth; and here not a few believe. All this is through God's great grace.

"Pray for us, as we do for you, that the numbers saved by grace may be many. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

"October 2, 1867."

"TSU KYUO-KWZ.

The Lord bless all who labour in the Gospel everywhere throughout the world.

O God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our earnest desire, in His name and for His glory, is—that dear servants employed by Thee to gather souls out of the world, may gather them to Jesus, to "hold the Head," and walk by faith in the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us. Amen.

"A FULNESS RESIDES IN JESUS THE HEAD."

"Dear Brother in the Lord Jesus.—Feeling assured that your desire in 'Precious Truth' is to help the saints of God, I write, hoping, as the Lord may lead you, you will help me in the understanding of the passages annexed:—

"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die." (Romans viii.)

"The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified." (John xii. 23.)

"I have received much profit from the expositions put forth in your journal. Praying the Lord to use you abundantly for the glory of His own name in these perilous days,

Yours affectionately in Him, G. S., Bristol."

Dear Brother,—We are not happy in receiving questions in this way. Our duty, as we apprehend it, is *not* to receive and answer questions: our duty is to put forth what we believe the Lord has given us for the purpose. If anything hitherto put forth has been used of the Spirit to your help, we shall be glad. Indeed, you say it *has* been so. Now *here arises the evil*—dependence on one another. No sooner have we been blessed through anyone than we turn to *that* one to help us in our difficulties, instead of telling Jesus, and waiting in faith and patience till *He* show us by the Holy Spirit in His *own* gracious manner and time.

But we *should* do *this latter*, and then we might receive light the next time we sat at the feet of Jesus with the Word, or the next time we were in the assembly, or on our beds, or walking alone in communion with Him.

Very dear brother,—Don't use the "glass darkly" when you ought to be learning "face-to-face," "that which is perfect having come." Ask Jesus and *wait*. "Ye have need of *patience*;" "we walk by faith;" "ye have no need that any man teach you." Oh, beloved one, how many precious assurances there are to lead us to "cease from man," to the glory of God! While we *think* we have a need of teachers, the Lord deals graciously with us in our ignorance; but woe to us if we so act after being enlightened! We are jealous with a godly jealousy both for the honour of God and the simple, true-hearted devotion of the Church as a pure virgin unto Christ, to whom with the Father be all glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Now, dear one, look at it in another light. We pity the poor Romanist who asks Mary to pray to Jesus. But if I ask a brother to take my questions to Jesus for me, is it not an evil somewhat akin? Ah, dear brother, the Romanist may have a *note* in his eye—some of us taught ones have a *beam*; may we hasten to remove it!

But you may say—"I only send to you in case the dear Lord has already shown you, not that I *lean* on you." Well, dear one, it is altogether better to tell Jesus and wait. Because—

when we *have* said what we are happy in holding as the meaning, unless the Holy Spirit graciously use our words, they will give you *no* light. "A man can receive *nothing* except it be given him from heaven"—or by a heavenly One, the Holy Ghost. *Spirit must deal with spirit*. Intellect is powerless. We do not apprehend this clearly enough. We think to receive through our understanding what another has received through the Spirit. There may be an intellectual acquiescence, but this will be partial, evanescent, and do no spirit-good. "Them that honour me I will honour."

But now, suffer us to make one remark concerning questions. We are happy in receiving questions *on anything we have said*. Because it gives us opportunity of correcting wrong impressions and of re-considering our words. Also, any questions on such matters as history, geography, or correct translation—questions that may be settled by reference to such books as the poorer brethren have not got.

Having already referred to the former of the two Scriptures you are in difficulty about (see Feb. 1868, p. 13) we feel at liberty to do so again.

Death is separation from God, with all that that entails.

Living after the flesh is *sin*.

The wages of sin is *death*.

If a believer sin he must suffer death—that is, separation in communion from God, so long as he remains in his sin, not repenting of it and confessing it.

Worldly-mindedness is sin, as well as gross breaches of the moral law.

Hence we read of the worldly Christian woman, "She that liveth in pleasure is *dead* while she liveth." And so of the worldly church; "Thou hast a name to live but art *dead*,"—that is, going on in *separation* from God.

As for your latter question, dear brother, we have no light. We do not remember taking it to the Lord, and cannot—*for you*.

Do take these remarks in love; we desire "to keep back nothing profitable unto you." The Lord bless you, and deepen His work of grace in your heart and ours. Amen.

AN ALLOWABLE QUESTION CONSIDERED.

A.—With regard to the word "household" in Rom. xvi. 10, 11, you will see it is in italics; the word "friends" or "acquaintance" would supply the meaning as well. So that the phrase "Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household" means those who form his circle of friends; and is very different from the expression in the 5th verse—"Greet the church in their [Aquila and Priscilla's] house." In the former case, *no* open door for gathering to the Lord is contemplated; but in the latter there *is* an open door. [This question arose from the perusal of an article in this journal, which referred to gathering in our own houses to the Lord.]

"IT IS I."

Choeing words, by Jesus spoken;
All their sweetness who can tell?
Woes may gather, yet this token
Brightens all—for all is well.

It is I, poor child of weakness—
Tried and weary, oft distress'd;
I have known earth's tears, temptations,
And can shield thee—give thee rest.

It is I, poor child of sorrow;
Fear not, I have thought of thee:
I am sharing all thy sadness—
Come and tell thy griefs to me.

It is I canst thou not trust me,
Feel that all I do is right!
I am leading thee to glory,
Soon shall faith be lost in sight.

Precious Jesus, gracious Saviour,
I do put my trust in thee;
Speak in sorrow now and ever—
"It is I; have faith in me."

THE KINGDOM OF GOD—
PAST, PRESENT, AND TO COME.

[Several well-printed circulars have reached us, from a brother, J. B. of Salisbury, containing much truth, for which we are thankful. Among other things they press upon Christians' attention the iniquity of mixed assemblies. In two of them, however, our brother seems hardly to apprehend our high calling, as being a *heavenly* people. Our brother has pressed us to make this remark, because he earnestly desires scrutiny. In these circulars, he invokes this nation as—"Dear England!" "England, arise!" "Britons, arise, and show the might of truth!" &c.

Now, seeing that the bulk of the people of this land are still in their sins, we cannot admit the Scripturalness of such language. We are, alas! reminded of the more appropriate exclamations of our Lord—"Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida!" Privileges increase responsibility: they are not in themselves cause for exultation.

We believe we have been led by the Spirit a little further than our brother, and place the following Scriptures before him and the reader, praying the Lord's blessing.]

The proper expectation of the Jew was an *earthly* kingdom—a king to reign on the throne of David. (Ps. cxxxii. 11.) Throughout the Gospels reference is made to this, the *Jewish* hope. "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation," that is, *outward show*, (Luke xvii.) so as to strike the natural mind. Only born-again ones *saw* the kingdom (John iii. 3); that is, they, and they only, like Nathanael, *perceived* in Jesus of Nazareth the King of Israel, and, bowing down in spirit before Him, "*entered* into the kingdom." (John iii. 5.) Hence the Lord Jesus said to the Pharisees—"The kingdom of God is within you [or, in your midst],"—that is, the king was among them and His subjects, too; now, a king and subjects make a kingdom. (Luke xvii.)

For the establishment of the kingdom, all the people of Israel were looking, and very naturally and properly—the fleshly Jew for earthly splendour, the spiritual Jew for the restoration to Israel of the glory and favour of God. So that, even after the resurrection it was the great hope of the disciples themselves—"Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts i.)

The Jew *sealed* his iniquity by the rejection of God's Anointed, who is still despised and rejected by them, and they will complete their sin by ultimately accepting in His place the Great Antichrist, or Man of Sin, whom they will worship as God! Nothing will then remain but instant judgment, and that Wicked One will be destroyed by the brightness of the Lord's coming. (2 Thess. ii.) Then will be fulfilled the prophecies relating to the Messiah's *earthly* reign.

In the meantime, a place in a higher kingdom is offered to believing Israel (and with them, all among the Gentiles who believe on Jesus, or accept God's King by *faith*.) For Him—the crucified Jesus—"hath God highly exalted, and given Him a name which is above every name," having seated Him at His own right hand, and crowned Him with glory and honour.

Thus Faith apprehended Him as God's King when He was on earth, and faith—and faith only—apprehends Him as God's King *now*. And the

solemn question for every one is—Does my heart say, Jesus *my* King?

Now where the king is, there His subjects *gather*. By faith we know Him as our king—"King of glory"—and by faith we know ourselves as sitting "together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," (Eph. ii.) That is, where He is, there are we—*representatively*; he being the Head, when He rose we rose in Him, and are accepted in Him, and are glorified in Him. "Whom He justified, them He also *glorified*." (Rom. viii.)

Therefore, "our conversation [or citizenship] is in heaven:" that is to say, the *laws* we obey, and the *privileges* we possess, and the *duties* which devolve upon us, are not earthly, but heavenly. I can pray "for kings, and for all them that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life;" but what have I to do with helping the world to keep itself in order? It is very well, and a divine ordinance, that there should be "powers," as a "terror to evil doers." But how can a child of grace, who is freely forgiven a "world of iniquity," act on the ground of law with any poor fellow-sinner?

It is plain we cannot be *citizens* of earth and heaven too. I cannot have Duties, Responsibilities, and Privileges as a citizen of earth and heaven, too. There may be things proper for the world to attend to; but I am "not of the world, *even as Jesus* is not of the world!" The world is the kingdom of Satan; it yields him a voluntary homage. Shall I take part with Satan's subject to get redress, or to make things work smoothly in a scene in rebellion against God, and over which His wrath abideth? Surely not. We "have been translated from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God's dear Son." (Col. i.) Not as subjects *MERELY*—but as *subject-kings*. "And hath made us unto our God kings." (Rev. i.) But it doth not appear, as to outward glory, what we *SHALL BE*. The only things that are to *appear now* are moral and spiritual *newness*. "The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Rom. xiv.) Into this kingdom the only entrance is "through much tribulation." (Acts xiv.)

May these Scriptures be helpful to any who have been exercised on the subject of the believer's duty with reference to taking or keeping positions in the police, army, navy, law courts, and voting for representatives in the national or local governments, going to law, accepting offices, titles, and honours, &c. I cannot be a citizen of earth and heaven too. But a brother must abide in the "calling" wherein he is called till the Shepherd leads him out. "If thou mayest be made free, *use it rather*." (1 Cor. vii.) The Lord is unto us "*wisdom*," a "greater than Solomon" is He. In His light we shall see light.

Vol. I. for 1865-6-7 now ready, cloth lettered, 3s.
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Published for the Proprietor, by—

J. B. BATEMAN, 22, Paternoster-row, entrance in Ivy-lane.
SMART & ALLEN, 2, Londonhouse-yard, Paternoster Row.
West End—HETWOOD & Co., 335, Strand, London, W.C.

Printed by JOHN EVANS, 336a, Strand London.

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Published by J. B. BATEMAN, 22, Paternoster Row, and SMART & ALLEN, 2, Londonhouse-yard, Paternoster-row.

No. 39.—VOL. II.]

JUNE 1, 1868.

[One Halfpenny.]

DEARER THAN LIFE.

THIS is what the Church is to Jesus. For—

"Christ loved the Church, and gave *Himself* for it."

Oh, the amazing grace of the Son of God! to set His love upon us, whom He knew would return it so little—that is, while we are down here.

And it is *because* we were dearer to Jesus than life that the Father loved Him. (Oh, what love for us!)

"Therefore doth my Father love me, *because* I lay down my life for the sheep."

Well may we, with prostrate spirits, worship Him "who sits upon the throne" and the Lamb, for ever and ever! As Perfect *Servant* Jesus thus earned the Father's love:—

"This *commandment* [to lay down His life] have I received of my Father."

He *hated* His own LIFE, when that life lay between His will and God's.—

"Not my will, but thine be done."

So, He says to any of us who would be servants:

"And there went great multitudes with Him: and He turned and said unto them—

"If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, *yes*, and his own *life* also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, he cannot be my disciple."

The Lord does *not* say "he cannot go to heaven"—that depends upon faith, "he that believeth in Me hath everlasting life." What the Lord is referring to is *service*. To be "servants," we must be self-haters; our Master must be to us—Dearer than Life.

Hence, if one is called, being *unmarried*, and has strong movings of spirit to be a *servant*, let him take special heed to Paul's advice—the advice of a true *servant*—on the subject of "marriage," contained in the Seventh chapter of the First Epistle to the church of God at Corinth. When a man marries, he surrenders, in a measure, his freedom; he must thenceforth care for his wife as his own flesh. He takes duties which he must not neglect. He is directed to "give honour unto the weaker vessel;" "to provide for his own;" and he will naturally "care for the things of the world how he may please his wife." Hence Paul says—"I would have you without *carefulness*, that you may *serve* the Lord without *distraction*."

While, therefore, "Marriage is honourable in *all*," it is "not *expedient*," especially to those who have movings of spirit to the Lord's *service*. Not only so, but "*trouble in the flesh*" (1 Cor. vii.) is faithfully forewarned. — Well, is Jesus "Dearer than Life"?

PHILADELPHIA — THE CHURCH OF CHRIST'S LOVE.

"I HAVE LOVED THEE."

(Rev. iii.)

OF unspeakable importance is it, that the Church of God throughout the world should realize the *love of Christ resting*, in blessed smiles of satisfaction, upon it. *Man's* approval may be withheld; indeed, we are certain *not* to have it. How many little assemblies are looked down upon by others as a poor contemptible people, contented with holes and corners! But—

"Blessed are ye *poor*!" (Luke vi.)

Thrice-blessed, indeed, if Jesus says that *He* loves us! And this He *does* say to the church at Philadelphia.

"Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee."

Bless the Lord, the number of humble assemblies gathering together in the name of the Lord Jesus, (without any human leader,) has greatly increased of late years. Alas! that there should be any, who, in the pride of their hearts, can inwardly despise and *look down upon* such assemblies. Ought not such despisers to learn from the above words of the Lord that the time will come when they will, with admiration and approval, *look up to* those whom they now look down upon from their self-given altitude, calling themselves Jews, the favoured of God?

"I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee!"

"What! despised ones will be looked up to with honour! Dreams, dreams!" thinks some poor reasoning soul, little used to the "sincere [unmixed] milk of the word"—*i.e.* the simple statements of Scripture.

Well, so said Joseph's brethren, when *he* spoke of the sheaves and the stars bowing down.—

"Behold, this *dreamer*!"

And even Jacob thought such language was not to be indulged in—

"Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee?"

Ah, but a greater than Joseph has said *this*. And *He* has said it with two emphatic—*Beholds!*

"BEHOLD! I will make them of the synagogue of Satan . . . BEHOLD! I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee."

"God is not a man, that He should lie; nor the son of man that He should repent. Hath He said, and shall He not

de it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?" (Numb. xxiii.)

Dear one in the Lord, we *do* wish—do we not?—to be of the number of those of whom the Son of God says—

"I HAVE LOVED THEE!"

And we *do* earnestly desire that all believers everywhere may seek to be taught of the Spirit what is the mind of the Lord concerning Philadelphia and—*conform* to it. Do we not? Let us, therefore, read the Epistle to Philadelphia together, and let me tell you, as I have this opportunity, what I think the Spirit has shown me. But, I entreat you, dear one in the Lord, to receive all that we say as the word of *man* only. Say in your heart—"Lord, is it so?"

I. THE NAME.

1. In the first place, does not the *name* betoken the special visible characteristic of this church? "Philadelphia" means *Brotherly Love*. We rejoice to think that this is increasing in *our* midst. Is it so in *yours*, beloved? At your prayer-meetings is a lively interest *shown* and expressed in the circumstances of the members, individually? do you come together to "bear one another's burdens" to the throne of grace, and "to cast those burdens upon the Lord"? Are your meetings really in all simplicity, liberty, and love, as the children of the one family of God? Do you bear with one another, when things are done or said in the assembly which *seem* to you to show a want of subjection to the Holy Spirit of God? Do you seek to "wash feet," or do you brandish the rod, forgetting that the use of the rod devolves upon the Head of the family?

Then again, are the sick and the aged really cared for among you—visited, comforted, nourished? the unemployed prayed for that their faith may not fail, and are they spoken for to others? the needy ministered to? the wilful, the worldly-minded, and the young watched over, their fleshly tendencies noted and arrested by timely united prayer?

If so, beloved, then, so far, is the name Philadelphia deserved by *you*, and especially if, in addition, you mourn over and appropriate the failings of believers everywhere as *your* failings—the failings of the One Body.

"As touching Brotherly Love, ye need not that I write unto you, for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another." (1 Thess. iv.)

"This is my commandment, That ye love one another as I have loved you." (John xv.)

Thus Philadelphia is the "Church of *Brotherly Love*," which makes it (with *other* good features about it), the Church of *Christ's* love also.

II.—"LITTLE STRENGTH.

In the second place, let us note the *three* things of which the Lord approves in Philadelphia.

"I know thy works; behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast—

A LITTLE STRENGTH, — AND
HAST KEPT MY WORD, — AND
HAST NOT DENIED MY NAME."

Have you, my fellow-believer, asked the Lord to show you, by the Holy Spirit, the meaning of this? I have, and trust *you* will. *Do so now.*

In the first place, the Son of God notes only "a little strength" in the church at Philadelphia. That church had not strength sufficient to *go forward of itself*—it had strength enough to *follow*, follow the Lord, follow *when* He opened the way, and *not till then.*

How natural that the Great Shepherd of the Sheep should smilingly approve of the patience and humble dependence of that portion of His flock which, (instead of trying to force a way for itself,) waits patiently upon the Lord to provide a way—an open door. Let us, therefore, as churches, if we need any temporal help, look to the Lord and wait. He delights to help the helpless whose help is in the Lord.

"When Israel was a child, then I loved him." (Hos. xi.)

"I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt." (Jer. xxxi.)

"The Lord thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way ye went, until ye came into this place." (Deut. i.)

"But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked." (Deut. i.)

There's the danger—and the result—*trouble.*

Shall we not, therefore, as churches, desire to remain little in our own eyes, that we may have the special help of the Lord? What though in the eyes of others we are a contemptible little crew!

"Fear not, worm Jacob!"

It is not pleasant to be only a *worm*; ah, but it is conformity with Him whose experience down here was—

"I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people." (Ps. xxii.)

Satan is ever seeking to delude us with the thought that *much* strength is desirable, and urges us to wish for *larger* buildings, *able* men, *more* money. Hence the machinery some of us resort to—such as Reports, Annual celebrations, lists of donations, and censuses of members. What exultation if *our* church is added to! if *our* sum-total of money has run up! if *we* have increased our roll of hired servants!

The very fact of our craving visible resources shows that we lean on *them*, and in proportion as we lean on our *visible* resources the Lord withdraws Himself, and *then*, that which comes to pass is this—

Much outward strength—*little* inward grace:

Little outward strength—*much* inward grace.

As is seen in comparing Philadelphia and Laodicea:

<p>"Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and increased with goods, and have and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name."</p>	<p>"Because thou sayest, I am rich, and need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire," &c.</p>
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Beloved, is your place of meeting a small one, and are your numbers few? Then you are like Philadelphia, possessing "little strength." Don't look upon and covet what other Christians have; but "wait on the Lord; be of good courage; and He shall strengthen your hearts: wait, I say, on the Lord."

"He will withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly."

Having "little strength," however, must not be *confined* to little *outward* strength, in respect to *numbers* and *means*. It means no *confidence* in them. A church may be comparatively large and wealthy; but if its confidence is in the Lord, then it is Philadelphia. It is strong in the Lord—not in itself. Its strength is that of the true woman—weak in herself, but strong when leaning on the arm of the Beloved.

But while "little strength" spiritually may be *possible* with large external means, it is doubtful if they are *often* united. The Lord knows the danger of riches—

"How hardly shall they that *have* riches enter into the kingdom of God!

"And the disciples were astonished at his words.

"But Jesus answereth them, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them who *trust* in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the Needle's Eye [a small postern door], than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." (Mark x.)

In this passage is vividly shown that *having* and *trusting* generally go together.

It may also be noted that the Lord does not refer, in the above passage, to the increased difficulty of a rich man *believing* unto eternal life (though that may be true.) He speaks of "riches" *hindering* those who were on the ground of being God's people from "entering into the kingdom"—that is, apprehending and going on with that new and divine order of things at the head of which Christ is. Or, in other words, if we possess riches we shall be in danger of walking by sight, *not* by faith.

Now, what is dangerous to the *individual* is also dangerous to the *assembly*. Hence it is that the dear Lord, "who hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and *prudence*," (Eph. i.) sees it best to keep us in little companies and with slender (yet sufficient) resources.

May we fall in with the will of God concerning us, and be content to have "little strength."

"Be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." (Heb. xiii.)

Not content to stand still spiritually—no. But—"content with such *things* as ye have." *Spiritually* speaking, as assemblies, let us press on; let us desire to see the work of the Lord going on in our midst. But let us be careful not to hang grace on bricks-and-mortar, money and men. So shall we please the Lord, like the church at Philadelphia, by having—

"A LITTLE STRENGTH."

3. "HE THAT OPENETH, AND NO MAN SHUTTETH."

As the church is added to by the Lord, *additional* places of meeting may be felt to be needful. Well, the Lord goes before the church which has "little strength," and "opens the door," and the church has just strength enough to *follow*—and *that* degree of strength is all that is needful.

Blessed it is to wait, and to be kept waiting, till we see the Lord Jesus going before. To follow Him is the path of safety and blessing to His dear sheep.

Now let us ask the Lord to show us what "opening the door" means. Surely it means—

A WAY INTO BLESSING.

If a church feel itself rather straitened for room and means, let it wait upon the Lord, who will give all that *He* sees needful for His own glory and its usefulness. But sometimes *we* suppose something to be needful (of the nature of temporal means) which the Lord sees to be *not* so. If, therefore, it is kept *from* us, it is the very best thing *for* us. Let us beware lest, in our impatience, we do not press forward *before* the Lord.

Suppose, from the increase of numbers, for instance, a *larger* place of meeting is thought to be desirable. Or, suppose, from the members in fellowship residing somewhat apart, an *additional* little place of meeting is thought to be needful. Well, what would Philadelphia do? Would it not say—"Dear Lord, we look to Thee; give us what we "think we need, if it be to Thy glory. Not our "will, but Thine be done."

Now, suppose a place in which to meet offers itself, how is Philadelphia to judge that it is a door of the Lord's opening? The first question would be—Has the Lord *provided the means*—*provided the means* BEFOREHAND, in His own gracious way? Suppose the rent were £40 a quarter? Can it be said that the Lord has opened the door unless the rent for the first quarter is provided *before* the church goes in? Surely not?

It is the special duty of the Head, the Lord, the Husband to provide—to provide for the Body, the Church, the Spouse. Shall we, therefore, take *future* liabilities upon us for the *Lord's* we? who "are not our own," and may be called away to-morrow? Oh, this is a grievous failure.

Again. How can any of us *reckon* on anything in the future? We can only reckon on *one* thing in the future—and that is, the coming of the Lord. Suppose, then, the church be caught away just before the end of the quarter—would it not be a slur upon our testimony? If the building rented belong to a man of the world, let us desire to be beforehand, in such a case? It would be a special opportunity of precious testimony.

Let us not provide by *worldly shifts* of our own,—such as giving "bills," or promises of payment, for materials and work done; engaging to meet rent *when* it becomes due; borrowing money on interest, and mortgaging the property to secure the principal to the lenders, &c.

"Whatsoever is not of faith is *sin*."

Are not such expedients *forcing* a door open, instead of looking to the Lord to open "the door"?

Oh, the grief and the shame which would have been spared to many if they had not gone before the Lord in this matter!

Even when we meet our engagements, we have *practically* dishonoured the Lord, because we have taken into our *own* hands what we ought to have left in *His*. But—when we do *not* meet our engage-

ments, and go on in debt! What a failure and a sin! Often does the Lord allow His dear ones to reap the results of their carnal sowing in the form of monetary burdens and bondage, to show them that He is *not with them in it!*

"Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses." (Ps. cvii.)

They are helped, indeed, in answer to prayer;

"But let them not turn again unto folly." (Ps. lxxxv.)

If, therefore, *purchase* is contemplated, let us *pray*, and *look*, and *wait* till we get ALL the money:

If the *rental* of a place is contemplated, let us *pray*, and *look*, and *wait*, for the FIRST QUARTER'S rent *before* going in. Then, if it is the Lord's will that we should stop, He will provide, by freewill offerings, *during* that first quarter the rent for the *second*. The same course should be taken with places rented by the week, month, or year.

Saints may not have been acting exactly in this way heretofore: *nor have we ourselves*. But being enlightened, we hope to do so for the future.

This, surely, may be regarded as *one* meaning of the blessed assurance—"I have set before thee AN OPEN DOOR."

If the rent of each quarter is *not* thus provided *before* a fresh quarter is entered upon, who shall say it is a door of the Lord's opening? It *may* have been, but the means being withheld, it is shown to be a door of His *shutting*?

"And shutteth, and no man openeth!"

Thus the Lord Jesus Christ does *shut*, as well as open! Yes, indeed; it is a solemn fact!

If Satan can succeed in exciting *strife* in an assembly—*this* will be a giving "place to the Devil;" and will not the door be shut, if such strife be not soon repented of?

Christ not only shuts, but He also says—"No man openeth!" We may, by our contrivances, and nipping, and pressing, manage to hold possession of bricks-and-mortar, and the Lord will meet with us therein, according to His assurance (Matt. xviii. 20). But blessing will be comparatively *limited*. We shall not *advance* into blessing, as *through an open door*. Difficulties and depression will be felt, and that in proportion to the light sinned against. The Lord must and will bring us to an end of ourselves—our confidences and our devices, that *He* may be all in all. And then how foolish to struggle to keep possession of a place, when the Lord, by withholding the means *before* it is due, and by other signs, shows that He has shut the door!

Doubtless, "an open door" means not only a place or places to meet in, but includes ALL opportunities of serving God and fellowship with one another in worship and work—*widening out* before a church.

IV.—"AND HAST KEPT MY WORD."

The second feature which the Lord Jesus notes with approval in the church of His love, is that it

has "kept His word." It is with much joy that we call to mind the fact that of late years there has been throughout the Church a gathering conviction of the Sufficiency and Supremacy of the Word of God. A passage of Scripture is required for everything. Believers are now to be met with who read *nothing* but the Word of God. Indeed, this is the case with us, with very occasional exceptions. Joyful day, when saints have advanced to this state of real fellowship-dependence on the Holy Ghost, to lead them into all truth by the Word of God.

The consequence is a general gathering back to Scriptural simplicity on such subjects as—

The Certainty of Eternal Life to every one that believeth;

Baptism in Water;

Showing forth the Lord's death weekly;

The duty of Individual and Collective "Holding forth the Word of Life;"

The Ministry of the Spirit;

The Coming of the Lord.

The Presence of the Lord Jesus in the midst.

Though these and other great and precious truths are *now* being "*kept*," treasured, or held fast, by the Church increasingly, yet it is noticeable that the *singular* "word" is used—not *words*, (as in John xv., "Abide in me, and my words abide in you.")

What "word" of His can it be that the dear Lord alludes to? May it not be that "word," or single commandment, expressed in this Church's name—"Philadelphia"—*Brotherly Love*?

"This is my commandment, *That ye love one another, as I have loved you.*" (John xv. 12.)

"These things I command you, *that ye love one another.*" (John xv. 17.)

Thus, the Lord Jesus Christ has laid down this law twice.

This one law—this great, simple, single commandment is reiterated by the Holy Ghost—

"This is his [the Father's] commandment, *That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he [the Lord Jesus] gave us commandment.*" (1 John iii. 23.)

Alas! how have we all failed in "keeping" this, our Lord's commandment or "word!" Individually, we must all feel our failure. And, as churches—alas! the bitterness we have shown towards those who have failed and fallen among us, and also towards other churches. There has been, in some quarters, a vast deal of "putting away" for matters to deal with which the church has received no power.

The Lord turn us from our evil ways! Let us remember that our *Lord*, whose we are—body, soul, and spirit—has *commanded* us to love one another—and to love one another *as He has loved us*.

Would we be Philadelphia? Let us love "all the holy brethren with a pure heart fervently." So will the Lord Jesus approvingly regard us as "keeping His word."

V.—“THOU HAST NOT DENIED MY NAME.”

What is the Name of Jesus with reference to the Church? — HEAD. —

“The husband is the Head [Ruler] of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church.” (Eph. v.)

“Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I [as Head or lord] in the midst of them.” (Matt. xviii.)

Now, do you meet to a human president, or head? If so, you practically deny Christ's name! This did not Philadelphia. That church, in spite of contempt from others, did not deny Christ's name. Oh, dear one, meet with those who meet simply to Jesus in the midst. This was among the good things which the Son of God noted in Pergamos.

“Thou holdest fast my name.” (Rev. ii.)

All sorts of things are said against us for denying the headship of man—in the presence of God!!

We are said to be “spiritually proud, disdainful” to be taught by those who know better than ourselves! We are said “to shut ourselves up from everybody, cherishing the sentiment ‘I-am-holier-than-thou!’”

Of course, all this is to be expected from men who hire themselves out for religious work!

6. Such men are called by the Son of God

“THEM OF THE SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN!”

“Behold, I will make them of the *synagogue of Satan*—”

“Synagogue” means *assembly*, and “Satan” means *adversary*. Those, therefore, who *claim* and *take* place and power in the church, (as “heads” or leaders of meetings,) acting, as they do, *adversely* to the power and position of Christ, the Head, are—the *synagogue of Satan*.

They will be found to be “adversaries” of the Father as well of the Son, for—

“He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him.” (John vi.)

Equally true is it that all such are “adversaries” of the Holy Spirit of God, for while the saints are committed to *His* personal care, these “adversaries” take the “care of souls,” and dreadfully hinder and grieve and vex the Holy Ghost. Thus are they convicted “adversaries” of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost!

Oh, what a dreadful charge to lay against mortal men!

These “adversaries” speak “great swelling words” of themselves. The Lord says they—

“SAY THEY ARE JEWS, AND ARE NOT, BUT DO LIE.”

The thought of the Jew was that he was specially favoured of God as an *earthly* one. So these will be found to take *earthly* ground for the Church; their teachings and practices will be found to be deeply coloured with Judaism; they also practically claim to be God's favourite ones on *earth*.

For instance, some will speak of “clergy and lay workers” as answering to “the priests and levites;” others, that “infant baptism” is the counterpart of

“circumcision.” The place where Christians meet is with them the “house of God.” The First Day of the week is to be regarded as holy as the Jewish Sabbath, and for the same reasons. Then we have yearly feasts and fasts with some; and vestments and imitations of tabernacle glory.

All these errors are, however, secondary to, and result from, their *main* position—their *great* assumption: which is this—

That they (or such as they) *must alone minister in the assemblies of saints.*

This is a practical denial of the *name* (or headship) of Christ and the ministry of the Spirit.

“They say they are Jews, and are not, but *do lie*.”

“SCRIBES, PHARISEES, HYPOCRITES!”

Your moral progenitors loved Robes, High Places, and to be called Rabbi, Rabbi. Pretty things! who would despoil you of them! You glory in your shame! Your very dress, as most of you walk the streets, stamps you to be a somebody! a holy one! a favoured of heaven!

But you *lie*! You are an “adversary” of God and His Christ! And (regarding you as a *class*) you are

“*The Synagogue of Satan!*”

A PROFESSION OF ADVERSARIES!

Oh, that you would take heed to the words of the “Judge of all the earth”?

“Behold, I will make them of the *synagogue of Satan*, which say they are Jews, and are not, but *do lie*! behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that *I have loved thee*.”

Know this, that Heaven and earth shall pass away, but His “word shall never pass away.”

Says some one—

“Such a threat as *that* can only apply to unconverted men who claim to be teachers and leaders in “the Church. Surely, some believers will not bow “down to others!”

Well, when *I* get home, I feel I could honour in love all who have greatly honoured Jesus, (especially if I have *spoken ill of them*), even as far as to casting myself at their feet and embracing them, and confessing how wrong I was. I shall rejoice that *they* honoured God in one respect in which I did not.

Now *this* disparagement of speech is exactly what *was* done by some of us, and *is* done by many Christians still, towards those who meet simply in the name of Jesus without any minister! Such believers are, as of old, a “sect everywhere spoken against.” Only press the walk of faith upon a stranger-brother you have incidentally met, and forth comes the exclamation—“Oh, I see! *you're* one of the Brethren!” Well, this state of things *must* be reversed. The “day” will declare all things. And *then*, should I not hasten to honour those who have honoured Jesus? Yes: surely.

If Peter act wrongly, the Lord must needs say—“Get thee behind me, *Adversary!*” Why should we feel difficulty, therefore, in admitting that true

believers *may* be associated, while down here, with the "synagogue of Satan"? There is the fact before our eyes—That both true believers and mere professors practically deny the Headship of the Master. There will remain, therefore, but *one* course with *both*. *They shall admit the wrongness of their conduct at the feet of Philadelphia.* Those who are on Philadelphian ground at the Lord's coming will doubtless be filled with a sense of their many shortcomings, but among their failings will *not* be the sin of "denying the name [headship]" of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Not that *the former* [true believers] will bow down at the feet of Philadelphia in the same *manner, time, and place*, as the unconverted "adversaries." Let this be marked. In the first case, it will be done with joyfulness; in the latter with dismay. Of *this* let us be very sure :

"GOD IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS." (Acts x.)

"I will give unto every one of you according to your works." (Rev. ii.)

"We must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether good or bad." (2 Cor. v.)

A Contrast—

PHILADELPHIA.	SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN.
"Brotherly Love."	"Lording it over." (1 Pet.)
"Little Strength." (Rev. ii.)	"A Green Bay Tree." (Ps. 37.)
"Keeping Christ's Word." "	"Holding tradition of the elders." (Mark vii. 3.)
"Not denying His Name," "	"Not holding the Head," Col. ii. but taking leadership.
<i>i.e. His Headship.</i>	"My Lord delayeth His coming." (Matt. xxiv. 48.)
"Keeping the Word of His patience."	

VI.—THOU HAST KEPT THE WORD OF MY PATIENCE."

This is the next characteristic of Philadelphia. What is the word of the Lord's "patience"? May it not be the assurance of His return? That is a precious word—

"I WILL COME AGAIN!"

The Lord says of that church which is treasuring—"keeping"—this word :

"I have loved Thee!"

May we all, in "patience keep our souls"—the "patient waiting for Christ," (2 Thess. iii. 5.)

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith : henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day : and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (2 Tim. iv.)

"VII.—LET NO MAN TAKE THY CROWN."

Paul thus refers, in the above passage, to a *future* crown for those who love the Lord's appearing. But does not the Lord Jesus Christ refer to a *present* crown when He says to Philadelphia :

"Behold, I come quickly : hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

When we are in the glory, men will not be able to touch our "crowns". But the Lord, in this

passage, warns Philadelphia against man's taking its "crown." Hence the "crown" He refers to, may not so much be a *future* crown—that is in His own blessed keeping,—but a *present* "crown". Surely, to have His love resting upon us is a *crown*. When He says—

"I HAVE LOVED THEE."

Surely *this* is Philadelphia's crown! Of none of the other six churches has the Lord said *this*. Not but that He loves ALL, in a general sense. But He does not love all when viewed in their *earthly course*. The nearest approach to Philadelphia in this respect is poor, persecuted Smyrna, whose crown is—

"THOU ART RICH!"

But Philadelphia's crown is—"I have loved thee!" This assurance is given, not because of the *one* good thing—"loving the appearing" or "keeping the word of Christ's patience." But it is a special word called forth by *general* correctness—

"Little strength—kept my word—not denied my name."

Oh, that dear ones may be anxious to "hold fast" all *three*. At one little gathering of saints we know of, it has been very grieving to hear enquiries continually—"Who's coming next Sunday?" Surely such are not "holding fast" the last of the three, that is, Christ's Headship of the Church, which is His Body, and which He delights to nourish and cherish, by the Spirit with the Word.

The Lord's admonition to Philadelphia is—

"Hold that fast which thou hast."

So shall we "*abide in His love*"—that is, *know* His love upon us—that is, *keep* our crown, allowing no *man*, "by science (knowledge) falsely so-called," to cause us to lose this blessed inward assurance of His love resting upon us as a church.

"Who crowneth thee with loving-kindness."

Of all the churches it may be said—They are running.

"They which run in a race run ALL, but *one* receiveth the prize. So run that ye may obtain.... Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown ; but *we* an *incorruptible*." (1 Cor. ix.)

The chaplet about Philadelphia's brow, which *faith* is *conscious* of, is indeed blessed. Yes, but it is not a *mere* chaplet, for it fadeth not away. Oh, the joy through *eternity* of knowing that the special love of Christ was upon us when we were in our *time-state* !

The final word assuring *future* blessing (in addition to the present "crown,") is very wonderful; may the Holy Spirit lead us into those amazing assurances ending with—"I will write upon him my new name."

And now let us finally read the whole Epistle, the *statics* showing the parts on which we have been led out :—

"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write : These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, *he that openeth, and no man shutteth ; and shutteth, and no man openeth ;* I know thy works : behold, I have set before thee an *open door*, and no man can shut it : for thou hast

his strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

"Behold, I will make them of the *synagogue of Satan*, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do *lie*; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee in the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and I will write upon him my new name.

"He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." (Rev. iii.)

THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH.

"God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." (2 Tim. i.)

A TRUE spiritual proselyte to the Jews' religion was the Ethiopian Eunuch. How carefully treading, we see him, in the way of God's commandments! Distance and duties were not allowed to hinder him from appearing before God for to worship. An adopted child—an obedient child—a devout child, we see him, like the good man of the First Psalm, sitting reading in his chariot, "delighting in the law of the Lord, and in His law meditating day and night."

"He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah vi.)

But how conscious of helplessness was he! To Philip's question—"Understandest thou what thou readest?" there comes the almost-pitiful answer—"How can I, except some man should guide me?"

Ah, the Spirit, though with him, was not yet in him. There was the secret. Regenerate, doubtless, was he; but he was one of those many spiritual ones who were being "gathered together into one,"—(see John xi. 52,) "baptized by one Spirit into one Body," upon the reception of Christ as "the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth."

But "how should he hear without a preacher?" And so a preacher was sent. But the truth being received in the love of it, and baptism being administered, does the preacher accompany him to his far-off home? Nothing of the sort. The Spirit catches the preacher away! Oh, what a lesson to preachers of the Gospel! And that lesson is—
You're no longer wanted.

Dear brother in the Lord, Art thou used of the Lord in the conversion of souls? Baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; "commend them to God and the word of His grace, which is able to build them up, and to give them an inheritance among all them that are sanctified," and leave them to the care of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit of Promise.

You may, indeed, remain with them—and will do so as long as the Lord shows you that He would have you do so; but then you would meet with them as a

brother and a fellow-sheep, not as a "teacher." You will doubtless tell the sheep to gather to Jesus and to regard the Holy Spirit as their *Teacher*. The Lord may, now and then, use you to "speak the truth in love," but let it be seen, by *silences* in the Lord's presence, that the Spirit is at liberty to use whomsoever He please. Endeavour to realise in yourself and show practically to others that the Spirit has "caught" you away.

The Eunuch, believing and being baptized, was no longer cast down with any feeling of helpless dependence on man. No: he does not say any longer, "Oh, that I had a man to 'guide' me!" Thenceforth he possesses the spirit "of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." And so, he goes "on his way rejoicing."

Baptized believer, So may you and I, realising that word—

"But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." (1 John ii.)

THE "HOUR OF TRIAL" FURTHER CONSIDERED.

"Plymouth, May, 1868.

"DEAR BROTHER IN THE LORD,

"I feel assured that your true desire is to encourage the Lord's dear ones to look forward with increased delight to His Coming. But, dear brother, if you admit of conflict with Satan and his hosts at the Lord's Coming, it must affect and take away from our joy in the prospect of that day."

[Answer.—"Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." (2 Cor. v.)

"Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." (1 John iii.)

"But I admit that the Word of the Lord seems plain about Judgment beginning at the House of God, and that the Lord, in love, does judge His people. If we do not listen to the whispers of His love He will speak louder by some other means. Therefore, I take it to be that the Lord deals in judgment with us now, day by day, as we go on our pilgrimage."

[Reply.—Doubtless there is individual tribulation for individual sin; but this a general trouble at the same time that Jezebel is cast into a bed.

If you look at the epistles to the seven churches you will find JUDGMENT always associated with the Lord's coming. In the meantime, the Lord gives space to repent. See Rev. i. 5, 16, 25; iii. 3, 16.

"My mistaking the word "tribulation" for the tribulation caused much difficulty. May the dear Lord make His Coming more and more a deep reality to our souls, and that for which we wait with patience and delight. And may the dear Lord preserve us blameless unto his coming, so that we may have boldness and not be ashamed. Believe me to remain your Brother in the Lord,
W. J. C.

"PS. If the threatened tribulation be confined to those who are in any way found connected with those principles you mention as characterizing the 'Woman Jezebel' (which seem quite to answer to her), then I must ask—who will be free? who is not more or less in adultery with her?"

[Surely you are not, for one! Surely, you are not displacing the Holy Spirit, and looking up to college-taught men, in spite of your knowing it to be wrong! Consider, for a moment, the dreadful state of things around us! Believers go to certain buildings and look up to certain men. By some systems, they have a frequent change of men; one week, a true believer; the next, an unregenerate man.

Now, poor ignorant ones in the midst of this evil who know no better do certainly receive a *present* injury, and it may be that *they* will escape future tribulation. But what of those who have been enlightened, but still cleave to "that woman Jezebel"?

"He that *knew* his Lord's will, and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes!"

To this, you say, Who will escape, for who does his Lord's will? In the matter under consideration, are there not thousands who are doing their Lord's will—who have forsaken Jezebel, and are gathering to the Lord in the midst? Yes, indeed.

You surely do not think that all believers will enter into the presence of the Lord with *exactly* the same feelings and experience at the moment! Is not such a thought contrary to the tenour of Scripture? Do not the following Scriptures show various *shades* of experience at the Lord's Coming?

Shame at NOT abiding in Him.

"Little [Dear] children, Abide in Him, that, when He shall appear we may have confidence, and not be *ashamed* before Him at His Coming." (1 John ii.)

You and I may not be in adultery with Jezebel, but if we are found *not* abiding in Him—then *inward* shame (not *outward* tribulation) awaits us. Surely this should have a *quickening*, not *saddening* effect.

Ministerial Confidences removed.

"Thou hast left thy first love. Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove *thy* Candlestick [the church's lamp or lightbearer, that is, man-minister or teacher] out of his place." (Rev. ii.)

Surely this should *quicken* us to hold only the ministry of the Spirit in the assemblies of the saints.

Doctrinal evil unsparingly dealt with by the Lord Himself.

"Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will *fight* against them [those who hold the evil doctrines] with the *sword* of my mouth [the Word, that which "shall judge" us "in the last day."] (Rev. ii.)

PERSONAL punishment for continuing in gross CARNAL sin.

"Deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." (1 Cor. iv.)

PERSONAL punishment for continuing in gross SPIRITUAL sin.

"Behold, I will cast *them* that commit *adultery* with her [Jezebel, the queenly, but worldly one] into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds." (Rev. ii.)

The Worldly-minded startled with terror and suffering loss.

"Remember how thou hast received, and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou wilt not watch, I will come on thee as a *thief*, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." (Rev. iii.)

[May these Scriptures quicken us in walking in "the fear of the Lord," "for our God is a consuming fire." Amen.]

"WHATSOEVER things are lovely." (Phil. iv. 8.) Obedience is *lovely*. Our JESUS, "was obedient unto death." (Phil. ii. 8.) OBEDIENCE is oft-times difficult—but *lovely*,—never presented to us without two things accompanying it—*grace* to enable us to overcome the difficulty, and *promise of reward* when overcome. Happy soul, that, living *within the veil*, REALISES these things. For *there*, there is *companionship* with HIM who was "obedient unto death," and so shall we be sweetly led to—"THINK on these things."

ANNOUNCEMENT.

Brethren are hereby invited to a meeting for Prayer and Conference upon "the things pertaining to the kingdom of God," to be held (the Lord permitting) at 335A, STRAND, on Monday, June 1, (known as Whit-Monday.) The meeting will commence at 10 A.M. and end at about 12.30.

The motive which suggested this invitation was the desire to meet, face-to-face, any who take exception to the line of truth put forth in this Journal. But the Lord's presence being owned, the convener desires to leave it all to Him as to what shall be brought forth.

"He that doeth truth cometh to the light that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God." (John iii.)

"HE MADE THE STARS ALSO."—There are many double, triple, and multiple stars. The large star in the binary system in a Lyrae is said to emit eight times as much light as the sun of our system, and to be so distant that its light can only reach us after a period of thirteen years. Many of these double stars present the beautiful phenomenon of contrasted colours. In the two stars composing the system in ϵ Cancri, the larger star is *yellow*, the smaller *blue*. In g Andromedæ, the larger is *crimson*, the smaller a beautiful *green*. e Cassiopeiæ discloses a combination of a large *white* star, and a small one of a *purple* colour. In a Leonis, b Orionis, and a Serpentis, the large star is *white* and the small *bluish*. In 59 Andromedæ the two stars are of a *bluish* colour, and equal in size; the same occurs in the star d Serpentis. There are also double, triple, quadruple, sextuple, and multiple stars! In the Unicorn's Head is a multiple star, consisting of one star with about twelve round it! "The heavens declare the glory of God; the firmament showeth His handiwork!"—the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, "without whom was not anything made that was made!"

RECEIVED.—"Images in the Windows of Churches; Protest against Them." By G. R. C. — Much labour lost, as must be all attempts to suppress the working of heaven! Evil must work—and work—and cannot be kept down. Even if pollution is banked-in for a time, it will soon overflow again. Nothing less will do than protesting against the *whole* system as utterly contrary to Scripture—"there is no soundness in it." One sighs over such a book—"Ever learning but never coming to the knowledge of the truth."

Consider the shameful spectacle before the world at this moment—The Worldly Professing Woman screaming with terror at the threatened withdrawal of the State-arm!

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PRECIOUS TRUTH.

"He that hath an Ear to Hear, let Him Hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches." (Rev. ii.)

Published by J. B. BATEMAN, 22, Paternoster Row, and SMART & ALLEN, 2, Londonhouse-yard, Paternoster-row.

No. 40.—VOL. II.]

JULY 1, 1868.

[One Halfpenny.]

THE END.

"Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof." (Eccles. vii.)

WITH the present number, this publication is suspended. For this course our readers will have been in a measure prepared by our occasional testimony that the saints ought to read nothing but the *Word of God* and to hold the need of no other Teacher than the *Spirit of God*. In taking this course, therefore, we trust we are influenced by that Word—

"*Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*"

Indeed, the existence of this publication was practically inconsistent with our testimony, for while we were testifying that the Spirit is the *only Expositor* of the Word, our publication was circulating amongst the saints, to the great danger of their really seeking the Spirit's teachings only. An *apostle* could write to the Church of God—and an *apostle only*.

1. *Printing* produces *confusion*, for supposing that which we put forth is *true*, yet, if the Holy Spirit lead us *further* to-morrow, we shall *then* be glad to recal what we have said for something which is still *nearer* the *full truth*.

2. *Printing* is also a snare to the *writer*; for if what we print is *not* true, yet, having *said* it, we shall be in danger of contending for it with our *natural* mind rather than accept the humiliation of owning ourselves wrong.

We are therefore pressed to the conclusion that the only *God-honouring*, and therefore the *best* course, every way, is for the saints to fall back upon Scriptural simplicity and the provisions of God's grace. And what are they?

"Holding the **HEAD**," [*the Lord the Ruler of the meeting,*] (Col.)

"**SPEAKING** the truth in love," (Eph.)

"Be filled with the **SPIRIT**." (Eph.)

Dropping, therefore, all the devices of man—(as though God's ways could be improved upon!)—let us desire both in private and when met together, to be led of the **SPRIT** into all truth, by the **WRITTEN WORD**, sitting at **JESUS'** feet. In proportion to our emptiness of self and our subjection of soul to the Holy Spirit (leading us to avoid pride and dogmatism) shall we receive light—Divine light.

Under such circumstances, should any crude statement be made, or false thought be put forth, the Lord, by His Holy Spirit, may rebut it with the Word. Oh, the confusion and weakness that are all around us, like the troubled sea! But, *the Spirit of God is moving on the face of the waters*?—First, Light; then Liberty, Separation, Usefulness, Beauty, Dominion, and Glory to God.

Lecturing or sermonizing is of man—the Press is of man—they are therefore (when applied spiritually) dishonouring to God and dangerous to souls. May we all henceforth be endowed with grace to treat that which is of man, as a dear brother treated a number of **PRECIOUS TRUTH** when it was put into his hand. Laying it down, he said:—

"*Thank you; I shall be able to read it when I have finished with the Scriptures.*"

* By "the Press" is meant Journalism and Authorship appropriating the things of the Spirit of God. We do not refer to the simple multiplication of copies of the Word. Nor are tracts for the unconverted here regarded: this latter is a question for individual conscience.

This is not the only case we have heard of, the Lord be thanked ; and add their number. Let us, therefore, trust in the living God, and in *His* spreading the truth from *soul to soul*. "The wind bloweth where it listeth." Let us seek, if permitted, to widen out our fellowship with God's dear saints, that the truth may be spread in God's way. Let confidence in the Press give way to confidence in God—in God's promises—prayer in the name of Jesus, the Word of His grace, fellowship of saints, the teaching of the Spirit.

"And now, brethren, I commend you to GOD and to the WORD of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified." (Acts xx.)

"WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?" (Rom. v.)

"Search the Scriptures." (John v.)

"Give ear, O my people, to my law ; incline your ears to the words of *my* mouth."—*Ps. lxxviii.*

"Hear, O Israel ; The Lord our God is one Lord : and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And *these words*, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart : and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." (Deut. vi.)

"The Bereans.....searched the Scriptures daily."—*Acts xvii.*

"Apollos, mighty in the Scriptures."—*Acts xviii.*

"From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness : That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished into all good works."—*2 Tim. iii.*

"I have written unto you, young men, because ye are *strong*, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the Wicked one." (1 John ii.)

"Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word...One thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." (Luke, xi.)

“But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.—*Ps. i.*”

“The law of the Lord is *perfect*, converting the soul; the testimonies of the Lord are sure, making wise the simple.”—*Ps. xix.*

“Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord..... Great peace have they which love thy law.—*Ps. cxix.*”

“Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” (*Ps. cxix.*)

“The entrance of *Thy words* giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.” (*Ps. cxix.*)

“Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.”—*James i.*

“If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (*John, viii.*)

“If ye abide in me, and *my words* abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you, continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.”—*John xv.*

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”—*Col. iii.*

“Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of *the word*, that ye may *grow* thereby, if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.” (*1 Peter, ii.*)

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; *that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by 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.*)

“Meditate on these things; *give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear unto all.*” (*1 Tim. iv.*)

“Every word of God is pure.” (Prov. xxx.)

“The word of the Lord endureth for ever.”—*Peter i.*

“Sanctify them through thy truth; *thy WORD is TRUTH.*” (John xiv.)

“*If that which ye have heard from the beginning abide in you, Ye shall continue in the Son and in the Father.*” (1 John ii.)

“The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.”
Heb. iv.

“The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye NEED NOT THAT ANY MAN TEACH YOU: but as the same anointing teacheth you of ALL things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it [or He] hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him. And now, little children, abide in Him, that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His Coming.” (1 John ii.)

Oh, how wrong to say that this precious assurance “*Ye have no need that any man teach you,*” applies to one subject *only*, namely, Anti-christian error! The word is emphatic—“The same Anointing teacheth you of ALL things,” not *one* thing only.

“Thus saith the Lord, *Cursed* be the man that trusteth in *man*, that maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the *Lord.*” (Jer. xvii.)

“Now the *Lord* is that [or the] *Spirit.*” (2 Cor. iii.)

“*Blessed* is the man who *trusteth* in the *Lord*; and whose hope the *Lord* is.”





