

*What  
Said the  
Scripture*

? ? ?

CONCERNING  
200 QUESTIONS OF  
INTERPRETATION  
FAITH AND PRACTICE

C. F. HOGG

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## FOREWORD

IT is not surprising that there should be many subjects in the Scriptures about which readers feel their need of help by those fitted by their deeper study of the Scriptures to give such help. The Word of God has many deep places: it were inconceivable that it could be otherwise: "Thy thoughts are very deep (Psa. 92. 5). "Understandest thou what thou readest?" is still a question which readers of the Bible need to put to themselves fairly often, lest they become mere skimmers of the surface, never reaching the central meanings of the sacred text they peruse. "How can I, except some one shall guide me?" was the Ethiopian's response to this question by Philip in the desert by Gaza that day, and it is true to say that the more thoughtful and earnest the reader of the Word, the more likely is he to feel the need of a brother's help in wrestling with its interpretations. This is not to say that the Spirit does not impart truth direct to the sincere seeker; all the experience of the saints through the ages affirms the reality of the direct illumination of the Holy Spirit. But was it not the Spirit Who taught the Ethiopian on that occasion? Who was it said, "Go near, and join thyself to this chariot"? Was not Philip's voice that of the Spirit to the dark-skinned seeker? And it is so still. He uses those to whom the truth has already been taught by Him as His instruments to "teach others also." We do well to make use of the ministry of Spirit-taught men, both their oral and written ministry, to the fullest extent to which we can avail ourselves of it. The writer of this book would have counselled those about to read it thus: "Quench not the Spirit; despise not prophesyings; prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

The name of C. F. HOGG will not soon be forgotten by very many whose helper in the things of Christ he was. In a deeply true sense he was a profound Christian scholar, though this was the last thing he would have dreamed of claiming, contenting himself with being a humble student of the Bible, always aware of how much there is to know and of how little as yet the most diligent of learners knows. The writer of this Foreword will always

remember C. F. Hogg as a model of patient study and accurate thinking in his search for the meanings of the Word. He believed that Scripture is its own interpreter, that the comparison of all germane passages and the weighing of each in the scales with its fellows is the safest way to arrive at right conclusions. He believed in carefully, laboriously if need be, ascertaining precisely what the text of Scripture says, as distinct from what folks make it say. He maintained that Scripture is always consistent with itself and that to fix a meaning on any passage which makes it contradict other passages is to misconstrue it. And he held that quiet and patient waiting on God is indispensable for arriving at the right understanding of any obscure or disputed point of Scripture doctrine.

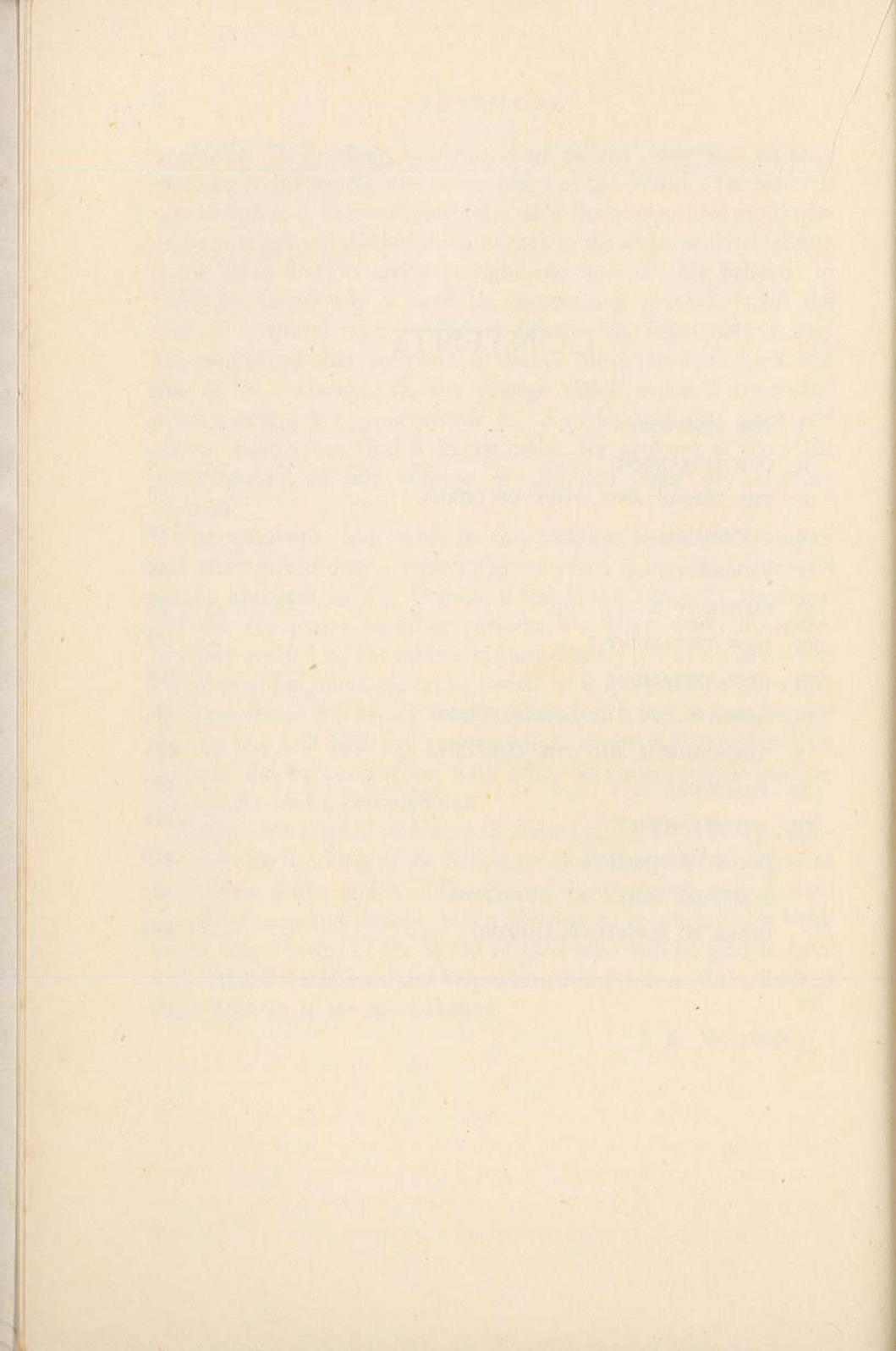
The questions dealt with in this volume touch many topics and were spread over a wide range of years, many of the answers having appeared in *The Witness*, a few in the *Believer's Magazine*, and the remainder in other periodicals. They were, however, carefully revised by the author in those later years of his life when his spiritual judgment was at its ripest. It is too much to hope that all the answers will satisfy every reader, but it can at least be said that no one will find any answer which is not well supported by the text and by comparison with other Scriptures which bear on the subject under consideration.

As one who learned to esteem the wise balance C. F. Hogg maintained in his handling of the Scriptures and to respect his judgment in matters about which differences of view prevail among men equally sincere and devout, it is a pleasure to commend this book to the many lovers of the Word of God who will be glad to have it by them for reference and help when, from time to time, subjects dealt with in it are re-awakened.

J. B. WATSON

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# I—THE SCRIPTURES

## RELIABILITY OF THE SCRIPTURES

In the Text Book of the Christian Scientists, *The Science of Health and Key to the Scriptures*, the following appears: "The decision by vote of Church Councils as to what should and should not be considered Holy Writ, the manifest mistakes in the ancient versions, the thirty thousand different readings in the Old Testament, and the three hundred thousand in the New—these facts show how a mortal and material sense stole into the Divine record, with its own hue darkening to some extent the inspired pages." Are these statements in accordance with fact?

THIS is a specimen of the method pursued by detractors of the Bible to throw the minds of uninstructed Christians into confusion. In the first place, no Council of which any trace is left in history decided the Canon of Scripture. The earliest Councils appealed to the Scriptures as what is called "the Rule of Faith," that is, they were accepted as the final authority in all that concerns "the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). The Council of Trent (16th century) which was exclusively Roman, did complete a list of Books of the Bible that included those that had already been recognized as Scripture for more than a millennium, and added thereto a number that had not been recognized in the same way—the Apocrypha. We may be as sure as it is possible to be sure of anything, that there are no books outside those that are contained in our English Bibles as ordinarily published, that should have been included; nor are there any now excluded that have a right to a place therein.

As to the thirty thousand variants alleged in the text of the Old Testament, any reader with a little diligence can test the matter for himself. In the margin of the Revised Version there are two kinds of variants noted, variants in the text and variants in the translation. With the former only are we concerned here. Now

sufficient to present the two renderings of the latter here. A.V. runs: "the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." R.V. has: "the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ." The former makes two persons, distinct one from the other, the latter applies the designation "God" to "our Saviour Jesus Christ." Not only does the American Edition revert to the Authorised Version, it inserts in italic "the" before "Saviour" (although the article is not in the original) thus distinguishing strongly between "God" and "Jesus Christ." That the English Revised Version is right is evident on comparison with verse 11 of the same chapter, where precisely the same Greek is rendered in all these Versions, "our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

The American Edition does not give many independent marginal notes, that is, other than those contained in the English Edition. The note appended to the word "worship" in John 9. 38 is all the more noteworthy on this account: it reads, "The Greek word denotes an act of reverence, whether paid to a creature (as here) or to the Creator (see chap. 4. 20)."

I take the opportunity of printing here what the leader of the more conservative school of textual critics, the late Dr. F. H. A. Scrivener, wrote to the late Mr. G. F. Bergin, of the Ashley Down Orphanages, concerning the work of the English Revision Committee, of which he was a member. It is on a post card, and is dated from "Hendon Vicarage, June 17, 1881." It reads in full: "Dear Sir,—I thank you truly for your sympathy with our revision work and our critical studies generally. I am sure we have made no changes in the Authorised Version save on reasonable, if not quite always on sufficient ground."

### THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

Do the Synoptic Gospels represent three independent revelations given separately to three men? Is it unscriptural to suppose, for instance, that any one of the writers was dependent in any measure on the work of another who had written before him?

"SYNOPTIC" means "a common view"; it is applied to Matthew, Mark, and Luke, because there is so much material common to all

three, whereas John includes comparatively little of what is found in them. As Mark is the simplest account of the four, devoted mainly to a record of the events in the life of the Lord, rather than to His teaching, it is often assumed, and it may be correctly, that this account was written first. There is a very ancient tradition that he received from Peter, with whom he was closely associated, the things he recorded. Luke states in so many words that he took pains to arrive at the truth of what he narrates, investigating the matter from the beginning. Neither he nor any of the other evangelists claims to have received what he wrote by Divine revelation.

God does not do for men what they can do for themselves. All the miracles recorded in the Bible were wrought to accomplish what lay altogether outside human powers. So with revelation; God tells men nothing they can discover for themselves. Hence we may conclude that the same pains Luke took to arrive at the truth were taken by each of the others. Matthew and John were eye-witnesses of most, if not of all they wrote. It is because of this fact, not because he had received a revelation, that John demands that his story must be believed. "He that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true," he declares, and indeed it was on this ground that the Lord commissioned him and others: "The Spirit of truth . . . shall bear witness of Me . . . bear ye also witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning" (John 15. 26, 27, *margin*; 19. 35; 20. 31; 21. 24).

While there is a great deal in common between Matthew, Mark, and Luke, yet there is sufficient matter peculiar to each to show that they did not write in collusion one with the other. John seems to have written last, and to have had the Synoptists before him, for he clears up some points they had left obscure, and in certain matters rounds off and completes the record of the things that the Lord did, said, and suffered.

## THE SYNOPTICS

What are "the Synoptics"?

THE Gospels written by Matthew, Mark and Luke are known as the Synoptics because they present the story of the life of the

Lord in the same way. Though each writer has matter peculiar to himself, much of what each writes is found in all three, or in two of them. Apart from the events of the last week, culminating in the death of the Lord, John includes very little indeed of what the Synoptists have preserved. The exceptions are to be found in Chapter 6. In general they take what may be called an exterior, John an interior, view of the Lord's life. John completes their story by taking his readers into the inner sanctuary. For example, they give the Father's public testimony to the Son; John gives His own testimony to His relationship with the Father. The incidents of the Baptism and the Transfiguration having been recorded by the Synoptists, there was no reason why John also should narrate them. Whereas they relate the story of the baptism of the Lord from the spectator's point of view, John gives the personal experience of the Baptist, as related by himself after the event, and from the inside, so to speak (1. 29-34). And, although John does not record them, it is clear that the words from heaven, "Thou art My Son" are the Baptist's authority for his testimony on the same occasion, "I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God." Not all the evidence for the doctrine of the Deity of the Lord is found in the writings of John. Why, it might be asked, are the words of Matt. 11. 25, 26 and Luke 10. 21 not found in the Fourth Gospel also? Two or three witnesses are enough! And if John does not include these stories of a voice from heaven, he has such a story of another occasion in Chap. 12. 28-30. But in this case while the Voice bore words to Him, it was sound and no more to those around Him.

## CHAPTER HEADINGS

What authority is there for the chapter headings in some editions of the A.V.? I refer particularly to the interpretation of certain prophecies, Isa. 41. 8; 44. 1-5, for example, as foretelling the blessing of the Church.

THE summaries of Chapters in the A.V. have nothing correspondent in the original, and are without authority. (Angus, *Bible Handbook*, p. 173).

## THE CONCORDANT VERSION

What is the value of the "Concordant Version" of the Scriptures?

IN the first place it is anonymous, and this suggests caution. If, as states the Prospectus, the "weakness" of the method of translation by "individuals and companies of scholars" renders their work untrustworthy because "it is biased by human opinions," this weakness is not eliminated when the names of the translators are unknown. Anonymous translators also are human, and no more likely than others to escape bias.

The Prospectus also states that former translators have tried "to put their understanding of (the Bible) into English." This raises the question whether any one can translate a book which he does not understand. Of course there is much in the original Hebrew and Greek Scriptures the full meaning of which the writers themselves had not fathomed; later revelation was necessary to the interpretation of their messages. These mysteries, however, were not of vocabulary and grammar but of purpose and scope, and of a meaning other than that which lay upon the surface. And what does this unnamed translator do but put into English his understanding of the Bible?

The "Concordant Version" claims to proceed, where possible, "on the simple plan of rendering a given Greek word by only one English word," which was the method of the 1881 Revisers, though it was not of those of 1611, so there is no justification for another translation on this account. But the Revisers applied the rule intelligently, not slavishly. How is it applied in "The Concordant Version"? In the Prospectus the word *psuchē* is selected as an illustration of the method. In the Greek translation of the O.T. this word is the equivalent of the Hebrew word *nephesh* in many of its occurrences. *Nephesh* occurs between seven and eight hundred times; it is translated in the A.V. by about fifty English words. Its first occurrence is in Gen. 1. 20, *psuchōn zōsōn* which, obviously, cannot be rendered "living lives." The idea is that of life as a principle (*zōē*) constituted in an individual (*psuchē*). The same words are used of man in 2. 7, "man became a living soul." But though the same language is used of both man and the other animals

there is a profound differentiation between them inasmuch as man, formed by God of "the dust of the ground," became "a living soul" in virtue of "the breath of life" (*zōē*) "breathed into his nostrils" by God Himself. Nothing of this kind is said of the other animals, from whom man is thus separated by an unbridgeable gulf.

In Gen. 23. 8 *nepshesh* is rendered "mind" in the English versions; "if it be your mind," said Abraham, "that I should bury my dead out of my sight." Joseph's brethren remembered their callousness when they saw "the distress of his soul" and were unmoved thereby (42. 21). The following also occur, in all these cases *psuchē* is the translation of the Hebrew *nepshesh*: "the heart of a stranger" (Exod. 23. 9); "ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead" (Lev. 19. 28); "dead body" (Lev. 21. 11).

And in N.T. also *psuchē* has various meanings. Thus in Matt. 2. 20, Acts 20, 10 it refers to natural life. In Rev. 6. 9 "the souls of them that had been slain" are seen, that is, disembodied men. *Psuchē* in Luke 9. 24 is explained by "own self" in v. 25. It is the seat of the emotions in Luke 2. 35, "a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also," and of the will in Matt. 22. 37, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with . . . all thy soul." It is "the inward man," the seat of the new life in the believer, in 1 Peter 2. 11; 3 John 2.

But enough has been said to put the reader on his guard against any easy method of dealing with this very complex subject. The man with the axe of "Conditional Immortality" to grind (and the doctrine has many forms) relies on the truth of his assertion "that not one in a thousand knows what the soul is." (Those who care to pursue the matter further may find some help in the note on 1 Thess. 5. 23 in *Thessalonians*, where the N.T. usage of the three words "body," "soul" and "spirit" is described.)

The "Concordant Version" makes a point of printing the text in an imitation of the lettering of the early manuscripts, which is known as "uncial" because of the large size of the letters. Moreover, this imitation is carried further in the reproduction of abbreviations, and in the absence of spacing between words, and of punctuation. These are merely pedantic features that are of no value whatever to the reader and that can only confuse him. Only those will be impressed who are ignorant of the history of the N.T. Text,

and of the medium through which God gave, and in which He has preserved, His revelation.

The value of the notes may be judged by that on Acts 20. 9, from which we learn that Peter raised Dorcas because of her good works, hence she is a "type" of the resurrection of Israel, whereas Paul raised Eutychus in whose case "merit has no place," hence his is a "type" of "the secret resurrection" "of the ecclesia which is Christ's body." Now this is not merely "vacant chaff well meant for grain," it betrays ignorance of God's ways with Israel. For not by works has any man ever been justified, as Paul proves by example in Rom. 4, and not by works but by faith did they of the O.T. "receive their dead" in figure, or in hope, as the writer of Hebrews declares (II. 19, 35).

I notice that while "Messiah," "God," and other titles of the Father and Son are printed with capital initials, "the holy spirit" appears three times in one paragraph in a note on Matt. 9. 34.

It is difficult to discover any helpful feature in this version, or any contribution to the better understanding of the mind of God as revealed in the Scriptures.

### "HIS" OR "ITS"

What is the correct rendering of Matt. 5. 13—"his" or "its"?

"THE Revisers' Preface to the Old Testament" has the following note: "It is well known that 'its' (Matt. 5. 13) does not occur in the Bible of 1611, and it does not appear to have been introduced into any edition before 1660. But it is found ten times in Shakespeare, and there is other evidence to show that at the time of the Authorised Version it was coming into use . . . there seemed no good reason . . . for refusing to admit it generally when it referred to purely inanimate objects."

It will be remembered: hat the Revisers were not permitted, by their rules, to introduce words not in use in English at the opening of the seventeenth century.

## II—THE OLD TESTAMENT

### LOT'S WIFE

Did Lot's wife actually become a pillar of salt?

GEN. 19. 26 states so, categorically. The Lord Jesus referred to this incident, "Remember Lot's wife" (Luke 17. 32). On what ground is the statement questioned? Is it necessary to add that "salt" is a word that covers much more than the domestic table condiment? Basalt, for example, "a dark green or brown igneous rock often in columnar strata" (*Oxford Dict.*).

### THE BOUNDS OF THE PEOPLES

What is the meaning of the words, "He set the bounds of the peoples, according to the number of the children of Israel"? (Deut. 32. 8)

THE tenth and eleventh chapters of Genesis contain the account of the increase of the descendants of Noah, and of how they were scattered abroad in the earth. In the third generation, in the family of Ham, there was born a son, Nimrod, who developed into a man of outstanding ability, and with ambition to match. He made himself king and established his capital at Babel. It became evident to him that feuds would inevitably arise among the people and thus his purpose to keep them from scattering and to exercise sovereignty over them as a unit would be defeated. So, under his leadership, the people said, "let us build us a city and a tower . . . and let us make us a name; lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" (11. 4). Apparently this tower was intended to be a rallying centre, in which there would be a strong patriotic appeal, such as is suggested by the now familiar words, "Fatherland" and "Mother country." But the plans of the sagacious and mighty Nimrod perished because "the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth; and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad

upon the face of all the earth" (11. 9) "every one after his tongue" (10. 5) thus securing the carrying into effect of His command to Adam to "multiply and replenish the earth, and subdue it" (Gen. 1. 28). All unknown to Nimrod, and to the families that were afterward to become "tribes and tongues and peoples and nations," the Lord over-ruled the confusion and out of it directed their steps to their allocated portions of the earth. The "bounds of their habitation" (Acts 17. 26) were fixed with respect to those whom God calls "My people, My Chosen," and to "the Glorious Land" where they were to dwell, the centre of the habitable earth, the keystone of His prophetic arch in it (Isa. 43. 20, Dan. 8. 9).

These early records are significant for the present day. Nimrod has had his successors in every age, the Nebuchadnezzars, the Cæsars, the Charlemagnes, the Napoleons, and Hitler: each seeking in defiance of God to reunite the human race under his own control. These have all failed.

It is indeed the purpose of God that "the Kingdom of the world" should "become the Kingdom of our Lord," in which all peoples of the earth will be reunited under one rule, but the overlordship of that kingdom He has reserved for "His Christ" (Isa. 11. 10, Rev. 11. 15). Meanwhile, amid the turmoil created by the ambitions of the ungodly, faith knows that "the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the lowest of men" (Dan. 4. 17).

#### MANASSEH OR MOSES?

In Judges 18. 30 it is said that the idolatrous priest of the tribe of Dan was "Jonathan, the son of Gershon, the son of Manasseh." It has been said that Moses was the name originally written but that the Jews altered it. Is this so? And when and why was it done?

IT is so. Rather than allow this incident to be associated with the revered name of Moses, Jews of a later age substituted the name Manasseh. R.V. has Moses.

## "CURSE" OR "BLESS"

Why does Mr. Newberry in his references give the marginal note "bless" while the Authorised Version gives "curse" in Job. 2. 9?

THE word *bar-rach* is ordinarily translated "bless" in both English Versions, as in 1 Kings 8. 14; Job 1. 10. But in 1 Kings 21. 10, 13, it is rendered in A.V. "blaspheme," and in R.V. "curse," with "renounce" in the margin. In Job. 1. 5, 11; 2. 5, 9, R.V. has "renounce" in the text, with "blaspheme" in the margin.

There are several ways of accounting for these differences. Gesenius supposes that the word originally meant to kneel (2 Chron. 6. 13, *beh-rech*), and as men kneel whether to curse or to bless, so it must be understood either way to suit the context.\* This meaning hardly suits Job 1. 5, however; it is unlikely that Job feared that his sons might have cursed God.

*Bah-rach* is also used of a salutation (1 Sam. 13. 10), and of a farewell (cp. Gen. 47. 7 and 10). Thus it may have come to mean to leave, turn away from. This, apparently, is the sense in which the Revisers understood it, hence their rendering "renounce" in some passages.

Again, it may be that there is here a figure of speech, a euphemism, the word "bless" being used where it is intended that "curse" should be understood. The Jews had an aversion to putting such a word as "curse" into immediate association with the Name of God or of the King. Thus, for example, the LXX probably preserves the original Hebrew text in 1 Samuel 3. 13, where it reads that the sons of Eli "did speak evil of God" (cp. Psa. 10. 3. R.V.).

The Sopherim, the editors of the Hebrew text as it has been transmitted to us, give a list of passages in which they say the word *kallal* (to curse) originally stood, but which, for the reason mentioned above, had been altered to *bar-rach* (to bless). It is curious, however, that Isaiah 8. 21, is not included in this list.

It may be useful to notice here the sound principle that, in any given case of difficulty in the Scriptures, all that can be attempted

\* Cp. "Out of the same mouth cometh forth blessing and cursing" (James 3. 10). In Luke 21. 5 "offerings" (lit. "blessings") is, in Greek, *anathēma*, whereas *anathema* is a curse.

is to give possible explanations, any one of which would be adequate to account for the difficulty, though no one of them might, in fact, be the actual explanation. So in this case; any one of these explanations will account for the occurrence of "bless" where "renounce" or "curse" is plainly the meaning, though it is hardly possible to say definitely which of them is the true one. My own inclination is to the last of these mentioned above.

### TURNED TO DESTRUCTION

What is the meaning of "destruction" in Psalm 90. 3?

THE rendering of the Hebrew word *dakka* adopted in the Jewish Version of the Scriptures is "contrition," with which the margin of R.V. "Heb. crushing" is in agreement. Etymologically, the English words are equivalents. The underlying thought is that God's dealings with man are intended to show him how frail he is, as David desired that he might be taught (Psa. 39. 4), and that thus he might learn the wisdom of self-judgment and humility. *Dakka* occurs again thrice, and in each place is rendered contrite: in Psa. 34. 18, "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit"; and Isa. 57. 15, "Thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose Name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

There does not seem to be any reason for attaching a different meaning to the word in Psa. 90. 3. As in Psa. 34, so here; in the reminder of his uncertain, and in any case brief, tenure of life on the earth, man should hear the voice of God saying, "Return, ye children of men." Return to what? Not to the dust, that they must do in any case; not to destruction, for God's dealings with men are intended to turn them to salvation; but to that realization of weakness apart from God that will constrain them to take hold of His strength, that they may make peace with Him (Isa. 27. 5).

Such passages as Matt. 5. 3, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," and 2 Cor. 12. 9, 10, "My power is made perfect in weakness . . . wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses . . . for when I am weak, then am I strong," readily suggest themselves as the New Testament complement of the words of the Psalmist.

## ASAPH THE PSALMIST

Which Asaph wrote the Psalms to which his name is attached?

THERE are twelve "Asaph" Psalms (50 and 73-83). Asaph, son of Berechiah, was a leading member of the orchestra formed at the request of David, and he seems to have had the leading vocal part, at least, in it (see 1 Chron. 15. 17, 19: 16. 5, 7) The bracketing of David's name with that of Asaph in 2 Chron. 29. 30 (where he is called "the seer," as David is said to have been a prophet, in Acts 2. 30, cp. Heb. 11. 32) suggests that the reference is to David's choir master. The Asaph mentioned in 2 Kings 18. 18, 37, as Hezekiah's court-chronicler is, of course, a different person. Nothing is said of him concerning praise. They were separated by about three hundred years.

The earlier Asaph may well have written some of the Psalms. Psalm 83 seems to have for its historical occasion the circumstances of 2 Chron. 20. Psalms 74, 79 and 80 suggest the conditions prevailing in the land and the city after the people had been carried into captivity. In these cases, of course, the author could not have been the person mentioned with David, nor he of Hezekiah's reign.

It is well to remember that we know only what we are told, and that speculation is vain where God is silent. Had it been necessary to interpretation that the reader should identify the writer, or writers, of these Psalms, the necessary material, we may be sure, would have been provided.

## RIGHTEOUS OVER MUCH

How are we to understand the command: "Be not righteous over much"? (Eccl. 7. 16)

THE answer to this question may depend to some extent on the view taken of the general character of the book in which it is found. Is *Ecclesiastes* revelation from God? An answer in the affirmative would involve us in difficulties, varied and formidable, if not insuperable. Besides, the Writer does not, either implicitly or explicitly, claim to bring a message from God. Indeed, he insists that he is considering life from the point of view of a leisured, well-informed person who has not received light or guidance other

than that which is available to all men "under the sun," the recognized key word to the book. Here is man at his best doing his best to disentangle the motives of men and to deduce from his experience some principles to guide men in the conduct of life. The task is too great for him; it had to await the "greater than Solomon" who, in the fullness of the time, came from the Father to teach, and to show in life and death how men may live, and how they may die, to the glory of God. (See Darby's *Synopsis*, p. 304, and Grant's *Facts and Theories*, p. 564).

If this is the right way to understand the book, then "command" is not an appropriate description of this sentence. When v. 16 is read with vv. 15 and 17, "be not over much wicked," it seems evident that the counsel is ironical, or even cynical; worldly wisdom, the opposite of walking by faith. By a little trimming, a little moderation in responding to the claims of absolute righteousness, men may, at times, escape loss and suffering. Only the fear of God will preserve the Christian from such counsel as this.

On the other hand, the Lord condemned those who tithed mint and anise and cummin, the while their over-much righteousness stands out in contrast to their neglect of weightier matters, such as judgment, mercy and faith and the love of God (Matt. 23. 23; Luke 11. 42).

The words may also be taken as a warning against the hypersensitiveness that grows out of, and encourages, a morbid state of mind. The effect is legality, soul-bondage, altogether contrary to the liberty of the children of God. Our Father is not a hard taskmaster, an austere person seeking to gather where He has not strawed. God is love, and he that is born of God will seek to walk so as to please Him, in happy confidence and unconstrained obedience.

#### "EVERLASTING BURNINGS"

"Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with the everlasting burnings?" (Isa. 33. 14). Is this to be understood as referring to God, as in Heb. 12. 29, or does it refer to the judgment of the wicked? Which is the correct interpretation?

**GOD'S** anger is against sin, always and everywhere. He is never indulgent to the sins of His people. Here Isaiah rebukes

Israel for their greed and for their complicity with evil doers. Is not God against them, His people though they be, as the fierce devouring fire is against the stubble? Verse 15 answers the question for they that behave themselves righteously, that speak and act honestly, that refuse fraudulent gain, that lend no countenance to any evil thing, have nothing to fear from the wrath of God which comes only on "the sons of disobedience" (Eph. 5. 6).

These words, and such words as these, are for the Lord's people in this age as in that, to remind them of the holiness of God and of His irreconcilable hatred of everything unholy. It is salutary to associate Matt. 18. 20: "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them," with Exod. 33. 3: "I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiff-necked people: lest I consume thee in the way."

It is fatally easy to "lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord in the midst of us? no evil shall come upon us" (Micah 3. 11) while our hearts are far from Him and our ways obnoxious to Him. For this cause judgment came upon Israel, as it will assuredly come upon us if we pursue our own selfish ends even while we call on the Name of the Lord.

Such passages as Isa. 33. 14 and Heb. 12. 29 are intended to exercise the consciences of the people of God, and to warn them of the danger of saying, "Lord, Lord," while they walk in disobedience to His Word.

### CREATING EVIL

In what sense does God create evil? (Isa. 45. 7).

**I**N the first place notice the challenge to the idols in 41. 23: "that we may know that ye are gods . . . do good or do evil"; that is, bestow a blessing or inflict a punishment. Notice, too, that whereas in Amos 3. 6, A.V. reads, "shall there be evil in a city?" R.V. has "shall evil befall a city and the Lord hath not done it?" The same Hebrew word is translated "afflictions" in the familiar Psa. 34. 19, and in 1 Sam. 10. 19, "calamities"; in Psa. 27. 5 it is rendered "trouble." In other passages moral evil is intended. But whether it means moral evil, as in Isa. 47. 11, or a calamity, as in the question, it is never difficult to distinguish the sense in which the writers use the word, which is of frequent occurrence.

## THE BRUISING OF CHRIST

Do the words of Isaiah 53. 10: "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him," mean that it gave God pleasure to inflict pain upon His Son?

WERE it not that there is evidence that this horrible slander upon God, Who is Love, is not infrequently repeated, one would shrink from printing the words. Does it gratify King George that a criminal lunatic should be "detained during His Majesty's pleasure"? No, the words mean "at His Majesty's will." Did God, Who takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, take delight in inflicting pain upon the Righteous One, His Holy and Beloved Son, in the very act of His supreme obedience to His Father? "Therefore doth the Father love Me, because I lay down My life . . . this commandment received I from My Father" (John 10. 17, 18). Is it less than blasphemy to charge God with sadism? In that hour of darkness "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses" (2 Cor. 5. 19). It was the will of God to bear our sins in His Son that so we might be delivered from them. This is what Isaiah means; it was His own choice, acting under no constraint save the constraint of His love, that His Son should bear our iniquities and that we should go free.

## JEREMIAH'S COMPLAINT

In what sense did the Lord deceive the Prophet? (Jer. 20. 7).

THE event proved that Jeremiah had not been deceived, though those who refused to hear his message could point to the Divinely-given test of a prophet (Deut. 18. 21, 22) and declare that, judged thereby, Jeremiah was none. In the end the event did vindicate him, but meantime faith was sorely tried. Here he is recording his own inner experiences, his thoughts in the hour of perplexity, when his heart was hot within him (Psa. 39. 3). From the beginning he had been reluctant to be God's messenger, alike because of his sense of his own insufficiency (1. 6) and because of the violent opposition of those to whom he spoke the word of the Lord (15. 10)

and because they derided and threatened him (26. 8, 9) and preferred the more comfortable words of the false prophets (27. 9; 28). The longsuffering of God delayed His punishments and this gave Jeremiah's enemies the opportunity for ridicule and abuse.

In this fierce and sustained trial Jeremiah's sensitive spirit was brought to the verge of rebellion; he would speak no more in the Name of the Lord. What if he had been deceived, if his detractors should be right and he mistaken about the voice of the Lord? No confirmatory sign had been vouchsafed; was it to be wondered at that men refused his bare word, and such a word, of impending disaster, of humiliation and shame? Then faith re-asserted itself; God was with him, and would vindicate His word and His servant who endured so much in the speaking of it. The Lord of Hosts tries His servants, but He does not desert them. So the end is a song of praise.

But though faith has won a battle, discharge from the war is not yet, for in the next paragraph the conflict with unbelief and fear rages more fiercely than ever. This time the triumph of faith is not recorded with the story of the wrestling with the powers of darkness, yet we know that "the end of the Lord" for Jeremiah was not different from what it was for Job (Jas. 5. 11). No man to whom God commits a message may expect an easy passage; with such, as with Paul, without there will be fightings, within there will be fears (2 Cor. 7. 5).

### THE SOUL THAT SINNETH

How are the words of Ezek. 18. 4, 20: "the soul that sinneth it shall die," to be understood?

THIS text is often misused, because it is misunderstood, and misunderstood because its context is not considered. Here *nephesh*, (soul), does not refer to the spiritual element in man; it is the equivalent of "person"—"the person who sins is the person who shall suffer for that sin." The question of eternal destiny does not arise here any more than it does in 1 Cor. 11. 30. The problem with which Ezekiel deals is the age-old problem of retribution. Its New Testament parallel is John 9. 1-3. The parenthetic addition of a few words may make this clear. The disciples asked "Rabbi,

who did sin, this man (in a previous incarnation, an allusion to the doctrine of the transmigration of souls) or his parents (before he was born, an allusion to the doctrine with which Ezekiel contends) that he should be born blind?"

The vivid proverb quoted by Ezekiel, "the fathers have eaten sour grapes, the children's teeth are set on edge," like all sayings that take hold of the imagination and so gain currency, does not require explanation. God answered the cynics, who reckoned that they might sin with impunity as someone else would bear the consequences. And this is His answer: "the man that sins himself shall bear the consequences of his wrong-doing." The emphasis in the sentence falls upon "it."

### III—THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST

#### SINLESSNESS OF CHRIST

Regarding Christ's sinlessness, was it that He was not able to sin, or was He able not to sin?

REPLYING to this question I cannot do better than make some extracts from Dr. H. C. G. Moule's *Outlines of Christian Doctrine*, pp. 61, 62, 63. He says: "One Person is in view throughout. . . . Two Natures are in view, the Divine and the human, in equally real relation to this Person. He is God. . . . He becomes man. . . . His Manhood, by its mode of becoming, namely, birth of a mother, is not an alien and strange manhood, but *solidaire* (one with) ours. . . . Its materials are created materials, and derived. *The Human Nature of the Son never, for a moment, stood or stands apart from His Divine nature, and person . . . the Manhood was, and is, never independently personal. It is better to say Christ is man, than Christ is a man . . . this absolute and necessary dependence of the Manhood does not mean the least unreality in the human experience of our Incarnate Lord. Here the phenomena of the Gospels are clear. Christ, as man, is seen to learn, to trust, to bear, to do, to contemplate past, present and future with perfect naturalness. Peter is in these respects no more human than Christ. In some sense, the solicitations of evil appear as a trial as real for Him as for His followers.*"

"On the other hand, He not only did no sin; He 'knew no sin' (2 Cor. 5. 21). Not for one moment did sin enter the human field of His being. In the highest sense He was incapable of sin; not physically (for every physical faculty and limit which in us, as men, is an avenue for temptation, and ministers to the sinning spirit, was in Him) but morally and spiritually. *In this respect His position is expressed by 'ability not to sin' . . . rather than by 'inability to sin'.* The Manhood of Christ is to be studied not in the abstract, but in its actual, absolute, necessary harmony with

His Deity, under His Divine Personality. Had the Manhood sinned, the Christ would have sinned in His Manhood; the highest moral impossibility. . . . In this subject we are reduced to the acceptance of revealed phenomena, as yet, at least, imperfectly harmonized in our thought. Our blessed Lord was really tempted. Our blessed Lord could not sin." (Italics are Dr. Moule's.)

### TEMPTATION OF THE LORD JESUS

Although our Lord Jesus Christ in the days of His flesh was "without sin," was it possible for Him to have sinned, that is, to have fallen under the temptation of the devil? If not, how was he "in all points tempted like as we are"? (Heb. 4. 15).

TESTIMONY is borne that the Lord did no sin, that in Him was no sin. These are statements of fact. The question whether He could have sinned is purely hypothetical, and is barely removed, if at all, from mere curiosity. Moreover, there is physical impossibility and there is moral impossibility.

One statement may be made: *it was possible for the Lord not to sin.* This, of course, differentiates Him from all other men, no one of whom from Adam has been able to resist temptation to act in self-will and contrary to the will of God. It contemplates the Lord as walking in the path of faith in instant dependence upon His Father, and therefore doing always the things that were well pleasing to His Father. Another statement is that it was not possible for Him to sin. This contemplates Him as God manifest in flesh. And since the Lord is God, was God from the beginning, the question is really, Could God sin? The answer to this is inevitable.

The writer of the Epistle to Hebrews adds "*sin apart.*" This qualifying phrase seems to mean apart from any actual, or potential, relation with, or participation in, sin. It is to be noted that the words are not "without sinning," a statement that may be true, and indeed should be true, of every believer. For if God has called us to holiness, He has made provision to enable us to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. But whereas there is that within the believer which responds to suggestions from without that would lead him to do that which is contrary to God, a traitor

within the citadel ready to betray it, the case was far other with the Lord. The prince of this world had nothing in Him. There was no traitorous instinct in that holy heart, nothing but an unwavering purpose to do those things that pleased His Father. He has lived our life and borne our burdens, so He knows by experience what we have to meet and to bear, and is able to sympathize, not with our sins, but with our infirmities, and to succour us in our trials.

#### THE DIVINE ONE WHO DIED

Is it Scriptural to teach that Christ as the Divine One died for us?

TWO simple propositions, readily recognized as Scriptural, provide an answer to this question. Christ is the Divine One, for He is the Son of God; that is, He is God (Matt. 16. 16; John 1. 1). Christ died for us; we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son (Rom. 5. 8, 10; Gal. 2. 20); the Son of God gave Himself up for us.

It is not easy to conceive how it could be more explicitly stated that Christ, the Divine Person, died for us. The statement that Christ died "as man" is unscriptural and misleading, just as is such a statement as that He wrought His miracles "as God." The Incarnation made the Death possible, indeed, for had not the Word "become flesh" He could not have undergone the experience of the Cross, and so could not have accomplished our salvation. Therefore it was because He had become Man that He was able to die (Heb. 2. 14). But to speak of the Lord as doing anything "as man" or "as God" (the phrases are not uncommonly heard, and are sometimes even seen in print) is to fall into the ancient heresy of "dividing the Person." There is but one Christ, and all He suffered and did He did and suffered in the unity of His Person. He was, and He is, God and Man, holding the two natures in one Person for ever.

#### THE BLOOD OF GOD

Does the language of Acts 20. 28 justify the expression "the Blood of God"?

THE ancient MSS. differ in the words they preserve in this verse, and competent scholars differ in their judgments of the evidence. Darby, following earlier writers, would read "God," and translate

"the assembly of God, which He has purchased with the blood of His own." But this raises the question, His own what? Apparently the answer is "His own Son," and Hort surmises that this word has dropped out of the text. In such a case, however, it is better to decline purely subjective considerations. On the whole, we shall do well to accept the text and translation of the A.V. and R.V. As to the meaning, Darby quotes Athanasius approvingly, that the expression "blood of God" was "an invention of the Arians." On the other hand, even such a sound writer as Warfield (*The Lord of Glory*) lets the phrase pass without dissent, as do also Pearson (*On the Creed*), and Liddon (*The Divinity of Our Lord*). It is to be observed, however, that these writers defend it only as implying the essential Deity of the Lord, not as a phrase desirable in itself. Doctrinally the position may be stated thus: He Who has ever been, Who is, and Who ever will be, "in the form of God" (Phil. 2. 6); that is, in all that is essential to, and inseparable from, Deity, became man in all that is essential to, and inseparable from, Manhood, and thus continues to be, and must for ever continue to be, one Person in two natures, Godhood and Manhood. He is both God and Man. Now whatever belongs to the Deity, and whatever belongs to the Humanity, of the Lord, belongs to the One and the same Christ. "The properties of both His natures are the properties of His Person" (Liddon).

While such expressions as "the Blood of God" and "the Mother of God" might be of use as counters in controversy, as against those who refuse the doctrine of the Deity of Christ, yet in themselves they are not desirable, for they err by excess, saying too much, and taken literally, would misrepresent the Incarnation of the Son of God; for, it is to be remembered that neither of the Father, nor of the Holy Spirit is it said that "He became flesh" (John 1. 14). The "mystery of God, even Christ" (Col. 2. 2) defies analysis and definition; as it transcends the range of human thought so it exceeds the scope of human language. The further we get from the words of Scripture the more liable we are to err. Birth is the equivalent of origin, but it is plain that God did not begin from Bethlehem. The shedding of blood is the evidence of death, but it is plain that God did not die at Calvary. Therefore, while it is true that He Who died in death was God, we should not

say that "God died." And while it is true that He Who shed His Blood was God, yet we should not speak of "the blood of God." And while it is true that He Who was born of Mary was God, yet it is surely not well to speak of Mary as "the Mother of God." These are not merely fine distinctions; they mark the difference between the reverent care of Scripture and the lack of care that goes just a little beyond what is written, and so is in danger of offending the spirit of reverence and awe (Heb. 12. 28) that should inspire all our thoughts, and inform all our words concerning "Christ . . . Who is over all, God blessed for ever" (Rom. 9. 5).

### THE END OF THE LAW

"Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. 10. 4). Does this mean that He is the object of the law to bring about righteousness, or the annulling of the claims of the law over believers?

THE word *telos* means "end" or "object" in one passage in the New Testament, probably in one only, 1 Tim. 1. 5, "the end of the charge," i.e. the purpose of the ministry of the Word among Christians is to produce in them a disinterested love, a good conscience, and sincere faith. This meaning does not give good sense in Romans 10. 4, however, for it is not clear what would be meant by a statement that "Christ is the object of the law with a view to righteousness." Certainly the law did not produce Christ! Christ first fulfilled the law in His life, thus establishing the justice of God's claims upon men therein expressed, and in His death He gave substance to its shadows, thereby obtaining eternal redemption (Matt. 5. 17; Rom. 3. 31; Heb. 9. 11-14). Moreover, when Christ died the law was superseded alike as a means of justification and as a rule whereby conduct might be regulated. The apostle, however, is alive to the danger that the deduction might be drawn that when the restraint of law is removed wrong-doing would abound. Hence he adds "unto righteousness"; it was in order to secure that in which law could only fail that Christ in His death abolished the law. The man who believes on the Lord Jesus is set right in his relation with God, and is taught and enabled to

“live righteously in this present age” (Tit. 2. 11). How Christ makes righteousness, rectitude of conduct before God, possible to the believer is not stated here; that subject is dealt with elsewhere in the epistle (see 6. 11; 8. 2-4).

## CHRIST IN THE GRAVE

Was the Lord Jesus in the grave three nights and three days?

**MATTHEW** 12. 40 was written after the resurrection by one acquainted with the facts. If any incongruity between the prophecy and its fulfilment existed, it must have been as evident to him as to us.

Other statements concerning the time to elapse between the burial and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus are thus worded, “the third day” (Matt. 16. 21), “after three days” (Mark 9. 31); “in three days” (John 2. 19).

It is a disputed point whether the crucifixion took place on Thursday or Friday of Passover week. That the resurrection took place before dawn on the following Sunday is common ground. Mary Magdalene, “while it was yet dark,” found the tomb empty. Assuming that by “day” and “night” complete periods of light and darkness are intended, even the longer period, namely, Thursday night and Friday, Friday night and Saturday, and Saturday night, covers only three nights and two days. That “a day and a night” may be considered as a unit of time is clear from 2 Cor. 11. 25, where “a night and a day” is *nuchthēmeros.*, lit. “nightday.” In that case it is probable that any part of a day and night, considered as a unit, may have been reckoned a day and night. Methods of reckoning time vary. The “after six days” of Mark 9. 2 is the same as the “about eight days after” of Luke 9. 28. “Three days and three nights” in 1 Samuel 30. 12 is equivalent to “three days ago” in verse 13.

The words of the travellers to Emmaus were spoken on Sunday: “it is now the third day since these things came to pass” (Luke 24. 21), that is, since the Crucifixion. Saturday, then, was the second day, and Friday the first, that is, the day of the Crucifixion.

## AFTER THE RESURRECTION

Is it possible to harmonize the accounts of the appearances of the Lord after the Resurrection?

**M**ANY attempts have been made, from Tatian's "Diatessaron," circa 170-180 to the present day, to harmonize the Four Gospels, with varying degrees of success. The difficulties so far have not all been overcome. And what is true of the whole is true also of the part with which the question is concerned. A connected narrative was not attempted by the Evangelists; the Four Gospels are confessedly incomplete, containing merely selections of the deeds and words of the Lord made with a certain purpose in view (see Luke 1. 1-4, John 20. 30, 31; 21. 25). But these fragmentary records are not inconsistent one with another. Had they been forgeries, the forgers would at least have taken pains to avoid discrepancies. The purpose that guided the selection of incidents for record was, apparently, to establish the identity of the Risen Lord with Him whom they had learned to know under the ordinary conditions of human life.

## THE ASCENSION

From which part of the country did the Lord Jesus ascend to heaven?

**M**ATTHEW does not mention the Ascension. Mark states the fact, but does not give particulars. John does not include it in his history, but see 6. 62; 20. 17. Luke in his Gospel describes the place as "over against Bethany" (24. 50). In Acts he states that after the Ascension the disciples returned to Jerusalem "from the mount called Olivet" (1. 12), leaving the impression, though not actually stating, that it was from that mount the Lord was "received up into heaven." Bethany and the Mount of Olives are close together. See Mark 11. 1, "Bethany, at the mount of Olives."

## CHRIST'S DEATH FOR SINNERS

Is it correct to tell a sinner that Jesus Christ died for his *sins* (not sin)?

**P**ETER declares that Christ "suffered (i.e. died) for sins," that is, it was in relation to the sins of men that He died (1 Pet. 3. 18). Had

not man been a sinner Christ had not died. Sins do not exist apart from a sinner, so Peter goes on to say that Christ, a righteous Person, died in behalf of unrighteous persons. Had men been righteous, in the sense in which Christ was righteous, there would not have been any necessity for Christ to die.

In Hebrews 10. 12 it is said that Christ "offered one sacrifice for (*hyper*, in behalf of) sins." Here again, by the figure metonymy, "sins" is put for "sinners": that is, He died not for men as men, but for men as sinners. Rom. 5. 6 may be compared, "Christ died for (*hyper*, in behalf of) the ungodly."

There remains, of relevant passages, Romans 8. 3: "God, sending His own Son . . . for sin." Here only in the New Testament is the singular sin, used in this connection. The preposition is *peri*, as in 1 Peter 3. 18; 1 John 2. 2; 4. 10. It means with reference to, in relation to. But here again sin does not exist apart from the sinner.

These passages are all concerned with the explanation of the death of Christ in relation to sin and sinners. They are all addressed to persons who had already responded to the Gospel proclamation, and who had received the forgiveness of their sins, and who had been justified from every charge in virtue of that death. They constitute no part of the message to unregenerate persons, such as have never trusted Christ for salvation.

When Peter preached at Pentecost he declared that since Christ had died and had been raised from the dead, remission of sins was to be obtained through faith in Him. Paul, reviewing the Gospel as he preached it says: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10. 9). But for saying to any person who has not trusted Christ: "Christ bore your sins on the Cross," or, "Christ died in your room and stead," there is no justification in Scripture. Such language is the appropriating language of faith which says: "Who His own self bare our sins in His body upon the tree . . . by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Pet. 2. 24).

## SUBSTITUTION

Do Rom. 5. 6, 8 and 1 Cor. 15. 3 imply that Christ was a substitute for sinners?

"SUBSTITUTION" is a theological term; it does not occur in Scripture, neither is any equivalent term found there. Whether Christ in His Death is presented in N.T. as a "substitute" for those who believe on Him is a matter of deduction, it is not so stated. The preposition that conveys the substitutionary, or vicarious, sense is *anti*, translated "in the room of" in Matt. 2. 22, but Matt. 5. 38 could not be read, "an eye as a substitute for an eye," neither was the shekel given "instead of" Peter (Matt. 17. 27). In Luke 11. 11 "instead of" is more nearly the idea, but this is certainly unusual in N.T.; there does not seem to be another place in which it is found. *Anti* "is the preposition of equivalence, denoting a price paid, or a balance made, as on the scales" (*Thessalonians*, Hogg and Vine, p. 185, see also p. 170). Hebrews 12. 16 is a typical case, one in which the meaning of *anti* is clear: "Esau, who for one mess of meal sold his own birthright" (that is, as an equivalent "for"). *Anti* is only found twice in connection with the Death of Christ (Matt. 20. 28, Mark 10. 45): "the Son of Man came . . . to give His life a ransom for many (*lutron anti poltōn*)," that is, as an equivalent for, in exchange for many. In these places the idea is that of equivalence rather than of substitution. The same is true of 1 Tim. 2. 6, where "ransom" is *antilutron*, a corresponding price, and "for" translates *huper*, "in behalf of." In Rom. 5. 6, 8; 1 Cor. 15. 3, the preposition is *huper*; it would do violence to the word to give either the meaning "as a substitute for," or "as an equivalent for" in these passages. 1 Peter 2. 24: "Who His own self bare our sins in His Body upon the tree," is not incapable of the idea of substitution, but, of course, much will depend on the definition of the word. However, it seems quite clear that there is no simple sense in which it could be said that Christ in His Death was a substitute *for sinners*; certainly Scripture has nothing to countenance such teaching. How much better it is to "hold the pattern of sound words"; theological terms, though some of them may serve a good purpose on occasion, lend themselves to polemics, and are fruitful in "disputes of words,

whereof cometh envy, strife, railing, evil surmisings, wranglings" (2 Tim. 1. 13, 1 Tim. 6. 4, 5), which things war against the soul.

That the death of Christ was vicarious, or substitutionary, that is, it was endured not on His own behalf but on behalf of those who believe on Him, is the plain, unvarying testimony of Scripture.

### THE MYSTERY OF THE CROSS

Is it Scriptural to speak of Christ dying on the Cross to appease an angry God?

SCRIPTURE certainly does not say so. The idea is not found in the Epistle to the Romans in which the Gospel of the grace of God is expounded. The believer is to hold fast the pattern of sound words; the nearer he keeps to those of the apostle the better for all concerned. The mystery of the Cross, at once the revelation of the love of God to sinners, and of His moral indignation against sin, which is an offence against His love, is such that it it not well to add to what He Himself has said about it in Holy Writ.

The idea of appeasing God is also absent from Scripture. The idolater aims at appeasing the wrath of his gods by offering to them that which, being of value to himself, he concludes must be valued by them. In contrast, the sacrifice at Calvary was of God's providing. It was God who gave up His Beloved Son for us, as we are told in Rom. 8. 32, "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all." Now, assuredly, this was not done by God to appease His own anger, but to "commend His own love to us" on the one hand, and on the other, to manifest His righteousness in His condemnation of sin even when it was borne vicariously by His own Beloved Son (Rom. 3. 25, 26). The Cross is the vindication of God's Throne against any charge of treating sin as less deadly than He has ever asserted it to be.

### THE BEGINNING OF THE CREATION OF GOD

What is the meaning of the words: "The beginning (*archē*) of the creation of God" (Rev. 3. 14), as they evidently refer to our Lord Jesus Christ?

THE title here given to the Lord might bear one or other of two meanings. It might be understood to declare that the Lord is the

first of God's creations, whether in time or in rank. In support of this interpretation Gen. 49. 3; Deut. 21. 17; Job 40. 19; Psa. 78. 51; 105. 36; Pro. 8. 22 (where the LXX, Septuagint, has *archē* in each case) might be quoted. Or *archē* may be understood of the author, the source, the active agent, that is, the "beginner," of all that God created. But if Christ were a created Being, however exalted, how could John write later in this Book (5. 13) that "every created thing" ascribed to God and to Him the selfsame honours? In 21. 6 *archē* is used of God, and in 22. 13 of Christ, as the context shows in each case. In 19. 10; 22. 9 the writer records how an angel recoiled from the worship offered to him on the ground that only to God can worship rightly be given. And in his Gospel he wrote: all things were made by Him. The second of these alternatives, therefore, must be understood to be its meaning here.

In the Apocryphal *Gospel of Nicodemus* Satan is called "the beginner (*archē*) of death and the root of sin." (This quotation, of course, is made only to illustrate the use of a word, not for any purpose of doctrine). This meaning of the word is as old as the eighth century, B.C. I mention this fact (see Thayer's *Grimm*) to anticipate a suggestion that this meaning has been invented for the purpose of giving an orthodox turn to the text. Nothing of the kind. It is a simple enough principle of interpretation that any ambiguous statement must be understood in harmony with the writings in which it occurs. To read the word here as though it were intended to include Christ within the ranks of creaturehood, would be to force a meaning upon it that would not only throw it out of harmony with other words of the same writer concerning Him, but would be to run counter to the testimony of the rest of the Scriptures to His essential Deity.

#### TRANSLATION OF MARK 13. 32

It is stated in a widely circulated book that Mark 13. 32 should read: "Neither the Son *if not* the Father."

IT is true that in Mark 13. 32 the word "but" represents two Greek words, *ei mē*, literally "if not." They are not, however, to be connected with the subordinate clauses, which are "not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son," but with the main clause, thus, "of that day or that hour knoweth no one . . . if not the

Father." They are, therefore, rightly translated "but." If the words were read as suggested the result would not be, "if the Son were not God as well as man," but "if the Son were not the Father." That the Son is God, the Scripture abundantly testifies, nor did His Incarnation in any way modify His Deity; but to identify the Son with the Father is to revive an ancient heresy, a form of Unitarianism. In Matt. 24. 36 many MSS. read: "neither the Son but the Father only." If the suggestion referred to were well founded, the meaning here would be: "If the Son were not the Father only," making its misleading character the more apparent.

Matt. 11. 27 provides a close parallel which, if translated after the same fashion, would read: "no one knoweth the Son if not the Father," but would anyone understand this to mean, "if He were not the Father?" John 9. 33, where the same idiom appears, is rightly translated, "if this Man were not from God, He could do nothing," yet it would be equally well rendered into English by, "But that He is from God, this Man could do nothing."

The suggested translation, then, so far from clearing up a difficulty, merely replaces it with a greater; one that, could the translation offered be justified, would destroy the foundation of the faith in respect of the nature of God, by confusing the Persons in failing to distinguish between the Father and the Son.

To say the least, it is extremely unlikely that Dr. R. C. Trench ever penned this exposition of Mark 13. 32 accredited to him. I have not found it, nor anything like it, in his writings, and the writer of the book from which your correspondent quotes has confessed himself unable to supply the reference. Two things it is well to keep in mind. The first is that whatever perplexity may arise out of these words of the Lord, it is clear they involve a claim to Deity. "Angel" is a general term to include the highest order of created intelligence, but He puts Himself beyond the angels and into immediate association with the Father. He shares not their nature, but His! The second is, let the worshipper of God in Christ cultivate humility of mind—let him be content to say at times, "I do not know." The finite cannot comprehend the infinite; there must always be that in the Word become Flesh to baffle the understanding. There is nothing to hinder the love and worship of the regenerate soul.

## "DESPOT" AS A TITLE OF CHRIST

Is "Despot" ever used of the Lord Jesus Christ?

IN Luke 2. 29; Acts 4. 24, *despotēs* is used of God, cp. Rev. 6. 10. In 2 Pet. 2. 1 the Lord Jesus is intended, for elsewhere He is said to have "purchased us unto God" (Rev. 5. 9). In Jude 4, following the Received Text, A.V. has "denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ," but R.V., following a corrected text (Nestle's, published by the B. & F. B. Society, may be taken as a sample), reads: "denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ." Here, again, we are indebted to the R.V. for giving publicity to this addition to the already abundant testimony borne by the A.V. of the New Testament to the Apostolic doctrine of the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

## DEITY OR DIVINITY?

What is the difference between the Deity and the Divinity of Christ?

NONE whatever. Both words are used to convey the truth revealed in Scripture that the Lord Jesus Christ is God, not indeed in the sense that He alone is God, but in the sense that with the Father and the Holy Spirit He is essentially, necessarily, God.

H. P. Liddon, aiming to establish this doctrine, called his classic work *The Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*. Of late years, however, certain preachers and writers have used the word "Divinity" in a way to suggest that the Lord is merely godlike in character, not God in nature and Person. For this reason those who wish to assert unequivocally the Godhood of the Lord have preferred "Deity" as less ambiguous than "Divinity."

## ONENESS OF THE FATHER AND THE SON

John 10. 30—"One" what?

CERTAINLY not "one person," for *hen*, "one," is neuter here and therefore is to be understood as "one Thing." The context is concerned with the love, purpose and power that guarantee the eternal security of the believer against all the machinations of his adversaries. This love, purpose and power, however, are not of

the Son only, they are of the Father also. But this complete identification of the Son with the Father in love, purpose and power is the result, or fruit, of Their community of essence. Augustine pointed out that the two nominatives to the plural verb "I and the Father (we) are One," excludes that identification of the Father with the Son which would involve the denial of the plurality of Persons in the Godhead (Sabellianism) and that the predicate, "one," is singular and neuter, thus affirming the unity of Father and Son in essential Being, and excluding their separation as into Creator and created (Arianism).

## IV—DOCTRINAL

### THE FALL

Is belief in the Fall<sup>of</sup> Man essential to salvation?

THE denial of any fall of man has always been made; in our time it is made on new grounds, that is all the difference. "Modern science," runs the modern catchword, "makes it impossible for thoughtful men to accept the story of the Fall." But really thoughtful men will think for themselves and will remember that the denial of the Fall is not modern at all. From the outset Pagan philosophy came into conflict with Divine revelation at this point. Thoughtful men will find themselves asking how the present conditions of human life came about. If there never was a Fall then it follows that man is as God made him, that God gave him the heart out of which, the Lord Jesus declared (Mark 7. 21-23), every evil thing proceeds. If, let it be said with reverence to His Holy Name, God could make nothing better than man as we know him, what hope is there for the human race?

Not only did the Apostles believe the Biblical account of the Fall to be historical; the fallen condition of men is one of the major pre-suppositions of their recorded speeches and of their writings. In most of his letters the Apostle Paul refers to the narrative of Genesis 1-3, and that not merely by way of literary allusion to adorn his style; his concern is with the substance of the record. The Fall is axiomatic with him. Refuse him his axiom and his argument has no longer any relation to life. In his exposition of the philosophy of the Gospel, incorporated in his letter to the Roman Christians, he accounts for the presence of sin in the world by the primal disobedience of Adam. Here are some of his words, they will be found in the latter part of Chapter Five, "Adam's Transgression"; "by the trespass of one (Adam) the many (his descendants) died"; "by the trespass of the one (Adam) death reigned." Then he argues that "as through one trespass the judgment came unto all

men to condemnation; even so through one act of righteousness the free gift came unto all men to justification of life." (vv. 12-18). This "one act of righteousness," whereby alone men are saved, is the atoning Death of the Lord Jesus on the Cross. If then there were, in fact, no such act of disobedience, no such trespass, what need, or room, is there for the one redemptive act of Christ?

In every age man must choose between the ideas current in his own day and the immutable revelation of the mind of God concerning Himself and His creatures. And by His choice he must abide.

Belief in the Fall of man is not a means of, neither is it a qualification for, salvation. The sole condition upon which salvation is offered to men is that they believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, Who died to make their salvation possible. But if a man refuses the testimony of history and experience that he is one of a fallen race, why should he seek to be saved? Why turn to a Saviour of Whom he has no need? The Lord Jesus came to seek and to save that which is lost, that which is fallen. But if man, in fact, be not fallen at all, neither lost, what a vain errand to come to find or to save him! The point is as vital to-day as it has always been. Christianity is a religion of hope for fallen creatures. If man be not fallen then Christianity is built upon a delusion, and to "flee from the wrath to come" is to be fearful of a danger that does not exist.

#### GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY AND MAN'S WILL

It has been stated publicly "that if not crucified, buried, and risen with Christ back in the eternal age, the individual is lost for ever" (Eph. 1. 4, 5; Rom. 8. 28-30). Is this so?

THE question of "election" in relation to the responsibility of men, like the problem of the permission of evil, is as old as man himself. Its interest is perennial. Tomes have been written on it, but no solution has ever been reached. It is too much to hope that it can now be settled by a few lines in these pages.

That there is an answer to the question we cannot doubt. Somewhere these apparently irreconcilable things meet to "kiss mutually." But it is not here or now. There are limitations to

the power of the human mind to deal with the things that pertain to God. Otherwise the Satanic lie would have been truth; man would be as God (Gen. 3. 5). The complete sovereignty of God over His creatures we can apprehend. So we can the freedom of man to use his will as he is free to use the other faculties wherewith God has endowed him. It is when we attempt to grasp the two things at one and the same time, that is, to comprehend them, that our powers fail us and we are baffled. We are not without compensation, however, for this limitation provides opportunity for what may, after all, prove to be the highest function of man—*faith*. Men want to know. God bids us trust and leave knowledge to a future day.

Scripture does not speak of the believer as having been “crucified, buried, and raised with Christ back in the eternal ages”; nor does it make any suggestion even remotely like this. It is well to notice, too, that Scripture never speaks of election or predestination to a place, heaven or hell. Here is Eph. 1. 4: “He chose us in Him (Christ) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before Him.” Rom. 8. 28 is similar: “Whom He foreknew, He also foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son.” Election in the Scriptures is to holiness, to Christ-likeness. Some make choice and become “Calvinists” or “Arminians.” The wiser way is to hold to all that is taught in Scripture, and to resist the temptation to select as the temperament of the individual may impel him.

The Scripture doctrine of election cannot be inconsistent with the Scripture invitation to the sinner. Every such invitation is given in good faith. Could God act otherwise than in good faith? We may, and should, with the same good faith and urgency, present the Gospel to those who hear us. And this is not the less because we know that only the Holy Spirit can convince men of sin. This He does by the presentation of Christ. Therefore let us boldly and sympathetically preach Christ in the fulness of His power and will to save. It is no small comfort to know that both roads lead to Christ. The electing grace of God leads to Christ. The will of man submitted to God also leads to Christ. Some day, with larger minds and with clearer light, we may see how these two factors in the life of man meet in Christ in Whom all things

are reconciled. Meantime, the secret of peace and of effective service is to trust implicitly in, and unhesitatingly preach, the wisdom and truth of the God Who is Love.

### THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST

Many orthodox divines speak of the imputation of "the righteousness of Christ" to the believers. Are they justified by Scripture in doing so?

QUOTATIONS from "orthodox divines" depend for their value on the Scriptures adduced in support of them. And these are not given. The reason is that they do not exist. One text frequently quoted is Rom. 5. 19: "Through the obedience of the One shall the many be made (or constituted) righteous." But the words must be taken with their context. "The obedience of the One" is defined in the previous verse, where the "one act of righteousness," the death of the Lord Jesus, is set over against the "one trespass" of Adam (R.V.). Neither does the life of Adam enter into the matter, nor the life of Christ.

The expression "the righteousness of Christ" does not occur in Scripture. Where the way of salvation is declared the mind is always carried directly to the Cross. This is the case four times in five verses (6-10 of this chapter, for example). Cp. 1 Cor. 15. 3.

Again and again it is asserted that Christ died for us; not once does any New Testament writer speak of Christ having "lived," or "kept the law" for us. If the Apostles had "felt that His life was imputed to the believer the moment he believes," to quote a writer, how comes it that no one of them ever says so, or ever gives expression to anything like this?

Believers are said to be "justified freely by His (God's) grace"; "justified by faith"; "justified by His (Christ's) Blood" (Rom. 3. 24; 5. 1, 9); but never is our justification associated with the "righteousness," or "lawkeeping" of the Lord Jesus. This idea belongs to theology, not to Scripture. 2 Pet. 1. 1 is not to the point at all. The words are rightly rendered in R.V.: "to them that have obtained . . . faith . . . in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ." They correspond with those of John: "He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins" (1 John 1. 9).

## THE DESTINY OF THE INSANE

When Christ comes in His glory, what will happen to those who are insane? (1) Through drink, etc., which has brought on madness; (2) Those born, or who through no fault of their own, have become insane.

WE may not attempt to be wise above what is written. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" God is love: He cannot deny Himself. The Bible is a practical, not a speculative Book, and while what it has pleased God to reveal therein may not satisfy even legitimate curiosity, nothing is lacking that is necessary to the faith and walk of the Christian. Such questions as these constitute a call to trust God. Even were an answer available, what possible difference would the knowledge make to us? We walk by faith, not by sight.

## ANIMALS AND "SOUL"

Is the word "soul" ever used of animals in Scripture?

HERE are some of the facts. In Gen. 1. 20, the first place of the occurrence of the Hebrew word *nephesh*, the reference is to animals; A.V. has "soul" in the margin. So also in verses 21, 24, 30, where R.V. has "living soul" in the margin. In 2. 19 it is again used of animals and rendered "creature." As *nephesh* is frequently found in this sense in Gen., Exod., and Lev., I need do no more than refer to the familiar Lev. 17. 11: "the life, or soul is in the blood" (R.V. margin).

The New Testament equivalent of *nephesh* is *psuche*, which is used of animals in Rev. 8. 9; 16. 3 (see R.V. margin).

The psychology of Scripture is a highly complicated matter; great care should therefore be taken to ascertain the facts, and much caution in accepting deductions drawn from any selection of the facts.

## FORGIVEN SINS

Since the sins we commit now are forgiven—if confessed—how can they be brought forward again at the Judgment Seat of Christ?

IT is fundamental that the believer is "justified from all things." Through Christ he has received "the remission of sins" (Acts 13.

38, 39). Such, therefore, "have boldness in (view of) the Day of Judgment; because as He is (beyond judgment, inasmuch as He endured what was due to sin at the Cross), even so are we in this world," that is, here and now, for what is true of Him is true also of all that are in Him (1 John 4. 17).

At the Judgment Seat the believer's "body of humiliation" will already have been "conformed to the body of His (Christ's) glory" (Phil. 3. 21). And this solely through the grace of God abounding to us, for grace alone secures our entry into the Father's House.

Now as children of God "we are ambitious . . . to be well-pleasing unto Him," and this for two reasons: "the love of Christ constraineth us," on the one hand; on the other, "we must all be made manifest before the Judgment Seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in (through, by means of) the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good (intrinsically) or bad": that is, good for nothing (2 Cor. 5. 9, 10, 14). Therefore we are to "walk worthily of God, who calleth you into His own Kingdom and glory," that Kingdom for which we suffer now (1 Thess. 2. 12; 2 Thess. 1. 5).

In His parables the Lord Jesus made the principle clear that loyalty in service here determines position in the Kingdom hereafter (Matt. 25. 14-30; Luke 19. 11-27). "Each man's work shall be manifested . . . because it is revealed in fire . . . if any man's work shall abide . . . 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 through fire" (1 Cor. 3. 10-15).

These two things must be kept apart in the mind as they are clearly distinguished in the New Testament; grace and the Father's House; faithfulness and the Kingdom and its rewards. It is with the latter the Judgment Seat of Christ is concerned. Only those who have a place in the former shall appear at the latter. These things were written for our learning, to give us confidence as children, to stimulate our loyalty, and to encourage us in faithfulness as servants.

## JUSTIFICATION

What is the difference between the justification of Matt. 12. 37 and that of Rom. 4. 25?

“BY thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” means that in the Day of Judgment, of which the Lord speaks (v. 36) the words of men will bear witness for or against them. Here and in Matt. 11. 19, Luke 10. 29, Rom. 2. 13, and, indeed, everywhere in the New Testament outside Paul’s Epistles (and his speech at Pisidian Antioch, Acts 13. 39), and often in them, justify means to vindicate, to maintain the rightness of the person charged, whether Paul, as in 1 Cor. 4. 4, or God, as in Rom. 3. 4.

In such passages as Rom. 3. 24; 4. 5; 5. 1-9, “justify” (and its equivalent “made (or constituted) righteous” 5. 19) bears a meaning found only in this apostle’s writings. In these places he uses it in a “forensic” sense, that is, as a legal term. The sinner stands condemned before a righteous judge. How can he be delivered from the penalty—death—attached to his guilt? The answer is that the Lord Jesus Christ by His death made it possible. He “bare our sins in His own body upon the Tree” (1 Pet. 2. 24), enduring there (and only there) the appointed penalty. In virtue of this, all who trust Him are justified, or put into right relation with God.

If a person has not been intrinsically righteous, then no power can alter the fact. Nevertheless, since Christ died for our sins, God can treat the sinner who believes on Him as a righteous person should be treated. So Paul asks, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? Shall God that justifieth (him)? . . . Shall Christ Jesus that died (for him)?” . . . (Rom. 8. 33). Thus the sinner is justified; not on the ground that his character has been changed as by some infusion of grace, but solely because Christ in His vicarious death endured what sin entails. Justice having no further claim upon him, God is justified in justifying the believing sinner (Rom. 3. 26).

## V—PROPHECY I

### A GOSPEL PROPHECY

In what manner was our Lord's prophecy in John 8. 28 fulfilled:

THE question, Who, then, is He? was recurrently on the lips of the Jews. He was a stumbling-block, an offence to them. The more part concluded that He was demon possessed, mentally deranged, or a servant of Beelzebub (Matt. 12. 24; John 10. 20). The Lord never satisfied the curiosity of unbelief on this or any other point. He Himself was the touchstone of their destiny (Luke 20. 18). If, seeing His work and hearing His words, they would not believe (that is, if they would not acknowledge Him to be their Messiah, their Saviour) they must die in their sins. He made a further claim. He spoke only the words His Father gave Him to speak, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah 50. 4 (see John 5. 19, 30). Unbelief had blinded their eyes, but a crisis was approaching that would open them. Once more He spoke of being "lifted up" with explicit reference to the lifting up of the serpent in the wilderness, clearly intending them to remember later that He had thus foretold the manner of His death and suggesting that that would take place under circumstances that would convince them of their unbelief (Num. 21. 8, 9; John 3. 14; 12. 32; 18. 32). In the event His death was marked by convulsions of nature, by an eclipse of the sun and, surely most significant of all to a Jew, by the rending of the veil of the Temple "from the top to the bottom" (Matt. 27. 45-51; Luke 23. 44, 45). The death of the Lord, moreover, had its sequel in resurrection and the descent of the Holy Spirit Whose function it was to convict of sin those who refused to accept the Lord Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God (John 16. 7-11).

At Pentecost, under the preaching of Peter in the energy of the Spirit, they were illuminated in mind, convicted in heart and constrained to cry out to the Apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"

No longer did they question His claim that God had sent Him, and thus His prophecy was fulfilled.

The words "I am" must be understood in harmony with the context in each place of their occurrence. In John 8. 58 they mean, "before Abraham was born I already existed." In John 9. 9 the erstwhile blind man said, "I am he," that is, he was the man who had been born blind and about whose identity there was some question. In our passage the meaning is, "I am the Messiah, the Anointed of God."

THE PAROUSIA AND THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN. If the Coming of the Lord for His saints (or, as some say, for His Church) is to precede the Coming of the Son of Man by the period of the Parousia, or Day of Christ, how would the Apostasy and the revealing of the Man of Sin affect the Thessalonian believers, who would be "caught up" before that time?

APPARENTLY the believers at Thessalonica had been subject to trial severe enough to cost some of them their lives; hence they had concluded that the Day of the Lord had already set in. Note the true reading and translation of 2 Thess. 2. 2, "as that the Day of the Lord is now present." The "Day of the Lord" is carried over from the Old Testament; the "Day of Christ," or "of the Lord Jesus," the phrase varies in its six occurrences (see page 66), belongs to the New Testament; they must not be confounded one with the other. The Thessalonians were naturally perplexed and needed the Apostle's reassuring word, "concerning the Parousia of the Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him." Certain unmistakable signs must precede the Day of the Lord; that he had told them when he was with them. But the new word from the Lord (1 Thess. 4. 15) showed them that believers will be "caught away" prior to that Day. Their trials, severe though they were, were not the token of the presence of the Day of the Lord, for such trials may be the lot of those who name the Name of the Lord at any time. They were assured that that Day had not come because the Lawless One had not yet appeared.

The purpose of the Lord Jesus to call His own to meet Him on His way to the fulfilment of the prophecies concerning His appearing in glory was revealed to them alone; it is a family matter, forming no part of their testimony to the world, but intended for their comfort in bereavement (1 Thess. 4. 18). The difference between the use of the third person in such passages as Matt. 16. 27, and the use of the first and second in John 14. 3, is significant in this connection.

### "PAROUSIA" AND THE DAY OF THE LORD

1 Thess. 5. 2, 4. Assuming that Christians are to be removed from the earth before the Day of the Lord arrives, why should it be necessary to assure them that that Day shall not overtake them "as a thief"?

WHILE it was necessary that the Apostle should communicate to the believers at Thessalonica the new revelation he had received from the Lord concerning the manner of their deliverance from the wrath to come upon the world, it was not necessary to write to them concerning the effect upon the world of the Day of the Lord. His readers knew perfectly for he had told them, that "when they are saying, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall in no wise escape." The third person here is significant, in contrast with the second person in chap. 4. 13-18, and with the verses that follow chap. 5. 4. It was sufficient to remind them of what they already knew in order to warn them once more of the danger of conformity to an ignorant and careless world.

### TWO STAGES IN THE COMING OF THE LORD

How can there be two stages in the Coming of the Lord in view of 1 Thess. 4. 14: "them also that are fallen asleep through Jesus will God bring with Him?"

THE phrase "two stages in the Lord's Coming" may lead to confusion in the minds of some people. The phrase "the Coming of the Lord," though generally used in a comprehensive sense, is properly His appearing in power and glory for the overthrow

of His enemies and for the establishing of His Kingdom upon the earth (Rev. 11. 15). This is His objective and should be ours. His purpose is our hope (Heb. 10. 13).

When God "again bringeth the Firstborn into the inhabited earth" (Heb. 1. 6, *m.*), He (God) will bring "the dead in Christ" with Him, and this He will do "through Jesus." He Who in obedience to God laid the foundation of our salvation at Calvary, will be the Agent of God in the consummation of that salvation. Standing alone the Apostle's words would have puzzled rather than comforted the bereaved Thessalonians. The necessary elucidation is immediately forthcoming in a fresh revelation given by the Lord for that occasion, and henceforward for the comfort of all in like case. This "word from the Lord" is not a repetition of any that had preceded it, nor even a variation of any earlier prophecy; it declares a purpose never before disclosed. It is true Paul had assured the Thessalonians when he was with them that they would be delivered from the wrath wherewith the earth must be visited, but the manner of that deliverance had not then been revealed (1 Thess. 1. 10).

The new revelation is that before wrath falls upon the world at the "appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ," and in order that when He does so appear we may be "manifested with Him," "the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven" and those who have believed on Him, the living and the dead alike, shall be "caught up" (*harpazo*, raptured, that is, snatched away) "to meet the Lord in the air." The "rapture of the saints," or "of the Church," is thus seen to be not the Coming of the Lord, but our going to be with Him, the necessary preliminary to His coming "in power and great glory" (1 Thess. 4. 13-18, Col. 3. 4, Tit. 2. 13).

From the beginning the Thessalonian saints had been taught by the Apostle that they were "to wait for His (God's) Son from heaven . . . Jesus, which delivereth us from the wrath to come." The same word in the same tense (it is a present participle) is found only in Rom. 11. 26, where it is translated "the Deliverer" in R.V.,

as it surely should have been translated in 1 Thess. 1. 10 also. It thus becomes clear that the reference is not to the Cross and the deliverance from guilt accomplished there, but to the deliverance from wrath at the Coming of the Lord in power and glory. So much he was able to tell them when he was with them, but how that deliverance would be accomplished was not yet part of his message. Subsequently, when he wrote his first letter, he revealed the secret—before He reached the earth, they would be called “to meet the Lord in the air.” None the less not the rapture of the saints, but the “appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ,” is our proper hope; the “Rapture” is the necessary preliminary thereto.

### CHRIST'S RETURN

2 Peter 3. 12, in A.V., “looking for and hastening unto (margin, hastening) the coming of the Day of God”; in R.V., “earnestly desiring the coming (margin, hastening the presence) of the Day of God.” Can we in any way influence the date of Christ's return?

THE word used here is *spendo*, which occurs also in Luke 2. 16; 19. 5, 6; and Acts 20. 16; 22. 18, not elsewhere. In these places it is intransitive, and the meaning is plain. In 2 Pet. 3. 12, however, it is transitive, it has an object, hence the difficulty. According to the lexicon of Abbott-Smith, there is equal authority in extra-Biblical Greek usage for both text and margin of R.V.

We are thrown back, then, on the analogy of Scripture. Are there other passages that teach plainly that we can “hasten” the “presence of the Day of God”? (I understand this expression to mean the ultimate condition of the Universe; the first step toward which is to be the fulfilment of 1 Thess. 4. 15-17). No passage suggests itself as justifying us in supposing that we can influence the date of Christ's return. That we should earnestly desire the Day is clearly involved in many passages, of which only 2 Thess. 3. 5, and 2 Tim. 4, 8 need to be mentioned here. The rendering in the text of R.V. gives the best sense, that in keeping with other Scriptures.

## WAS PETER IGNORANT OF THE "RAPTURE"?

Peter presents the hope of the Christian in these words, "looking for and earnestly desiring the coming (*parousia*, presence) of the Day of God" (2 Pet. 3. 12, 13). If the Thessalonian saints were awaiting the "rapture," was Peter unaware of this?

THE words of Peter here quoted set out the ultimate object of God in His dealings with men; and refer to "the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets which have been since the world (age) began" (Acts 3. 21). He was not at the moment concerned with intermediate events. No one passage of Scripture covers the whole ground, or mentions all that is to take place. See, for example, how much is passed without notice between verses 23 and 24 of 1 Cor. 15. Indeed, the first recorded prophecy is a prophecy of the ultimate event, the bruising of the head of Satan, his final overthrow, which is only accomplished when he is "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone" (Gen. 3. 15; Rev. 20. 10).

That Peter does not mention the Virgin Birth, does not mean that he was ignorant of it. So also that he does not mention the "rapture" is no ground for assuming that he was ignorant of it.

INTERVAL BETWEEN RAPTURE AND THE RETURN. Is it stated in Scripture that there are two stages in the Coming of the Lord, divided by a period of not less than seven years?

THE answer is, of course, in the negative. If there were such a statement it would be culpable to ignore or to deny it. Considering God's method in revelation in the Scriptures what should we expect? He has not chosen to reveal His mind concerning the future in a way that would relieve us of the responsibility for investigation. His method calls for exercise on our part, for the comparing of Scripture with Scripture. Prophecy is addressed to the spiritual, not to the natural intelligence. If the Prophets "sought and searched diligently . . . searching what time or what manner of time" their own words pointed to, how much more is it incumbent upon us to "search the Scriptures" that we may have

“the mind of Christ”! God speaks by divers portions and in divers manners, “here a little, there a little,” as His people are able to bear it (Isa. 28. 10, 13; John 16. 12; Heb. 1. 1). To this end the method as well as the contents of the Divine revelation must be studied, otherwise our interpretations will be at fault.

The first prophetic word is the last to be fulfilled—the final overthrow of Satan by the glory of Christ. The second event foretold was fulfilled nearly two thousand years ago—the sufferings of Christ culminating at Calvary. The Prophets spoke of both, but none of them suggested that there would be an interval between these fulfilments, though an interval there has been. When the Lord spoke of coming to receive His own to be with Him where He is (John 14. 3), and when Paul spoke of our deliverance from wrath (that is, from the judgment of God upon the world: 1 Thess. 1. 10) the manner in which these promises are to be made good was not declared. That was revealed for the first time in the words of Paul in 1 Thess. 4. 13-18; we are to be “caught up” (“raptured”), that “that day” should not overtake us.

The effect of the “Rapture” is to take believers to be “with the Lord,” and this being with the Lord is called, in Scripture, “the Parousia” and “the Day of Christ,” and, as the context indicates in each occurrence of the latter phrase, and in many cases of the occurrence of the former word, this period covers “the Judgment Seat of Christ,” which is also called “the Judgment Seat of God” (Rom. 14. 10; 2 Cor. 5. 10). All that need be insisted upon here, however, is that “the Parousia” and “the Day of Christ” refer to a period, not to an event; there is duration, as the words themselves indicate, but to discuss the possible length of that period would unnecessarily complicate these notes.

#### REIGN OF CHRIST

Rev. 20. 4. “They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” Do these words limit the reign of Christ to the Millennium? Or do they merely limit the reign of these particular persons to the Millennium?

**J**OHAN describes certain persons who had been faithful to Christ even unto death. To them is given the peculiar honour of reigning

with Christ during the period of Satan's incarceration in the Abyss. With what takes place after the release and final subjugation of Satan this passage is not concerned; it fixes no limit, whether in respect of these persons or of Christ.

The Millennium is to the Eternal State what the portico is to the temple which is entered by it. There is no suggestion here or elsewhere that Christ's reign will be interrupted by the rebellion of the liberated Satan. A rebellion is an unsuccessful revolution; a revolution is a successful rebellion. A rebellion is but an incident in a reign, it does not bring the reign to an end. The rebellion organised by Satan is not an exception; he is defeated and is finally reduced to impotence, never again to work mischief in God's Kingdom.

### SALVATION AFTER THE RAPTURE

If there is another chance to be saved for those left on the earth at the time of the Lord's Coming, why do we stress the point that when the door is shut there is no possibility of entering in?

IT is a common confusion to speak of the Rapture of 1 Thess. 4. 17 as "the Coming of the Lord." The Rapture ushers the saints into the *Parousia* or Presence of the Lord, shortly before His appearing in glory, which is properly His Coming. The Rapture does not close this age, but is an event in it, the first of the series that brings in the new, or Millennial age. Joel, as quoted by Peter at Pentecost, declares that up to "the day of the Lord," that "great and notable day . . . whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2. 20, 21). The Second Advent, or Coming, of the Lord is His coming to the earth in power and great glory for the overthrow of His enemies and the establishing of His Kingdom. At that time those who have shared in the Rapture, God will bring with Him (Col. 3. 3, 4; 2 Thess. 2. 7-10).

We rightly reason that the death of the individual believer cannot be the Lord's Coming, as that is our going. So neither can the Rapture of the saints be His Coming, for that also is our going to be with Him. The shutting of the door, then, is not the Rapture, but the appearing of the glory of our great God and

Saviour, Jesus Christ" (Tit. 2. 13). Until that moment, as it is written, "whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord shall be saved", though salvation here does not necessarily mean inclusion in "the Church which is His (Christ's) Body" (Eph. 1. 22, 23).

It is absurd to talk of a second chance after the Rapture, for whether any now living will still be on earth when that takes place only the Lord knows. Not even now in this present day is a second chance guaranteed to any one. The present moment is the only one any man can count upon, or call his own.

#### ETERNAL STATE AND MILLENNIAL KINGDOM

On what ground is Rev. 21. 1-8 interpreted as of the Eternal State, and verse 9 and what follows as of the Millennial Kingdom?

AS I understand the passage, the Holy City of verse 10 is identical with that of verse 2. John saw the City, and as he gazed upon it the angel offered to show it to him, that is, in detail, as in the following verses. Each City comes out of heaven from God; in the former the epithet "new" is applied. "New" here is *kainos*, new in kind, different in character from the old. In verse 10 "new" does not appear, indeed, but the epithet "holy" marks the difference between this symbolic City and the literal Jerusalem, "where also the Lord was crucified." In verse 2 the City is compared to a bride on the eve of her marriage; in vv. 9, 10, the City is "the Bride, the wife of the Lamb." The "made ready" of verse 2 is expanded into a description of the glory of the City from verse 11 onward. The glories of the City are symbols of the character of its inhabitants. The ancient Latin proverbial saying may be compared, "a city is its men." In whatever way 2 Pet. 3. 12 may be fulfilled, we look for new (*kainos* again) heavens and a new (*kainos*) earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

## VI—PROPHECY II

### THE LAST TRUMP

Is the "last trump" of 1 Cor. 15. 52, the trumpet sounded by the Seventh Angel in Rev. 11. 15?

IT is not possible to fix with any approach to accuracy the date of the Revelation; it may be assumed with confidence, however, that 1 Corinthians was written much earlier. There is no likelihood that the Apostle Paul knew of the visions of John, visions seen, in all probability, long after Paul had died.

The trumpets, like the vials and the seals, are figures, not actual instruments. Moreover, the same or similar symbols used by different writers do not necessarily refer to the same thing or event; they should be interpreted independently. For example, in Isa. 31. 4, Amos 3. 8, the lion is a symbol of Jehovah, and in Rev. 5. 5 of the Lord Jesus, but in 1 Pet. 5. 8 of "your adversary the Devil," and in 2 Tim. 4. 17 of the Roman Emperor, Nero. Confusion is bound to result where this simple principle is forgotten or ignored. For example, the whole number of believers from Pentecost to the Rapture is called by Paul "the Church which is His (i.e. Christ's) Body" (Eph. 1. 22, 23). John has the word "church" but once (3 John 10), and then not in this sense. He speaks of the Lord under the figure of a lamb (*agnos* in the Gospel, *arnion* in the Revelation). Paul never does, neither does he use the symbol of a bride. The phrase "the Bride of Christ" is not found in Scripture, and as it combines the figures of different writers, its use is to be deprecated.

There does not seem, therefore, to be adequate ground for identifying "the last trump" of which Paul speaks to the Corinthians with that which John tells us ushers in the scene in which the kingdom of the world becomes the Kingdom of our God and of His Christ. The language used, the scenes described, the events and people involved, are dissimilar. The passages have just one feature in common, the appearance in both of the word "trumpet"; surely a precarious foundation for a theory of their identification.

## THE APOSTLES' EXPECTATION

Did the Apostles expect the Lord to return during their lifetime?

THE Apostles were not speculating visionaries but practical men, whose great concern was that the lives of the converts should be worthy of the Lord and of the Gospel. Their outlook upon the future may be gathered from the language of the Apostle Paul in his second letter to Timothy. He "loved the appearing of the Lord" (4. 8) even as he had written some time previously, "our citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory" (Phil. 3. 20, 21). Yet death is imminent, for he says: "I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is come" (4. 6). This is probably to be understood of the possibility of an adverse decision on the part of the Emperor, a sentence of execution, notwithstanding his temporary escape therefrom (4. 17). And yet, there was also the possibility that "the Lord would deliver (him) from every evil work (that is, from such decision?) and would save (him) unto His Heavenly Kingdom" (4. 18). In such a context "save" can hardly refer to his security in Christ, but to the fulfilment of his hope of "the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ" (Tit. 2. 13) words written, presumably, not long before.

If the Lord may appear, and if death may be his lot, the alternatives are not yet exhausted. There is also the prospect of a winter, in prison or out of it, and for that he would not be unprepared. He will be glad of companionship, so he wishes Timothy to join him, and of some personal attendance, so let Mark come too; it will be cold, let him have the warm garment he had left with a friend at Troas; he will wish to spend the time in profit, so bring the books and parchments also (4. 11, 13, 21).

If the Apostle says, "We that are alive, that are left unto the Parousia of the Lord" in 1 Thess. 4. 15; in 2 Cor. 4. 14 he says that God "shall raise up us also with Jesus." Thus he associates himself with both the living and the dead at the Rapture; hence he may not be understood to commit himself to a conviction that he

would then be in either state. In the following chapter (2 Cor. 5. 2, 3, 6, 8) he declares himself to be of good courage in the face of death, though he does not desire it, as he desires the Rapture and the consequent conformity to the "body of the glory of the Lord." Plainly he had no knowledge of the will of the Lord for himself. He did not certainly expect the Lord in his lifetime, neither did he know that He would not come during it. The essential thing was that he was ready for any contingency, winter or death, but what he desired was that the Lord might come to take him Home.

Holiness, not speculation about times and seasons, is the purpose for which the hope has been set before us. This end has not been furthered by sentimental declarations that the speaker, or writer, "feels" that the Lord's coming is near, or that the rise of dictators, or other developments, in Europe is an indication that now at last He comes. This kind of language has been heard in every century, almost in every decade of the present age, but never, I judge, to the progress of true spiritual life. Nothing that transpires in Europe or elsewhere can bring the Coming of the Lord nearer to the Christian than does His own word "I come again . . . be ye also ready."

### THE COMING OF THE LORD

Why has Christ not come when His Coming was said to be nigh, so many years ago? "The Coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (James 5. 8). What answer could be given to any who may say that the statement in question is over 1900 years old, and the "Coming" has not yet taken place?

**I**F the questioner is an opponent of the Gospel let Peter answer him, 2nd Epistle 3. 3-7. If he is a perplexed believer let him read the verses that follow, 8-13, and let him further be assured that what was true in Paul's day is true still, and nearer to its fulfilment: "Now is salvation nearer to us than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand" (Rom. 13. 11, 12).

## UNITY OF KNOWLEDGE

Is it possible, while seeking to maintain "the unity of the Spirit," to seek also to "attain unto the unity . . . of knowledge" in the prophetic word? (Eph. 4. 3, 13).

IT may be well to notice first that the unity of the Spirit is a unity of life, and therefore is maintained by Him Who makes it. The exhortation is to Christians to maintain that unity under a certain condition, namely, "in the bond of peace." Further, the unity of knowledge of which the Apostle speaks is knowledge (*epignōsis*—full knowledge) of the Son of God, that is, of Christ Himself. Now He declared that His qualification to teach lay in His gentleness and lowliness of heart (Matt. 11. 29). In His school gentleness and lowliness are the first lessons to be learned.

The newly born has life as truly as ever he will have it, but knowledge is only acquired by labour. Yet if any man supposes that he knows anything let him remember that he knows nothing as he ought to know it, and that what he does know he has learned from God (1 Cor. 1. 5; Phil. 3. 15). Truth is one, but truth is infinite, and apprehension of truth is partial and differs as capacity and opportunity differ. Variety of judgment is the essential condition of the preservation of truth among men—how often has it been found true that the heresy of yesterday is the orthodoxy of to-morrow! The ministry of the Spirit does not secure uniformity of opinion, for that would forbid growth in knowledge; but where He is allowed to lead us into fellowship with Christ, it will produce in us that love and mutual esteem which expresses itself in courtesy and which is not based upon, but is tested by, difference of temperament, and consequent variety of insight and outlook.

We have surely sinned against the Lord and against our brethren when we have imputed motives to, and allowed ourselves to speak with asperity of, those who differ from us, not in the acceptance of Scripture but in its interpretation. Shall we not remember the "gentleness and forbearance of Christ"? (2 Cor. 10. 1), and give to others what we desire to have for ourselves, credit for a desire to please the Lord by entering into the purpose of God as it is revealed to our warped and altogether inadequate minds in His most perfect Word? When we proclaim ourselves as of any school, followers

of any teacher, whosoever he may be, we "are yet carnal . . . and walk after the manner of men" (1 Cor. 3. 3).

### HIS ENEMIES HIS FOOTSTOOL

Inasmuch as Jehovah has said to our Lord Jesus Christ, "Sit Thou on My right hand, till I make Thine enemies the footstool of Thy feet," and as Peter understands this to mean that the heavens must receive Him until "the times of restoration of all things," can it possibly be that Christ the Obedient One will come to take His Church before the time of Jehovah's expressed will and desire?

**I** PRINT the question as it reaches me, though with some reluctance. The suggestion that any person disagreeing with the questioner must of necessity stigmatize the Lord as disobedient is unworthy, as surely he will acknowledge if he reads it in cold print. More of the spirit of investigation, the desire to learn, less of the spirit of controversy, would better become us all, and verily we have all been guilty herein. Let us learn to do well!

There is nothing whatever about the Church either in Psa. 110. 1, or in any of its quotations in the New Testament. Moreover, the rest of the Psalm makes evident that these words are not to be understood to mean that the Lord Jesus will come to a world already subdued to Him. He Himself is to overcome His enemies under the authority, and in the power, of God. Such Scriptures as Psa. 2. 7-12, and 2 Thess. 1. 7, 8; 2. 8, are sufficient to establish this. The prophecy does not mean, then, that the Son is to come to a victory already won; He comes to win that victory.

A not uncommon confusion in the minds of Christians is that the Rapture of the saints is the Coming of the Lord, "the Second Advent." But Scripture does not so teach, and a little consideration will show that this cannot be the case. There are many who suppose, notwithstanding the Lord's words in John 21. 18-23, (which could not be understood to mean "if I will that he live until he dies!"), that death is the coming of the Lord for the Christian. To this supposition the evident answer is that death is not the Lord's coming but our going. And the same argument holds good where the Rapture of the saints is taken as the coming of the Lord. That

Rapture (the word means a removal by force) is not the Lord's coming but our going, as 1 Thess. 4. 16, 17 expressly states.

The words "Sit Thou at My right hand" should not be taken in a physical sense, as the question implies, as though the Lord sits literally upon a literal throne, nor may leave it until a certain signal is given! Stephen's words, and John's experience in Patmos, should be sufficient to warn any reader against so doing (Acts 7. 55; Rev. 1. 13). The right hand of God is a symbol for the place of honour and authority (Heb. 1. 3; 2. 9; 1 Pet. 3. 22). Will the time ever come for Him either to surrender, or to be deprived of, these? To ask the question is to answer it; they are His eternally.

Old Testament and New alike consistently point to "the appearing of 'he glory'" of Christ, and the establishment of "the Kingdom of our God and of His Christ," as the objective of the purposes of God for the world, and therefore, as the "blessed hope" of the believer. But there is nothing in any of the large number of passages that deal with the subject to make it inconsistent with them that the dead in Christ, and the living who are in Him, should be "caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air," as Paul declares will be the case (1 Thess. 4. 13-18). That this must take place before His appearing in glory is confirmed by Col. 3. 4: "when Christ, Who is our life, shall be manifested then shall ye also with Him be manifested in glory." In the earlier revelations there is room left for revelations to be made later, and no later revelation is out of harmony with those that preceded it.

It may contribute to the clarification of the point at issue if I suggest here that it depends on the answer to be given to such queries as: Will the meeting of the Lord and His people "in the air" have duration? Will it occupy time? Or it may be put thus: Is the Parousia of the Lord a period? Are the Parousia and the Day of Christ alternative descriptions of the same event? My own answer to these queries is in the affirmative.

Concentration upon this point would, perhaps, lead to a healthy modification of certain current statements, and might also result in an increase of brotherly love and mutual respect, where unity of judgment is not yet attained. The fact is that this generation of meeting-goers is not a Bible-searching generation, and therefore, many statements made in public are accepted as Scriptural, while

in fact they are not so at all. It was to a church of young believers, none of whom had had more than a few weeks' acquaintance with revealed truth, the Apostle wrote "test all teachings; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. 5. 21).

### THE BLESSED HOPE

What is the "blessed hope" of Titus 2. 13?

IT is essential to read the words as they are rendered in R.V. (with which Darby is in verbal agreement) "the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." Incidentally, we may notice how much more definite is this translation in its testimony to the doctrine of the Deity of the Lord, than is that of A.V. The same is true of 2 Pet. 1. 1.

In the Greek, as in this translation, there is but one article with the two words "hope" and "appearing"; thus they are closely connected. Then they are separated by a conjunction (*kai*) which not infrequently is followed by a word or phrase explanatory of that which precedes it. In such cases, and this is one of them, it is equivalent to "namely." Acts 23. 6 is an example, "the hope and (namely the) resurrection of the dead"; Rom. 1. 5 is another, "grace and (that is to say) apostleship." The "blessed hope" of the Christian, therefore, is not the Rapture but the "appearing of the glory," to which the Rapture is the necessary preliminary.

### THE RAPTURE AND THE RETURN

Are there any words of the Lord recorded in the Gospels to show that there will be an interval between His coming for the Church and His descent to the earth to set up His Kingdom? Does not Matt. 13. 30, 41, 47-50, prove the contrary, namely, that the unsaved are punished and the saved rewarded at the same time?

THERE are no such words recorded in the Gospels. In fact, the Lord did not speak of the Rapture at all. The time was not yet ripe for that revelation of His purpose, which is in complete harmony with all that He did say, as, for example, in John 11. 25, 26; 14. 1-3. The first explicit reference to the Rapture is in 1 Thess.

4. 13-17. It is important to notice that the time element is often completely ignored in prophecy. For example, in Gen. 3. 15 there is no indication that any interval was to elapse between the beginning of the enmity between the woman and Satan, and the bruising of the heel of the Seed, and the bruising of the head of Satan. Yet about four thousand years elapsed between the fulfilment of the first part of the prophecy and the fulfilment of the second, while well nigh two thousand years more have run their course and the bruising of Satan's head is not yet. See Rom. 16. 20. For another illustration see Isa. 11. 1-9, where the Prophet passes from the circumstances of the Lord's coming in humiliation to those of His coming in glory, as though the latter was to follow immediately upon the former. Everything intermediate, including the Rapture, is passed over in silence. The opening words of Isa. 9. 6 are possibly to be taken in the same way; "the Child" was born in Bethlehem, "the Son," upon whose shoulder the government is to rest, still awaits the fulfilment of Psa. 110. 1; Heb. 1. 6.

A New Testament illustration of the same principle is found in John 5. 28, 29, where the resurrection "of those who have done good" unto life, and the resurrection of those "that have done (practised, *margin*) ill" unto judgment, are spoken of in the same sentence, yet subsequent Scripture shows that a thousand years are to intervene between them (Rev. 20. 4-6, 11-15).

The same consideration makes it clear that the expression "the last day," used only by the Lord, and by Martha, evidently quoting His words, is a period including the thousand years of Rev. 20; compare John 6. 39, 40, 44, 54, with 11. 24 and 12. 48.

It is equally clear, however, that the earlier declarations remain unaffected by the later, and that the later are entirely consistent with the earlier. So is it everywhere in Scripture; there is a harmonious development in the communication of the mind of God to men on all subjects, on the principle stated by the Lord, "as they were able to hear it" (Mark 4. 33).

The answer to the second part of the question is, therefore, that the words quoted no more prove that the unsaved are punished and the saved rewarded simultaneously than does John 5. 28, 29 prove that there will not be an interval between the resurrection to life and the resurrection to judgment.

THE DAY OF CHRIST AND THE DAY OF THE LORD. Are "the Day of the Lord" and "the Day of Christ" the same? If not, how do they differ?

THE phrase "Day of the Lord" occurs fairly frequently in the Prophetic Books of the Old Testament, but in the New Testament only in Acts 2. 20; 1 Thess. 5. 2; 2 Thess. 2. 2; 2 Pet. 3. 10.

The following phrases are also found in the New Testament:

The Day of Christ	-	-	-	Phil. 1. 10; 2. 16
The Day of Jesus Christ	-	-		Phil. 1. 6
The Day of the Lord Jesus	-	-		1 Cor. 5. 5; 2 Cor. 1. 14
The Day of our Lord Jesus Christ				1 Cor. 1. 8

An examination of these passages will show that this "Day" is concerned with believing people only; men generally are not in view in any one of them. Moreover, the language in each case resembles that used of the Parousia, and always suggests some feature of the Judgment Seat of Christ; cp., for example, 1 Thess. 2. 19 and 1 John 2. 28 with Phil. 2. 16. It seems, therefore, that while the Parousia and the Day of Christ are to be identified, the Day of the Lord is distinct. They differ at least in the following particulars:

- (a) Whereas the Day of the Lord is a subject of Old Testament prophecy the Day of Christ is not.
- (b) The scene of the Day of the Lord is the earth; that of the Day of Christ is the air.
- (c) The Day of the Lord, since it is a period of judgment and punishment, is a "great and terrible day" (Joel 2. 31), and is to be anticipated with dread; the Parousia, since it is a period of rest and reward, is to be anticipated with joy chastened by the solemn consideration that then the believer is to render account of himself to God.
- (d) From the Day of the Lord believers are to be delivered, saved; in the Day of Christ they are to meet the Lord and to be with Him.
- (e) Angels are prominent in connection with the Day of the Lord; they are not mentioned in connection with the Day of Christ.

## THE PAROUSIA

Is the "Parousia" of Matt. 24. 3, the same as that of I Thess. 4. 15, and I Cor. 15. 23, etc.?

IN the interpretation of Scripture it is important to remember that revelation is progressive. The minds of men must be prepared for what God would communicate. Even when the Lord was Himself the Teacher in person, this principle held good, as witness His own words: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (John 16. 12, with which cp. Mark 4. 33, and I Cor. 3. 1, 2). At the same time the Lord spoke of the Holy Spirit and of His ministry to "guide them into all truth"; this "guiding," however, was to be on the Lord's own lines, "as they were able to hear it."

Moreover, revelation involved the impartation of ideas altogether new to men, and for the most part words were chosen for this purpose into which the new meanings had to be put—they were not there to begin with. Thus, for example, *ecclesia* was in use both among Jews (Acts 7. 38), and Gentiles (Acts 19. 32, 39, 41), when the Lord Himself took it up and devoted it to a use of which neither Jew nor Gentile had any conception. The word *parousia* does not occur in the LXX (Septuagint), but it is found in 2 Maccabees (one of the books of the Apocrypha, which, though not of authority for doctrine, is useful in determining the meaning of N.T. words): "the presence of an army" (8. 12). Among Gentiles it had the same meaning, that is, it never in any place means an arrival merely, it always includes what follows an arrival, the presence of the person who has arrived. Its meaning is sufficiently illustrated in Phil. 2. 12, where Paul's presence (*parousia*) and his absence (*apousia*) are contrasted. Notice that the phrase is never *parousia* to persons, always *parousia* with them, as in I Thess. 3. 13, cp. 2 Peter 1. 16. The meaning given in Lexicons, which makes *parousia* in the N.T. the equivalent of "arrival," is due to theology. It would not be so translated outside the N.T. But "the grammarian or lexicographer has nothing to do *per se* (i.e. as a grammarian or lexicographer) with the theology of the N.T." (A. T. Robertson). Much of the lamentable confusion and misunderstanding of N.T. teaching on this subject, even among those who cherish the hope of the Lord's

return, is due to failure to recognize that *parousia* always means presence. "Coming" is a misleading translation; it is to be regretted that the word was not transliterated as was *baptisma*, which appears everywhere as "baptism."

It is necessary, therefore, to understand the words of the enquiring disciples, "what shall be the sign that Thou art present?" Similarly, the answer of the Lord (vv. 37, 39), must be understood as "so shall it be when the Son of Man is present," but unseen by the world. Here the parallel is drawn not between the opening of the Deluge and the Parousia, as must have been the case were the latter an event, but between "the days of Noah"—those days which were before the Flood—a lengthy period, and the Parousia, itself also a period. It is to be noted, moreover, that those days were not characterized by exceptional wickedness, or, if they were, this is not the point in the Lord's mind; the things He mentioned were the normal activities of the human race.

*Parousia* occurs for the first time in the words of the disciples; it is therefore impossible to tell precisely in what way the Lord had used it earlier in His teaching, though something may be gathered from their use of it. The distinctive characteristic of the Parousia of the Lord, His presence with His saints "in the air," was not revealed until Paul wrote to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 4. 13-18), therefore it must not be assumed that the disciples had this knowledge when they asked the question. Again, the question "what shall be the sign of Thy Parousia"? suggests that that Parousia would not be open, and obvious, known to all; else why ask about the sign, or indication, of what all could see? We may gather from vv. 27, 30 that He had spoken of His Parousia in such a way that the disciples understood that it would be preliminary to His "coming (*erchomai*) on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." During His Parousia with His saints "in the air" there will be many rumours among men on earth concerning His appearing, but none of these is to be believed; when His Parousia is manifested it will be sudden as the lightning, and like the lightning, be manifest simultaneously to all. "The tribulation of

those days" would thus seem to mean the tribulation endured by the faithful on earth during the days of the Parousia of the Lord in the air, unseen by, and unknown to, the inhabitants of the earth. What saints will be with Him in the air, and what saints will be called upon to endure the tribulation on the earth, must be learned elsewhere. It is a sound canon of interpretation of Scripture that later revelations must not be read into those given earlier, and that the earlier must always be understood in the light cast upon them by the later.

In my judgment, therefore, the answer to the question is, that *parousia* is a technical term used of that period during which the Lord will be with His saints preliminary to His appearing in glory, and that this reference is common to all those passages in which it is used of the Lord in N.T., with, of course, the instructive exception of 2 Pet. 1. 16. But the revelation concerning it was given progressively; the disciples when they put their question did not know what was revealed to Paul many years later; nor did the Lord, in His reply, anticipate what could not have been understood until the purposes of God had been duly developed.

Considering the progressive character of revelation, it seems to me somewhat unreasonable to ask where Scripture contains any categorical statement that "the Church will not go through the tribulation." And as accuracy of statement is essential to clarity of thought, it is desirable that this expression, and the corresponding affirmation or negation should be dropped by all serious readers of Scripture. That "the Church which is His (i.e. Christ's) Body" (Eph. 1. 22, 23) cannot pass through the Tribulation is evident from the fact that multitudes of those who compose it have already gone where tribulation cannot come, they are "with Christ, which is very far better." On the other hand, Scripture everywhere testifies that chastening and trial are the portion of the godly in all ages, and saints of this calling are not immune. "Through many tribulations we (also) must enter into the Kingdom of God" (Acts 14. 22).

## THE COMING IN 2 PETER I. 16

Does "coming" in 2 Pet. I. 16 refer to the Lord's Incarnation, or to His future coming for His saints?

"COMING" here represents the Greek word *parousia*, concerning which see the answer to the previous Question. It is clear from the words of verse 18, "when we were with Him in the Holy Mount," that the reference is to the Transfiguration (Matt. 17. 1-8 and parallels). That that event had a prophetic significance for the Synoptists is clear from the fact that each of them introduces the incident after the words of the Lord about the Kingdom of God, of the Son of Man (Matt.) coming (*erchomai*) in power. So, apparently, it had for Peter also, for he refers to it in connection with his own hope (albeit he knew that he must die before its realization, verse 14) and with the dawning of the Day and the rising of the Morning Star. He seems to look upon the Parousia of the Lord with the three disciples on the Mount as a foreshadowing of that other Parousia with all His saints, "in the air" (1 Thess. 4. 17), *i.e.* outside earthly scenes and conditions, of which "our beloved brother Paul . . . wrote" (2 Pet. 3. 15, 16).

## THE RAPTURE AND JOHN II. 25, 26

Does the Lord refer to the Rapture in John II. 25, 26?

NOTICE that the clause "though he were dead" (A.V.) should run "though he die" (R.V.). Again, there is no reference in the passage to "spiritual death," the subject matter throughout is death in the sense in which Lazarus was dead, and resurrection the sense in which Lazarus was about to be raised.

There is nothing in the Gospels to provide a clue to the time at which these words are to be fulfilled. Nor was any further word on the subject vouchsafed until, the time being ripe, it was given through Paul to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 4. 13-17). This latter passage incorporates a fresh revelation, something hitherto unspoken, "this we say unto you by the (a) word from the Lord." There is no such "word from the Lord" in any writing earlier than this Epistle, no earlier reference to the Rapture. The words of the Apostle correspond with those of the Lord to Martha. In each

case there are two companies of believing people described; the one dead and to be raised, the other living and not to die.

### THE RAPTURE IN STAGES

Is there any Scriptural authority for teaching that the Rapture of the saints will be in three stages, firstfruits, harvests, and gleaning?

I DO not know of any statement in Scripture to this effect, nor of any Scripture from which such a division of Christians could legitimately be deduced. The general principle that doctrine must not be based upon types, or figures, or analogies, is a sound one. Christian doctrine is found in the N.T.; illustrations of that doctrine may be found in the O.T., and analogies in nature; but to go beyond these limits provides room for the imagination and encourages ingenuity. The most ingenious is not necessarily the best interpretation of Scripture.

At the time of the rapture of the saints Paul sums up all believers in two categories: "the dead in Christ" and those that "are alive, that are left."

These are all to be caught up (or raptured) to a meeting with the Lord. No third class is mentioned, nor is any room left for a third; nor does Scripture speak of a rapture of Christians prior to this (1 Thess. 4. 13-17).

### GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

Is the Gospel for this dispensation the Gospel of the Kingdom?

THE Gospel is good news of salvation (Eph. 1. 13) to mankind under condemnation because of disobedience, and held in bondage to moral corruption because of self-will. Fundamentally it is "the Gospel of God," inasmuch as it has its origin in Him, and as it is preached by His authority and in His power. Moreover, it is "the Gospel of God concerning His Son," inasmuch as "Jesus Christ our Lord" is at once its centre and its substance (Rom. 1. 1-4, 9; 15. 16).

The Gospel is variously described in the New Testament as of				
Jesus Christ, the Son of God	-	-	Mark 1. 1	
Our Lord Jesus	-	-	2 Thess. 1. 8	
Christ	-	-	Rom. 15. 19	
The Glory of Christ	-	-	2 Cor. 4. 4	
The Grace of God	-	-	Acts 20. 24	
The Glory of the Blessed God	-	-	1 Tim. 1. 11	

It is also called "the Gospel of peace" in Eph. 6. 15, inasmuch as its essential message is that Christ "made peace by the blood of His Cross" (Col. 1. 20, and cp. Acts 10. 36, "preaching good tidings of peace by Jesus Christ").

In Matt. 4. 23 it is recorded that the Lord "went about . . . preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom," and in Luke 4. 43 His own words are reported: "I must preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God." The parallel passage in Mark (1. 14) has "the Gospel of God" simply.

In my judgment there is but one Gospel, however variously it is described. Its essentials are stated in Rev. 12. 11: "they overcame him (the Accuser of the brethren) because of the Blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony"; that is, because of the reconciling death, and the life and power demonstrating resurrection, of the Lord Jesus (cp. Acts 4. 33). The message of the Angel in Rev. 14. 7 can hardly be understood to describe the content of the "eternal gospel" of v. 6. It is a declaration of the imminence of judgment, addressed not to the afflicted saints (to whom the imminence of God's judgments would mean also the imminence of their salvation) but to "them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and tribe, and tongue, and people." The passage may mean that when this proclamation of judgment is made, there will be made concurrently a proclamation of the way of escape, namely, that described in 12. 11. It may well be that thus the word of the Lord recorded in Matt. 24. 14, "this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in the whole inhabited earth for a testimony unto all the nations; and then shall the end come," will have its final fulfilment. Notice, too, that in the parallel report of the Lord's words given by Mark (13. 10) they run "the Gospel must first be preached unto all nations." "The Gospel," and "the Gospel of the Kingdom," then, are interchangeable terms.

That there is no article in Rev. 14. 6 must not be pressed to mean that this "eternal Gospel" is "another Gospel," for in that case it would come under the condemnation of Gal. 1. 6-9. In Rom. 1. 1, notwithstanding the absence of the article, the meaning of "the Gospel of God" is made unmistakable by its definition as the Gospel of God "concerning His Son." So here the word "eternal" is sufficient in itself above all dispensational considerations, and suggesting that it is so called because it partakes of the timelessness of God Himself. Conversely, it would be incongruous to speak of a temporary message, given for an occasion, as "an eternal Gospel."

### THE GOSPEL AFTER THE RAPTURE

What kind of Gospel is preached to those on the earth after the Church (Christ's Body) is caught up, and what place do they occupy in heaven?

THE Gospel is God's good news about His Son (Rom. 1. 1-3). It was preached before His Incarnation in type and prophecy pointing to His vicarious death and His resurrection (Gal. 3. 8, cp. Gen. 22). The Apostle Paul summarized the Gospel he preached, which is the Gospel to be preached to the end of this age: "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and . . . He was buried; and . . . He hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15. 3, 4, R.V.). In the tribulation period the Gospel is thus defined: "They overcame him (the Accuser of the brethren) because of the Blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony," that is because of the death and resurrection of the Son of God (Rev. 12. 11, cp. Acts 4. 33). The Gospel is one in every age. The description of the "great multitude" . . . which come out of the great tribulation, and the theme of their praise confirm this conclusion.

In my judgment these redeemed persons have their place in "the Holy City, New Jerusalem," which is described in Rev. 21. 1-8.

The Rapture of 1 Thess. 4. 17 is an incident taking place toward the end of the age; it is not the end itself. "The harvest is the end (consummation) of the age" (Matt. 13. 39).

## VII—NEW TESTAMENT I

### DIVORCE AND RE-MARRIAGE

Do the Lord's words in Matt. 5. 32 and Matt. 19. 9, "except for fornication," warrant the innocent person in a divorce to re-marry?

If a Christian thus divorced marries a Christian equally irreproachable in character, would an Assembly be warranted in refusing fellowship, or taking action in any way?

THE two utterances of the Lord referred to are: (1) "Every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress: and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery" (Matt. 5. 32).

(2) "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery" (Matt. 19. 9).

Both passages teach that the only sufficient ground for the annulment of a marriage is that sin which by its very nature disrupts the union because it breaks the solemn undertaking given to reserve the "vessel" wholly for the partner. The repeated exception, "except for fornication" clearly shows that this sin is recognized by the Lord as the one valid ground for divorce.

Both passages teach that divorce obtained on other ground is not valid in Divine law, and that, therefore, the parties concerned are not free to contract any other union, because in the sight of God the original bond stands.

Both sayings forbid the marriage of persons who have been divorced on insufficient grounds, i.e. for some cause other than the one specified. The reason for this prohibition is that whatever man's law may say, in God's law the original union still stands,

and a new one would therefore be sinful. Where, however, the marriage has been dissolved for the legitimate cause named—fornication—the reason for forbidding re-marriage no longer exists. In other words, the excepting clause, “except for fornication,” limits the operation of the prohibition to those instances in which the divorce has been obtained for some other cause.

We judge, therefore, that the answer to the first part of the question is that the Lord’s words do not forbid the re-marriage of the innocent party concerned in a divorce granted because of the sexual unfaithfulness of the other party.

This reply assumes “fornication” to bear the meaning of “sexual unfaithfulness,” without reference to the technical signification of the term in English law, where it means the sexual sin of unmarried persons. That in the New Testament the word carried this wider meaning is plain, when all the occurrences are examined. (See *e.g.* 1 Cor. 5. 1, where fornication is named as sin to which a wife is party). Those who insist on the narrower meaning (*i.e.* unmarried unchastity) usually refer the sin to the woman, and to her unmarried days, linking this interpretation with Deut. 22. 13-21. As the penalty laid down in that passage for such sin was death, no question of divorce could arise. And as in the following verse sin of the same kind committed after marriage met with the same penalty, it is clear that whether the sin were committed before or after marriage made no difference to its heinousness, or to the sentence of the law against it.

Those who maintain that “fornication” in the two passages in Matthew means “pre-marital unchastity” must also show clearly why, if such sin is sufficient to make subsequent marriage null, the same sin committed after marriage is insufficient to nullify the marriage bond.

As to the second part of the question; it follows that as such a marriage is not forbidden by the Word of the Lord, an Assembly would not be warranted in treating the innocent person concerned as morally delinquent.

C.F.H.

J.B.W.

## GIVING AND LENDING

Can Matt. 5. 42 be literally carried out without giving to that which is not the Lord's work?

THE words are "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away." In the earlier part of the Sermon the Lord had shown that the Sinaitic Law was to be interpreted in an inner and spiritual way, not merely as a legal enactment to which outward conformity alone was necessary. Much more was required, as the Lord showed by applying that Law to motives and intentions, to thoughts as well as to actions. To interpret the words concerning which the question is asked, as a legal enactment demanding merely formal and mechanical obedience, would be out of harmony with His mind. A guiding principle is laid down, to which loyal obedience can be rendered only by one walking in fellowship with Him Whose mind it expresses. And indeed this is fundamental in respect to all the commandments of the Lord; where it is forgotten we become legal, external, formal, rather than those who walk by faith and in grace.

The Lord Himself has made certain promises to us in connection with our requests, such as "whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son . . . if ye shall ask Me anything in My Name, that will I do" (John 14. 13, 14). Now we know that the Lord hears every cry of His people, and gives heed to it. But we also know that He does not always give them what they ask for. There is His higher wisdom, His deeper love, His longer vision, His complete knowledge, and these are always engaged on behalf of His people. Out of the wealth of His wise sympathy, and in ways that leave our poor and limited notions of our needs far behind, He hears and answers our prayers. So when others approach us in their need we are not to shut up our compassion from them (1 John 3. 17) but to meet them in sympathy, remembering that it is a worldly fallacy that those who have are of necessity worthier than those who have not. If we have the compassion of Christ we shall have His mind also how best to help those who are in need. And if help must be refused it should be refused not because of a grudging or selfish desire to spend what one

has upon one's self, but only because the true interests of the needy person, so far as we can judge of them, would make compliance with the request an injury rather than a help. Give to him that asks you, but not necessarily what he asks; turn not away from the would-be borrower, but do not lend where lending would not relieve from, but would actually add to, the embarrassments of the applicant. It is easier to dispense a dole, and so relieve one's own feelings and conscience, than it is to take a personal interest in the needy with whom God may bring us into contact.

The questioner does not define what he means by "the Lord's work." However, he that walks in fellowship with Christ, to do His will, shall not walk in darkness as to what that will is. And anything the doing of which pleases Him is His work.

### TEMPTATION

Why are we told to pray: "Lead us not into temptation" whereas James tells us that God "Himself tempteth no man" (Matt. 6. 13; James 1. 13)?

THE word translated "tempt" in these passages is the same, *peirazō*. It may have a bad sense, as in 1 Thess. 3. 5, "lest by any means the Tempter had tempted you," or it may have a good sense, as in Heb. 11. 17, "Abraham, being tried (that is, by God) offered up Isaac." In the first case it suggests enticement to do evil, in the second, trial or testing. Testing is the meaning then in the prayer, enticing is the meaning in the statement of James.

The following paragraph from a full note on the subject in *Thessalonians*, Hogg and Vine, p. 97, may help to a general understanding of the New Testament usage of the word. "James 1. 13-15, seems to contradict other statements of Scripture in two respects, saying (a) that 'God cannot be tempted with evil,' and (b) that 'He Himself tempteth no man.' But God tempted, or tried, Abraham (Heb. 11. 17), and the Israelites tempted or tried God (1 Cor. 10. 9). Verse 14, however, makes it plain that whereas in these cases the temptation or trial came from without, James refers to temptation, or trial, arising within, from uncontrolled appetites and from evil passions (cp. Mark 7. 20-23). But though such temptation does not proceed from God, yet does God regard

His people while they endure it, and by it tests and approves them; see James 1. 2, 12, where *peirasmos* is apparently used in its wider sense of trial from whatever source."

### JONAH'S EXPERIENCE

In view of the words "as" and "so" in Matthew 12. 40, did the Lord imply that Jonah actually passed through death while he was in the belly of the fish, and thus become a type of the Lord? If so, what do the words "out of" in Jonah 2. 1 mean?

NEITHER in this verse, nor in the history of Jonah, is it stated or implied that the prophet died in his strange prison. Hence he could not be a "type of the Lord in his death." So far from dying, he is found praying in the "belly of the great sea monster." The parallel is not between the condition of Jonah while he was in the deep and the condition of the Lord while He was in the grave, but between the fact that Jonah was in the deep for a certain time and the fact that the Lord was to be in the grave for a certain time. To imagine the death of Jonah, not only in the face of the silence of Scripture, but against its plain testimony, is not the way either to convince gainsayers or to edify the people of God. The Bible requires for its interpretation not ingenuity but sobriety. One of the most pressing needs of the times is that patient, careful, and loyal "opening" of the Scriptures which ministers light and grace to the soul. What is merely fanciful genders strife and diverts the simple from paths of righteousness. (See Psa. 119, 130, R.V.).

### THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT

Is the unforgiving servant a believer? Who do the tormentors represent? Who are those weeping and wailing; are they lost? (Matt. 18. 34, 35; 24. 51; 25. 46)

THE parable of Matt. 18. 21-35 suggests a test by which one can know whether or not he is a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. The unforgiving servant is of a spirit entirely alien to that of his lord. But the man that is born again has the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8. 9). To this subject the Lord returns again and again;

it is of supreme importance. He has declared categorically and explicitly that there is no forgiveness from the Father for any unforgiving child (Matt. 6. 14, 15). And the man who bears resentment against his brother, or fails to forgive him, thereby shows himself to be not "of Christ" at all.

It is beside the mark either to relegate to a past dispensation these plain statements of the Lord, or to postpone them to the future, for that would imply that He expected more of others, past or future, than He expects of those who name His Name now.

Who "the tormentors" are is not stated. It is a sound rule of interpretation of Scripture that what we have not been told we do not know.

To be "cut asunder," and to share the lot of the hypocrites, "to weep and to gnash the teeth," is not language that suggests the joy of those who are with Christ now, and who are to accompany Him when He comes, which is the happy lot of the believer in Christ. Is it conceivable that "a man in Christ" should be an "evil servant," beating his fellow-servants, and eating and drinking with the drunken, as in Matt. 24. 48-51, or that one bearing the Name of Christ should be callous to human suffering? Alas for them. These persons are plainly "lost."

## BLIND GUIDES

What are we to understand by Matt. 23. 24: "Ye blind guides which strain out the gnat, and swallow the camel"?

IN the previous verse the Lord condemned those who have so little sense of comparative values as to suppose that by punctilious observance of religious ordinances they compensate for neglect of the requirements of God, well summed up in Micah 6. 8: "He hath showed 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?"

Twice it is recorded in this Gospel (9. 13; 12. 7) that the Lord reminded His opponents of Hos. 6. 6: "I desire mercy (kindness, R.V., *margin*) and not sacrifice." How often among Christians has kindness been banished from our treatment of others because of

some comparatively small difference in teaching or in practice, notwithstanding that "God's elect" are to put on "a heart . . . of kindness" (Col. 3. 12).

It is possible that, looking back over the past one hundred years, this has been the characteristic sin of those known as "Brethren"; nor is there any convincing evidence that the warnings of the Lord have been heeded, or the lesson widely learned. For such things lampstands are moved out of their places, for if we "bite and devour one another, how can we but be consumed one of another" (Gal. 5. 15)?

The lesser parable recorded in v. 24 seems intended to enforce this salutary teaching from the opposite point of view. "Ye blind guides, which strain out the gnat and swallow the camel" (R.V. rightly has "out" where A.V. as ordinarily printed, has "at"). Not infrequently, it is to be feared, discipline has been rigorously enforced for refusal to conform to some custom or rule with but precarious sanction in Scripture, or with none at all, while grave defections from truth and right have been neglected or condoned. On the other hand, even the jot and tittle of the commandments of the Lord are to be observed, for, He added: "These ye ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone."

### "THIS GENERATION"

What do you understand by "generation" in Matthew 24. 34?

WHILE the word *genea*, alike in the LXX (Septuagint), and in the New Testament, usually refers to one's contemporaries (Jer. 2. 31) or to the aggregate of humanity alive upon the earth at any one time (Matt. 1. 17), it may also mean the character of the life of an individual (Isa. 53. 8), or the moral qualities that characterize men generally, whether good (Psa. 14. 5; 24. 6; 112. 2), or evil (Psa. 78. 8; Matt. 12. 39, 45; 16. 4). In one place the Apostle applies to Gentiles words that Moses had long before spoken of Israel, "a perverse and crooked generation" (Deut. 32. 5; Phil.

2. 15). Prov. 30. 11-13 offers an apt illustration of this use of the word.

It may well be in this sense that the words of the Lord in Matt 24. 34 are to be understood. Fallen man will continue in his fallen state until all that has been foretold, culminating in the Return of the Lord, has been fulfilled. Neither education, a closer approximation of law to justice, ameliorated social conditions, nor even the fruit of the Gospel in modern civilization, excellent though these things are in themselves, will change his moral state.

### THE DEATH OF JUDAS ISCARIOT

Are the statements of Matt. 27. 3-10 and Acts 1. 15-20, with regard to the "death of Judas" and the "purchase of the field" conflicting?

THE apparent discrepancy between the narratives shows that they were written independently, otherwise the later writer would surely have taken pains to make what he said agree with what had been already written. They must, therefore, be taken as complementary the one to the other. The sequence of the events, recorded may have been as follows: Judas repented, and rushing into the Sanctuary (a place forbidden to him as he was not a priest) cast the blood-money at the feet of the men whose willing tool he had been. Then he went out and hanged himself, but, apparently, the rope broke, and he, falling from a height, ruptured himself extensively with the result described by Luke. As the priests could not use defiled money (defiled surely as much in the giving as in the taking!) they purchased a field therewith. It may be, however, that not wishing to be associated in any public way with the traitor they caused the purchase to be made in his name. This would account for Luke's statement that Judas "obtained a field with the reward of his iniquity."

Whether or no this was the way the events recorded actually occurred cannot, of course, be asserted. But in this way they could have occurred leaving no discrepancy. Nothing more can reasonably be expected in the case of seeming discrepancies in historic records, whether sacred or profane, than to show how the statements of two writers may be reconciled. Moreover, there

may be other facts which are not included in these terse narratives which, were they available to us, would throw the necessary light on what is now obscure. In any case no question arises of the competence or integrity of either writer.

#### A "SCARLET" OR A "PURPLE" ROBE?

According to Matt. 27. 28, the soldiers threw a scarlet robe about the Lord, but according to Mark 15. 17, John 19. 2, the colour was purple. Which is correct? Or were there two robes?

**MATTHEW** calls the robe, *chlamus*; John, *himation*; both words refer to outer garments. Mark says purple, simply. Nevertheless it is highly improbable that, in their derisory burlesque of the regal claims of the Lord, the soldiers should have put two garments upon the victim of their horseplay.

"Scarlet" is a translation of *kokkinos* (from which "cochineal" is derived), the name of a bunch, or knot, of insect's eggs. "Purple" is a translation of *porphura*, the name of a shellfish. These names thus describe the origin of the two dyes. There were many shades of each, particularly of purple, so that sometimes the red shade would predominate, sometimes the blue. If, as is probable, the colour was purple-red, it can readily be understood that independent observers might use either of the terms.

#### ONE EARTHQUAKE OR TWO?

Are the earthquakes mentioned in Matt. 27. 51-53 and 28. 2 one and the same? If distinct, were the graves open during the three days the Lord was in the tomb?

**T**HE first earthquake took place when the Lord died, the second after His Resurrection.

As to the second part of the Question, let it be remembered that we know, and can know, only what we have been told. And where we have not been told anything it is vain to attempt to supply the lack by guessing. Where God has left a matter we must leave it also.

## MARK 9. 1

In what respect would not some of the disciples taste of death till they saw the Kingdom of God?

FROM the fact that each of the Synoptists (a general title under which the first three Gospels are usually grouped for convenience) records this saying of the Lord immediately before His account of the Transfiguration, it may be presumed that they saw in that event the fulfilment of the words (Matt. 17. 1-8; Mark 9. 2-8; Luke 9. 28-36).

There are certain interesting variations in the words of the Lord as reported by the three Evangelists. It may be assumed, with a fair measure of probability that the Lord spoke in Aramaic. Matthew and Mark (writing for Jews) transliterate the word He used, *amēn*, which is translated in to English by "verily," whereas Luke (writing for Gentile readers, as might be expected of the companion of Paul) translates *amēn* by the Greek word *alēthos*, "truly," which is rendered in our versions "of a truth."

Again, whereas Matthew speaks of "the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom," Mark has "the Kingdom of God coming with power." These, then, are alternative descriptions of the same Kingdom. "The Kingdom of Christ and God," in Eph. 5. 5, may be compared, as also may "the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ" in Rev. 11. 15. Luke has merely "the Kingdom of God." In each case we have an accurate representation of the words actually used by the Lord, though each writer gives them in his own way. From this variety it is evident that there was no collusion between them, for had there been, an elementary precaution would have been to reduce the records to uniformity.

There are other variations in the original, which are to some extent reproduced in the English Version, but these are minute. They show us, however, that there are synonyms in the New Testament, that is, alternative ways of expressing the same thing without loss of accuracy and with great gain in lucidity and comprehensiveness of meaning.

## THE BARREN FIG TREE

Why did the Lord expect to find figs on the tree when "the times of figs was not yet" (Mark 11. 13)?

ISA. 28. 4 casts light upon the difficulty of the Barren Fig Tree. "The time of figs" would be late August or early September. The incident recorded in Matt. 21. 18-22 and Mark 11. 12-14, 20-24, took place at the Passover season, late March or early April. After the main crop is gathered and stored there is still sap in the tree, and vitalizing power in the rays of the sun, so the fig-tree, robbed of its fruit, begins to replace it. But the winter is inexorable, and speedily puts a stop to the new growth. In consequence the second crop remains, small and immature, during the winter months. With the spring the new life of the tree advances the after-growth of the previous year, but, of course, this can never come to perfection, and must give place to the new season's fruit. The aborted crop is useless from a commercial point of view, but any passer-by might stay his hunger by plucking and eating as he walked. It would not be easy to make sense of the words of Isa. 28. 4, as they appear in A.V. Lowth (*Commentary*, 13th Ed., 1839) renders

"the early fruit before the summer;  
Which whoso seeth, he plucketh it immediately;  
And it is no sooner in his hand than he swalloweth it."

R.V. runs, "the first ripe fig before the summer; which when he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up." The Lord's action corresponds closely to Isaiah's picture. He did not expect to find that year's fruit, but last year's aftermath, and even that had failed. There was life, for there were leaves; but the life was fruitless, nigh unto death.

The incident was a parable, plainly so intended. The fig tree was Israel, for it had borne no fruit. Around its roots the Gardener had dug with His stern, uncompromising words to the rulers of the Jews. And He had offered enrichment wherewith the roots might be revived in the gracious counsel He gave to them and to the people at large. But in vain; still no fruit appeared. There remained only to "cut it down" as it proved an incorrigible "cumberer of the ground" (cp. Luke 13. 6-9).

Even as Jehovah had longed for fruit from His vine which brought forth only "wild grapes" (Isa. 5. 2), so the Lord "hungered" for fruit from Israel, and hungered in vain. There remained nothing but the cry, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . how often would I . . . and ye would not!"

### THE GADARENE SWINE

Why did Christ allow the devils (demons) to enter into the herd of swine and to destroy them? (Luke 8. 32).

**PROPERTY** is more highly esteemed among men than is human life, as, among other things, the slums of our cities and the hovels of our countryside bear witness. It was the Lord Jesus Christ who first showed men that in God's sight nothing exceeds a man in value. But not even in nominally Christian lands has the lesson been learned; hence the social and political unrest in the contemporary world.

Like the rest of the race, the Gerasenes set a higher value upon their beasts than upon their townsman. This they showed when his deliverance cost them the swine by asking the Lord to leave the neighbourhood, as though they feared He would do some other good deed at their expense! Criticism of the Lord for the destruction of the beasts is part of the caviller's stock-in-trade still, though he is usually silent about the delivered man.

A prior question should be asked, which may set this one in its true light. Why had the Lord permitted the demons to enter the man? Why does God permit suffering at all? To that question there is no answer, though one day there will be. Meantime, "it pleased the Lord." Is not that enough? To show the Israelites the power and the resources of their Deliverer, and so to assure them of His ability to carry them to the end of the way to which they were committed, God permitted them to see "the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore" (Exod. 14. 30). So would the possessed man (or men, Matt. 8. 28) the better appreciate the reality of his deliverance, and the power of his Deliverer, when he saw the destruction the demons were able to bring upon the swine, and might have brought upon him but for the gracious interposition of the Lord Jesus.

Further meditation on the ways of God, which are surely past our tracing out, may be directed by such passages as Amos 3. 6, where "shall calamity befall a city and the Lord hath not done it," is the meaning (Psa. 46. 8; and Rom. II. 33-35).

### JAIRUS' DAUGHTER

Was Jairus' daughter asleep or dead?

AS recorded in Luke 8. 52, the Lord said concerning Jairus' daughter, "She is not dead, but sleepeth," whereupon the crowd "laughed Him to scorn, knowing she was dead." The issue is clear—which was right, the crowd or the Lord? Is a crowd ever competent to decide in such a case? But the suggestion is that by sleep the Lord meant death, and the question has been asked, why not receive His words about Jairus' daughter in the same sense as those He used of Lazarus? The answer is, of course, that He did not use the same word on each occasion. In John II. 11, the word is *koimaomai*, which is used in N.T. "of natural sleep . . . and of the death of the body, but only (in the latter case) of such as are Christ's" In Luke 8. 52 (and in Matt. 9. 24; Mark 5. 39), the word is *katheudō*, which, in its twenty-odd occurrences in N.T. always refers to natural sleep, save in four places where it "denotes worldly indifference to things spiritual on the part of believers" (Mark 13. 36; Eph. 5. 14; I Thess. 5. 6, 10). *Katheudō* is never elsewhere used of death in N.T. Is its use in all three accounts of this incident an exception? Moreover, in John II the Lord identified sleep with death, in Luke 8 He contrasted and so distinguished them.

There are considerations that tell in the other way, however. Luke says that "her spirit returned," and the separation of the spirit from the body is death. However, the same words are used of Samson, who certainly had not died, nor had the Egyptian of whom also they were used (Jud. 15. 19; I Sam. 30. 12; and cp. Gen. 45, 27). Yet, if this were merely an awakening out of a coma, why should the Lord have forbidden any report of it to go abroad (Mark and Luke) and why should the witnesses have spread "the fame hereof" throughout the country? If we cannot clear up a difficulty at least we can recognize wherein it consists, and this is always the first step toward the solution of any problem.

## CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE DISEMBODIED STATE

Can it be shown that our Lord taught that there will be conscious existence during the interval between death and resurrection?

**Y**ES. He teaches this in the passage Luke 16. 19-31, which, however interpreted, must be assumed to represent fact, not fancy; to be founded on the Lord's knowledge, not upon Jewish fables, in the absence of any hint to the contrary or of any parallel to illustrate the opposite assumption.

It draws the veil from the intermediate, "unclothed," or "naked" state (2 Cor. 5. 3, 4), and shows Abraham, Lazarus, and Dives all speaking and acting as conscious each of his own existence out of the body, conscious of the existence of others still in the body, and of their condition of mind. Conscious also of the existence of certain books and of their contents, of pain and pleasure and of their own powerlessness to alleviate the one or to share the other in the face of certain inexorable circumstances. Remorse, pity, and fear for his brethren are all shown at work in Dives, but do not avail to alter conditions there or to modify them here.

## THE RENT TEMPLE-VEIL

Luke 23. 44-46 states that the veil of the Temple was rent before Jesus died, whereas Matt. 27. 50, 51 states the reverse. How are these statements to be reconciled?

**A**PPARENTLY the rending of the veil was simultaneous with the death of the Lord; cp. Heb. 10. 20. But while events may happen at the same instant they cannot be stated, or described at the same time; one or the other must be stated first. In this case Luke tells of the rending first, then of the death; Matthew tells of the death first, then of the rending. This affords another evidence that the narratives are independent; neither writer has copied the other.

## THE FATHER'S HOUSE

What are the "Father's House," "the many abiding places," and the place prepared for those to whom the Lord was speaking in John 14. 2?

THE only other recorded use of the first phrase by the Lord is in John 2. 16, where House is *oikon*, here it is *oikia*. Each of these words is used of both house and household with approximately equal frequency throughout N.T. Luke 2. 49 does not contain either word; there the literal rendering is "in the things of My Father" (R.V. margin). In the earthly Temple there were many chambers (1 Kings 6. 5, 6, 10, cp. Ezek. 41. 6). But perhaps the figure intended is rather the palace of a King, with ample accommodation not only for the heir, but also for all the children of the King.

The word rendered "mansions" (*monē*) occurs again only in John 14. 23, where it is rendered "abode." No suggestion of varied degrees of glory is inherent in the words, whether that idea be found elsewhere in N.T. or no. To assure the disciples that there would be room not only for Himself but for them also in the place whither He was about to go, seems to be the purpose of the Lord.

Had the Lord in the call to discipleship intended no more than to instruct them and to leave them without further hope, He would surely have told them so plainly, for much that He had said to them implied a glorious future in which they were to share. He was going, indeed, but it was to prepare a place for them, as "the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord went before (the children of Israel) three days' journey to seek out a resting place for them" (Num. 10. 33, cp. Deut. 1. 33). It may well have been that the writer of Heb. 6. 20 had these words of the Lord in mind when he wrote, "within the veil; whither as a forerunner Jesus entered for us."

The idea of Heaven as God's House, His "holy habitation," is found in Deut. 26. 15. Cp. Psa. 11. 4, Isa. 63, 15, and other passages.

## SINS FORGIVEN AND RETAINED

What is the meaning of the words, "Whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John 20. 23):

THESE words must not be read apart from those at the close of v. 22, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit," which, with the "breathing" that accompanied them, are probably best understood as spoken in anticipation of Pentecost; the actual giving and receiving took place then, not before, for soon afterwards the Lord charged the disciples, "Behold, I send forth the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24. 49).

In Matthew 18. 20, the Lord's presence "in the midst" of those who "are gathered together in" (into) His Name is their warrant for exercising discipline in a church. In the absence of the Lord, the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete (John 14. 16, R.V. margin) is His Representative; what the Lord does now He does by His Spirit, as the following passages show. Col. 1. 27, "Christ in (among) you" corresponds with Matthew 18. 20. With these compare 1 Cor. 3. 16, "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in (among) you"? In Ephesians 3. 16, 17, the Apostle prays that the saints may be "strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inward man; that (with this object in view) Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith," with which compare 1 Corinthians 6. 19, "Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God." Compare also Romans 8. 9, "The Spirit of God dwelleth in you," with the alternative in verse 10, "And if Christ is in you. . . ." 2 Corinthians 3. 17, 18, is also significant in this connection.

These passages, in which the same things are said of the Lord and of His Holy Spirit, show that John 20. 23 is the Lord's own indication of the way in which His words in Matthew 18. 20 are fulfilled to-day, and further explain how "the power of the Lord Jesus" is manifested for discipline in "a church of God." 1 Corinthians 5. 3-5 is probably an instance in which the words of our question were obeyed. Tidings had reached the Apostle from Corinth of grave moral evil there. In this passage he directs that

the Church should be gathered together "in the Name of our Lord Jesus" (that is, under His authority) to exercise godly discipline, the Apostle being present with them in spirit to bear his share of the responsibility. It is sadly possible, however, for unspiritual men to usurp positions in the churches and to pretend to the authority of the Lord, hence the Apostle adds, "with the power of our Lord Jesus." This is the test. If the discipline is of the Lord, in accordance with His mind, exercised in His fear and for the welfare of the Church, His Spirit dwelling in it will make that discipline good, He will ratify it by His power. The responsibilities of the New Testament churches were and are heavy, each was and is a "pillar and stay (or bulwark) of the Truth" (1 Tim. 3. 15). The present confusion makes the discharge of these responsibilities difficult, and even where the New Testament principle is recognized, our ignorance of Scripture and our lack of spirituality handicap our attempts to carry what is still, notwithstanding our failure, the mind of God for His children to the end of the age.

### SHEOL AND HADES

Does the word translated "hell" in Acts 2. 27, 31, refer to the grave?

THE word is *haidēs*, which is used in the Greek Version of the O.T. for the Sheol of the Hebrew original. These are proper names and as such have no plurals, so that whereas we may speak of "a grave," or of "graves," we cannot speak of "a sheol," or of "sheols," or of "a hades."

The "Reviser's Preface to the Old Testament" (an interesting and informing document that should not be missed by the serious reader of the Scriptures) has a paragraph devoted to "Sheol," from which the following is an extract: "The Hebrew *Sheol*, which signifies the abode of the departed spirits, and corresponds to the Greek *Hades*, or the underworld . . . The Revisers . . . in the historical narratives have left the rendering 'the grave' or 'the pit' in the text, with a marginal note 'Heb. *Sheol*' to indicate that it does not refer to 'the place of burial'" while in the poetical books they have put most commonly 'Sheol' in the text and 'the grave' in the margin."

Hades (which is the conventional spelling in English; note the capital initial throughout R.V.) is best described as "the unseen world," that is, unseen by men in the flesh; there is not anything in the word itself to indicate whether it is a place, or condition, of happiness or of misery. An examination of its New Testament occurrences will provide an answer to the question confirming that suggested in the preceding paragraph.

But first it should be noted that there are two words of frequent occurrence in the N.T. which do refer to the grave, sepulchre, or tomb, by which three words each of them is translated in A.V. For these words, *mnema* and *mnemeion*, R.V. uses "tomb" only, probably to avoid the ambiguity that might attach to "grave." Another word, *taphos*, also appears occasionally. It is the place of corruption, as may be seen from its use in Matt. 23. 27, "whited sepulchres . . . full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness." Mention is made of these words here to show that, if the reference in any one of the texts now to be reviewed had been to the grave, the place of interment, appropriate words were available.

In the Received Text (often called *Textus Receptus*, and represented by "T.R.") *haidēs* occurs eleven times. In ten of these in A.V. it is translated "hell," and in 1 Cor. 15. 55 "grave." Rev. 20. 13 has "grave" in the margin. In 1 Cor. 15. 55, *thanatos*, death, is the true reading. In the remaining ten places R.V. does not translate the word but transliterates it—"Hades." These we will now examine.

Matt. 11. 23, Luke 10. 15 (cp. Isa. 14. 13-15). Hades is the condition of humiliation, in contrast with the condition of exaltation suggested by Heaven, the highest and the lowest conceivable to men. The Lord thus presents vividly the dire consequences of self-sufficiency and pride. The words would be meaningless were they taken literally, for all, good and evil alike, in due time go to the unseen world.

Matt. 16. 18. Here Hades is equivalent to "all the resources of evil." "Gates" is a symbol of power.

Rev. 1. 18. "Keys" is a symbol of authority. Over the unseen world and over death, the entrance thereto, whereof all men naturally stand in dread, the Lord has triumphed. Why should the Christian fear that which his Lord has vanquished?

Luke 16. 23. The rich man had been buried, that is, his dead body had been put into a tomb; it was, therefore, incapable of any action, of any sensation, whether of pleasure or of pain. Hence when it is said that "he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth . . . and he cried and said . . . cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame," we perceive that the actual physical members of the material frame are not intended. God speaks to men in language they can understand; if He speaks of the experiences of men after death He does so in terms of their experiences on earth. If He speaks concerning the spirit, or soul, the immaterial part of man, He does so in terms of the body, the material part. In Scripture, spiritual truth is stated in language drawn from natural life. We may be quite sure, however, that none of the figures used in Scripture is an exaggeration, whether it sets forth the misery of the wicked or the bliss of the redeemed.

If Hades here refers to the grave, the tomb, it would be necessary to understand that the rich man lifted up his natural eyes, which had been closed in death, and which were already passing into corruption, and that Abraham and Lazarus were in the same tomb with him—which is absurd. The statements, therefore, are not made concerning the bodies of the two men, but of their spirits and souls. Among other things we learn from the story that when the members through which alone we have any experience of feeling, or ability to act, have ceased to function, the powers of the spiritual element in man continue unimpaired.

Rev. 6. 8; 20. 13, 14, need not detain us further than to say that in these passages Death and Hades are agents in the judgments of God upon the earth; they are personified to make more impressive the terror of those judgments, and the completeness of their final annulment.

Acts 2. 27 is quoted from Psa. 16. 10. Hebrew poetry depends not upon rhyme or rhythm as poetry in English does, but upon parallelism of thought and expression. This parallelism is of different kinds; sometimes the second line of a couplet is explanatory of the first, sometimes, as here, it supplements, or extends, the statement of the first. The first line of this couplet has for its subject the spiritual element in the Lord, His Spirit and soul, included under the one term, soul; the second line has for its subject

the physical nature, the body, of the Lord. So Peter, in v. 31, explains the words of the Psalmist, "neither was He (not 'His soul' as A.V.) left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption." The "neither . . . nor" shows that the writer, and the speaker, had two things and two places in mind. "The Holy One" of v. 27 is interpreted as "His Flesh"; "My soul" becomes "He" in the quotation. The seat of personality is not in the body, but in that inner and invisible element which in Scripture is called sometimes spirit, sometimes soul. Note that whereas the spirit, or soul, can be divided from the body, spirit and soul themselves can only be distinguished one from the other; they cannot be divided. "He," the Lord Jesus, as to His soul and spirit, at death went to the unseen world, Hades, while "His flesh, His body," was laid in the tomb. In resurrection, body, soul and spirit were reunited that, in the integrity of the Manhood He had assumed, He might ascend into heaven.

#### THE HOPE OF ISRAEL

What is the Hope of Israel of which Paul spoke in Acts 28. 20?

WHEN Paul stood before the Sanhedrin, perceiving "that the one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees," the former denying, the latter asserting the resurrection of the dead, he cried out, "touching the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question" (Acts 23. 6. 8). Here the word *kai*, translated "and," has its not infrequent epexegetical, or explanatory force, and is the equivalent of "the hope, that is to say, the resurrection of the dead." Later, before Felix, he recalled his earlier words but abbreviated them into "touching the resurrection of the dead," and defined the hope of Israel as "that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and the unjust" (Acts 24. 15, 21). Later still, before Agrippa, he declared that he stood there "to be judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers; unto which promise our twelve tribes earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. And concerning this hope I am accused of the Jews, O king! Why is it judged incredible with you if God doth raise the dead?" (Acts 26. 6-8). It was indeed on the charge of affirming that "One

Jesus Who was dead," was, in fact, alive, that the Jews complained to Festus. (See Acts 25. 19).

Finally he declared that he had said "nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come; how that Christ must suffer, and how that He first by the Resurrection of the dead, should proclaim light both to the people (the Jews) and to the Gentiles" (Acts 26. 22, 23).

Paul's own words, and his own explanation of them, leave no room for doubt of his meaning when he said at Rome that it was "because of the hope of Israel" that he was "bound with this chain."

### THE OLD MAN CRUCIFIED

Is it possible so to appropriate by faith the statement of Rom. 6. 6, "that our old man is crucified with Him," that one arrives by faith at a stage in Christian experience where the heart is completely and permanently cleansed, and all future sin makes its approach from without?

IN Rom., chapters 3 to 5, the Apostle presents the vicarious, or substitutionary, work of Christ. This, by itself, leaves the question open whether the Gospel of grace has any bearing on the life of the believer. In chapter 6, however, he goes on to show that to say that Christ died "for" us does not exhaust the meaning of the Cross. It is also true that we died "with" Him. This is not an attainment on our part; it is the reckoning of God in grace to the repentant sinner. From the moment of believing two things become true of all who put their trust in Christ. They are "justified by His Blood," and they "died with Him" (5. 9; 6. 8). Neither of these things becomes true apart from the other; God has joined them and they cannot be dissociated. It is possible that many Christians rejoicing in the knowledge that Christ died for them, have not apprehended the complementary fact that they died with Christ.

The form of the word used in 6. 6 is the aorist, or point, tense. It refers to an accomplished fact, and therefore should be read as in R.V., "our old man was crucified with Him." So also v. 8 should read, "we died with Christ." We are not "dead with Christ" for

Christ is not dead but risen, and we with Him (Eph. 2. 5, 6). (Cp. Col. 2. 20; 3. 3; 2 Tim. 2. 11). Since he died with Christ the believer is to reckon himself to be dead to sin; but since Christ not only died but rose again, and since we "were raised together with Christ" (Col. 3. 1), we are to reckon ourselves to be "alive unto God in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 6. 10, 11).

Death with Christ is not in any sense a "stage in Christian experience." It is the beginning of all Christian experience. Not relief from the presence of sin only, but deliverance from its power is the blessing of the Gospel, as it is written, "sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace" (6. 14). In Gal. 5. 16, 17, the same Apostle tells us that the way to avoid fulfilling "the lust of the flesh," is to "walk by the Spirit." There is no undertaking by God that the lusts of the flesh shall cease to exist in any of His children, or that any measure of faith will expel them from the heart, but there is the gracious assurance that since the Spirit of God dwells in us "we may not do the things that we would," that is, we are not under necessity to fulfil the lusts of the flesh. These are always ready to leap into activity again should the restraint of faith in the will and power of Christ to overcome them by the Holy Spirit be removed. Both in Rom. 6 and in the present context, the statements concerning the crucifixion and death of the man who has received Christ are accompanied by exhortations to make the corresponding realities good in his experience. "You were crucified with Christ—you died with Christ—reckon yourself to be dead unto sin," and "you crucified the flesh—walk by the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." (See *Notes on Galatians*, Hogg and Vine, p. 301). God makes faith's reckoning good in the experience of such as trust and obey.

### "DEATH"

In what sense are we to understand the word "death" in Rom. 6. 23?

DEATH is here used in its widest sense, physical, the separation of the soul from the body, and spiritual, the separation of man from God. The latter is the present condition of men by nature, the former an experience that awaits men. In Scripture death is

never the equivalent of annihilation, or the cessation of existence. If death were the equivalent of non-existence, the statement that "Jesus died" would convey an idea repugnant to Scripture, and obviously untrue. Death, in whichever of the above-mentioned senses it is used, is always, in Scripture, viewed as the penal consequence of sin.

### OUR MORTAL BODY QUICKENED

Has Rom. 8. 11 a direct practical application in our present life in view of Luke 9. 24?

IN Luke 9. 23 the Lord laid down the conditions of discipleship; these are simple but drastic: to deny oneself (that is, to say No! to one's ambitions and desires, to everything inconsistent with following Christ) and to "take up his cross daily," whatever that cross may be.

Then He added the law of all true living; the man who would save his life (that is, who lives for himself), shall one day find that he has lost it, he has lived in such a way that it has been of no value either to God or to man or to himself—a wasted life!

At the close of Rom. 7 the Apostle pronounced the body of the believer to be "a body of death." His desire was to be delivered out of (*ek*) it, and this, he was assured, he would be "through Jesus Christ our Lord," that is, at His Parousia.

In chapter 8, however, the present effect of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in that body is described. First, to adopt a paraphrase of v. 2, "the controlling power of the living Spirit in Christ Jesus made (us) free from the controlling power of sin and of death." Then there is a practical experience of power to walk according to the mind of God as expressed in the law, that the object of the law in producing right living (in which it has failed through the weakness of fallen man) might be attained in us who walk in the power of the Spirit and who devote ourselves to the interests of the renewed nature, not to the interests of the old; as vv. 4 and 5 may be paraphrased. And while it is true of every man in Christ that the body is dead because of sin, "the primeval sentence still holds its way *there*" (Moule), yet the Spirit (the renewed man) is in the state of life, because of righteousness, that is, because the

Last Adam's "one act of righteousness" (chap. 5. 18) has counter-vailed the one act of disobedience of the First Adam. And because (R.V. margin) God's Spirit dwells in it (1 Cor. 6. 19) the body, mortal though it be, shall be quickened, life will be imparted to it, at "our adoption, that is to say, the redemption of our body" (v. 23). See Phil. 3. 20, 21.

### CREATION DELIVERED FROM BONDAGE

Has the word "creation" in Rom. 8. 21 any reference to the believer?

THE believer is, of course, a creature, a product of the creative activity of God, as described in Gen. 1. Here, however, for the purposes of his argument, the apostle distinguishes the believer from the rest of the creation, as he does also in verses 19, 20, and 22. And this is done on the ground that the believer is the first fruits of a new creation (Rom. 6. 4, cp. 2 Cor. 5. 17), though, even for him, the old has not yet entirely passed away. "Creation," then, in these verses sums up all that work of God which was involved in the consequences of Adam's disobedience, though it may also cover all that was involved in the prior rebellion of Satan. The first part of the old creation to enter into the experience of deliverance from bondage is that which, through the death and resurrection of Christ, and the quickening of the Holy Spirit, is already a "new creation." "The revealing of the sons of God" is the revealing of the Son of God surrounded by the "many brethren" of verse 29. And for this the whole groaning, pain-racked creation is waiting, as the signal that its own deliverance draws near.

But though the believer is thus distinguished from the creation, yet in verse 23 he is reminded that so long as he is in the body he must share its groans as he shares its hopes.

### TEMPTING THE LORD

In what way may a Christian be said to "tempt Christ?" (1 Cor. 10. 9).

WHEN any passage of Scripture is under consideration the first essential is to enquire as to the text. Reference to R.V., or other modern version, shows that what the Apostle actually wrote

was "tempt the Lord," that is, Jehovah. The reference is to the incident recorded in Num. 21. 5-9. The word used is *ekpeirazō*, a strengthened form of *peirazō*. It occurs in the words of the Lord to Satan, Matt. 4. 7, Luke 4. 12: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Clearly it means to test in these passages, as it does in the only other place of its occurrence, Luke 10. 25. Paul warns his readers against the sin of presumption, of attempting to see how far one might go in self-will, and even disobedience, without incurring the displeasure of God. Compare Psa. 95. 9: "Your fathers tempted (i.e. tested) Me, proved Me, and saw My work." It was to this sin that Satan encouraged Eve, saying, in effect, "God would never deal so drastically with you for such a small offence; you need not be afraid to eat."

### ENDS OF THE AGES

What is the meaning of the phrase "the ends of the ages" in 1 Cor. 10. 11? How does it differ from "the end (consummation, *margin*) of the ages" in Heb. 9. 26?

THE only passage in the New Testament in which "end" (*telos*) is found with "age" or "ages" is 1 Cor. 10. 11. Of the two possible meanings of *telos* "aim" or "conclusion" only the latter is suitable here. In Matt. 13. 39, 40, 49; 24. 3; 28. 20 the word is *suntelia*, with "age" in the singular. This may be translated "consummation" or "conclusion," of the age. In each case the reference is to a time still future.

In 1 Cor. 10. 11 the historic ages may be intended; the period before the race was differentiated into Jew and Gentile, and that during which they were separated by "the middle wall of partition," the Law, or that in which the barrier was broken down by the Cross, and the present age of "the ministration of the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3. 8), Who has brought God's final message to the world.

Heb. 9. 26 is the only place in which *suntelia* appears with "ages" (pl.). The reference is plainly to the Cross. To it the former ages looked forward. For it they were preparatory. Upon it all later ages will look back as the consummation of God's revelation to His creation. That "God is Love" is His final word, the word of the Cross!

## THE HEAD COVERING OF WOMEN

Does 1 Cor. 11. 5, 6, mean that a woman should have a covering over her head when engaging in private prayer at home?

THE epistle is addressed, primarily, to the "church of God . . . at Corinth"; its object is to deal with certain abuses that had grown up in it (11. 34). That the section of this chapter (2-16) with which the question is concerned contemplates the conduct of certain women in the gatherings of the church is plain from the language of verse 17: "In giving you this charge, I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better but for the worse"; "this charge" referring to what precedes, not to what follows. The words "come together" are repeated in verse 18, introductory to the new section concerning abuses in connection with the Lord's Supper. The transition is natural, for in both sections the apostle is dealing with public gatherings, and with such only. Who had observed women at their private devotions that he should be able to report on their dress while so engaged? Moreover, the prophesying which is here coupled with praying is not a privately but a publicly discharged function. Criticism of the attitude or covering of any person—man or woman—engaged in private devotions would be out of place in an epistle written to meet pressing emergencies, and where every other matter dealt with is of a public character, as in the immediately preceding and the immediately following contents.

I conclude, therefore, that the apostle is dealing exclusively with the covering seemingly for a woman in a public gathering.

In 1 Tim. 2. 8-12 also the apostle appears to have had in mind a public gathering. In every place the men (*anēr*, the males; not *anthrōpos*, which might include both sexes) are to pray. The women who may be present are to be dressed in a becoming manner, but "to be in quietness."

Why, it may well be asked, does the apostle in one place categorically forbid women to pray in public at all, and in another give directions as to their covering when they do so pray? I judge the answer to be that the word pray has two uses; it may refer to audible prayer, as when we say "lead in prayer," or it may mean to pray inaudibly, as when a company responds to the invitation,

"Let us pray." To pray is to draw near to God with words (Hos. 14. 2) which may be "uttered or unexpressed." Ideally the whole congregation prays; he who prays audibly expressing the common thanksgiving, petition, or intercession as the case may be; those who follow intelligently identify themselves with the prayer by saying "the Amen" (1 Cor. 14. 16).

I understand, therefore, that in 1 Tim. 2 the apostle forbids women to lead (audibly) in prayer in the public gatherings, at the same time instructing them as to their dress on such occasions. It will be noted that the epistle was written to teach people how to behave in "a church of a Living God" (3. 16). In 1 Cor. 11 he directs them how to dress while they are praying (inaudibly) in the public meeting. This does not mean that they are to assume a covering during prayer, removing it at other times; "praying or prophesying" is sufficient here to cover the whole period of the gathering.

The difficulty remains that prophesying is of necessity audible, and that women are implicitly recognized as discharging that function. To which the answer is that while here public (inaudible) prayer is regulated, and in 1 Tim. 2 public (audible) prayer is forbidden to women, prophesying is explicitly forbidden to them in 1 Cor. 14. 34, where the apostle gives general instruction on that subject.

It seems an inevitable deduction from Tit. 2. 3-5 that there were meetings for women in the apostle's day, in which the maturer women instructed the younger in practical Christian living. Such impartation of the mind of the Lord to others falls under the general heading of "prophesying." In such gatherings no limitations are placed upon women praying audibly and prophesying as described.

It is too much forgotten that in "the churches of the saints" all should pray, though but few, and they "men-brethren," may lead audibly the prayers of all. The effectiveness of public prayer depends not on the utterances of the few but on the exercise of the many. It is surely good that sisters should come together on occasion for prayer and in the absence of men-brethren, express their thanksgivings and petitions audibly. I give my judgment, having no commandment from the Lord. But what a difference a band of godly praying women may make to a church of God!

## “THAT WHICH IS PERFECT”

What is the meaning of “that which is perfect is come” in 1 Cor. 13. 10? Does it refer to the completion of the Scriptures, or to the Heavenly state?

IF, as is surely the case, the “when” of 1 Corinthians 13. 10, “when that which is perfect is come,” is the “then” of verse 12, “Now we see in a mirror, darkly (Greek, *ainigma* = enigma); but then face to face,” the answer to the question would seem to be Heaven, for, notwithstanding that the revelation of God has long been complete, not even yet do we see “face to face,” nor do we yet “know (thoroughly) even as we have (all along) been (thoroughly) known.”

## THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY

What is the meaning of “glass” in 1 Cor. 13. 12?

IN his commentary on this verse Stanley quotes a Rabbinical saying that “all the prophets saw through a dark glass; Moses saw through a bright glass,” probably with reference to Num. 12. 8. This may have suggested “window” to the earlier translators whom Darby (in his rendering of the verse, and footnote) followed. But the Greek word “*esoptron*” has not this meaning. The use of glass for windows is of much more recent date. That *esoptron* is a mirror is confirmed by its only other N.T. occurrence, in Jas. 1. 23, but the ancient mirrors were of metal, not of glass. “Through” may be equivalent to “by means of,” or it may refer to the optical illusion that what is seen in a mirror seems to be seen through it. Compared with his own times, clear light had been vouchsafed to Moses, but that light was as darkness compared with that which has come to us through the Lord Jesus and His Apostles. Even so, the revelation contained in the New Testament, glorious as it is, is partial compared with that which the future has in store for us. The medium of revelation, human language, is inadequate to the task of conveying the thoughts of God in their perfection, and therefore all that is possible to us now is partial knowledge, obscured vision. While in the world we are in the child state; in due time we shall enter upon the state of the full-grown man. As for

knowledge, and the means whereby it is transmitted and acquired, prophecies, tongues, and the like, these are imperfect and transient, and must fail, but faith, hope and love abide eternally.

### “SPEAKING” OR “CHATTERING”

In 1 Cor. 14. 34, 35 does not the word translated “speak” (*lalein*) really mean to chatter?

ETYMOLOGICALLY this is obviously the case; it has reference to sound as distinct from meaning. But usage, not etymology, determines the meaning of a word in any language. *Lalein* does not mean to chatter elsewhere in the New Testament, although it occurs therein about three hundred times. In this chapter it is found twenty-four times, and in the other twenty-two cases it refers to ministry in the churches. Are these two occurrences at all likely to bear a different, and in N.T., an unexampled meaning? The Apostle certainly did not instruct the prophets to “chatter by two or three” (v. 29).

*Lalein* stresses the words in which a message is conveyed rather than the message itself, for which *legein* is used. Both words occur in verse 21: “By men of strange tongues . . . will I speak (*lalein*) . . . saith (*legein*) the Lord,” and in v. 34: “let the women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak (*lalein*) . . . as also saith (*legein*) the law.”

One other illustration may be added, for its own sake. In John 12. 49, the Lord tells His disciples that the Father had given Him a commandment, what He should say (*legein*) and what He should speak (*lalein*). Not His message only, the very words in which it was uttered were His Father’s—reminding us of Isa. 50. 4, and suggesting 1 Cor. 2. 13.

### THE INTERMEDIATE STATE

Do 1 Cor. 15. 29, “baptised for the dead;” and 1 Pet. 3. 18-20, “the days of Noah,” refer to those in an intermediate state or existence?

WHATEVER the meaning of the first of these passages (and I have no suggestion to offer, nor am I satisfied with any that I have

seen proposed by others), it is not clear how there can be a reference in it to an intermediate state. Some have found here a vicarious baptism intended to secure the salvation of persons already dead. To which it should be sufficient to reply that the text is a precarious foundation on which to build such a superstructure, and one, moreover, without a shadow of sanction elsewhere in Scripture.

As to 1 Pet. 3. 18-20, my own judgment is that the reference is not to human spirits at all, but to those spirits that made an irruption into the human race as described in the early part of Genesis 6. Observe that Peter's words are not "spirits of men who were disobedient in the days of Noah," but "spirits which aforesaid were disobedient . . . in the days of Noah," i.e. they were spirits when they disobeyed.

### "DEATH" AND "SLEEP"

1 Cor. 15. 51, 52. Why are the two words "death" and "sleep" used in these verses?

THE mystery is not that "we shall not all sleep," for that had already been revealed (1 Thess. 4. 15), but that we shall all, "sleeping" and "waking" alike, be changed as described in v. 52. Sleep, is used in N.T. of the death of the believer, as in 1 Cor. 7. 39 (R.V. margin). "Them that are fallen asleep" in 1 Thess. 4. 14, 15 are "the dead in Christ" of v. 16. This is a figure of speech known as "metaphor," in which one thing is put for another which resembles it in some measure. The metaphor is not always suitable, however, as in the passage under consideration; it would be incongruous to say "the sleeping shall be raised incorruptible." Hence the change from metaphor to direct statement. It is obvious that both terms apply to the same persons.

### THE FADING GLORY

2 Cor. 3. 13. What is signified here by the *end* of that which is abolished?

THE words of this verse must be understood in the light of v. 7, "The children of Israel could not look stedfastly upon the face of Moses for (because of) the glory of his face; which glory was

passing away." Hence "that which was passing away" (v. 13) is the glory on the face of Moses after his descent from the mount, and the "end" (*telos*) of it was its diminishing stages through which it finally disappeared. The argument is that if this derived and transient glory, even in its most attenuated form, was beyond the power of the human eye to endure, how much more the full blaze of the essential glory of God in Christ! And, further, what is true in the physical sphere is equally true in the moral and spiritual; if the glory of the law, which dealt only with externals and which could result only in death, was so great, how much greater the glory of the Gospel, which deals with the spirit and which brings with it life!

#### THE JUDGMENT SEAT AND O.T. SAINTS

"We must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ" (2 Cor. 5. 10). Does this include the saints of the Old Testament, or does it only apply to those who are redeemed during this present age? If only applicable to the redeemed of this age, where will the Old Testament saints receive their reward?

IF "they that are Christ's" (1 Cor. 15. 23) includes Old Testament saints, as I judge is the case, then these also will "be made manifest" at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

#### THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

Is the Judgment Seat of Christ the place where saint and sinner will be judged, although at different times, or is it confined to believers? If the latter, why does the Apostle go on to speak of "the terror of the Lord"? (2 Cor. 5. 10, 11).

THE Corinthian Epistles are addressed to "the church of God at Corinth," which was composed of "them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus." The section of the Epistle in which the words under consideration occur begins at 4. 7: "we" and "us" are found in almost every verse, and always with reference to believers. There is no evident reason why the "we" in 5. 10 should be understood in a different sense from the "we" in v. 9. Cp. 1 Cor. 4. 1-5, where again the Apostle is dealing with believers only.

In v. 11 the word translated "fear" is *phobos*, which, in the many places of its occurrence, is so translated in A.V., save here, Rom. 13. 3, and 1 Pet. 3. 14. R.V. is consistent in giving "fear" throughout. In our passage Paul is defending himself against a charge of duplicity; he and his accusers alike, he tells them, must one day render an account of themselves to the Lord. Meantime, God, Who tries the hearts of men, knows the truth; there is nothing hidden from Him. And Paul hoped that when the consciences of his readers were exercised they, too, would be convinced of his integrity, though in saying this he would not be mistaken as commending himself for, as he says later in the Epistle (10. 18): "not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth." Throughout the passage there is no reference whatever to "sinners."

There is a tendency, quite strongly marked, and much to be deprecated as detrimental to the spiritual well-being of Christians, to wrest such words as these from the context, and to apply them to other persons, whereas the purpose of the Spirit of God is, by them, to warn believers of the solemnity of the Christian obligation in stewardship whereof each of us must one day give an account to the Lord. The words, therefore, may be paraphrased thus: "having a sense of our responsibility to Christ at His Judgment Seat, we seek to persuade men of our integrity, but happily it is not necessary to persuade God Who already knows us thoroughly."

### OUR LORD'S POVERTY

As the word translated "poor" in 2 Cor. 8. 9 is rendered "beggar" in Luke 16. 20, are we to understand that the Lord when on earth was a beggar in the same sense?

A BEGGAR is one who begs, so it has come to mean one who gets his living by begging. There is another sense, however, in which it is said of one who was formerly wealthy that he is now a beggar, intending thereby not that he asks alms, but that he has been bereft completely of his possessions. In ordinary usage there is no difficulty in distinguishing what is meant. Similarly, in the language in which the New Testament was written, the word may describe one who lives by asking alms, but Luke 14. 13, 21;

16. 20, 22, seem to be the only ones to bear this meaning.

The Lord, we may be sure, did not intend to convey that the Gospel was preached to beggars only, nor that the widow who put a gift into the treasury was a beggar (Matt. 11. 5; Luke 21. 2). The churches of Macedonia were not beggars when they remembered the poor saints in Jerusalem who, again, were not begging (Rom. 15. 26; 2 Cor. 8. 2). To translate Gal. 2. 10, "that we should remember the beggars," would be absurd. The general New Testament use of the word can be gathered from James 2. 2-5, where material things are in view; and from Gal. 4. 9, for the religions of this world, including Judaism, are poverty-stricken indeed; they can give nothing for they have nothing to give. But we know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, for He, being rich with all the wealth of Heaven and the glory of Godhood, became so poor that on earth He had not where to lay His head, and in the end submitted to be hung upon a cross of wood. This is the poverty of which the apostle speaks in 2 Cor. 8. 9. There is no suggestion there or elsewhere in Scripture, that He became a beggar after the fashion of the "holy men" of the East, nor that He sought anything from men save confidence, love, and sympathy. But there were those who esteemed it a privilege to minister to Him of their substance when they had opportunity (Luke 8. 3, John 12. 2).

### THE THIRD HEAVEN

What is "the third heaven" mentioned in 2 Cor. 12. 2-4?

THE words with which we are immediately concerned are, "I know a man in Christ . . . caught up even to the third heaven . . . I know such a man . . . how that he was caught up into Paradise." The word translated "caught up" (*harpazo*) is that from which our word rapture comes, as in the expression "rapture of the saints." While there is nothing in the word to suggest the direction in which the person or thing "raptured" is taken, this is usually made plain by the context. Thus Philip was "caught away" (Acts 8. 39) not "up," and when Paul was forcibly removed by the soldiers he was taken away, not up (Acts 23. 10). In Rev. 12. 5, however, it is clear that the Man child was "caught up unto

God, and unto His Throne." So also the saints are to be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess. 4. 17). In neither of these passages would "caught away" be suitable, for reasons that are quite obvious. Moreover, as Heaven is represented in Scripture as above us (see, for example, Acts 1. 9) "caught away" would be equally misleading in our passage.

Peter speaks of "heavens from of old," and of "heavens that now are," and of "new heavens" as successive one to the other (2 Peter 3. 5, 7, 13). But there is no suggestion in the words of the Apostle Paul that he supposed himself to have been carried away to the future heavens; besides he speaks of a "third heaven" whereas Peter speaks of "heavens." This interpretation (Bullinger) may be dismissed without hesitation. Heaven, in ordinary speech, is used of the sky, "the limit of vision upwards." In Scripture, the heavens are distinguished—the aerial, Matt. 6. 26, the sidereal (or starry), 24. 29, and the "third," as in our passage.

While Peter says only that the Lord went "into heaven" he implies, and indeed, states that there is the immediate presence of God (1 Pet. 3. 22). The writer of Hebrews declares that the Lord "passed through the heavens," and Paul that He "ascended far above all the heavens" (Heb. 4. 14; Eph. 4. 10). This is "Heaven itself," where is "the Throne of the Majesty in the heavens" (Heb. 8. 1; 9. 24).

So much for what we may know about Heaven from the Scriptures, and we have no other source of knowledge. Paradise is mentioned in Luke 23. 43, where the Lord speaks of it as a place where He and the penitent robber were to be even that very day, not in the body, for the Lord's resurrection was not to take place until the third day. (The rendering, "I say unto thee this day, thou shalt be with me in Paradise" requires no further notice than dismissal as translation made in the interests of a doctrine inconsistent with the words in their plain sense). The only other place in which it is found in N.T. is Rev. 2. 7. Paradise means a garden on a large scale, a park. And if Paul was caught up as far as to (*heos*) a "third heaven" and there was brought into (*eis*) "Paradise," then these are at least so closely associated as not to be distinguishable from our point of view, which is that of partial, and so entirely inadequate, knowledge.

## VIII—NEW TESTAMENT II

### HOW MANY APOSTLES?

Eph. 2. 20; 4. 11, and Rev. 21. 14. Are we to understand that the two Ephesian Scriptures contemplate only twelve apostles? Then in what sense was Barnabas an apostle (see Acts 14. 14)?

IT is unlikely that "the apostles" in Ephesians are the twelve. The two classes, apostles and prophets, are included under one article, and while this does not identify the prophets with the apostles it does associate them closely, as in chapters 3. 5; 4. 11. It seems better to understand "apostles" here in the wider sense in which Barnabas (Acts 14. 4-14), Andronicus, and Junias (Rom. 16. 7), and James, the Lord's brother (Gal. 1. 19), are included. In 1 Thess. 1. 1 and 2. 6, Paul includes Silas and Timothy with himself as apostles.

### THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT

What is the "unity of the Spirit?" and how is it to be kept?

"GIVING diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4. 3). No doubt, Paul suggests the "one Body," previously called "the church which is His (Christ's) Body," is made and maintained by the Holy Spirit, and will be maintained despite what the powers of evil may devise, and even accomplish through the perversity of carnal men. But there is no sense in which we can keep that unity; it lies completely beyond our power to make or mar. As it was His to produce, so is it His to maintain.

Does not "the unity of the Spirit" mean a unity of purpose and action in the corporate life of Christians? In that case the unity would be maintained by diligently cultivating the lowliness, meekness, forbearance and love of verse 2. A garden neglected

soon grows luxuriant, but with weeds. If flower and fruit are to abound we must take to heart the significant words "giving diligence," for these graces belong not to the sensual, but to the spiritual nature; they are "fruit of the Spirit," giving evidence, as fruitfulness always does, of the presence of life. The opposites of these are the workings, the fermentation, of the flesh that war against the peace of an assembly and make harmonious life impossible in it.

This, then, is the responsibility of each believer, to do what in him lies so to cultivate the garden of the Lord in his own life that the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control, may be borne in him abundantly. Only thus can the unity of the Spirit be maintained in the bond of peace.

Here a word of warning is necessary. This keeping cannot refer to the seven "uniquenesses" of the following verses, for no more can we maintain the oneness of the Body than we can the oneness of the God and Father of all. True, we can and should maintain the Scriptural doctrines concerning these, but assuredly something more and deeper than the intellectual grasp of doctrine is intended here.

This interpretation is illuminated by a quotation from an unpublished writing of J. B. Watson, which corresponds closely with what he takes to be "the unity of the Spirit." And with this judgment I agree: "The bond of fellowship between churches is to be that of a common obedience to the same Lord and subjection to His Word, not that of conformity to decisions, imposed from without, or that secured by creeds or governmental forms. . . . The unity thus exhibited will be one of the Spirit, the effect of which towards the world will be that which only the steady pressure of truth manifests in life can produce."

There are passages of Scripture which, whilst they refer immediately to the corporate life of believers, yet are often read as though they were spoken of the individual and, of course, quite appropriately so if such application is not allowed to obscure the primary reference to church life.

## WHAT IS THE FILLING? (Eph. 5. 18)

THE section of the Epistle beginning at verse 15 is devoted to counselling the believer concerning his daily life—he is to walk wisely, and to redeem the time (cp. Dan. 2. 8), for evil characterizes the age in which we live. Its atmosphere is poisonous and many snares await the feet of the disciples, from which the only way of deliverance is to get to “understand what the will of the Lord is.” And the will of the Lord for His people is found only in the Scriptures. Let the Christian beware of the snare of alcohol which, taken into his body, throws a man’s life into confusion, and causes him to neglect his responsibilities in riotous self-confidence. In contrast the Christian is to “be filled in spirit,” so literally (see R.V. margin), there is no article. This is a unique expression; it does not occur again in the New Testament. To be technical, the noun is in the dative case preceded by the preposition *en*, in. The words in Acts 2. 4, and similar places, are different; in them there is no preposition, and the nouns are in the genitive case.

There are no capital letters in the ancient MSS. on which our translations are based, so that there is no authority for the capital S in the English versions; whether a large or small initial letter is used depends on the translator’s understanding of the passage. In my judgment, the capital S is misleading. The contrast is between two fillings, of the body of the believer with alcohol, and of the spirit of the believer with—what?

The two Epistles, that to the Ephesians (which is probably that to the Laodiceans mentioned in Col. 4. 16) and that to the Colossians, are complementary one to the other. Throwing light each upon the other, they should be read together. The parallel passage in Colossians 3. 16 reads, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,” and, if it be asked why these words are taken as corresponding with “be filled in spirit,” the answer is found in the very similar contexts; the sequence is the same in each case. Combining them, we perceive the meaning to be, that the Christian filled in his spirit with the word of Christ and regulating his walk thereby will live in an orderly way, and will maintain the relations of husband and wife, of parent and child, of master and servant (or employer and employee, in more modern but equivalent

phraseology) in a way that will please God and, at the same time, will commend the Gospel. The Christian is not guided by impulse, nor is he left to his own conception of what the life that pleases God is. He exercises a judgment enlightened by the Holy Scriptures, and, in his obedience thereto, proves the enabling power of the living Spirit of Christ. As another has said, prompt obedience to the word of the Lord is the secret of the overcoming life.

It may be pointed out that as the ancient MSS. are without punctuation, that of our versions is also a matter of interpretation. Col. 3. 16 is an instance of the loss to the reader from a punctuation that does not make good sense in itself, and that obscures the correspondence of the passage with other Scriptures. Is it true that Christians teach and admonish one another when they sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, as these versions suggest? Correctly punctuated the sense is good and in keeping with the teaching of Rom. 12. 6-8; 14. 19; 1 Cor. 12. 12-14; 1 Pet. 4. 10, 11; 1 Thess. 5. 11; instruction ignored or refused by the organized churches of our day. The verse should read thus: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another, with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs singing with grace in your hearts unto God." It may be added that this is the punctuation in Nestle's Greek Testament, published by the B. & F. B. Society, and adopted by them as the standard Text for their translations, and of Conybeare & Howson in Epistles of St. Paul.

#### THE CHURCH—"IT" OR "HER"?

Eph. 5. 25. Is the pronoun with which this verse ends feminine or neuter in the original?

THE pronoun is feminine in gender; it does not follow, however, that a feminine pronoun should be used in English. In English gender follows sex, but not in any other language. In Greek the gender of a word is usually recognized by its ending. For example, *polis*, a city, is feminine, and the pronoun accompanying it is always likewise feminine. In Rev. 21. 11, the English Versions render this pronoun by "her," probably because of the presence of "wife" in the immediate context. But in verse 23, the same pronoun is rightly translated "it," because in English "city" is neuter gender.

“Spirit” in Greek is *pneuma*, the termination of which shows it to be neuter, and whereas the accompanying neuter pronoun is usually translated by “it,” yet R.V. surely did right to use “Him” in Rom. 8. 16, 26, and might well have done so in 1 Pet. 1. 11. So in Eph. 5. 25; the termination of *ecclesia* shows it to be feminine in form, and consequently it is followed by a feminine pronoun. But “church” in English is neuter, and therefore properly takes a neuter pronoun, so that the feminine pronoun in Greek is rightly rendered by “it” in English. In this respect A.V. and R.V., with Darby and the Douai (Roman Catholic) Version are to be preferred to Weymouth, and Moffat, both of whom make the pronoun feminine throughout.

### WORKING OUT SALVATION

We are told, in Philippians 2. 12, to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. What does this mean?

THIS text is frequently rent from its context and thus misunderstood and misapplied. It is too readily assumed that a new subject is introduced with the new paragraph. But why?

The opening words: “Wherefore” (A.V.) or “So then” (R.V.), certainly suggest a connection with the preceding verses; the Greek word thus rendered is no less explicit. Verses 5-11 are the necessary preparation for verse 12. Moreover, the word “salvation” covers a very wide area of meaning and must always be understood in keeping with the subject with which the writer is immediately concerned. From what danger did the Christians at Philippi need to be saved? The perennial danger, besetting every church, and calling for unrelaxed vigilance if we are to be saved from it, is the danger of division. This is the burden on the Apostle’s mind throughout the letter. Individual salvation is not in view except as the salvation of the whole depends on the obedience of every part thereof. The Apostle approaches the subject, in verse 2, by urging upon his readers to “be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind,” just as in chap. 4. 2 he exhorts Euodia and Syntyche “to be of the same mind in the Lord.” The word translated “mind” is the same in each case,

and, as in 2 Cor. 13. 11, it means the practical wisdom, the actuating motive which guides and controls the course of one's life, *phroneo*. It is also the word of verse 4: "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." This is the secret of oneness of mind among Christians, not that any person, elder or other, should attempt to impose his mind on the rest, but that each should be controlled by the mind that was in Christ Jesus, the love that constrained Him to lay down His life in obedience to His Father and in love to "His Own." Thus, and thus only, can we work out our salvation from division in a church of God. The danger of division is real, the enemy is subtle and unrelenting; those who love the Lord will fear and even tremble at it; and if the desire to work out salvation from it is present, it is God Who planted it in us.

### THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

To what does "the resurrection of the dead" refer in Phil. 3. 11?

FIRST let us clear the ground by noting the facts. A more or less literal translation would run, "if in any way I may attain, or reach, unto that out-resurrection which is from among dead persons." There was something to strive after, with the possibility alike of success and of failure. The word translated resurrection, *exanastasis*, is not found elsewhere in the New Testament, the usual word is *anastasis*, simply. The addition of *ex* serves to heighten the contrast with the "dead."

Who are these dead? Two answers are possible: the reference may be to the physically dead, as in Eph. 1. 20, or to the spiritually dead, as in Eph. 2. 1. The objection to the former is that the resurrection of the believer (and it is as a believer the Apostle speaks) is not elsewhere in Scripture made conditional upon any effort of his, nor is it elsewhere presented as something to which the believer might not attain.

When the Apostle speaks of becoming conformed to the death of Christ he does not aspire to die as Christ died, but to an experience of separation from all that displeases God analogous to that death in which "He died unto sin once" (Rom. 6. 10). It seems to

follow that since physical death is not the object of his desire, so it cannot be physical resurrection that is the objective which he aims at attaining.

The word translated "attain" occurs in Acts 26. 7, "Unto which promise our twelve Tribes earnestly serving (God) night and day hope to attain." The Jew based his hope of resurrection on his zealous service of God, but vainly, for "if the inheritance is of the law, it is no more of promise" (Gal. 3. 18). Now that to which the Jew could not attain by works is secured to the Christian through faith. This is the essential difference between Saul the Jew and Paul the Christian. That for which the former strove in vain had become the inalienable hope of the latter through faith.

But the end here contemplated could be reached only by earnest, whole-hearted devotion, and, apart from such devotion, he must fail to reach it. Thus it seems that the resurrection at "the last day" is ruled out, for that that is assured to the believer unconditionally is an essential element in the Gospel: "the dead in Christ shall rise," see John 6. 39, 40, 44, 54, and 1 Thess. 4. 16.

That what the Apostle has before him is to be attained only on condition is witnessed not merely by the phrase "if by any means," but by the context generally, alike that which precedes and that which follows, v. 11. He had counted (3. 7), and he still counted (3. 8), all that the world had to offer as mere "table-leavings", that by turning away from them he might devote himself to "gaining Christ." Now Paul's phrases, "that I may gain Christ," "that I may know Him," cannot mean that he sought a saving knowledge of Christ, for he had already been rejoicing in Christ and His salvation for many years. It is the aspiration of a soul to enter into a deeper knowledge of, a closer fellowship with, Christ. To know Christ here is to know "the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings," that is, to have such an experience of the power that God "wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead" (Eph. 1. 20), that he might, in that strength, so follow Christ as to enter into fellowship with the sufferings that eventuated in His death, and thus, in his relation to the world, might be conformed to that death; and to know, experimentally and increasingly, what it is to be alive unto God (cp. Rom. 6. 7, 18 and 1 Pet. 4. 1, 2).

So in the verses that follow the end has not been gained; he must still "press on, if so be that he may"; the language is still that of determination to fulfil a condition in order to gain an end. There is a certain incongruity about the introduction of a reference here to an end already assured, the resurrection of the dead in Christ. Moreover, a little later (20, 21) he speaks, not of the resurrection of the dead, but of the transformation of the living when the waiting time is passed.

It appears, then, that the alternative, a present experience of victory over sin, and of a life well-pleasing to God, is the Apostle's aim expressed in v. 11, as it is in the verses that precede and follow it. There is no finality in holiness; every fresh attainment creates a fresh sense of heights yet to be scaled. Yet it was for this, the character of the life that He Himself had lived, that Christ had laid hold upon Paul. What, therefore, was Paul to do but to stretch out after that life as it opened out and unfolded itself before him? The parallel with Rom. 6. 4-14 should not be missed. We died and were raised with Christ that "we also (we, like the Lord) might walk in newness of life," and this becomes a growing experience as we obey the injunction: "Even so (*i.e.* after the pattern of Christ as described in v. 10) reckon ye also (*i.e.* ye, like the Lord) yourselves to be dead unto sin indeed; but alive unto God." Increasing likeness to Christ in character now is the normal prelude to full likeness to Christ, within and without, in that day. Experience of the resurrection power of Christ in deliverance from moral corruption, is the path to that deliverance from corruption and death which will be manifest when the believer is seen in glory with his Lord.

### ATTAINING TO RESURRECTION

If desire for resurrection (Phil. 3. 11) would be inconsistent with Paul's hope of the Parousia, what of 1 Cor. 6. 14, 2 Cor. 4. 14, where he associates himself with those who have already died in hope of resurrection?

THE Apostle maintained a threefold attitude toward the future. He was "already being poured out as a drink offering," that is, the order for his execution might be given at any moment, and it

would find him ready to die; but if that order should not be given, he would be prepared for the severity of the winter, so he sent for his friends and for his clothing. But also he "loved (the hope of) His (Christ's) appearing" (2 Tim. 4. 6-13). Thus he was ready for whatever might lie in the will of the Lord for him, he himself not knowing what that will might be. But in none of these places does he make resurrection the object of endeavour, as he does in Phil. 3. 11. The essential element, therefore, is lacking, and in this respect the passages are not parallel.

It is true that a heresy that the resurrection was already past had obtained some currency prior to, or about the date of, the writing of Philippians, but it would be no answer to such teaching that the resurrection is to be gained by striving.

2 Tim. is probably the latest of Paul's letters known to exist, and in it he does not commit himself as to his own future. Thus the oft-repeated statement that he expected the Lord in his own lifetime, but was mistaken, is seen to be without foundation.

It may be well to speak a word of caution, as to drawing deductions from the fact that the word here translated resurrection, *exanastasis*, occurs nowhere else in N.T. The corresponding verb *exanistēmi*, does occur, in Mark 12. 19, Luke 20. 28, and Acts 15. 5. But in Matt. 22. 24, which is a parallel in that Gospel to the two passages just mentioned, the word is *anistemi*. It is as precarious to base an argument on the stronger form found in Phil. as it would be unwarranted to find a difference between the word used by Matthew and the strengthened form used by Mark and Luke.

## CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

How are we to understand the word "perfect" in Phil. 3. 12, 15?

THE words are *teleiō* (verb) and *teleios* (adjective); for the purpose of this note they may be treated together. A review of the meaning in other of Paul's writings will help us to follow his thoughts here. In Rom. 12. 2, and 2 Cor. 12. 9, the reference is to the will of God and to the power of God respectively; these do not call for further remark. In each of the remaining passages the word is used of the believer. In Eph. 4. 13, "fullgrown," the

consummation of his development is in view, an end to which the exercise of certain gifts is the appointed means, as it was the aim of the Apostle in the exercise of such gifts as had been committed to him (Col. 1. 28). This stage, however, is not reached in this world, for not even in knowledge is the Christian brought to maturity until "that which is perfect is come" (1 Cor. 13. 10). Meantime he is to be (lit., become) mature in mind, to develop his intelligence in the things that pertain to God (1 Cor. 14. 20). For his friends at Colossæ Epaphras prayed that they might become mature in (the knowledge of, and obedience to) all the will of God (Col. 4. 12). Here, again, progress, not finality, is the thought; finality is stagnation, progress is the note of life. And while the Apostle would not attempt to impart "the mystery of God" to the Corinthians when he first came among them, yet he had a "mystery" and a "wisdom" for those who had accepted the message of the Gospel and had thus passed from death unto life. These he calls the "mature," but in the sense that they had become qualified to learn, not in the sense that they no longer needed to learn (1 Cor. 2. 6).

There remain only the passages mentioned in the question to be considered. In the former of these the Apostle declares that he has not yet reached the stage of maturity, he is pressing toward it, knowing that the purpose of Christ for him is that he should attain thereto. But when? Here, or hereafter? This question he has already answered: "He which began a good work in you will perfect (*epiteleō*) it until the day of Christ" (1. 6). The work in him is to continue until then. But if God is at work, Paul is not passive; he also is actively engaged, "stretching forward . . . I press on" (3. 14). It is plain that v. 15 must not be understood in any sense that would be out of harmony with that of v. 12. It should be taken, therefore, in the sense of 1 Cor. 2. 6, see above: "we who are no longer babes, who have put away childish things."

### THE LORD AT HAND

In what sense are we to understand "The Lord is at hand?" (Phil. 4. 5).

THE reference may be either to space or to time, that is, the word is equally appropriate whether the thought of the Apostle is that

the Lord's return is near, or that the Lord is beside us. Paul uses *eggus* (or *engus* as it is pronounced and sometimes written) in five places; in Rom. 10. 8, Eph. 2. 13, 17 (where it is used figuratively) the idea is of nearness to a person; in Rom. 13. 11, approach in time is intended, as is the case with the verb (*eggizo*) in the following verse. But in Phil. 2. 30 the idea is proximity. Thus Paul's usage elsewhere affords no definite guidance as to his intention in our text; here either meaning would make good sense. The words follow an exhortation to gentleness in our dealings with others, and they precede an exhortation to free ourselves from anxiety by leaving ourselves and our concerns in the care of God. Which meaning yields the better sense in such a connection—that the Lord will soon be here, or that even now He is close beside His people in their trials? If the former is preferred, then Jas. 5. 8, offers a close parallel; Joel 2. 1, Heb. 10. 25, and 1 Pet. 4. 7, may be compared. If the latter, then there are parallels in Psalms 34. 18; 119. 150, 151 (with which 31. 20 should be read) and 145. 18. My judgment inclines somewhat strongly to the interpretation that sees in the words an assurance that the Lord is "a very present help." This note offers the material on which the reader can form a judgment of his own.

### THE MYSTERY OF GOD

What is meant by "the mystery of God" in Col. 2. 2?

THERE is considerable variety in the ancient manuscripts of this passage. However, we may assume, with a fair measure of probability, that the words run as in R.V., "the mystery of God, even Christ." The danger to which the church at Colossæ was exposed was apparently from a Greek philosophy, which afterwards came to be known as Gnosticism (derived from *gnosis*, "knowledge"), and which some were attempting to apply to Christ, in explanation of His Person, and of His relation to God. Apparently Paul has this incipient teaching in mind when he warns Timothy against "the oppositions of the knowledge (*gnosis*) falsely so-called" (1 Tim. 6. 20). For knowledge as an end in itself, even when it is true knowledge, or knowledge of truth, not merely speculation, the Apostle has no regard, as his writings testify. Compare, for

example, what he wrote to the Corinthians, "we know (*oida*, perceive) that we all have knowledge. Knowledge (*gnosis*) puffeth up, but love edifieth," and "if I have . . . all knowledge but have not love, I am nothing" (1 Cor. 8. 1; 13. 2), and what he prayed for the Ephesians, that they "being rooted and grounded in love, might be strong . . . to know the love of Christ" (3. 17, 19). In the Christian an instructed mind must always be accompanied by a devoted will, otherwise vain glory will replace humility and godliness. Here also the Apostle puts knowledge in its right setting, desiring that "being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding," they might "know the mystery of God, even Christ, in Whom are all the treasures of wisdom and understanding hidden." For this mystery is Christ, since His Incarnation at once God and man, in Whom God has revealed Himself to men as fully as the human mind can grasp, or the human will can follow, even when that mind and that will are regenerate in the believer. In 1 Tim. 3. 16 the mystery is that in one Man godliness should be displayed in a world at enmity with God. and in which the Christian is to walk even as He walked (cp. Col. 2. 6, 7). The one mystery is that of His nature, the other that of His character. Contrast "the mystery of lawlessness" in 2 Thess. 2. 7, Rev. 17. 5, 7.

### ASLEEP "IN" OR "THROUGH" JESUS

Is it correct to read 1 Thess. 4. 14, "fallen asleep *through* Jesus," and explain it as though Jesus Himself had put them to sleep? In verse 16 they are termed "the dead in Christ." The Lord Jesus certainly is not the author or cause of death to any believer. He is "the Resurrection and the Life" (John 11. 25).

THE answer supplied by the questioner seems to be correct. *Dia* means through, not in, but it is incongruous to read that God puts believers to sleep (i.e. causes them to die) through the agency of Jesus, for the direct action of the Lord Jesus would thus be implied. The simple, straightforward way of reading the words is "them that are fallen asleep God will, through the agency of Jesus (Who Himself died and rose again), bring with Him, i.e.

with Jesus, that is, when He returns in power and glory. The Apostle then describes how this will be done in the words of a fresh revelation given him for our comfort. (*Notes on Thessalonians*, Hogg and Vine, p. 37).

### ATTAINING RESURRECTION

In 1 Thess. 4. 17 the Apostle asserts that resurrection is assured to all "the dead in Christ," yet in Phil. 3. 11 he speaks of his desire "by any means" to "attain unto the resurrection from the dead." How is this to be explained?

IN each passage the words must be understood in connection with their context. In the former the Apostle is comforting bereaved saints with the assurance that those of their number that had fallen on sleep will be raised from among the dead and thus become partakers in the Rapture. Here the reference to the resurrection of the body is indubitable. The passage in the Philippian letter is experimental; in it the writer expresses his aspirations after a fuller knowledge of Christ, a closer walk, a deeper fellowship with Him, at whatever cost of suffering to himself. He remembers his first surrender of everything for Christ's sake; nor has his mind changed; he still counts "all things" well lost when compared with "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord" which he had gained instead. But whatever his attainments in this respect they did not satisfy him; there remained more to be possessed. He is assured, moreover, that the power that wrought in Christ when God raised Him from the dead, working in him will enable him to go on suffering, not what Christ suffered, indeed, but for the same cause, devotion to the will of God, that thus he may become "conformed unto His death." This can hardly be understood as a desire for physical death, "to depart and be with Christ," which he had earlier in the letter described as "very far better" than remaining in the flesh (1. 23). Rather does he mean moral conformity, conformity in character; the attainment of such an attitude to the world as may best be described by analogy with the death of his Lord. And as Paul cannot be understood to refer here to physical death, so neither in the writer's judgment, can the words

that follow refer to physical resurrection. That, indeed, comes into view later where he speaks of another and complete conformity when "the Lord Jesus Christ . . . shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory" (vv. 20, 21). Hence the conclusion that in his reference to resurrection here, as in his reference to death immediately before, moral conformity with Christ, conformity in character as a present ambition and an increasing experience, is intended. If this understanding of the Apostle's words is correct they are to be explained by the exhortation of Rom. 6. 11, "reckon ye also yourselves to be dead (indeed) unto sin but alive unto God in Christ Jesus." The thought seems to be much the same as that expressed in 1 Pet. 4. 1: "Forasmuch then as Christ suffered in the flesh, arm ye yourselves also with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin."

The word resurrection in Phil. 3. 11 represents *exanastasis* (which occurs here only in the New Testament) a strengthened form of the more usual word *anastasis*. The corresponding verb does occur, however, and a comparison between Matt. 22. 24 (*anistēmi*) and Mark 12. 19 (*exanistēmi*) suggests that there is no discernible difference between the words.

### THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS

In 1 Tim. 3. 16 we have the following phrase: "*to tēs eusebeias mustērion hos ephanerōthē.*" Is there another instance in the New Testament where a neuter noun is followed by a masculine pronoun?

AS is well known, there are three "readings" in the MSS. in this place. *Ths.* an abbreviation of *theos*, God; *hos*, the masculine relative pronoun; and *ho* the neuter pronoun. The first of these finds few supporters now, ancient authorities and the sense being against it. F. W. Grant, *Numerical Bible*, rejects it, as does Kelly, with emphasis; as, indeed, do all Editors of the Text, and though J. N. Darby retains it he adds this note: "It very likely should be read *hos*, He who has, etc." Even the cautious Scrivener sums up in favour of *hos*, "of the ancient few" (that is, few MSS.), adding only that he "dare not pronounce *theos* a corruption."

Whichever word is read is the subject of each of the following statements and not of the first only. "God manifest in the flesh" is sense, but what could be said in favour of "God was justified in spirit . . . God was received up in glory"?

The word translated "mystery" is, in Greek, in the neuter gender, and should normally be followed by a neuter pronoun, and if, as seems likely, *hos* was the word the Apostle wrote, an early copyist may have changed it to *ho* in the supposed interest of the syntax. But gender does not necessarily denote sex or the absence of sex (neuter) as in English. In Rom. 8. 16, 26, for example, "Spirit" is a neuter noun, but R.V. does well to translate the following neuter pronoun by "Himself". In Eph. 1. 13, 14 "Spirit" is followed by a masculine pronoun. In Col. 2. 2 *mustērion* is neuter, yet it refers to a Person, "the mystery of God, even Christ." So in 1 Tim. 3. 16, "the mystery of godliness" is Christ, hence "He Who" is the appropriate translation of *hos*. In Gal. 3. 16, *sperma*, seed, is neuter, yet it is followed by a masculine pronoun; here also the reference is to Christ.

Other clear cases of the association of a masculine pronoun with a neuter noun are John 6. 9 ("lad" is neuter); Acts 15. 17 (*ta ethnē*, the Gentiles, is neuter); Phm. 10; Rev. 13. 14.

### TAKEN CAPTIVE BY THE DEVIL

Who are taken captive? And by whom? (2 Tim. 2. 26).

THE apostle, counselling his younger colleagues concerning the ministry committed to him by the Lord, warns them of those that "oppose themselves," that is, to healthful teaching concerning life and godliness. As is insisted upon in this epistle, the first qualification for dealing with such persons is that one's own spirit should be rightly adjusted to God's Spirit. Hence there must be meekness and forbearance, not contention; grace must reign in argument! Here Gal. 6. 1 should be compared, "restore such a one in a spirit of meekness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

Moreover, it must be kept steadily in mind that no argument will suffice, however wise, or however graciously presented. Only God can work such repentance in the opposers as will bring them to the knowledge (or acknowledging) of the truth,

Again, there must also be the active co-operation of the opposers, for, the apostle continues, they have been taken in a snare and they must act to recover themselves if they are to be freed from it. Each has his own part to do—the captive, the teacher, and God. Only so can there be any return to sobriety, as the word signifies. (See R.V., margin).

A slight alteration in the wording of R.V. may bring out the meaning, as the writer of this note understands it. "That they may recover themselves to sobriety of mind out of the snare of the Devil (by whom they have been taken captive) unto the will of God." The word translated "taken" is literally, "taken alive" (see R.V., margin), and so may be intended to suggest that these opposers may nevertheless be children of God. But the point could hardly be pressed.

### THE "GREAT HOUSE"

It has been said that in 2 Tim. 2. 20, 21, professing Christians are likened to "a great house" in which are vessels to honour and dishonour. If we are to be serviceable to the Master, to have the features proper to vessels to honour, it is necessary to purge ourselves from the vessels to dishonour by separating ourselves from them . . . only thus can any of us be sure of being "a vessel unto honour sanctified and meet for the Master's use." Is this the meaning of the passage?

I THINK not. The assumption that "professing Christians," or, as it is sometimes put, "Christendom," is the "great house" is without foundation. The illustration is based on the fact that in any "great house," as distinguished from any little house, a variety of utensils are to be found, some for use in the kitchen, some for use in the room in which the family lives, and in which the guests are entertained. The former are not displayed, the latter are; but all are equally useful; each has its place.

Moreover the assumption on which this exposition is based, namely, that "dishonour" is here the equivalent of "disgrace" is erroneous. Most frequently in the New Testament *atimia* and *atimos* mean no more than "without honour," as in Matt. 13. 57.

Only in Rom. 1. 26, and perhaps 1 Cor. 11. 14, does *atimia* mean "disgrace." The remaining occurrences of these words are as follows. The potter does not make vessels for "disgrace," though he does make some that are not for display (Rom. 9. 21). The Apostle was not "disgraced" in serving Christ though no honours of this world came to him thereby; neither did he "disgrace" when in his determination to serve he disparaged, or brought reproach (A.V.) upon himself (1 Cor. 4. 10; 2 Cor. 6. 8; 11. 21). The clothed parts of the body are not "disgraced," they are only "less honourable," they "lack honour," they are not displayed (1 Cor. 12. 23, 24). The body of the believer is not "disgraced" when it is committed to the earth, although the glory of life has departed from it (1 Cor. 15. 43).

Since no reflection is cast upon the vessels of wood and of earth it is unwarrantable to suppose that it is from "these" that a man is to "purge himself."

To what, then, does the word "these" refer? I judge that the illustration of the "great house" points to the "house of God" which certainly is not Christendom, for that is "a hold of every unclean spirit." In the house of God there are many kinds of service. Some servants serve under the observation of men and are honoured for their works' sake. Some serve in obscurity, and are either little known or altogether unknown to men, though they are well known to God. These also have an honourable part in the work of the household; indeed "they also serve who only stand and wait." And whether a servant be of the known and honoured, or of the unknown and unhonoured, if he "purge himself from these things" condemned by the Apostle in the context, the "profane babblings" which produce ungodliness and act as a canker on the soul, the youthful lusts, and strife-engendering questions, "he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, meet for the Master's use."

The misrepresentation of the Apostle's words suggested in the question cannot but have an unhappy effect upon those who adopt it, inducing in them a sense of superiority as that they themselves are vessels of gold and silver while others are of inferior stuff. But the difference, as we have seen, is not between the true and the false, the faithful and the unfaithful, but between the prominent

and the obscure. It stands written, "The pots in the Lord's House shall be like the bowls before the altar, yea, every pot . . . shall be Holy unto the Lord" (Zech. 14. 20, 21).

### SO GREAT SALVATION

What is the "salvation" of Heb. 2. 3?

THE danger to which the Hebrew Christians were exposed was that before the specious arguments of their unconverted nationals they might apostatise from the faith of the Gospel. To take a false step here would be fatal; how could they escape if they disregarded (the same word is translated "regarded not" in 8. 9) the salvation that God had, in grace, provided for them? Did not all God's dealings with their fathers show that He made good His word through whomsoever spoken? How much more would He make it good when "the word of this salvation" (Acts 13. 26) was actually spoken "through the Lord?" "Salvation" here is salvation through faith apart from works, salvation by grace, not by ritual and sacrifice.

### LOWER THAN THE ANGELS

In the R.V. Psalm 8, verse 5, reads: "Thou hast made him a little lower than God." In the margin "angels" is an alternative to "God." Is "angels" a justifiable translation of the word "Elohim," and if not, what is the meaning of the passage, and how can it be reconciled with Hebrews 2. 7?

THE answer to this question involves a few simple technicalities. The Psalm was written in Hebrew, and about 150 B.C. was translated into the Greek language. This translation is known as the Septuagint; which, for brevity, is usually written LXX. The LXX, however, does not always reproduce the Hebrew literally. In the New Testament, quotations from the Old Testament sometimes agree with the Hebrew, sometimes with the LXX. In the Epistle to Hebrews the quotations are from LXX throughout.

In Psa. 8. 5, the Hebrew word is *elohim*, which, though plural, is commonly translated God, but sometimes "gods," as in Psa.

97. 7. The LXX in these places rendered it by "angels"; in this they were followed by A.V., but not by R.V., which translated the original Hebrew, not the Greek interpretation, as A.V. has done.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, quoting from the LXX, wrote "angels," and, of course, the English Versions translate what he wrote.

*Elohim* is God, the Creator, the Provider, the Sustainer. Like the English word god, *elohim* may also mean false gods, those that are called gods, though they be not. It is difficult to understand why it should be said that man is less than his Creator, while to say that he was made lower than angels makes good sense.

Among the Jews, Psa. 8 was not reckoned a Messianic Psalm. It is a hymn of praise to God founded upon Genesis 1. 26-31. In this sense it is quoted in Hebrews 2. 6-8. The words, expressive of mild surprise:

"What is man that Thou art mindful of him?  
Or the son of man that Thou visitest him?"

are appropriate enough to man, but would be quite inappropriate spoken of the Messiah. Moreover, "son of man" here (*huios anthrōpou*) is not the form as the title the Lord so frequently used of Himself (*ho huios tou anthrōpou*). The idea would be more nearly represented by rendering "a son of man."

However, the purpose of God has not been thwarted by the disobedience of Adam. There is a Second Man, who is indeed the anti-type of the first, and in Whose image the first was made (Rom. 5. 14). So when the writer of Hebrews has quoted the words that describe God's purposes in Adam's creation, he adds the obvious comment, "We see not yet all things subjected to him," that is, to man, who forfeited this glory and honour by the Fall. But faith sees One Who, "being the effulgence of His (God's) glory, and the very image of His substance," and Who "upholds all things by the word of His power," yet stooped to our estate that He might make "purification of sins," and Who, when He had accomplished this, "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High" (Heb. 1. 3). In Him Who thus stooped, and Who was thus exalted, the purpose of God for the sovereignty of the earth, will yet be accomplished, in assurance whereof faith is granted to

see "Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour."

### CHRIST CROWNED

Hebrews 2. 9. How was the Lord crowned with glory and honour for the suffering of death? Does this mean that He was crowned before the Cross in order that He might suffer?

IN reply to this question, it may be pointed out that the words are, "we see," not "we saw," the reference is to a present condition, not to a past act. There is nothing said in the Gospels about any crowning of the Lord of any kind whatever. The glory of John 1. 14 is either His moral glory, as in John 2. 11, or the glory of the Transfiguration (Matt. 17. 1-9). It would surely be a misuse of language to speak of a crowning in either case. Moreover, the "for" of A.V. represents a grammatical form (*dia* with an accusative case) that occurs many times in this epistle, and throughout the New Testament, but which never in any other place means "with a view to," but always "on the ground of," "because of." There is no reason why it should be given an unexampled meaning here.

Perhaps the verse may become plain if it is printed thus: "We behold Him (Jesus) Who hath been made a little lower than the angels (because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour) so that (*i.e.* in this way) by the grace of God He should taste death for every man."

It seems clear enough that no crowning was necessary to the suffering of death, whereas it is indubitable that because of that suffering His crowning ensued. It is equally clear that He was made a little lower than the angels by partaking of "blood and flesh" (v. 14), for only by so doing could He "taste death." The Victor was crowned, not in order that He might win the victory, but when the victory was won.

### THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES

What is the meaning of Hebrews 6. 1-3?

APPARENTLY the church to which the Epistle was written was composed of Hebrews who, having witnessed a good confes-

sion, and having suffered in property because of it, were now showing signs of wavering under pressure of plausible argument, such as that they had neither temple, priest, nor sacrifice; that, in fact, having deserted the substance, they were living among the shadows. At the close of chapter 5 the writer declares that a knowledge of the counsel of God, to be gathered from the story of Melchizedek, for example, would have preserved them from such a feeble argument. But they had lagged, they had not persevered, when they should have been teachers they needed to be taught; when strong meat was their proper food they had need of the milk suited only to babes. No wonder they were in danger when they had neglected the provision of God for their preservation. Like so many in our own day they had been satisfied with the foundation they had not gone on to build. Assuming themselves to be wiser than God, they supposed that what is now called (or rather mis-called) "the simple Gospel" was all that was necessary to preserve them from the enemies of the faith. We may rest assured that God has not provided anything that is not necessary to our spiritual well-being. So the writer exhorts them to leave the first principles, the A B C, the elementary doctrines, of the Christian faith, and to go on to maturity.

Then he recites these elementary things, things found in the former revelation, common to the old and the new. These he presents in three pairs. That works are dead, unproductive of spiritual life, and that faith toward God alone is of any value. Many washings had been prescribed, teaching that defiled persons could not approach a holy God. They had learned from the laying of the offerers' hands on the victim doomed to death, that their lives were forfeit on account of sin. That this life is not all, that the dead must be raised was implicit in the words of God spoken to and through His servants in ancient days. And that men must one day answer for themselves to God was also implied in the very fact that God had spoken to them at all.

These things were suitable food for the newly born, but to be satisfied therewith after so long a time was to their shame, as indeed, the same condition is to-day. It should be added that the word translated baptism (*baptismos*) and here, as always in N.T., in the plural, is not that used of Christian baptism (*baptisma*), which is

not found in the plural in the New Testament; there is but one baptism (Eph. 4. 5). "These things . . . were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come" (1 Cor. 10. 11).

### MOSES AND THE REPROACH OF CHRIST

How could Moses know anything of the reproach of Christ? (Heb. 11. 26).

LITERALLY, "the reproach of the Christ," see R.V. margin, *i.e.* the reproach of the Messiah (cp. Acts 5. 42); "they preached Jesus as the Messiah," a testimony appropriate only to an audience of Jews. (See Acts 18. 5). This use of the title "Christ" must be distinguished from that in which it is an alternative for the personal name "Jesus," as *e.g.* in Rom. 5. 8, Phil. 3. 7-9. Obviously Heb. 11. 26 cannot be taken to mean the same thing as "the reproach of Jesus."

The Jews are described, in Eph. 1. 12, as those "who had before hoped in the Messiah"; here again it would be incongruous to say "who had before hoped in Jesus." Moses, with all the men of faith, looked for the fulfilment of the promises of God in, and through, the Messiah, and in the fulness of the time all that had been foretold of His sufferings was accomplished in "Jesus, Who is called Christ" (Matt. 1. 16), while all that was foretold of His glory remains to be accomplished "at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from Heaven with the angels of His power" (2 Thess. 1. 7). Moses "greeted these promises from afar," and confessed himself to be a "stranger and a pilgrim on the earth" (Heb. 11. 13). But this turning aside from the beaten track, this seeking of the unknown, inevitably alienated him from his contemporaries and involved him in suffering at their hands. This, then, was the reproach of the Christ, the Messiah, which Moses chose in preference to the dignities and the emoluments of Egypt.

### A BETTER RESURRECTION

Hebrews 11. 35 suggests that torture would secure for its victims a better resurrection. In what sense is this to be understood?

THE "women" who "received their dead by a resurrection" are probably those whose stories are recorded in 1 Kings 17 and

2 Kings 4. These dead persons were raised merely to live out the remainder of their lives here upon earth, and in due course to die again.

The "others" are probably Eleazar, "one of the principal scribes" who, at the age of 90, "went straightway to the instrument of torture" rather than accept the deliverance offered to him if he would by a subterfuge even seem to deny God and His laws. "And when he was at the point of death with blows, he groaned aloud and said, "to the Lord, that hath the holy knowledge, it is manifest that, whereas I might have been delivered from death, I endure . . . I gladly suffer these things for my fear of Him."

This story is found in 2 Maccabees, chapter 6, and is followed by the story of an unnamed woman and her seven sons who, strengthened by her encouragement, were slowly tortured to death before her eyes. Last of all she herself was killed. Of the second son it is told that "when he was at the last gasp he said (to the King, Antiochus Epiphanes) Thou, miscreant, dost release us out of this present life, but the King of the World shall raise up us, who have died for His laws, unto an eternal renewal of life." In like manner the fourth, when he had been shamefully handled and tortured, said, "it is good to die at the hands of men and look for the hopes which are given by God, that we shall be raised up again by Him; for as for thee, thou shalt have no resurrection unto life."

The resurrection which these persons desired, and which, they were persuaded, had been promised them by God, was obviously a better resurrection than that experienced by the women and their sons to which the earlier part of the verse refers. By denying their faith they might have extended for a little their earthly lives; by refusing the deliverance offered to them they made it evident that theirs was the faith that secures that "resurrection unto life" which their persecutors would never know.

#### WE HAVE AN ALTAR (1)

What is the "altar" in Heb. 13. 10?

**T**HIS anonymous Epistle is addressed to "Hebrews," not to Hebrews as such, but to those who had been "enlightened," that is, who had received the knowledge of Christ and had confessed

His Name, and who were therefore "partakers of a Heavenly calling," of which "the Apostle and High Priest" is "Jesus" (3. 1; 6. 4). Nor yet to Hebrew Christians at large, but to a company in some unnamed place who had "endured a great conflict of sufferings," though they had not been called to lay down their lives for the Gospel; a company, moreover, whom the writer hoped to visit again, as he had done before (10. 32; 12. 4; 13. 19, 23). After a period of comparative peace their enemies had renewed the attack, and the conditions were such that the writer feared apostasy among them. The ground of his apprehension was that, since they had neglected to "press on unto perfection," degeneracy had set in, as must inevitably be the case where "milk," suitable enough for babes, is preferred to "solid food," the only substance suitable for the fully grown (5. 11-14).

It may be gathered from the Epistle itself that the new line of attack was a subtle argument to show the superiority of the ceremonial law, with its Temple, Priesthood and ritual, to the Christian simplicity in which no place was found for any of these. Just as Paul strenuously opposed the introduction of law into the Gospel in the Epistle to the Galatians, so the writer of this Epistle is equally strenuous in the same cause, though his arguments are entirely different.

Chapter 13 is in the nature of an Appendix, or covering letter, containing practical counsel, encouragement and warning. The exhortation of verse 9 suggested a supplementary argument. In order to understand it let us analyze verse 10: "They . . . which serve the tabernacle" (lit., "the tabernacle servers"; no stress whatever falls upon "they"; in fact, the pronoun does not appear in the original at all), are plainly the Aaronic priesthood. The "altar," by a figure of speech called metonymy (in which one thing is put for another with which it has some close association) is a sacrifice offered upon, or in association with, the altar. Which of the sacrifices answers this description? Verse 11 supplies the information—the sin offering (cp. Lev. 4. 1-21; 6. 30) which was "burned without the camp." The words might be paraphrased "there is a sacrifice which the sacrificing priests are forbidden to eat; it must be burned outside the camp limits." Who, then, are the "We" with which the verse opens? The writer, a Jew addressing

Jews, speaks as a Jew, so that the ellipsis to be supplied is not "We Christians," but "We Jews." As Dr. Bonar sings,

*"No blood, no altar now, the sacrifice is o'er,"*

for the Christian has "been sanctified by the offering of the Body of Jesus Christ once for all." And He, "when He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God" (10. 10, 12).

The Christian does indeed partake of a memorial meal in which he "proclaims the Lord's death," but he does not partake of a dead, or sacrificed, Christ. "As I live because of the Father; so he that eateth Me, he also shall live because of Me" (John 6. 57), was spoken, not merely in anticipation of His death, but also in anticipation of His resurrection. There is no evangelical sense in which the Christian has a "right to eat" of his sin-offering. His life-sustaining communion is with the living, risen and exalted Lord, in all the value alike of what He is, and what He has done.

"The thing in view is an altar whose law was such that the sacerdotal ministers of the Tabernacle might not use its sacrifices for food. But why? Not, of course, because they were not Christians, but because the sacrifices in question presented there were to be wholly burned, burned without the camp. The altar in question is not of the Church but of the Tabernacle." (H. C. G. Moule on *Hebrews in loc.*)

### WE HAVE AN ALTAR (2)

Heb. 13. 10. Who are "they . . . which serve the Tabernacle?" What is "the altar?"

"THEY that serve the Tabernacle" (the present tense is used, for though the Tabernacle had been replaced by the Temple, which was still standing, the priesthood remained the same), were not the Jews generally but the priests of Aaron's order. "Altar" by a figure of speech known as metonymy, is put for the sacrifice offered on the altar. In this case the sacrifice intended is the sin-offering, as the connecting word "for" shows. The law of the sin-offering prescribed that "the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest (as an offering) for sin, are burned without the camp." Inasmuch,

then, as "Jesus . . . suffered without the gate" (the camp had long since been replaced by the city), He fulfilled the typical conditions under which the sin-offering was made.

The "we" at the opening of v. 10 must be understood, therefore, to refer not to Christians, but to Jews. When the Epistle was written the Jewish sacrifices were still being offered; the Christian has neither altar nor sacrifice. Dr. Bonar is entirely right when he sings:

*"No blood, no altar now, the sacrifice is o'er."*

The point is one of considerable importance, for the teaching that Christ is offering Himself to God now, is made the justification of the "sacrifice of the mass" in which the priest claims to offer an "unbloody sacrifice" on earth corresponding with the present offering of Himself by Christ in Heaven. But Christ is not offering Himself to God now. Every reference in the New Testament to Christ's offering of Himself is in the past tense, as, for example, "Christ having been once offered to bear the sins of many," and "we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. 9. 28; 10. 10). And this accords with His own words, "It is finished."

#### THE SIN OFFERING IN HEB. 13. 10

What is signified in Heb. 13. 10?

THE main passages to be considered are two—Lev. 4. 1-21, and 6. 25-30. According to the terms of the Hebrews passage the sin-offering in view was one the blood of which was "brought into the Holy Place," but the body itself was to be "burned without the camp." This rules out any reference to Lev. 6. 25-29, where the contrary of these two features obtained; the blood was not brought into the Holy Place, and the flesh was to be eaten by the priest. In Lev. 10. 16-20 these points are emphasized. Not only was it not the case that they which served the Tabernacle had no right to eat of this sacrifice; Moses was angry with them because they had not done so.

In Lev. 4. 1-21 and 6. 30, the blood was brought into the Holy Place and the flesh was not eaten by the priest but was burned, without the camp (cp. Exod. 29. 14).

The wording of the Hebrews passage excludes, categorically,

any eating of the sacrifice the writer has before his mind. The reference, therefore, is to the sacrifice of Lev. 4, not to that of Lev. 6. 25-29.

Our priesthood, like that of the Lord, is after the order of Melchizedek, not after that of Aaron. In Hebrews the two are set in contrast, and the aim of the Epistle is to show that the Aaronic types and shadows having been fulfilled in the death of Christ belong to the past; discarded things that having served their end are no more. The Aaronic priests, indeed, fed upon dead sacrifices, but we do not feed upon a dead Saviour. Our Melchizedek, of whom it is witnessed that He lives in the power of an endless life, brings to us the Bread and the Wine and the Blessing. They never got beyond death, but we were raised with Christ.

#### WITHOUT THE CAMP

What is the camp of Heb. 13. 13?

**B**EARING in mind what was said in reply to the previous question, the teaching of the words is not obscure. In the days of the Tabernacle (for it is with the Tabernacle, not with the Temple, the writer deals throughout) the sin-offering was burned outside the Camp in the wilderness. But when the true Sin-offering was sacrificed, Tabernacle and Camp had long ago made way for Temple and City. Hence it is said He "suffered without the gate," that is, the gate of the City. Thither He went bearing the reproach of our sin, thus fulfilling the pattern under the Law. Thither let us also go, taking our place with Him Who there "became a curse for us" (Gal. 3. 13). The "Camp," when the Epistle was written, was Jerusalem, the City where the Temple stood in which sacrifices were offered and priests discharged their functions. Now the "camp" is any sphere or association in which salvation is sought by rites and ceremonies, by sacraments and priests, or by the keeping of law in any form.

#### MANY MASTERS

What is meant by "Be not many masters" (Jas. 3. 1)?

**B**E not many teachers, my brethren," so Revised Version. James is addressing not an individual, but a community, the members of which he warns against the temptation, to which so many suc-

cumb, of assuming that all male saints are called and qualified to teach, and that the tongue is the only member of the body where-with God may be served acceptably. This warning against eagerness to teach he supports by reminding his readers of the greater condemnation that awaits those who fail either through attempting to do that to which they have not been called, or through unfaithfulness, or lack of diligence, in that to which they have been called. There is a danger lest a low esteem of the solemnity and responsibility of the presentation to others of the revealed mind of God, combined with a desire for public speaking, should ensnare ignorant or unwary brethren to the detriment of the spiritual and moral welfare of the saints and to their own eternal loss.

### WHAT IS "THE PRAYER OF FAITH"?

(Jas. 5. 13-18)

THE passage does present difficulties, indeed, largely due to the differing conditions of the Apostolic Age and our own. It is to the former the interpretation belongs in the first place, though there are important lessons here for us also upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

In the endeavour to ascertain the meaning of the passage, obviously the first thing to do is to discover what the writer actually said, and this can best be done in the R.V.

Verse 13—"Suffering," A.V. "afflicted." *Kakopatheo* is literally, to suffer evil. It is rendered "suffer hardship" in 2 Tim. 2. 9; 4. 5, and with an affix meaning "jointly" in chapter 1. 8; 2. 3. The noun occurs in Jas. 5. 10, where it is rendered "suffering." In these passages, and they are the only ones in which the word appears in the New Testament, physical suffering is certainly intended, suffering endured in the service of God. The word might conceivably include sickness, though it does not seem to do so in any of these passages.

Verse 14—"Sick," *astheneo*, literally, weakness, frailty, which is used of physical sickness in John 5. 3, 7, and many other places. In Rom. 5. 6; 8. 3, 26, and elsewhere, it refers to moral weakness, sickness of the soul.

Verse 15—"Sick, *kamno*, is translated "weary" in Heb. 12. 3

(it does not occur again in the New Testament), where it can hardly refer to bodily sickness, though the possibility of its bearing that meaning in this verse is not excluded on that account.

It seems, then, that three things were before the writer's mind; first, the hardships incidental to the service of Christ and His Gospel; second, bodily sickness; and, third, weariness of mind, a wavering purpose.

Verse 14—Because the word "synagogue" is found in Jas. 2. 2, some have described the epistle as "Jewish," a word much used as a knife to cut the knots of difficult Scriptures. Knots, however, should be untied, not cut; and where that seems impossible they should be left alone. In this verse, however, "church" appears, and "church" is the distinctive New Testament word for a gathering of the children of God of this present calling.

If in James' days a Jew fell sick he would call in an exorcist to expel the evil spirit alleged to be the cause (see Acts 19. 13). A Gentile would call in a physician who would prescribe loathsome concoctions and appeal for aid to the god of medicine. Should the Christian follow either course? No! Let him call for "the elders of the church" (not just for any professing Christian, male or female), men whose interest in the welfare of the saints had been tried and proved. Instead of the nauseous compounds of that day let recourse be had to a simple remedy such as oil. Apparently this was to be done before the prayer; see R.V. margin, "let them pray over him, having anointed him with oil in the Name of the Lord." For an instance of such simplicity of treatment compare Isaiah's "cake of figs" applied to Hezekiah's "boil" (2 Kings 20. 7).

Two words are translated "anoint" in New Testament. One, *chrio*, which is always said of "Christ," Who is "the Anointed One," save in 2 Cor. 1. 21, where it is said of the Christian. It is always used metaphorically, never literally, in the New Testament. The other is *aleipho*, the meaning of which may be gathered from Matthew 6. 17; Mark 16. 1; Luke 7. 38, 46; John 11. 2; 12. 3. In none of these is ceremonial anointing intended. The only other places in which it is found are Mark 6. 13, and here. It is probable that in these two passages the anointing was for a curative purpose.

Verse 16—"Healed" may refer either to a physical experience, as in John 4. 47, or to a spiritual experience, as in Matt. 13. 15.

Verse 15—What is “the Prayer of Faith”? It is defined at the close of verse 16, where A.V. renders “the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” This, however, is meaningless for, of course, if a prayer is effectual it prevails! R.V. is a little better, “the supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working,” but the meaning is still obscure. There is another translation which, there is reason to believe, was intended for the margin of R.V., but was accidentally omitted, and which better represents the sense. It runs, “the inwrought prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” Inwrought by whom? The answer to this question is to be found in such passages as Rom. 8. 26, “the Spirit helpeth our infirmity; for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us,” and Eph. 6. 18, “praying at all seasons in the Spirit,” and Jude 20, “praying in the Holy Spirit.” “The prayer of faith” is the prayer that is inwrought in us by Him. True prayer comes from God and returns to God. In prayer, as in all else, He is the Alpha and the Omega the Beginning and the End!

### THE DAY OF VISITATION

When is that day of visitation? (1 Pet. 2. 12). Now, or in the future?

THE word translated “visitation” is *episcopē*, which means “an inspection”, “an overseeing.” It is used also in Acts 1. 20, 1 Tim. 3. 1, passages which do not throw any light on its meaning here. The only other place where it occurs in New Testament is Luke 19. 44, where the Lord speaks of His ministry among the Jews as “the time of (their) visitation.” There it means an opportunity graciously afforded them for repentance, but this good meaning is not inherent in the word itself, it comes from the context. In Isa. 10. 3 “visitation” certainly means judgment, calamity, but this again is seen from the context, not from the word itself. In the Epistle, therefore, one of two meanings is possible; either that in the day when calamity overtakes those who speak against Christians, they will remember and acknowledge that the Christians had set them an example of obedience to God, and that then they will glorify Him. Or, that the good behaviour of

Christians in the face of opposition, when good behaviour is not easy, so testifies to the saving power of God that a gracious opportunity is thus afforded those who revile them to repent of their opposition to God and His people. Strongly in favour of the latter interpretation is its harmony with Luke 19. 44, and that it adds weight to the exhortation of the apostle to patience under undeserved suffering, whereas a threat to other people would only feed the vindictive spirit to which we are all naturally inclined when hardly dealt with.

### “HIS SEED”

What is meant by “His Seed?” (1 John 3. 9)

THE justification of the believing sinner on the ground that Christ “was delivered up for (his) trespasses” (Rom. 4. 25) is not the whole truth. The sinner justified on believing is at the same time regenerated, or “born anew” (John 3. 5-7, Titus 3. 5) an experience in which the Holy Spirit is the Agent, acting through the Word of God (1 Pet. 1. 23). A further immediate consequence of believing on Christ is that the Holy Spirit comes to abide in the justified and regenerate person, as the seal of his new relation to God, and as an earnest of the “salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (Eph. 1. 13, 14; 1 Pet. 1. 5). It is on this account the apostle declares that “if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His (Christ’s)” (Rom. 8. 9).

The “seed,” then, of which John speaks, is the new life thus imparted to, implanted in, the believer. Now the universal law of all seed is enunciated in Genesis 1. 12, “after its kind.” As with the natural so with the spiritual. Where the life of Christ is in the heart of a man, there the character of Christ will be manifested. To this law there is no exception, though there is also the law of growth—“first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear” (Mark 4. 28). And where life makes itself known in growth in a man, the end is assured; he is “foreordained to be conformed to the image of His (God’s) Son” (Rom. 8. 29).

“Doth not commit sin” is misleading. Little wonder the reader of A.V. is perplexed by the words. The verb is in the present tense: it describes not an act, as the word “commit” suggests, but

a habit, a course of action deliberately persisted in. This R.V. makes plain by using "doeth." "Cannot sin" here is the equivalent of "does not continue in sin" in Romans 6. 1.

Some have understood "seed" here to refer to the new nature; it is not the nature that sins, however, but the person acting through the nature.

### SPIRITS CONFESSING CHRIST

Do not 1 John 4. 2, and Matt. 8. 29 appear to be contradictory?

THE passages read: "Every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God," and "There met Him two possessed with demons . . . and they cried out, saying, What have we to do with Thee, Thou Son of God?" In Mark's account of this incident these "demons" are called "unclean spirits" (5. 1-13). Luke uses both terms (8. 26-34). Demons also believed, but in their case belief was not the foundation of hope; they shuddered as they came in contact with the Saviour of men (Jas. 2. 19). That the demoniac used the title "Son of God" is not to be understood as implying that the demons had that knowledge of the "mystery of God, even Christ," which was afterwards revealed to John and Paul and the rest. Something altogether different is meant by the words of 1 John 4. 15, for example, "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth in him, and he in God." It probably meant nothing more to the demons than it did on the lips of the High Priest (Matt. 26. 63) though, whereas the former acknowledged the claim, the latter denied it; by so much did the perception of the demons exceed the perceptions of men. The true knowledge of the Son of God comes only by a communication of God to the soul: "flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 16. 17). And cp. 1 Cor. 12. 3, "No man can say Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit."

In 1 John 4. 2, "spirit" is obviously the equivalent of "prophet" as v. 1 shows, and 1 Cor. 14. 32, "the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets," confirms. There are two agencies at work upon the spirits of men, the Spirit of God and the anti-christian spirit. The former imparts truth to men who speak as His prophets. The latter endeavour to imbue the minds of men

with error. How are the different spirits, i.e. prophets, or teachers (cp. 2 Pet. 2. 1) to be identified? How can they be tested? The answer is, that whereas both alike confessed the Deity of Jesus, the antichristian spirit, or teacher, denied His Humanity. The reference is to the Incarnation; the tense is perfect, because the Humanity He then assumed is permanently, eternally, His. In 2 John 7, where the present participle is used, the reference is to the Second Advent. The latter passage is significant against those who hold that the promised return of the Lord is to be of a spiritual character, that is, not in the Body (now glorified) in which, "in the Days of His flesh," He suffered for us here.

It is to be noted that whereas the pre-existence of the Lord is not stated in these texts, it is implied in the language used, and the same is true of His Deity. The order of the words in 4. 2, is "in flesh has come," for what is in the writer's mind is not so much the fact that He came as that He came in a certain condition—Manhood.

In 1 John 4. 3, the Humanity of the Lord is still the subject; those who deny it are "not of God." The marginal reading "annulleth" (*luo*—dissolveth) is very ancient, as it is found in the Latin Vulgate (about A.D. 400), but it has no claim to be accepted instead of the text of R.V. It does show, however, that the heresy aimed at by John was that of separating the Man Jesus from the Divine Christ, and asserting that the latter came upon the former at His Baptism and left Him at the Crucifixion. The passage does not state that they are not of God who do not acknowledge a certain fact (i.e. "that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh" A.V.), but that they who do not confess Jesus, the Name appointed to Him in His Incarnation, are not of God. The subject of the confession is a Person, not a fact about that Person. "Confesseth" here is the equivalent of "bringeth not this teaching" in 2 John 10. Even the "little children" are to test the teaching for themselves (1 John 2. 18-29). The Church at Thessalonica was composed exclusively of young believers, yet they were to test all teachings and to hold fast what is good (1 Thess. 5. 21).

The two passages have nothing in common save the word "spirit," which is used in each case in a different meaning.\*

\* The various uses of "spirit" in Scripture are described in *Notes on Thessalonians, Hogg & Vine*, pp. 204, 205.

## A FULL REWARD

What are we to understand by 2 John 8:

IN the first place we must ascertain the true text, and this is probably that found in the R.V. and its margin. "Look to yourselves, that ye destroy not the things which we have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward."

The subject immediately before the Apostle's mind is the faith concerning Christ. From one point of view this had been revealed by God, cp. Matt. 11. 27; 16. 17, and 1 Cor. 2. 10; from another it was "wrought" by the Apostles. To them it was committed, and by them it was formulated and communicated to others. These, in turn, were to "guard the deposit" (1 Tim. 6. 20) and to "contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3), and to "hold the pattern of sound words," to "keep the commandment, without spot, without reproach" (2 Tim. 1. 13; 1 Tim. 6. 14). From these and other passages it is evident that the maintenance of the truth of the Gospel was a chief concern of the Apostles.

It is the aim of the "antichrists" (1 John 2. 22) to mar the testimony to Christ, whether by denying His Deity, or His Humanity, or the sole sufficiency of His vicarious death, and Christians are to beware of giving any encouragement to such persons (2 John 9-11), lest by doing so, however unwittingly, they "destroy" it.

It seems plain that in our day those who maintain or encourage by their gifts, prayers, or presence, a ministry that is not unequivocally loyal to Christ, come within the scope of this warning. On the other hand there is a "full reward" for those who continue "sound in (the) faith, in (the) love, in (the) patience" of the Lord and of His Gospel, and who encourage others therein.

## THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

Does 2 John 10: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not," apply to visitors generally, or only to professed ministers of the Gospel?

THE context makes it abundantly clear that the Apostle is warning the Elect Lady (or the Lady Electa, as the words may equally well be rendered into English), against the insidious methods

of the anti-Christian propagandist. These are described graphically by the Apostle Paul in 2 Tim. 3. 6, "they that creep into houses and take captive silly women," and though John was persuaded better things of the lady to whom he wrote than to include her in that category, nevertheless he warned her against showing hospitality to any teacher who did not bring with him the true doctrine of Christ. The consequences of receiving such would be doubly disastrous. The reward of a lifetime's service would be diminished, and she would share the responsibility for the evil effects of this teaching.

The principle illustrated here is that whoever facilitates the ministry of one who denies the distinctive Gospel revelation of the Father in and through the Son, involving the denial of the doctrines of the essential, necessary Deity of the Son, and of His real and permanent humanity (which latter is immediately before John's mind, v. 7), in whatever way, even by showing him hospitality, shares in his evil deeds. To encourage by sympathy or gifts the ministry of men who deny the authority of Scripture, who refuse to honour the Son as they should honour the Father, who reduce the Gospel to merely ethical counsel, or good advice, or who make the way of salvation mechanical and magical (as Romanists and Ritualists do), is surely to come under this condemnation. The receiver is as bad as the thief.

There is another principle, complementary to this, expressed by the Lord Himself in the words: "He that receiveth you receiveth Me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet (that is, because he brings the true doctrine of Christ), shall receive a prophet's reward" (Matt. 10. 40, 41). Thus grace abounds, and they who make the ministry of Christ possible, by showing hospitality to the preacher, or in any other way facilitating his service to Christ, share his reward.

The question of general hospitality to those under discipline is dealt with in 1 Cor. 5. 11, where, however, there is no reference to doctrinal defection. Whether a person under discipline for maintaining doctrine derogatory to Christ should ever be received into a Christian home, must, I judge, be left to the responsibility of the head of that home. Much will depend upon the purpose of the visit, for surely to receive such a one and thereby to seem to

condone his doctrine would be disloyalty to Christ; to facilitate his teaching would be to incur the condemnation of our passage. To receive him in order to win him back to his former allegiance might be wholly admirable, and under the blessing of God might result in the end of all godly discipline, the restoration of an erring brother.

That is to say, nothing should be done to give the impression that the offence against Christ is a matter of no great moment, or to put the delinquent in the way of influencing others.

There is nothing in 2 John 10, I judge, concerning hospitality to relations, or to persons met in the way of business.

### BLOTTED OUT OF THE BOOK OF LIFE

How are the words of Rev. 3. 5: "I will in no wise blot his name out of the Book of Life" to be understood?

THERE is a common misunderstanding that the Lord has guaranteed eternal security to those who profess to be Christians. This is not so. Those of whom He said: "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand" (John 10. 27, 28) are described by Him as His sheep who hear His voice and who follow Him. This is something quite different from making a profession of faith or being baptized, or being "in fellowship" with a company of Christians. It means that true Christians—Christian in the vital sense of the word, share His life, and that life makes itself manifest in theirs.

In the Revelation such persons are called "overcomers." Two things are said of them: the Lord will confess them before His Father and the angels, but those who deny Him now He will deny them (Matt. 10. 32-33). To confess Christ is not merely to speak Christian words; it is to live the Christian life.

It is clear from the context that the blotting of the name out of the Book of Life is the equivalent of the Lord's denying the mere professors in that Day.

This solemn word is intended to arouse the conscience from "carnal security," and no doctrinal difficulty should be allowed to rob it of this effect.

## THE BOOK OF LIFE OF THE LAMB SLAIN

“And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13. 8). What is it that is “from the foundation of the world?” Some say it is “the Lamb slain,” others, that it is the writing of the names in the Book of Life.”

IN Rev. 13. 8 the words, “from the foundation of the world” may, with equal propriety, be read either with “written” or with “slain”; the grammar, and the structure of the sentence, in Greek as in English, do not exclude either alternative. In Rev. 17. 8 the clause “of the Lamb that hath been slain” does not occur. This seems to decide the question in favour of R.V. margin of Revelation 13. 8, “Written from the foundation of the world in the Book of Life of the Lamb that hath been slain.”

## THE 144,000 SAINTS OF REV. 14. 1

Who are the hundred and forty and four thousand in Rev. 14. 1-3? What is the difference between this company and the hundred and forty-four thousand in chapter 7. 4?

THE former may be those who are slain under the persecution of the first Beast (the Antichrist, the Man of Sin) described in the preceding chapter. The company of chapter 7 is said to be taken “out of every tribe of the children (lit., sons) of Israel.” It is possible, perhaps probable, that the same company is in view in each case. Nothing whatever is stated concerning them in chapter 7 save the fact of their sealing. Detail is supplied in chapter 14.

## THE FIRST RESURRECTION

Does Rev. 20. 5 refer only to the persons spoken of in verse 4 or does it relate to those mentioned in 1 Thess. 4. 16?

THE first resurrection seems to include that of Christ (“the firstfruits of them that are asleep,” 1 Cor. 15. 20), that of 1 Thess. 4. 16, and that of Rev. 20. 4, 5. The last clause of verse 5 might be paraphrased, “This is (the completion of) the first resurrection.”

## IX—BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

### BORN OF WATER

What is meant by "born of water" in John 3. 5? The marginal references give texts in which baptism is mentioned.

AS rendered in A. and R.V.'s, the complete phrase runs, "born of water and the Spirit," but the Greek original has simply "born of water and Spirit," omitting the article and bringing the two words closely together under the government of one preposition. Immediately afterwards the Lord explained that "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit . . . so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The omission of "water" shows that "Spirit" is the essential word of the two.

In the writings of the Apostle John wherever water is used symbolically the Holy Spirit is intended. In 7. 38, 39, for example, his comment on the words of the Lord concerning "living water" is, "but this spake He of the Spirit," which they that believe on Him were to receive." (Compare 4. 10 and Rev. 22. 1). The conjunction *kai*, here rendered "and," often has the meaning "even," and is used to introduce an explanation of the preceding word or phrase. On His entry into Jerusalem the Lord did not ride "upon an ass, *and* upon a colt," two animals, but "upon an ass, *even* upon a colt," one animal (Matt. 21. 5; see Zech. 9. 9). Comparison with Luke 22. 1 confirms that Mark 14. 1 means "the Feast of the Passover, even (that of) Unleavened Bread," for these are not two, but one. In Titus 3. 5, the meaning of which I take to be identical with that of John 3. 5, the article is absent, and *kai* bears the meaning of even: "the washing of regeneration, even (that is to say) renewing of the Holy Spirit."

Therefore I judge that "born of water, even (that is to say) of the Spirit," is the meaning of the words of the question: water is the symbol, the Holy Spirit is that which is symbolized.

There are cogent reasons against understanding the Lord to refer to baptism. No one of the New Testament writers speaking of the "new birth" mentions baptism in connection with it. John (I. 12) declares that those who "receive Christ" are made free to become children of God, but says nothing of baptism in that context. Paul writes of baptism in different places, but never associates with it the new birth. Nor does James (I. 18), nor does Peter (I Epistle I. 23-25).

The use of water as a figure of the Spirit is found in Ezek. 36. 25-27, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you . . . and a new spirit will I put within you." The Baptist declared that his baptising in water was but a preparation for the baptism in the Spirit to be administered by Christ, which came to pass at Pentecost. It may be the Lord intended Nicodemus to learn that John's baptism was but a figure which in itself could accomplish nothing, thus carrying his mind from the outward symbol to the underlying reality.

An alternative explanation of the verse, and one widely accepted, though it does not appear to the writer to be satisfactory, sees in "water" a symbol of the Word of God, which is said to bring about the new birth in Jas. I. 18 and I Pet. I. 23-25. A symbol may mean different things in different parts of Scripture, however, as when Isaiah uses the lion as a figure of God, John of the Lord, and Peter of Satan (Isa. 31. 4; Rev. 5. 5; I Pet. 5. 8). Agreement between the writers, nevertheless, is complete, for while the Holy Spirit is the sole agent in the regeneration of men, the Word of God is the sole means He uses to effect this.

Moreover, there is no trace of a doctrine of baptismal regeneration in the New Testament. That had a pagan origin and was introduced into the corrupt Christianity of a later era.

#### THE BAPTISMAL FORMULA (I)

Which is the Scriptural formula to use when baptising believers to-day; that of Matt. 28. 19, or that of Acts 2. 38?

**T**HERE are those who deny that the commission of Matt. 28 is that under which the Gospel is preached in this era. For my part I cannot dismiss it thus, but must take for granted here that the

contrary is the case. The words are quite explicit, "baptizing them into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

If, indeed, the commission were intended only for a "transitional period," how does it come about that from the very beginning of that period Peter exhorted his hearers to "be baptised every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ"? Did he thus early set aside the command of the Lord, given but a few days before? This is hardly conceivable.

The preposition used in Matt. 28. 19 is *eis*, which always suggests motion toward. There is an ellipsis to be supplied, such as "baptising them into association with" the Triune Name. The same preposition is used in Acts 8. 16; 19. 5; in their baptism these persons were publicly associated with the Name of the Lord Jesus. In Acts 10. 48 the preposition used is *en*; the words should be read, not that they were baptised in the Name of Jesus Christ, but that in the Name of Jesus Christ Peter commanded that they should be baptised. Here "in the Name" means under the authority of, for this was just the point in dispute with those "of the circumcision," who accompanied Peter, whether they had the authority of the Lord for baptising Gentiles who professed faith in Him, unless they became Jewish proselytes as a preliminary. The descent of the Holy Spirit upon Cornelius and his friends had settled the question finally. To baptise under the authority of the Lord was to baptise under the authority of the only command He gave, that recorded in Matt. 28. 19. To be baptised into association with the Lord Jesus Christ was to be baptised into association with the Father and with the Holy Spirit, Whom He revealed; the word name is in the singular—not names, but name, the one Name of the Triune God. There is a figure of speech by which the part is put for the whole. In Acts 2. 42, for example, it is clear that "the breaking of bread" is not to be understood as excluding the drinking of the cup, though that is not specified. So with the baptismal formula: the mention of the Name of the Son alone cannot be taken to exclude that of the Father and the Spirit. Moreover, in none of the places in Acts is "the Name of Jesus Christ," or "of the Lord Jesus" given as the formula used.

## BAPTISMAL FORMULA (2)

Is it according to the Apostles' Doctrine to use the formula at a baptism: "In the Name of the Trinity," or, "In the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ"?

**I**T is clear enough that Acts is intended to relate how the apostles carried out the command of the Lord preserved in the closing verses of Matthew's Gospel. Apparently neither the preachers nor the historian saw any incongruity between the command given and their manner of carrying it out.

No formula is given in Acts as having been used by the apostles. By the command of the Lord Jesus they baptised the converts. In submitting to baptism the converts publicly confessed that they had been brought into association with Christ in His death and resurrection (Rom. 6). But what form of words they used is not recorded.

Neither is it necessary to read the words of the Lord as providing a baptismal formula. Baptism was the public acknowledgment of God and of the Son of God. In like manner no form of words is provided that must be pronounced in order to the validity of the Lord's Supper.

A further correspondence between the two ordinances may be noted here. In Acts we read only of the Breaking of Bread; no mention is made of the Cup. We do not therefore suppose that the Cup had no place in the Supper in the apostolic age. In like manner we must not conclude that because only the Name of the Son is mentioned that therefore there was no reference made to the Father or to the Holy Spirit when baptism was administered. By a figure of speech called synecdoche, the part is put for the whole in each case.

## BAPTISM AND FORGIVENESS OF SINS

Has baptism at any period been the prescribed condition for the remission of sins?

**B**APTISM is mentioned in connection with sins in several New Testament passages which may be briefly examined.

Matt. 3. 6-12; Mark 1. 4.—Repentance was expressed in baptism,

and repentance was the essential condition for the remission of sins. Mark's words are not to be read "baptism unto the remission of sins," but "repentance unto the remission of sins."

Acts 2. 38.—Repentance, *metanoia*, is a change of mind. The mind of those who heard Peter preach had been that Jesus of Nazareth was justly condemned and executed as a blasphemer. When the newly-descended Spirit presented Christ to them in the words of Peter, they began to perceive that something was wrong. In answer to their question Peter urged them to change their minds about Christ and His death, and to testify to this change of mind by submitting to the ordinance Christ had Himself appointed. Here again we must understand not "be baptised . . . unto the remission of sins," but "repent . . . unto the remission of sins." Their submission to baptism would testify to their repentance; the gift of the Holy Spirit which was to follow thereupon would be the assurance that their sins had been remitted. The new mind which was to replace the old was that the Lord Jesus had died, not for His own sins, as they had hitherto supposed, but for theirs. And this condition is invariable, whether implied or expressed. (See Peter's words to Cornelius, *e.g.* "every one that believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins"—Acts 10. 43). In this case the Holy Spirit came upon the hearers before they were baptised, but certainly not before they had believed. It is not conceivable that the gift of the Spirit preceded the remission of their sins.

Reverting to Peter's address at Jerusalem, the condition on which the Jews were baptised was that they received his message, which means that they believed on the Lord Jesus. Plainly, save for ulterior motives of prospective gain, only believers will submit to baptism. The sins of such as believe are remitted on believing (see Acts 13. 38, 39), and those who believe receive the Holy Spirit on believing (Eph. 1. 13). The audience in Jerusalem at Pentecost would not be in any danger of deducing from Peter's words, "Repent and be baptised unto the remission of sins," the idea that remission of sins depends upon baptism.

Acts 19. 4, 5.—Paul's words supplement the records of the Baptist's ministry by making it quite clear that John preached faith in a coming Messiah as the motive to repentance of sins, and as the ground of the remission of sins. When the men heard the

Apostle's testimony to the Lord Jesus they were baptised. It is not stated that they believed on Him, but would they have been baptised into His Name had they not believed?

Acts 22. 16.—The three essential words here are the verbs "baptise," "wash," and "call," and all three are in the middle voice, the force of which is to suggest that a person procures something to be done for himself, that is, with a view to his own interests. Paul was not to baptise himself; indeed, but he must procure baptism for himself. But why should he do so, save on the ground that he had believed? His repudiation of his own works, and his association of himself with the before contemned Jesus, was set forth in his voluntary submission to baptism.

The Greek word translated "wash" occurs again only in 1 Cor. 6. 11, and there also in the middle voice. The words are, "ye were washed," or "ye washed (yourselves) . . . in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ"; not that the Corinthians had put away their own sins, but that they had voluntarily fulfilled the condition upon which alone sins can be remitted, that is, they had believed on the Lord Jesus.

The third is the vital word; "the calling (for himself) on the Name of the Lord" procured Paul's salvation, for "whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2. 21). "Calling" is thus synonymous with "believing"; he who believes on the Lord calls on the Lord for salvation, and he who calls on the Lord for salvation his sins are remitted, or washed away, and he who is saved and forgiven declares his dependence upon Christ, his association with Christ in His death and resurrection life, by submitting himself to baptism.

The answer to the question, then, is in the negative. In Scripture baptism always succeeds, never precedes, the forgiveness of sins. Whether under the old economy or the new, faith is the sole condition on which God remits the sins of men (Rom. 4. 1-8, Gal. 3. 1-14). Every argument directed by the Apostle against law-keeping as a means of justification is equally cogent against baptism as a condition on which remission of sins could be obtained, in the apostles' day, or can be obtained now.

## ONE BAPTISM

Eph. 4. 5: "One Baptism." What baptism is here intended?

WHERE it is used in its literal sense in the New Testament, the Greek word *baptisma*, translated into English as baptism, describes the immersion of a person in water and his emergence therefrom, as in Matt. 3. 7; Rom. 6. 4; Col. 2. 12; 1 Pet. 3. 21. Figuratively, it means in some places to be overwhelmed with sorrow, suffering, and the like, as in Mark 10. 38, 39. In another figurative use it stands for the teaching, the acceptance of which qualified a person to receive baptism. John called men to repentance, and those who responded were baptised into John's baptism, signifying their association with John in what he taught. This was called "baptism unto repentance" (Acts 19. 3, 4). When the Lord asked the priests and elders whether the baptism of John were from Heaven or from men, He surely did not refer to the act of immersion in water practised by John, but to the teaching of John, of which it was a figure (Matt. 21. 25). So in Eph. 4. 5, the "one baptism" is the one Christian faith symbolized by the baptism to which each believer is to submit when he accepts it. Thus by a common figure of speech the act of confession is put for what is confessed therein. The meaning of Christian baptism is set forth in Rom. 6. 11, and in 1 Pet. 3. 21.

## LEADING OF THE SPIRIT

How is one able to discern the leading of the Spirit in the meeting for worship and the breaking of bread?

THERE is no trace in the New Testament of any regular meeting, of Christians save that of which mention is made in Acts 20. 7 and 1 Cor. 11. 17-34, the ordering of which is described in 1 Cor. 14. That the meeting is one and the same is clear from Luke's statement of its primary purpose, "when we were come together to break bread," and from the Apostle's words in 14. 16, "If thou bless with the spirit (that is, in a tongue unknown to the Assembly) how shall he that filleth the place of the unlearned say the Amen at thy giving of thanks?"

That this meeting is also a proper occasion for teaching and exhortation is equally clear, for at Troas, after the main object of the gathering had been accomplished, Paul "discoursed with (not preached to!) them."\* The purpose of the passage in Corinthians 14 is the regulation of such ministry. It is significant of the power of tradition—and all tradition is not ancient—that two phrases currently used of that meeting are not found in either passage. These are "the worship meeting," and "the leading of the Spirit."

There is but one reference to worship in 1 Cor. 14, where it is said of the effect of the spoken Word of God upon the conscience of a spectator, "the secrets of his heart are made manifest; and so he will fall down upon his face and worship God, declaring that God is among you indeed" (v. 25). (That anything resembling this is, so far as the writer is aware, a rare occurrence to-day is a severe rebuke to our high pretensions and low attainments). There is no suggestion in the chapter that the meeting is "for worship," nor, indeed, is there any New Testament reference to a worshipping company, save in the Revelation, where the scenes are not earthly but heavenly, belonging to eternity, not to time.

Worship is not something done on occasion, and in association with others; it is the characteristic and normal attitude toward God of the individual regenerate soul.

In His words "such doth the Father seek to be His worshippers" the Lord cannot be understood to refer to a meeting of any kind, but to the individual believer, nor to any part of his life, but to the whole of it. If we are not worshippers in habit of mind, we shall not be worshippers on some specified occasion. If we are not worshippers alone we shall not be able to worship when we join a company.

In view of the fact that the Holy Spirit is not mentioned in 1 Cor. 14 the use of the phrase "the leading of the Spirit" in this connection calls for consideration. Let us ascertain the facts and thereafter learn what they have to teach us. In chapter 12. 3-11,

\* Incidentally it may be noticed that ministry of the Word succeeded, it did not precede, the breaking of bread. The breaking of bread in verse 11 was an individual act; the verbs are all in the singular number, describing the speaker's refreshment before resuming his interrupted journey. There is thus a close parallel between Acts 2. 42 and 46, and Acts 20. 7 and 11. If verse 11 refers to the Lord's Supper then Paul's partaking alone would provide an analogy with, and might be appealed to as a justification for the Roman priest partaking of what he "offers" in the "Mass" in the presence of a non-participating congregation,

three things are stated. *First*, that all gifts to the Church are from "the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as He will." *Second*, that these gifts are to be used in subjection to the one Lord. *Third*, that God alone can make the exercise of any gift effective to the profit of His people. After v. 13 there is no further reference to the Spirit in this Epistle.

In chapter 14 the whole responsibility for activities in, and for the orderliness and profit of, the gatherings of any church, is put on those present and, in particular, upon those on whom the Holy Spirit has bestowed His gifts for the edification and comfort of the children of God. "To each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal" (12. 7). Here *sumpherō* (translated "profit") may be taken as meaning "to produce harmony," for without harmony of spirit there cannot be profit. God is not the author of confusion, but of peace (harmony), and where His Spirit is in control all things will be done decently and in order (14. 33, 40). Hence it is that the question, "What shall I profit you?" should be pressed home upon himself by anyone assaying to take part in ministry in the Assemblies of the saints (14. 6). In v. 20 we are exhorted to act, not impulsively as children do, but as men of full growth who are responsible for their actions. "Brethren be (become) not children in mind: howbeit in malice be ye babes, but in mind be (become) men."

Specific instruction as to the conditions under which responsibility for ministry is to be discharged begins at v. 26.

All those fitted for such ministry by the Spirit (this is fundamental, for all are not so fitted) should come prepared to exercise it if the need arises. It does not follow, however, that every ready person is to give expression on every occasion to what is in his mind. Edification is the paramount consideration (v. 26). Of those so prepared let not more than three speak, though two would be preferable. Neither is any man to be the judge of his own ministry, "let the others discern" (v. 29).

Yieldingness marks the true minister; he will be ready to defer to another (v. 30). The gift does not absolve a man from the exercise of his judgment, for "the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets" (v. 32). Self-control is the fruit of the Spirit in the regenerate—let him supply it with patience (2 Pet. 1. 6). In any

church where the gifts of the Spirit are held as a stewardship from God, and under law to Christ, there will be peace; brethren will dwell together in unity, and the harmonious working of the whole will testify to the presence of the Lord "in the midst." But if these words of the Apostle are neglected his fear for the Corinthians will be realized in us, "lest by any means there should be strife, jealousy, wraths, factions, back-bitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults (*akatastates*, translated confusion in 1 Cor. 14. 33) . . . uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness" (2 Cor. 12. 20, 21).

There are only two passages in the New Testament that speak of the leading of the Spirit, and in neither is there any reference to worship or to ministry. In both the subject is the Christian life, the life that pleases God. In Gal. 5. 18 we read that if "we are led by the Spirit" we "are not under law." The preceding verses make the Apostle's meaning clear; he that walks by the Spirit is led by the Spirit, not by legal precepts, and thus there is secured to him the possibility of deliverance from the lusts of the flesh. Since He dwells within we may not, we need not, do the things we would do if we were left to ourselves (v. 17).

In Rom. 8. 14 it is written that "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." In v. 9 the same truth is expressed negatively, "if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." The Spirit of Christ is He Who, immediately before, had been called the Spirit of God. The unusual title suggests that the character of Christ is the identification mark of the Christian, and this is confirmed by v. 14. Where believers are called "children" the thought of relationship is prominent; where they are called "sons" the emphasis is on character or dignity. It is clear, then, that the words "led by the Spirit" as used in Scripture refer not to an isolated occasion, such as a meeting, but to the whole course and tenor of the life of the regenerate.

There is thus no justification whatever for the prevalent idea that a man may become the subject of a divine operation on Sunday, albeit he may have been living to please himself throughout the week. If we are not "led by the Spirit" on six days can we expect to be so led on the seventh? But if we "walk by the Spirit" on six days, we may be assured that He will not desert us when we gather on the seventh.

Too often we look for some supernatural prompting; such prompting, however, is more likely to be of the flesh than of the Spirit. The condition on which guidance is assured is plainly stated in Psa. 25. 9: "The meek will He guide in judgment, the meek will He teach His way." Guidance in any gathering of the saints comes not by way of feeling, but out of a sober consideration of what is appropriate to the occasion. And this is possible only where the Word of Christ, dwelling in us richly, enables us to teach and admonish one another, and to build each other up. (See Col. 3. 16; 1 Thess. 5. 11). How easily the interposition of someone in whom the Scripture is not dwelling richly, someone impatient of silence, or eager to speak, can throw godly order into confusion! Yet on such occasions let us not despair, for the judgment of the godly, and their prayers, the grace of God abounding to us, may restore the order threatened by the flesh.

#### THE BREAKING OF BREAD

To what do the words, "the breaking of bread," "breaking bread," "to break bread," in Acts 2. 42, 46; and 20. 7 refer?

**T**HEY may mean either, (a), to partake of an ordinary meal, or, (b) to partake of the meal instituted by the Lord. The simple method of discovering which sense is intended in any passage is to substitute one of the definitions for the phrase. Thus to understand Acts 2. 42 to refer to an ordinary meal would be incongruous, as though one were to say that when people became Christians they "continued stedfastly" to partake of food, or, in 20. 7, that on the first day of the week the Christians at Troas came together expressly to partake of food. If, however, the other definition is substituted the sense expressed is good. Christians continued stedfastly (i.e. not occasionally or spasmodically) to observe the Lord's Supper, and on the first day of the week (at Troas certainly, and, it may be assumed, elsewhere) they came together with the express purpose of so doing.

Communal life of believers.—The A.V. "from house to house," Acts 2. 46, is corrected in the R.V. to "at home." If definition (a) is substituted for the phrase under consideration the result is,

as Luke explains it, "they took their food at home." This is a very necessary indication that the communal life of the believers did not involve the breaking up of the family, which, had it been observed, would have prevented the segregation of men and women in monasteries and nunneries. But the substitution of (*b*) here would yield a sense not so good, inasmuch as "the Breaking of Bread" is not a family, but a church observance (1 Cor. 10. 16, 17).

Again, in Acts 20. 11, if definition (*b*) be substituted, Paul is seen partaking of the Lord's Supper alone, for all three verbs are singular; "when he was gone up (and when he) had broken the bread, and (when he) had eaten . . ." There is no indication in the text that any others shared with him in this meal. Luke and the rest of the party had already departed to begin their sea journey. Paul lost no time in setting out by land to meet them as planned, partaking of refreshment ere he departed. Definition (*a*) is clearly the meaning here.

A.V. "preach," in 20. 7 and 9, is misleading. The word used is that of Acts 17. 2, 17; 18. 19, where it is translated "reasoned with" in R.V.

"Speech" before breaking bread.—"Speech" in verse 7, is *logos*, the message. The meaning of "talked," in verse 11, can be learned from its only other New Testament occurrences, Luke 24. 14, 15, and Acts 24. 26, where it is rendered "communed" and signifies "to hold conversation with." The passage cannot therefore be held to show an example justifying a lengthy address previous to the doing of that for which believers gather. The exercise of gift must be left to the spiritual judgment of the individual; and this should remind us that spiritual judgment is possible only to spiritual persons. Probably experience in the needs of any company of saints, and sense of the fitness of things, will suggest that, before the breaking of the bread, the ministry of "five words with the understanding," leading directly to the Father, through Christ, is most likely to encourage the spirit of worship. Nor is there any necessity that the exercises should be multiplied ere that is done, and always there should be room left for teaching and exhortation before the congregation disperses.

## SHOWING THE LORD'S DEATH

To what does the word "show" (A.V.) or "proclaim" (R.V.) in 1 Cor. II. 26 refer? It has been stated that the idea of proclaiming (the Lord's Death) to men is utterly inadmissible. Is this so?

THE meaning of *katangelo*, the word as translated, can best be learned by noting how it is used elsewhere in Scripture, and, in particular, by the Apostle himself. Indeed, it is found only in his letters and in the Acts. In A.V. it is variously rendered by *declare* (twice), *speak of* (once), *preach* (ten times), *show* (three times, Acts 16. 17; 26. 23, and 1 Cor. II. 26), and by *teach* (once). On the other hand, R.V. translates by *proclaim* every place save Acts 16. 21; 17. 18, 23, where *set forth* is used.

*Katangelo* always refers to speech, never in any place does it mean to show in the sense of exhibit or present. The passages in the Epistles are Rom. 1. 8; 1 Cor. 2. 1; 9. 14; 11. 26; Phil. 1. 17, 18; Col. 1. 28. Let the reader compare them and judge for himself.

To whom do we "proclaim the Lord's death"? To *angelic* beings, fallen or unfallen? To neither have we any commission to proclaim anything. To God? But this would be absurd. And if it is suggested that we "show" the Lord's death to God, the answer is that such an idea is altogether foreign to Scripture. The sacerdotalist claims to offer an "unbloody sacrifice" on earth in parallel with the sacrifice Christ is offering to God now in Heaven. But Christ is not offering Himself to God now. Nineteen hundred years ago He did offer Himself to God in our behalf, but that offering was complete when on the Cross He cried "it is finished." And every reference to that sacrifice in Scripture is made in the past, the completed, tense. See, for example, "Who needeth not daily . . . to offer up sacrifices . . . for this He did once for all, when He offered up Himself" (Heb. 7. 27, see also 9. 14; 10. 10, 12, 14). It is indeed on this ground alone that any sinner can enter into the presence of God.

To whom, then, do we proclaim the Death of the Lord? Our sole commission is to preach to men, we have no other. It is clear from 1 Cor. 14. 23-25 that the Lord's Supper, the Breaking of Bread, was not held in private. Secrecy genders suspicion. (Under

British law it is not permitted to hold this meeting behind closed doors). There is nothing secret about the Gospel or the gatherings of the saints.

So far is it from the truth that "the idea of proclaiming (the Lord's death) to men is utterly inadmissible." I suggest, in the light of the plain meaning of *katangelo* in every other place of its occurrence in the New Testament, no other idea is at all admissible. Mrs. Rundle Charles has expressed the truth in her hymn, too little known, beginning:

"No Gospel like this feast  
Spread for thy saints by Thee,  
Nor prophet nor evangelist  
Preach the glad news more free."

### "THIS DO"

To what does "this do" in Luke 22. 19 and 1 Cor. 11. 24 refer—to the breaking of the bread by the brother who gives thanks, or to the breaking and eating by the whole company?

LIKE "do" in English, *poieō* in Greek is a sort of "maid of all work" among words. It can be substituted for most verbs to avoid repetition; indeed, it often stands for a complete sentence for the same reason. For example, "When I have painted and varnished this panel I will do that one." Or this in 2 Chron. 35. 17-19, "keep (lit., do) the Passover," where not a particular act such as the slaughter of the lamb, or the eating of it, or the putting away of leaven, but all the detail of the memorial of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread is intended. Another example out of an abundance is 1 Kings 18. 23, 25, where the word "dress" is literally "do," and includes all the actions mentioned earlier in the verse. In Matt. 26. 18 the words are "keep (lit., do) the Passover," while Mark and Luke have "eat." But obviously not only the act of eating is intended, but all that was necessary to carry out the instructions concerning the feast and leading up to the eating of it.

So it is to be presumed that when the Lord said, "This do" He meant that they should do in the future what they were doing when He spoke. The "taking," cannot describe a significant act, such as lifting up ceremonially, or as an offering. It is the pre-

liminary act of selecting the bread as the appropriate symbol of His Body. He gave thanks (to His Father) so we must give thanks (to His Father) for the gift of His Son in our behalf. They were to eat, and so are we to eat the bread. There is no justification in the quite simple words of the fourfold story presented in the New Testament, for isolating the "take" and vesting it with a peculiar significance. Moreover, when the instructions about what is to be done are repeated in 1 Cor. II. 26-29, four times the words are "eat" and "drink," "taking" and "breaking" are not mentioned at all.

Here, again, the suggestion that leads to priestly position and function enters, for the sacerdotalist contends that the word "do" in these passages means to sacrifice, that the taking and lifting the bread is a repetition of the Lord's sacrifice, and that the priest on earth is doing what the Priest in Heaven is doing—offering Himself to God. But the Lord is not offering Himself to God now—He "offered Himself" once for all well-nigh two thousand years ago (Heb. 9. 14, 28; 10. 12).

#### RITUAL AT THE SUPPER

"Upon the first day of the week, when we (are) gathered together to break bread," is it necessary for the brother expressing the thanksgiving of the assembled church to raise the loaf in his hand, or hands, as he does so?

**A**SSUREDLY there is nothing new under the sun! I had been reading something of the history of the Hungarian Puritans; the writer relates that in the seventeenth century controversy raged among them on this point. At the same time, and later, among Presbyterians in Scotland feeling on the subject ran very high. Such disputations do not mark a rising tide of spirituality among saints; the contrary is usually the case. It is possible that the idea to which the question refers lies at the root of the practice of the "Elevation of the Host" in the Roman system.

Two errors seem to be involved, one latent, one patent. It is assumed that the person who divides the loaf is performing an act necessary to the right observance of the Supper. But this is merely an act of service to the Lord and to His people, necessitated by the

crusted loaf ordinarily used, which, were it passed whole, would cause distraction and embarrassment. The bread, or loaf, is not broken by any one person in any sense in which it is not broken by all who partake. Were the number present small (there were about twelve on the first occasion), and were the "loaf" a brittle cake (as it probably was then), there would not be any need for the initial breaking at all.

Paul speaks of "the bread which we break"; there is no emphasis on the "we," the pronoun is not separately expressed; yet the "priest," Roman and Anglican, claims that by "we" is meant himself and his brethren in office. He claims, moreover, that he acts representatively, and that the function is exclusively his. This claim has been urged also in places where priestcraft is not suspected, yet where it is taught that a representative of the Lord (who must have a "priestly character," whatever that may mean), must break the bread for the company, as an essential to the intelligent observance of the Supper. There is a Latin tag which meets the case: *principiis obsta*—the beginning of evil should be opposed.

It is surely significant that neither priest, elder, bishop (overseer), pastor, nor teacher is mentioned in any Scripture in connection with the breaking of the bread. Incidentally it may be noticed that this is true of baptism also. To make any particular person, or an act not prescribed in Scripture essential to the right observance of the ordinance, is to move on the way that lies through ritualism to clerisy and priestcraft.

The other error to which reference was made above is in supposing that the word "took" in the narratives of the institution of the Supper means to lift up. It represents the very common Greek word *lambano*, which is rendered in A.V. by from fifteen to seventeen different English words; in fact, it is as varied in meaning as is our word "take." In Matt. 5. 40 it means to take by force; in 13. 31, 33, John 19. 1, Acts 16. 3, it is idiomatic, as in English, adding nothing to the meaning of the following verbs. It is used of taking counsel in Matt. 22. 15, and of marrying in Mark 12. 20 (compare Matt. 22. 25). Paul speaks of taking a prize, and Luke tells us that astonishment "took" all the beholders of one of the Lord's works (Phil. 3. 12 and Luke 5. 26). But enough has been said to show how little basis the word "took" provides for the

introduction of a ritual into the observance of a memorial meal, the characteristic of which is its simplicity, and the entire absence of either official or formula.

Of all that was on the table on the night of His betrayal it was the bread the Lord "took," or chose, in which to provide a symbol of His Body.

### COMPOSITION OF THE ELEMENTS

Should the bread and wine used at the Communion be of any particular kind, leavened or unleavened, fermented or unfermented?

AN inference has been drawn by some that because of the Passover season the bread must have been unleavened. But surely had there been any significance intended a plain indication would have been made in a matter of such importance. Neither is there any suggestion in any of the Scriptures dealing with the Supper that it was intended that the bread or the wine should have any typical or symbolical significance. It is purely gratuitous to attach such significance to them. Why add to the Scriptures? Isa. 28. 28 has been applied to the bread of the Supper, but this is far-fetched and merely fanciful. In R.V. (margin) the verse reads, "Is bread corn crushed? Nay, He will not ever be threshing it, and driving his cart wheels and his horses over it, he doth not crush it." The whole paragraph is a message of comfort to an afflicted people assuring them that their trials are adapted to the end in view, and that not even the severest trial is unlimited by the wisdom of God.

Any attempt to raise the question can only disturb the harmony of the assembly, lead to unhappiness among the saints, and to the marring of the testimony for God. The great end of Satan is to break up the churches of God, and in attempting this he is very plausible. A favourite way is to move us to think ourselves wiser or more devoted than our brethren, and to raise some question concerning detail, making it of prime importance, and so generating strife, as the Apostle warns us will inevitably be the effect (2 Tim. 2. 23; Tit. 3. 9). We are not ignorant of his devices; let us beware of falling into such an obvious snare. The whole world lies in the wicked one, and to us God has committed the only message of salvation. The children of God need comfort and instruction in

righteousness. There are many worthy things to which we can devote our energies in the fear of God, and in the confidence that He will accept our service, however feebly it is rendered, and that He will reward it at the Day of Christ.

#### THE SUPPER: HOW AND WHEN:

Is it right to drink the wine before breaking the bread?  
Is it according to Scripture to break bread the first day of every week?

THE order in which the Lord gave to His disciples the cup and the loaf does not vary in any of the records of the institution of the Supper. Indeed, Paul explicitly says that the cup was given "after supper," leaving no room for doubt that the loaf came first (1 Cor. 11. 25). In 1 Cor. 10. 16 he reverses the order, but this is not an historical but a doctrinal passage, in which he draws lessons from the Supper in favour of the maintenance of harmony among saints. It can be right only to follow the order the Lord followed, and that the Apostle confirmed.

The day.—The words of the Apostle, "as oft as ye drink," and "as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup," are not to be read as though He had said, "as often as ye *choose* to do so" (1 Cor. 11. 25. 26). No instruction as to frequency is anywhere given, but the custom of the Church at Troas is recorded, surely for our learning. In Acts 20. 7, R.V., we read these words, "upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread." The believers at Troas did not so gather because Paul and his party were visiting them. On the contrary, the narrative plainly indicates that though the visitors arrived on the morning of Monday, and though their journey was urgent (v. 16) yet they did not convene a special meeting for the purpose, but waited for the first day of the week. Such, indeed, was the urgency of the journey that after the prolonged meeting was over the Apostle partook of a hasty meal and so departed to overtake the rest of the party at Assos, as had been arranged. It is unlikely that we should be able to improve on an example approved to us in such a way by the Apostle. And why omit any first day? Why not rejoice to proclaim the Lord's death on every recurrent resurrection morning, "till He come?"

## THE PASSOVER AND THE SUPPER

Is it in accordance with Scripture to say that whereas the Passover looked back to the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, the Lord's Supper looks forward to their deliverance from all lands in the future, as declared in Jer. 31. 8-11; 27, 28?

WHILE it stands written that "He that scattered Israel will gather him," there is no suggestion in any relevant passage that the Lord's Supper is in any way anticipative of this restoration. In the account of the institution of the Supper, Paul quotes the Lord as saying, "this do in remembrance of Me." To this he adds, "ye proclaim the Lord's death." Both words carry the mind backward, not forward. The added words, "till He come," prescribe the limit set to the observance. If, as some say, He did come in A.D. 70, it is plainly out of order to continue to remember Him thus; but if not, then the command remains in force.

If, as others say, the Supper belongs to a "transition period," that it was intended for believing Jews only, not for Gentiles, it is strange that the Lord's words at the institution as Paul recounts them, make no reference to Israel; moreover, the church to which Paul wrote was one of "the churches of the Gentiles," albeit it contained believing Jews also (1 Cor. 11. 23-34; 12. 13, and Rom. 16. 4). If the Supper is "Jewish" why is it dealt with here and no mention made of it in Hebrews?

It is also true that the Supper is not mentioned in the "Prison Epistles," *i.e.*, those to Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon, but neither is it in those addressed to Romans, Galatians, and Thessalonians. And if the Supper is not for saints of this present calling then neither is Baptism, yet the current observance of Baptism is assumed in Eph. 4. 5, and Col. 2. 12. There is no explicit reference to the coming of the Lord in Ephesians; we do not therefore conclude that His coming was without interest to the recipients of that letter.

## KEEPING THE FEAST

The words of 1 Cor. 5. 8, "let us keep the feast," are much used for the Breaking of Bread. What is meant by these words?

THESE five words represent one word in the original *heortazō*, which does not occur again in the New Testament. The noun, *heortē*, is found quite frequently, and always with reference to one of the "feasts of the Jews" (John 7. 2). Thus it is never used of a meal, but always of a festival or holiday. In John 7. 14 it is recorded that in "the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the Temple and taught," and verse 37 speaks of "the last day, the great day of the feast." In such passages as Luke 5. 29; 20. 46, entirely different words are used. It is clear, therefore, that 1 Cor. 5. 8 does not refer to the Lord's Supper.

The Passover was appointed for the people about to be delivered from Egypt, and with it was to be associated a week's abstinence from leavened food (Exod. 12). A memorial of the Passover, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were to be observed throughout the generations of Israel. Sometimes the one name was used, sometimes the other, as in Luke 22. 1, "The Feast of Unleavened Bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover"; and Mark 14. 12, "On the first day of (the Feast of) Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover (lamb)."

The reference in 1 Cor. 5. 8, then, is to this festival or holiday, but only in so far as it was "a shadow of the good things to come" (Heb. 10. 1). In the slaying of the true Paschal Lamb we had no part, "Christ our Passover hath been sacrificed." But the keeping of the true Festival of Unleavened Bread through the whole lifetime of the believer (symbolized by the complete cycle of seven days of the shadow festival) is his own responsibility. He must himself search out and put away all he cherishes that is displeasing to God. His motives are to be not of malice but of love; his actions not of hurtfulness but of helpfulness. His walk and conversation are to be marked by sincerity and truth.

## "LORD'S" OR "LORDLY"

What is the meaning of "*kuriakon deipnon*" in 1 Cor. 11. 20—"the Lord's Supper" or "the Lordly Supper?"

*KURIAKOS* is an adjective formed from *kurios*, lord; it occurs again in Rev. 1. 10, *kuriakē hemera*, translated in the English Versions "the Lord's day." Whether the first day of the week or "the day of the Lord" is intended may be a matter of controversy, but that this is the right rendering cannot well be disputed. In the writings of the second century *logia kuriakē* occurs, meaning not "lordly sayings," but "sayings of the Lord." Another early phrase, *graphai kuriakai* means "writings concerning the Lord," not "lordly writings."

*Kuriakē* does not occur elsewhere in the Bible save in these two passages, but there are other adjectives formed in a similar way, and these help us to arrive at the meaning of *kuriakos*. *Mulos onikos*, in Matt. 18. 6, is, literally, "a millstone of an ass," that is, as in R.V., "a millstone turned by an ass." *Sarkikos* (Rom. 15. 27; 1 Cor. 9. 11) means, not fleshly things, but "things of the flesh," i.e. material things. In the *papyri* "Imperial Finance," "Imperial Treasury," occur (*kuriakos* in both cases) clearly meaning the Finance and Treasury of the Emperor, who was called *Kurios*, Lord. Another such word is *anthrōpinos*, formed from *anthrōpos*, a man. If *kuriakos* means "lordly," then *anthrōpinos* must mean "manly." These words express ideas in English that make them impossible as representatives of the Greek words of which they are the literal equivalents.

The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines "lordly" as "haughty, imperious . . . grand, magnificent"; and "manly" as "having a man's virtues, courage, frankness." *Anthrōpinos* bears none of these meanings in the seven places of its occurrence in the New Testament. These are: "men's hands" (Acts 17. 25); "the manner of men" (Rom. 6. 19); "man's wisdom" (1 Cor. 2. 13); "such as man can bear" (1 Cor. 10. 13); "mankind," or as *margin*, "human nature" (Jas. 3. 7); and "ordinance of man" (1 Pet. 2. 13). The remaining passage is of peculiar interest because it provides a close parallel with "the Lord's day" in Rev. 1. 10. This is 1 Cor. 4. 3, where *anthrōpinēs hēmeras* is translated "man's judgment" with

margin, "man's day." And just as "manly day" is an impossible translation of the latter phrase, so "lordly day" is impossible in Rev. 1. 10, and "lordly supper" in 1 Cor. 11. 20.

This conclusion is confirmed by the words in verse 21 which are set in contrast with those of verse 20. "His own supper" represents a noun and an adjective, just as do "the Lord's Supper." There cannot be any question that the adjective *idios*, translated "his own," is the contrasted equivalent of *kuriakos*, "Lord's"; hence its only legitimate translation is that of the English Versions, and the reference is to the memorial meal instituted by the Lord.

### WAS JUDAS AT THE SUPPER?

Did Judas Iscariot partake of the Supper with the rest of the disciples at its institution by the Lord on the night of His betrayal?

**HAD** we but the Gospel according to Luke to guide us, the answer would be in the affirmative. For immediately after his account of the institution of the Supper, he adds, without any suggestion of an interval that the Lord said, "But behold, the hand of him that betrayeth Me is with Me on the table" (Luke 22. 21). Nor is there anything in Matthew inconsistent with this conclusion; indeed, the word "all" in chapter 26. 27, coming after Judas's challenging question to the Lord, "Is it I?" may have been added for his sake. Like the giving of the sop, it may have been the expression of the longsuffering of the Lord, not willing that any man should perish, giving Judas a last opportunity to repent. Mark, in his account of what occurred, gives no indication that Judas left the room before the end of the meal. His words, "they all drank of it" (14. 23) where "all" is emphatic, may be intended to signify that Judas also was among them when they partook of the Cup.

The difficulty arises when the attempt is made to identify the moment in John's narrative at which the Supper, which he does not mention, was actually instituted. Writers vary greatly in their judgments. Thomas Whitelaw (on John 13. 30) says, "At what time the traitor left the upper room, whether before, during, or

after the institution of the Supper, cannot be conclusively determined, though a careful examination of the records points to the inference that it was before 'Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it'." Later he says, "Matthew (chap. 26. 27) expressly places the Supper after Christ had revealed to Judas that he was the traitor at which instant John says he went out. Hence there is a strong presumption that *Judas did not partake of the Lord's Supper.*" (The italics are Whitelaw's). Quite a number of commentators are quoted as sharing this view, including Calvin and Milligan and Moulton. On the other hand, Stier would place the Supper between verses 32 and 33 of John 13, and Godet as early as before verse 1. Whitelaw's own view is "after verse 30." Bishop Ellicott in his *Historical Lectures on the Life of our Lord*, says: "After a more special and private indication had been vouchsafed, and the self-convicted son of perdition had gone forth into the night, followed in due and solemn order the institution of the Eucharist." These writers, however, do not offer any evidence for their different conclusions, all of which are purely arbitrary.

Some hold that Luke's order is not chronological but moral, and that there is a break at the end of v. 20, v. 21 referring to another occasion. But alike in structure and in sense v. 21 follows upon v. 20. Moreover, at no other place in the Gospel narratives are the Lord and His disciples found together in any sense in which the words of v. 21 would be appropriate.

Again it is asserted that the Lord would not have allowed Judas to partake of the Supper. It is always precarious, not a little presumptuous, and it may well be at times dangerous, to say what the Lord would or would not, could or could not, have done under certain circumstances. That is to measure Him by ourselves, assuming that He would necessarily do what we would have done.

If what I may call the "magical" theory of the Sacraments is held, then it will be presumed that since life is imparted in the "elements," as would be the case did John 6. 54, 58 refer to the Supper, Judas could not have partaken thereof. On the other hand, those who would not refuse the "Communion" to any respectable resident in the parish, may plead that since Judas was there, why should we presume to discriminate between regenerate and unregenerate now? All such reasoning is vain.

Let it be allowed that Judas was present, and that he did partake, what follows? That the Lord knew His betrayer is quite clear (John 6. 64). Equally clear is it that He did not act upon this knowledge in such a way as to preclude the possibility of repentance on the part of Judas. Indeed, the giving of the sop, a token of friendship, may have been the Lord's final appeal to him to pause ere he carried his wicked purpose to its consummation. Nor did He communicate His knowledge to the other disciples who, to the last, had no suspicion of the presence of a traitor among them (Matt. 26. 22). Judas had the confidence of the other disciples in a somewhat marked degree; he was their treasurer, entrusted with the common purse. John 12. 6 was written in view of subsequent developments.

What analogy is there, then, between the case of Judas and the case of a man who makes no confession of the Name of Christ, and who yet partakes of emblems that, if they have any meaning at all, can only mean to him a sorer condemnation?

Those who came together to break bread in New Testament days were such as openly professed to be disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. True it is that only the Lord knows them that are His (2 Tim. 2. 19), but all such will both name (*i.e.* confess) the Name of the Lord, and will depart from iniquity. And, the Apostle adds, we are to "follow after righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart," that is, out of a heart "cleansed by faith" (Acts 15. 9). That Judas partook of the Supper does not warrant the admission to the Supper now of a person who has not confessed the Lord.

#### UNLEAVENED BREAD

In the course of our study of 1 Cor. 5. 7, 8; 10. 16, 17, and other passages bearing on the holiness and purity of the Church in God's sight, and also considering the fact that the Lord's Supper was instituted on the first day of the Feast of the Unleavened Bread, the question has come up as to why unleavened bread should not be used when remembering the Lord:

THE ground may be cleared in the first place by pointing out that 1 Cor. 5. 7, 8, does not refer to the Lord's Supper. The word

used by the Apostle, *heortazō*, means a feast in the sense of a festival, not of a meal (see R.V. margin). Its meaning is clear from the use elsewhere of the corresponding noun (*heortē*) as in Luke 2. 41, 42, Col. 2. 16. Where a meal is intended, other words are used, as in Luke 5. 29; 20. 46. Neither may it be assumed that the Feast of the Passover or Unleavened Bread (these were one and the same—Luke 12. 1) was actually being kept at Corinth; on the contrary, Paul's antagonism to the imposition of Jewish laws and rites upon Gentile believers is well known.

The church of God at Corinth was ideally "unleavened," *i.e.* it was formed of persons who had been "sanctified in Christ Jesus," and who were "called to be saints." Let them live in accordance with their calling, then, let them seek to realize the ideal in their walk and conversation. To this end they must themselves put away malice (which refers to motives), and wickedness (which refers to conduct) as the Israelites annually put away leaven from their homes for the space of a week. But the feast the Christian is to keep is not occasional, nor is it confined within any limits, it is continuous and ends here only with his life.

When the Apostle deals with the Supper of the Lord in 1 Cor. 10 he makes no reference to the Feast of the Unleavened Bread. Instead, for the purpose of warning, he draws a parallel between the Supper and the "spiritual meat" (the manna) and the "spiritual drink" (water from the rock) provided in the Wilderness, vv. 3-5. He does not refer at all to the nature of the loaf nor, here or elsewhere in Scripture, is any lesson drawn from either the composition of the loaf or the contents of the cup. All that we can assuredly conclude is that when He instituted the Supper, the Lord selected the common elements of the common meal without hinting that they had any typical or mystical significance at all. Let us heed the Apostle's warning in this Epistle, not to go beyond what is written (4. 6).

The following points are noteworthy. There is no time appointed at which the Supper is to be taken. The wording of Acts 20. 7, "when we were gathered together to break bread," indicates that it was customary in the Apostolic Age to meet for that purpose on the first day of the week. The time was apparently the evening, for there was not then a day's cessation from toil, as there is for most

folk now in this country. Then the word "supper" does not necessarily mean a night meal, but the second of two where, as in many countries, only two meals are taken daily. Cp. Matt. 23. 6, "feasts," and Rev. 3. 20; 19. 9, 17, where the time of eating is lost sight of altogether. Both words are used in Luke 14. 12.

There is no formula appointed to be used on the occasion of the Supper, neither is any official act of any kind necessitating the presence of a priest or a minister or other official. The breaking of the bread and thanksgiving are the acts of the whole company, not of any one person (1 Cor. 10. 16).

Moreover, to repeat, neither in Gospels nor Epistle is any suggestion made that the composition of the bread enters in any way into the significance of the Supper.

Finally, it is to be remembered that there is no certainty at all that the evening of the betrayal was the first of the Days of Unleavened Bread. It is not clear, then, that the bread the Lord broke was in fact unleavened; it may have been, or it may not. Had it been in the mind of the Lord that a special kind of bread, in use among the Jews during only one week in the year, should be prepared for use every first day of the week among all the nations of the earth, we should hardly have been left without some plain indication of His intention.

#### THE BIBLE AT THE BREAKING OF BREAD

Concerning the reading of Holy Scripture in meetings, particularly that on Sunday morning, should much or little be read?

THE Law of the Lord is "the life" (Deut. 32. 47) of God's people in every age since it was begun to be given through Moses. The variety of its functions is described in Psalm 19. In it is expressed the experience of the saints, and the worship of God, in language unexcelled and that provides a pattern.

Instructing Timothy as to the behaviour proper to a church of God, the Apostle says, "Give heed to reading" (1 Tim. 3. 15; 4. 13), that is, to the public reading of the Scriptures. Reading of the Scriptures in a gathering of Christians is never out of place—though, of course, spiritual discernment of the portion appropriate to the occasion will always be necessary.

## X—THE CHURCH AND THE CHURCHES

### SCRIPTURE PHRASES

“The Church which is His Body” (Eph. 1. 22, 23); “the church of God” (1 Tim. 3. 5) and “the church of the Living God” (v. 15), are these alternative descriptions of the same thing, that is, do they refer to the same church?

“THE Church which is His (Christ’s) Body” is that of which He Himself spoke as recorded in Matt. 16. 18. It includes all regenerate persons from Pentecost until the Rapture of 1 Thess. 4. 17. It is not impossible that this Church may include the faithful of the earlier dispensations also, those who “before hoped in Christ,” “the saints . . . the household of God” (Eph. 1. 12; 2. 19). The arguments relied on to show that they are excluded do not seem to me to be conclusive. “I will build” probably refers to the operations of the Holy Spirit begun at Pentecost, but may not the accumulated material of the former age (to maintain the figure) be incorporated therein?

In the other passages to which reference is made the article is absent in the original. In each case the indefinite article is necessary and is correct, in English, as the context shows. An overseer is responsible to “take care of a church of God” (not of the Body of Christ), and all ought to learn “how to behave in a manner befitting a church of a Living God,” so different from the community of worshippers of lifeless gods in the midst of which the Ephesians dwelt. These, then, are local companies, whereas “the Church which is His Body” is universal.

Much confusion concerning the teaching of the N.T. as to the Church and the churches has arisen from applying the term "church of God" to "the Church which is His Body." In Scripture this is never done.

### THE LAMPSTAND AND THE SEVEN LAMPSTANDS

Has the lampstand of Exod. 25. 31, 32 any connection with that of Rev. 1. 12?

THE lampstand of the Tabernacle (and cp. Zech. 4. 2) was one stand for seven lamps. (Cp. Heb. 9. 2, "the lampstand"). In John's vision there are seven separate lampstands, each a stand for one lamp, with no suggestion of any connection between them. It is important to observe this difference. John's symbol is in harmony with the teaching of the Epistles of Paul regarding the churches of God. They are not a unit. There is no connection between them save that living link that connects each with the Lord "that walketh in the midst" of them. No church is constituted by the recognition of any other. To no church has authority been committed to unchurch another; the removal of a lampstand is the prerogative of the Lord alone (Rev. 2. 5). In no passage of Scripture are any two or more churches made responsible for mutual discipline, nor are they anywhere directed to take joint action. Churches, like individual believers, are to walk by faith, not by sight. Each church, like each believer, is expected to seek counsel of the Lord, in His Word, by His Spirit. As fellowship among believers is maintained not by mutual agreement but as the result of each individual walking with Christ, so fellowship among churches is maintained, not by subscription to a common creed, or recognition of a common form of church government but through the submission of each church to the Lord by the enabling of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12. 3). Any other bond between churches save that which binds each to the Lord is sectional, sectarian, however speciously the fact may be disguised or denied.

## TITLES OF THE CHURCHES

What is the difference, if any, between "the churches of God" (I Cor. 11. 16; I Thess. 2. 14) and the "churches of Christ" (Rom. 16. 16)? To these may be added, for the sake of completeness "the churches of the saints" (I Cor. 14. 33).

THESE were the same churches differently described, otherwise we should have to contemplate in any given city three churches—one "of God," one "of Christ," and one "of the saints," which would be absurd. As "churches of God" these companies are viewed as Divine in their origin, and as under the Divine protection, and as having their needs supplied by Divine provision. As "churches of Christ" they are viewed as having Him "in the midst," enjoying fellowship with Him and with one another. As "churches of the saints" they are viewed as responsible to maintain order, to preserve peace, and to edify one another. So the context seems to indicate in each case. The second and third of these phrases occur each in one place only, the first is found more frequently.

"Churches of the Gentiles" (Rom. 16. 4) probably describes those churches whose membership was at least predominantly Gentile.

## WHERE GOD CAUSES HIS NAME TO DWELL

Does Deut. 16. 2, 5, 6 provide guidance for the present day? Is there a place now where God has chosen to put His Name? Is there any Scripture that would enable a seeker after truth to identify that place?

ON the borders of the Promised Land, Moses told the Israelites that when they were settled there the Lord would indicate the place of His choice "to cause His Name to dwell there," "His habitation," whither they must bring their offerings and their tithes (Exod. 25. 8, Deut. 12. 5-7, 10. 11). Thus the Lord would fulfil His word, "I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God"

(Exod. 29. 45). The language of the Lord Jesus concerning the children of God now is altogether unlike that spoken concerning the children of Israel. Since the Cross there is no "place of worship" upon earth, no place where God has put His Name. The words of the Lord are quite explicit; worship of God in spirit and truth is independent of locality (John 4. 24). Since Christ died and rose and ascended, and since the Spirit came at Pentecost, "where two or three are gathered in (into)" His Name there He is "in the midst of them" (Matt. 18. 20). No "place" is suggested, hence there is no way of recognizing such a place. The people in whose midst the Lord is will not need to assert the fact, nor will they be identified by the name of the place wherein they meet merely; they will be recognized by their likeness to Him. Not those who appeal to their soundness in doctrine, or carefulness in following the Scriptural order, however desirable these may be, but those who "walk worthily . . . with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love," bear the marks of a true church of God (Eph. 2. 21, 22; 4. 1. 2).

#### "INTO MY NAME"

Is it strictly accurate to say that in Matt. 18. 20 we have the definition of a church of God? Do you approve of the literal rendering "into" which some prefer to the more idiomatic English, "in My Name," of the A.V. and R.V.? If so, what do you consider to be the difference between them?

"**W**HERE two or three are gathered together in (or into, *eis*) My Name" is hardly a definition, but the connection shows clearly enough that this is the necessary characteristic of all such gatherings as may be described as churches of God. The first place in Acts in which the believers at Jerusalem are spoken of as a church is 5. 11, in a context strongly suggestive of Zeph. 3. 5 and 17, and testifying to the reality that lies in the words "there am I in the midst of them." Where the Lord is present indeed, His power will be known not only by those professedly so gathered, but also by ignorant or unbelieving persons who may come in. Such

persons will "worship God, declaring that God is among you indeed" (1 Cor. 14. 24, 25).

The difference between "in" (*en*) and "into" (*eis*) may be said, broadly, to be that the former is static whereas the latter has the idea of motion, evident or latent, in it. In some of the occurrences of *eis* ("into") the idea of motion is less obvious than in others. In some passages the two words must be sharply distinguished. For example, in Acts 10. 48, Peter, "in (*en*) the name of Jesus Christ" commanded that the believing household of the Gentile, Cornelius, should be baptized. That is, in face of the objections that had been urged against the baptism of uncircumcised Gentiles (cp. Acts 11. 2, 3; 15. 1) he invoked the authority of the Lord Himself as recorded in Matt. 28. 1).

Acts 19. 1-7 tells of "certain disciples" who were unaware that the Holy Spirit had come. In order to ascertain their standing, for their answer to his first question made it clear that they were not Christians, the Apostle asked them further, "into what, then, were ye baptized?" Then it transpired that they were disciples of John the Baptist, not of the Lord Jesus, Whose Name, apparently, they had never heard. When Paul told them of the later developments in the ministry of the Baptist, and how he had identified Jesus as the "One Who should come after him," they were baptized "into (*eis*) the Name of the Lord Jesus." Up to this point they had been associated with the name of the Baptist; henceforth they were to be associated with the Name of the Lord Jesus.

In 1 Cor. 10. 2, where *eis* is used, the meaning is equally clear; the Israelites in crossing the Red Sea were committed to the leadership of Moses. When the ellipsis is supplied the words will run, "baptized into association with Moses." The same ellipsis supplied in Matt. 18. 20 yields an adequate sense, "where two or three are gathered together into association with My Name, there am I in the midst of them." In my judgment much is lost when the colourless "in" is substituted for the pregnant "into" in this passage. Believers are gathered not merely under the authority of the Lord (in His Name) but into that vital association with Him that makes them witnesses in their walk and conversation, individually and corporately, to what He is. A church is a school in which meekness and lowliness are learned of Christ (Matt. 11. 29). His "meekness

and gentleness" (2 Cor. 10. 1) will mark those to whom gathering into association with His Name is not merely nominal, formal, but is a living fruitful power. In such assemblies the peace of Christ will rule indeed (Col. 3. 15).

### ARE "BRETHREN" A SECT:

THE word "sect" represents the Greek *hairesis*, which is translated "heresy" in 1 Cor. 11. 19, Gal. 5. 20, 2 Pet. 2. 1. Its meaning may be learned from the use of the verb form in Matt. 12. 18, Phil. 1. 22; it is always translated "choose." Sadducees and Pharisees were sects of the Jews (Acts 5. 17; 15. 5); what more natural, then, than that those who followed the Nazarene (Matt. 2. 23) should be known as "the sect of the Nazarenes" (Acts 24. 5)? The Apostle of the Gentiles was not content to allow this to pass without protest; therefore in his plea before Felix he said, "After the Way which *they call a sect*, so serve I the God of our fathers" (Acts 24. 14).

The English word "sect" means that which is cut off from the main body, or any part separate from the whole, a section. The Church which is Christ's Body (Eph. 1. 22, 23) is spiritually discerned, lying altogether beyond the range of the natural senses, and is without organization, or expression, on the earth. Therefore it is impossible there should be "sects" in it. The Spirit Who makes it one maintains its unity.

Not all that profess to be Christians are such in fact. The pagan notion that baptism secures regeneration, or in any way affects the spiritual status of men, has produced a mass of profession without reality. This mass with pretensions to be "the Church" describes all those who attempt to order their ways by appealing to Scripture as "sectaries," "sects."

As Mr. E. H. Broadbent has shown in his illuminating book, *The Pilgrim Church*, there has never been lacking such testimony outside the organized "churches," but the danger has always been that those who sought out "the old paths" to walk in shortly degenerated into small bodies even more rigid and exclusive than the main body from which, in their desire for Christian liberty, they had broken away. Denounced as sects by the organized and historical churches, they retaliated by calling all others but them-

selves "sects and systems," not realizing the danger of throwing stones when you live in a glass house.

Sectarianism is of the heart, not merely of outward position. It is easy to denounce "sects" and yet to be thoroughly sectarian oneself. Our Father loves all His children equally, however wayward they may be. For us to continue in fellowship with Him, and to love and serve them, while we endeavour to bear practical witness to the Truth He has committed to His people, is far from a simple matter, though to take an isolated, sectarian stand is easy to the carnal mind. True faithfulness to Christ is possible only as we "walk humbly with . . . God," learning from Him Who was "meek and lowly in heart" (Matt. 11. 29). We may be sure that when we compare ourselves with others to their disadvantage and to our own credit, we have lost touch with Christ.

The question assumes that there is a sect called "The Brethren," but that would be to appropriate to a small part what is true of the whole. There are companies of Christians throughout the world whose sole concern is, or should be, to wait on God in His Word that they may learn His mind, and to seek His grace to carry it out, individually and collectively. When these companies cease to "walk even as He (Christ) walked," they become sectarian, and will soon be found glorying in their shame; for whatever excuse may be made for others there can be none for such as claim to know.

To adapt the words of John Milton, "a new circle of fellowship is but old sect writ large." Scripture knows nothing of an association of churches. In the New Testament each church is planted and grows independently of all others; churches are never seen associated for any common purpose; each is directly answerable to the Lord alone. In our own day there is no such body as "Open Brethren," inasmuch as each company seeking to carry out what they find written is responsible, not to any other, or to any circle, but to the Lord alone. Thus these companies are not sects in the ordinary acceptance of the term; they do not belong to any organised body of professing Christians.

Nevertheless, since sectarianism has its roots in pride, such companies are in daily danger of falling into a sectarian condition. Sometimes this comes about in a church because those who constitute it have been careless, or self-satisfied, or through indolence

have shirked the labour of making themselves acquainted with Scripture teaching on the subject.

How easy it is to become a traditionalist even as we condemn others for accepting without investigation what they have received in the same way. Thus we should assuredly describe as sectarian an announcement to the effect that "Baptized or Presbyterian Christians gather here," whereas some have no conscience about using the same form saying, "Gathered-out Christians meet here." Yet the latter is as sectarian as the former would be.

Only as they are spiritual can any company maintain an unsectarian position; nor will they find it easy so long as they cultivate the sincerity of God (2 Cor. 1. 12, R.V.)—the world, the flesh, and the Devil will see to that! They are few that try, and arrogance is always the besetting sin of minorities. Intolerance and spiritual pride speedily produce a hard, unlovely, and wholly unchristian ecclesiasticism, from which only the grace of God can preserve us.

### GATHERED OUT

(1) What is the meaning of "being gathered out" like those commonly known as "Brethren?" (2) Why do they not have a minister to speak at the Sunday morning services? (3) Why do they not take a collection at their Gospel services?

(1). "GATHERED out" The first Scripture that suggests itself in reply to this question is Acts 15. 14: "God did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His Name." These words describe what God is doing through the preaching of the Gospel; all believers are thus "gathered out" to God from the world that "lieth in the Wicked One." In 2 Cor. 6. 17 a free quotation from Isaiah 52. 11, runs, "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; and I will receive you." Here again, the Gospel call of God to men to forsake their wickedness and turn to the Lord the Saviour is the theme. It is a call not to walk apart from Christians, but from the world. Isaiah exhorted God's people in his day to come out of the idolatrous communities amidst which they dwelt. Paul

adapts this word to exhort the believer to cut himself free from association with unbelievers (vv. 14, 15).

In the course of the age the true idea of a church has been lost, and for the gatherings of confessors of Christ for the worship of God and mutual edification, there have been substituted mixed congregations of those who do, and of those who do not, so confess. This is largely, if not altogether, traceable to the rise and spread of the quite unscriptural, indeed anti-scriptural, practice of "infant baptism," which means the acceptance as Christians of multitudes who never had, and who do not even profess to have had, a Christian experience, and who, for the most part, do not even know the way of salvation. When persons in association with such companies are converted to God, if they begin to read His Word (as they surely should), there will follow a stirring of conscience and a desire to obey what they find written in the Bible. Obedience to the will of God revealed therein will separate them from such associations.

It is in this connection that the expression "gathered-out Christians" has been used. It is, none the less, unfortunate that it should have become current, for just as no adjective can properly be added to the Name "Jesus," or "Christ," so no adjective should ever be attached to the name "Christian." We recognize the sectarian character of such a title as "Baptist" or "Presbyterian Christian," but we must not fail to recognize that all such descriptions are equally sectarian, "gathered-out Christians" no less than others.

Christians are to follow the New Testament implicitly. But Christians do not learn everything at once. When they do learn that it is the will of God for all His people that they should "not forsake the assembling of themselves together" (Heb. 10. 25), they do not leave one denomination to join another; that would only add to the confusion already existing. They simply go out, and like Abraham, often "not knowing whither they go," but assured that as for Abraham, so for them, they will find God true to His Name, "El Shaddai," the All-Sufficient God (Gen. 17. 1; Heb. 11. 8). Soon, in His providential care, God brings such faithful souls into touch with others who also have the desire to walk as they find it written, and to continue "stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2. 42).

(2) No fixed minister.—It has pleased God to provide certain “gifts” for the welfare and edification of His churches. There is no suggestion in Scripture, however, that all these gifts are to be found in one person. Even in the days of Ezra, fourteen men occupied the “pulpit of wood” from which the Scriptures were expounded (Neh. 8. 4).

I Cor. 12-14 relates to the ministry of the Word in the gatherings of the church of God at Corinth, but so far from suggesting a congregation in which all the ministry is committed to one man, it is assumed throughout that the ministers will be plural, and the ministries varied. Thus “there are diversities of gifts . . . to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom; and to another the word of knowledge . . . to another faith . . . to another prophecy; and to another discernings of spirits . . . but all these worketh the one and the same spirit, dividing to each one severally as He will” (chap. 12. 4-11).

Later in the chapter the Apostle enumerates the gifts (v. 28), and in a later Epistle he gives a shorter list, omitting the sign gifts altogether (Eph. 4. 11). In I Cor. 14, 29 the prophets are told to “speak by two or three”; that is, of course, not two or three at once, but consecutively. For, he proceeds, “ye all can prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.” That is, not all present, nor even all men present, but all who have been fitted by the Spirit for such work (see chap. 12. 29, 30). The controlling principle is asserted in chapter 12. 3: “no man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit,” and the effect of the practical acknowledgment of that Lordship is seen in all things being done “decently and in order” (chap. 14. 40).

When the church of the Thessalonians was yet young (none among them had even heard of the Lord Jesus a few months before), the apostle Paul wrote to them, “Wherefore exhort one another, and build each other up, even as also ye do” (I Thess. 5. 11). To the church at Rome, which he had never visited, and which had evidently been in existence for a considerable time, Paul wrote, “I am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another” (Rom. 15. 14). Thus there were in the Apostle’s days, and there should be now, in every church, not merely a minister, but

ministers with different gifts given to each according to His will by the one Spirit, and all used, or administered, in subjection to the one Lord (1 Cor. 12. 3).

As those who follow the Scriptures in these matters are few compared with the whole number of Christians, and as many of the "gifts" are found ministering to mixed companies that do not answer to the New Testament description of a church, many gatherings that do seek to conform to the pattern are without the help the Lord has provided for them. Still, the failure of men does not make the counsel of God of no effect, and those who trust God find Him El Shaddai indeed.

(3) Collections at Gospel meetings.—From the New Testament churches "the Word of the Lord sounded forth" (1 Thess. 1. 8), so in these days the preaching of the Gospel is a main preoccupation of those who keep the pattern before them. Moreover, they esteem it no small privilege to preach it without cost to those who hear. It seems absurd to gather a number of sinners together to tell them of the amnesty God offers to rebels, and then to appeal to them to contribute towards the expenses of the occasion! Freely we have received, let us as freely give.

When Christians meet together for the purpose of worship and edification they may give of their substance to the Lord for the care of His poor, and for the furtherance of the Gospel. Indeed, this is part of their worship, and a fruit of their love to Christ (Heb. 13. 15, 16), but it is a privilege peculiar to the "household of the faith" that cannot be extended to "them that are without," albeit our desire is that they should speedily come within.

## GATHERED OUT

In Matt. 18. 20 are we to understand the meaning to be "where two or three are, having been gathered together?" The suggestion underlying this translation being that certain Christians are "gathered out," others not.

IN the first place there is nothing whatever in the text about being "gathered out"; on the contrary, the words are "gathered into." Neither is the idea suggested by the former phrase found

in any other Scripture, unless it be Acts 15. 14, where, however, the words "take out of them" refer to Gentiles; they are, therefore, true of all Christians as having been gathered out of the world by God.

In the second place, the addition of any limiting term to the title Christian necessarily involves sectarianism. Thus such descriptions as "Baptist Christians," "Presbyterian Christians," cut off a certain number of Christians from all other Christians. Not less does such a phrase as "Gathered out Christians," or, "Christians gathered to (or in) the Name of the Lord" have the same sectarian effect.

In the third place, there is the question of grammar. In the year 1903 I submitted it to the late F. W. Reynolds, M.A., a widely known West of England tutor. His reply, which, in the nature of the case, is necessarily technical, and is here somewhat condensed, was as follows: "I see nothing unusual in the use of the verb in Matt. 18. 20 . . . The third person plural of the perfect tense indicative passive of the verb is *sunēgmenoi eisi*, being made up of the perfect participle past: and the third person plural of the verb *eimi*. . . In the passage before us the *eisi* and the *sunēgmenoi* are transposed in order, which is not uncommon. The literal translation in English idiom, as the order of the words stands is, 'For where there are two or three gathered together into My Name, etc.'" Mr. Reynolds went on to point out that parallels are to be found in John 20. 19 (A.V. Text); Acts 4. 31; 20. 8. He adds that this is the normal way in which the perfect tenses passive are formed. Comparison with the mentioned passages will show how baseless the suggestion of the question is. Mr. W. E. Vine, M.A., writes that in Matt. 26. 43, a grammatical parallel, "their eyes were heavy," would require to be rendered "their eyes were, having been, weighed down." So also in Acts 21, 29, where "they had before seen" runs, literally, "they were, having seen before."

It has been urged that the interposition of the three words "two or three" between the auxiliary and the main verb justify the translation "where two or three are, having been gathered together"; but Mr. Vine points out that in Mark 2. 18 no less than six words are inserted in the same way, between the auxiliary and the principal verb, without modifying the sense.

That the proposed translation of Matt. 18. 20 is nothing less than grotesque becomes evident when some other verb is substituted for gathered, as, for example, "I am loved, or beaten, or imprisoned." Could these be expressed as "I am, having been, loved, or beaten, or imprisoned?"

## CONCERNING RECEPTION

What guidance does the New Testament provide in the matter of reception into the fellowship of a church?

IT is seemly, when one desires the fellowship of believers to whom he may be "unknown by face," to provide himself with a note of commendation, as Phoebe did (Rom. 16. 1, 2).

The Lord Himself presented His credentials, declaring, "If I bear witness of Myself My witness is not true" (John 5. 30-47). "In all things . . . made like unto His brethren," He appealed to the testimony of "two or three witnesses." "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Lord."

The Apostle tacitly acknowledged that those responsible for the welfare of a church have the right to expect letters of commendation from those who visit them; the brethren at Ephesus provided Apollos with one when he set out for Greece (2 Cor. 3. 1, Acts 18. 27). Such a letter, however, is not the only means whereby good faith may be established. There are others—personal introduction, for example (Acts 9. 27).

A rule is not a safeguard in spiritual affairs; these usual evidences of good faith may be unavoidably absent; in such cases grave wrong may be done by refusal of fellowship. If the brethren who are exercising care are spiritual men we may confidently expect them to be guided by Him to Whom the churches belong, and Who is more deeply concerned for their welfare than any of us can be.

If a rule is adopted which is not found in Scripture (and there are no rules laid down in the New Testament) we thereby contract ourselves out of the Divine guidance which is the happy portion of those who walk in the fear of God, and so become sectarian (Psa. 25. 9). And if we accept persons merely because they belong to an Assembly listed in a certain book, are we not sectarian? A letter of commendation is not a species of "communion ticket";

it is an evidence that in the judgment of godly men the bearer belongs to Christ. Carnal men will make mistakes notwithstanding the plainest rules of human devising.

Spiritual knowledge, wisdom, and understanding are the result of meditation on the Scriptures which were given for our guidance in these as in all other matters. If we are led by the Heavenly wisdom which is promised to those who seek it (Jas. 1. 5) we shall win men. If our ways be such as to please the Lord, those for whom Christ died will not be stumbled, but will rather be helped on the way to the Father's House and to the Eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

In my experience there are few that "assay to join themselves to the disciples" from ulterior motives. The exceptions are provided for in 1 Tim. 5. 22, "lay hands hastily on no man." The Apostle goes on to say that in some cases a man's reputation precedes him, in other cases he shortly shows himself in his true colours. Therefore let caution go hand in hand with courtesy. If, for example, a stranger received on his own testimony were at once to begin to instruct or exhort the saints (or to attempt to borrow money, or to make temporal gain in any other way) his motives might well give rise to suspicion. The popular misconception that any one may take audible part in a meeting has certainly attracted some who desire to hear their own voices. Where zeal outruns knowledge, let the elders instruct and correct in a firm yet gracious way.

If the person presenting himself has been associated with a similar gathering elsewhere, it would be well to inquire of him whether he be under the discipline of that assembly. This course is advisable when a Christian presents himself from any company known by whatever name. Persons prone to dissension are little likely to change their character with their associations. No man in the fear of God will resent reasonable care being taken by the elders of a church.

Some with little understanding yet with a sincere desire to please the Lord, attracted by the Christian character of the believers, by their courtesy and kindness, and by their reputation for loyalty to the Lord and to the Scriptures, have come to see for themselves, and, like some in Paul's day, "beholding your order, and the

steadfastness of your faith in Christ," have acknowledged "that God is among you indeed," and have never wished to leave such good company again. Not by our theories, however firmly they may be supported by Scripture, but by our demeanour and behaviour, men will be either attracted or repelled (1 Cor. 14. 25, Col. 2. 5).

Persons making a habit of occasional attendance at the Lord's Supper should be reminded that privilege carries with it responsibility. There must be rule and order in a house of God (1 Tim. 3. 15).

There is grave danger that through fears and apprehensions we may drift imperceptibly into a sectarian position. It is not possible to do right where fear is the motive. "Let all that ye do be done in love"; that is, not because of our fears, but in the interests of the well-being of others. This danger is insidious and constant.

## CHURCH MEETINGS

Do 1 Cor. 11. 2-16; 1 Cor. 14. 34, 35; 1 Tim. 2. 11, 12, only refer to gatherings upon the first Day of the week, or do they refer to all meetings? In other words, are Christians gathered in church capacity only on the first Day of the week, or are they gathered in church capacity at other times?

**T**HERE is no indication in the New Testament that believers were accustomed to gather together on any day but the first of the week. All the exercises described therein were apparently carried out at that one meeting. Now, in the providence of God, what with weekly holidays and curtailed hours of labour (things which are by-products of the Gospel, so to speak), believers can come together on any mutually convenient day, at any mutually convenient hour, and thus distribute the various exercises over the whole week, to the manifest profit of all. This refers, of course, to this and other countries where the Gospel has long been preached; there are countries not so happily circumstanced. But whenever the church is convened, with whatever object, that is a church meeting, and New Testament principles apply.

## MINISTRY OF WOMEN

Do not the Scriptures seem inconsistent when we compare the case of Deborah (Judges 4. 4-9) with 1 Cor. 14. 34?

NOT at all; a moment's reflection shows them to be quite strikingly consistent. The period of the Judges was one of declension and confusion in Israel, so much so that here is a woman doing the work of a man—judging, that is, ruling the people in civil matters, for “the rulers had ceased in Israel” (5. 7). Military leadership was indeed in the hand of a man, but Barak, on an emergency, refused to discharge his function unless Deborah shared it. And in this he persisted in spite of the significant words addressed to him by Deborah, “the journey thou takest shall not be for thine honour.”

At Corinth there was a church of God into which confusion had come in many things, among others, apparently, in the assumption of leadership and of the teaching function by women. To meet this abuse the Apostle wrote, “Let the women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak . . . for it is shameful for a woman to speak in the church.” The danger seems to have been common enough even in the Apostolic Age for, many years later, Paul dealt with it again in 1 Tim. 2. 11-12, “Let a woman learn in quietness with all subjection. But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness.” And he adds his reasons.

A note on 1 Cor. 14. 35 may usefully be added. The Greek word is *lalein*, which refers to the act of utterance, rather than to the matter uttered. It is true that *lalein* might mean “to chatter,” but it has not this meaning in any other passage in the N.T., nor would it be suitable to understand it in that sense here, for surely in that case all present, men and women, would have been included in the prohibition. The “speaking,” in the writer's mind, is the subject of the whole chapter, not of this verse only. The Apostle is regulating the teaching, preaching, and prophetic gift (cf. vv. 19, 23, 27, 29); indeed, *lalein* occurs twenty-four times in the chapter. See v. 21 in particular.

## THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

Is the Church the Bride of Christ?

THIS expression, though commonly heard, is unknown to Scripture. "The Bride, the wife of the Lamb" is found in Rev. 21. 9. Care should be taken not to confuse the symbols used by different New Testament writers. Christ is the Head of the Body, the Church which, as His Body, is the object of His love. Let the Christian remember that his wife is as his own body, and let him treat her as he treats his body, and as Christ treats His. Such, put briefly, seems to be the argument in Eph. 5. 22-23. There is no suggestion that the converse is intended, namely, that Christ's Body is His wife. Christ "nourishes and cherishes . . . the Church because we are members of His body," not because we are members of His Bride or Wife; at least, that is not what the Apostle says here.

The City of Revelation 21, 22, is not probably "Jewish," as some have understood it, neither, in the writer's judgment, is it the Church which is Christ's Body. May not the whole of the redeemed from among men, including the Church, be intended? The City is the obvious symbol of social, as contrasted with individual, life. The purpose of the Lord is not merely the salvation of individuals, but the exhibition of His power to form out of holy individuals a holy society.

In 2 Cor. 11. 2, the church of God at Corinth is in view, not the Church which is the Body of Christ. Here the Apostle speaks of His zealous care lest the "pure virgin" should be corrupted. In Ephesians no such possibility is contemplated, for the preserving power is directly exercised by Christ Himself. Cp. His own words, "I will build my Church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16. 18).

## OLD TESTAMENT BRIDES AND THE CHURCH

If the Church is not the Bride, to what do the figures of the O.T. refer? For example, Adam and Eve (Rom. 5. 14), Isaac and Rebekah, Samson and the Woman. And does not Rev. 3. 12 link the Church and the Bride?

DOCTRINE may not be based upon, or deduced from, types, neither may doctrine be modified in any particular to bring it into

conformity with alleged type. Adam is the only O.T. person said in the N.T. to be a type of the Lord (Rom. 5. 14), and there no mention is made of Eve, nor is the Church in view in the context. Any special analogy between Isaac and Rebekah, and Christ and the Church is not evident. When Paul speaks of Christ and the Church he refers to the Cross as the evidence of His love (Eph. 5. 25), but Isaac suffered not at all for Rebekah. The unnamed servant of Gen. 22 is sometimes said to be a type of the Holy Spirit seeking a Bride for Christ, but for this there is no specific authority in Scripture, and it is significant that in the ten references to "the Church which is His Body," by name in Ephesians and Colossians there is no mention of the Holy Spirit. He is not said to exercise any function in relation thereto. And this is the more significant since He is mentioned at least ten times in Ephesians (though not at all in Colossians) in His activities in relation to the individual believer.

Why should Samson and the Woman of Timnah be associated with Christ at all? Nothing in Scripture indicates that the Spirit of God so intended, and indeed the suggestion must jar on any mind spiritually sensitive to the holiness of the Lord.

The redeemed viewed as a Body in relation to a Head, is peculiar to Paul's writings, and indeed to his Epistles to Ephesians and Colossians. No other writer uses this figure, and, with the possible exception of Heb. 12. 23 and save, of course, Matt. 16. 18, the word Church is not anywhere else applied to the whole number of the redeemed, whether of this Gospel calling, or of the redeemed of all ages. Revelation concerning this Church in the O.T., therefore, is not to be looked for. It is "the mystery which hath been hid from all ages and generations (lit., from the ages and from the generations R.V., margin); but now hath it been manifested to His saints, to whom God was pleased to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in (or among) you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1. 26, 27).

As to Rev. 3. 12 the promise that the faithful soul in the church at Philadelphia is to be marked for a place in the City of God is a very long way from identifying that City with "the Church which is His Body," which indeed, is not in view at all in Rev. 1-3.

It is well to give heed to Phil. 1. 9, that our "love may abound

more and more in knowledge and all discernment; so that ye may approve the things that are excellent (or, quite literally, distinguish the things that differ) that ye may be sincere and void of offence unto the Day of Christ." Let us remember, too, that "he that prophesieth speaketh unto men edification and comfort, and consolation" (1 Cor. 14. 3), and to this end we must beware of ingenuity, original or traditional, and of sentimentality. That only is profitable which produces reverence and confidence towards God, and righteousness and love among men.

### FORSAKING THE ASSEMBLY

If a Christian leaves an Assembly after some purely personal disagreement, and assays to join himself to another in the neighbourhood, what action, if any, should be taken by the Assembly to which he comes?

IT should be clearly understood that each assembly is immediately responsible to the Lord alone. But that responsibility will assuredly constrain each assembly to act in courtesy towards every other. Assuming that the brother does not bring a letter of commendation (which he would be well advised to seek, and the absence of which should raise questions), the second assembly would do well to make enquiries whether there are any matters outstanding between the brother and the assembly from which he wishes to part company, that would make it undesirable that he should be encouraged. In that event a kindly attempt should be made to restore harmony where there has been a breach. This would be done, of course, in the interests of godly care, and of the spiritual well-being of all concerned.

The subsequent course would depend on the success, or otherwise, of these efforts. It is impossible to lay down any rule; none is laid down in Scripture. The cause of the disagreement, where there is such, might be trivial or great, a personal matter or one of principle, though experience shows that too often personal prejudice pretends to loyalty to Scripture principle. The spiritual must judge in the fear of God Who gives wisdom to those who seek it (Jas. 1. 5).

## THE ABSENTEE BROTHER

Should an Assembly put a brother out of fellowship on Heb. 10. 25: "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more as ye see the Day approaching"?

**P**RESUMABLY the question refers to some one who has been absent from the gatherings of the saints for a length of time, and for an unexplained cause. But if this has been the case the brother has already shown himself to be out of fellowship with his brethren! How, then, can others do to him what he has done for himself?

Under such circumstances the true pastor does not seek an excuse for breaking such a tender thread as may still bind the absenting brother to his old associations. He will use every endeavour to strengthen the bond, and to renew it, lest a wandering sheep, straying from the flock, should become a prey to the wolf. "I hate putting away, saith the Lord," refers primarily to the marriage bond, indeed, but surely it is not less applicable to that association of believers one with another in Christ which we usually call "fellowship." "Therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously," but rather "tend the flock of God . . . exercising the oversight . . . (not) as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock" (Mal. 2. 16; 1 Pet. 5. 2, 3). Taken with the context, and in view of the purpose of the Epistle, it is probable that those who had forsaken the gatherings of Christians did so because they had apostatized. The word translated "gathering together" here (*episunagōgē*) occurs again only in 2 Thess. 2. 1, thus strikingly associating the partial gatherings now with the unbroken gathering in the Parousia of the Lord.

## THEM THAT ARE WITHOUT

1 Cor. 5. 12, 13: "Them that are without." Does this refer to the unsaved, or to Christians outside the Assembly at Corinth?

**T**HE phrase occurs in Mark 4. 11, 1 Cor. 5. 12, 13, Col. 4. 5, and 1 Tim. 3. 7. These are all the places of its occurrence in the

New Testament. The context in each of the other cases leaves no room for doubt as to the persons in view. They are unbelievers, non-Christians. The passage under consideration is no less plain.

The Apostle does not anywhere write as though he contemplated the Christians at Corinth, or elsewhere, as being some inside the church, some outside it. See 1 Cor. 10. 32, "Jews . . . Greeks . . . the church of God," which three captions included the whole population of the city. The Apostle claims disciplinary authority over believers, "them that are within," and acknowledges that this authority is shared by the church itself. But he declares that over the unbeliever, "them that are without," he had no such authority. Inferentially neither had they (vv. 12, 13). It was no part of their responsibility, or of his, to judge those of the world who were guilty of the enormities of verse 10.

The case under review was different; the culprit was numbered among themselves, and therefore was subject to the disciplinary authority committed to the church gathered with "the Lord in the midst" (Matt. 18. 18-20; cp. 1 Cor. 5. 4).

### APPOINTMENT OF ELDERS

Is it scriptural for an assembly to elect elders by vote or how should they be distinguished?

IN Acts 14. 23 the relevant words are: "When they had appointed for them elders in every church," so R.V. "They," these are the apostles, Paul and Barnabas. "For them," these are the converts in each locality. The "appointing" was done by the former in the interests of the latter. The Greek word translated "appointed" is *cheirotoneō*, which means to stretch out the hand. It may be understood in one or other of two senses: (1) to stretch up the hand, *i.e.* to vote for a person and thus to elect him, or (2) to stretch the hand towards, *i.e.* to indicate a person and thus to appoint him. Plainly (2) is the meaning here, for it is not possible to conceive of the two apostles electing the elders by voting for them! Indeed, there is nothing in the passage to show how the elders were selected; we are merely told that they were appointed by the apostles. The action was their action, not that of the converts. *Cheirotoneō* appears again in 2 Cor. 8. 19, where it is

perhaps possible that (1) might be the meaning of the writer. It is not certainly so, however, and it is better to retain the meaning that is indisputable in Acts 14. 23. Thus not the election of the brother mentioned, but his appointment, is intended. Be that as it may, however, this appointment was not to overseership, or elderhood, but to ministry in temporalities, and in this the church is responsible both to select and to appoint suitable persons. Further light is cast upon the meaning of *cheirotoneō* by the occurrence of the word *procheirotoneō* in Acts 10. 41, where it is translated, "chosen before," *i.e.* by God. Obviously there is no question of voting here.

The Lord instructed Moses to bring before Him men "whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people." In so doing Moses did not make them elders; they had already shown themselves to be such (Num. 11. 16). It is the Holy Spirit who makes (or sets up) elders (Acts 20. 28).

Recognition of elders is a responsibility imposed upon the saints in such passages as 1 Cor. 16. 18, which may be rendered, "Get to know them that are such," and see 1 Thess. 5. 12, 13. The instruction of 1 Tim. 5. 17 goes further still: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour (*i.e.* of a double honorarium or gift), especially those who labour in the Word and in teaching. For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his hire." The work of the elder and the teacher is spiritual; only such as are spiritual themselves will be able to recognize it or to appraise it at its true worth.

It is at least questionable whether the method of voting is anywhere recognized in the New Testament. The "punishment inflicted by the many" (2 Cor. 2. 6) need not mean "by the vote of the majority against the vote of the minority," as some assume; more likely is it that "the many" are the whole church as against the one offender. Here again whether or no the apostolic churches put matters to the vote there is certainly no indication that their elders were so elected, or indeed, that they were elected by the church at all.

## RECOGNITION OF OVERSEERS

What should be the attitude of an assembly toward a brother who demands that he be recognized as an overseer?

IF a man wishes to be recognized as an overseer, the obvious course is for him to do the work of an overseer, but the true shepherd will be little concerned to be recognized as occupying any "office." The approval of the Lord and of his own conscience will be the chief consideration, the other his last thought. He will not undervalue the goodwill and fellowship of those he seeks to serve, indeed, but these will not occupy his mind, and he will not forget that love and kindness are not always appreciated by their immediate objects. Remembering the experiences of the Lord he will not resent this, but will find it a new point of contact, a new opportunity for fellowship with Him, and like Him will say, "I thank Thee, Father" (Matt. 11. 25). The true shepherd seeks not the recognition but the welfare of the saints, and this though he may have to say with the Apostle that the more he loves the less he is loved by those for whom he is being spent out (2 Cor. 12. 15).

As a rule, however, it will be found that the saints are forward to recognize any little service rendered to them, and where there is some initial prejudice, from whatever cause arising, patience lives it down, and "love never faileth."

But if any man desires an office the duties of which he does not discharge, he surely leaves the Lord out of the account, for the law of His Kingdom, as of His own life, is that he that would rule must serve (Mark 10. 42-45). The saints will need to bear patiently with such, for they wrong not merely the assembly, but the Lord and their own souls. The true shepherds, those who give evidence that they have no ambitions of their own but that they seek to watch for the souls of the saints, should point out to him his mistake, kindly, albeit firmly, in the hope that, brought to recognize his misunderstanding of the pastor's responsibilities, he may even yet be more "useful" to the Master, and to his brethren. When he attains to that he will not fail of recognition by both. But men who reach out after position are seldom either happy or useful. Those who love to serve are loved because they serve.

## THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ELDERS

Are overseeing brethren alone responsible to God for the carrying on the affairs of a local Assembly?

IF it is unwise for the elders in a church to act as though the fellowship of the saints were of no value to them, it is no more wise to resist or to stir up opposition to them. "The Lord's servant must not strive, but be gentle towards all . . . forbearing" (2 Tim. 2. 24). The conditions suggested in the question would call for fellowship in humiliation before God that a mutual desire to walk together in love might be encouraged. According to the New Testament pattern, elders are overseers in, not over (*en*, not *epi*) the churches (Acts 20. 28), guides, not lords, ruling by example, not by command; standing before, and being examples to, the flock (1 Pet. 5. 2, 3; 1 Tim. 4. 12; 5. 17).

It must not be forgotten, however, that the direct responsibility of the elders to God for the spiritual condition of the church to which He has given them is one of which they cannot divest themselves, and of which others cannot deprive them, and should not ignore. Scripture calls for co-operation with and submission to, elders on the part of saints, and we must beware of the carnal wisdom that would excuse us from obedience to such plain instruction as is given in 1 Thess. 5. 12; Heb. 13. 17; and 1 Pet. 5. 5, passages which should be attentively considered.

## ELDERS AND DEACONS

How do the following Scriptures apply to a church of God: Acts 1. 23 to end; 6. 2 to 6; 14. 23; 15. 40; Titus 1. 5-9?

ACTS 1. 23 to end. Not at all, if it be suggested that elders should be selected by lot. The paragraph is historical merely. So the apostles acted on that occasion, but there is no hint in the Epistles that their example was followed in the churches.

Acts 6. 2-6 — The distribution of the gifts of the saints should always be in the hands of more than one person. That these persons should be selected by the saints as those in whose godliness and judgment there is general confidence is clear from this passage

and 1 Cor. 16. 1-3; 2 Cor. 8. 18-21; 9. 3-5. Note the plurals throughout.

Acts 14. 23.—The elders in Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch were appointed by Paul and Barnabas. They were not voted for by the church. It is true that the word translated "appoint" is literally to stretch forth the hand, but this extension of the hand was done by Paul and his colleague, not by the saints. Their hands were not put up to vote, but stretched out, literally or figuratively, to indicate the persons they considered qualified to care for the spiritual welfare of the churches.

Acts 15. 40.—Here is an excellent example of fellowship in service, one that might be profitably followed. The younger man does not merely propose himself for the work, his call is ratified by the desire of the older man for his company. But both need the spiritual sensitiveness that alone will enable them to discern the mind of the Lord.

Titus 1. 5-9.—This chapter, with 1 Tim. 3, describes the ideal elder, the type of person who was to be selected for the care of the spiritual interests of the churches. Such men should be encouraged to devote themselves to this work everywhere. No service is more needed. In the absence of any authority given by the Lord, or His apostles, to any man, or men, to appoint such, it is well to pay attention to the word Paul used to Stephanas and his household in 1 Cor. 16. 15, "they have set themselves to serve the saints."

It may be remarked here that what are usually called "oversight meetings" are in practice meetings of deacons, for so far as my observation goes, they are devoted almost exclusively to those interests of the churches that properly fall to "deacons" to do. The work of the elder, or overseer (bishop) is properly individual and spiritual. To such work there cannot be appointment by the saints, for theirs is a charge committed to them directly by God (Acts 20. 28, cp. 1 Cor. 12. 8-11). No method of choosing, or approving, of "deacons" is prescribed either in Acts 6 or in 1 Cor. 16. The course to be pursued to ascertain the mind of the saints as to the persons to be responsible for the administration of their bounty, or the care of their property, is apparently left to the judgment of godly and wise-hearted men.

## HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE

In the light of 1 Tim. 3. 2, "the husband of one wife," must an overseer be married?

WHILE it might be possible to understand the Apostle to confine the responsibility of "oversight" to the married, I do not think this is the natural meaning of the words. "One" is the emphatic word; that is, one, no more.

In view of this barely possible ambiguity, something of the Apostle's mind may be gathered from other of his writings. Under certain circumstances he counsels celibacy; would those who accepted his advice be thereby disqualified for taking care of a church of God? (1 Cor. 7. 26). Verse 8 seems to indicate that the writer himself was unmarried, yet he took care of the churches (2 Cor. 11. 28). Certainly Paul may have been a widower, but would not this interpretation of his instruction to Timothy exclude widowers? Could one whose wife had died be described as "the husband of one wife?"

If the unmarried man is disqualified for the care of the flock it is difficult to account for the Apostle's words: "He that is unmarried is careful for the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord" (1 Cor. 7. 32).

There were those, said the Lord, who remained unmarried "for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake" (Matt. 19. 12). He went on to say that the standard was high, that not all might be "able to receive it." Are these persons, who, He tells us, are exceptional, thereby disqualified from "exercising the oversight?" There is a certain incongruity in the suggestion.

Examples of unmarried men who have shown themselves to be true shepherds, made such by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20. 28), men who cared diligently for the flock, and who comforted the saints might be mentioned to confirm the judgment that the words of 1 Tim. 3. 2 will not bear a meaning that would exclude unmarried men from taking their share in church responsibilities.

## XI—PRACTICAL

### ACCOUNTING FOR ASSEMBLY MONEYS

Which is preferable—to render a verbal statement of the money accounts of an Assembly quarterly or yearly to the members of the Assembly?

**M**ANY questions arise in the conduct of church affairs to which Scripture does not apply categorical answers. In such cases it is well to remember 1 Cor. 14. 20: "Brethren, be not children in mind: howbeit in malice be ye babes, but in mind be men," literally "of full age." That is to say, act not as irresponsible children might, in petulance or self-will; act as those whose judgment has come to maturity through experience.

That accounts should be rendered to the church in some form or another is clear, but in what form, or at what intervals, is not prescribed in Scripture. Whether this should be done quarterly, half-yearly, or annually is mere detail to be settled by those responsible for guiding the church for its general well-being. And when the decision is made, let not time and energy be wasted in murmuring and disputing, for this is the way of the child, not of the man (Phil. 2. 14). Twice yearly suggests the happy medium, with a summary printed yearly, or, alternatively, a copy of the accounts to be made easily accessible to any of the saints who may desire to inspect them.

### CONCERNING THE COLLECTION

When is the best time for the bag or basket to be passed round on Lord's Day morning, so as not to disturb the meditation and worship of saints?

**I**N the absence of specific instruction on this, or on any other point of usage, the general principles enunciated by the Apostle

must rule. These are, first, that the decision must not be taken baby-fashion, on impulse, or in self-will, and certainly not out of malice, as children so often act. Believers are to act on judgment, considering the common convenience, each showing readiness to submit his own preference to that of another. They are to act as those who have attained to maturity (1 Cor. 14. 20).

The other principle is that what is done should be done to secure decency and order in the church (1 Cor. 14. 40). The first of these words (*euschēmōnōs*) refers to the seemliness and attractiveness of such arrangements as are made. The second word (*taxis*) is that translated "order" in Luke 1. 8, and refers to the efficiency of those arrangements.

The place to be given to the box will largely depend on the light in which it is viewed. The question suggests that the offering is apart from worship and that it might become a hindrance to worship. Is not the offering a part of the worship? What is given is given to the Lord as really as our praises are given to Him. The word "collection" (*logia*) refers to the act of contributing, whereas "offering" is that which is carried into the presence of God (Heb. 13. 15, 16). It is, at least, commendable to pass the box immediately after the cup. This emphasizes the worship character of the giving. And it secures the opportunity of fellowship in giving to those who may be under necessity to leave before the close of the meeting. Some prefer not to pass the box or bag at all. There is no law, save that law of love which impels saints to defer one to another. If the box is not passed it should be placed in a conspicuous place where it can be readily seen and where it is not liable to be hidden either by the saints departing or by hanging garments.

### COLLECTIONS AT GOSPEL MEETINGS

Is it Scriptural for a company of believers to take up a collection from saved and unsaved at their Gospel meetings?

**T**HERE is a prior question. Is it Scriptural to hold a "Gospel meeting" at all? So far as the record goes, in Apostolic days there were no halls such as are now built, and no free day in the week on

which "Gospel meetings" could be held. The providence of God makes such meetings possible in many countries—not in all—at the present time; buildings are available, and the modern limitation of the hours of labour makes attendance possible. The manner of conducting these meetings must be left to those responsible for convening them; the New Testament does not contain any explicit instructions, nor does it describe a working model. The Gospel to be preached is described, and much may be learned from the records of Apostolic practice as to the method of preaching it. What suited the conditions of those days would not suit the conditions of this day; no doubt the wisdom of God is displayed herein. Servants of Christ are not bound to particular methods. They are left free to meet exigencies and circumstances in the light of Scripture and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Granted that it is right and proper to hold "Gospel meetings," it would seem well to make the Gospel without charge. To ask directly or indirectly, by word or by act, a contribution from unsaved people for the maintenance of evangelistic work seems inconsistent and entirely undesirable. It is the privilege of the saints to invite the guests and to spread the feast without money and without price. If there is financial straitness, for saints are often poor, it would be better to wait upon God for supplies than upon men. Gospel work abroad is carried on on this principle; why not the same work at home?

Let a line be added in deprecation of the words "No Collection" on announcements of Gospel meetings. It is not good to proclaim our own generosity, the more that in so doing prejudice is aroused in those we propose to attract. Do not make a collection at such meetings, but do not say anything about it, lest it be supposed that you are displaying your generosity and inviting only the indigent.

#### CONSCIENCE AS A GUIDE (1)

Is the Christian to be guided by his own conscience or by the consciences of others? (Rom. 14. 13-23; 1 Cor. 8; 10. 23-33).

**I**N any matter affecting conduct the Christian must first aim at full persuasion in his own mind as to the right or wrong of the

proposed course of action. And to this end he must make himself acquainted with the revelation of the mind of God preserved for us in the Scriptures, and particularly must he acquaint himself with the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the revelation of God in His ways as well as in His words. Such knowledge of the Lord is the fruit of companying with Him, the habitual reference to Him of thought, of word, and of act. This involves prayer, indeed, but it is an informal, living thing, untrammelled by any convention, a delicate exercise of the regenerate spirit responding to the presentation of Christ by the Spirit of Christ.

And this exercise will make the Christian considerate of others. He will not stand on his presumed rights, or determine to have his own way irrespective of the effect of his conduct upon others. The Christian life is not the product of new laws imposed from without; it is the product of a new spirit working within.

So the Christian will consider the weak conscience of his brethren; but no Christian will insist that his "weak conscience" is to trammel or fetter another in his life or service. The tyranny of the weak over the strong is at least as much to be deplored, and is as contrary to the Spirit of Christ, as is the tyranny of the strong over the weak.

## CONSCIENCE AS A GUIDE (2)

To what extent can we rely on conscience as a guide?

CONSCIENCE is an inward monitor, rebuking us for failing to live according to our accepted standards. Unregenerate man has a conscience (Rom. 2. 15), but that conscience may be "defiled," (Tit. 1. 15). Paul, looking back on his history, declares that he had walked according to his conscience, that is, without rebuke from it, before and since he became a Christian (Acts 23. 1; 2 Tim. 1. 3). And yet he could speak of his earlier life in such words as, "I was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious." It is to be concluded, therefore, that conscience is not to be relied upon as a guide in the conduct of life. It does not itself provide a standard and it will be as active in rebuking departures from a bad as from a good standard, as when Paul "thought with himself" that he ought to oppose Jesus of Nazareth, and oppose Him he did with a good, but unenlightened conscience (Acts 26. 9).

The regenerate man hears the words of the Lord, "he that followeth Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8. 12). The Word of God is the appointed means for the enlightenment of the conscience. Moreover, conscience is to be maintained and exercised (1 Tim. 1. 5, 19; Acts 24. 16).

### LETTERS OF COMMENDATION

If a person who purposes devoting his whole time and energies to the spread of the Gospel, receives from the elders of the Assembly with which he is associated a letter commending him to the work, is it generally understood that in so doing this company of saints should assume some responsibility at least towards his financial support?

THAT letters of commendation were given to those who went to visit in, or to reside at places where they were strangers, may be safely deduced from the case of Phoebe (Rom. 16. 1, 2). It is discourteous, and it is unfair, for any person to ask to be received on his own testimony, where this can be avoided. Besides which, it is in accord with the Scriptural principle that two or three witnesses should testify in a matter. Compare also the words of the Lord, "If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true" (John 5. 31). If the Lord did not ask to be received without credentials, why should His people do so? Such letters of commendation have a double object; they guarantee the good faith of the bearer, and they commit him to the shepherd care of the elders of the church to which he comes.

It seems also to have been customary for preachers and teachers to carry letters commending them as "ministers of the Word." Paul's detractors asked the Corinthians whether he had brought such letters with him. To this his reply was not that such testimony to good faith is unnecessary, for his words in 1 Cor. 16. 3 plainly imply that it is, but that such letters were not necessary in his case, since the Holy Spirit had written His commendation of him on their own hearts when He made good therein the Gospel he had preached among them (1 Cor. 9. 2).

There is no suggestion, however, that such letters entailed any

financial obligation on the churches that gave them, nor upon those to which they were addressed. But though Paul refused to burden the church at Corinth while he was with them, yet he made it clear that his was an exceptional case, "for even so did the Lord ordain that they which proclaim the Gospel should live of the Gospel" (1 Cor. 9. 11-14).

When Apollos left Ephesus for Achaia, "the brethren encouraged him, and wrote to the disciples to receive him" (Acts 18. 27). It may well have been that this "encouragement" took the form of gifts in aid of his travelling expenses and maintenance, thus setting him "forward on (his) journey worthily of God" (3 John 6), but there is no other indication that any financial obligation was desired or incurred. When he reached Corinth the spiritual benefits he brought would constrain the saints there to care for his temporal well-being, according to the ordinance of the Lord. Such a moral obligation was certainly felt by the Philippians, who esteemed it rather a privilege than an obligation, in the case of Paul, as may be seen in his letter to them.

These are instances of the godly care exercised in the early days of the spread of the faith, and such care is equally necessary now, alike for the comfort of believers and for their protection against designing persons. Plainly if those who give commendatory letters to preachers and teachers do not exercise due care in seeing that those upon whom they thus lay hands are worthy in character and fitted for the work they undertake to do, much harm will accrue to the saints and to the testimony generally, and such letters will cease to have any value; and those given after a godly sort and to worthy persons will come under suspicion. The signatories to such letters should see to it that they preserve their consciences "void of offence toward God and man alway" (Acts 24. 16).

Amiability, reluctance to give offence, amenability to flattery, the fear of man, and suchlike considerations too often account for commendations given to persons of questionable suitability, or even of obvious unsuitability for the service in view. "The thing that ye do is not good: ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God?" (Neh. 5. 9).

The letters of commendation to which the aforementioned New Testament Scriptures refer were written to churches. But the

commendation now sought by those who desire to engage in the service of the Gospel is often commendation to persons to whom funds for the support of such workers has been committed, either in the way of gifts or legacies. The burden imposed upon those to whom such stewardship has been committed has become well-nigh intolerable through commendations given carelessly or through interest. They are dependent upon the good faith of those who commend persons to them, and it may be feared whether commendations are always given with a proper sense of responsibility to the Lord.

It is vain to ask for instruction from Scripture, as to how this latter commendation is to be given, for in Apostolic days no such funds existed, so far as the New Testament records. But sobriety of mind, the fear of God, the sense of responsibility and the realization of the claims of fellowship and of mutual confidence are a general guide. We may be sure that to further the going forth of any whose calling and fitness are even doubtful will result not in helping forward the work of the Gospel, but in imposing a burden upon it and upon those, already heavily burdened, who have given proof of their call to the work of God. Moreover, the costly offerings of the saints are thereby diverted from the purpose for which they were intended, and in some cases, as a consequence, are not repeated.

## MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

The question of a musical instrument which has been in use for years in our Gospel work has now been raised in our Assembly. What Scriptures bear upon the subject?

A PLAIN answer to this question is—none. It may be permissible, however, to take the opportunity to make some general observations on a subject which disturbs the harmony of some gatherings; quite unnecessarily so, in my judgment. In the first place, Scripture does not prescribe how a "Gospel meeting" should be conducted, does not, in fact, make provision for such a meeting at all. There is no allusion in the New Testament to special occasions on which unbelievers should be gathered that the Gospel

might be preached to them. The only regular meeting mentioned is that for the Breaking of the Bread, at which unbelievers might be present as spectators (Acts 20. 7, 1 Cor. 14. 22-25). In apostolic days there were no buildings expressly for church purposes, no shortened working days, no Sunday cessation of toil. There are such facilities now, and we do well to take advantage of them. But it is vain to look to Scripture for guidance in the detail of an exercise which it does not contemplate.

It follows that there is freedom for brethren to use the judgment God has given them that local conditions may best be met. To lay down laws where Scripture is silent is to bring one another into bondage, and of this godly men will never be guilty. Where an instrument is not used in a Gospel meeting it is surely incumbent on all concerned to see that the unaccompanied singing is worthy of the Lord. Slovenly singing creates a not unreasonable apprehension that the rest of the service will be slovenly also.

There is no justification for treating the matter as though any principle were involved. If an instrument is in use I would counsel brethren not to agitate for its discontinuance. The peace of the church is far too precious to sacrifice to what, when all is said and done, is merely a matter of individual preference. If an instrument is not in use, do not attempt to introduce one if there is opposition, however unreasonable that opposition may seem to you. If you find there is a strong desire on the part of the major portion of the assembly for or against, you being in the minority, submit graciously; "let all that you do be done in love," and "without murmurings and disputings" (1 Cor. 16. 14; Phil. 2. 14). Majority rule is bad; minority rule is worse. If you cannot get your way without disappointing or distressing others, remember Oliver Cromwell's words: "I beseech you, in the bowels of Christ Jesus. that ye consider whether ye may not be wrong." Organ or no organ, what does it matter so long as the singing is worthy of the Gospel we preach? "Brethren, be not children in mind: howbeit in malice be ye babes, but in mind be men" (1 Cor. 14. 20). To quarrel about such things is to be childish, not childlike.

## PRACTICAL TEACHING

What, in your judgment, is most markedly lacking in the preaching of to-day?

WHAT seems to me to be the gravest need of the day is "practical" teaching, oral and written. Do we not take for granted that those who profess conversion know naturally what the life that pleases God is? Whereas, of course, that can only be learned by patient and sober reading of the Scriptures in which that will is made known.

God's end in creating man and His end in redeeming man was one—that there should be a race of beings who in the face of temptation, subtle or severe, would be loyal to Him in the kind of life they live.

We may well thank God for evidences of true godli(ke)ness to be seen among those who call themselves by His Name. But is our godli(ke)ness characteristic of us? Are we known by the one mark by which, the Lord declares, we are accredited to the world, "By this shall all men know (*ginōskō*, get to know by observation) that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13. 35)? If we do not carry our credentials, can we be surprised if men will not hear us? It is vain to preach brotherly love when our actions show malice and covetousness.

How little teaching there is in current preaching about Christian living! How little in the ministry to search and to correct, whether of the ordinary meetings of the assemblies or in our conventions! We have much platitudinizing, some ingenuity, some sentimental unreality, much profitless speculation about the future, but comparatively little of that for which the apostle declares the Scriptures were given, "instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3. 16).

We may well pray God to raise up men who will not be content merely to give an address, but who will keep Paul's charge to Archippus in mind, "Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it" (Col. 4. 17). "The end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned." Is this the end we have in view in speaking to men in the Name of the Lord? The warning that follows about "vain talking" by persons who "understand not what they say,

nor whereof they confidently affirm," is not inappropriate to-day. Time does not make the commandment stale, nor the Word of the Lord out of date.

It is useless to criticize other folk. Our own house sadly needs to be set in order. Feeble as these lines are in relation to the seriousness of the situation among us, the Lord may use them to quicken some conscience, and to stir some reader to a wholesome dissatisfaction with himself, and to a holy ambition to discover and to proclaim the Christian life as it really is.

### SERVICE IN THE DENOMINATIONS

Should those gathered on Scriptural ground unite with Christians from the various denominations in open-air testimony, or would it be more consistent to seek other opportunities for service in connection with the Assembly only? Is there Scripture to guide in these matters?

**S**INCE Scripture does not contemplate denominations of Christians it is vain to expect specific guidance therein as to our attitude toward them. Therefore whatever liberty the individual may claim in the matter he should be guided by expediency, in accordance with the principle laid down by the Apostle: "all things are lawful for me; but not all things are expedient . . . all things edify not" (I Cor. 6. 12; 10. 23). Occasions may arise when it would be wise to take advantage of an opportunity so provided to proclaim the Gospel, or to open up Scripture. This is the liberty of the servant which no man may take from him. "Who art thou that judgest the servant of another? To his own lord he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be made to stand; for the Lord hath power to make him stand" (Rom. 14. 4).

On such occasions, however, a certain sacrifice of freedom to declare the whole counsel of God may be involved, owing to the claims of Christian courtesy. As a general rule, therefore, it would be well, in the interests of loyal, happy, and efficient service to associate with those whom we know, in whom we have full confidence, and who have like confidence in us. Complications will thus be avoided, and centres of testimony in the Gospel be

multiplied. "The meek He will guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach His way" (Psa. 25. 9).

As this question presents itself frequently and in a variety of forms, it may be well to add a further word with a view to helping the reader to decide for himself in the fear of God. It is clear, I assume, that the Lord has trysted His people on the first day of the week to proclaim His death "for a remembrance of" Him. Therefore it would not be well done to absent oneself from the gathering to break bread (Acts 20. 7) because of a call to preach.

Again, it will be well to consider the object in visiting a denominational building. Is it to "conduct worship" or to help to maintain the ordinary services therein? If this is the purpose, one may well ask whether it be worth while. It would surely be wiser to preserve one's freedom to declare the whole counsel of God, and to build up a church after the New Testament pattern, as we may be able to discern it. The commission under which we preach is one and indivisible, we have no authority to observe one part of it and to ignore the other. An essential part of that commission is to baptise those who respond to the Gospel and to teach them to observe all things the Lord has enumerated.

As suggested above, and as Scripture strongly asserts, every servant is answerable to his own Master and to Him alone. It seems clear to me, however, that one of two courses may be followed, but not both. A man may use what he conceives to be his liberty to the full, going hither and thither to preach, but so doing he dissipates his energies and builds nothing; or he may surrender his liberty of movement, so to speak, and thus preserve his liberty to declare the whole counsel of God, and to build up a church of God, teaching the saints to observe all things whatsoever he himself has learned of God. In view of the terms of our commission, and the example of the Apostle, there seems little room for hesitation as to which is the better path (Matt. 28. 18, 19; Acts 20. 20, 27).

## TRADE UNIONS

Non-union members of Trade Union Organizations are reproached that they reap advantages in wages and conditions secured at considerable sacrifice by others, they themselves contributing nothing. In view of 2 Cor. 6. 14-18, how should a Christian act?

THE Christian is not under law; he does not look to the Scriptures for rules whereby to regulate his conduct in the affairs of life. Principles are provided, and illustrations of their application, but these can be interpreted only by spiritual men in fellowship with Christ and taught by His Spirit. Where there is the will to please the Lord He will not leave us in doubt about the way.

The principle laid down in the passage mentioned in the question is plain, but Scripture must be compared with Scripture if we are to learn the mind of the Lord. In 1 Cor. 5. 9 it is written that Christians are "to have no company with fornicators," but lest the injunction should be taken in an absolute sense, the Apostle goes on, "not at all meaning (margin) the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous and extortioners, nor with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world." That is to say, if Christians are to discharge the legitimate obligations laid upon them by the social and economic conditions under which they live, there must be a certain association and intercourse with their fellows. They cannot withdraw from the world, they are to live in it so as to please God.

Moreover, the Christian is to "take thought for things honourable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men," and, indeed, "in the sight of all men" (Rom. 12. 17; 2 Cor. 8. 21). It is not an honourable thing for a Christian to take advantage of the sacrifices of others while he refuses to share those sacrifices himself. To take without giving is not according to Christ. While difficulties are not to be escaped by those who would live godly in Christ Jesus, he that follows the Lord shall not walk in darkness. Let every man, then, be fully persuaded in his own mind, but let him see also that he has the mind of Christ.

A similar difficulty presents itself to the convert in China. Contributions are demanded by custom, not by law, and out of the fund

thus secured temples are repaired, theatrical displays financed, roads repaired, and coffins provided for the poor. The convert is tempted to take advantage of his membership of the church to evade such payments. This, however, brings the Gospel into disrepute, for the neighbours naturally say that he uses the roads without sharing in the expense of maintaining them. Christians who are exercised to provide for things honourable, pay the dues and ask that their contributions be earmarked for the repair of roads and other purely benevolent objects.

It may commend itself to the consciences of brethren, whether employees or employers (for it must not be forgotten that there are unions of employers as well as of employees, and what applies to one applies also to the other) to pay the customary levy, but to take no part in any agitation nor to assume any further responsibility. Thus they would escape the stigma of eating others bread for nought.

#### “VISITING” PREACHERS

Is it right for an Assembly to have its ministry and Gospel Meetings conducted by brethren belonging to other Assemblies, or has the Lord provided for each “so that it comes behind in no gift,” and so does not require such help?

QUESTIONS of right and wrong are readily settled by reference to the Scriptures. And if neither Scripture nor nature (1 Cor. 11. 1) provides a plain and obvious answer, then the question is not one of right and wrong, but of expediency and judgment. In such cases differences are not avoidable, and opportunity is presented for forbearance and yieldingness, graces valued by God, but too often lightly esteemed among Christians.

It is clear that a church may consist of as few as two or three persons, and equally plain that in many of larger numbers there are not brethren capable of carrying through one meeting where preaching or exposition is in order, much less fifty-two, or one hundred and four such meetings in a year. It does not call for demonstration that under such circumstances suitable help must be sought elsewhere; alternatively there will be no testimony at all, or it will be carried on in such a way as to bring it into disrepute.

The fact that the Corinthians "came behind in no gift" is not a promise that every such company will be similarly furnished, though we should pray God to make it so.

Gospel Halls and Sunday evening meetings for preaching the Gospel are unknown to Scripture; it is vain, therefore, to look to Scripture for instruction in the conduct of such meetings. Let those whom God has made responsible for the care of the flock, and for the public testimony of the assembly, act according to the wisdom given them. And let the rest not criticize, nor stand aloof, but co-operate heartily in the good work without ambition for place or prominence, for only so can we serve the Lord Christ. If any one thinks he could do better, let him wait until the Lord makes him responsible in that or in some other place; he will then be free to carry out what he believes the Lord has taught him. That the work should be done is the important thing; to that all personal feeling and judgment should be subordinated.

Because of the quite unworthy ambition to "take the platform" of some who are unsuited for the work, it has been found inexpedient in certain places for those whom God has gifted to speak in the halls with which they are associated, and to depend solely on help from other assemblies. It is to be deplored that this should be made necessary by the too common ignorance of the ways of God in the matter of gift for service. If a man judges that he has the preaching gift let him exercise it where he cannot be suspected of ambition for place. The platform of the Hall is not the only place from which to preach; it may not even be the best; there is always the street corner. A man with gift from God will never lack opportunity to exercise it in fellowship with his brethren, but no man is judge of his own gift (1 Cor. 14. 29). When an obviously unsuited man appears upon a platform he forfeits the respect of his hearers, depletes the attendance, and brings the testimony into disrepute.

## XII—MISCELLANEOUS

### APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION

Would you give your reasons for saying that Apostolic Succession, and power vested in an ordinary minister, have no foundation in the New Testament?

THE onus of proof lies with the person who makes an assertion. Whosoever declares that there is such a succession should be able to give references to those Scriptures on which the doctrine is based. Such references can then be examined dispassionately with the sole view of eliciting the truth. Scriptures that are ordinarily adduced do not, in my judgment, provide a foundation for any form of the doctrine. Moreover, the Romanist claims this succession exclusively for his "church," but denies it to the Anglican. The Anglican claims it for himself and allows it to the Roman and to the Greek Orthodox "church," but denies it to all non-Episcopal "churches." Outstanding scholars of the "Church of England," such as Hooker, Lightfoot, Alford, to name but a few, deny any "Apostolic Succession" alike from an historical and a Scriptural point of view. It is nothing more than an unscriptural figment, invented by priestcraft the better to bind its unholy fetters upon the minds of men.

It is part of this doctrine that if at any point in the long succession, since the apostles, any irregularity should have taken place in the "ordination" of any priest or bishop, then all the "sacraments" consecrated by the former would be ineffectual, and all the ordinances performed by the latter would likewise be ineffectual. Thus, on their own doctrine, it can never be certain that any "sacrament" has really been a "sacrament," or any "ordination" really an "ordination." And the result is that there is no possible security that any baptism, any administration of the Mass, or Holy Communion (since these all derive their virtue from the Apostolic

Succession which may have been broken anywhere, and which must have been broken somewhere) at any time had the virtue claimed for it. What a precarious ground on which to build the hope of salvation! How different from the simplicity of God's Gospel, and His assurance of forgiveness and salvation to all who accept the word of Christ and put their trust in Him!

### CHINESE EMPIRE AND THE FLOOD

It is said that there are proofs that the Chinese Empire existed five thousand years ago, and since the Flood is dated something like four thousand years ago the waters could not have covered the whole earth.

IN *The Chinese Reader's Manual*, W. F. Mayers dates the beginning of the historical Period between 781 and 719 B.C. The preceding three hundred years (to 1122 B.C.) he calls the Semi-Historical. All earlier he describes as the Legendary Period. According to this authority the earliest historical Emperor of the Chinese was contemporary with Joash in Judah and Jehu in Israel.

### IMMORTALITY

Is it right to use the term "immortal soul?"

THESE words are not found together in Scripture. The word "mortal" is there applied only to the body. It means capable of, and liable to, death. The immortality of the soul was a doctrine of Pagan philosophy, which cherished the hope that when men "shuffled off this mortal coil," that is, were freed from the body by death, they would also be freed from "all the ills that flesh is heir to." The distinctive doctrine of Christianity, in this respect, is not that the soul is immortal, but that the body of the believer will become immortal, which Paganism neither desired nor expected. The words "that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life" refer to the body of the believer who lives and remains until the Parousia, as do also the words "this mortal must put on immortality. But when . . . this mortal shall have put on immortality" (1 Cor. 15. 53, 54; 2 Cor. 5. 4).

In 1 Tim. 6. 16 it is said of God: "Who only hath immortality,"

that is, He, and He alone, has essentially, in the nature of His being, the quality of immunity from death. Creatures that are, or that become, immortal, derive that quality from Him, and hold it as His gift. These are the only N.T. occurrences of the word *athanasia*.

Immortality must not be confounded with continued existence. That God created man Scripture asserts (Gen. 1. 27; Matt. 19. 4), but that any man will ever cease to be, Scripture does not anywhere state or suggest.

In view of the fact, then, that Scripture uses the word "mortal" in one sense, whereas it has quite a different meaning in ordinary use, it is wise to avoid a phrase unknown to Scripture. Moreover, the advocate of "Conditional Immortality" finds an opportunity of throwing the mind of an uninstructed person into confusion by challenging him to show from Scripture that the soul is immortal. Out of this confusion he has often made a convert, overthrowing the faith of some.

#### THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND OF HEAVEN

Are the terms Kingdom of Heaven and Kingdom of God synonymous?

THE former is found in Matthew only, who also on four occasions uses Kingdom of God, interchanging them in chapter 19. 23, 24. Mark (10. 23, 24) and Luke (18. 24, 25) reporting the same incident, have Kingdom of God in both cases. The parallel passages in the three Gospels leave no doubt in my mind that the terms are synonymous. That they are interchangeable is evident, from the fact that in the Gospels they are often interchanged. (See *Thessalonians*, Hogg and Vine, p. 68.)

#### MARRIAGE RITES

Ought a brother and sister who were married (before conversion) according to heathen rites to remarry according to Christian rites?

MARRIAGE rites are not prescribed in the New Testament, nor were any prescribed in the Old Testament. For the "Church of

England as by Law Established" such rites are provided in the Prayer Book, but they are not of obligation outside that body. Marriage in England is essentially a civil contract, and the clergyman who performs the ceremony is, *ex-officio*, a civil servant for the purpose.

For Free Churches no rite is prescribed, but certain words are essential to the validity of the marriage. In Registry Offices no religious ceremony takes place; the essential words, questions and answers to and from the contracting parties, must be distinctly enunciated in the hearing of the Registrar. Records are kept in each case.

Missionaries are not agents of the British, or any other Government; it is no part of their business to introduce the laws of their native lands into countries whose people they have gone to serve. If a couple have been married according to the custom of the country of which they are natives (there are really no marriage laws in unevangelized lands, only customs which are recognized as binding) then the marriage is a marriage, and there is no ground whatever for suggesting remarriage according to the laws of another country.

Where Christians desire to marry in a country where idolatrous rites are practised, then it would be a becoming thing for the missionary, in counsel with the elders of the church, to devise some simple ceremony, and to suggest to the elders that a record of all such marriages should be kept. The missionary should resist the temptation to impose the laws of his own country, however excellent they may be, on the people of another country, even though they be professing Christians.

## OUR FUTURE STATE

What will be the state of the Christian hereafter?

THE Bible is a practical book; it contains nothing to satisfy curiosity, however legitimate. It tells us nothing merely for the sake of imparting information. It records the creation of man, his rebellion, and God's revelation of Himself to men that He might subdue the rebel, and from this unpromising material might,

in a new creation, form a people for His praise. Whatever is necessary to the development of holy and righteous character is to be found therein.

The conditions of the future could only be described in language drawn from our present experiences. How inadequate all such language must be to such a purpose! Nor is it necessary that we should know them in order to be able to follow the Lord now. A dignified reticence, therefore, marks the references of Scripture to the future state. As to the immediate hereafter, the interval between falling on sleep and the Rapture into the Parousia of the Lord, there is the general assurance that we shall be with Christ, and that we shall find that "very far better" than our state here (Phil. 1. 23). Moreover, while we have the further assurance that we are not merely called children of God, but that we are such, here and now, yet there is no outward evidence of the fact. We are confident through faith. The time comes, however, when we shall be with the Lord and like Him. And as there is no language adequate to describe Him as He is, so there is none to describe what we shall be. He "shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the Body of His Glory" (1 John 3. 1-3; Phil. 3. 21). The general testimony of Scripture may be summed up in the words of the Psalmist: "As for me, I shall behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness" (Psa. 17. 15).

And the end of the charge is, that, since we are to be like the Lord then, so let us aim to be like Him now.

### PRIESTHOOD AND ADVOCACY

F. W. Grant and other writers say that our Lord's High Priesthood is for infirmity, not sin; while His Advocacy is for sin. Can this distinction be sustained? Does not Christ's Priesthood in Hebrews deal with and meet sin as well as infirmity?

IT is clear from 1 John 2. 1, 2 that the advocacy of Christ is with the Father in behalf of the children when they sin, and that His advocacy is effectual in virtue of His propitiatory death.

The corresponding function of priesthood is intercession, and this

subject is dealt with in Rom. 8. 34 and Heb. 7. 25. In the former passage the believer is supposed to be accused of having sinned, of being a sinner. On this account he needs an intercessor. In virtue of His death the Lord is qualified to be the intercessor. His resurrection and ascension make it possible for Him to discharge the functions of an intercessor. Since the accusation is not against the believer on the ground of infirmity incident to creaturehood, but on the ground of sinful condition and sinful actions, it seems that intercession is necessary only because of sin.

In Heb. 7. 25 the believer is looked upon as needing salvation, so here also the intercession is for the believer as a sinner, not as a creature merely. The salvation here contemplated is prospective, his need to be preserved from the power of sin. The case is that of a man who refuses the ministry of a priest hindered by death from continuing, and offering sacrifices that must be renewed continually—what resource has he when conscious of sin? The answer is that such an one has an intercessor in Heaven, the "Son, perfected (that is, for the discharge of the functions of priesthood by death and resurrection) for evermore." The believer's confidence is in one priest who offered one sacrifice for sins, and who, since He lives in the power of an indissoluble life, is "able to save unto the uttermost them that draw near unto God through Him."

Unfallen beings do not require either advocate or priest, sinners need both. It seems better, then, to understand the word advocacy and intercession in the passages to which the question refers as different descriptions of the same function, the advocacy exercised on account of sins already committed, the priestly intercession to prevent our falling under temptation, as in the case of Peter in Luke 22. 31, 32.

## SHEOL, HADES, AND GEHENNA

What is the distinction between Sheol, Hades, Gehenna, and Hell?

**SHEOL** is a Hebrew word, Hades a Greek word. They are equivalents, Hades being used in Acts 2. 27, where Psa. 16. 10 has Sheol. It is a general term for the unseen world, that sphere of

which men living on the earth have no experience, and into which the Lord went in death, and from which He returned in resurrection. Gehenna is an Aramaic word, "originally *ge ben hinnom*, name of a valley or cavity near Jerusalem" (2 Kings 23. 10; Jer. 7. 31). In N.T. it is used by the Lord of the place of punishment of the impenitent; apart from His words, it is found only in Jas. 3. 6.

Hell is an English word used indiscriminately in A.V. for Hades and Gehenna. R.V., text or margin, usually affords a clue to the particular word used.

### SOLOMON: HIS WISDOM AND SIN

Why did Solomon sin after God had given him wisdom?

**K**NOWLEDGE does not necessarily preserve men from the snares of Satan. We are not ignorant of his devices (2 Cor. 2. 11), yet how often we become his victims! Knowledge is not enough.

Wisdom—even Divinely-given wisdom—could preserve Solomon only so long as he allowed himself to be guided by it. The grosser elements in his nature were then controlled and directed to their legitimate ends, and the whole man—spirit, soul, and body—was harmonized in the will of God. But, yielding himself to the impulses of these grosser elements, and deliberately making provision for their gratification as an end in itself, in spite of his wisdom his will was deflected from putting God first, until, finally, he turned from God to idols (1 Kings 11. 1-10). "Knowing God, he glorified Him not as God, neither gave thanks; but became vain in his reasonings, and his senseless heart was darkened. Professing himself to be wise, he became a fool, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image . . . wherefore God gave him up to the lust of his heart . . . for that he exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator" (Rom. 1. 21-25). Wisdom is not enough.

Let the Christian take warning from the sorrowful history of Solomon. "Mortify (*i.e.* reckon to be dead, cf. Rom. 6. 11) your members which are upon the earth" (Col. 3. 5-6) for "foolish and hurtful lusts . . . drown men in destruction and perdition" (1 Tim. 6. 9).

## THE LEGAL OATH

In view of Matt. 5. 34 and Jas. 5. 12, should Christians swear in courts of law, saying, "So help me, God," and pointing to the sky? Some say Matthew and James are Jewish.

**M**ATTHEW and James are undoubtedly Jewish. The Lord Himself was a Jew, and so was each writer of the New Testament; Luke may, or may not, be an exception. But if by this use of the word it is suggested that the things written by Matthew and James are not intended for Christians, do not contain the counsel of God for His people of this present calling, I judge the suggestion should be refused.

The use of the Bible for oath-taking is purely superstitious. The uplifted hand arises out of such a passage as Genesis 14. 22. It is not necessary in Great Britain to take an oath in a court of law, or on any legal occasion, the alternative of making an affirmation is provided.

The taking of an oath certainly seems to imply that without it one's word would not be equally reliable. A Christian cannot admit that his word is not at all times sufficient. He should take care not to give anyone occasion to doubt his word (Eph. 4. 25).

On the other hand, God, for our sakes, condescends to an oath, "being minded to show more abundantly . . . the immutability of His counsel, interposed with an oath" (Heb. 6. 16, 17). Thus each is free to judge for himself. For my part I prefer to affirm.

I avail myself here of words written elsewhere and for which I share responsibility. "It is to be noted that of the illustrations of common oaths here given by the Lord Jesus, none is in the form of 'the oath of testimony,' the formal, legal oath required in a Court of Justice." The view of the present writer is that compliance with the requirements of the Courts of Justice in regard to the oath of testimony is not in question, that the words "at all" (v. 34) are limited by the succeeding context, and that similarly the words of Jas. 5. 12: "any other oath," are limited to all oaths of the kind indicated by the illustrations given in the context."

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