

# The Witness:

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OF

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Notes of Addresses, Conference Reports,  
Questions and Answers, Intelligence,  
Poetry, Correspondence, &c.

EDITED BY

JOHN R. CALDWELL.

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V.—We heartily thank all who have helped us by replies to questions, although many replies have *necessarily* not appeared, owing in many cases only to want of space, and we trust this willing aid may be continued.

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EDITOR.

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# THE WITNESS:

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE.

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## THOUGHTS ON CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

### I.—INTRODUCTORY.

I HAVE chosen this title to the following papers because it gives ample scope for the wide field over which the writer and readers may travel together.

The subject of church government is one surrounded by controversy on all sides. Perhaps there is no subject on which there is such a diversity of opinion among the children of God as on that of the government of the church.

While agreeing mainly on most of the fundamental doctrines of revelation, there is endless confusion on the question of church constitution and order. Not only is this true regarding those religious systems known to most of my readers as "sectarian," it is also sadly true of those who have during the past half century left the traditions of man and sought to return to the simplicity of church rule and practices as found in the Scriptures.

No one can read many of the writings of those who are by the world's religion called "the brethren" without seeing that Church government in some of its phases is mainly the rock on which they have split and broken into fragments. And their differences have not been so much regarding "evil" itself, as on the question of how to deal with it. And it needs little discernment to see that the same subject is mainly the bone of contention amongst many dear saints who would otherwise be going on in happy fellowship.

So much is this the case that in most of the conference meetings held amongst those who profess to be separated unto "the Name," almost any subject in the inspired Word may be freely discussed without any jar; but the

moment church government is touched there is such a sensitiveness in the hearts of many Christians that unless the teacher has great grace and wisdom there is sure to be a breach of harmony; and some are so exceedingly touchy on this point that they cannot listen with patience to anything that appears to differ from the views they themselves hold on this subject. And even in some conferences where leading brethren come together for mutual help, the subject of church government is rarely taken up; or, if it is raised, it is generally shelved for fear of controversy.

One might go on surveying the scene long enough, but to do so would help no one. As one has said, "What is needed is *positive* teaching."

It is not enough for one who assays to guide his fellows through a difficult path, to be able to warn them against *by-paths*; to tell them of the dangers to which they will be exposed if they follow certain guides. The one who would be a leader ought to be able to say—"This is the way; walk ye in it."

What is needed just now is the truth of God so brought to bear on the confusion that the honest learner will feel that it is His truth and not man's opinions.

There are some dear brethren who seem to have their minds made up on such questions as "reception," "oversight," "the fellowship of assemblies," and similar points. Some on one side, and some on the other. To such I have little to say. To enter the field of controversy with brethren who may think they know well enough already is what I have no intention of doing; although it will not be possible to give needed help to those I wish specially to reach without some reference to writings that may be in their hands.

In the midst of all the painful conten-

tion and humiliating confusion amongst the assemblies of the saints, it is very cheering to those who are going in and out amongst them to meet with so many young men of sound judgment and godly discernment, who are not only holding the truth firmly, but are also carrying it out in much grace towards those who are less enlightened than themselves. And in writing I desire to keep specially before my eye those dear young brethren on whom the sacred trust may soon fall of guarding the truth of God and maintaining the holiness of His house.

The subject of church order seems to many to be a dry one; and some teachers, on this account, give it the go-by. But if we consider how intimately it affects the honour of the Son of God, and also the fellowship of his disciples with Himself and with one another, it certainly ought not to be a barren theme to any loyal follower of the Lord Jesus. One may speak or write on it long enough, but the question how the redeemed may, in a collective capacity, carry out the will of the Lord Jesus Christ in a rebel world is not in itself a dry subject.

And while endeavouring to enlighten the understandings of honest inquirers as to the "ways which be in Christ," it will be my aim to edify as well as instruct.

In thinking and conversing over the painful lack of oneness of mind and judgment as to rule in the church, the question has been mooted as to how far *want of light* lies at the root of it. There is clearly a great want of grace; but would an increase of grace really meet the present need? Might it not be that there is some foundation principle which has never been clearly apprehended? And instead of gifted brethren trying to prove how far those who differ from them are wrong, would it not be worth while to allow the thought that perhaps on the question of how to carry out the rule of God in His Church or in His churches we are all more or less in the dark?

Since the days of what is known as the "Reformation," many companies have left the darkness of Popery, and the ignorance and pollutions of other worldly systems of religion. They came on so far in their search after the truth of God, and liberty to carry it out, but

by-and-by they settled down on the little light they had got, and formed new systems which soon became nearly as bad as those they had left. They seem to have concluded that they had got to the summit of the hill of knowledge, and began to build a new ecclesiastical edifice, as if there was no room for a farther advance into clearer light.

Might we here ask the question, Is it possible that many of those who have been gathered into the name of the Lord Jesus are making the same fatal mistake, that because the Lord in His mercy has enabled us to find in His Word some, nay much, precious truth our forefathers in Christ never saw, therefore we have arrived at the "*terminus*," and all we have got to do is to settle down and defend the position we have taken up against all assailants.

I write thus because until we apprehend how limited our knowledge of the "ways which be in Christ" really is, and how unable we are, on account of our little grace, to carry out the little we do know, there is almost no hope of our making any real progress. We need first to learn our own ignorance and helplessness, so as to get the *conceit of knowledge* taken out of us, and be led back to the study of the Word in the spirit of "a little child."

But now to advance a step. Among the many truths which have been in measure restored to the Church during the past half century, perhaps none are more important than the supremacy and liberty of the Holy Spirit in the assembly. That by His agency the diversities of gifts in the body of Christ are bestowed, and by Him these gifts are wrought (see I Cor. xii. 4-12). Some of us remember well what a novelty it was to have even a prayer meeting without someone to preside, and to call on brethren to pray. And how slow many were to learn that, when the saints are gathered to remember the Lord in the breaking of bread, there ought to be no *pre-arrangement*, but all in subjection to the leading of the Spirit. Now this doctrine is clear to very many, and any infringement of the liberty of the Spirit in the assembly would be at once resented. And not only in meetings for fellowship and prayer is the guidance of the Spirit necessary, but

there can be no efficient *ministry* without His direct operation. That, whatever gift a man may have, if, in the exercise of his gift, he is not under the power of the Spirit, his ministry will be a failure. However far we may be failing in practice, the doctrine of the leading of the Spirit in ministry is held in theory. That in worship, and prayer, and teaching, and preaching, we can do nothing acceptable to God, or really beneficial to man (that is, spiritually), but in as far as we are under the control of the Holy Spirit.

But now, dear reader, let us ask the question, Has the necessity for Divine leading in the exercise of the gift of "RULE" been as clearly apprehended as in the exercise of the gifts of teaching and evangelising? At an oversight meeting held lately, a young overseeing brother is reported to have said that "overseeing brethren would require to be *shrewd* men." Few would care to put it in such plain words; but how many are there, even among so-called overseers, who seem to have apprehended that among all the gifts in the body of Christ, the "pastor" needs pre-eminently to *know* the leading of the Spirit, and that the "oversight meeting" ought to be composed of men who, in conscious weakness and liability to err, are hanging on the "Living God" for wisdom and guidance.

G. A.

(To be continued.)

THE Christian is like the ripening corn; the riper he grows the more lowly he bends his head.

"I CAN see how the pressure of circumstances which keep one down produces nothing but joy and praise in the experience of God's goodness, for we are then kept in the place of blessing—conscious weakness and dependence which casts us upon God. But satisfied with blessing instead of the Blesser, and, losing the sense of weakness in the sense of relief, like Israel, we forget His works. I am sure this is your experience. I have often wondered, indeed, how much ballast you seem to need to keep you in sailing trim; and, to speak frankly, have many a time thought and said to others it would entirely swamp and sink me."

J. B. M.

## THE BAPTISM OF LIFE AND THE BAPTISM OF DEATH;

Or, Baptism IN the Spirit and Baptism WITH Fire.

By J. HIXON IRVING.

PERHAPS at no period in the history of the Church of God on earth have so many believers been longing to know or possess the fulness of the Spirit as of late. Many and many a heart has been secretly yearning for a fuller, richer inflow of Divine power, not only for victory over sin within, but also for faithful and fruitful service and testimony. That numbers of such have received a further "supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to their earnest expectation and hope" (Phil. i. 19, 20), is beyond question; for lives that once reflected but little of the meekness and gentleness of Christ have suddenly been changed, and service, once sterile, has become fruitful, proving that in response to faith and prayer they have received a fresh accession of power from on high.

Not a few of those who have been led to know their need, and have sought for a greater measure of power, boldness, and joy, have in their anxiety prayed (though not with that intelligence which a knowledge of the Word of God begets) for a "baptism of the Spirit and fire." Though such a petition be not warranted by the Word, yet if we heard a truly honest believer praying so, we should, interpreting it according to what we know to be the mind of the Lord, in our heart say "Amen" to it; "for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart"; and hence His answering many an unintelligent but earnest prayer.

All must admit that it is not only the will of the Lord that His people should *not* be drunk with wine, but also that they should be "filled with the Spirit" (Eph. v. 18). Yet it is clear to all who "speak as the oracles of God" (1 Peter iv. 11) that such filling is neither a baptism of the Spirit nor of fire. We do not say this to in any way hinder the seeking of that which we most sincerely believe to be the birthright of every child of God, the Spirit's fulness; for we would not only be among the last to hinder, but would be among

the first to encourage such seeking, and that by (as far as we were able) giving intelligence to the same. That is our object, our aim, in writing on our Lord's baptism *in* the Spirit and *with* fire.

### I.—BAPTISM *IN* THE SPIRIT.

Such phrases as "the baptism of the Spirit," "the Spirit's baptism," or even "baptism *with* the Spirit," though universally current, are not, strictly speaking, according to the Word of God. The two former are not found therein at all, and though the latter is found in the A.V., it is not quite accurate. It does seem a pity, for the sake of ordinary readers, that the revisers have not, in all places where it occurs, inserted the "*in*" of the marginalia in the text, the same as they have done in the following instance:—"For *in* one Spirit were we all baptised into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Cor. xii. 13, R.V.). If the former phrases were correct, which they are not, then He (the Spirit) would be the Baptiser. Christ, as the Son of God, is the Immerser: He, and He alone, baptises in the Spirit (John i. 33, 34).

There are not so many things, apart from the sufferings and death of our Lord, narrated by each of the four evangelists; but among the number we find the prophecy of the Baptist concerning Him being the Baptiser in the Holy Spirit, and the fact that it is referred to by each would show its prime importance. John received it as a revelation from God some time prior to our Lord being by him baptised in Jordan's waters, and he gave Jehovah's own words:—"Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptiseth with (in) the Holy Spirit" (John i. 32-34). The words of this prophecy were not fulfilled by Him before His own deep, dark immersion in death (Luke xii. 50); nay, not whilst He was on earth at all, but after "being by the right hand of God exalted." He then began that work which has gone on ever since.

Looked at from the Divine side, this baptism is the gift of the Spirit, the joint donation of Father and Son. This gift could not be bestowed until our Lord was glorified and had begun His present representative work, as

we learn from His words to the disciples:—"If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you"; and, "I will *pray* the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter"; and again, "I will *send* Him unto you"; (John xiv. 16, xv. 26, xvi. 7). In this joint gift the Spirit Himself was not passive, but active; and hence we have, "*When He is come*" (John xvi. 8).

### PROPHECY AND PROMISE.

Between His resurrection and ascension, just before the latter, He charged His disciples not to "depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of Me. For John truly baptised with (in) water; but ye shall be baptised with (in) the Holy Spirit, not many days hence" (Acts i. 4, 5). Ten days after that, a cloud having received Him out of their sight—days occupied chiefly by the disciples in prayer—on the morning of the tenth, "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts ii. 4).

It has of late been taught that this filling was entirely in answer to the prayers of the disciples, and that "without that preparation they would not have received the promised baptism, although their waiting had extended to years instead of days."

Now, we fail to see this to be correct. In fact it is just the very reverse; for on earth the fulness of the time had arrived for the outpouring of the Spirit, for the Feast of the Passover had come and gone, "Christ our Passover" had been sacrificed, the Feast of First-fruits had passed, and Christ in resurrection had become the First-fruits of them that are sleeping. And now the day of the new Meat-offering dawns—the day of the Church's offering to God, which is accepted: and the outpouring of the Spirit is the ratification of that acceptance. God would not have been behind His time with the gift of the Spirit: though the disciples had not prayed, no more than the Lord could be behind as the First-fruits in resurrection though they were unbelieving. "If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful. He cannot deny Himself."

In heaven, too, the fulness of the time had been reached: our Lord had begun His intercessory work; He had fulfilled His own words, which we have already quoted—"I will

pray the Father, and He will send you another Comforter." The time had therefore arrived both on earth and in heaven for the Spirit's being poured out upon the disciples, and this not in any sense in answer to their prayers, but in answer to the Lord's request and in fulfilment of type and promise.

It is well to distinguish between the gift of the Spirit and the gifts of the same, and for this reason, that to-day some are teaching that the baptism we are considering consisted altogether in the Spirit imparting certain gifts to those upon whom He came, such as "miracles," "healings," "prophecies," and "tongues," and that as such gifts no longer belong to the Church, and therefore this baptism is a thing of the past, and closed with the days of the apostles. That such gifts were bestowed upon many who were baptised in the Spirit is clear enough; but that all who were so baptised received such gifts is just the reverse of the truth (1 Cor. xii. 30, 31). But why this attempt to get rid of the baptism of life? Why? In order to make the "one baptism" (Eph. iv. 5) and "baptism into Christ" (Gal. iii. 27) water baptism, in which they profess to wash away the "filth of the flesh," the guilt of sin. We are never said to be baptised into Christ or to put on Christ in water baptism, but "buried with Him" and "baptised into His death" (Rom. vi. 3; Col. ii. 12). But by His own action in the Spirit we are baptised into vital union with Himself, and also into union one with another.

(To be continued.)

"OH, to contrast 'the pleasures for evermore'—'for evermore'—so quickly coming, with the light affliction but for a moment, unworthy of comparison except by contrast. 'A season of manifold temptations,' as Peter says, and then, when we see what a pathless wilderness of evil the world is, how beyond price it is that the Lord directs our steps!"—J. B. M.

"How often has that word in Ps. xxv. been a comfort to me when I have prayed, 'Lord, show me Thy way. . . . What man is he that feareth the Lord? even him will He show the way that he should take;' and again, Ps. xxxvii. 23, 'The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord: and he delighteth in His way.'"—J. B. M.

## AN OUTLOOK AND A FORECAST.

EXCERPT FROM A LETTER ADDRESSED BY A BELIEVER IN AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND, TO A FELLOW-BELIEVER IN HASTINGS, ENGLAND.

YOUR letter of the 27th May last to hand. Accept my thanks for its contents, so fresh, so fervent, so true. I rejoice that you stand fast in the Lord, abounding in His work, thankful that you can "discern the signs of the times," and can trace out the artifices of "the father of lies," by which he ever seeks to stumble and lead astray unstable souls.

With reference to the Rationalistic "Down-grade" tendency in the professing church on the one hand, and the Romanising Ritualistic Degeneracy on the other—the former, issuing in the utter rejection of the substitutionary work accomplished at Calvary, will become Unitarian, and ultimate in avowed Atheism; the latter, rejecting the teachings of Scripture, will retrograde to the sensuous, superstitious symbolisms, the priestcraft, the idolatry, and the purgatory of the "dark ages," both equally disowning the Christ of God and exalting the creature; the one denying the manifestation of God in flesh, ignoring the sacrifice which put away sin: the other substituting tradition for revelation, ecclesiastical ordinances, confessions, penances, and sacraments for God-begotten life through belief of the truth. Both are advancing *pari passu*, gathering volume and force as they go. Nothing will be able to keep in check the whelming waters of the rising flood! Yet awhile and orthodoxy will be cast out to the winds, the laughing-stock of man's intellect. The Bible will be shelved as mythic, a book of legends, "old-wives' fables!" Admittedly ethical, good in its place it may be, but no sensible, thinking person would now either accept its teachings or obey its precepts, much less anticipate its future, whether of beatitude or doom. It may have served a purpose in archaic ages, during which the sons of men were groping in their primal ignorance; but now, in the presence of "advanced thought," tested in the crucible of "scientific investigation," subjected to the analysis of unsanctified, faithless reason, it is assumed to contain no sufficient evidence of inspiration, and, therefore, has been pro-

nounced obsolete. The Evangel of Philosophy and the Revelations of Science are superseding the lustrations of the Mosaic Ritual, the "voices of the prophets," and the teachings of the Christ and of His apostles.

Inflated human intellect will, in the future, be the guide of progressive manhood: the genus *homo*, that wondrous duplex of mind and matter, the head, the centre, the soul of physical creation, no sooner emancipated from the swathes of traditional teachings, untrammelled by any apprehension of a Future, an illimitable Hereafter, in the licentious liberty of "Free-thought," albeit circumscribed and materialised by the agnosticism of a physical existence of threescore years and ten, than it will deify itself and worship at the shrine of its own "intellectuality," as culminating in the "Lawless One," the last Antichrist!

Occult forces are already actively at work to bring about this ultimate and consummating rebellion of the creature against the Creator. The unclean spirits, antagonistic to God and His Christ, are even now energising in the "sons of disobedience." Their influence is felt far and wide throughout the civilised world. It permeates every grade of society, from the highest to the lowest. It matters not whether rich or poor, patrician or plebeian, learned or ignorant, all alike are infected. With irresistible, fascinating potency do these occult agencies bend their willing victims to their purpose; and these, toying with their silken shackles as they swirl the maelstrom eddies, nearing the vortex of utter destruction, shout their pæans of anticipated triumph, intoxicated with the "strong delusion" of the "last days of the perilous times." (Comp. 2 Thess. ii. 3-12; 2 Tim. iii. 1-5; Rev. xvi. 11-21, xvii. 6-18.)

To the prescient eye of faith, heeding the "sure word of prophecy," "the lamp shining in a dark place," all is plain and clear. As in the past, so now and in the near future will it be! Of old, Pilate and Herod became friends, that they might destroy Him whom they feared, whose life was their reproach; and soon will deepening Scepticism, as it gravitates towards pronounced Atheism (No Godism), join hands, for the nonce, with the sensuous, abject superstition of resuscitated Mediævalism. Yes! Rome may yet be found confederate with

Atheistic Rationalism! But Priestcraft and Demagogueism, though in league, will attempt to overreach the one the other, each to accomplish its own predetermined sinister end. The unhallowed alliance will be short-lived. The essential vitality of the one is antagonistic to that of the other, hence they cannot co-exist for any length of time; their friendly relations must be ruptured, their concordat broken. The domination of either will extinguish the other. But, notwithstanding this, Rome will persist in her attempt to assume the *rôle* of democratic leadership. In her fitful dream of restored universal empire, fain would she clutch at the reins, in the hope of recovering her lost dominion, her usurped temporal power. With the aid of any and every helping hand, whether Conservative, Radical, Anglican, or Dissent, orthodox or heretical, it matters not, the object of her ambition will be ecclesiastical absolutism, political supremacy. Again for a brief season will she be seen arrayed in purple, triple-crowned, chalice in hand, "sitting upon many waters" (peoples), bestriding and controlling the scarlet beast, the seven-headed and the ten-horned, full of the names of blasphemy (Rev. xvii. 1-15).

But though extremes may thus be permitted to meet, they cannot cohere for long; from lack of inherent affinity they must of necessity sunder. Being the antithesis of each other, mutual repulsion will precipitate the crisis of their avowed hostility. The triumph of either implies the extinction of the other. Rome is prophetically foredoomed! The Democratic Revolution will culminate in the Revelation of "The Antichrist," "The Lawless One" (2 Thess. ii. 8), who will be "The Eighth Head" of the Apocalyptic "Beast" (2 Thess. ii. 3, Rev. xvii.), and the coming Emperor of the ten kingdoms of the Latin world. He and his confederate ten kings will hate the Harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. Thus will God, at length, so overrule the machinations of the Papacy, that they shall recoil upon her own head! She shall reap that which she had sown. Those whom she had sought and won as allies, to further her blasphemous ambitions, will become the instruments of her final collapse, her utter downfall.

At the epoch of the last apostacy, the Church of the First-born gone, having been caught up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17; 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52), the Papacy wiped out, Atheism will be rampant. "No God" will be the exultant, popular cry! The Holy Spirit, who was sent forth at the inception of the Church, "The One Body," on the morn of Pentecost, having left the earth with the completed body, raised and changed, the area of the prophetic earth, as delimited by Daniel and John, ten-horned, ten-toed, dominated by the ten kings, will have become one vast Pandemonium, in which will riot for a season the malignant lusts and passions of demons and of men, in their blasphemous hostility against God and against His Christ. Thus will set in "The Great Tribulation," such as never has been, and never again will be, upon the earth. It will be the crisis of man's history, the climax of his rebellion against his Maker, the outcome of his rejection of the love of God in the gift of His Son. The day of God's long-suffering and mercy will then have been closed, "The Day of Judgment" will have been entered upon.

Let us thank our God and Father that the floodgates of the "fiery indignation" destined to "devour the adversaries" will not burst forth, that the "vials of the wrath of God" will not be poured out into the earth and the air, until the saints who have met the Lord Jesus in the air have been rewarded at His tribunal, until they shall have entered into His joy to share in His marriage supper. Having been presented "faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy," they shall be revealed with Him, "coming with clouds in power and great glory," to overthrow, destroy, and obliterate the works of the Devil, that is, all rule and all authority antagonistic to Himself. Having taken to Him His great power, He will reign. "The kingdoms of this world will then have become the kingdom of God and of His Christ," and He will reign with undisputed sway "into the ages of the ages." God, the Elohim of Israel, will then have shown "who is the *only* Potentate, the Lord of the lords, the King of the kings" (1 Tim. v. 14-16). The long- vexed question of human government will then have been settled, and the problem which puzzled the brain of man, and mocked his

every effort at solution throughout all time, will then have been solved!

Jesus of Nazareth, although, in the day of His humiliation, "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, despised and rejected of men," accounted by them "stricken, smitten of Elohim, and afflicted," was ever "God's appointed Heir of all things," and He will, in the near future, when "the times of the Gentiles" expire, be "King over all the earth." The sceptre of universal dominion, whether in heaven or upon the earth, with which He was endowed on the resurrection morn, the manifest exercise of which has now been held in abeyance for eighteen hundred and fifty years, will be swayed by Him over the whole earth in righteous yet beneficent rule. He is still within the veil, at the right hand of the Majesty in the Heavens," still the despised and rejected one, patiently awaiting the hour when His enemies shall become the footstool of His feet. Then will He return to earth in His own glory, in the glory of His Father, with all the angels, to take to Himself His great power, to sit upon the throne of His glory, and subdue all things unto Himself. Wars will cease unto the ends of the earth, and the Heaven-sent King will be of Divine right the one autocratic Emperor of earth's principalities and powers, infinite in power, in wisdom, and in goodness. He will reign for the behoof of all mankind. The rivalry of clashing, selfish interests and the antagonisms of competition will have ceased for ever. Society will be blended into one vast harmony, the symphonies of whose ascriptions of praise will be heard at morn and at eve, ascending, as did of old, the odour of the burnt-sacrifice, a "savour of rest" unto Jehovah during the prolonged millennial Sabbatism. The prophetic chorus of the multitude of the heavenly host, as the glory of the Lord shone round about the shepherds upon the plains of Bethlehem, will then receive its fulfilment: "Glory to God in the Highest! On earth peace, good pleasure amongst men." Community of interest, universal brotherhood, harmony and peace, honour and truth, based upon "the fear of the Lord," will be the atmosphere in which earth's teeming millions will live and move and have their being.

'Neath the sceptre of His righteous rule,

the modern dream of an impossible "Free Trade," under present conditions of selfish national policy, and the Utopian vision of universal "National Federation," will become practicable and be realised, and will be perfectly adapted to ensure and promote the unity and the happiness of mankind. War as a science, an honourable profession, a means of getting a living, will have ceased to exist. "The nations shall learn war no more." "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." "The sword shall be beaten into the ploughshare, the spear into the pruning-hook." Dynamite and smokeless powder, shot and shell, death-dealing rifles, Gatlings and Armstrongs, ironclads and torpedoes, ramparts and bastions, batteries and fortifications, will have become things of the past. The marvel will be, how the sons and daughters of men could have been so befooled by demons and men as to submit for so long a time to so intolerable a reign of oppression and terror! Such the Past! Such the hatchment of Time! So hideous, so foul, so dark, so revolting, emblazoned with lust and crime, exhibiting the misery of man and the long-suffering of God! During the long night-watches of the past the foul and the unclean ventured forth to do their fiendish work. They have left their names inscribed in characters of blood upon the gory pages of human history. Lust, hydra-headed in its outburstings; Passion, unbridled and insatiate in its gratifications; Ambition, rioting in desolation and slaughter, its track ghastly with the dead and the dying, the air echoing back the groans of the wounded, the lament of the widow, the wail of the orphan—these, the triple outflow of human depravity, will all have been swept away with the hideous Past, to be held in everlasting abhorrence throughout the cycles of the eternal age.

Well may the wise and the faithful of this generation long for and pray, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done upon the earth as in heaven." "He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry." As at the First Advent, it was "in the fulness of the time" that "God sent forth His Son," and "the Logos became flesh and tabernacled among us," so, at the Second Advent, will there be a "fulness of time," and "unto them that look for Him shall

He be manifested a second time without sin unto salvation." But unto the Christless nations the revelation of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven "will be as a thief in the night." "For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape" (1 Thess. v. 3).

In the review of the Past and the anticipation of the Future, notwithstanding that darkness and gloom environ the Present, believers should "put a cheerful courage on." They should rejoice and be glad; their victory is assured, their final triumph certain! They have but to be "patient unto the parousia (presence) of the Lord," "take up the cross in witness for Him, always abounding in His work, awaiting the "blessed hope," the "manifestation of the glory of their great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." With the dawn of the "glad millennial morn," how will the scene be changed! "The Beast and the False Prophet will have been cast alive into the lake of fire," Diabolus (the Devil) will have been, fettered and chained, immured in the well or deepest cell of the abyss! Blackness of darkness!

Israel, having looked upon Him whom they crucified, will then be restored and in possession of the heritage covenanted to them in the promise of Jehovah to their father Abraham! Jerusalem will have been rebuilt—"the City of the Great King," "the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth!" The Temple (the Shekinah) returned, "pillar of cloud by day, of fire by night," filled with Jehovah's glory, will then stand forth upon the lines of Ezekiel's prophetic tracings, so vast, so magnificent in all its colossal proportions, yet so exact and unique in its architectural beauty of design, the gathering-place, the centre of worship for the nations of the earth, the shrine of manifestation and glory to those coming up with their gifts "from year to year to Jerusalem, to worship the King, Jehovah Tzebahoth, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles" (Zech. xii. 16, 17).

W. R. V.

It is through loss that all gain in this world is made. The winter leaves must fall that the summer leaves may grow.

## PRAYER AND SERVICE.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS ON THE SECOND EPISTLE  
TO THE CORINTHIANS, BY JOHN R. CALDWELL.

**"Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed on us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf" (2 Cor. i. 11).**

**T**O the apostle Paul prayer was a great reality. He knew it to be a great and effectual means of obtaining blessing: a divinely-appointed channel through which to secure the benefit of all the resources of God. Therefore he himself was a man of prayer, and often did he seek the help of others by prayer, and acknowledged the grace that such prayers had been instrumental in obtaining for him.

But the apostle ever kept in view that the end of prayers presented and grace received must be glory to God. He seeks the prayers of many, in order that, as many hearts united to present the petition, many hearts may join in the thanksgiving psalm for grace bestowed.

Thus in all his prayers, and in all his exhortations to prayer, thanksgiving is combined with request. (See Col. i. 9-12, Phil. iv. 6, Eph. i. 15, 16, &c.)

The words "helping together" seem to answer to the "striving together" of Phil. i. 27 and of Rom. xv. 30, and indicate fellowship in prayer. There is something far wrong if "the prayer meeting" is dull and tiresome. Many causes may contribute to such a result. But is it not the case that one cause is the lack of definiteness in requests, and consequently the absence of definite thanksgiving for answers received? It is a poor thing to be always asking and never thanking. If prayer does not lead to thanksgiving, God is robbed of His glory and His joy. We never knew a prayer meeting to be "dull" where requests were definite, and where answers to prayer were definitely acknowledged, and united thanksgiving presented for blessing received. Many a time have we gone to such a meeting wearied and depressed, and have come away refreshed and cheered, strengthened and edified.

Verse 12, "For our rejoicing is this," &c. Here is a joy in which others do not share. In Prov. xiv. 14, we read, "A good man shall

be satisfied from himself." My service may be little owned or appreciated by others, but if therein I am acting before God I shall have an inward satisfaction which fellow-men can neither bestow by their approval nor deprive me of by their censure.

"The testimony of our conscience." Happy is he who maintains an approving conscience: a "conscience void of offence toward God and toward man," a "good conscience," a "pure conscience." The contrast is a "defiled conscience," an "evil conscience," a "seared conscience." If a "good conscience" be not maintained, the inevitable result, sooner or later, will be the breakdown in doctrine or life. The "mystery of the faith" can only be held in "a pure conscience" (1 Tim. iii. 9). "Holding faith and a good conscience, which some having put away concerning (the) faith have made shipwreck." Little do we know how often errors in doctrine have their root in defilement of conscience.

"That in simplicity and godly sincerity," as opposed to "fleshly wisdom." Fleshly wisdom is too often brought into the professed service of God. It is the simple and the sincere, who by the grace of God are seeking only to please Him, whom God will use in blessing to His Church. Alas! when the crafty methods of the carnal mind are resorted to in order to drive on and force what is supposed to be the Lord's work! How often is the attempt made to secure the acceptance of a dogma or a judgment by attaching to it the names of men who are held in repute, or by getting numbers to support it, or even by force of lock and key attempting to secure the "recognition" of fellow-believers! And in Gospel testimony how often is fleshly wisdom brought in, vainly attempting by carnal means to secure results that can never be obtained but "by the grace of God." Means are being used to attract the ear of the world that are not according to God, and are being justified on the ground of expediency. The Gospel service must be made "attractive"; and choirs and brass bands, and outrageous and ridiculous advertisements, are resorted to, and the prayer of faith and personal testimony to individuals and from house to house are little relied upon. Yet such was the apostolic way, and when it pleased God to

give "a large audience," "almost the whole city came together to hear the Word" (Acts xiv. 44).

God is able to do more, and greater things, for us if He were counted upon to do it.

The apostle's "conversation" or "behaviour," both in the world and to the Church, had been "by the grace of God." It is this that sets aside carnal means and fleshly wisdom. Oh, how "the grace of God" had shone in him towards these Corinthians! How he served them through evil report and good report! Gladly would he spend and be spent for them, though the more abundantly he loved them the less they loved him. Again and again did he write to them and visit them. He wept for them and prayed for them. He reasoned with them, rebuked them, instructed them, and never once entertained the thought or hazarded the threat of giving them up. Such was the manifestation in him of the grace of God. Were more of that grace and less of fleshly wisdom to be found in those who seek to guide the saints now, the results would be more to the glory of God.

### TRIUMPH IN CHRIST.

**G**OD has not given us to be without conflict, but a much more blessed thing, an inheritance of victory; for He who is our life is Satan's conqueror, and the faith by which we live is "the victory that overcometh the world." Therefore the Holy Ghost exhorts us to "Stand fast" because our adversary knows full well that we never stand alone for God; for behind the weakness of the weakest saint lies the mightiest power of Jehovah. The armour is divinely provided—"the whole armour of God"—that we "may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having overcome all (marginal reading), to stand." We wage our warfare in the pause between two victories, the one when Christ by dying destroyed him that had the power of death: the next when He shall bruise Satan under our feet shortly. We may forget our fellowship with Christ in the right to conquer, and then only can our enemy triumph over us. Satan had his hour of triumph—"This is your hour and the power of darkness"—when God's Holy Lamb laid Himself on the altar as a sacrifice for our sin;

when He stood between us and the curse, and the floods of God's righteous judgment spent themselves on Him. He bore our sins in His own body; but how much more than this. "When thou shalt make *His soul* an offering for sin." We can never fathom the depths of woe, the tasting of the cup of wrath and trembling, the anguish of the forsaking, We can but bow our heads and worship.

But Satan's deepest defeat was in the cross. Psalm xviii. gives us a picture of the scene when the blood of our eternal redemption was shed; and God heard the cry of our Surety out of His temple, and came "upon the wings of the wind" to deliver Him. "He sent from above, He took me, He drew me out of many waters. . . . He brought me forth also into a large place;"—(fulness of resurrection blessing, in which we share)—"He delivered me, *because He delighted in me.*" Then Jehovah thundered in the heavens and scattered the hosts of Satan. He made darkness His secret place in the day of victory; "dark waters and thick clouds of the skies." We read in Matt. xxvii. 50-54 what was seen on earth; but the deliverance was for us as for Him. "To David and *to his seed* for evermore." This is what our adversary would hide from us, either by the subtlety of supposing there is no conflict, robbing us thus of the privilege of being overcomers; or by letting slip, as leaking vessels, our title to overcome. The Holy Ghost teaches us that by one and the same act of Divine power the deliverance from the guilt and the bondage of sin alike was wrought; and the quickening grace given to the weakest believer to walk as an overcomer, is "according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead." We may lack faith to link ourselves in with His almightiness, but it is all for us in our smallest need. It is not that we have not foes, but that they are vanquished ones; not by us, but by Him who is raised far above them in resurrection triumph; and just as we are found in close and yet closer companionship with the conqueror, is our safety, victory, and blessing.

A. E. W.

Just as you are pleased at finding faults, you are displeased at finding perfections.—*Lavater.*

## POWER GONE.

“YOU USED TO BE A POWER IN THIS TOWN;  
BUT YOUR DAY IS GONE.”

I WAS travelling by rail to attend some special meetings for believers in a neighbouring town, and soon discovering that several of my fellow-passengers were likewise fellow-pilgrims, we had an interesting conversation on things concerning the King. I inquired how the battle was going in their respective localities, but was grieved to learn that in some cases “soldiers” were not owning the authority of the “Commander,” and, instead of attacking the enemy, were firing grape-shot and even bullets at one another. I was likewise pained to learn that the “slain of the Lord” had been few in their districts for a considerable time, and I remembered when it was otherwise. Years previously I had been privileged to preach the Gospel in some of the places referred to, and found brave, earnest, whole-hearted soldiers of the cross, who were “instant in season out of season,” sounding forth the royal proclamation of their “Victor Immanuel” in the open air and inside, in the cold and snows of winter, and in the rain and heat of summer. One of my fellow-travellers told me of a brother in a town where I had been privileged to preach being accosted by an unconverted man, who, speaking of the assembly there, said—“*You used to be a power in this town; but your day is gone.*” What a sad testimony! and from one of the enemies of the Lord! That company of Christians had at one time been a “power” in that town. The unsaved knew it. They *felt* it; but alas! they had left their first love. Though it might not, and need not, be true that their “day was gone,” as the unsaved one put it, it was evident to him that they had declined in spirituality, and had lost the hold they once had on God and the people.

Cannot the same be said of numbers of assemblies of believers who are professedly gathered to the name of the Lord? It may be stated that there are so many now in fellowship. That may be true; but what of the power? How terribly possible to maintain “the form of godliness,” whilst the power has died out of it (2 Tim. iii. 5). There was a time when, as assemblies, we

had not only “the form of godliness” but the “power.” The words spoken to Jacob were in part true of us—“As a prince hast thou power with God and man, and hast prevailed” (Genesis xxxii. 28). The unconverted spoke of our love to one another as did the enemies of Christ in the early days of Christianity, and said, “See how these Christians love one another.”

Our love likewise to ALL God’s people was manifest. Then we were familiar with the “sheep mark” which the great Shepherd had given: “By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John xiii. 35). Then we knew the power of the eleventh commandment—“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you that ye also love one another” (John xiii. 34). Then we recognised our love to all God’s dear people as one of the “evidences” of our conversion. “We know that we have passed from death unto life, BECAUSE we love the brethren” (1 John iii. 14). How is it with us now, fellow-believers, in our respective assemblies? Has our love to one another, and to all God’s dear people, grown in proportion to our numbers and increase of knowledge? Has *love* been reigning in the assemblies? Or is it the case that we have been seeking to have our own way? As we have been getting older, have we been getting colder? Cornelius Vanderbilt of New York, the founder of the Vanderbilt family, once remarked, “I was never anxious about making money, but *I was anxious about carrying my point.*” How like many of us! We are bent on “carrying our point,” even though it should cause strife and division. We are determined to have our own way, at all costs, though we are exhorted: “Let your forbearance (yieldingness) be known unto all men” (Phil. iv. 5). Let us seek to “serve one another” (Gal. v. 13), to “pray for one another” (James v. 16) and to “confess our faults one to another” (James v. 16). If there were the desire *deep* and *abiding* to prefer one another’s comfort, one another’s profit to our own, there would be more of that provocation to love and good works spoken of in Heb. x. 24. “Brother H—— and I have been contending for fifty years,” said an aged

servant of Christ to a believer. "We have been contending," said he, "which of us should have the lowest place." O for more of such "contention" among the people of God! How different the remark made to a brother in Christ, not long since, regarding an assembly in his neighbourhood. "They must be a strange lot of Christians. They met the other Sunday morning, and did not take the communion at all, and for several hours they were biting and devouring one another." How dreadful! And alas! the testimony was a true one. No wonder many dear children of God are repelled from taking a scriptural church position when they see and hear so much going on amongst us that is utterly unchristian. I am not forgetting the fact that failure in the carrying out of God's principles cannot alter or affect the principles themselves. Surely, however, it ought to cause us, when obliged to speak of others' shortcomings, to do so in much humility of spirit, "considering ourselves." Whenever there are misunderstandings among believers, let those who think themselves aggrieved act out the scriptural principle contained in Matt. xviii. 15-18. And if we know that there are brethren who feel pained by aught that we may have done or said, let us remember the words of our Lord in Matt. v. 23, 24.

If there has been a loss of power in the assembly; if there has been little if any blessing in the Gospel; if our words have little or no weight with believers in the various denominations, do not let us cloak our sin, but let it be brought out in the light of His presence. Let there be confession, frank, full, and explicit. Do not let us blame one another. Let us imitate the spirit of Nehemiah of old, who said, "I and my father's house have sinned" (Nehemiah i. 6). Let there be mutual confession and forgiveness where such is required; and let there be a putting away of all evil speaking, backbiting, and judging of one another. Where there has been backsliding in heart and ways, let it be confessed in the presence of God. Where the world has been enslaving and ensnaring, and the things of sense and time have been taking the place the Lord alone should occupy in the heart's affections, let honest acknowledgment be made and the sin judged.

And THEN, every stumbling-block having been removed, every known sin put away, every root of bitterness plucked up, we can count upon the Lord's presence and blessing. Let the Psalmist's prayer be ours: "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me with Thy free Spirit. *Then shall I teach transgressors Thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto Thee*" (Ps. li. 12-14). Then we will long for "revival," and will cry, as one of old, "Wilt thou not *revive us* again: that Thy people may rejoice in Thee?" (Ps. lxxxv. 6).

"Revive Thy work, O Lord,  
Create soul thirst for Thee,  
And hungering for the Bread of Life  
O *may* our spirits be!"

A. M.

### COMPLETE IN HIM.

COMPLETE in Thee; Lord, 'tis Thy Word  
That tells me this,  
Else should I not have known nor heard  
Such wondrous bliss.

*Perfect* in Thee; no taint of earth  
Can reach me there.

Thy spotlessness and matchless worth  
I'm called to share.

*Filled up* in Thee; what joy it gives  
To my poor heart,

With One who in the glory lives  
To have a part.

Then I will look *above* the road,  
When dark the way—

Look yonder to that blest abode  
Of endless day,

Where, pleading at the throne on high,  
My Lord appears,

Who knows my need, hears every sigh,  
And calms my fears.

See Him, my righteousness complete,  
Acting for me;

Then to sit passive at His feet,  
Content I'll be.

*Complete in Him* I am; what more  
Can I require?

With this engaged, my thoughts shall soar  
Higher and higher.

Then let me worship, praise, adore,  
And thankful be;

Think less of self, and more and more  
*His* beauty see.

F. R.

## SELECT SAYINGS FROM SEVERAL ADDRESSES TO BELIEVERS.\*

BY ROBERT C. CHAPMAN, OF BARNSTAPLE.

**ONENESS OF MIND.**—How precious to God, in the midst of the present broken and disjointed state of the church, any longing for this oneness of heart amongst the children of God, that shall be at all a picture of the oneness between the Father and our once crucified Lord. Let us be exceedingly hopeful, and exceedingly strong in faith, and seek to encourage one another in the Lord. Remember that it is not bringing numbers of saints into like fellowship which is our chief business, great and important as this is. Our chief business is to give joy to the heart of God our Father, and to the Lord Jesus, and to the Spirit that dwells in us, not grieving Him by anything in us that would hinder oneness of mind amongst us. Oneness of mind between fellow-saints should be, in measure, a mirror of the oneness of mind between the Father and His beloved Son, in whom He is ever well pleased.

**ANEW IN CHRIST.**—Considering ourselves rightly, that which was once fair in our own eyes, viz., our goodness, kindness, and integrity, when brought into the light of God would be seen by us to be abominable in His sight. Then we would see spiritually and rightly what we were. But we should never confound what we were with what we are. We should see ourselves as created anew in Christ; and loved by God the Father as He loves His Son. God sees Christ and His members as one object of His love. Then we should see ourselves too high to be proud, and too near to God to have any lack of love to our brethren, or our fellow-labourers.

**PRAYER.**—Prayer should be according to Eph. iii., as well as according to Eph. i. Knowing the power should lead us to knowing the love. If we would go to other lands, we must begin by being always *abroad*, as to our place here; and being only at *home* in the Father's house. With the affections of Christ we shall always find a field of labour at hand—always room for the mind of Christ to reveal

itself. The very look and greeting made to one another, will be a sweet savour of Christ, if we know one another as Christ commends us to God. "We are His workmanship."

**THE COMING.**—In looking for the coming of the Lord, it does not become us to look at it as putting an end to our sorrows, for that would bespeak little communion with God. We should rather look at it as fulfilling God's pleasure, and unfolding what He has planned.

## Correspondence.

### JAPAN.

**TOKYO.**—The Lord has at last been pleased to own His Word, as ministered in the Bible classes held here, in the way which the Scriptures would lead us to expect. Two of my pupils in secular things have been led not only to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, but to show forth their union in death and resurrection with Christ, by being buried with Him in baptism. They are both medical students, and one of them was brought to the Lord soon after he was allowed to come and reside in my house, at his own request, for the sake of being instructed in the things of God. His name is Oishi. When spoken to about baptism, a couple of weeks ago, he said he had for some time desired to be baptised, and to take his place at the Lord's table. This emboldened me to speak to the other young man, Inouye, who had for some months been attending the Bible classes, and whose quiet earnestness made me feel that he was at least not far from the kingdom. He replied that he had for some time past believed in Christ, but that he desired to delay his baptism, because he knew of persons who had been baptised two or three times, in consequence of relapses, and once he was baptised, he would *never* go back from his profession. After a little conversation, he agreed to consider the matter, and two days later he sent word he would very gladly obey the Lord at the same time as Oishi. Yesterday being the Lord's day, the three of us walked to a quiet outskirts of Tokyo called Mukojima, where the house of a doctor had been placed at our disposal, the walk occupying over two hours, which will give some idea of the size of this city. Proceeding to a part of the Sumida River, near by, we read Matt. xxviii. 19, 20, and a part of Romans vi., and then sang, from *The Believer's Hymn Book*, "Around Thy grave, Lord Jesus!" Then we went down the bank, in the sight of a few strangers, who stared in silence at this novel spectacle, and each of the young men was given a text and was baptised into the name of the Father and of the

\*"Addresses to Believers," by R. C. Chapman. Glasgow: The Witness Office. Paper cover, 3d.; Cloth cover, 6d. Post free. Now ready.

Son and of the Holy Ghost. Coming up out of the water, we stood on the bank to sing, "How good is the God we adore," and to offer up a brief prayer, after which we retired to the house, when one of the young men prayed with much fluency, the other with much feeling.

It is very difficult for persons who have never lived abroad to realise the position of a young believer who has breathed a heathen atmosphere from infancy, who is not cut off by his friends and relations although he has become a Christian, who is not surrounded by savage or outwardly debasing scenes of vice, and who must still go on in an enervating atmosphere of atheistical indifference tempered by sensuality. There is perhaps not much public example to draw, and probably not much persecution to drive the young convert to spiritual things, and so there may be an outward profession with very little true personal religion. It is a profitable question for each one of us, whether old or young believers, to ask, "How much pleasant fruit has the Lord found to-day in the secret garden of *mysoul*?" May the Holy Spirit lead out saints in prayer for these two young men, and for as many as the Lord our God shall yet call out to Himself. Amongst those who attend the Bible classes, a printer and a tailor appear to be in a hopeful condition, and a former pupil, who was absent for a long time, has now returned with apparent desire for instruction in the truth.

The principle which finds expression in the injunction, "Lay hands hastily on no man" (R.V.), needs to be kept well in mind here. Two youths who professed conversion, and whom I was hoping to hear ask for baptism, dropped suddenly out of sight, an experience which is by no means uncommon. One occasional attendant, who is a believer, and who studied for a time at a Missionary College, imbibed from his uncle the doctrine of "perfection." The young man has found out his mistake, and the uncle, who was formerly assistant in a native "church," is in a wretched state of mind, declaring that he was never born again, and was only a false teacher. Some months ago, an old pupil and Bible class attendant reappeared, after a long absence, and said that although not yet a Christian, he and some others met together to read the Scriptures; would I go and help them on the following Sunday? On the day in question, public notices were posted up, saying that Mr. W. G. Smith, *President of the Scholars' Association*—an association I had never even heard of—would deliver a lecture on Christianity at a certain well-known tea-house. Three hundred persons assembled, but no meeting could be held, for the landlord explained that the young man—who had disappeared before my arrival—had told him that he resided in my house, and had wanted the

landlord to issue tickets of admission, from the proceeds of which the hire of the room was to be paid for. The young man had told me that the meeting would be in a hall which was lent to him and the others every Sunday.

When our Lord sent out the twelve, He warned them that they must be wise as serpents, a fact which should remind labourers in foreign lands that the conscientiousness of good intentions cannot be accepted as making up for lack of discretion. In Satan we have a cunning and cruel adversary, and one that knows neither rest for himself nor mercy for others. He would fain lure us first into carelessness and folly, and then seek to overwhelm us with the consequences of what he has tempted us into. "We are not ignorant of his devices," is an utterance meant to put us on our guard. A professing Christian who had obtained the post of teacher in a school, against the advice of a missionary friend, determined to visit a distant mountain, although he was ignorant of the language and customs of the people. At a Japanese hotel in the country he behaved indiscreetly, and he furthermore left early in the morning without paying his bill, intending to pay it on his return. The enraged landlord, with the aid of a bad woman who was staying in the hotel, concocted a story about the shameful behaviour of this foreigner, who was falsely described as a missionary; the story was published in the newspaper, and the man had, in consequence, to leave Japan. It was his missionary friend who gave me the history of the case.

WILLIAM GEORGE SMITH.

45 Shimo Rokuban Cho, Kojimachi,  
Tokyo, Nov. 3rd, 1890.

### "HALF-FILLED HALLS."

MIGHT there still be room for a word on this important subject? It is to be feared that much that is done just now, even in what is known as "special efforts" in Gospel work is little else than a sort of religious entertainment. A play upon the feelings which leaves the individual the same sinner as before, only a little more religious. Where the Gospel is so preached that hypocrites get stripped, and careless sinners awakened, we need not be surprised nor disappointed although we fail to attract crowds. If we make the "filling of the hall" the *end* instead of the *means*, it is no wonder that we fail. What is needed is the heart set on "winning souls." Then we would not so much invite sinners to come and hear the Gospel as carry the Gospel to them. We would not merely invite them to "come into the Gospel hall," but we would invite them to come to Jesus. What is so much needed, and which we are so liable to neglect is, to have our own souls in continual *touch* with the "MAN of Calvary." We need to be in deep real fellowship with the Good Shepherd, who left the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and went after the lost sheep *until He found it*.

Halls may be well filled and not a soul saved, and

halls may be less than half-filled and many sinners won for Christ.

Eternal things are very important and should never be neglected; but if we are to be used to conversions—genuine new births—we must go in for souls. And the measure of our power with God on behalf of the lost will be the measure of our power with them in the Gospel. If we would see sinners attracted to our halls, not only must these be comfortable, and the preaching orthodox and pointed, but preachers and people must be on fire to win souls. There is an *easy respectability* settling down, or has settled down, on the “gathered saints,” which lies at the root of our failure in Gospel work. If we were filled with the Holy Spirit, as they were of old, and rejoicing to be counted “worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus,” the people would feel the power, and, if we failed to attract crowds, we would succeed in reaching the sinners our God has purposed to save.

Contrite attention to Rev. ii. 4-5 would bring about a revolution in many a Gospel hall.

G. A.

GOSPEL HALL,  
QUEEN STREET, PENRITH.

THE brethren taking oversight at the above-named hall would be glad if you would give space in the *Witness* to bring before the notice of dear brethren visiting the different assemblies of saints, for edification and preaching of the Gospel, a few suggestions which they have had under consideration with regard to this work. They would suggest that brethren desiring to visit an assembly should first write and ask if it is convenient, and, if possible, a fortnight before time, or at least a week; the longer notice the better it would be. We are of opinion this would be a help in every way, as coming suddenly upon an assembly sometimes causes confusion, as it is not always convenient to have a place ready at an hour's notice for the evangelist to stay at. When this is the case there is no time to arrange meetings, and some of those in fellowship may not know of the meetings until they are over. If due notice was given, and the evangelist began his addresses on the Lord's day, the visit might be made more satisfactory to him who visits and to those who are visited. We would also suggest that endeavours should be made on both sides to make fewer visits and *stay longer*, in which case more good might be done, and less money paid to railway companies. In two or three days' stay only a few seem to get together, and in such cases the object of these visits is not realised. Yours in our risen and coming Lord,

JOHN SMITH.

## Questions and Answers.

We desire to express our thanks to all who have sent answers.

We particularly request that each writer will give his name and address in full, not for publication, but that we may know who it is that seeks to help, and, if desirable, that we may communicate privately.

When more than one question is replied to, let the answer to each question be upon a separate piece of paper.

Replies to appear in the next number require to be sent in not later than 15th of present month, and so on; the 15th of the month being always the latest to which we can defer making up for press.

We again urge the importance of replies being *short*; it is essential, in this particular line of things, to be *concise*.

We shall greatly value remembrance in prayer that special wisdom and grace may be given for this service. THE EDITOR.

Replies are invited to the following:—

What would be the *most scriptural* way for a believer to describe him or herself in a census paper; say under the heading of Religious Denomination? Then, if any of the family are (still) unconverted, how should they be described? And, further, how when children have not reached the years of discretion?

“So then they who are in the flesh cannot please God” (Rom. viii. 8). “But in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of Him” (Acts x. 35). How can these two passages be reconciled?

In view of the passages, Acts xvii. 29 and Luke iii. 38, xv. 11-32, is it unscriptural to speak of “the universal fatherhood of God”? I myself protest against the phrase, and against the false teaching which often underlies it; but how are the foregoing passages to be disposed of? The apostle appears to distinctly endorse the teaching of the heathen poet, and I have long felt this to be a difficulty, John i. 12 notwithstanding.

Are the new heaven and the new earth, spoken of in Isaiah lxxv. 17, lxxvi. 22; 2 Peter iii. 13, and Rev. xxi. 1, the same in all these passages? An examination of the passages in Isaiah seems to show that the *millennial* earth, not an earth free from sin and death, is there spoken of.

THE LORD'S-DAY.—How may we lawfully view the obligations of the Sabbath-day, as transferred to it? Would it not be of much benefit to the church if the whole question as to the obligations of the Lord's-day were fully entertained from the Word?

What is a “sect”?

What constitutes the difference between an assembly of God and a sect?

FAMILY WORSHIP.—Should what is called “Family Worship” be countenanced when the parents are not children of God?

“PURGE HIMSELF FROM THESE.”

QUESTION 374.—What is the teaching of 2 Tim. ii. 20, 21? Does “purge himself from these” include both the vessels “to honour” and “to dishonour” found in the “great house” in verse 20?

Ans. A.—To the latter question I answer that the great house in the illustration seems to represent Christendom, or Christian profession, and includes those who call on the Lord, “the Master,” out of a pure heart, whose duty it is to keep separate from all uncleanness of the flesh and spirit, and so be meet for the Master's use. God forbid that we should be separated from vessels unto honour, meet for the Master's use.

The teaching of this passage has been greatly misunderstood. The context, however, explains it. It is not mainly, or primarily, an instruction to purge ourselves from evil persons, though that may be involved, but from evil things. Scriptures are abundant for the

former. (See L. D. G.'s enumeration in the December number.) But this is not one. It should be translated (Dr. Alford notwithstanding), "If a man purge himself from these *things*." What things the chapter (best of commentaries) explains. There are just seven of them.

1. From entanglements in worldly affairs (verse 4).
2. From strifes about words (verse 14).
3. From profane and vain babblings (verse 16).
4. From false doctrines (verse 18).
5. From iniquity (verse 19).
6. From youthful lusts (verse 22).
7. From foolish and unlearned questions (verse 23).

If a man purge himself from these evils, he shall be, &c. With this natural interpretation the figure itself agrees.

For it is not the shelf it stands on, any more than the material it is made of, that fits a vessel for the Master's use. A dirty goblet of gold would not be meet for His use to drink from; nor a dirty foot-bath of earthenware for His use to wash in. But if a vessel be clean, whatever its material, it is fit. That is, a saint, be he ever so poorly endowed with gifts, if he keep separate from evil, is a servant whom Christ can employ. And, *vice versa*; the most splendid gifts, if not employed "out of a pure heart," need not be offered for the Master's service. He will have none of them.

Separation from evil persons is taught throughout the whole New Testament. It is the great curse of Christendom that in this respect Christ is disobeyed by His own people. This very epistle contains the caution, "From such (persons) turn away" (iii. 5). About that line of duty no honest heart can be in doubt. But I believe the passage in question does not primarily, or except by implication, refer to it. G. F. T.

**Ans. B.**—The notion of *diversity* is brought out in the variety of the vessels. Some vessels are capacious, whereby many may be served; others are little, with a limited sphere of service. "Some to honour, and some to dishonour." "*How am I to become a vessel unto honour?*" "If a man purge himself." As to the vessels of a house, cleanliness is everything. If only it be purged and clean and pure, the earthen pitcher takes the place of honour from the golden goblet which is not so. The King Himself in His glory is more honoured by the service of the simplest utensil, purified from all uncleanness, than by the costliest vessel if lacking this condition. "Purge himself from these." Some have supposed "*these*" refers to the vessels of wood and earth. The analogy of the passage fails under this interpretation. A vessel in the house does not get its honour or use by virtue of the shelf on which it stands, or of the vessel which stands near it, but by virtue of its cleanliness. A golden bowl or silver spoon, *covered with dust*, though taken from a chest where nothing but gold and silver plate were kept, would not on that account be rendered fit for honourable uses: they must also first be *cleaned*.

Nor, if clean, would they be disqualified because they were kept in proximity with vessels of humbler material. Further, we do not speak of "purging" ourselves *from one another*, but from *evil things, and ways, and habits*. Same word is in 2 Cor. vii. 1, "cleanse ourselves." The purging or cleansing of a vessel could not in ordinary parlance mean its removal

to other company, but the removal of all its uncleanness. The evils specially referred to are the "profane and vain babblings" of heretics, to which the servant of Christ was to shut his ear. In the vessels of gold and silver we see those servants who are most richly endowed; in the wooden and earthen, those who are less so.

**Ans. C.**—This passage has been much controverted, and the following thoughts are only suggestive:—In verse 17 we have two men mentioned whose place was outside the circle of Divine fellowship. In verse 18 there are those who are ensnared by their false teaching. Verse 19, although thus seduced from "the faith," they may still be the Lord's; and if so, He knoweth them, and will look after them; but those who name the name of Christ are enjoined to depart from the *doctrinal* iniquity of which they were guilty. If we look at verse 20 as a parenthetical illustration, the passage seems quite plain. The "vessels unto honour" showing believers who are sound in the faith; the "vessels unto dishonour" showing those who, although they may still be believers, are, on account of the evil doctrine they hold, unfit for the fellowship of the "house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. iii. 15).

Then verse 21, being a confirmation of the last clause of verse 19 (the one enjoining departure from the iniquity of evil doctrine, and the other separation from those who hold it—"putting out," if that is possible, and "coming out," if that is impossible), the thought of "purging oneself from vessels unto honour" could not for a moment be entertained. G. A.

#### ORDINATION OF THE LORD'S SERVANTS.

**QUESTION 375.**—Would it be scriptural for brethren to lay their hands on the head of one going forth in the Lord's service in those days?

**Ans.**—Perfectly scriptural, if the action be but the expression of identification with the servant in his call to the work of the Lord. "Separate me Barnabas and Saul, said the Holy Ghost. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away" (Acts xiii. 2, 3), thereby intimating their joyful acquiescence in the will of God.

But the moment men vainly imagine that by laying on *their hands* they impart either spiritual power or gift, surely "they understand neither what they say nor whereof they affirm" (1 Tim. i. 7). Barnabas and Saul were "separated unto the Holy Ghost" (Acts xiii. 2); "sent forth by the Holy Ghost" (v. 4); "filled with the Holy Ghost" (v. 9); and all they needed was the fellowship of their brethren, among whom they had previously laboured (v. 1), which was accorded them by the simple laying on of hands. Years later Barnabas and Saul received "the right hand of fellowship" from the apostles before setting out finally to the heathen (Gal. ii. 9). T. B.

**Editor's Note.**—It is important to distinguish between the two objects of laying on of hands; the one implying fellowship or identification, the other the occasion, and instrumentally the means, by which gift was imparted. The answer given above contemplates the first. The latter is referred to in 2 Tim. i. 6, Acts xix. 6, viii. 17, &c.

## OUR DAILY LIFE.

THERE are four distinct things stated in the 1st Psalm as the result of meditating upon God's Word, apart from the blessing which the individual enjoys who is found so doing (see verse 1). Let me enumerate them—(1) Like a tree planted by the rivers of water; (2) bringeth forth fruit in his season; (3) his leaf shall not wither (always green); (4) whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

Dear child of God, how is it with you? On every hand, in the days we live in, we see and hear of those who once lived for God, and were used of Him, being tripped up by the Devil, "the lust of the flesh," or the world. Backsliding, both in heart and practice, characterises these last days; and, beloved, what is the cause of it all? We verily believe, the neglect of two things—namely, *secret prayer*, and reading and meditating upon God's blessed Word. Let me ask you, tenderly and lovingly, as you hold this paper in your hand, have you had a quiet time alone with God this morning, reading and meditating upon His own precious Word—speaking to Him, and He speaking to you? We do not mean, did you kneel down and go over a prayer? But, have you seen the face of your Lord to-day, and heard Him speaking to your heart? It may be you can sing, "O the pure delight of a single hour"; but hold now, be honest with your soul, when did you spend an hour in His company? How dishonouring it is to God and grieving to His holy Spirit to sing about spending an hour with Him when it is not true. Have we not all been guilty of spending too much time in the company of one another, and too little time in the company of God? God in His grace has made blessed provision for our everyday life while passing through the wilderness. We get it beautifully pictured in the history of Israel passing on to Canaan. Morning by morning they gathered the manna, fresh down from heaven, and no doubt it took both trouble and time to gather it. Early in the morning the camp of Israel was astir. See them down on the ground gathering, every man getting his omer filled! And this was all done before the sun was up.

How often it is the case in these days, among the saints of God, that, instead of being up in the morning early and getting alone with

God, seeking to see His face and catch His voice, there is the lying in bed until the last possible moment, and then a hurry to get away to work. *No watching, no praying, no reading of the Word, no meditating*, and, as a matter of course, *no fruit borne, no greenness, no prosperity*, and when Satan comes along there is *no power* to resist his temptations. O, beloved children of God, let the time past of our lives suffice us to have wrought the will of the flesh, and in future let us seek to walk in the blessed footsteps of Him who rose a great while before day, so that He might have time to commune with His Father.

The days are getting darker, and we feel it more difficult to get along every day we live. But He who has saved us and brought us so far is willing, yea, it is His delight, to feed us with the finest of the wheat and satisfy us with honey out of the rock.

"He openeth His hand, and satisfieth every living thing" (Psalm cxlv. 16); and His word to us is, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it" (Psalm lxxxi. 10).

May we, then, until the morning dawn, remember His words (Matt. xxvi. 41), "WATCH AND PRAY."  
J. K. M'E.

## JOTTINGS FROM THE MARGIN OF A BIBLE.

"If I had my life to begin again," said Dr. Chalmers, "I would read more of the Bible by itself and less of what men have written about it.

"I would read it, with my mind in naked contact with the truth, relying only on the Holy Spirit, the great Teacher sent from God, to explain and apply it to the conscience and the heart."

Meditation on the Word of God is the chief means of our growth in grace; without this even prayer itself will be little better than an empty form.

No believer can flourish in the ways of Christ unless it be his custom to deal with God by the Word in the closet.

Whilst the Scriptures contain many things *above* our reason, they teach nothing *contrary* thereto.

The great cause of our neglecting the Scriptures is not want of *time*, but want of *heart*; some idol taking the place of Christ.

## THOUGHTS ON CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

## II.—THE SOURCE OF GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY.

IT is painfully evident that amongst those assemblies over the face of the earth which are in some measure gathered according to Scripture principle, there is much weakness and confusion in the matter of government.

For companies of believers professedly owning one Head, and being guided by one Word and one Spirit, to be acting on different principles, is very confusing, and clearly proves that there is something seriously wrong; but for leading men among these assemblies not to be "speaking the same thing," is even more bewildering. No wonder that the flock is scattered, when the shepherds are divided in their judgment.

To endeavour to shut our eyes to such a painful condition of things, and insist on a larger measure of forbearance, is a most unsatisfactory way of dealing with it. It may satisfy those who have never learned what God's principles as to church order really are, or those whose aim seems to be to maintain peace at any cost, to meet each case of increasing difficulty by a further stretch of what they call "charity." But there are many who cannot be satisfied with that, and who are seriously asking the question, Is there no help? Is there no truth in the Book of God that would help to bring those who are honestly seeking to please the Lord to be more of one mind, and to act more in harmony with each other?

Well, there has been an attempt made lately to answer this important question; and we have been told that "periodical meetings of elder (or overseeing) brethren," embracing whole districts, is the scriptural antidote for the present confusion. What truth there may be in such a theory I do not now inquire. To do this might lead into a controversial style of writing, and this I specially wish to avoid. And instead of warning fellow-saints against what might lead them into error, I would rather seek to throw some light from Scripture on the "right path" for the faithful to tread.

In seeking to learn the mind of the Lord as to government, one of the very first things we

need to know is the primary SOURCE of all authority—that all rule and authority come down from God. When man was created he was placed on this earth "under law to God." Such a theory as "man's free will" is not to be found in Scripture. The moment man got a will of his own he was a "sinner"—a rebel against the authority of God. He was placed at the head of earth's fair creation to rule it for God, and ever since he came under the power of Satan his aim has been to get the power into his own hands and shut out God. To pursue this subject as revealed in Scripture would fill volumes, but it will help us much to glance briefly at the principles of Divine government as exemplified in the history of Israel.

Perhaps some reader may ask, What has that to do with church government? It has this to do with it, that it helps us to apprehend the "foundation principles" of government. As one has said, "Many errors may be supported by parts of Scripture, but no error will bear the test of ALL Scripture." We are all liable to become one-sided, to get our minds biased in a certain direction, and then we go to the Word of God to find that which favours the particular view we have imbibed; and thus learned and gifted men can make what is only a human theory look so like a Divine principle that the unwary but honest soul is led into a snare without being aware of it. Hence the need of those who are called to lead in the church bringing everything to the test of what is known as the "analogy of the faith." That is, to bring the light of the *whole teaching of Scripture* to bear upon it; and for this purpose I refer to God's government of the nation of Israel.

When God "came down" to fulfil His promise to Abraham, He revealed Himself to Moses, and through him to Israel, by the name of Jehovah (see Ex. vi.). And when He sent Moses to Pharaoh He gave him this message, "Let My people go, *that they may serve Me*" (Ex. viii. 1). They were not set free from Egyptian bondage and left at liberty to do their own will. They simply changed masters. From that memorable night of the Passover, when they were redeemed by blood, they had no choice either of what they were to do, or of how they were to do it. Everything was settled

for them by the "word of the LORD." "This is the thing which the LORD commanded to be done" (Lev. viii. 5), was their only court of appeal. Neither had they any choice as to their movements on their journey to the Promised Land. Their God settled all this for them by the movements of His "cloud" (Num. ix. 15-23). Their behaviour, ecclesiastically, politically, and socially, was dictated to them by the word of the LORD, and in all things they were to be guided solely by Him. No room was left for their own wills. On their part it was simply a matter of prompt and implicit obedience—obedience to one will, and that will was the WILL OF GOD. Herein lies the Divine remedy for all governmental confusion, whether in the church, the world, or the family—the recognition of the absolute authority of the "Living God."

Another important truth is, that the whole nation was under one form of government, and all were led by the one cloud. There was no room for man's wisdom in the smallest matter, nor was there any room for different practices in the worship and service of the LORD. "One law and one manner shall be for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you" (Num. xv. 16). There was simply one thing to do, and one way of doing it. There was no liberty given for man to alter or improve that which the LORD had commanded.

Jehovah, who had redeemed them, was their sole law-giver. He gave them a perfect form of government, which included the whole nation, and extended to the end of the age. When not only the nation but the restored remnant had failed, His injunction to the individual fearers of the LORD was, "Remember ye the law of Moses My servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for ALL Israel, with the statutes and judgments" (Mal. iv. 4). There was no paring down the truth of God because of man's failure. In these days of so much spurious liberality and trifling with the truth of God, these things have a solemn voice to us.

Let us also note that those men who were called to rule over Israel were chosen by the LORD. "Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose" (Deut. xvii. 15); and again, "And when the LORD raised them up judges, then the LORD was with the judge" (Judges ii. 18).

The LORD gave them a man after their own heart in the person of Saul, their first king, but it was in judgment. "I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath" (Hos. xiii. 11), evidently refers to Saul. And when Saul was put to the test he acted in a great emergency without waiting for Divine guidance. (Compare 1 Sam. x. 8 with chap. xiii.) And again, in the case of Amalek he obeyed the "voice of the people," instead of obeying the voice of the Lord (1 Sam. xv.).

Another thing we must be clear upon, that is, that the men who were called to rule got all their orders from the LORD, never from the people. One cannot read the history of Israel without being struck with how often the authoritative words occur, "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying." But when Moses tarried long on the mount, we read that "The people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods" (Ex. xxxii. 1), and he did it. Moses, in all that he did, was the exponent of the will of the LORD; but Aaron in this case was the exponent of the will of the people.

Whether the tribe of Levi, who afterwards took the LORD's side, made any protest before the calf was made, we are not told; but though they had, that would not have made the thing wrong, neither did the unanimity of the congregation make the thing right.

Then we have another case in Judges xx., where, instead of inquiring of the LORD, an appeal is made to the people (verse 7), and we read that "all the people arose as *one man*." And again, they were "knit together as *one man*." They settled by universal consent *what* they were to do, and then asked counsel of the LORD *how* they ought to do it, and of course there was failure. The nation lost forty thousand men, and one tribe was all but exterminated. Had they first confessed the sin and inquired of the Lord, no doubt the results would have been very different. It is amazing in these days to find men using this case as a precedent for the church to follow.

Then we have the case of David, of whom God said, "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after Mine own heart, which shall fulfil all MY WILL" (Acts xiii. 22). It was David's practice to inquire of the LORD before taking any step, but he sometimes failed; and

on the occasion of bringing up the ark it is recorded, "And David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, and with every leader. And David said unto all the congregation of Israel, If it seem good unto you, and that it be of the LORD our God" (1 Chron. xiii. 1, 2). The LORD was taken into it; but the leaders of the people were consulted first, and consequently they failed. David was clearly out of the leading of the LORD, or he never would have put the ark on a new cart; and yet there does not seem to have been a single dissenting voice. Who proposed the new cart we are not told, but it is clear that all the leading men were of one mind; but that did not make the thing right, seeing that none of them had the mind of the Lord.

In these days in which we live, when the moral air we breathe is permeated by the principles of democracy, it is most important that we be clear on this point, that in Scripture there is not such a principle as rule by the will of the people in any form. Under the Divine government of Israel, when the right men were right with God, they went direct to Him in every emergency, and if ever they did depart from this principle it was sure to result in failure. It is of great importance that saints be all of one mind before they act in any case of difficulty, and also that leading men amongst the saints be of one mind; but one thing is of paramount importance, that is, that those who lead are in the counsel of God, and if they are not, no unanimity of judgment on the part even of leading men will make the conclusions they come to right, or give to their deliverances any authority over the consciences of saints.

One thing is specially needed to be known in these days, and that is, that those who essay to lead among the people of God must themselves be in the leading of the Spirit of God, and any other oneness of mind is only an imitation of God's reality. G. A.

(Other papers will follow.)

#### CHRIST'S LOVE-MARKS.

- |    |             |   |           |                |
|----|-------------|---|-----------|----------------|
| 1. | Divine love | - | Corrects. | Mark x. 21.    |
| 2. | Divine love | - | Chastens. | John xi. 5.    |
| 3. | Divine love | - | Cleanses. | John xiii. 14. |
| 4. | Divine love | - | Claims.   | John xiii. 23. |

#### THE BAPTISM OF LIFE AND THE BAPTISM OF DEATH;

Or, Baptism IN the Spirit and Baptism WITH Fire.

By J. HIXON IRVING.

THE FIRST EFFUSION.

PASSING by, with but a brief reference, what took place at Jerusalem and at Samaria under the preaching of Peter and Philip, we see they were each dealt with in a special manner, and for a different object. In the case of the former, God is seen as bringing those Jerusalem sinners to the fullest acknowledgment of Jesus of Nazareth as being both Messiah and Lord before He would bestow upon them the gift of the Holy Spirit. And hence Peter's answer to their pricked heart question, "*Repent ye, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*" (Acts ii. 37, 38, R.V.). We could not to-day make repentance, baptism, and remission of sins the conditions of the Spirit's reception, could we? There is great similarity between what took place at Jerusalem and what was seen afterwards at Samaria, yet with this one difference: the Holy Spirit was conveyed to them by the laying on of hands. Why this difference? Was it not to teach the believers at Jerusalem that the time of isolation had passed away, and also to teach Samaria that religious rivalry and independency had come to its end? for they were one in Christ in the one Spirit. It at least seems so to us. It was "one body" truth in embryo—truth that was committed not to the apostle of the circumcision, but of the uncircumcision. There can be no doubt that which Peter witnessed at Samaria was in part a preparation for what was soon to take place elsewhere, and in which he should be the most prominent actor.

THE SECOND EFFUSION.

The time had now fully come when other than the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" must hear the Gospel, and Peter must be the one to preach it to them. But he has another lesson to learn before he preaches peace by Jesus Christ to Gentile sinners. And hence that vision on the house-top at Joppa. With heart prepared and enlarged thereby, he goes at the call of God to tell the glad tidings to a

quicken Italian soldier and his God-fearing household at Cesarea. As he proclaims the life, works, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus—not stopping at the death of the cross, but going on to life out of death—then took place that which is so graphically described by Luke: “While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word” (Acts x. 44). Those who came with Peter, and who perhaps were not in the fullest sympathy with him, “were amazed, . . . because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.” That which took place at this time was so different from that which was witnessed at Jerusalem when the three thousand received the Spirit, or what afterwards was seen at Samaria. Here, without any intermediary, the Holy Spirit was imparted to them just the same as to the one hundred and twenty in the upper room on the day of Pentecost. All baptised on that day were *Israelites*; all immersed on this were *Gentiles*. And now all flesh had been touched: pure Jew, mongrel Samaritan, and true Gentile; and this in accordance with the Divine purpose—“to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.”

Peter, on his return to the metropolis of Judaism, met with this accusation from those of the circumcision there: “Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them” (Acts xi. 3). In defence, he very fully recounts the circumstances which led up to his visit to the Gentiles, and what he had witnessed of the Spirit falling upon them, and of that he said: “And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that He said, John indeed baptised with water; but ye shall be baptised with (in) the Holy Ghost” (Acts xi. 15, 16). When they heard these words they were first silenced, then, as they were reconciled to the ways of God in overflowing grace, they glorified Him, saying, “Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life” (ver. 18, R.V.).

#### THE ONE BODY.

Jew and Gentile were now immersed in one Spirit into one body, though the truth of the body, as we have said, was not at that time

made known. It was afterwards committed to the man who had formerly “made havoc of the Church” to be the exponent of its corporate character. Here is grace indeed! Our Lord laid the foundation of this one organism in His death upon the cross, by breaking down the hedge or partition wall between Jew and Gentile, thus clearing the ground and laying the basis for the action of the Spirit as soon as He should be glorified in resurrection. He “brake down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in His flesh the enmity . . . that He might create in Himself of the twain (Jew and Gentile) one new man, so making peace; and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby” (Eph. ii. 14-17, R.V.).

The ground, then, of the One Body is the death of Christ, whilst the elemental bond between the Head and the body, and between member and member, is the Holy Spirit. This we learn from the following words: “For in one Spirit were we all baptised into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit” (1 Cor. xii. 13, R.V.). The first thing we perceive here is that the Holy Spirit is the baptismal element. He is the HOLY ELEMENT—not His effects. He is the point of contact between the Head and the body: the very life of the Head is in the body, and consequently the security of the former is the measure of the security of the latter. The acceptance of the Head ensures the same for the body, and the glory of the former the glory of the latter.

The second thing is the abolition of distinctions: Jew no longer Jew; Gentile no longer such; master and servant one in the body, though in the assembly they each occupy their respective positions; male and female no longer twain, but one in Him; for “Christ is all, and in all” (Col. iii. 11).

That is the result of baptism *in* the Spirit, as we see from these words of Paul: “For as many of you as were baptised into Christ did put on Christ” (Gal. iii. 27). In this baptism, national, social, and sexual distinctions all disappear, for they are “all one in Christ Jesus.” All those who are sons of God were baptised into one body in the Lord—not in water baptism surely, for in that we do not

put on Christ, neither are we made one in Him in it.

In water baptism we are baptised into His death (Rom. vi. 3-5, Col. ii. 12); but, in Spirit baptism, into His life. The former sets forth our mystical union with Him in death, burial, and resurrection; whilst the latter makes our spiritual union with Himself upon the throne. The more we examine this passage (Gal. iii. 27) with 1 Cor. xii. 12-15, the more we are assured that to introduce water baptism into it is to introduce confusion into it, for it refers exclusively to baptism in the Spirit into one body. It is the one baptism, in one Spirit, by the one Lord, into one body, to one faith, for one hope.

#### UNITY OF THE SPIRIT.

We cannot leave the doctrinal part of this subject without a word as to the practical outcome of it all, which may be summed up in the apostle's words to the Ephesian saints: "Endeavouring (giving diligence) to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. iv. 3). The "*unity* of the Spirit" is that oneness effected between the believer and the Lord and one another. That we have got to recognise and endeavour to keep. We had no part in making it, but we are responsible for keeping it. Though Christendom is a standing proof that it has not been kept, yet that should not discourage us in the least from endeavouring to do the will of God. Instead of the manifestation of the one body, which would result from a keeping the unity of the Holy Spirit, what do we see? A shameful spectacle truly. One "sect" calling itself after a *nation*, another after a *race*, a third after a *city*, a fourth after a *man*, another after a form of *ecclesiastical government*, another after a *doctrine*, another after an *ordinance*, and again another arrogating to itself a claim to be the sole representative of the *one body*, and numberless "sects" beside. What a hideous spectacle Christendom presents to one with an anointed eye. To such it will be seen as a harlot gilded and gaudy, and glorying in her shame, whose end is to be "spued out" of the mouth of Christ (Rev. iii. 16).

Can we fail to see that, in order to keep the "unity of the Spirit," there must be a response to the voice from heaven, "Come out of her,

my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not her plagues" (Rev. xviii. 4). There cannot be a maintenance of any form of will-worship and at the same time a keeping of this Spirit-formed unity. It is for each beloved fellow-believer to see how far he is giving all diligence to keep this unity so dear to the heart of that Blessed One who is the Head of the Church, which is His Body; for just as we are doing so, in so far are we manifesting the one Body.

Need we add that baptism in the Spirit is altogether peculiar to this age; for we search the Scripture in vain to find anything approaching to it either in the Patriarchal or Mosaic times. It will, so far as we know from the Word, be entirely absent from the age to come. It is altogether peculiar to this age of grace, and is a once-for-all operation, taking place when a soul believingly hears the Word of Truth, the Gospel of Salvation. It is never repeated, and hence we never find the plural, "baptisms"; therefore, to pray for a fresh baptism is to ask for that which the believer has already received; and it would be just as intelligent for a saved person to pray for regeneration, or justification, or for life, as for a baptism in the Spirit—there being no more warrant for the former than for the latter. No one so praying could pray with the spirit and with the understanding, much less *in* the Holy Spirit (Jude 20).

#### DRINKING OF THE SPIRIT.

Again, we wish to repeat that filling with the Spirit is altogether different, and is progressive, and depends entirely upon the faith of the child of God. I think this is plain from what we find in the Acts of the Apostles, for therein we read of "Stephen, a man *full of faith* and of the Holy Spirit"; and again, "*full of faith* and power" (Acts vi. 5-8). Barnabas, too, "was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of *faith*" (Acts xi. 24). Faith is connected with this fulness, as is plain from those instances, as well as from the words of our Lord: "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that *believeth* on Me, . . . out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John vii. 37, 38). The outflow will be in exact ratio to the inflow.

We have, by the Lord, been placed in the

Holy Spirit element, and we have but to take it in by faith and prayer to be filled (Eph. v. 18). We have been "made to drink of one Spirit" (R.V.). The instrumental means are faith and prayer, and the Word of God. The disciples prayed for *boldness* for the apostles; and in answer thereto, not only they who prayed, but those who were prayed for, were "all filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake the Word of God with *boldness*" (Acts iv. 31). Whilst we do not need to pray for the *gift* of the Spirit, take care we are not limiting the Lord and robbing our own souls by failing to pray and believe for more of the energy, power, love, and grace of the Holy One. We have received Him as a gift once for all, but our privilege is to be full of Holy Spirit. May we, beloved, be like the disciples, "filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost" (Acts xiii. 52). (See Rom. xv. 13.)

(To be continued.)

## THE LORD'S BOND-SERVANTS:

THEIR DUTIES, PRIVILEGES, RESPONSIBILITIES,  
AND REWARD.

THE subject of "Servants of Christ, their Privileges and Responsibilities," is an interesting and important one.

All the Lord's servants are bond-slaves; the word is so translated in the Revised Version. Paul and the others always called themselves "slaves of Jesus Christ." See Rom. i. 1, "Paul, a *bond-servant* of Jesus Christ"; Phil. i. 1, "Paul and Timothy, *bond-servants* of Christ Jesus"; Titus i. 1, "Paul, a *bond-servant* of God"; James i. 1, "James, a *bond-servant* of God"; 2 Peter i. 1, "Simon Peter, a *bond-servant* and apostle of Jesus Christ"; Jude i. 1, "Jude, a *bond-servant* of Jesus Christ."

These passages show unmistakably that the first and paramount aspect of the believer's service is

"ITS NECESSITY."

This thought is more prominent even than its privileges, great as they are, or its responsibilities. The Lord's servant has to recognise that necessity is laid upon him. He cannot, unless at the risk of being rebellious or stubborn, refuse to heed and obey the mandate,

"Son, go work to-day in my vineyard" (Matt. xxi. 28).

It is no free-will service, in a sense, not rendered for reward, and not open to be exchanged for another service. The Lord's servants serve because they are His property. The Master takes care of them, feeds them, sees that they are kept in a condition for effective work; but they serve because He commands them, and because He has full ownership and control of them.

Paul felt this when he said, "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel," and we are taught it in such passages as: "When ye have done all, say we are unprofitable servants." "Doth He thank that servant? I trow not." "Do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal. i. 10). Let us trust and seek that all the Lord's people will more and more be led to see that they are not their own, that they have been bought with a price, and that, in the fullest sense of the term, they are the

SLAVES OF OUR BLESSED LORD JESUS CHRIST.

We dare not serve anyone else, even for reward. He is entitled to all the fruit of our labour, and we dare not leave His blessed service; for we are His servants for ever. We are not open for hire to another, nor permitted to render service to any other.

Having clearly seen "the necessity" of His service, the believer can the better estimate "the privilege" of His service. Oh! how great and wondrous is His service. Angels never had such a service, and may well covet it. One of the things that so struck the queen of Sheba in her visit to Solomon's court was the dignity and happiness of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers (1 Kings x. 5). It was this that caused her to have no more spirit in her, and to say that the half had not been told her. Much, very much, is said in scripture upon this blessed point; and we by the teaching of the Holy Ghost do well continually, for the encouragement of our hearts, to bring out of our treasure things new and old concerning it.

The other point, namely,

"THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LORD'S  
SERVANTS,"

is the most solemn of all, and claims in a

corresponding degree our most prayerful meditation and reflection. If a doctor is unskilful or negligent, the patient's life may be forfeited. If a lawyer mislead or betray his client, that client's case is ruined. If a railway signal-man confounds his handles and puts up a wrong signal, trains may be wrecked and lives lost; but these disasters are as nothing to the harm and injury a servant of Christ may do, if ignorant, unskilful, and unprayerful. The issues that depend upon the faithfulness and correctness of the service God intrusts to us are simply overwhelming to contemplate. Truly our service, whether in the Gospel or the Church, is surrounded by the gravest responsibilities—matters of life and death depend upon its due discharge. Did not Paul feel this when he exclaimed, "Who is sufficient for these things?" (2 Cor. ii. 16). He could not lose sight of the fact that he was "a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish." Truly a solemn reflection. What sustained him was the counterbalancing reflection; "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; who also hath made us able ministers" (2 Cor. iii. 5).

Another aspect of the servant's responsibility is, of course,

#### THE REWARD THAT AWAITS HIM,

and the desire to have the approval of the Master we serve; responsibility, faithfully and adequately discharged, brings high and blessed rewards. We have to keep full in view the judgement-seat of Christ, where we shall all be manifested (*i.e.*, turned inside out). "Therefore," says the apostle, "judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God" (1 Cor. iv. 5). We must also keep full in view the Master's speedy coming: "Work while it is called to-day; the night cometh, when no man can work."

"Occupy till I come." "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give to every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. xxii. 12).

Nor is the service confined to this life only; it goes on into eternity and

#### CONTINUES FOR EVER.

"There shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him" (Rev. xxii. 3).

The blessed Lord Jesus Christ is the perfect pattern for us in this matter of service, as in everything else. "Behold (says God) My Servant, whom I uphold." "The Lord formed Him from the womb to be His servant" (Is. xlix. 5); and in Is. liii. 11 the Lord Jesus is alluded to as "My Righteous Servant." He "took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" (Phil. ii. 7). He was verily in all His ways and doings an exemplification of what Paul instructed Timothy that a servant of the Lord should be, namely, "The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient" (2 Tim. ii. 24).

R. E. S.

#### DISCIPLESHIP.

"THE disciple is not above his Master," were the words uttered by the heavenly Master to the few who were known as His disciples; and when, on the same night in which He was betrayed, He referred to those words (John xv. 20), and bade them remember them, He added, "If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also." *If*; the entire path of one who owns himself a disciple of Christ hangs on these two letters. Have they persecuted Him? Then, "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

There are seven things which characterise a disciple of Christ—in other words, an Antioch Christian:

1st, Continuance in His Word,	John viii. 31.
2nd, Self-denial,	Luke xiv. 26.
3rd, Cross-bearing,	Luke xiv. 27.
4th, Fruit-bearing,	John xv. 8.
5th, Persecution,	John xv. 20.
6th, Love one to another,	John xiii. 35.
7th, Reward,	Matt. x. 42.

These form a precious chain, the first link of which is the "Word of His mouth," the last, the "reward" which He will bring with Him, and the intermediate links all closely allied with Himself. If ever master and servant were one, the heavenly Master and the feeble disciple are indissolubly linked together.

Some of these characteristics are more prominent than others in the children of God, but all were found perfectly in Him, who has "set us an example, that we should follow His steps" (1 Peter ii. 21). Let us see how they shone forth in Him. Firstly, *Continuance in the Word*. He, and He alone, could say, "Thy law have I hid in My heart," and "By the words of Thy mouth have I kept Me from the paths of the destroyer." Truly He lived by every word which proceeded out of the mouth of God—even His name was called the Word of God. Secondly, *Self-denial*. "Christ pleased not Himself." From the manger to the cross His one object was to do the Father's will; and in that awful hour, when the shadow of the cross hung over Him with its horror of great darkness, all it could wring from His lips was, "Father, not My will, but Thine, be done." Thirdly, *Cross-bearing*. And what a cross! "*After Me*," are His words to His own about it, and what that cross of His was, who can estimate? "He endured the cross, despising the shame." Precious Saviour. Fourthly, *Fruit-bearing*. Was ever such fruit borne to God as He bore those thirty-three years? All the fruits of the Spirit shone forth perfectly. The vine—the fruitful vine, whose branches run over the wall. Fifthly, *Persecution*. Of this we need say nothing. "A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." They hated Him without a cause. Sixthly, *Love*. "Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it." "Who loved ME and gave Himself for ME." He loves unto the end. Seventhly, *Reward*. "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross;" "wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name." "The glory Thou hast given Me I have given them." "For every one who is perfect shall be as his Master."

Such is the path of discipleship. May the Lord awaken more earnest desire in the hearts of His people to walk, even as He walked, in communion with God the Father. H. C. R.

HAVE YOU observed the three gifts of John xvii.? In verse 2 we have "*Eternal Life*" given; verse 14, "Thy Word" given; and verse 22, "The glory which thou gavest Me" given.—H. B. THOMPSON.

## SOUL-WINNING.

NOTES OF A CONFERENCE HELD IN MARBLE HALL,  
GLASGOW.

Prov. xi. 30, "He that is wise winneth souls" (R. V.).

UNCONVERTED men and women are going to eternal perdition. The Scripture describes them as starving, thirsty, weary, heavy laden, guilty, condemned, lost, and even dead. To be saved according to the Word of God, is not merely to be saved from an eternal hell and from the power and dominion of sin and Satan; it is far more than that. To be saved is to be won for Christ, that we may love and serve Him for ever. It pleases God to use those whom He saves to win precious souls for Himself. What a high honour and exalted privilege, to win souls for Christ! Is it not wonderful that God should take up those who were His enemies and make them His children and ambassadors of the Lord Jesus Christ? Two scriptures which show that we are His instruments in the accomplishment of His gracious purposes. Daniel xii. 3, "They that be wise (margin, teachers) shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever"; James v. 19, 20, "Brethren, if any do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." It is a blessed deed to save a human being from death by fire or from a watery grave; but what is that compared with a soul saved from eternal punishment in hell? Then think of the glory brought to Christ and the joy it gives Him when a soul is saved.

Some of the qualifications of a soul-winner: Isaiah lii. 11, "Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord"; 2 Tim. ii. 20, 21, "A vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, prepared unto every good work." How often have we seen a simple believer, who knew very little of the Word of God, used in the conversion of sinners. How is this? That one is in fellowship with Christ, and as far as he knows his Master's will he seeks to do it. Isaiah xlix. 2, "He hath made my mouth as a sharp sword . . . and

made me like a polished shaft." God would have His servants to be as polished shafts in His hands. If we would be used by the Spirit of God in the conversion of sinners we must abide in Christ; this is our source of power and fruitfulness. How tender, sympathetic, loving, and wise the Son of God was in all His ways! If we are clean vessels, polished shafts, and prepared unto every good work, the Lord will use us in His service. If we would be soul-winners, we must have an intense desire for the salvation of sinners. If this desire is wrought in us by the Spirit of God, we should use all legitimate means to attain this blessed end. That was the spirit of the Apostle Paul. In his letter to the saints at Galatia, he says: "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." I fear we know very little of this deep exercise and yearning of soul before God for the salvation of our fellow-men. Isaiah lxvi. 8, "As soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth children." If we travailed in birth for souls we would see many more converted than we do. Many times we preach the Gospel, and there is little power in our testimony. Our words neither get hold of saints nor sinners. What costs us little we do not value much. If souls are to be saved it will cost us something.

2 Cor. v. 20, "We are ambassadors for Christ." When the Queen sends an ambassador to represent her at a foreign Court, he is not so much occupied with himself and his message as the dignity and honour of the royal personage that he represents. If we were more occupied with the Lord Jesus, the One that we are called to represent, and in whose name we testify before the world, we would pause and consider more than we do what we should say and how we should say it. When you and I are seeking to speak in the name of the Lord to sinners, let us first get into the presence of the Lord. "Let him that heareth say, Come" (Rev. xxii. 17). That is our authority for telling sinners to come to Jesus. It is good for our souls to be engaged in some definite work for the Lord. And whatever work He gives us to do, let us do it under a conscious sense of our dependence on Him for grace to do it.

There is a moral and spiritual fitness necessary for every servant of Christ. They are to

be men of good report (Acts xvi. 1, 2; 1 Tim. iii. 7, &c.). The evangelist should be a man of good report; his moral and spiritual condition ought to be right before God. If we would be real soul-winners, we must first be subjects of Divine illumination, "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus" (2 Cor. iv. 8, 9). Here is the secret of the success of the evangelist. Let us beware of pride and self-confidence. If in our service to the Lord we are not becoming more Christ-like, we lack the secret of real success. Let us seek to live out what we preach. Verse 13, "We also believe, and therefore speak." The measure of our obedience is the measure of our faith. The measure of Abraham's faith was the measure of his obedience (Gen. xxvi. 5). If we get truth direct from God to our own souls in the power of the Spirit it will lead to us obeying it.

Paul, in 1 Cor. ix. 16, says: "Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is me, if I preach not the gospel!" God put him "in trust with the gospel" (1 Thess. ii. 4), and he realised his solemn responsibility in this stewardship. He knew if he was unfaithful to that which had been committed to him he would lose his reward; he would be disapproved as a servant (1 Cor. ix. 27). "Moses had respect unto the recompense of the reward" (Heb. xi. 26). If we would have an approving conscience now, and the Lord's commendation at His coming ("Well done, good and faithful servant"), we must be faithful concerning that which He has entrusted to us. The secret of success and fruitfulness in the Lord's service lies in our abiding in Christ, living daily in His presence, giving diligent attention to His instructions and commands, and faithfully fulfilling them. Amongst the closing words in Rev. xxii., the Lord says: "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me." May our desire be to please Him in seeking to win souls for Him, who will be our "crown of rejoicing at His coming" (1 Thess. ii. 19).—Notes by W. K.

THE world cannot stand before a ministry that is strong in the grace of God. It can stand before eloquence in the preacher; it can stand before philosophy and before learning in the preacher; but before grace in the preacher it cannot stand.—W. H. H.

## MUSINGS ON SECOND TIMOTHY.

FOR YOUNG BELIEVERS.

BY ROBERT STEPHEN, CHINA.

## CHAPTER I.

IT has been said that "the second epistles are eminently written for the last days"; and this second epistle to Timothy, said to be the last that Paul wrote, seems to be even far more fitted for the present time than when it was given into the hands of young Timothy. An epistle of warning, it is like the sea-gulls flying shorewards, telling the mariners that storms are brewing. It was written in trying times. Paul, the aged warrior, was lying in a Roman prison, deserted by friends and persecuted bitterly by foes. The brightness of the Church's testimony had begun to wane, faithlessness to God and His truth had crept in, and laxity and coldness abounded. Few were left faithful; but these the devoted apostle upheld night and day in prayer. In the present day, some who begin well in a few short years get careless, sceptical, and lukewarm, thinking evidently that it is becoming on the part of those who have maturity on their side not to be too sure or too decided regarding the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. But, at the close of life's day, it is refreshing to see the boldness of Paul in declaring the principles taught him of God, even although he was on what would humanly be called the losing side. Certainly it was not earthly gain that made him speak out as he did on the Lord's side. His gains had been labours, stripes, imprisonments, being stoned, shipwrecked, in many perils of trying kinds, in weariness and painfulness, in watchings, in hunger and thirst, fastings, cold and nakedness, and, above all, the care of all the churches (2 Cor. xi. 23-29). This was his lot for many weary years; yet he plodded on through all, a bold and faithful warrior of the Lord Jesus. If self had been the motive of these works, these trials would have knocked all seeming faithfulness out of him; but a true heart to the Lord Jesus lay at the bottom of all. About eleven years before this time he wrote his first epistle to the Thessalonians, and now it is sweet to see him living out the

same principles he then held forth to these saints freshly gathered from heathenism. This, then, is the man who lies, for the sake of the Lord Jesus, in jail, and who writes this epistle. If he gives warning and exhortation, we know that his words are backed up by the godly practice of many years. Although lonely and deserted, still, with faith unquenched, he exhorts Timothy to be true to God and the word of His grace. Timothy, young although he was, had been much taught of God, and had given much joy to the heart of Paul, not so much because of his great knowledge of the Scriptures as the outcome of it, his faith unfeigned. He had journeyed with Timothy years before, and knew his life and faith. Timothy was greatly favoured, having such instructors as Lois, his grandmother, and Eunice, his mother. What a power parents have in moulding the lives of their children! Godly parents, who day by day live that Gospel which they seek prayerfully to instil into the minds of their little ones, are doing work which must be fruitful. The work of mother and grandmother was not lost on Timothy. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God;" so from his youth he was instructed in the truth which "is able to make wise unto salvation." Children taught the truth in a hard, legal way, as if compelled to learn a hard task, will not readily have awakened within them a love for that truth, but rather a dislike. To the parents who are walking with God, however, He will ever give wisdom as to how to bring up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord the children whom He has given.

(To be continued.)

"I DWELL in a house of cedar,' &c. (2 Sam. vii.), followed by the positive sin of murder and adultery (2 Sam. xi.), and finally distrust of the Lord in numbering the people (2 Sam. xxiv.), and the end of all this 'the sword never to leave his house.' How solemn the two histories of dependent David ever praising God, and the self-willed, self-indulgent David, lamenting, with sorrow, the past on a dying bed."—J. B. M.

THOSE who are enjoying a constant settled happiness do not, except when it is a new thing, talk much *about* it; they talk *out* of it.

## INTERCESSION.

IT has been well said, "If thou prayest for thyself alone" (that is, if we are always looking on our own things, and are unmindful of the things of others), we are in the end great losers. We gradually fail (Heb. xii. 15) of the perfect grace of God in which we are set, and become incapable of receiving or communicating the blessings that God would, through such exercises of heart before Himself, cause us to partake of and enjoy. Holy Scripture shows, by many examples, how God, the Almighty, governs the world in having in it His witnesses, remembrancers, and servants, through whose prayers of faith He puts forth his glorious power, according to His own will of purpose and counsel. I will only refer to Moses (Exod. xxxiii. 7-14); Joshua (Josh. vii. 6-8); Elijah (James v. 17, 18); Hezekiah (Is. xxxvii. 14-22); and Samuel (1 Sam. xii.) of old. As examples of this compare Gen. xviii. 17-33 with Acts xii. 1-17. And if Paul so earnestly desired the prayers of "all saints," he no less lovingly and perseveringly presented supplications on their behalf (2 Cor. i. 11; Eph. vi. 18-20; Col. iv. 12; Phil. i. 19).

If, indeed, my heart knows brotherly love and charity, which is the most perfect bond (Col. iii. 13), it must turn without effort and naturally, as it were, to such holy and blessed exercises. I can conceive nothing more acceptable unto God in the way of service (who has so wrought to bring it about) than the mingling together and coming up before Him, through Christ, of this most sweet incense (Exod. xxx. 34-38, compared with Exod. xxx. 1-8 and Ps. cxli. 2), mutual intercessions in the love of the Spirit.

The apostle James says the effectual (or inwrought) fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. This expression "inwrought" brings before us the Holy Ghost the Comforter, who searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God (1 Cor. i. 10). The Spirit of grace and of supplications dwelling in us within the deepest depths of our spirit, the power which worketh in us to will and to do of God's good pleasure, lifting up our poor hearts into fellowship with the Father and the Son, and thus making intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

What a wonderful disclosure this is of the ways of God in the Church and in the world!

The beginning of those ways, by means of which He is linking together in oneness and under one Head (Christ) those whom sin had disunited, both from Himself and from one another. Prayer and intercession do indeed glorify God, because in attending to it and answering it He puts forth His glorious power and wisdom.

He by such manifestations comes forth from that light which no man can approach, and descends in tempered majesty, grace, and blessing upon the creatures or works of His hands.

To know that the desires of my heart can enter into the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth, and He will act in accordance with them, is an overwhelming thought (1 John v. 14, 15).

I feel sure—*ay*, it is sure, because it is written (Dan. ix.), that those saints who dwell most in the secret place of the Most High (Ps. xci.; xxv. 14) abound most in intercessions. We are not, indeed, heard for our much speaking. It does not require bodily exercise, which profiteth little, to accomplish this service. The heart which loves all saints in the bowels of Jesus Christ can, in very few words, make request with joy for all; can through only an emotion of holy love (Col. i. 8) and desire present all before God and our Father, in the name of the Lord Jesus. In the simple yet immeasurably profound words of our Lord Jesus Christ, in John xvii., we see this, and the mind of Christ, and the Spirit of Christ, if unhindered, would bring us into that communion which is meant by the apostle when he writes, "There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling" (Eph. iv. 4).  
C.

"God with us" is the watchword of our warfare, the secret of our strength, the security of our triumph. "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." How strong faith is when we are just fresh from the fountain of redeeming blood! A good conscience, and then faith will do all things; for it is, in its very nature, such as to let God work all. We may say that it is most active when it is most passive, and that it wearies least when it does most work.

## SELECT SAYINGS FROM SEVERAL ADDRESSES TO BELIEVERS.\*

BY ROBERT C. CHAPMAN, OF BARNSTAPLE.

**OUR ENLARGED CAPACITY.**—We are now children in comparison with the manhood of resurrection. "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Cor. xiii. 12). But, nothing shall ever be revealed but the truth we have in God's Book. It will be more perfectly revealed to us in the glory, but it will be the same truth, that is, Christ the Truth. Our capacity will be greater and more excellent, but it will still be the same Christ, and the same ways and works. I would add this word—that every error that Satan has coined, or by which he has deluded any regenerate or unregenerate one, is culled from some Scripture. No error will abide the test of all Scripture. If we have that esteem for the Word of God of which the Psalmist speaks in Psalm cxix. 6, "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all Thy commandments," we shall be guided aright in all things. And whatsoever faults, errors of judgment, of conscience, of spirit, of ways, we detect in ourselves, we shall be enabled to correct and amend.

**REPRESENTING CHRIST.**—In Col. iii. 1 we are raised so high, so unspeakably high in the account of God—higher than angelic beings, and all other creatures of God, above earth's great ones *who "bear not the sword in vain"* (Rom. xiii. 4). Might we not then so behave ourselves in all the relations of life as perpetually to represent our unseen Lord. Whether as husband or wife, parent or child, master or servant, in fulfilling all those relationships, we shall have an abundant opportunity of representing our unseen Lord. And, beloved, these are the circumstances in which I have much opportunity for manifesting Christ, and in which He has most opportunity of helping me. This will turn our natural thoughts upside down. Good circumstances according to the world, would be according to

faith bad circumstances—bad in the account of the flesh would be good in the account of faith. Let us therefore have fellowship in the great business of helping one another.

**THE HUMBLEST AND HIGHEST.**—We who are in the new creation ought to be the humblest of all God's creatures, because we are highest and nearest God. Our hearts have been dwelling upon that blessed truth, "Thou . . . hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me." We don't stand in creature-ship before God (creatures we are and creatures we ever shall be), but we stand in the excellency of our risen Lord. We are more than linked with Him, we are one with Him; He the Head and we the members, one object of God's love; only, in order, Christ first meets the eye and heart of God. We are embraced in His love to Christ. O! what love, what obedience, and what reverence we owe to God. How we ought to tread under our feet all earth's glory; it can only be rags to us. O! how we ought to love all the members of Christ.

**GLORY** is a servant of love. All that God can give is a token of something higher, viz., the love of His heart.

**HIS DOOR.**—We say to sinners who cry out, "What must I do to be saved?" that the Lord is more ready to save them than they can be to be saved. Well, so with us; Christ our Friend is more ready for this friendship than we are. We have never to knock at His door. He may knock at ours and be sent away. His door is always *wide* open. We should never oblige Him to say, "Open to Me, My sister, My love," &c. (Cant. v. 2). Let us not provoke the Lord to jealousy. We have in this friendship an all-sufficient and overflowing cup of comfort. Whatever our matters, they are an occasion of friendship to the Lord; and the deeper the adversity, the more tender and the more mighty the friendship of that love.

I KNOW that many dear Christians, with a troubled conscience, go about the affairs of this life with much prayer; but do they listen to God from day to day? They speak to Him, but do they listen to Him?

"OH, the bitterness and sorrow of taking one wrong step."

\* "Addresses to Believers," by R. C. Chapman. Glasgow: The Witness Office. Paper cover, 3d.; Cloth cover, 6d. Post free. Now ready.

## Correspondence.

### THE FELLOWSHIP OF ASSEMBLIES.

OUR article on "District Oversight Meetings" in September number, and that by our esteemed correspondent, W. H. B., in December number (especially the latter), have elicited many letters of condemnation; several declaring that, on account of these articles, the *Witness* is to be publicly denounced wherever these brethren go, and the assemblies are to be warned against reading it.

To their own Master they have to give account for such proceedings; but it seems to us remarkable that not one of these correspondents have even attempted to enlighten us as to what they have discovered in these articles so contrary to Scripture, that such extreme and almost unprecedented measures are deemed necessary.

We hope to hold ourselves ever open to welcome fresh light from the Scriptures of Truth, and ask special remembrance in prayer at this time that much wisdom and grace may be granted to hold the even balance of truth, and to minister it in love and in the spirit of Christ.

To the Editor of *The Witness*.

SOME questions have been asked with reference to the paper on "*The Mutual Relation of Assemblies*," to which the following replies are given.

1. *Am I to consider the various sects in — churches of God? Would it be according to knowledge to do so?*

No one who has learnt what the Church of God really is can regard any human system, held together by human rules, as a church of God; and yet we must remember that by those in them they are generally regarded as such. In this, as in so many things, the principle of James iv. 17 applies: "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." If we have learnt something of what the church is, we are responsible for obedience to the will of God; but we are freed from the solemn responsibility of judging others. That all ought to know and obey is certainly true; but have we not reason to bow before God and humble ourselves because we have not, by obedience, lowliness, and unity, manifested the truth to others, but rather by our divisions and failures have positively hindered their discernment of it?

2. *Is it possible for members of the body of Christ to be out of the church of God in its local application?*

There can be no doubt that any who come under the sentence of 1 Cor. v. are outside a local assembly, and outside every assembly that truly owns the Sonship of Christ; but any further answer to this, and to another question on the subject, requires the application of the principle above referred to. We are responsible so to carry out the truth in the spirit of Christ, that if Christians remain in human systems instead of gathering simply to the name of the Lord, it shall not be because we, either by teaching or practice, raise barriers against fellowship with any who are Christ's and are seeking to walk in the fear of God.

W. H. B.

### JOTTINGS FROM THE MARGIN OF A BIBLE.

A careless reader of the Scriptures never made a close walker with God.

Men's books with worthless chaff are stored.

God's Scriptures golden grains afford.

Reject the chaff, and spend thy pains

In gathering up the golden grains.

Never go to Scripture to find your opinions in it.

## Questions and Answers.

We desire to express our thanks to all who have sent answers.

We particularly request that each writer will give his name and address in full, not for publication, but that we may know who it is that seeks to help, and, if desirable, that we may communicate privately.

When more than one question is replied to, let the answer to each question be upon a separate piece of paper.

Replies to appear in the next number require to be sent in not later than 15th of present month, and so on; the 15th of the month being always the latest to which we can defer making up for press.

We again urge the importance of replies being *short*; it is essential, in this particular line of things, to be *concise*.

We shall greatly value remembrance in prayer that special wisdom and grace may be given for this service. THE EDITOR.

Replies are invited to the following:—

What would be the *most scriptural* way for a believer to describe him or herself in a census paper; say under the heading of Religious Denomination? Then, if any of the family are (still) unconverted, how should they be described? And, further, how when children have not reached the years of discretion?

Are the new heaven and the new earth, spoken of in Isaiah lxxv. 17, lxxvi. 22; 2 Peter iii. 13, and Rev. xxi. 1, the same in all these passages? An examination of the passages in Isaiah seems to show that the *millennial* earth, not an earth free from sin and death, is there spoken of.

THE LORD'S-DAY.—How may we lawfully view the obligations of the Sabbath-day, as transferred to it? Would it not be of much benefit to the church if the whole question as to the obligations of the Lord's-day were fully entertained from the Word?

What constitutes the difference between an assembly of God and a sect?

FAMILY WORSHIP.—Should what is called "Family Worship" be countenanced when the parents are not children of God?

"SO THEN THEY WHO ARE IN THE FLESH CANNOT PLEASE GOD."

QUESTION 376.—"So then they who are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. viii. 8). "But in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of Him"

(Acts x. 35). How can these two passages be reconciled?

**Ans.**—Perhaps it is not necessary to attempt to reconcile them. To assume that a man who was “devout, and one that feared God with all his house, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always”; and to whom an angel from heaven said, “Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God”; to assume that such a man was in the flesh, and could not please God, is certainly not just and right, for he had pleased God. Peter had to be taught a stranger lesson before he could say to this man, “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of Him.” This is only one of many cases that prove the truth of the words, “For My thoughts are not your thoughts; neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord”; and, “a Just God, and a Saviour.” Read the remarkable parenthesis in Romans ii. 13, 14, 15, R.V. I do not think Romans viii. 8 touches Cornelius, nor Acts x. 35 at all. L. D. G.

**Editor’s Note.**—The difficulty probably arises from a misunderstanding of Acts xi. 37. It is hastily judged from this that Cornelius and those with him were unsaved or unregenerate persons. But those who think so overlook the fact that Cornelius stood at the crisis of the past and present dispensations. As pertaining to the past he feared God, wrought righteousness, and was accepted of Him. See Acts x. 35.

But in order to be “saved,” according to the full new covenant bearing of the Word, it was necessary that he should hear and believe the Gospel of Christ, the Risen Son of God, and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The God who had heard his “prayers,” and taken notice of his “alms,” secured that the glad tidings of His grace, according to the heavenly calling of the new dispensation, should speedily be testified to him. “He that is of God heareth God’s words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God” (John viii. 47). The instant joyful reception given to the Word, as it came from the lips of Peter, showed that Cornelius and his friends were “of God.”

#### THE UNIVERSAL FATHERHOOD OF GOD.

**QUESTION 377.**—In view of the passages in Acts xvii. 29, Luke iii. 38, xv. 11-32., is it scriptural to speak of “the universal Fatherhood of God?”

**Ans. A.**—The universal Fatherhood of God is a “doctrine of devils” invented by “seducing spirits,” very pleasant to “itching ears,” and sure to become popular among men “having their conscience seared with a hot iron” (1 Tim. iii. 1-2).

It does seem plain, from a consideration of Acts xvii., that the apostle resorted to “the enticing words of man’s wisdom,” as he gives a quotation from a *poet*, and not from the *prophets*, as was his custom (Acts xiii. 40; xvii. 27). Leaving Athens he came to Corinth, where he “was constrained by the Word to testify that Jesus was the Christ” (Acts xviii. 5, R.V.). Abba, Father,

is an expression found three times in New Testament Scriptures. “Abba, Father, all things are possible to Thee,” is the language of the *Son* amid the deepening shades of dark Gethsamane (Mark xiv. 36). Abba, Father, is the language of the “*Spirit of His Son*” sent forth into the hearts of all believing ones (Gal. iv. 6); and last of all, *we* have received the spirit of adoption, whereby *we cry*, Abba, Father (Rom. viii. 15). Such, and such only, are children of God, all others “are of their father the devil, and the lusts of their father will they do” (John viii. 44; Acts xiii. 10). T. B.

**Ans. B.**—I suggest, first, that Acts xvii. 29, though it does endorse the teaching of the heathen poet, only does so in the sense of men being creatures of the Creator; second, it should be noticed that in the genealogy of Luke iii. the term, “the Son,” only occurs *once* in the text of the whole genealogy, viz., “the son of Joseph” (verse 23); all the others are supplied by the translators, and appear in italics. I incline to the opinion they should not appear at all, for the last statement in verse 38 makes Adam the son of God; and third, it must be observed and remembered that Luke xv. 11-32 is only a *parable*. Man was the work of the Almighty Creator, hence, in a creative sense, “the offspring of God.” However, we need not hesitate to say that the term, “the universal Fatherhood of God,” as used for several years past by the leading teachers and popular lecturers and preachers of the Congregational body, is *not* scriptural, but is error, and is followed by false doctrine of a serious character. L. D. G.

**Editor’s Note.**—We cannot accept the view expressed in Answer A that the words of the apostle, recorded for our instruction by the Holy Ghost, were a resort to man’s wisdom.

To have quoted from “the prophets” in addressing Gentile heathens would have been then, as now, to appeal to an authority of which they were quite ignorant. But truth is many-sided, and some aspect of truth is to be found mingled in with nearly all human forms of religion.

The apostle begins where the Bible begins, and where all instruction to the heathen must ever begin, with God as Creator (see also Acts xiv. 15-17). And in support of the great truth of His Creatorship, and also to demonstrate to them their folly in making humanly-devised likenesses of God the Creator, he quotes from “certain of their own poets” what undoubtedly is a phase of truth, that man derived his being from God, and is dependent for his life and breath on the God who gave him his being.

But through sin all the higher attributes of Sonship were lost to man; he no longer bears the image of the God who created him, nor does he possess in any degree the Spirit of Sonship. The only aspect of it that remains is the unalterable fact that from God man has derived his being. More than this is not contended for by the apostle. But, morally, man the sinner is after the likeness of Satan. The Jews said, “We have our father, even God.” Jesus said unto them, “If God were your Father ye would love Me . . . ye are of your father the devil”; and here the moral likeness comes in, “the lusts of your father ye will do.”

But modern popular religion ignores this solemn teaching, and builds upon the isolated passage in Acts xvii. a theory that it never was intended to teach.

### WHAT IS A "SECT"?

#### QUESTION 378.—What is a "sect"?

**Ans. A.**—The "with us" of Luke ix. 49. An association of professed Christians upon a basis of fellowship unsanctioned by the doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ. A. L.

**Ans. B.**—A leading English dictionary says a sect is "a body or number of persons who follow some particular teacher, or who are united in some settled tenets or doctrine."

Ecclesiastically a sect may be described as a company of professed Christians who are gathered together *anywhere* EXCEPT on the Divine foundation on which the Church of God was first planted by the Holy Spirit. See I Cor. iii. 6-11. G. A.

**Ans. C.**—The "sects" of our day are not found in New Testament history, viz., bodies of so-called Christians, permanently separated from the rest, and completely organised in imitation, more or less imperfect, of the Church. The sects of the New Testament were rather what we should call factions inside the Church fellowship.

If the Spirit of God condemned so severely those divisions (I Cor. iii.), what must be the Divine abhorrence of the state of Christendom? That was corruption: this is ruin.

A sect is a body making church claims, which, in its principles, or by its practice, violates the essentials of the Church of God. For example—

(1) A body which, whatever its profession may be, does not really and sincerely gather to Christ as the centre, but to some other, as, for example, to Ecclesiasticism (as of Rome), or to a doctrine, true or false (as Baptism), or to a founder (as Wesley).

(2) A body whose conditions of membership are unscriptural. For example, doors open to all sinners (too inclusive), or doors not open to all saints\* (too exclusive).

(3) A body which adopts some system or rule binding its members, which is not so given in Scripture; e.g., ordination of ministers, exclusion of God's Word from meetings, united oversight, &c., &c.

The thorough-going sectarian limits his interest and activity to his own community, and to marshal, organise, increase and perfect that, is all his concern, while he feels no sympathy or tolerance for any who will or do not first conform to his ideas.

The true "churchman," on the other hand, for love of the Church, disowns all church pretensions as of Babel, if not of Babylon, meets with those who gather locally in the name of the Lord Jesus, and seeks to honour Him by extending love and fellowship, service and sympathy, to every member of His body, wherever he is and whatever his condition; and, "Inasmuch as

ye did it to one of the least of these, My brethren, ye did it unto Me," is his ample reward. G. F. T.

**Ans. D.**—A sect is a body of persons professing any peculiar doctrine or doctrines by which they are specially known. The word rendered "sect" in Acts v. 17, xv. 5, xxiv. 5, xxvi. 5; I Cor. xi. 19, is "heresy," and is so rendered by the A.V., R.V., and Alford, in I Cor. xi. 19. The word is by some rendered "faction," as an alternative reading, and is used in both a good and a bad sense. L. D. G.

**Editor's Note.**—The Greek word rendered "sect" is the same as that rendered "heresies": a "heretic" is "a sectarian man." The "divisions" in the Corinthian church are designated by a different word, from which our English word "schism."

The schism might be within the assembly as in the Corinthian church, open severance not having been then arrived at, although the approaching necessity for such action is clearly pointed to by the apostle in xi. 19.

The "divisions" of Corinth, which ultimately issued in the sects of Christendom, were the result of carnality, the saints thus failing to give Jesus Christ His rightful place as Lord, and so ranging themselves under human names. Their diminished regard for the authority of the Lord, and their corresponding undue regard for His servants, was severely challenged and rebuked by the apostle, and they are instructed as to the deep significance of such a form of departure from the Lord, and exhorted to speak all the same thing, and to be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

Those who seek, in accordance with these exhortations, to obtain and act upon the mind and judgment of the Lord, will doubtless be regarded by all others as a "sect," and may even be, as such, "everywhere spoken against" (for the mind and judgment of the Lord can never be acceptable to the carnal); but in the eyes of "Him with whom we have to do," the endeavour to please Him and to keep the unity of the Spirit by maintaining "the unity of the faith" in lowliness and in love, will yield its fruit of blessing now and of glory hereafter. "Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and has not denied My name."

But let it never be forgotten that, even in such gatherings, there may be the spirit of division, the very essence of sectarianism unjudged, quickly manifesting itself in various ways; e.g., Upon any difficulty arising, taking *sides* and setting up "an opposition bench." Some becoming known as sure to oppose everything that does not emanate from their "side." Or by so speaking of fellow-members of the body of Christ as to dishonour or disparage them because they have not attained to the knowledge of the mind of the Lord as to the evils of sectarianism, and consequently are members of sectarian associations, though personally godly and devoted.

**We have not received any answers to the questions concerning "New Heaven and New Earth" and "Family Worship," and only ONE to those on "Census Paper" and "The Lord's Day." We should be glad of further help.**

\* Of course this does not touch the question of exclusion upon clear scriptural grounds.

## THE AUTHORITY BELONGING TO THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS,

In connection with the Preaching of that Name to the World, and the Place that He occupies in the Assembly.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY A. J. HOLIDAY.

LET us read Phil. ii. 5-11—"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, counted not equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself (see R.V.), and took upon Him the form of a servant. . . . He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." I have read this scripture as following up the deeply important matters in regard to rule and government which have just been brought before our attention; and I would seek, by the help of God, continuing in the same line, to connect these thoughts especially with the mind of God as to the authority belonging to the Name of the Lord Jesus, in connection with the preaching of that name to the world, and the place that He occupies in the assembly. In this connection I will ask you to turn with me to two passages of Scripture. The first is Matt. xvi. 13-19. Peter having made the confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," the Lord said to him, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church." Peter acknowledges God's great Rock-foundation, that never can be shaken, and upon which all the purposes of God are to be established. The Lord, on the other hand, speaking of the Church as a building, declares that those who are to be built upon that foundation must have something in common with the foundation; they must be partakers of the Divine nature. Peter in Greek is *Petros*, and rock is *Petra*. When the Lord says, "Thou art *Petros*, and upon this *Petra* I will build," &c., He is saying, in effect, "Thou art a Rock-man," one who has the same nature as the rock. And to whom-

soever it is given by the Father to know Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, such an one becomes a Rock-man, a living stone. We know that Romanists have misinterpreted these words of Christ, by making them to mean that Peter is the foundation upon which the Church is being built. The best answer to this delusion is to be found in the Spirit's commentary on the matter, by the pen of the same apostle. Look at 1 Peter ii. 3, 4—"If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house." Does Peter ever suggest that anybody was to be built upon himself? He is but one of the living stones, and every one who is taught of God that Jesus is the Christ is a partaker of the Divine nature which belongs to Him who is at the same time the Sure Foundation and the Chief Corner-stone.

But we will turn back to Matt. xvi.: "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be, having been, bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be, having been, loosed in heaven" (verse 19). This is the rendering of the verse given by Dr. Young in his translation of the Scriptures; and I believe it to be undoubtedly correct.

You will observe the great difference between this and the rendering of the Authorised Version. This latter gives us the idea that the binding on earth precedes the binding in heaven; while the former teaches us that God binds in heaven first, and that, as the one who is taught of God to declare His mind speaks in accordance with that which is already registered in heaven, what he says shall stand fast.

What, then, are we to understand that the Lord meant by these solemn and remarkable words which he addressed to Peter? Was He bestowing some special power upon him, such as the "Church of Rome" declares to have come down to her by direct apostolic succession? Was He entrusting Peter with the power to forgive sins or to keep people in their sins? Let Peter again answer the question. Turn to Acts xv. We have it here recorded that a council of the apostles and elders was held at Jerusalem to consider

a matter brought before them. Certain Pharisees had been down to Antioch wishing to compel the Gentile converts to be circumcised and to keep the law; and Paul and Barnabas had been sent up from Antioch to Jerusalem to confer with the apostles and elders about this matter. In verses 7-11 we find Peter speaking on this question. Does he claim some special power of binding and loosing individuals by the exercise of his own authority? Nothing of the sort. Here is what Peter understood by Christ's entrusting him with the keys of the kingdom of heaven: "Men and brethren," he says, "ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles through my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bear them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." Peter once again rehearses what he had already declared before the apostles and elders at Jerusalem in chapter xi. He had been justifying himself on that occasion for having eaten with Gentiles, and his justification was that God had bestowed the Holy Spirit upon them that believed; and who was he, that he should withstand God by refusing to have fellowship with them? And now Peter appeals to the same thing again, to remind those to whom he was speaking that God had put no difference between the apostles themselves and these believing Gentiles. He does not even say, "We believe that *they* shall be saved even as *we*," but, "*We* shall be saved even as *they*." There was Peter's understanding of this matter, and it exactly explains to us what was meant by the binding and loosing, and by the keys of the kingdom of heaven being committed to Peter.

When Peter first preached the Gospel to Jews, on the day of Pentecost, at Jerusalem, and to Gentiles, in the house of Cornelius, God was simply using his mouth that men might hear and believe. But, none the less, when Peter declared that the sinner who trusted in Jesus was delivered from condemnation, his word of loosing or deliverance would be made good, for it agreed with that which was settled in heaven. In like manner, if he

declared that the Christ-rejector was condemned already, the word must equally stand fast, being in accordance with the Divine decree. And all this holds good with us also when we preach the Gospel. It is an individual thing. It was not addressed to the disciples collectively, but to Peter as an individual, yet it did not belong to Peter exclusively, but followed on his individual confession of Christ and his individual proclamation of Christ to others. In exactly the same way it belongs to each one who, being taught of God, confesses Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God. Such an one is, therefore, a Rock-man, built upon the Divine foundation; and when he witnesses to others about the Christ, according to the Divine teaching, he becomes again what Peter was in that day, one binding and loosing according to the Divine decree. Men may say to us, "I don't believe in salvation in your easy way." But, none the less, according to their acceptance or rejection of the Christ whom we preach to them, they shall be loosed from the bonds of judgment or held fast in them.

Turn now to Matt. xviii. 15. I would ask you to notice here how the subject being dealt with is commenced from the opposite end to that at which the Lord commenced in the other matter in chapter xvi. There He began with that which was true of Himself, and from that all the rest proceeded. He said, "Upon this rock I will build My Church"; and then went on to show how that building should be carried on, through the witness of those who had been taught of God, which witness should be accompanied with His power. But in this 18th chapter He begins at the other end; for, starting with a matter between two brethren, He shows those brethren to be part of a company or association having responsibility concerning one another, and having bid them carry out certain steps belonging to that responsibility, He leads up to the fact that their association is all founded upon Himself, and that His authority accompanies the steps taken, and he calls that company of believers by the same name of Church that He had before applied to the whole building that He had said that He would build. Now, there is manifestly a distinction between those two aspects of the Church. When Christ says,

“Tell it unto the Church,” He does not mean the Church of which He spoke in chapter xvi.; we cannot tell anything to that Church. It is very plain that a brother in a difficulty cannot tell it to the Church which began at Pentecost, and will only be completed when the Lord comes. The Church in chap. xviii. is something well known, well defined, something about which the parties here concerned are in no doubt, something that can be reached by individuals. Now, my object in turning to this scripture is to point out what is the character of the Church here spoken of, as compared with the aspect of the Church brought before us in Matthew xvi.; but I must pause a moment to ask you to consider the words of the 15th verse: “Moreover, if thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; and if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.” Is it not true that there is scarcely any instruction in all the Divine record that we need to have more deeply impressed upon us than that contained in these exceedingly familiar words? Alas! how much of sorrow, of heart-burning, of division and strife, might have been saved if we had acted out both the letter and the spirit of these instructions on all occasions. If I have dared to speak to others about my brother’s fault before going to him, I have in great measure unfitted myself for that which is in the heart of God, the gaining of my brother; and I have put myself out of fellowship with God about this purpose of His. I shall need, therefore, to judge myself about my own sin, and to confess it to God, before I venture to go, at the bidding of the Lord Jesus, to seek to gain my brother.

Read verses 17 and 18: “. . . if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church: but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be, having been, bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be, having been, loosed in heaven.” The grammatical construction is the same here as in chapter xvi. Verse 20—“For where two or three are gathered together unto My name, there am I in the midst of them.” And thus, beginning from the other end, the Lord brings us back exactly to the point at which He

started, in the matter of Matt. xvi. He Himself, that which He is, is the sole foundation, the one only source of power and authority in the one matter exactly as in the other; and our relationship to Him in both cases is exactly the same. Here, as in Matt. xvi., the binding and loosing is done in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus. Though the matter began with a personal trespass, it passed beyond the control of the individual, when, having taken the one or two more with him, and having failed in gaining his offending brother, he now has to tell it to the Church, that they may unitedly, in responsibility to the Lord, act according to His command about it.

*(To be concluded in Next Number.)*

### “SOLAR LIGHT AS ILLUSTRATING THE TRINITY.”\*

Gen. i. 1-19.

OUR subject is “Light”—the light of the sun. God is light; and God is a sun and shield. I shall speak of light to-night as illustrating the Trinity of the Godhead, in order that we may have clearer thoughts of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

I will, then, simply commence by recalling these nineteen verses of Gen. i. “In beginning God,” “Elohim.” That is how God reveals Himself in the very first sentence of the inspired Scripture. “In beginning,” without the article; that is, in some undefined period in eternity, “created”—here the word “created” is in the singular, while God “Elohim” is the plural of God Eloah, the object of Divine worship. This is contrary to the rules of grammar that the verb must agree with the nominative case in number and person, but in harmony with the usage of Scripture. Thus the sentence, opening up eternity, reveals the mystery of the Trinity acting in unity—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost acting in the work of creation.

“In beginning,” Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, acting in the unity of the Godhead, “created,” brought into existence out of nothing (so Heb. xi. 3 teaches us, “that the

\* Notes of an address by Mr. Thos. Newberry, at Regent Hall, Cheltenham, 6th October, 1890.

things which are seen were not made out of things which do appear"). Matter is not eternal; but in some undefined period God brought the universe of matter into being out of nothing.

"God created all things through Jesus Christ, so that without Him was not one thing made that hath been made." Again, we read, "Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, they are created" (Ps. civ. 30), showing us that God the Father creates all things through Jesus Christ, but by the energy of the Holy Ghost. So we find the head originates the thought, the arm is stretched forth to accomplish, while the fingers manipulate or write the thought we express. Father, Son, and Spirit co-operate in every work and word. The Father makes known all to the Son, the Son does nothing without the Father; but it is by the Spirit of God, called in Scripture the finger of God "the work of Thy fingers" (Ps. viii. 3); "By His Spirit He garnished the Heavens" (Job xxvi. 13); and the phrase, "By the Spirit of God," in one gospel, is rendered "By the finger of God" in another—that the work is made effectual, whether in creation, providence, or grace. The three persons of the Trinity always act in unison, harmony, and together, each in His own sphere, but the one never acting without the other.

Over the first chapter of Genesis you will find in the margin of your Bibles, "B.C. 4004." I believe this is out of place, and therefore in the Englishman's Bible you will find I have placed B.C. 4004, not before the first verse, but at the commencement of the second. The first verse gives an account of the universe being brought into being out of nothing. The history of this present world begins at verse 2, where we are told the earth was "without form and void"—the words meaning "emptiness" and "confusion." How it got into that form we are not told, how it became empty and void we are not instructed; but in Isaiah xlv. 18, we read, "He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited"; and the words "in vain" are the same as rendered in Genesis i. 2, "without form." So the first chapter of Genesis gives, not so much the history of the creation, as the re-formation or reconstruction of the world. Whether this condition of the world had to do with the fallen angels, "who

kept not their first estate," we are not told, but they may have involved this world in their own ruin; at all events, we find that, just after the re-formation of it, the serpent and Satan appear on the scene.

"Darkness was upon the face of the deep," and the Spirit of God is then seen moving upon the face of the waters. Thus the personality of the Spirit of God is brought out. The word "moved" is the same as that rendered in Deut. xxxii. 11, "Fluttereth over her young." The Spirit is thus hovering over the surface of the waters of the earth, a confused mass of liquid and solid, without form or beauty, shrouded in darkness, when God says, "Let there be light!" and there was light. We have not here, I believe, the creation of light, but simply the fact that at this stage of the history God brought light into the darkness. In Isaiah xlv. 7, we read, "I form the light, and create darkness." Creation is the bringing in of something which did not exist before. Formation is the artistic arrangement and combination of a thing; it is the word God uses when he says he formed man of the dust of the ground; it is the action of the potter moulding the clay—artistically, scientifically forming and combining. Darkness, then, is a creation; it is an abnormal thing, and no doubt sin brought in darkness, for God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. But "I formed the light" gives us an idea with regard to light which science authenticates, namely, that there is nothing so wonderfully and artistically formed of all God's works as light. I know of nothing which can be compared to it.

All this is a foreshadowing of the work of the Spirit of God in the restitution and reconstruction of man from the ruins of the Fall—first brooding over, stirring up, upon the unformed darkness of man's mind and soul; convicting, agitating, and then bringing in light from the Word of God. "He spake, and it is done," and life with the light is imparted.

Light is brought in and localised at first, and then we find the earth for three days revolving on its centre, and alternately passing from light to darkness.

On the fourth day, God says, "Let there be lights, or light-givers, in the firmament of the heaven," and "God made (and the word "made"

here means to construct out of existing materials) two great lights, the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night." When the sun and moon came into the creation at the first, it appears that the sun was not luminous as now, although the centre of attraction to the earth; but on the fourth day the light, previously localised, clothed the sun with light as with a garment, constituting the sun as the light-giver of the heavens and earth, and the source of heat and active fructifying power. The light is now connected with the sun and called the photosphere, the disc or face of the sun; and the moon is reflecting for the first time this light, and thus commences to rule the night. I think we may see in all this something that will help us in our apprehensions of God, and Christ, and the Spirit.

God is a sun, and God is light.

What is the sun? Astronomers tell us it is a stupendous orb, in itself opaque and invisible, a million times larger than this world, and five hundred times larger than all the other planets and satellites of the solar system together, and hence the centre of gravity of all. But on the fourth day this orb, the centre of power but not the source of light, was clothed with light as with a garment, and became for the first time visible; but it was only seen in the face of the photosphere by the rays of light that proceeded from it, making it glorious to the view, and constituting the moon its reflector.

Compare this with the fact explained in Heb. i., where, though the Greek word for God does not express the Trinity, as does the Hebrew, yet the same truth is brought out in the doctrine. "God . . . , who spake in time past . . . by the prophets, hath . . . spoken unto us by the Son, who, being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person . . . upholding all things by the word of His power."

As in the first three days the light brought in was localised and diffused, so God, until the fourth thousand year, spoke by the prophets, and the light of God and Divine truth was thus diffused; but when the fulness of time came (the fourth thousand year), the fourth day the light diffused by the prophetic scriptures now becomes concentrated, as it

were, in the person of Emmanuel. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son . . . He hath declared Him." "Immortal, invisible," but the One in the bosom of the Father, He "hath declared Him," and He came into the world, thus being constituted the light and centre of God's solar system.

"The brightness of His glory." Just as the photosphere of the sun is the brightness of its glory, the express image of its person, taking the form of the sun and manifesting it, so God has spoken by the Son, and upholds all things by the word of His power.

The sun's rays, warmth, and energy come through the photosphere; and so we find that God is manifesting Himself in the person of Christ by the Holy Ghost. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." But how? "No man knoweth the things of man but by the spirit of man; even so knoweth no man the things of God but by the Spirit of God, and we have received the Spirit which is of God that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God."

God spake by the prophets—type, shadow-vision; and now, when He by Himself hath purged our sins and taken His seat at the right hand of God, He has sent down the Holy Ghost—the sunbeam coming down from the sun, forty days after the resurrection and ten days after the ascension—the Comforter to reveal the glory of God in the person and face of Jesus Christ.

At the same time, just as the moon was constituted the ruler of the night by reflecting the light when the sun itself was no longer visible, so that Son was the light of the world; but those beams which first shone on the plains of Bethlehem sunk behind the hill of Calvary and left the world in darkness. Then rose the moon (the Church) in her Pentecostal beauty to be the light of the world until the day we look for dawns; for the night is far spent, the day is at hand when the Sun of Righteousness shall rise with healing in His wings, when every eye shall see Him, and He shall give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, and the Spirit shall be poured out on all flesh.

Just as with the moon there is waning and waxing, so the Church has shone with varying brightness during the history of the ages. What causes the waning? The moon can only reflect while her face is turned toward the sun; when it is turned away she only shows her cold shoulder. Her light becomes less and less until she turns round again to face the sun. When the Church looks with open face on that glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, she is changed from glory to glory, waxing brighter and brighter; but mark, it is only by the Spirit of the Lord. That is, as the moon shines by the light of the sun, so the Church, receiving the teaching of the Holy Ghost, reveals that light, Jesus Christ; but it is reflected light—no power to shine in herself.

What is Unitarianism? I call it insanity. It is that which refuses to look at the sun by means of the sunbeam. Denying the Holy Ghost, seeing God in the works of His hand, it is an attempt to contemplate the sun by means of moonshine! Trying to see God without Christ or the Holy Ghost.

But we, above the world, gazing upon the glory, with the full face turned to the Sun of Righteousness, though the world see Him no longer, shall be reflecting His full light upon the dark, benighted world beneath.

Notes by H. E. C.

#### ATONEMENT A NECESSITY.

The Atonement was necessary in order that God might be so propitiated toward sinners as to render it consistent with His infinite perfections to pardon their sin; because, had sin been pardoned without such a satisfaction, its exceeding evil would not have been displayed; the law which forbids it would not have been magnified; the holiness of God, which abominates it, would not have been cleared; the glory of God, which has been insulted by it, would not have been vindicated.

#### FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST.

To present Christ to others, we must be occupied with Him ourselves; and it is only as we *begin, continue, and end* our work at our Master's feet that our service or testimony will be of the right kind.

## THE CLOUD OF JEHOVAH'S PRESENCE.

THOUGHTS ON PSALM CV. 39.

THE cloud of Jehovah's presence was Israel's covering. The glory tabernacled in the cloud, and *under the cloud* the sun smote not Israel by day, nor the moon by night.

It was also their *guide*.

But Israel turned his glory into shame, and caused Jehovah's name to be blasphemed among the nations (Rom. ii.), while God bore with their manners in the wilderness, as a nurse with naughty children. At last the glory departed. How loth He was to leave Ezekiel is witness; but Isaiah unveils His heart, and in chapter iv. we see His settled purpose to be with them again.

The cloud, in which the glory tabernacled in the wilderness, was a fitting type of Christ.

God in unveiled glory on Sinai made even Moses exceedingly fear and quake; but the glory in the cloud could be waited on and seen without terror.

In a later day, "all the publicans and sinners drew near to Jesus."

Elihu, in Job xxxiii., says, "My terror shall not make thee afraid; I also am formed out of the clay." Thus spake he, as a type of Christ, who became man, to reveal God; that sinners might, through death and resurrection, be brought to God.

But Isaiah iv., connected with Rev. xxi. 9 to end, gives us a further thought in connection with all this.

The cloud was simply a vessel of the glory—a giver-out of Him who is light, in a suited way.

Man, as he is, cannot endure a full revelation of God. As a fallen creature, it would be hell on earth to him. Christ came forth from the bosom of God, and took part of flesh and blood. In His humiliation He tabernacled amongst us—revealing the Father. None but One, who *is* God, could do this. He truly said, "As the Father knoweth the Son, *even so* know I the Father"—therefore He could reveal Him. He stood on earth as the One whom Job longed for—One who could "lay His hands on both." He satisfied God, and met the need of man.

Connecting Isaiah iv. and Rev. xxi. 9 to

end, we see that His Church is in grace linked up with Him, as Israel's future cloud.

Now we are lights in the world, to tell to saint and sinner something of God. He who is light and love hath shined in our hearts, that we may *give out* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ. Earthly ways hinder this, and worldly ways dim its rays, but nevertheless He has put the light in these earthly frail tabernacles, that we may hold forth the Word of Life. If we were really desiring like Paul to know Him, and with settled purpose gazing on Him, we would be changed into the same likeness from glory to glory—and men would daily take knowledge of us that we had been with Jesus. How our ways mar this; we grieve the Holy Spirit by our unforgiving manners to each other. Instead of walking in love and being kind and tender-hearted towards one another, we manifest to saint and sinner too often the very opposite of what is now shining in the face of Jesus Christ (Eph. v. 1, 2).

But in the time of Rev. xxi. 10, all that hinders the light shining will be left behind. We shall "shuffle off this mortal coil" at His coming, and be clothed in immortality; and that which was sown in corruption shall be raised in incorruption; and then, as the precious gems of the heavenly city, and like the cloud, we shall reflect on the millennial earth the glory of God. Thus shall Christ be glorified in His saints; for they, with the Lamb in the midst, will give light to all that scene. The nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of this glorious company, and of the nations which *despised* them on earth—that which remains (the saved nations) shall bring their glory and honour to it, and confess that God has loved them as He loved His Son (John xvii. 23, Rev. iii. 9).

And note—it was one of the angels who had the seven vials, or *altar bowls*, who showed John these things. The altar bowls contain the prayers, the groans, the tears of God's saints for all time. The hour of vengeance has come, when God shall avenge His elect. What a warning to us; for while none of "His own" will ever pass through this time of vengeance, yet in this life do we reap the fruit of naughty things said and done to those who are dear to God.

O let us be careful how we speak to, or of, "His own"—He feels it, for it is done to a member of His body.

May this one thought curb our lips as we speak, and our pens as we write of those who are precious to God. Of those for whom Christ *gave Himself*. Of those who are the gift of the Father to His beloved Son—the seed whom He saw, when, having made His soul an offering for sin, He arose on the resurrection morn—each quickened into life in Him.

We prize and take care of what costs us much. We value a gift because of the one who gave it. Let us remember that each redeemed sinner is the purchase of His own precious blood—and *the gift of the Father to the Son*.

While hating the *garment*, the spotted garment that dims the light within, let us ever remember that the *wearer* is like the cloud indwelt by the glory (1 Cor. vi). T. C.

## INDEPENDENCY.

LIKE the swing of the pendulum, we often go from one extreme to another. Forgetting that truth is two-sided, we are so foolish that we reject the one side because we see the other. Like the two travellers in the story, who quarrelled over the colour of the statue. One said, "It is white." "Nay," replied the other; "it is black." The dispute waxed hot. They charged each other with falsehood, and were about to cross swords over the vexed question, when they discovered that both were true; for one side was white, and the other black. Thus they learned the need of looking at both sides before giving an opinion. This same care is requisite in the things of God. Particularly is it so in the matter of our relationship one with another. In this the order must be, "Fear God" first, then "love the brotherhood"; otherwise there will be confusion, and worse results. The Divine command to be subject one to another may be so pressed that the individual conscience is crushed out. Those who should be guides become lords over God's heritage (1 Pet. v. 3).

Paul told the Corinthians that he did not seek to have dominion over their faith, but to be their helper (2 Cor. i. 24). Many there be,

outside the Church of Rome, who claim to be successors of the apostle, yet who cannot make this noble declaration. The Jezebel doctrine that proclaims, "*Hear the Church* ; the teachers ; the oversight," must be withstood at any cost. Vital godliness *can only be maintained* as Christ is the real and not the nominal Lord of His assembly. The conscience must be swayed and ruled by Christ, and Him alone, and every other teaching is disloyalty. Yet the recoil from the false extreme on the one side may land the saint, unless he is watchful, on to the quicksands of what we will call, for want of a better name, independency.

Mr. Hold-fast-the-truth looks with something akin to contempt on Mr. Submit-to-my-brethren. "Ah," says he, "I don't confer with flesh and blood. It is nothing to me to be judged by others. I strike out a path for myself." The other brother looks with suspicion, in a timid sort of way, at the bolder one, and mutters, "That is not my way." Beware, Mr. Holdfast, lest you stumble over the rock of pride, and not only fall yourself, but bring others down too. Beware also, my timid brother, lest you be so occupied with your brethren (for they are only *brethren*, though they strut about as if they were indeed masters in Israel) that you lose sight of the Master. The second chapter of Galatians will afford an illustration of both sides of the Divine truth of our mutual dependence, for we are members one of another.

In the one case we have an example to follow ; in the other a warning as to what to avoid. Paul is commended, while Peter is condemned. If ever anyone might be independent, it would surely have been Paul. The first chapter is taken up with proof that the Gospel he preached was a Divine revelation to himself. He learned it not from man, neither was he taught it in man's school. Not in Jerusalem, but in Arabia. Further, we may take it, he was in advance in Divine truth of his fellow-apostles. From the first he preached Jesus as the Son of God. Yet when he went up to Jerusalem, fourteen years after his first short visit, though he had been so abundantly honoured of his God with revelations, and used as an apostle, teacher, pastor, and evangelist, what was his course?

How beautiful ! how lovely ! He sought out those of reputation (doubtless those taking oversight), and to them, when gathered *alone*, he told out that Gospel which he preached. Not in a proud, boastful manner, but in such a way as gained the sympathy and fellowship of the brethren. In such a way that they were able to see the grace of God given to him, and to grant him the right hand of fellowship. Paul ever exercised himself to have a conscience void of offence towards God and MEN (Acts xxiv. 16). The pride that likes to be misunderstood is as evil as any other kind of pride, and, alas ! fearfully common. To desire the fellowship of our brethren, and to value their good opinion, is not weakness but faith. If we know we have God's mind, we can surely afford at least to seek to have the God-speed of our brethren, of the elder ones as well as those who may be "our equals."

Now for the other side. The place is no longer Jerusalem, but Antioch, where the disciples were first called Christians (Acts xi. 26). Peter had been there, enjoying much blessed fellowship with Gentile converts, when certain came down from James, and then all was changed. The happy fellowship was broken up. Alas ! for their troubles ; they exist to-day to the sorrow of God's simple ones. These strict brethren ! What would they say if they knew that Peter was eating with Gentiles ? They would pity him, call him a well-meaning person, but, of course, very ignorant. Peter can't stand this. He is afraid of them. Peace at any price. Rather than raise all this trouble and have these brethren, and James and others at Jerusalem, look down upon him, he will withdraw and separate himself from the Gentile converts. Alas ! alas ! the fear of man bringeth a snare.

When what brethren will think of us, rather than what the Lord would have us do, rules our conduct, folly and shame must result. Even so here.

Peter not only gives up his fellowship with Gentile fellow-believers, but is anxious that those who came from James shall never know of it. This is not upright ; and in this dissimulation other Jewish converts, and even Barnabas, are carried away. So their own

consciences are damaged, fellow-saints are slighted, and a glorious Gospel principle is abandoned, all for want of moral courage to act out the dictates of conscience in the fear of God, notwithstanding the frowns of certain, who came down from James. Has all this no voice to us to-day? Are not saints driven to accept theories before they have proved them for themselves from God's Word, under pain of being considered ignorant or not up to date? Action is proposed; but the heart-misgiving that such is not of the Lord is hushed, lest the objector should be put in the terrible list of those "who know nothing of Church truth." Does not this fear ever breed dissimulation? Let us not think Peter only to blame. Had those who came from James been of the Spirit of Christ, such failure had not been. Alas! alas! when teachers aim more at uniformity of action than at the instruction of heart and conscience. The former brings glory to man, and can be brought about by the will of man, but the latter leads to the exaltation of Christ, and can only be accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Cutting, sarcastic words may dragoon saints for a time into the appearance of unanimity, and appear more successful than the patient teaching of the words of Christ; but eternity will reveal the difference in the true result to be as great as between earth and heaven, even the difference between the fear of man and the fear of God. To follow the Lord fully, like a Caleb or Joshua, ever requires courage, moral courage. Paul showed it in always seeking the fellowship of saints, and in submitting himself, as he did once and again, to elder ones at Jerusalem. Peter lacked it when, unable to withstand to the face those who came from James, he gave up the sacred conviction of his conscience, built again the wall of separation which he had pulled down, and caused others also to be carried away with his dissimulation.

W. H. S.

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#### TRUE SERVICE.

True service consists in daily living with God, and letting our life be the outcome of abiding in Christ.

## PAUL'S CONVERSION.

BIBLICAL SOLUTIONS BY A. P. MACDONALD—No. 12.

Compare Acts ix. 1-19; xxii. 1-21; xxvi. 1-18.

IN order to take in the full force of the difficulty some have found in reconciling the statements in the thrice-repeated narrative of the conversion on the road to Damascus, it will be better for the reader to compare Acts ix. 1-19, as it stands in the Revised Version, with the two other passages mentioned above. He will then see that certain details borrowed from chaps. xxii. and xxvi. have, in the Received Text, been inserted into the first and shortest narration. (*Cf.* ix. 5, 6, A.V., with xxii. 10 and xxvi. 14.) He will, at the same time, notice other diversities in the wording of the divers accounts. Are these diversities sufficiently grave to entitle them to be reckoned as contradictions? To this question we shall endeavour to furnish a satisfactory reply.

Let it be remembered, to begin with, that the three narrations are written in the same book, by the hand of the same author. The first is Luke's own statement of facts; the second and third are reports by Luke of the spoken words of Paul relating the same events. Is it not unreasonable to suppose that the former put into the mouth of the latter affirmations which directly contradict his own version of the story? I say, is not such a supposition unreasonable even if we set aside all question of inspiration or even truthfulness? For if Luke wrote with intent to deceive, he would surely have suppressed any details in Paul's speeches which did not agree with his own tale; while, if he merely recounted what Paul had told him, he would surely have corrected his own version so as to make it agree with Paul's. One is forced to the conclusion that the three versions did not appear contradictory in the eyes of the man who wrote them. This is most important, for, even if there remained differences which we could by no means explain, the explanation of them was certainly well known to the historian who put them on record, otherwise he would not have done so. We start, then, with a strong presumption in favour of the belief that the accounts are consistent with

each other. But the Scriptures themselves will bear examination apart from such consideration.

The first and greatest difficulty is that in Acts ix. 7. It is written that the men who journeyed with Paul stopped short, "hearing indeed the voice, but seeing no one"; while, in xxii. 9, Paul himself says, "but they heard not the voice of Him that spake to me."

Note here that both the verb "hearing" and the noun "voice," employed in these verses, are, in Greek, words of at least twofold signification, the exact meaning of which has to be decided by the context wherever we may find them.

Thus *phōnē*, "voice," means really "sound," and is so used in such expressions as: "voice of a trumpet" (Matt. xxiv. 31, 1 Cor. xiv. 8); "voice of the wind" (John iii. 8); "of many waters" (Rev. i. 15); "of wings," "of chariots," and "of horses rushing to battle" (Rev. ix. 9). Elsewhere it is often used for the sound of intelligible words. Nevertheless, as 1 Cor. xiv. 10, 11 teaches us, it is quite possible to hear a voice without knowing the power, or meaning, of the voice.

Again, *akouō* has for its primary and ordinary meaning "to hear." A secondary meaning, however, is "to understand"; and the verb is thus employed in 1 Cor. xiv. 2 (Cf. R. V. and R. M.), where the apostle complains, not that no one could hear, but that those who heard could not understand.

Are we then entitled to accept, in Acts ix. 7, the reading of the Revised Margin, "hearing the sound"; while in xxii. 9 we explain that they "understood not the voice"? I believe that we are; the matter being settled for us by the context in the latter quotation, namely, the explanatory clause: "OF HIM THAT SPAKE TO ME." Evidently the allusion is to the spoken words which the men did not hear so as to comprehend. "Hearing the sound" makes good sense, and is a fair translation; but one would hardly say "they heard not the sound (or 'noise') of Him that spake to me."

A similar event in our Lord's life on earth may help to explain what really took place. In John xii. 28, 29 we read: "There came therefore a voice (*phōnē*) out of heaven, saying, I have both glorified it (*i.e.*, My name), and will glorify it again. The multitude therefore that stood by, and heard (*akousas*),

said that it had thundered: others said, An angel hath spoken to Him." They heard indeed the sound of the voice, but they understood not what the Speaker said.

Another objection has been raised on the ground that the terror of those men is attributed in ix. 7 to their hearing a sound and seeing no one, while in xxii. 9 it is attributed to their having seen the light. One might reply that the words "and were afraid," xxii. 9, are rejected by the R. V. and the most trustworthy editors, and that, therefore, the statement that the men "saw indeed the light" is simply additional information which is not brought in to account for anything. But even considered as the *cause* of the men's fear, are the two things contradictory? Are they not, on the contrary, perfectly consistent with one another and with the rest of the narrative?

Yet a third difference has been quoted concerning the *effect* of their fear. The first account (ix. 7) states that they "stood speechless"; the third account (xxvi. 14) says "we were all fallen to the earth." Again I ask, do these facts exclude one another? Does any one mean to say that they "fell to the earth" without "coming to a standstill"—without "stopping short"?

One might add here that although the importance of the sacred Scriptures, as the written Word of God, attracts inevitably the closest attention to even their minutest details, yet the relative importance of these details compared with the whole is just the same as in any other historical record.

I am not aware that any other "contradictions" have been asserted to exist; but there are two passages sometimes referred to as later additions to the story, and therefore hindrances to the whole being accepted as worthy of confidence. These are: xxii. 13-16, where Ananias speaks at greater length than in ix. 7; and xxvi. 14-18, where the Lord Jesus utters words which are not recorded in ix. 5, 6.

Let the honest reader peruse each of the accounts, in its proper place, and with its own surroundings, and he will see that each one contains what is most fitting, neither more nor less.

In the first, the historian speaks, presenting the facts as a whole, and omitting words and points of detail. Nothing could be more

## MUSINGS ON SECOND TIMOTHY.

(SECOND PAPER.)

BY ROBERT STEPHEN, CHINA.

natural, seeing that the story has to reappear twice in parts of his book where these words and details will be interpreted by the context.

In the second, Paul is defending himself at Jerusalem in presence of an infuriated crowd. He has already affirmed that Jesus the Nazarene is both living and glorified. But it is neither the time nor the place to dwell upon what the Lord Jesus had said to him. The mob has heard more than it can bear of that Name already. A few sentences more and it will interrupt him finally for daring to quote once again from the same glorious Speaker. He makes haste therefore to arrive at what might still produce some impression on his hearers—namely, the sayings of Ananias of Damascus, “a devout man according to the law, well reported of by all the Jews that dwelt there,” and who, nevertheless, had become a Christian at an earlier date than himself. He repeats much, and could probably have repeated more, of the discourse of this worthy man.

The third account is that of Paul’s defence before Festus and Agrippa. Neither the one nor the other was likely to be interested in the personality of Ananias, hence it is not suffered to appear. But one of the judges, King Agrippa, already secretly believing the prophets, was open to an appeal founded on the accomplishment of that “which both the prophets and Moses did say should come.” The other, Festus the governor, idle and indifferent, but puzzled concerning his report to Cæsar, was willing that his prisoner should say all he had to say. Paul seizes the opportunity, tells his conversion in such a way as to evangelise the court and the audience, and, consequently, gives the words spoken by the Lord Jesus their true place and value in his story.

Thus the very variations bear witness to the profound sentiment of unity of which the threefold narrative is the expression.

If we act independently of the Spirit in little things, we shall look for Him in vain in great things.

A PERFECTLY humble man would be one who was always thinking of the Lord Jesus, and *never* of himself.

GOD had gifted Timothy in no ordinary way, and amid the turmoil and trials of the time this gift must not be allowed to slumber. The fire will soon cease to give a bright flame if left alone—it requires stirring. So with gifts God has given, we often allow them to lie unused when they might be turned to good account if only stirred up. Adversity of circumstances and fear of the reproach which may come by close identification with the work of God, often keeps from usefulness talents given by Him. As the fire may get smothered from various causes, so may these. The principal smothering agent in Paul’s day was fear. The persecutions then raging against the afflicted Church of God were enough to make any timid, unless those who were filled with “faith and the Holy Ghost.” Therefore Timothy, on the ground of the fact that God had not given “the spirit of fear,” was to stir up his gift, and do the work to which God had called him, fearlessly. Why should shame cover the face or fear fill the heart at being identified with the Lord Jesus, or His poor, despised, and suffering children? Don’t let your gift slumber, even if the afflictions of the Gospel lay hold on you: “For think it not strange concerning the trial of your faith which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified” (1 Peter iv. 12, 13, 14). Many could bear affliction for the Gospel if it wasn’t over-humbling; but “partakers of the afflictions of the Gospel” means also partakers of the afflictions of those who go through the deep waters for Him. Few would care to acknowledge a poor jail-bird, as he would be called in the present day, like Paul. It was not the first time he had been inside “the dark and gloomy” prison walls for Christ’s sake. His was a low place, but not so low as his Master’s.

Others may be ashamed of the Lord Jesus, and go away and leave the aged apostle alone; the Gospel may become a by-word in the streets of Rome, and men sneer at it and its witnesses on every hand; but he could say, "I am not ashamed: *I know* whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." There is no sign of compromise in these words, but a firm determination to stand and bear all bitterness and shame that may be meted out to him for the sake of the Lord Jesus. Following this declaration comes the exhortation to "*hold fast* the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." False doctrines and heresies were already coming in, but that which he had received must be held with a firm grasp. Hold fast. This gives us the idea of conflict, as if enemies would seek to make us let go the old truths; and it is so, for all around us to-day these are attacked by those who even profess to be God's children. Titus i. 9 says a bishop must be a man "who *holds fast* the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince gainsayers." This truth is to be held in "faith and love." Even if many have deserted the standard of truth, we are, in all our dealings with them, to manifest the love of Him who is the Truth. Grace and truth must go hand in hand. We are not to hold it with a mere intellectual grasp; that wouldn't be safe keeping. Soon would we let it slip if the intellect only held it. We are to *keep* it "by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us." God's children can't be taught of Him apart from the Spirit, and if they would keep what they have been taught they must "walk in the Spirit." This chapter gives us a contrast in verses 15 and 16. Those whose proud hearts could not bear to suffer reproach with Christ, and those who loved in truth the Lord Jesus and his aged and tried servant. Of Onesiphorus, he says, "He oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain." In days gone by he had in many ways ministered to the needs of Paul; but then there was not so much reproach attached to him. Now he was a chained felon, in the eyes of the law, and few would care to have anything to do with him; yet Onesiphorus,

although only on a visit to Rome, sought him out, refreshed his soul again and again, and "was not ashamed of his chain." The heart that is living in touch with the Lord Jesus will always, in any place, in any clime, seek out the Lord's own, and if they are, as the world would say, "away down the social ladder," they will still rejoice to be one with them in their lowliness. Now-a-days there are many lonely and oft-times sorely-tried saints in districts where fellowship with fellow-pilgrims is a rare thing. Is it not the glorious privilege of all who are travelling hither and thither to seek out such and refresh them? for in doing so they will be refreshed themselves. Paul exhorts Timothy "*not to be ashamed* of the testimony of the Lord, or of me His prisoner" (verse 8). In verse 12 he affirms that "*he is not ashamed*" of the sufferings which had come upon him for the Gospel's sake, "for he knew whom he had believed." In verse 16 he says, "Onesiphorus *was not ashamed* of my chain." Precept and example.

#### JOTTINGS FROM THE MARGIN OF A BIBLE.

Parables and typical analogies can only be used as illustrations of what has been proved elsewhere — never as the basis of an argument.

We must talk much *with* God and talk much *to* Him ere we can safely talk much *ABOUT* Him.

One who is always doing and speaking will be apt to do and speak too much.

The measure of our love to the Lord will always be proportionate to the measure of our knowledge of His love to us.

A house without prayer is like a house without a roof — open to every storm that blows.

Sorrows increase when confessions fail.

The measure of a man's holiness is the measure of his obedience to the Word of the Lord.

He who judges of his service by present appearances, will judge by the blossom and not by the fruit.

The highest success is pleasing God.

To learn best how to use this sword,  
Be much in secret with the Lord.

## THE BAPTISM OF LIFE AND THE BAPTISM OF DEATH;

Or, Baptism IN the Spirit and Baptism WITH Fire.

BY J. HIXON IRVING.

### II.—BAPTISM WITH FIRE.

WE now turn to the alternative baptism—that of fire (Matt. iii. 10-12). We have already seen that the Lord Jesus, as the Son of God, is the Immerser in the Holy Spirit, for that immersion is for vital union with the Life (Col. iii. 3, 4). But it is as Son of Man that He immerses with fire, an immersion which is for death and banishment from His presence. As the Head of the Church, He baptises in the Spirit; as Judge of men, He baptises with fire. The Father hath delegated all judicial authority into the hand of the Son of Man, that equal honour should be accorded to the Son as to the Father (John v. 22, 23, 27).

It is on this ground, the investiture with judicial power, that God commands all men everywhere to repent, for He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance—a repentance eventuating in life (Acts xvii. 30, 31). All who have rejected Him as Son of God, the source and giver of life, will have to do with Him as the Son of Man, the death-sentencer. In other words, all who have not believed in Him, and have not been baptised in the Holy Spirit into an inseparable eternal union with Himself, will, for their rejection of Him, be baptised by Him in fire, and banished into an eternal exile from His presence.

#### BAPTISMAL ELEMENT.

We, therefore, need hardly repeat that this element, "fire," is not the Holy Spirit. That it is so is very commonly taught, so that it is the popular idea to-day—an idea deeply imbedded in the hymnology of Christendom, and which has formed the staple of many an eloquent discourse. But like much that passes current among Christians for truth, it will, on closer examination, be found to be without foundation; for there is not the slightest shred of Scripture to support such a thought.

There is no clear warrant for saying that fire is an emblem of the Holy Spirit, much less for the belief that the baptism of fire is His action upon the believer. True it is, we

read of the "seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God" (Rev. iv. 5); but here fire is not emblem of the Spirit at all, but of His action toward the earth after the Church has been removed, and during the "days of the Son of Man"—emblematic of His judgments, for then He will be the Spirit of burning judgment (Rev. v. 6).

I fancy I hear someone saying—"But were not those tongues like as of fire which sat upon each of the disciples on the day of Pentecost not only emblematic of the Spirit, but a proof that they had been baptised with fire on that day in fulfilment of John's prophecy?" That such is the common teaching we know, but at the same time we believe it to be the opposite of truth, as we shall presently show.

Those "tongues like as of fire" (not "of fire," as it is usually put) which were distributed (not "cloven," or bifid) among the one hundred and twenty were neither the baptism of "fire," nor were they emblematic of the Spirit, but symbolic of a gift having been bestowed upon them, enabling them for the time being only to speak in languages they had not learned in the ordinary way, the object whereof was to bring the sin of Israel in crucifying the Lord of Life and Glory, and God's judgment against them in consequence, so vividly before the mind as to lead them to repentance. This was accomplished; they were pierced to the soul, and cried, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts ii. 37). What transpired that day was an illustration of the words of the Lord to the prophet—"I will make My words in thy mouth fire" (Jer. v. 14)—words of judgment.

Now, when we turn to Matt. iii. 9-12, we see that "fire" there is not in any sense figurative of blessing, but just the very opposite. It is set forth as an emblem of that element into which those persons represented by fruitless trees and "chaff" will be cast, and that by our Lord, in that day "that shall burn as an oven" (Mal. iv. 1). How anyone can find anything but judgment without mercy here is more than we can understand. To us it is unmistakably plain that it points to that which our Lord referred to when He said—"I am come to send fire on the earth"; and

again, "Every one shall be salted with *fire*" (Luke xii. 49, Mark ix. 43-50, see R.V.). Ponder the words of the Baptist in the light of our Lord's, and it will be seen that, as in the latter so in the former, "fire" is emblematic of the righteous judgment of God upon ungodly ones as dispensed by the Son of Man.

#### THE SUBJECTS.

Primarily, the Baptist referred to the Pharisees and Sadducees who were "coming to his baptism," or to the place where he was baptising, for they rejected his baptism (Luke vii. 30). To them He made use of those withering words: "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" The "wrath to come" He explained to be the "unquenchable fire," their sure portion if they did not bring forth fruit worthy of repentance. They were but representatives of that class who in every age and place reject the testimony of God to His Son as the Life-giver, and who, in consequence of such rejection, will have to endure the baptism of fire, the first effusion of which will fall upon all such when the "Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance upon them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power" (2 Thess. i. 7-9). O beloved, in the light of that day, how sober and earnest we ought to be, how faithfully we ought to warn men and women to "flee from the wrath to come," to "escape for their life."

#### BAPTISMAL TIME.

It was future when John uttered his prophetic word. It is still in the future, thank God! It cannot begin before the two baptisms which are now going on, both of which are peculiar to this age, shall have ceased—baptism in the Spirit into the one body, and that which follows it, the baptism of the believer in water into the threefold name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt. xxviii. 19). Those two must come to an end before this final one can begin, for the three cannot go on together.

At this point it may be helpful to see that our Lord, at the beginning of His ministry, when He stood up in the synagogue of

Nazareth (Isaiah lxi.), closed His reading with the words, "the acceptable year of the Lord"; and giving the roll to the servant of the synagogue He sat down, saying, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke iv. 16-21). Now, when we turn to Isaiah lxi. we find the next sentence to be, "And the day of vengeance of our God." Why did He not read these words? Why? Because the day of vengeance had not then dawned, neither has it yet come, thank God. But that it is fast hastening is clear to all who are able to understand the "signs of the times." In the closest keeping with the foregoing, we find our Lord, a few days before His ascension, turning the prophecy of the Baptist into a soon-to-be-fulfilled promise, and omitting the word "fire" (comp. Matt. iii. 11 with Acts i. 5). In the same way Peter, in giving an account of what had taken place at Cesarea as being a fulfilment of prophecy and promise, also drops that term (Acts xi. 16). In like manner also, Paul, when writing both to the Corinthian and Galatian saints on the baptism in the Spirit, makes no reference whatever to "fire" (see 1 Cor. xii. 13, Gal. iii. 27).

Now, why this strange silence on the part of our Lord and His apostles if this "fire" is connected with the present action of the Spirit, or is an accompaniment of His work, going on at the present time? This silence would be perfectly inexplicable if fire had anything to do with the present work of the Lord or of the Holy Spirit. If in the days of the apostles it had accompanied the work of the Holy Spirit, would they not have made reference to it? To think otherwise is difficult. On what ground, or grounds, can we, then, account for those strange omissions? On two mainly. First, that "fire" has nothing whatever to do with the work of the Spirit to-day; and second, that this fire immersion had not begun in the days of the Lord Jesus and His apostles—and it has not now begun, neither can it, until the "acceptable year of the Lord" comes to an end. Then He who now baptises in the Holy Spirit His own, will then begin to baptise in fire those who are not His.

*(To be concluded in Next Number.)*

NEVER go about looking for love, but go about showing it, and you will find plenty of it.

## Correspondence.

To the Editor of *The Witness*.

## CHURCH OF GOD.

DEAR BROTHER,

In certain quarters an attempt is being made, for reasons which I do not now discuss, to attach a special and uniform interpretation to the term "*Church of God*"; the acceptance of which a leading advocate recently declared was vital and fundamental. (Vital and fundamental to what? Human theory?) It is said the term carries with it the idea of locality and refers to the assemblies in a given town. Thus all the God-gathered assemblies in Glasgow form the *Church of God*; but no one assembly could claim such title, neither could it embrace a larger circle than the city boundary.

So when Paul wrote, "I persecuted the Church of God" (1 Cor. xv. 9), he meant the Corinthians to understand that his persecution was circumscribed by the walls round about Jerusalem. Yet it is evident that his hatred to the believers was not because they belonged to Jerusalem, but to Jesus of Nazareth, and it was opportunity, not purpose, that limited his persecution; to add the words "in Jerusalem" would therefore convey an inaccurate idea.

Knowing that many of your readers are exercised about this matter, I venture to suggest for their consideration the following:—

*First*.—Scripture nowhere defines the term.

*Second*.—The first use of the word "church" (Matt. xvi. 18), admittedly bring two different ideas before the mind. The first, something committed to our Lord; the second, to human responsibility.

*Third*.—We arrive at this conclusion by the connection or context in which the word is used. We have nothing else to guide us.

*Fourth*.—It follows, wherever the word "church" is used thereafter, the same rule applies, and the context must decide which meaning of the word is intended. It is not true that the words "which is His body" (Eph. i. 23) always qualify the word "church" when used in the sense of Matthew xvi. (see Eph. v. 25).

*Fifth*.—The term "Church of God" is only used some eight times in the Scriptures; only twice is the idea of locality clearly indicated, and that meaning is attached by the addition of the words "at (or in) Corinth" (see 1 Cor. i. 2, and 2 Cor. i. 1).

*Sixth*.—The term can only be proved to be used in connection with the church in Corinth, where there is no proof or indication that there was more than one assembly.

*Seventh*.—In some of the other uses of the term the idea of locality might or might not be attached, and therefore nothing can be affirmed; that is, it cannot be stated that, say in 1 Cor. xi. 22, or 1 Tim. iii. 5, Paul had particularly the church in Corinth or Ephesus in his mind. To assert it is so, is merely to beg the question.

*Eighth*.—But, on the contrary, in the apostle's use of the term in 1 Cor. x. 32 the opposite is obvious. The idea of locality, if imparted, destroys the whole sense of the passages; for, add the words "*in Corinth*" to church, and the result is nonsense. Further, the

next verse shows that which answers to the Jews, Gentiles, Church of God, is ALL MEN.

*Ninth*.—The fact that Paul addressed the Corinthian believers as "the Church of God in Corinth" is no proof that the term "the Church of God," without the addition of words to limit its scope, always refers to the God-gathered saints in a town or city, and that the phrase cannot embrace all such companies, or indeed be applied to even a single such company.

Yours in the truth,

Bradford, 20th Jan., 1891.

W. H. STANCOMB.

45 SHIMO ROKUBAN CHO KOJIMACHI, TOKYO,  
JAPAN, 18th January, 1891.

YOU will be glad to learn that last Lord's-day afternoon I baptised two more youths, the fruits of Bible-class work. Their names are Ishiwaru, aged 15, and Katayama, two years older. We went together with the two young men baptised in November to Mukojima, where we had the use of a house standing close to the river. One of the youths had a sore throat, but he did not think this a reason for delaying to obey the Lord's command; this was Ishiwaru. We sang a hymn and read a passage of Scripture on the bank of the river, in the presence of a little crowd of people, and then went down into the water. There was a strange feeling of peace as we walked home in the evening beside the silent river, which at Mukojima, a suburb of Tokyo, is a fine broad stream. There will now be four young Japanese believers taking their place at the Lord's table.

W. G. SMITH.

## Questions and Answers.

We desire to express our thanks to all who have sent answers.

We particularly request that each writer will give his name and address in full, not for publication, but that we may know who it is that seeks to help, and, if desirable, that we may communicate privately.

When more than one question is replied to, let the answer to each question be upon a separate piece of paper.

Replies to appear in the next number require to be sent in not later than 15th of present month, and so on; the 15th of the month being always the latest to which we can defer making up for press.

We again urge the importance of replies being *short*; it is essential, in this particular line of things, to be *concise*.

We shall greatly value remembrance in prayer that special wisdom and grace may be given for this service. THE EDITOR.

Replies are invited to the following:—

Are the new heaven and the new earth, spoken of in Isaiah lxxv. 17, lxxvi. 22; 2 Peter iii. 13, and Rev. xxi. 1, the same in all these passages? An examination of the passages in Isaiah seems to show that the *millennial* earth, not an earth free from sin and death, is there spoken of.

THE LORD'S-DAY.—How may we lawfully view the obligations of the Sabbath-day, as transferred to it? Would it not be of much benefit to the church if the whole question as to the obligations of the Lord's-day were fully entertained from the Word?

What constitutes the difference between an assembly of God and a sect?

FAMILY WORSHIP.—Should what is called "Family Worship" be countenanced when the parents are not children of God?

## HOW TO FILL THE CENSUS PAPER.

**QUESTION 379.**—What would be the most scriptural way for a believer to describe him or herself in a census paper; say under the heading of Religious Denomination? Then, if any of the family are (still) unconverted, how should they be described? And, further, how, when children have not reached the years of discretion?

**Ans. A.**—(a) A believer who is in separation from "system" cannot truthfully describe himself as of any "religious denomination." He should simply enter the words, "A Christian," in the column. (b) If any members of the family are unconverted they should be described according to their "religious denomination" if they belong to one, or the space left blank if they belong to none. (c) Young children should be included under the description of the parents. G. F. T.

**Ans. B.**—The members of the Church of God were called "believers" (Acts v. 14), "brethren" (Acts vi. 3, and "disciples" (Acts ix. 19). But, some seven years after our Lord's ascension, by Divine revelation they received a new name—"Christians"; probably through the apostle Paul, to whom was revealed the wondrous mystery in consonance with the name or title (1 Cor. xii. 12). Some twenty years after, the apostle Peter uses it (1 Peter iv. 16). Let us then take no other. In proof that this was a Divine revelation, I may state that the word erroneously translated "called," and popularly looked on as "called by the populace in derision," is to be found ten times, and ten only, in the Word of God; and by comparing the passages the meaning is plain: Matt. ii. 12, 22; Luke ii. 26; Acts x. 22, xi. 26; Rom. vii. 3, xi. 4; Heb. viii. 5, xi. 7, xii. 25. Hence Satan's imitation, as of every other ordinance of God; shortly he will have his Christ on the scene to head up HIS Christians. E. H.

**Ans. C.**—Why not answer the question from their own standpoint? The authorities cannot be expected to understand our scriptural position, and no principle would be sacrificed in stating that we are identified with the Christians known as "Brethren." Or if not separated, or unconverted, state the denomination the persons are actually or nominally identified with. Why confuse the authorities? No good could be accomplished. They will still regard us as a "sect," as they did in Paul's day (Acts xxviii. 22). I know of no scripture bearing directly on the point. 1 Peter ii. 13-15, Rom. xiii. 7, may help. T. R.

**Ans. D.**—Nothing more than "Christian" need be inserted opposite the name of a believer, but the words "no denomination" had better be added underneath in brackets, so that the census authorities may see that no denominational title need be expected. Formerly the simple title "Christian" was objected to; but at the last census, at least in Ireland, no objection was raised. Members of a household, whether converted or not, who belong to a denomination, should be described by that name. Unconverted members who have made no religious profession, and such as have not come to years of discretion, might be described as "not yet of any religious profession."

This question of religion being about to be directly raised by the census, an excellent opportunity is thus afforded for personal dealing with the unconverted

members of families, who, if they are lovingly pleaded with in the meantime, may be brought to the Lord before the census is taken, and thus all doubt will be joyfully removed as to the name by which they are to be described. R. L. S.

**Editor's Note.**—The foregoing replies give the gist of the many which this question has elicited.

We entirely agree with Answer A, paragraphs (a) and (b). As to paragraph (c), we think it would be more in harmony with the general teaching of Scripture to leave the denomination column as to young children blank, or to fill in "no religious denomination: not come to years of discretion."

To describe young children as "Christians" might readily be taken to sanction "baptismal regeneration," or some other anti-scriptural method of making Christians. Though we would not describe a young child as a "Christian" until there was credible evidence of regeneration by the Spirit of God, we would not for a moment question the salvation of such should they die. The doctrine of infant salvation is abundantly plain in Scripture.

As to Answer C, we quite believe that whatever is done or said, "the authorities," and all who have not learned the mind of the Lord, will regard us as "a sect," and call us by sectarian names.

But it is quite another matter for us to sanction their ignorance by accepting and calling ourselves by the name they attach to us. If so, the proper title would be "Plymouth Brethren," and we submit that it would be less antagonistic to the truth to accept such a title than to degrade to the denomination of a few of God's children the holy name of "Brethren," which is the birthright title of every one who is born of God. Children of one Father are "brethren."

**NOTE.**—The illness of the Editor necessitates the postponing of replies to other questions. The Editor thinks that more help might be given than has yet been sent in upon the question as to "Family Worship."

## EDITOR'S NOTES.

*The Editor greatly regrets that many letters he has received during the last year remain unanswered; and as during the last month he has been unwell and unfit for correspondence, a prospect of arrears being overtaken is further off than ever. He therefore deems it necessary thus to inform his many correspondents that his failure to answer their letters arises from no want of desire to do so, but simply from the impossibility of his finding time and strength to reply to the vast amount of letters that flow in upon him.*

*Will the readers of The Witness also note that Mr. Caldwell, as Editor of The Witness, is not responsible for the managing of the publishing department, which wholly devolves upon Mr. Pickering, to whom all letters upon business matters should be addressed.*

*We regret to observe a printer's error has been overlooked in Mr. Bennet's notes in February Witness, page 30. "Sonship" should have been "Lordship." Our readers will please note this.*

**THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST:** being Thoughts on Church Government, No. III., by G. A., will (D.V.) appear in next Number.

## PAUL'S HOPE AND PURPOSE.

REVISED NOTES OF ADDRESS ON THE SECOND  
EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS, CHAP. I.

By J. R. C.

**I**N VERSES 13, 14 of chapter i. the apostle contends that what he writes to them is consistent in all respects with what he had before written, and which they had read and acknowledged to be from God. Truth is many-sided, but no one side of truth is inconsistent with another. There may be advance in the knowledge of the truth, but no genuine advance will set aside or falsify the earliest knowledge received, provided that knowledge was from God.

But he adds the qualifying word, "*in part.*" That does not mean that they as a whole had only partially acknowledged what he had taught them, but rather that there was a "part," or a "party," in the Corinthian church who had set themselves against the apostle and his teaching, even refusing to own his apostleship. Hence his defence of his apostleship upon many and incontestible grounds in the course of this epistle.

**"We are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus."**

Read in connection with this 1 Thess. ii. 19. Whether it was Thessalonians or Corinthians, the apostle's love for them was such that the hope of meeting them at the coming of the Lord, of seeing them eternally safe from sin and sorrow within the veil, each shining in the glorious image of Christ, and of being with them never again to part, and not only so, but of meeting them as the result of all his toil and testimony, his everlasting joy and crown, was ever before his mind.

*The blessed Hope was more than a mere doctrine or theory with him; it was a grand reality beaming into his soul, cheering and encouraging him amidst trials and difficulties almost beyond endurance.*

But there is a further beautiful thought here. Not only does he anticipate his joy in meeting them, but he comforts himself with the thought also of their joy in meeting him. He was not acting toward them in the flesh, but in the spirit and after the mind of Christ; and though his ways with them might seem harsh and be misunderstood now, then, in the presence of the Lord, all would be seen in the light, and

the genuine love that was the motive would be manifested.

VERSE 15, "**And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that ye might have a second benefit.**"

Such was his care for this unruly company of saints that he had purposed to visit them on his way both going to and returning from Macedonia.

He might have refused to go when a proportion so influential were antagonistic to him. He might have written to them that there was not room among them for all the truth, and that therefore he would reserve his ministrations for more congenial assemblies. But such was not his way; those very difficulties and failures gave them, in his estimate, the larger claim upon him.

From VERSES 17, 18, we learn that in all his purposings he took God into his reckoning. It was not a journey planned according to fleshly liking or wisdom, and lightly announced and undertaken. It had been well weighed in the presence of God. Therefore any change of purpose, any divergence from the course he had intended to pursue, was not the result of fickleness, as some would appear to have insinuated, but was decided upon in the presence of God, and for godly and sufficient reasons.

A Christian ought not to be fickle-minded—one who purposes before God will not readily be changed;—nevertheless, he will not adhere in mere stubbornness to a purpose or course of action if, in the providence of God or by further light, it becomes evident that he had not rightly apprehended the mind of the Lord. God acknowledges the desire that was in David's heart to build Him an house (1 Kings viii. 18), though it was not permitted him to carry it out. And doubtless many such godly desires find a place in the hearts of God's children which He knows, and will yet own, though the fulfilment of them may be reserved for others. It is wisdom in such a case to yield to what is evidently the will of God, and to do that only which is appointed for us. The desire in David's heart was well-pleasing to God; but had he persisted in carrying it out himself he could not have had the approval or the blessing of Jehovah.

Nothing is more important in service than to take counsel of the Lord. Too often the

plan is conceived, the scheme arranged, and counsel asked afterwards, if at all. We have an instance of failure to seek counsel in Joshua ix. 14, &c. "And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord." Therefore was Joshua deceived by these Gibeonites, and led into a snare. These things are written for our instruction. A little while before Israel had trusted in their own strength; they said, "Ai is but a little place." They thought they could easily overcome it, not knowing that, be it small or great, they are weaker than the weakest without the power of God. Their defeat was inevitable. So now, in chapter ix., they trust to their own wisdom, and they fail.

And Satan is able to place before any of us, any day, just as subtle a snare as that whereby he deceived Joshua. We need to take unto us the whole armour of God, that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. We need the Word of Christ dwelling in us richly, hid in our hearts, and the constant appeal to the Living God for counsel and guidance. The apostle says, "I commend you to God and the Word of His grace." Let us be diligent searchers of the Word, comparing scripture with scripture, and seeking the teaching of the Holy Spirit, that we may understand and remember, whilst not despising any real help we may get from others who, taught of God, have written or spoken in exposition of the Scriptures; but, at the same time, let us not forget that, though we may thus be ever so "thoroughly furnished," we cannot dispense with the direct appeal to God, the asking of counsel at the mouth of the Lord. Thus shall we become, like the great Example, "of quick understanding," literally "quick-scented" in the fear of the Lord. Like the hound, quick to detect the scent and follow up the track, so would God have us to understand His mind through the use of the Word—quick, as it were, to detect, by the very scent of a thing, whether it is good or evil. (Compare Is. xi. 3 with Heb. v. 14.)

VERSES 19 and 20 give us the great truth of the certainty of all the promises of God to those who are in Christ. God's purposes and promises are not fickle or liable to change. They are to us "sure mercies," secured to us in the risen Son of God. And as faith lays hold

of them God responds in Christ with His unfailling "Yea;" and faith calls back to God, "Amen": "So be it."

In Genesis xxviii. 13-15, God made to Jacob an unconditional, infallible promise of blessing. Faith would have responded, "Amen." But what is Jacob's response? The first word is enough—"If!" Jacob's unbelieving heart is slow to learn the faithfulness of God; and his whole history is one continuous record of God's faithfulness to His promise, and of Jacob's unfaithfulness to his vow. How like ourselves. O for more of the faith that claims the promises in Christ, and ever answers back to God, "Amen!"

#### GEMS FROM DR. MULOCK.

"Is He not ever 'God that comforteth them that are cast down,' and does He not often comfort us through each other, as Paul was comforted by the coming of Titus, or by the meeting with the Roman brethren at Appii Forum when the old prisoner of the Lord 'thanked God and took courage'? Was he not a man of like passions and infirmities with ourselves?" \* \* \*

THE law of God, by the hammer of affliction or by the smiting of judgment, may break the heart; but broken ice is just as cold as solid ice. Worldly hearts may be bruised and shattered by calamity, yet remaining as frigid as an iceberg. Whilst not undervaluing law-work in preaching, it is grace-work that melts; and the wounds of Christ are just as powerful to break the heart as to heal it. Men will not look to Christ's wounds for healing until their hearts have been wounded for sin. \* \* \*

"I THINK Jude 21, 22, 23, is a word for us. It is only as I am keeping *myself* in the sense of the love that never fails to *me* (21) that I shall never fail in love to others, or be able truly to make a difference and compassionate others. The holy faith, and the loving God, lead me to compassionate an erring brother, and to make a difference in special cases. Again, 'But the end all things is at hand; be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer'—'And above all things have *fervent* charity among yourselves; for charity shall *cover* the multitude of sins.' Love is blind, as we say."

## THE AUTHORITY BELONGING TO THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY A. J. HOLIDAY.

*(Concluded from page 35.)*

THE basis of our whole subject is in these words, "For where two or three are gathered together unto My Name, there am I in the midst of them" (verse 20). Very much crowds in upon the mind in regard to this deeply momentous statement. First, I would point out the close connection between the power and authority as to binding and loosing in this passage and in the other (chapter xvi.). I think we saw distinctly in the former case that, upon Peter's confession that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God, a special power and authority were declared to be attached to his words of binding and loosing. As long as Peter only gave utterance to that which God had revealed to him, to all the truth that circled round the great fact that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God, he might count upon his words being upheld and maintained by the Living God. All the powers of earth might be arrayed against his word; but when the day of account comes, it will be found that Peter's words, spoken in accordance with the Divine teaching, will be ratified by the eternal binding and loosing in heaven. But it will be only so far as they agreed with that teaching, and no further. In the same way the Lord has given no power to a church to pass an arbitrary sentence of their own, and to claim that all are bound to act upon it because they have done it. For that reason I press the importance of the exact rendering of the words which makes the binding in heaven to precede the binding upon earth. An assembly will sometimes go altogether beyond the Word of the Lord, in order to get rid of some troublesome brother; and, having done so, they will say, "We were gathered together to the Name of the Lord, and we bound on earth, and therefore it is bound in heaven, and you must all submit to it." There is no warrant for this. We need to discern the mind of the Lord, and to be guided by the Word of God. We must act only upon the clear

and unmistakable instructions of that Word. And more than this, we need to have one mind from God about it. It is not enough to have the united voice of the overseers. As a matter of fact, they are not mentioned in this chapter. In saying this, however, I am not in any way suggesting that they should be ignored. Overseers should always first take the initiative; and, having come to a united judgment themselves, they should seek to lead the whole Church according to the Word of God. But it is the Church, and not the overseers, who are to bind or loose. The Lord says, "Tell it unto the Church; and, if he will not hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." So it is the action and sentence of the Church as a whole to which these words are attached, "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be, having been bound in heaven," &c. Why is such tremendous weight attached to this action? We get the answer in verse 20, which gives us the foundation upon which the whole passage, right from the beginning, stands. The Lord, speaking in anticipation of the time when they will be associated together as the Church of God, is leading them to see the meaning and character of this association. And what does it mean? Simply this, that all power and authority belong to the Lord Jesus. And because this is so, therefore wherever two or three even are gathered together unto His Name, He is in the midst of them, and will give His weight and authority to that which they do in His Name and according to His commandment. It is under these conditions, then, and only these, that the Lord pronounces the declaration as to their binding and loosing. What they thus bind or loose on earth shall be, it shall stand, having been bound or loosed in heaven. This affords no room for man to exalt himself, and talk of power and authority being given to him. The Church is not only carrying out the will of the Lord Jesus, but it is bearing witness to the fact that it is His power and His authority that alone make effectual that which they do in His Name. A word may be useful here as to the function of overseers in connection with the action of the assembly.

They bear considerable resemblance to the relationship which exists between a judge and a jury. After the witnesses have been heard, the judge marshals the facts together, calls attention to the salient points in the evidence, and shows the bearing of the law upon the facts. Having done this, he leaves the jury to come to a decision in the matter, for they alone can deliver the verdict. Now what is it that gives their verdict its authority? The jury, as individuals, are nothing more than other men; there is no special power vested in them to do anything at all. But gathered together in that jury-box, and having taken the oath, they represent the majesty of the throne of Great Britain, and the whole power and authority of that throne attach to their verdict. The comparison is only an imperfect one, and must not be strained, but it has its value. Overseeing brethren, as guides in the assembly, should be able to sift facts and evidence, and to bring these facts in a clear way before the assembly. They should also be able to bring the teaching of the Word to bear upon the facts, and to show what that Word commands to be done. But having done this, having indicated the action that ought to be taken by the Church as a whole, they can go no further as overseers. In the actual giving effect to the Lord's commandment, they are simply a part of the Church, and in fellowship with the whole Church they carry out the will of the Lord. Thus, the sentence of the assembly, carried out according to the Word of God, and in subjection to the commandment of the Lord Jesus, becomes in reality His sentence. It all falls back upon that Word, "There am I in the midst."

It has sometimes been alleged that too much has been made of this section of Matthew xviii., and that verse 19 shows that it is only a coming together of one or two for prayer that the Lord is speaking about, when, in verse 20, He declares that He is in the midst. A little more care in examining the exact words which the Lord spoke will show that this objection is an entirely mistaken one. Verse 19 is plainly parenthetical. Verse 18 says, "Whatsoever ye shall bind," &c., and is addressed to them as a whole, in the church character of verse 17. Verse 20 again speaks of the whole company, though that company

should consist of but two or three. But verse 19 is addressed to a part only of the whole. "If two of you shall agree . . . it shall be done for them." Not, "If you shall agree, it shall be done for you." This difference is significant, and leads to a most blessed truth. When once the brother who had been sinned against has put the matter into the hands of the Church, he is debarred from taking individual action any further. At the first, it was his privilege and responsibility alike to endeavour to win his brother, and even when he had taken the one or two more with him, he might still hope, with their help, to attain this blessed object. Now, however, the circumstances are changed, and the separate action of one or two is no longer permissible. Is there an end, then, to the special privilege and responsibility of those who had taken the earlier steps? No indeed. They may, and should, recognise that, in a very special sense, the grief of the offender's sin, and of the consequent action of the Church, is a matter for their continued prayers. And the Lord graciously interposes with a special and most encouraging promise at this point, doubtless for the special help of those who would bear the burden of church sorrows before God. But, as has been already shown, this is quite distinct from the "whatsoever ye shall bind," which precedes it, and the "two or three gathered together unto My name," which follows.

Let us now turn to Eph. ii. 19 to 22, and we shall get further light as to the two aspects of the Church which we have been considering. "Now ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets (the word 'foundation' is not used here in the sense of the rock, but of the first tier of stones, the foundation stones, laid upon the rock), Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone." Notice what we have got up to this point. Those who had been Gentiles, far off from God, and completely separated from Israel, who, as to their national position, are said to be near to God, have now been brought nigh. The middle wall of partition has been broken down, and they are in exactly the same position as believing Jews. Together they

have been built upon God's foundation. This much we know, but as to the character of that building nothing has yet been said. Let us read on. "In whom (that is, in Christ Jesus) an entire building"—I prefer to use this literal translation, because much stress has been laid on the fact that in the original there is no definite article. The revisers, for this reason, have rendered it "each several building." But the absence of the article does not by any means call for such a rendering, which, in fact, destroys the meaning of the passage; for each several building does not grow (increase) into a holy temple. The apostle does not say "*the* whole building," because he has not yet told us that there is a building, in the sense of an enclosed and complete structure. All the preceding passage might be true of a wall only. But now he says that what is being wrought is a complete building, which is being fitly framed together of continually added parts, and so is growing up into a holy temple in the Lord. This temple is manifestly the completed whole, not yet to be seen by human eyes, but ever before the mind of God.

But there is still something more to be declared. Let us read on. Verse 22—"In whom ye also are builded together." The "ye also" refers to those to whom the apostle is writing, the saints at Ephesus. And if to Ephesian saints, therefore to saints everywhere gathered unto the name of the Lord Jesus Christ; saints everywhere who own that name, and are being builded together in accordance with God's purpose concerning His Son. Saints not thus builded together cannot be unitedly and collectively an habitation for God through the Spirit. It is quite true of every saint that his own body is the temple of the Living God, who by the Holy Spirit dwells in him. That is true from the moment we believe; but it cannot be said of every company or association of believers, apart from their obedience in carrying out the commandments of the Lord, that they unitedly form an habitation for God through the Spirit. They must be builded together in order to be that.

We have here what corresponds with Matt. xvi. and xviii. In Matt. xvi., the Christ, the Son of God, says, "I will build My Church." It is all His own doing; nothing ever needs

to be revised, for all is perfect from the beginning to the end, till the top stone be set upon it. In Matt. xviii. we have the other aspect of His Church. Here we see a little company of believers, with trouble and sorrow and sin still manifest amongst them, but with the same Son of God in the midst of them. And because He is in the midst, and because their gathering together unto His name is the acknowledgment and expression of His authority as Lord, therefore they are accounted of God as a present habitation for Himself, so that they may continually be yielding Him a sweet foretaste of the time when the whole building shall be perfect and complete.

We sometimes hear truths of this kind spoken of as secondary things, as if they had not much in them for the heart and conscience, and we are told to talk more of the Lord and less of these things. Separate these things from the name of the Lord; separate them from His honour and glory; let them be taken up in a carnal, fleshly way, and they will deaden the conscience and harden the heart. But that is not only true of matters that concern the assembly and the relationship thereto of the Lord Jesus. You may fight for the doctrines of the Incarnation, of the Atonement, for the solemn realities of eternal judgment and everlasting life, in a carnal spirit, and with a heart not subject to the will of God, and in doing so you will equally deaden your soul and blunt your conscience.

Put things on their true basis; let our zeal for every truth be the outcome of our love and loyalty to the Lord Jesus, and no such unhappy results will follow. Let us mourn over the departure of fellow-saints from the path of obedience to Christ in these things, just as we should mourn over their worldliness or lapses into immorality. Mourn over them because they belong to Christ, because they ought not only individually to be His possession, indwelt by God's Spirit, but, even now, should be so builded together as to form a dwelling-place for God through the same Spirit. Let us ever maintain and manifest this spirit and attitude toward fellow-saints who have departed from the truth, and we shall both be blessed in our own souls and shall be fitted for God's use in leading others to the full knowledge of the truth.

## THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST.

## THOUGHTS ON CHURCH GOVERNMENT.—III.

**I**N pursuing this subject let us keep a firm hold of this truth, that all legitimate rule and authority emanate from the THRONE OF GOD. Until this is apprehended nothing is really known as to the Divine ideal of what government is. All who assay to rule ought to derive their right to do so from God, and their object ought to be to carry out His will. All subordinate governments which do not carry out the will of God, however well meant they may be, are only working confusion.

In a former paper I have endeavoured to show that the national government of Israel was a "Theocracy." That is, they were under the direct and immediate rule of the LORD. He gave them a complete constitution, and chose their rulers for them, and these rulers succeeded, in proportion as they waited on Him, to know and do His will.

If this was God's way with His earthly people, surely the rule of the Church is as Divine in its nature as the rule of Israel was. If, under God's government of Israel, no one had a right to exercise authority but those who were called of God, surely in the Church no one has a right to take the place of a leader but those who are led into that place by the Lord.

David, the man after the LORD'S own heart, waited until he got the kingdom from the LORD. Even after Saul's death, when the way was open for him to ascend the throne, he would not move one step without Divine guidance (2 Sam. ii. 1); and, although he sometimes failed, his habit was to keep up direct communication with the LORD in all that he did. In this he was a true type of the Lord Jesus, of whom it is said, "So also Christ glorified not Himself" (Heb. v. 5). On His part there was no grasping at power. He could say, "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, . . . and hath *given* Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man" (John v. 22-27). There was also no abuse of power on the part of the perfect Servant. He said, "For I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me" (chap. vi. 38). And again, "For I do always those things that please

the Father" (viii. 29). His dependence was also as perfect as His subjection. How wonderful to hear Him saying, "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do" (v. 19). And again, "I can of Mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and My judgment is just; because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me" (verse 30). Herein lies the perfection of government. Assuming no authority but what we have received from above; using that power only to the carrying out of the Divine will; and leaning in conscious helplessness on God for grace and strength to do it. Such was the way of the Son of God when He was upon earth; and He is the same in resurrection glory as He was when down here; and when He comes back to earth to reign, the perfection of His rule will be the perfect expression of the will of God. After His resurrection there was no usurping of authority. He could say, "All power is *given* unto Me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. xxviii. 18). And after His ascension the Spirit's testimony is, that God hath "*made* Him both Lord and Christ" (Acts ii. 36). In the epistle to the saints at Ephesus He is seen sitting at the right hand of the Father, and given to be "Head over all things to the Church" (Eph. i. 20-23); and in chapter iv. He is seen as the Source of all the gifts in the Church. When He was upon earth "He called unto Him whom He would, . . . that they should be with Him, . . . and to have power" (Mark iii. 13-15). After the "twelve" had been sent out we are told "that they gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told Him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught" (chap. vi. 30). This teaches that those to whom the Lord gave power when upon the earth, exercised that power in subjection to Him, and in the closest fellowship with Him. And although the Lord has gone above the clouds, and thus He has "ceased to be seen" by the eye of sense, He is still visible to the eye of faith; and although He is not present with His disciples, as He was in the days of His flesh, His knowledge of all that is going on is infinitely perfect. He can say to every assembly, "I know thy works" (Rev. ii. iii.). His authority is still absolute; there is no disputing His "I WILL." It is in proportion as the one

perfect will of the Lord Jesus is discerned and carried out in a single assembly, or by any number of assemblies, that there can be Divine harmony in government. Man's will may come in and attempt to produce something like it, but it is not the same Divine fellowship. A uniformity of action may be brought about by an ecclesiastical combination; but a oneness of mind and judgment, produced by the Lord Jesus being enthroned in every heart, is fundamentally a different thing. The saints at Philippi were exhorted to be "like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind" (Phil. ii. 2). Then the Spirit traces the path of the Son of God down to the cross, and back to the right hand of God, and shows God's purpose to be that "every knee shall bow" at the NAME OF JESUS; "and every tongue shall confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (verses 10, 11). That is God's way of bringing His children into harmony of thought and action, by leading them individually into fellowship with Himself, regarding the honour and glory He has conferred upon His Son Jesus. The Name of Jesus can do what no other power in the universe can accomplish. It can bring together companies of human beings that by nature hate each other; can bring together people of the most diverse characters, and of every shade of circumstances and temperaments, and can bind them together by the tender cord of Divine love, and enable them to go on in happy fellowship as one family, and yet can leave room for the healthy development of the spiritual growth and the unfettered exercise of the conscience of every individual in the fellowship. But this can never be done by merely learning the doctrine of the Lordship of Christ. The doctrine is very precious, but it must be an experience in the soul. The individual must be taught to "say that Jesus is the Lord, by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. xii. 3). We have in this chapter the doctrine of the one body with many members and the diversities of gifts, and in chapter fourteen we have these gifts in exercise in the assembly at Corinth; but before the Spirit unfolds these truths, and before the believer can learn these things, he has to learn to say, in the depth of his own soul, that "JESUS IS THE LORD."

The assembly at Corinth was divided into factions (1 Cor. i. 11-13); and let us mark God's way of correcting their differences of judgment. Had man's wisdom, now-a-days, to deal with such a condition of matters in a "city," very probably an "oversight meeting" would be called. These meetings have their place; but the danger just now is putting them into the place of something higher. Mark the way of the Spirit of God: He reminds the saints of the higher fellowship into which all the children of God are called, and then lifts up the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, as God's lever-power, to lift His saints out of all sectarian fellowships. And it is the power of that name, applied to the soul by the Holy Spirit, which can alone keep saints walking in the midst of the path in these days of difficulty and increasing confusion. In the present strained condition of fellowship amongst the assemblies, it is of the utmost importance that young believers should be clear as to God's way of dealing with confusion. Man's way is either to wink at it or to escape from it by taking up an exclusive position, and practically excommunicating all companies of saints who are not inside the circle of fellowship which he draws. God's way is to bring his saints into the higher fellowship, and to bring them into subjection to the One Lord. And as we are able to enter into the judgment of our God as to the Name and Person of the Lord Jesus, and our hearts are bowed down in adoration before Him, we will have a godly horror of anything that savours of self-will or lawlessness, and this heart-loyalty to the Name of Jesus will give to the soul a quick discernment to detect and a firmness to reject any principle of Church authority which is not according to God. But when Christians get enamoured with an ecclesiastical system of their own, they cannot understand how loyalty to the Son of God leads others to differ from them, and in their zeal they charge those who cannot adopt this mode of enforcing Church order with ignorance, or unfaithfulness to the truth of God. As the days darken, and lawlessness increases, those who would merit a "full reward" when He comes must not only contend earnestly for the whole truth of God, but they must be satisfied to keep strictly to God's way of doing it. However painful it may be

to be associated with confusion, far better than take up an unscriptural position to get clear of it. "For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come" (Heb. x. 37). Till then, let us seek to have Christ enthroned in our hearts, so that every word of His revealed will shall be sacred to us; and, in seeking to bring others into subjection to Him, let us ever bring His authority to bear on their consciences, and not an ecclesiastical authority of our own making. G. A.

(To be continued.)

### THE SABBATH QUESTION.

IF it were merely a question of the observance or non-observance of a day, it might be easily disposed of, inasmuch as the apostle teaches us, in Romans xiv. 5, 6, and also in Colossians ii. 16, that such things are not to be made a ground of judgment. But seeing there is a great principle involved in the Sabbath question, we deem it to be of the very last importance to place it upon a clear and scriptural basis. We shall quote the fourth commandment at full length: "Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it" (Exodus xx. 8-11). This same law is repeated in Exodus xxxi. 12-17. And, in pursuance thereof, we find, in Numbers xv., a man stoned for gathering sticks on the Sabbath-day. All this is plain and absolute enough. Man has no right to alter God's law in reference to the Sabbath, no more than he has to alter it in reference to murder, adultery, or theft. This, we presume, will not be called in question. The entire body of Old Testament scripture fixes the seventh day as the Sabbath; and the fourth commandment lays down the mode in which that Sabbath was to be observed. Now, where, we ask, is this precedent followed? Where is this command obeyed? Is it not plain that the professing Church neither keeps

the right day as the Sabbath, nor does she keep it after the Scripture mode? The commandments of God are made of none effect by human traditions, and the glorious truths which hang around "the Lord's-day" are lost sight of. The Jew is robbed of his distinctive day, and all the privileges therewith connected, which are only suspended for the present, while judicial blindness hangs over that loved and interesting, though now judged and scattered, people. And, furthermore, the Church is robbed of her distinctive day and all the glories therewith connected, which, if really understood, would have the effect of lifting her above earthly things into the sphere which properly belongs to her as linked by faith to her glorified Head in heaven. In result, we have neither pure Judaism nor pure Christianity, but an anomalous system arising out of an utterly unscriptural combination of the two.

However, we desire to refrain from all attempt at developing the deeply spiritual doctrine involved in this great question, and confine ourselves to the plain teaching of Scripture on the subject; and, in so doing, we maintain that if the professing Church quotes the fourth commandment and parallel scriptures, in defence of keeping the Sabbath, then it is evident that, in almost every case, the law is entirely set aside. Observe, the word is, "Thou shalt not do *any* work." This ought to be perfectly binding on all who take the Jewish ground. There is no room here for introducing what we deem to be "works of necessity"; we may think it necessary to kindle fires, to make servants harness our horses and drive us hither and thither, but the law is stern and absolute, severe and unbending. It will not, it cannot, lower its standard to suit our convenience or accommodate itself to our thoughts. The mandate is, "Thou shalt not do *any* work," and that, moreover, on "the seventh day," which answers to our Saturday. We ask for a single passage of Scripture in which the day is changed, or in which the strict observance of the day is, in the smallest degree, relaxed.

We request the reader of these lines to pause and search out this matter thoroughly, in the light of Scripture. Let him not be scared as by some terrible bugbear, but let

him, in true Berean nobility of spirit, "search the Scriptures." By so doing he will find that, from the second chapter of Genesis down to the very last passage in which the Sabbath is named, it means the *seventh* day and none other; and, further, that there is not so much as a shadow of Divine authority for altering the mode of observing that day. Law is law; and, if we are under the law, we are bound to keep it, or else be cursed, for it is written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Deut. xxvii. 26; Gal. iii. 10).

But it will be said, "We are not under the Mosaic law; we are the subjects of the Christian economy." Granted—most fully, freely, and thankfully granted. All true Christians are, according to the teaching of Romans vii. and viii. and Galatians iii. and iv. the happy and privileged subjects of the Christian dispensation. But, if so, what is the day which specially characterises that dispensation? Not "the seventh day," but "the first day of the week"—"THE LORD'S-DAY." This is, pre-eminently, the Christian's day. Let him observe this day, with all the sanctity, the sacred reverence, the hallowed retirement, the elevated tone, of which his new nature is capable. We believe the Christian's retirement from all secular things cannot possibly be too profound on the Lord's-day. The idea of any one calling himself a Christian making the Lord's-day a season of what is popularly called recreation, unnecessary travelling, personal convenience, or profit in temporal things, is, to us, perfectly shocking. We are of opinion that such acting could not be too severely censured. We can safely assert that we never yet came in contact with a godly, intelligent, right-minded Christian person who did not love and reverence the Lord's-day; nor could we have any sympathy with one who could deliberately desecrate that holy and happy day.

We are aware, alas! that some persons have, through ignorance or misguided feelings, said things in reference to the Lord's-day which we utterly repudiate, and that they have done things on the Lord's-day of which we wholly disapprove. We believe that there is a body of New Testament teaching on the important

subject of the Lord's-day, quite sufficient to give that day its proper place in every well-regulated mind. The Lord Jesus rose from the dead on that day (Matt. xxviii. 1-6; Mark xvi. 1, 2; Luke xxiv. 1; John xx. 1). He met his disciples, once and again, on that day (John xx. 19-26). The early disciples met to break bread on that day (Acts xx. 7). The apostle, by the Holy Ghost, directs the Corinthians to lay by their contributions for the poor on that day (1 Cor. xvi. 2). And, finally, the exiled apostle was in the Spirit, and received visions of the future on that day (Rev. i. 10). The above scriptures are conclusive. They prove that the Lord's-day occupies a place quite unique, quite heavenly, quite Divine. But they as fully prove the entire distinctness of the Jewish Sabbath and the Lord's-day. The two days are spoken of throughout the New Testament with fully as much distinctness as we speak of Saturday and Sunday. The only difference is, that the latter are heathen titles, and the former Divine. (Comp. Matt. xxviii. 1; Acts xiii. 14, xvii. 2, xx. 7; Col. ii. 16.)

Having said thus much as to the question of the Jewish Sabbath and the Lord's-day, we shall suggest the following questions to the reader—namely, Where in the Word of God is the Sabbath said to be changed to the first day of the week? Where is there any repeal of the law as to the Sabbath? Where is the authority for altering the day or the mode of observing it? Where, in Scripture, have we such an expression as "the Christian Sabbath?" Where is the Lord's-day ever called the Sabbath?

We would not yield to any of our dear brethren in the various denominations around us, in the pious observance of the Lord's-day. We love and honour it with all our hearts; and were it not that the gracious providence of God has so ordered it in these realms, that we can enjoy the rest and retirement of the Lord's-day without pecuniary loss, we should feel called upon to abstain from business, and give ourselves wholly up to the worship and service of God on that day, not as a matter of cold legality, but as a holy and happy privilege.

It would be the deepest sorrow to our hearts to think that a true Christian should be found taking common ground with the ungodly, the

profane, the thoughtless, and the pleasure-hunting multitude, in desecrating the Lord's-day. It would be sad, indeed, if the children of the kingdom and the children of this world were to meet in an excursion train on the Lord's-day. We feel persuaded that any who, in any wise, profane or treat with lightness the Lord's-day, act in direct opposition to the Word and Spirit of God. C. H. M.

### LIGHT AND LOVE.

"GOD is Light," and "God is Love." Holiness and righteousness are the attributes of the former; grace and mercy of the latter. Judgment of evil is the necessary outcome of the one; pardon, of the other. Light demands a sacrifice for sin; love provides it. Both were displayed at the cross, and both are seen now in a "just God and a Saviour"—"Just and the Justifier." And both together constitute the character of those who are born again, who are "made partakers of the Divine nature." Hence both should be manifested in our lives.

If the sinner does not avail himself of pardon through the blood of the cross, there remains nothing for him but judgment as manifested there against sin, which judgment he will never exhaust; it is eternal. Christ alone could satisfy the claims of God upon the sinner, and *drain* the cup of Divine judgment; the sinner never, *never* can.

In the nature of God, in the cross of Christ, in the principles of Divine truth, and in Christian life and practice, light and love go together. One cannot be called greater than the other. Both alike are maintained, manifested, and magnified by the sacrifice of Christ, the eternal salvation and glory of those who believe, and the eternal judgment of those who do not believe. The latter will be judged as those who have rejected the provision of love. Nothing could be more clearly set forth than these things are in the Word of God; and I am now writing for those who know and believe the Scriptures.

True it is, indeed, that, in relation to us, love seems the most important; but God is the one as much as He is the other. Let us look at both in relation to the cross; then only shall we have right views, and instead of being set one against the other, we shall see that

each is brought to bear in a way that manifests the perfection of the other, and ascendancy can be ascribed to neither. If it be said, "Love gained the day," it may be replied, "and so did light." Both were triumphant over sin, death, and hell, to the glory of God and the eternal salvation of sinners. Christ was the expression of Divine right as well as love; indeed, He was *God manifest* in the flesh. He came, "the Light of the world," and He so loved His sheep that He laid down His life for them. "He gave Himself a ransom," &c.

The cross of Christ, the present governmental judgments of God in relation to men and nations, and the final judgment of those who reject Christ, all proclaim that "God is Light." We may say, too, that the cross of Christ, and the consequent display of the grace of God in the gospel of our salvation and our prospect of glory, proclaim that "God is Love."

Christians are "light in the Lord," and they dwell in love, and love in them; they walk in the light as He is in the light, and they practise righteousness; but love is the motive power, and imparts a true Christian character and Christ-like savour to such practice of righteousness; and the practice of righteousness (or what men call righteousness) without it, is not Christianity. Grace reigns through righteousness, while sin and wickedness abound in the earth. "Let favour be shown to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness." Yet it is allowed only through "the long-suffering of God"; and even while grace is thus active and supreme, its testimony is intended to "convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."

But presently, in the millennium, *righteousness* will reign and evil will be subdued, and every uprising of the same will meet with immediate judgment. And in the eternal state righteousness will *dwell*; for there will be no evil to subdue, but all will be in happy harmony with our blessed God, who will then be all in all, and we shall dwell in infinite love and unsullied light. Blessed and glorious result of the love of God!

So, if we look at our subject alone in relation to ourselves and our own dispensation (which we are very prone to do), we shall surely have one-sided thoughts.

Men may talk about what is and what is not worthy of God—what is reasonable, and what is repulsive to human intellect—as, alas! they do in their darkness and presumption; but this leaves things just where they were. God will be God, notwithstanding man's dark reasoning, and He will do as He pleases without consulting His rebellious creatures, and will maintain what He has revealed of Himself, to the terror of the conceited mind that dares thus to sit in judgment upon Him and His word.

“Wilt thou give law to God? Wilt thou dispute  
With Him the points of liberty, who made  
Thee what thou art, and formed the powers of heaven  
Such as He pleased, and circumscribed their being?”

“God is Love!” Wondrous, glorious truth for us! Where should we be without it? But equally wonderful and glorious is its correlative, “God is Light.” Both alike shall be magnified. One has been manifested in such a way as to establish the other in that very manifestation. Then let us not give one undue prominence above the other. For the moment we sever Divine love from Divine light, or the opposite, either in Christian doctrine or practice, we shall surely bring dishonour upon God and His truth.

How should we know that “God is Love” but by the cross? And yet there are not wanting people who, though professing to make much of the love of God, nevertheless deny the need and the efficacy of the very act that manifests the blessed fact, viz., the death of Christ.

To wrench any part of truth from its relative connection with another, as the sovereignty of God from the responsibility of man, or the latter from the former, must lead to error; but to sever the two great truths that give us the very nature of God, thus giving a false idea of the God of Christianity, is blasphemy. One is the mutilation of principles which are in accordance with the Divine nature; the other is the mutilation (as far as man and theology are concerned) of the Divine nature itself.

The First Epistle of John shows that we have the origin of Divine love in God Himself—in what He is, “God is Love.” We have the manifestation of it in the gift of His Son (chap. iv. 9, 10). In this same epistle we see, too,

that it is the inherent nature of those who are begotten of God. In 1 Cor. xiii. we have it in activity, as a moral power, actuating the motives, controlling the conduct, and clothing everything that is done with real virtue.

In this same epistle of John, too, we get “God is Light”; indeed, the whole epistle goes to show that light and love are inseparable, both in God Himself and in the nature and practice of His children. But never let us forget that love is the great actuating principle in Christian life and practice, engendering pure, godly, and disinterested motives, sympathising with and comforting the tried, cheering the downcast, and helping the needy; forgiving those who wrong us, suffering willingly at the hands of those who persecute us, and pitying the fallen. Such is practical Christianity. And all this without making light of sin; yea, with such a sense of its heinousness as we can only have when viewing it in Divine light—as at the cross. O that Divine love may find a more perfect expression in our lives, while we are surrounded with tried, perplexed, and needy saints, and dark and perishing sinners; and we know we shall bathe our souls in it in the Father's house for ever (praise His name!), “before Him in love.”

So intimately are light and love bound together, that it is impossible to exhibit the one without the co-operation of the other. Could there be a more pure exhibition of Divine love than we see in the Lord at the well of Sychar? Yet the very accents of love opened the way to the dark heart of that poor woman, and allowed the light to shine in and shed its rays over the whole of her sinful life. O that we knew better how to deal with souls after this fashion. A little food given to an hungry enemy, or a soft word spoken to a reviler, may be more effectual in bringing his soul into the light than all the accusations of sin and threats of consequent judgment that could be justly brought against him. The first effect of Divine love upon the heart is repentance.

I need scarcely say we must not confound this with human love, which makes light of evil in consideration of its own gratification, and may go hand-in-hand with the greatest darkness.

Divine light and love always go together, even in pardoning a sinner, hence there can be no pardon apart from the cross. Unconverted people have human love. A man may love his wife, children, and even his neighbours who are friendly with him, and yet not have a spark of *Divine love*, nor a single aspiration above the wealth, fame, and society of this poor world. If there is not Divine life there cannot be Divine love, hence the epistle which gives us so much about the latter opens with a declaration of the former.

If we remember the true character of Divine love, we cannot exaggerate its magnitude; error arises from separating Divine light from it. He who knows the value of the sacrifice of Christ will glory in light while he magnifies love. May we know the purity of the one and the power of the other! J. H. B.

### Correspondence.

To the Editor of *The Witness*.

#### JACOB'S BLESSING OF DAN.

In the first reply to Question No. 365 (*Witness* for October, 1890), it is said that there can be little doubt that when Jacob pronounced a *blessing*—not a curse—upon the heads of the tribes of Israel, Dan was made to represent the Antichrist, because he is compared with a serpent. On the same principle of interpretation, Benjamin would be the false teachers who have made havoc of the Church, and Judah would be the great Adversary himself. Where Satan is compared with a lion, in 1 Peter v. 8, the context shows what is the exact point of resemblance which the inspired writer has in mind, a safeguard which is too often neglected in the interpretation of Scripture. In Genesis xlix. 17, Jacob compares Dan with that particular kind of serpent which is called in Hebrew sh'phee-phōhn (translated "adder"). This creature is nowhere else mentioned in Scripture, and it is identified by an eminent naturalist (J. G. Wood) with the *Cerastes* or Horned Viper, of which he writes thus (*Bible Animals*, p. 551):—"It will always take advantage of any small depression such as the print of a camel's foot, and, as it finds many of these depressions in the line of the caravans, it is literally 'a serpent by the way, an adder in the path.' . . . Therefore, whenever a horseman passes along the usual route, his steed is very likely to disturb a *Cerastes* lying in the path, and to be liable to the attack of the irritated reptile."

The book of Judges shows that Jacob's inspired simile was one appropriate to the general character of this tribe, the men of which were best let alone by their enemies. That the tribe of Dan does not share the guilt and punishment of those who worship Antichrist, is evident from the place of blessing given to it in millennial days (Ezek. xlviii. 1-32).

Tokyo, Japan.

W. G. S.

#### A GOSPEL JOURNEY IN CHINA.

Account of an itinerating journey from Wu-ch'en to Shui-chau fu and back, occupying three weeks' time, and covering a distance of 266 li one way, or 520 li including return journey.

*Nov. 19, 1890.*—We left Wu-ch'en at daybreak this morning for a trip to Shui-chau fu before low water made the river impassable. The Lord gave us favourable winds, so that the second day brought us past the capital of the province. I was rather on the *qui vive* to see the place; but nothing to be seen. Few boats about. No indications, as we passed the uninteresting flat mud banks, that we were nearing the great metropolis; and as we got up to it, though not close, only an exclamation—"Is that the place? It does not look anything!" Our plan, as a rule, is to make for our destination with as little delay as possible, and spend more time working on the return journey. When we got up to a place called Seng-fu it was extremely doubtful if we could proceed any further, the water being shallow. This was Saturday. Mr. Blandford went on shore and had a very good time preaching and selling books, and decided to remain over Lord's-day at this place.

*Nov. 24.*—This morning we told the men, if when they had done their duty to the utmost, we failed to get up the river, we should turn home. The head boatman was very sorry to see his nice stones, used as ballast, thrown out in two heaps on the bank. The men had to work hard. With shallow water, a strong current, and head wind, our progress was slow.

*Nov. 27.*—Have just reached Shui-chau, praise the Lord! And as this large and imposing walled city is spread out before us, we are filled with solemnity at the thought of being messengers of the Lord of Hosts to this people. We know, among the teeming thousands within these walls, there is not one believer in the Lord Jesus. We hold, as "sent" ones, the eternal destinies of men and women, as it were, in our grasp, believing, as we do, that for them all this depends on whether they *accept* or *reject* our testimony (see 2 Cor. ii. 16). We may add, "and who is sufficient for these things?" Here is a city left to the devil's sway for centuries, and now, before one shot has been fired, we view the citadel, and our hearts are moved while contemplating the possibilities open to faith should the Gospel gain an entrance into this city.

*Nov. 28.*—In the afternoon I accompanied my husband into the city, while he stood at about six different centres to preach and sell books. Our reception was better than anything we anticipated; the people were so orderly. Mr. Blandford sold 142 books and forty tracts, all we had of the latter.

*Dec. 1.*—Saturday was wet, so the Lord gave us a rest. We were on shore again from 10-30 till 1-30; sold 126 books. Had golden opportunities for testifying to the people. The object of our visit was to clear the way, as much as anything, for future work in this city, and we do praise God at having started so well. In the afternoon we left Shui-chau on our return journey, hoping to visit the capital.

*Dec. 2.*—Called at a small place, Hwang-tu-kong, and sold nineteen books, with good opportunities of getting at both men and women; always plenty of women to gather round me if not crowded out by the men.

*Dec. 3.*—We got off at a small town, Hwang-ni-chi ; sold 111 books. The people listened well. It is a great joy to be the first to tell the way of salvation.

*Dec. 4.*—Our next call was Shi-teu-kan, a place with two or three streets of small shops. (Please remember we were only able to select a few of the largest places by the river side. What about the others?) Here we had a sale of ninety-two books and a rather longer time of preaching. It is a wicked place. There was some delay in starting. More ferry-boats came over the river, and as we sat outside on the boat a little more "seed" was scattered. One man was so anxious to get a book he sold his only duck egg that he might have money to purchase one! Ah! could you have seen one feeble white-haired old woman who walked down the bank that she might have a look at me, your hearts would have been moved with pity for her. She bought a book, and we told her very simply to trust in Jesus. She was over eighty years of age. On leaving us she said, "Wan-si-shuen-i," or, "May everything be agreeable to your wishes." I have lately discovered that in Buddhism good wishes for others are meritorious. This may account for the ever ready "good words" of the Chinese in some measure. We were blocked on the 6th with very bad weather, and did not move for two days.

*Dec. 8.*—Brought us to the capital, Nan-ch'ang fu, or "Kiang-si-seng," as the people always say. The river on Monday presented a very different appearance from the time we passed up, and, with boats passing up and down in large numbers, looked quite lively. The creek at the capital, for about a mile long, is filled with boats, from perhaps the largest junk for river navigation to the smallest boats.

*Dec. 9.*—Yesterday afternoon was a somewhat remarkable day at the capital. We believe no foreign woman had ever been inside the city, or even on shore. One man said, "*In all his lifetime he had not seen such a sight!*" Oh, that it may be the harbinger of brighter days for some of these poor people. We went on shore in the afternoon, and together we walked through street after street thronged with people till one felt in a labyrinth. I wondered, "will this never come to an end." We saw one street after another of prettily arranged and decorated Chinese shops, with golden signboards suspended perpendicularly one after another all along the street, presenting a very fine appearance as we walked through. As for the ware, "everything can be bought in Kiang-si-seng." You may perhaps agree with this when I tell you we had been out of condensed milk for some days and were able to buy a nice tin of the "Eagle Brand," all the way from New York. My husband told me he heard the word "foreign" so often when in the city that morning. Here was a boy selling tapes, they were "foreign tapes"; there a man who was praising paper flowers to two country women, they were made after a "foreign pattern"; another man is selling "pu," it is "foreign calico" he tells his customers. Everything, everything but the *foreigner* himself! We passed prettily-arranged stalls of fruit—oranges, lemons (of a kind), nuts, &c.; other shops with beautiful fur garments for sale; one whole street of shops with paper flowers for the hair looked very gay. Then there were shops of china ware, curios, and many other things. We saw geese, fowl, pigeons,

&c., alive in creels; small fish and eels alive in tubs of water; and there was plenty of good mutton for sale. Apropos of live stock, I may tell you our man bought fowl for us yesterday, cheap, as was supposed; to-day, on their being weighed, a difference of 2 lbs. 4 oz. in weight was discovered—minus the sand the poor birds had been stuffed with before sale!

It is enough to make one's head reel to think of the numbers. There cannot be less than a million inside the city, and many thousands outside, with the boating population, &c. How would you like to walk through the busiest parts of London with the appalling thought, "Among all these men and women there is not one who knows the way of salvation." And how would you like to think in addition, "They all dislike and distrust me, some would kill me, all would be glad to get rid of me (there may be some exceptions)," as you passed through their midst bearing the glorious Gospel of the grace of God! Just before going on shore I came across Psalm cxviii., very appropriate it seemed to our circumstances—"The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. . . . The Lord is my strength and song." The twelfth verse, too, was a very real experience to us—"They compassed me about like bees," when we were glad of the services of a soldier or two who voluntarily offered to keep the people off. You will not be surprised to hear the Lord was as true as His word and "helped" us.

We got off at dawn the next morning for Wu-ch'en, and are now anchored for the night only 30 li off. A boat passed us to-day with a coffin on board. On the coffin was a small red bag of rice to feed the hungry demons, and two sticks of brushwood to clear the way of demons. A woman sat beside the coffin clothed in white; her head was tied with a white cloth, which hung half-way down her back. Poor thing! She was evidently the "chief-mourner"; but there was no comfort for her. On the way back from Shui-chau fu we met the Roman Catholic priests going in their boat to a place 60 li above Shui-chau; the bearers to the heathen of the false doctrine of an apostate church. Both on the way up and down we met from twenty to forty boats carrying numbers of men to Nan-ch'ang and Wu-ch'en to worship the idols and burn incense in certain temples. We saw one boat-load of the pilgrims *playing cards and gambling* on the way down the river. Among all the men I only saw one woman. The idols in Wu-ch'en are supposed to be very "efficacious," and pilgrims visit them from all parts of the province to burn incense.

You see, dear friend, how much room there is in this dark land for effort and prayer. We warmly thank those who strengthened us by prayer, and, on this journey, we feel sure your prayers have been answered, and are assured "the Lord is able" to do "much more than this."  
J. G. BLANDFORD.

PRAYER is prayer, let it come from the weak or from the strong. It is not the heart or the lip from which it comes, as the ear that it goes to, which is the great thing.

## Questions and Answers.

Two lengthy Questions are given this month as only one was given last month.

We particularly request that each writer will give his name and address in full, not for publication, but that we may know who it is that seeks to help, and, if desirable, that we may communicate privately.

Replies to appear in the next number require to be sent in not later than 15th of present month, and so on; the 15th of the month being always the latest to which we can defer making up for press.

THE EDITOR.

Replies are invited to the following:—

**FAMILY WORSHIP.**—Should what is called “Family Worship” be countenanced when the parents are not children of God?

Are the new heaven and the new earth, spoken of in Isaiah lxxv. 17, lxxvi. 22; 2 Peter iii. 13, and Rev. xxi. 1, the same in all these passages? An examination of the passages in Isaiah seems to show that the *millennial* earth, not an earth free from sin and death, is there spoken of.

Does Matt. v. 39-41 forbid a Christian to go to law under any circumstances to defend himself from injustice?

In some assemblies infants are brought to the hall where the assembly meets, to dedicate them to God. Is this scriptural?

Are the sayings of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar in the book of Job inspired?

Is it right in preaching the Gospel to the unsaved to tell them they will not be judged for original sin?

Where and what is Paradise? Compare Luke xxiii. 43, Rom. x. 7, and Eph. iv. 9, with 2 Cor. xii. 4.

### THE LORD'S-DAY.

**QUESTION 380.**—How may we lawfully view the obligations of the Sabbath-day, as transferred to it? Would it not be of much benefit to the church if the whole question as to the obligations of the Lord's-day were fully entertained from the Word?

**Ans. A.**—The distinctive character of the Sabbath and the Lord's-day is very evident, and generally admitted; but it is well, in seeking to understand any truth of Scripture, to start at the beginning.

In the opening of Genesis we read—“And God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good. . . . And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day.” In the work of His hands, full expression of the goodness and bounty of His skill as Creator, God could find complacent rest. But, alas! Genesis ii. is soon followed by Genesis iii., and that rest was broken. A holy God could not rest in a scene blighted by sin, and rapidly the world ripened in wickedness until the flood; and it is noticeable that when the new earth emerged from the judgment waters of the deluge, no mention is made of the Sabbath. God committed the control of the world in government to Noah for man's good in the restraint of evil; “smelled a sweet savour” in the burnt-offering of faith (Gen. viii. 21), and gave the token of His covenant of forbearance in the bow in the cloud (Gen. ix. 14), but no sign of His rest. Later on, when God had

called, and redeemed, a people unto Himself *out of* Egypt, we next find the Sabbath connected with the giving of the manna (Ex. xvi. 22, 23), and also with the setting up of the tabernacle in the wilderness (Ex. xxxi. 13-17). Also, in the giving of the law at Sinai, the observance of the Sabbath formed one of its chief commandments. The voices of the prophets bore testimony that He gave them His Sabbaths to be a sign unto them, that they might know that Jehovah sanctified them (Ezek. xx. 12); but they rebelled against Him, &c. (verse 13), and His rest was spoiled. Nothing shows this more clearly than the fact that commandment was necessary for man to enjoy so great a blessing. Hence God must work (John v. 17), and in the person of His own beloved Son accomplished that work which should bring sinners into rest, and so the entire Sabbath-day, which was a *high day* (John xix. 31), Jesus spent in the tomb. But “death could not hold its prey.” More than conqueror He arose. “Very early in the morning, whilst it was yet dark.” The morning of a new day, a new era, ushered in; a “new creation” scene, not of labour and toil, still less of law-keeping; not the victory of the first Adam, but of the second; and, far from transferring the obligations of the first man in any shape or form, it was the joyous witness that Christ had become “the end of the law for righteousness,” and that if any man be in Christ he is a new creation.

What, then, are the claims of the Lord's-day? *Not* those of a legal commandment, for no commandment is given concerning it; but the claims of One who is not only Saviour, but *Lord*, responded to by loyal hearts, set free in the liberty of love. On the Lord's-day, “the first day of the week,” Jesus first manifested Himself to His gathered disciples (John xx. 19), and the Holy Spirit calls the resurrection day the “Lord's-day” (Rev. i. 10). The early Church also seems instinctively to own its claims by gathering together on that day to “break bread.” Thus, the Lord Himself, the Holy Spirit, and the early disciples all more than sanction the special setting apart of “the first day of the week.” When an earthly people are again on the scene, and earthly blessings are vouchsafed, the Sabbath will again be prominent.

The religious world, with its national churches and dissenting bodies, has assumed that the seventh day is changed into the first, but no such warrant exists in Scripture. S. R.

**Ans. B.**—The Lord's-day is quite as distinct from the Sabbath as the first day of the week is from the seventh.

The Sabbath was connected with the old creation and the law. The Lord's-day belongs to the new creation and grace. The obligations of the old are not in any way transferred to the new. In fact, the word “obligation,” in the legal sense, is not applicable to the new. The Lord's-day is the day on which, in resurrection, the Saviour Jesus, who bought us with His blood, was made both Lord and Christ; and, accordingly, the heart which owns Him, first as Saviour and then as Lord, rejoices in the privilege of using that day for the purpose of owning His claim to the worship and service of all who call upon His name.

The very title, “the Lord's-day,” if prayerfully considered, will guide us as to the proper observance of the day. If the day is the Lord's, and if I am the

Lord's, then it behoves me to seek throughout that day, as far as in me lies, to devote myself exclusively to, the Lord in whatever way He may enable me to acknowledge Him as Lord, and to proclaim the gospel of His grace and glory to the world. Of course, we are as much the Lord's throughout the week as on the first day of it; but if one day is called in Scripture emphatically "the Lord's-day," and if we are privileged to cease working for our bread on that day, as is the case with most of the Lord's people, then we should use to the very utmost the opportunity thus graciously given us for worshipping and serving the Lord, to the exclusion of self-interest and self-pleasing of every form.

R. L. C.

**Ans. C.**—I had almost said the Lord's-day and the Sabbath-day are the antipodes of each other, having scarcely any features in common, though confounded together, by a false Christianity which knows neither the power of the cross nor the resurrection of Christ, which still puts man, and the believer too, under law, but is a stranger to the grace that brings salvation.

The Sabbath-day was the day on which God rested from His work of creation. And in this He was alone; man did not enter into God's rest even in paradise. After the entrance of sin no mention of the Sabbath was made until God had redeemed a people from bondage, and then it was given as a sign between Him and His earthly people, but they never entered into God's rest (see Hebrews iv.). Christ came, the true antitype of the Sabbath, and the Jews, whilst zealous as to the shadow, refused and rejected the Substance. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." There could be no rest for God in a world of sin and misery. The true Sabbath being rejected, and put to death, He spent the Sabbath-day in the tomb. Could there possibly be a more definite sentence on man and his religion? "If Christ died for all, then were all dead." The cross is the absolute end of man in the flesh, his religion and all (read Colossians ii.). The believer rejoices that he has died with Christ, and that he is risen with Christ in a new creation, and is no longer subject to ordinances; they belong to the old creation. Christian ordinances remind us of this, that we have died with Christ, and that His death is our life. The Lord's-day tells me my Lord is risen, and that I am in the eighth day, the resurrection day, and by His grace I rejoice in Him, gather to His name, remember Him in His death, and anticipate His return, when the new creation shall be perfected by His changing "this body of humiliation, and fashioning it like unto His body of glory." God rests in Christ, and the believer rests in Him, the true and everlasting Sabbath. G. A. S.

**Editor's Note.**—We regret our inability to insert more than three of the replies received to this question. Several are so long that any one of them would occupy all the space at our disposal. One esteemed correspondent contends that "the Lord's-day" (Rev. i. 10) refers to the future "Day of the Lord," the day of judgment, this being in harmony with the character of the book of Revelation; whilst another as strongly contends that "the first day of the week" is a mis-translation, and should always be rendered "the first of the Sabbaths." Were we to accept both theories, we should be left without any day at all!

We prefer to accept the universally-received rendering in both cases, believing them to be substantially correct.

We refer our readers to a lucid and able article (p. 56) which we have reprinted from an old publication, written by the well-known "C. H. M.," and also the Editor's reply to Question No. 278, in Vol. XVIII., p. 31, February, 1888.

#### ASSEMBLY OF GOD V. A SECT.

**QUESTION 381.**—What constitutes the difference between an assembly of God and a sect?

**Ans. A.**—An assembly of God is a company of saved sinners—"sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints"—who are gathered together by and according to the WILL OF GOD. A Divine "building," built upon a Divine foundation, according to a Divine pattern (see 1 Cor. i. 2, iii. 6-11; Eph. ii. 20-22. An assembly of God is the only sphere where the Lordship of Christ can be owned in the present age, and where His will, as revealed in Scripture, can be carried out.

A sect (that is, religiously) is a company of professed Christians gathered together by and according to the will of man, and presided over by a human authority.

The cardinal difference lies in this: The head government or seat of authority of a sect is upon earth; while an assembly of God has its head government or seat of authority in heaven.

G. A.

**Ans. B.**—The difference consists in the fact that an assembly of God owns no other authority than the revealed Word of God, recognises no lordship but that of Christ, "as Son over His own house," and acknowledges no power for guidance or edification but that of the Holy Ghost; whilst a sect is a company or organisation formed and governed, in a greater or less degree, by the will of man. It may be a pope, archbishop, president, director, or "general"; or, assuming a more democratic form, be based upon the will of the people; but man's will being allowed when only God's will should be recognised and submitted to, constitutes the prime element in sectarianism. Alas! that Christendom is full of it; and if God in His great mercy has exercised the hearts of any of His saints as to the evil of it, and has drawn them together to the name of the Lord Jesus, we must never forget that we are no better than those who have gone before us, and that our only place of safety and blessing is the low place, the constant sense of our entire emptiness and nothingness, and that it is He only by His grace can keep us true to that precious name. Moreover, there must be subjection one to the other, "each esteeming the other better than himself," and recognising that our alone resource in difficulty is the Living God Himself and the Word of His grace. The crying sin of Christendom is the displacement of God the Holy Ghost by the will of man, and in every dispensation the very truth which ought to have been borne witness to by the people of God has been that against which they have most palpably and grievously sinned.

G. A. S.

**Ans. C.**—It is difficult to produce a direct answer, for something seems to be assumed in the question.

There was "the assembly of God at Corinth," but it was in that very assembly that sects, parties, factions, first declared themselves—"I of Paul," "I of Apollos," "I of Cephas," "I of Christ"; this last seeming to

regard Christ as only a teacher like the others. In due course comes the reproof in chapter xi. 18, 19, though other matters are included in the reproof. If this was the condition of affairs "in the assembly of God at Corinth," and in the lifetime of the great apostle of the nations, there is not any cause for surprise that such conditions prevail to-day to a much greater and more serious extent. About 1860 some dared to announce themselves as "the one assembly of God," and the inevitable result of such presumption has followed. In the chief cities and towns, and other places in the United Kingdom, are a large number of meetings, and all regard themselves as "assemblies of God"; but the aggregate number is composed of at least five or six parties or factions, and outside of these are the various denominations which we call "the sects," and we must look back to the earliest days that are briefly recorded in Acts ii. 42 to end of the chapter to obtain an idea of what such an assembly was, and to 1 Cor. xiv., noting specially verses 23 to end of 25, for what it would be if the apostle's ideal were realised.

If we compare what we read in Acts ii., 1 Cor. xiv., as stated above, with the condition of parties generally, excepted none, we shall be able to perceive "what constitutes the difference between an assembly of God and a sect."

L. D. G.

**Ans. D.**—There is but one Greek word for "assembly" and "church," viz., *Ecclesia*. The scriptural translation of this is "church," and the term applies equally (1) to the whole Body of Christ from Pentecost till His return (Eph. v. 27); (2) to the whole number of its members at one time alive on earth (Acts ix. 31); and (3) to their local meetings (Matt. xviii. 16).

These are the only senses in which it ought to be used. But there is a fourth, a very general use of the term, which is wholly unscriptural—anti-scriptural—viz., an association consisting of groups of persons in numerous places who agree upon some particular set of opinions and organise themselves accordingly. Thus we have the "Church of England," the "Independent Church," &c. The word "sect" would be more appropriate. "Church" is not admissible. To introduce the word "assembly," or "assembly of God," does not elucidate the matter; it confuses it, unless the change be carried through all the uses of *ecclesia*.

What, then, is the difference between true church fellowship and a sect. The answer is prompt and clear.

There is no such thing as a true church fellowship of the sort uniformly adopted by all the sects of Christendom, i.e., a permanent association or organisation of assemblies in different places because of their agreement in opinion. If a number of local meetings, modelled in all things, so far as possible, after God's Word, were to be associated together in this manner, that fact alone would turn them into a sect, for it is not in God's Word.

The nearest approach to a true church fellowship, since the church lost its corporate unity on earth, is simply a group of believers in and lovers of Christ meeting together in any place for worship and communion in the Holy Ghost. But (1) they acknowledge no permanent relation to one another except the bond that links them in Christ, in life, and in love with all saints everywhere; (2) between one such group and another they acknowledge no link. Fellowship, free,

and spontaneous, there will always be when people love the same Person and work for the same object. More than this would involve being a sect.

G. F. T.

**Editor's Note.**—To this question we give the above four answers selected from many. Some of the replies are much too long to admit of insertion.

We heartily endorse the replies A and B, though difficulty must arise in applying the principles there stated to the confusion now existing. Nor do we believe that a definite line can be drawn between sects and churches of God. For we have known distinctly sectarian assemblies to have been so loyal to the Lord and His Word, that being faithfully instructed and willing to receive instruction, they gradually relinquished every sectarian bond, and developed into assemblies bearing the scriptural characteristics of "Churches of God." Who will say at what point they ceased to be sectarian and became assemblies of God?

Again, we have known assemblies, at first simple and true, which, through evil influence and false teaching, have degenerated into little isolated sects, controlled by influential individuals. Spiritual liberty, fellowship, and conscience towards God being superseded by blind subjection to the will of man. Who shall say at what point they ceased to be "Churches of God"?

We are persuaded that nothing but mischief can follow the persistent attempt to make out the line of demarcation; for, this once done, the next step is inevitable, viz., the affiliation of the accredited assemblies into a community claiming to be "the Church of God."

A statement in answer D calls for remark. "Between one such group and another they acknowledge no link." We think our esteemed correspondent, upon consideration, would himself qualify or guard this point. It is impossible to avoid, even if we would, the special linking up of assembly with assembly in a way that can never be between believers penned together in sectarian folds.

At a meeting of the assembly with which the writer is associated, it was stated lately that in the course of the past year fifty-two persons had been received, bringing letters of commendation from other assemblies, and some thirty commended to other assemblies.

If each of these is commended to God in shepherd care and love, do they not form most strong and effective links, and is not such linking according to God, and the proper outcome of the ways which be in Christ?

The condition of every one of the assemblies thus represented becomes matter of deep interest and concern to the other, whether it be in receiving from or commending to.

With callous independency we have no sympathy. There is no independency in a living organism.

Neither can we go in with those who deny that scripturally gathered assemblies have any more claim on them than other associations.

If our "love to the same person" leads us to "work for the same object," viz., the carrying out of His will according to His Word, surely the fellowship between such will be vastly different in degree, if not in kind, from that which is possible with those who set tradition and the doctrines of men practically above the Word of God.

## A WARNING FROM HISTORY;

Or, "The Leaven of the Pharisees."

THE solemn warnings of the Lord Jesus touching "the leaven of the Pharisees" are not out of date; for though the "sect of the Pharisees" has ceased to be, as it existed in the days of Christ and His apostles, the "leaven of the Pharisees" shows itself in various forms, the germ of it being in fallen human nature, and only requiring congenial soil for its ready development. We must not think of this party in the Jewish nation as a *sect*, in the modern sense of the word, but rather as corresponding with what is called a *party* in the Established Church of our day.

As soon as we open the New Testament we are brought face to face with the Pharisees in their self-righteousness and pride; but it is very instructive to trace Pharisaism to its beginning. For it is the fact that it was a shell from which the kernel had vanished—a system that was ostentatious and intolerant, because the spirit of life and godliness was no longer in it—that makes the study of it so instructive to us. It is specially a beacon to those who, in an age of latitudinarianism, are desirous of being faithful to the truth of God, and a solemn evidence that what is good and true in the beginning may so degenerate as to become false and evil. Jewish writings between the days of Malachi and Matthew are sufficiently trustworthy to enable us to trace the early history of the Pharisees.

After the last of the prophets had spoken, and during the long time of waiting for the fulfilment of the promises made to the fathers, the Jews in the Holy Land to a great degree forgot their calling as the separate people of God, and became conformed to the way of the Gentiles. In the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, B.C. 174-164, there were those who "persuaded many, saying, Let us go and make a covenant with the heathen that are round about us" (First Maccabees). Still, God had His faithful remnant, who sealed their testimony with their blood. Some of these "were tortured, not accepting deliverance" at the cost of unfaithfulness, while others, such as Mattathias and his sons, "wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy :) they

wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth" (Heb. xi. 35-38).

When Mattathias died he charged his sons to be faithful to their God, and hope in Him, reminding them of the bright examples of such faithfulness in the history of their nation. Through these men God gave His people a "little reviving," for in the spirit of faith they took hold of His promises, became leaders of the faithful in Israel, and, as long as they rested upon Him alone, obtained great victories over those who sought to banish the name of Jehovah from the earth. In those days men showed their unfaithfulness or their faithfulness by "mingling" or "not mingling" with the Gentiles in marriage and social life, as well as in the matter of worship, and those who were true to the covenant of their God and His laws were called Chasidim, that is, *saints*.

After the terrible persecutions under Antiochus, and when things became more settled, the representatives of these two classes were still left in Israel, and thus there were two great influences at work. While the faithful were seeking to maintain the authority of the law of God and the separate place of His people, others were seeking to relax the bonds of that law, and to fall in with the spirit of the age; and the very laxity of these only led those who feared God to cleave more closely to His precepts. But though men of faith and power might hand on to the next generation the truths they had maintained at such cost, they could not pass on the faith and power in which they had held them. Thus, imperceptibly it may have been, godliness waned, while the externals both of worship and social life became more rigid, and the Chasidim, or *saints*, of one period became the Pharisees, or *separated ones*, of the next. The separation they practised was in its early stages such as the law of God called for, their aim being to maintain the institutions God had appointed, and to cherish the hope of Israel; but whether they took the new name themselves or received it from others, the change is significant. The title Chasidim, *saints*, expressed their positive relationship to God as His people, and might have kept them in remembrance of the fact that they were one with all who were embraced in God's covenant, according to Psalm l. 5, where the word is used. The word Pharisees,

*separated ones*, described their position in a negative way with regard to those around them, for in course of time they went so far as to consider themselves defiled by contact even with other Jews, who, while faithful to the law, were not as rigorous as themselves in ritual observances. As these observances soon embraced human traditions, which were first put on a level with God's Word, and then raised above it, the later Pharisees grew in likeness to their predecessors of Isaiah's day, who walked "after their own thoughts," and said to others, "Come not near to me; for I am holier than thou" (Isa. lvi. 2-5).

When we reach the time of the Gospel history we learn how truly those who had begun in the spirit had sunk to the level of "the flesh," for we find the Pharisees ever before us as the strenuous upholders of mere outward ritual, while the majority of them evaded the true requirements of the law of God, and were the bitterest opponents of the Lord Jesus and His disciples. They gloried in their natural relationship to Abraham, as sufficient to ensure to them the blessings of the covenant, while they altogether disregarded their state of heart before God. Why they went to John's baptism we know not: but it is clear that when, with prophetic insight, he charged them to give evidence of their sincerity by bringing forth fruit worthy of repentance, most of them turned away (Luke vii. 30). Their antipathy to the Lord Jesus was made manifest from the very first. They looked upon Him with suspicion because He allowed a penitent sinner to touch Him; they found fault because He went to the house of one whom they classed with sinners, even though he was a true son of Abraham, and a partaker of Abraham's faith; their anger was stirred because He did works of mercy on the Sabbath-day; they plotted to entrap Him and hand Him over to the governor as a criminal; and they rested not until they had by the foulest means procured His condemnation.

But if we would learn the real character of the Pharisees we must listen to the words of Him who knew what was in man. From those words we learn that, though to a certain extent they were the orthodox expositors of the law (Matt. xxiii. 3), their religion was practically a system of *externalism*, that left entirely out of

account what met the eye of God alone. They drew nigh to God with the mouth and honoured Him with the lips, while the heart was far from Him; they sat in Moses' seat, and so far their teaching was to be carried out; but their example was to be avoided, for they said and did not; they exalted tradition to an authority equal with Scripture, and taught for doctrines the commandments of men; they were very particular about tithing the smallest herbs; but, with hearts full of covetousness, they neglected judgment, mercy, faith, and the love of God; they made clean the outside of the cup and the platter, but their inward part was full of ravening and wickedness, extortion and excess; they would strain out a gnat, lest they should be defiled by what was unclean, while they would swallow a camel, unclean though it was, when it was to their interest to do so; they were careful about the very mode of washing the hands, by which they distinguished themselves from "the men of the earth," as they called the common people, while they never considered how to cleanse the heart; and instead of leading people to God, they spent all their energies in seeking to win them to their own line of thought and action—"Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves."

The self-complaisance of the Pharisees found expression in the words, "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are," in strong condemnation of all who did not do as they did, and supreme contempt of such as did not come up to their standard in the matter of light and knowledge. When the officers who were sent to take Jesus returned with the statement, "Never man spake like this man," their taunt was, "Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him? But this people, who knoweth not the law, are cursed." They considered themselves to be the proper examples, and that their not believing on Him should deter others from doing so. In their self-confidence they could thus despise and pronounce as "cursed" some of the most godly of the nation, the true remnant, who were "waiting for the consolation of Israel," and, being prepared by the ministry of the Baptist, were ready to hear the Shepherd's voice and to follow Him.

Such, with few exceptions, were outside the ranks of the Pharisees. We may hope that there were still some who cherished the spirit of the *Chasidim* of old, and whose great aim was to be approved of God. But there were few like that "man of the Pharisees" who "came to Jesus by night," and finally cast in his lot with the crucified One; few as tolerant as Gamaliel, who refused to condemn what might be of God; few who, like Saul of Tarsus, became lowly followers of the Christ of God, having received Him as "the end of the law for righteousness." Even some who did believe, so clave to their old ideas that they were a constant source of trial in the Church, and persistent opponents of the Apostle Paul and his ministry of grace.

As before said, it is the *degeneracy* of what began in the fear of God, and with the desire for His glory, that causes the history of the Pharisees to be so full of instruction and warning to us, and it is the personal application of this lesson that we all so deeply need. It may be easy to discern the corrupting leaven of the Pharisees in systems around us, and to see how men are being led away from the truth of God to traditions, and are substituting human forms for spiritual power; inasmuch, also, as the Pharisees of the Lord's day were unregenerate men, the ready thought of the heart might be that to such alone His warnings are applicable.

But the fact that it was to *His own disciples* that the Lord said, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees," shows us that this leaven may work in children of God and servants of Christ. It may also suggest that the very effort to be faithful to God in a day of departure from His truth exposes us to the insidious working of this subtle evil. It behoves us, therefore, to consider in what way the Lord's command may apply to *us*, and how *we* may profit by it. To help us in this let us glance at another movement of the Spirit of God, its first results, and subsequent consequences.

(To be continued.)

THE Christian's confidence is in the living God—the worldly man's in Providence. The Christian is taught that the God of Providence is *his Father*.

## PERSONAL TYPES OF CHRIST.

### INTRODUCTION.

I DESIRE, in a few short papers, to bring before my readers some of the individuals in the Old Testament who are types of Christ. In commencing the subject, it may be well to say a few words about

### TYPICAL TEACHING IN GENERAL.

Within the last few years much attention has been given to popular education; and it must be admitted that great advances have been made in this matter. On going into an infant class-room, at the present day, one usually finds the walls covered with pictures. These pictures are more or less true representations of different animals, trees, fruits, &c. Underneath the picture there may be a description in *words* of the characteristic features of the plant or animal.

A few years since teaching of this sort was very little practised. But it is now known that the mind is more easily reached through the eye than through the ear. But it is simply carrying out a principle which God has long acted on. In the infancy of the race, God sought to teach men moral and spiritual truths by

### OBJECT LESSONS.

Such were the different sacrifices commenced immediately outside Eden, developed in patriarchal times, and fully matured under the law. The Jews having been so long in possession of the shadow, should have recognised the Person when He appeared. We, having the substance, more or less clearly discern the things which foreshadowed Him. The more familiar we are with the Person, the more quickly we will discover Him, even when He is veiled. For in all the types Christ is partly revealed and partly veiled. No single type sets Him forth fully. Take them *all* together and we have a life-size portrait of the Redeemer.

Christ crucified and risen is the one centre of all the ways and purposes of God. The cross of Calvary is no mere incident in the world's history; it is the great event to which all the past looked forward, and all the future will look back. The cross is the manifestation of God's love; it is the proof of God's justice; it is the foundation of all His purposes; and it is the channel for the outflow

of His grace to a perishing world. Christ is the great subject of the Scriptures. Give the Lord Jesus His true place, and all is clear both in the Bible and history. Ignore Christ and the Bible is a puzzle and the world an enigma. Confessedly "great is the mystery" of the incarnation; but, once accepted, it is the key to every other difficulty; it swallows up every other mystery. One at all acquainted with God's mind will expect to find Christ in every page of Revelation, and he is not disappointed. Many of the Old Testament portions can only be understood as we see the Son of God in them. This is notably true of the many sacrifices, both before and under the law; and it is just as clear that many of the characters in Old Testament history are *types* of Christ. By this we mean that *something in them or about them was intended by God to foreshadow some point in Christ's person or work*. But as these men were imperfect and sinful, it is impossible that even all of them together can fully reveal Him who is true God and real man in one person; and for the same reason many of them show Him as much by *contrast* as by points of resemblance. In fact, to get the full value of the type, it will be necessary both to

#### COMPARE AND CONTRAST

the antitype with the type.

With several of these men a *woman* is linked, and it will be found that the woman occupies an important part in giving us the type in its fulness and beauty. I may say, then, that I take the woman to represent *the Church*; meaning by that term the children of God of this dispensation. I do not intend to occupy time in largely proving this; it has been done again and again by able teachers of the Word. But one or two simple points may not be out of place.

1. Our Lord, when on earth, speaks of the Church as something which *He will yet build* (Matt. xvii. 18).

2. The calling of the Church—the baptising of Jewish and Gentile believers into one body—was *hidden in God*, till He revealed it through the apostle Paul (Eph. iii. 3-11).

3. The marriage of the Lamb, described in Rev. xix. 6-9, it is admitted, takes place at the commencement of the millennium; but during that age myriads of persons will be saved who

cannot possibly belong to the Bride of Christ; for, as we have seen, that is complete before they are saved.

Now, if this will be so in a future age, it is a good reason for supposing that *saints in the past* may not belong to the Body of Christ. And in the light of other scriptures, in my judgment, this probability becomes a certainty. The only answer to the *why* of it all must be: "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight."

There are several remarkable

#### FIGURES OF THE CHURCH

used in the New Testament; notably, that of *the Body*. The *human body*, with its *one head* and *many members*, is employed to show the wondrous union which exists between Christ and His people. But let us remember it is a *figure*—true, a figure of a Divine reality, yet only a figure; but this figure, so often used by the Holy Spirit, is surely the best He can employ to set forth in human language this blessed relationship. Within the last few years, some, who are generally well instructed in the things of God, have denied that the figure of the *Bride* is used of saints of this dispensation. But this denial is made, as I judge, without sufficient reason. It seems clear to me that the figure of the *body* is used specially, if not exclusively, of the Church *on earth*. Paul is the only New Testament writer who employs this figure; and whenever he speaks of *ministry in the assembly*, he naturally seems to turn to the idea of the body. And in the four epistles where the body is directly spoken of, the subject of ministry is introduced (see Rom. xii.; 1 Cor. xii.; Eph. iv.; Col. i. 18-26; ii. 18, 19).

But the use of gifts in the assembly is only needed—may I not say only *possible*?—while it is in the world. So we have no allusion to the Church as the body in connection with *the future*.

On the other hand, the figure of the *Bride* is one which necessarily awaits its perfect fulfilment. So, in the book of the Revelation, we see the saints after the *rapture* and *after the thousand years*, and in both instances it is as *the Bride* (Rev. xix. 6-9; xx. 1-3). I have dwelt longer on these points than I intended; but it will not be necessary to again refer to them.

In closing, a word or two of *caution* may not be out of place as to the unfolding of personal and other types. Let it be remembered then—

1. The men who will pass in review may be studied as *individual believers as well as types of Christ*. Their typical character does not do away with the lessons our God intends us to learn from their personal history.

2. In thinking of this subject we must be careful not to let our imagination run riot. It is easy to get into all sorts of fanciful and even ridiculous interpretations of types and parables. No type, analogy, or parable, was ever intended "to go on all four." I may be able to point out three things in which a man is a type of Christ; another may point out six in which he is not. Seek, then, to get the main features in any type without trying to make it fit in every detail. The poor type is sometimes so *tortured* to get resemblances, that one finds himself suffering in sympathy.

3. *We must never build a doctrine on the interpretation of a type*. If we have New Testament teaching on a subject, a type from the Old Testament may serve to illustrate it, *but that is all*. I have met with Christians who sought to justify what to me was the most unscriptural action in certain Church matters, by their interpretation of some of the types in Leviticus. But this surely was as unreasonable as it is unscriptural.

I doubt not simple souls again and again have been beguiled by this means. We cannot too often repeat that it is only a "thus saith the Lord" that is binding on the conscience. If, as we think, a type teaches something out of harmony with the New Testament, it must be our interpretation of the type that is wrong, and not the plain teaching of the Scripture. The type must be adjusted to the doctrine, not the doctrine to the type.

These precautions are intended for any young disciples who may read this. And let me say to such: If you will bear in mind what has been said, and, in simple dependence upon the teaching of the Holy Spirit, will enter this field of Scripture, I can assure you from personal experience you will find yourselves feeding in the green pastures, and being led beside the still waters.

J. N. C.

## THE FELLOWSHIP OF ASSEMBLIES IN THE WORK OF THE LORD.

AN ADDRESS GIVEN AT A CONFERENCE IN THE  
MARBLE HALL.

(BY JOHN RITCHIE.)

THE fellowship of assemblies is a subject which at this present time is receiving a large share of attention from believers who are gathered unto the Name of the Lord. Much diversity of thought exists, and this has been warmly expressed and widely diffused. It is not my present purpose to contribute anything to this controversy, either on the one side or the other, so far as the doctrinal or theoretical view is concerned. I desire rather to call attention to a few Scriptures which seem to point to a practical and experimental side of the subject. There is a doctrinal and there is a practical side to every subject of this kind, and we need to remember, that it is perfectly possible to hold the doctrine of fellowship with God and with one another, either as individuals or assemblies, correctly, and yet have very little experimental and practical enjoyment of that fellowship. The effect of discussion—even when conducted in a Christian spirit and with a true desire to ascertain and hold fast the mind of the Lord—is to so occupy the mind—especially of those who are leading in it—with the doctrinal side of the truth so that they are in danger of neglecting the practical altogether. The spiritual worth of any part of the truth, to the individual, or to the Church, is just the measure in which it is held in communion with God and practised in the grace and power of the Holy Spirit. To exalt it beyond its measure, and to press it beyond its importance, is the natural tendency, especially so, if it has given light to our path and joy to our own souls. Unwittingly it becomes our "Shibboleth," and presently the measure of our confidence in others becomes determined by their acceptance of it.

First, as to fellowship generally. The normal state of a believer or of an assembly is, to have fellowship with God and with each other. Divine life is the foundation of this fellowship. In order to make such fellowship possible, God has given to all His own eternal life. He has also given them His Holy Spirit to nourish and cherish this fellowship, and He

has given His Word to order and control it. The measure of our fellowship with fellow-saints will be largely governed by our experimental fellowship with God, our walk in the Spirit, and our obedience to the Word. If there is a carnal condition, disobedience to the truth, and grieving of the Spirit, there can be little experimental fellowship with fellow-saints; either individually or collectively.

As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are joint-partakers of all that God has given us in His Son. This is the root idea of fellowship. This is true of us, as individuals; it is equally true of us as assemblies. God has given to His people certain common mercies, privileges, and responsibilities, and it is His will that they should jointly share in these. I will not at present attempt to indicate what is embraced in the fellowship of saints, but proceed to look at one of its departments—namely,

#### THE FELLOWSHIP OF ASSEMBLIES IN THE WORK OF THE LORD.

Let us turn to a well-known incident in Luke v. 1-7, which may serve to introduce this subject. The Lord had just used Peter's empty boat. From it He had addressed the people on the shore; then, turning to Peter, He had told him to "launch out into the deep." At the Lord's bidding he let down the net, and a great multitude of fishes were immediately enclosed, insomuch that the net was broken. It was then that they beckoned to their partners in another ship close by, to come and help them. It is in circumstances like these that fellowship can best be appreciated and understood. Let us, by way of illustration, look at these two boats, with their respective occupants, as illustrative of two assemblies of saints. Let it also be remembered that the occupants of the boats are said to be "partners." The word "partner" is a significant one in this connection. It is translated elsewhere "fellowship." Although in two boats, they were one company. They were "partners" in one concern. When they had "a good take" they shared the profits, and when they had a loss, they shared that also. They were joint-partakers and companions, in joy and sorrow; labourers together and fellow-helpers in a common service. This is fellowship. It was a day of good things in Peter's

boat, more than he could rightly control. What more natural than to raise his hand and ask assistance from his "partners"? He knew full well that their sympathy and help could be counted on, for they were mutually dependent on each other. If we could only think of assemblies of saints thus, it would contribute largely to the removal of many difficulties. We are partners in one concern; not separate coteries or rival factions, each having separate interests of its own. "They beckoned." There is no indication here of what has been termed "independency." The uplifted hand inviting help, reveals the state of Peter's mind. He thereby owns his need of their assistance and expresses his confidence in their willingness to impart it. The ready response of those in the other boat, expresses the full and hearty fellowship that existed between Peter and his partners. Neither jealousy nor pride hindered its operation. The crew of the other boat did not say, "Why did the Lord take Peter's boat, and not ours?" They knew that Peter's success was their success. They knew that it all went to the common good. If God is pleased to give an assembly a time of spiritual fullness, with many conversions, filling their hands with labour, let them not bear the burden alone. If another assembly is at hand, having gift and grace, and capable of helping them, let them beckon to them as partners; and let not pride on the one hand, or jealousy on the other hinder. Why should it? They are mutual sharers of the joy and blessing—partners in the one concern.

#### FELLOWSHIP IN OPERATION.

When we turn to the Acts, where the early history of the Church is recorded, we get much instruction upon this subject. We see there the fellowship of assemblies in active operation in various aspects; but we must limit ourselves to the consideration of one point, viz., their fellowship in the work of the Lord. In chapter ii. we have an account of the first formed assembly of saints, "the Church which was at Jerusalem" (Acts viii. 2). The one thing that strikes us in connection with this assembly is, its high spiritual condition. It was yet in its infancy. So far as knowledge is concerned it had very little, for comparatively little of the Lord's will concerning the Church

was yet revealed, as it afterwards was through the Apostle Paul. Additional and more perfect order we do find amongst the assemblies of God later on, but nothing higher—if indeed any assembly ever reached the same high spiritual condition (see Acts ii. 44 and v. 32). The assembly at Corinth, while “enriched in all knowledge,” was in a “carnal” and divided state (1 Cor. ii. 1, 2). From this we may surely gather, that the knowledge of God’s will concerning the constitution and order of the Church does not of itself secure a condition that tends to foster fellowship among the saints gathered in any given assembly, or to promote its intercommunion with other assemblies. Only as the individuals who compose that assembly continue in the grace of God, and as the united company walk in “the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit,” will the assembly be in a fit condition to perform its various functions both within itself and toward others. Shall we therefore decry knowledge, or esteem of little practical value what is found written concerning the House of God? Far be the thought. To do so would be to slight much that God has given for our obedience. But the opposite tendency, to magnify its possession, has also to be guarded against, lest it should prove a wall of partition between us and those who may not yet have attained thereto. The measure of our fellowship with others will be to a large extent determined by our spiritual condition, rather than by our attainments in knowledge. When is it that we have most liberty and joy in serving the saints and in telling out the Gospel to sinners? Is it not when the love of Christ is constricting us, when the heart is dwelling in the love of God? Thus we may learn that we must not divorce from such a subject as the mutual fellowship of saints or assemblies a factor of so great importance as spiritual condition, this being the essential element by which alone it can be sustained.

Turn now to chapter viii. God sometimes uses the enemy to fulfil His own purposes. We should not look upon our sorrows and troubles as unmitigated evils. It is often in deep waters, as we pass through much exercise of soul, that we gain the truest knowledge of God and of His will. Pearls lie in deep

waters, and those who would find them must needs subject themselves to personal self-denial, patience, and endurance. We value most what costs us most. And I cannot doubt but God will, out of the deep searchings of heart, which many of His beloved people are passing through, on this and kindred subjects, yet bring out, and cause us to possess much blessing. God sees it necessary sometimes to bring His Church into circumstances of trial and sorrow, in order to develop and manifest what otherwise might be allowed to slumber.

The Lord had said to His disciples, “Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth” (Acts i. 8). They do not seem to have been in a hurry to fulfil that commission. The “fellowship of saints” at Jerusalem was both “good and pleasant,” and they were inclined to enjoy it, rather than to “launch out into the deep.” But God stirred up their nest and scattered them (see Acts viii. 2). If they will not be led by the direct constraint of love, to carry the Gospel beyond Jerusalem, they must be driven by the force of persecution; for God must have His Gospel made known, if not by the twelve apostles, then by the saints at large. “Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word. Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them” (Acts viii. 4, 5). This was a step beyond anything that had been yet done by the apostles. It was a new departure in the things of God, and to the mind of a Jew, it was a departure of a very serious nature. Samaria had been for centuries the centre of a great apostasy. It had a rival temple, and a counterfeit priesthood; therefore, “the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans.” The natural prejudices of the apostles may have hindered them from carrying the Gospel to Samaria; but the purpose of God, that sinners there should hear the Gospel, must be fulfilled. He sent Philip—who had been chosen by the Church for a different service—to preach Christ to these Samaritans; and He that sent him, wrought with him (Mark xvi. 20), and many believed and were baptised. There was a mighty work of God done in dark, unclean Samaria. But how will the apostles at

Jerusalem regard it? Let us see. "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of the Lord," they did not allow their prejudice to overcome them, or to blind their eyes to what the Lord was doing. They did not hastily conclude that this was "the work of the devil," or a "counterfeit" of what had been done in Jerusalem. No; "they sent unto them Peter and John." True, the devil had once wrought there; but that does not prevent God from working now. They at once extended the hand of fellowship towards this work of God, and sent workers to it. They identified themselves as "partners" in it, and proceeded to strengthen all that was of God, and to expose what was not. As individuals and assemblies, we should ever be casting our eyes over the world, looking for such visitations of Divine mercy, remembering that God so loved it that He gave for it His only begotten Son. The Church at Jerusalem sent forth Peter and John, not as spies to see what was going on, but as helpers and labourers, to strengthen what God had wrought. Here, we have the practical fellowship of the assembly in Jerusalem in the work of the Lord at Samaria.

*(To be continued.)*

Elementary Articles, No. 10.

### CHRIST FOR US, THE SPIRIT IN US.

IT is well that we should be clear as to the distinction between the ground of peace, and that which is the spring of holiness and devotedness in our daily course; in other words, that we should understand the distinction between the work of Christ *for* us, and the work of the Spirit *in* us. The former is illustrated by the blood on the lintel without: the latter, by the Israelites' actings within. When any one, through grace, receives Christ, in the Divine efficacy of His accomplished work, He is introduced into a position in which God can address him as to his conduct; he becomes the subject of parental care and discipline. But then he must be careful not to confound the question of his walk with the ground of his perfect, his profound peace in the presence of God.

Many suffer in this way; they do not understand the fulness of Christ for them, and their everlasting completeness in Him, together

with the settled judgment of God about them. Now, while there is any dimness or uncertainty as to this there can neither be settled peace of conscience, nor any intelligent ground of Christian activity. Everything will be referred to the question of peace, rather than to the glory of Christ, which should be our aim, and which will be our aim in proportion as we enter into the Divine reality of what we are in Christ, through the infinite grace of God. The more we realise the truth that everything has been accomplished by Christ, for the perfect establishment for our peace in connection with the holiness of God, the more we shall see how futile is every thought about ourselves. A question as to the believer's peace is, in reality, a question as to the accomplishment of the work of Christ. If you touch one, you touch the other; for "Christ is our peace." He is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

And not only is He the same always, but God's estimate of Him and of us in Him, is also the same—"Ye are complete in Him who is the head of all principality and power." "As He is, so are we in this world." "Wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved." "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel" (Num. xxiii. 21). Not that iniquity and perverseness are not there; for "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." It would not give us any peace to be told that the Lord's people have not perverseness in them; but that *He hath not beheld it* tranquillises the heart most blessedly. It is God's grace that blots out sin, through the precious blood of Jesus. He delights to do this; yea, it is His glory. "Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back."

This, beloved Christian reader, should banish every fear from your heart. God is not looking at your sin, but at the blood of the Lamb; and in that He sees the exquisite fruit of His own love, and triumphs in it. Now, if God is not looking at your sin, why should you keep dwelling upon it? If He graciously triumphs in the fruit of His love, why should you not triumph in it also? The spring of your communion is your keeping your eye fixed upon the same object that God is looking at. Now, if God is looking at Christ, and you

are looking at your sins, of necessity there can be no communion. "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" God says, by virtue of the blood of Christ, "Your sins and your iniquities will I remember no more." Are you calling them to remembrance? How many are anxiously occupied about the question of personal peace, which really stands at the very threshold of the Christian course!

This sorrowful state of soul may arise from various causes. It may arise from imperfect or muddy views of the Gospel; from not seeing the fulness of Christ, and the absolutely settled character of the forgiveness of sins.

But there is another cause, and one of a far more grave and serious nature: viz., a careless and an unconscientious walk; and cases of this melancholy kind often run to a great extreme—even to actual despair. Such cases teach the importance of seeking a close and faithful walk with God. "He will keep the feet of His saints;" but they are exhorted to "keep their hearts with all diligence." The Spirit reveals Christ, and, if not grieved by sin and worldliness, will build up the soul in His fulness, and establish it in the peace of God, which passeth all understanding. But, alas! when conscience is tampered with—when we sin against light—when we walk in an indolent and a self-indulgent spirit—when we let in the world upon our hearts, then the eye becomes dim, and the understanding darkened; feebleness and languor take the place of energy and vigour; and unless the soul be thoroughly broken down under the sense of its delusion, and restored by the grace of God, in all probability Satan will entangle it in the destructive meshes of carnality and worldliness; or, it may be, will well-nigh drive it into dread infidelity.

Should this paper fall into the hands of any one suffering in this way, let me entreat him at once to pause, and having ascertained, by honest self-judgment, the real cause of his low and heavy state, to bring it into the presence of his heavenly Father, and thus confess, judge, and put away his evil. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

There is no reason why the believer should continue in a low or impoverished state of soul,

unless he is deliberately trifling with conscience, and grieving the Spirit of God. It is his privilege to have Christ, in all His Divine fulness, between his soul and everything, no matter what—sins, infirmities, circumstances; and when the eye is steadily fixed upon, and filled with Christ, nothing can interfere with his peace. But the secret cause of the low condition of so many of God's dear people is, that they have let slip Christ, and allowed other things to come in and occupy their hearts.

C. H. M.

## THE RELATION OF ASSEMBLIES TO EACH OTHER.

AN ADDRESS BY A. J. HOLIDAY.

LET us read Deut. iv. 1, 2:—"Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them. . . . Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you." On this occasion, when the forty years' wanderings of the children of Israel were ended, and they were approaching the verge of Jordan, before they were suffered to pass over, Moses was commanded to rehearse in their hearing all the commandments and judgments that the Lord had given him well nigh forty years before, when Israel was encamped around Mount Sinai. In the words we have just been reading we are reminded of two especial dangers to which they were in that day, and we are to-day, liable. The one is that of adding to what God has commanded, and the other is that of diminishing from it. The outcome of the one is human tradition, in all its immense variety of mischievous forms. The result of the other is scepticism, and particularly the scepticism which is so prevalent amongst those who profess to be the people of God. These two things interact, the one upon the other, and each helps to produce the other. If I add to God's commandments, it is because in my unbelief I think His commandments are not sufficient. By so doing I take away from the authority of God's perfect and all-sufficient Scriptures, and so prepare the way for the one who

denies their truth, in part if not in whole. It is well that our eyes should be open to the condition of things around us, and that we should realise the causes as well as the character of the general departure from the truth of that which professes to be of God. But let us take care that we are learning needed lessons for ourselves as we ponder these things. All the corruptions of Christendom, all the things we see around us which are contrary to the Word of God, are the outcome of the workings of the natural heart; and we must never forget that the self-same heart is in each one of us, and, apart from the keeping, restraining grace of God, will produce the same results over again in our own case. Let us remember, then, that the position we have taken, however scriptural it may be, will not in itself be any safeguard from the two dangers that have been referred to, the adding to and the diminishing from the Word of God. We can never sufficiently thank God for the grace that has taught us something of the truth of separation to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ: but let me repeat again that that position cannot exempt us from the need of constant watchfulness against those dangers and temptations of the natural heart to which we are all liable.

A fruitful source of human tradition is found in the unwillingness of the natural man to stand still and wait for God. It may be that we are put in circumstances of difficulty, and that we do not at once discern clear guidance in the Word of God with regard to these circumstances. Immediately we fly off to some human device, and find some way of our own out of the difficulty. Then the desire to justify ourselves in the way we have taken inclines us to endeavour to make it a rule for others. True, we turn to the Scriptures, and seek to enforce our position from God's Word; but we have not come to the Word to seek God's mind there, but to find our own, and our self-deception only becomes greater. Possibly the mind of God was that we should stand still and do nothing, but our fleshly impatience would not let us do that. We thought we must take action of some sort, and, failing a commandment from God, we fell back on ways of our own.

Let us turn to Prov. xxx. 6:—"Add thou

not unto His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." I turn to this scripture also with the desire that this special danger may be the more deeply impressed upon every one of our hearts, and that, in going to the Word of God to seek to know His mind on any subject, we may beware lest we dare in the smallest thing to add to that which God has written. If we do so, presently the time will come when He must reprove us, and when we shall be found to be liars. It is of the utmost importance that we ascertain what God has not said, as well as what He has said. God's silence on a matter is often fully as instructive to us as that which He has spoken. Where God is silent, the absolute perfection of His Word makes us quite sure that it is because He does not purpose to give us any direct commandment. The Word of God is so perfect that by it the man of God shall be "thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Furnishing that he does not find there is a furnishing with weapons that God never meant him to use.

When we were considering, last evening, the first two mentions of the word "church," as used by the Lord Jesus in Matthew xvi. and xviii., we saw that the one had reference to an entire building, which is being carried on right through the dispensation by the preaching of the Gospel; while the other was connected with the gathering together of saints unto the Name of the Lord Jesus, in such a fellowship and unity that even here they should, in every place, become a dwelling-place for God Himself, until presently the whole building is complete. In connection with each of these aspects of the Church, we saw that the Lord repeats the self-same declaration as to the authority, the binding and loosing, that shall attach to the words and acts of those who carry out His bidding.

Now, when we turn to our present subject, the relationship of assemblies one to another, and their behaviour towards each other, the first thing that strikes me is the utter absence of anything of a parallel character to the declaration to which reference has just been made. God's silence should ever be of great weight with us; and the fact that God has nowhere repeated a third time, in a third application, these words, "Whatsoever thou

shalt bind on earth shall be, having been bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be, having been loosed in heaven," should surely prepare us to find that in regard to the association of assemblies one with another there is nothing exactly corresponding to that which there is in the association of believers together as a church, as gathered unto the Name of the Lord Jesus, and owning His authority as Lord. I do not say that there is no sense in which the Lord is in the midst of His assemblies; I believe we shall find that there is. I do not say that there is no power for action; again, I believe we shall find that there is. But there is nothing of the definite, specific character which we find in Matt. xviii., in connection with an offending brother, or in 1 Cor. v., in connection with the fornicator. I was once asked to meet with a few of the so-called "exclusive brethren" for conversation, and one matter that came up was this very subject of the relationship of assemblies to one another, and the power and authority of a circle of assemblies to deal with one offending assembly in their midst. I asked them if they could show me in the Word of God anything in this connection corresponding to the commandment in Matt. xviii., where the Church deals with an individual. The brother who was the leading spokesman replied, "Oh, some things are axiomatic, and don't need Scripture to prove them." An axiom is something that is self-evident. To say that anything in regard to the things of God is axiomatic is to exalt human thought and reason above the Word of God. That at once settled the matter to my mind, and I felt that there was no use going on contending with one who could take such a position. We had no common ground to stand upon. I trust that to every one of us, in connection with the Word of God, nothing is axiomatic. We do not know the simplest things of God's verities apart from His revelation. At every point we have to fall back upon God's Word; and we must never attempt to rely upon our own natural perceptions.

In regard to the action of churches one with another, we get valuable instruction in the first three chapters of the Revelation. But it is very distinct in character from any-

thing which the Lord commands to be done in Matt. xvi. and xviii. It will perhaps be well to notice here that some are ready to dismiss much of the plain teaching of Rev. ii. and iii., on the ground that the whole scene is described as a mystery or parable. But we must not forget that these churches were seven existing churches. The apostle John was commanded by the Lord Jesus to send to these churches the messages with which he was entrusted. Not only was each church to receive its own message, but all that John received from the Lord he was commanded to send to each church of the seven. In this way, the believers in each church would know not only the message sent to themselves, but also that which was sent to each of the other six. While I have not the smallest question that the whole thing does present to us a panoramic symbol of the history of Christendom from that time till now, yet this cannot for a moment take away the direct application of the words of the Lord Jesus to the church to which they were sent. His words were no less perfect guidance and instruction for them in their then circumstances because they have also a symbolic and prophetic application. In these seven churches we have presented to us, in mystery, a complete, entire thing, a picture of all the assemblies of God's gathered-out ones in the world. In Matt. xviii. we had the Lord Jesus in the midst of the individual church, and here we see Him in the midst of the churches. There is no visible link of connection between these churches. Their connection one with another is in every case through the Lord, and arises out of the relationship of each assembly to Him, who is in the midst as Lord, exercising authority and judgment.

Let us look at a few verses in these chapters which speak of action to be taken towards a sinning church. First, in chapter ii. 5, we read:—"Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick (lampstand) out of its place, except thou repent." You see the Lord Jesus does not say by what means this is to be done. If He is going to make use of any instrumentality, He does not indicate what the instrument is to be. He speaks of it as

His own personal intervention ; He says, " I will come and take thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent." Then to the church in Pergamos He writes :—" Repent ; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth" (verse 16). He had just spoken of some in that church who held doctrines which He hated, and He does not simply command these persons to repent, He calls upon the whole church to repent ; He holds them unitedly responsible for the evil doctrine being in their midst. Yet His long suffering is not exhausted, and while He says, " I will come unto thee quickly," He does not say, " I will fight against thee," but " I will fight against them." He will direct His first action against the persons who hold the doctrine, giving further opportunity for repentance to the disobedient church, who had delayed to deal with what was so hateful to Him. Then again in chapter iii. 3, in writing to the church in Sardis, He says, " Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief." Here again it is the Lord's personal intervention. Verse 16 :—" So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will (or rather, ' I am about to ') spue thee out of My mouth." You notice, in all these cases, that the Lord's call to the church is to repent, and, failing their repentance, He says, " I will come and remove thy candlestick ;" " I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them ;" " I am about to spue thee out of My mouth." Here, at any rate, there is no commandment as to action to be taken by other churches ; but there is something very remarkable and noteworthy, and that is, that to every one of these seven messages He adds these words, " He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Not, " let him hear what the Spirit saith to him," or " to the church"; but, " let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches." So that while on the one hand we do not find instructions given to six churches to combine in taking away the candlestick from the seventh, on the other hand we find no warrant for indifference on the part of six as to what is going on in the seventh church. The word is, " He

that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." The whole of what the Lord spake to John was to be written and sent to every one of the seven. If then the Lord is drawing aside the veil, and telling out that which He, who searches all hearts, discerns to be the condition of each church ; and if He calls upon each to take heed to what He says to all the rest, what are we to learn from this ? Certainly it affords no warrant for rash interference ; but just as certainly it gives no countenance to indifference as to the whole matter. If, when He says to one church, " Repent, or I will come and take away thy candlestick," surely every church should be deeply concerned : and by all the claims of love, of fellowship, of what they owe to the name of the Lord Jesus, should they seek to be exercised before God as to any way in which He would have them to help on the work of repentance, and so avoid the solemn necessity that the Lord should come in judgment and remove the candlestick.

## Correspondence.

To the Editor of *The Witness*.

### PASTORS.

HEARTILY agreeing with your published answers, A, B, C, and " Editor's Note" (pp. 127, 128, vol. xix.) to Question 328, I am anxious, with your kind permission, to press on the dear flock everywhere the importance and privilege of PRAYING for PASTORS to be given to labour amongst the scattered and tried ones, as well as amongst the larger companies.

Eph. iv. 11-13 is a blessed promise of the full provision for the perfecting (perfectly joining together) of the saints—the building up of the body of Christ by the ministry of "pastors," as well as of the evangelists and teachers. Let us be more earnest and confident in prayer that men, according to 1 Tim. ii. 2-7 and Titus i. 6-9, may be given to feel their *responsibility* to obey 1 Peter v. 1-3.

One evil that has perhaps arisen from the idea that the "assembly" is to appoint the pastors, is that men whom God has fitted for this blessed service may be waiting on man for a call, instead of humbly working as unto the Lord.

Surely, as we have been built on the "foundation" of the apostles and prophets (Eph. ii. 20), whose ministry still *remains* to us in the inspired record, and as we have been called by evangelists and instructed by teachers, so may we from Eph. iv. 11 confidently reckon on *pastors* amongst the good gifts our heavenly Father has given to our glorious Head for the blessing of His members.

Sometimes, perhaps, in recoiling from the abominations of "clerisy," saints have lost sight of the Divine provision for the care and nourishing of the flock by those amongst them called to this laborious and humbling service, and pointed out by the triple titles of *elders, overseers, shepherds*. Compare Acts xx. 17 and 28, and 1 Peter v. 1-2. May the Lord put it in the hearts of many of His dear ones to bear this matter before Him in prayer, and He will assuredly give us all a large blessing through this divinely-appointed ministry.

J. K.

#### FELLOWSHIP IN LABOUR.

ESTEEMED AND DEAR BROTHER,

The following notes as to the work in — may be interesting to you. If you find that in any way "we manage these things better in —," you may use them according to your own discretion.

First, as to the assembly. As everybody is speaking and writing on oversight in these days, I shall begin with that. Oversight here is practically committed to three men . . . . As to character, previous training, and views on particular subjects, we are very unlike each other. — is employed in the — Mission, an I, before coming here, had only come in contact with "open brethren," in the extreme sense of the word. I was supposed to represent the other extreme. — is an ancient disciple of J. N. D., whose teachings he still holds to a great extent. He occupies a position about equi-distant from — and myself, sometimes propounding theories of fellowship stricter than I could accept, and sometimes advocating a manner of reception looser than — could agree to. Not that I am astonished at this, for I have always found that J. N. D.'s teaching involves any one who submits to it in a perfectly hopeless confusion of ideas. Want of capacity to distinguish between things that differ is the most striking feature of the system.

Well, in two years' fellowship of labour, we have proved what I have often advanced elsewhere, namely, that men who could never be got to agree to the articles of a common confession of faith will come, if they are prudent toward each other and faithful according to their light toward God, to a wonderful unanimity of judgment concerning the action to be taken in each case as it arises.

One reason is, that we never spring a mine upon each other by bringing before the assembly any proposal that is likely to be opposed by one of our number. Everything is thoroughly discussed between ourselves, concessions are made mutually wherever they can be made with a good conscience, and we wait on God and on one another for a unanimous judgment. Where an agreement cannot at all be arrived at, we continue the previous practice of the assembly. Where agreement is only partial, we decide upon a line of conduct which will leave each one free to act according to his conscience, without committing the assembly to his particular views.

An interesting case came up last year in connection with the question of baptism. This truth had never been allowed its true place in the assembly, and some of those longest in fellowship were unbaptised. Young converts were applying for admission; what was to be

done with them? After mature deliberation, I, whose views on the subject are of the strictest, was deputed to deal with the applicants. I told them frankly that we had no doubt of their conversion; that a majority in the assembly would be glad to see them break bread at once; that, so far from presenting baptism as a condition of fellowship, some of our own number were still unbaptised. At the same time, I pressed upon their consciences as individuals the desirability of obeying God's truth *in God's order*. All those who have come into fellowship then or since have submitted to baptism. Two dear souls waited outside six months, till they saw their way to be baptised, knowing all the time that if they had insisted on their "right" to break bread it would have been admitted. On two occasions last year seven persons were baptised at one time. And every one, old and young, in the fellowship has obeyed the Lord in this matter some time ago.

I have never been so happy in any service as I have been here, in spite of a world of troubles of different kinds.

#### ASSEMBLY OF GOD IN A SECT.

UPON full consideration of the Editor's note, I am only inclined to "qualify or guard" my words in the April number as follows:—

That "between one such *group* and another (*viz.*, groups of saints locally gathered) they acknowledge no link," is involved in my previous threefold definition of the word "Ecclesia," to which no exception is taken.

The term is applicable (1) to the whole Body of Christ from Pentecost till His return; (2) to the whole of its members now alive on earth; (3) to their local meetings. A fourth use of the word, such as is involved by admitting a link between gathering and gathering, is not found in Scripture.

Local meetings are connected only as the fingers of the hand are one to the other—that is, by organic union with the body, of which the brain is in control. A hand enclosed as the foot is, in sock and boot, could not perform its function on the violin or piano. Each finger must move independently if melody—aye, or harmony even—is to result.

But we have "letters of commendation." Very true. That is, we have fellowship, or acts of fellowship, between meeting and meeting, and yet the honour we give to a letter of this kind is due, not to the name of the gathering as such, but to the known godliness and care of brethren in it of whom we know.

This distinction is essential to remember.

We honour the action of brethren who do not meet on Divine methods when they exclude from their fellowship one who is unworthy—that is, when we know that godliness and care in the presiding brother is in operation. We have *fellowship*, that is, with those whose conduct and character declare them to be godly persons; but between gathering and gathering, *as such*, we deny any confederating link whatever. G. F. T.

#### MEXICO.

Toluca, January 27, 1891.

ABOUT the 8th inst. all here commenced to prepare for removal, as a further stay in this extremely elevated part of the country had become quite impracticable on

account of Mr. Bright's health. I do not doubt, either, that on entirely fresh ground we are far more likely to see a really solid work done than in this part, where previous work by others has left us a legacy of difficulties of a nature that it would not be easy for one in another land to comprehend without going into much detail. I am thankful from my very heart for every attempt that has been made to serve our Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospel in these parts in bygone days, but I see sufficient to prove that, however zealous and self-denying labourers may be, *God's methods are the best*, and a little work done in His way is better than a great deal done in ours.

On the 13th inst. Mr. and Mrs. Bright left Toluca for Tehuacan, which only has an altitude of 5340 feet, while this place stands at an elevation of 9500. Tehuacan has been strongly recommended as likely to suit Mr. Bright's health, and, besides this, the district has been upon his heart for some time. Everything seems to prove that the Lord has guided, for already our brother feels stronger, and a most suitable house has been obtained at once, while, as a rule, it is very difficult indeed for a Protestant preacher to get a residence of any kind. The country around is well settled, and the whole district presents an appearance of thrift and industry that seems to indicate loss of Romish influence. If this really is the case, *now* is the exact time for the Gospel to be preached, or the people will rush from superstition and idolatry to atheism.

I am more and more persuaded that it is man's ruin and God's remedy that must be preached here. When a sinner sees how vile he is before God, he will seek Christ, and, having found *Him*, the errors of Rome will be abhorred and left. Of course, error must be exposed, but if we want *born again* people (and we are satisfied with nothing short of that), *Christ* must be preached. One can make "Protestants" without saying very much about Christ, but being a "Protestant" does not save.

I hope to leave for Tehuacan in a week or two, but at present remain in Toluca in charge of the press, which does a work of much value. There are Romish lands in Central America with millions of people, but without a single Gospel preacher — Venezuela, for instance, which is *five times* as large as Great Britain. Ecuador is about half the size of Venezuela, and will not allow a leaf of the Bible in its borders.

WM. H. STANGER.

Future address—Tehuacan de las Granadas, Estado de Puebla, Mexico.

## Questions and Answers.

We particularly request that each writer will give his name and address in full, not for publication, but that we may know who it is that seeks to help, and, if desirable, that we may communicate privately.

Replies to appear in the next number require to be sent in not later than 15th of present month, and so on; the 15th of the month being always the latest to which we can defer making up for press.

THE EDITOR.

### Replies are invited to the following:—

Is it in accordance with the teaching of Scripture that a Christian gifted by God, as a pastor or teacher, should give the greater portion of his time and strength to a business or profession, and only to apportion what

he can spare of the residue to the work for which he is gifted, and to which he has been called?

What is the teaching of the labourers in the vineyard, they all having received the same for their labour? (Matt. xx.)

Is our present translation of the Bible equally inspired with the original Scriptures, or in what relation do they stand?

Does the Shepherd character of the Lord Jesus cease at His coming for His saints?

What are the *things in the heavens* which are reconciled to God through Christ? (Coloss. i. 20.)

### THE NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH.

QUESTION 382.—Are the new heaven and the new earth, spoken of in Isaiah lxxv. 17, lxxvi. 22; 2 Peter iii. 13, and Rev. xxi. 1, the same in all these passages? An examination of the passages in Isaiah seems to show that the millennial earth, not an earth free from sin and death, is there spoken of.

Ans. A.—The Spirit of God tells us, by the mouth of Peter, that the passing away of this present scene, and the creating of new heavens and a new earth, takes place in the day of the Lord. The day of the Lord extends from the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with angels of His power (2 Thess. i. 7) until He gives up the kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all. It is evident, from Rev. xx., that the burning up of the present earth and heavens, and the creating of the new, closes the day of the Lord.

We are sure that Scripture never contradicts itself, so that if Jehovah mentions new heavens and new earth in Isaiah, He refers to the same in Peter. The day of the Lord was revealed to Old Testament prophets, and more particularly as connected with Israel and the nations. The Church and the Church's hope were not made known to them. The millennial age of blessing on Israel and the nations comes in between the time of the deliverance of the Jews by sudden destruction on their foes and the last great struggle of Gog and Magog (Joel iii. 1, 2; Rev. xx.).

In Isaiah lxxv., Jehovah is evidently speaking of two things which He will do. While He is speaking of the marvellous blessedness of His redeemed, restored, united Israel in millennial times, He reveals His purpose to create new heavens and new earth. "But," says He, in verse 18, "be glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy;" this condition of things bearing a likeness to that which awaits them in the new creation. Connecting this with Isaiah lxxvi. 22, we find that Israel shall remain before Jehovah through the millennium; the enemy shall no more triumph over her. Post-millennial deceivings will not ensnare her, but from henceforth she will be the blessed of Jehovah.

To Israel, therefore, remains the wondrous destiny of passing through and out of the millennial age, in which she was not only blessed, but became the channel of blessing to the nations (Isaiah lxxvi.) into the new sinless scene, along with nations saved through her agency, a destiny commencing with the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, with healing on His wings, and consummated in her having been made the centre of the

earthly display of God's glory in the eternal state (Psalm xxxvii. 22-29, Rev. xxi. 23, 24). T. O'N.

**Ans. B.**—All the passages in question refer to the same thing. In Isa. lxxv. 17, the prophet, by the Spirit, looks forward to the new heavens and the new earth, and then stops short to describe, not that which will ultimately exhaust, but that which will temporarily answer the requirements of his prophecy, viz., the millennial age.

Bishop Lowth's translation of verse 18 runs thus:—"But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that age which I create," thus showing that the verses which follow describe the glories of a certain period during the existence of this present earth; a period, too, which will so closely precede the new heavens and the new earth as to be separated from them by only the little season of Rev. xx. 3. The prophets not unfrequently mention future events in such a manner as to lead the superficial reader to suppose that only one time or mode of fulfilment is pointed to, whereas a provisional or partial, as well as an exhaustive or final, fulfilment is often indicated, as in the present instance. And it may be owing to lack of attention to this characteristic feature of prophetic utterance that interpreters of the book of Revelation divide themselves into the Historic and Futurist schools, whereas it may possibly be found, upon careful examination, that the whole truth lies, not in either, but in both of these modes of interpretation.

The reference to the new heavens and the new earth in Isaiah lxvi. 22 is introduced simply as an illustration of the stability of the new order of things, as in the case of Jer. xxxi. 35-37, which see. R. L. S.

**Ans. C.**—The passages from Isaiah contemplate the whole future of the earth and Israel from the commencement of the "day of God." It is the way of the Spirit of God in the Old Testament prophets to link together future events, though the events may be separated by even a dispensation. Thus the "sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow," are spoken of together, without recognising the interval of this dispensation of the Church's heavenly calling (see Isaiah lxi., Ps. xxii., &c.). So, in the passages in question, millennial times are linked with the ultimate purpose of the "new heavens and new earth, wherein shall dwell righteousness." For the "sufferings of Christ" lead to the "reign" of Christ, and this to the "putting down of all rule and all authority," and "delivering up the kingdom to God, even the Father," that "God may be all in all" in tabernacling among men in the new heaven and new earth, according to Rev. xxi. and 1 Cor. xv. 24-28.

Further, as believers are now a new creation, although not yet in possession of the new body, but the "spirit of life in Christ Jesus" reigns over the carnal desires of the death-doomed body, so the heavens and the earth in the "regeneration" (Matt. xix. 28) shall be spiritually and morally a new creation, the heavens ruling over the earth, although not *physically* new, until the "end," when they shall be "folded up as a vesture and be changed" (Heb. i. 12). T. R.

**Ans. D.**—The new heaven and new earth promised in the passages is unquestionably the same in every instance. The kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ commences with the millennium, during which death

will not be unknown, "for the child shall die an hundred years old," and goes on for ever (2 Sam. vii. 12-17, Dan. ii. 44, and vii. 14, &c.). It does not end although "the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. xv. 28). Scripture, in dwelling on the promises given to Israel—to Jerusalem—refers to the *whole kingdom*, and links the millennium with the new heaven and new earth, although these latter are not brought into being until the former has passed away. In Isaiah the promise is addressed to an earthly people, Israel; and so the Spirit of Christ in the prophet dwells upon the earthly blessing, in language they would understand, linking the heavenly, or the new heaven and new earth, with it, but giving prominence to the millennial aspect of the kingdom. But in Rev. xxi. 1 further truth is revealed, the Holy Spirit now indwelling the saint, the calling being heavenly, therefore the millennial part is passed over, and the eternal is described, where "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." This is not true of the millennium, for death will be there, and so pain and sorrow, though in small degree.

H. G. H.

**Ans. E.**—The "new heavens and new earth" in Isaiah lxxv. 17 and lxxvi. 22 are, I believe, the same as those in 2 Peter iii. 13 and Rev. xxi. 1; but the context in Isaiah is millennial. These verses are introduced parenthetically to indicate the blessings which will attach to Israel in ages beyond the millennium, thus *a fortiori* proving that they will be blessed within that period. The argument is—"God will certainly not cast off His people, but restore them in the millennium to their land and to their holy city, for He has even destined them for a place in the ages to come, that their seed and their name should remain as long as the new heavens and new earth which He will create." G. F. T.

#### FAMILY WORSHIP.

**QUESTION 383.**—Should what is called "Family Worship" be countenanced when the parents are not children of God?

**Ans. A.**—The family is an institution of God, and the sacredness of its claims and associations is fully recognised in Scripture. It is, therefore, the bounden duty of every Christian to uphold the family institution to the utmost of his power, especially in these degenerate days, when even natural affection is being cast off by a godless Christendom. Hence, if the head of a family desires so far to acknowledge God as to call his household together for what he considers worship, it would appear to be but reasonable, speaking generally, that all under his roof should respond to the call.

There may possibly be exceptional circumstances in which abstinence is justifiable, or even advisable; but in all cases of this kind the guidance of God should be earnestly and specially invoked, lest in doing what we consider to be right we unnecessarily wound the feelings of our kindred, and thus defer instead of hastening their conversion to God.

It may be added that the Scriptures, which speak of families being divided owing to the confession of Christ by some and His rejection by others, do not exactly

apply to such cases as this question contemplates, seeing that in these cases there is at least a nominal profession of Christ and a calling upon His name, while in the others there is absolute rejection.

R. L. S.

**Ans. B.**—Touching the question of believers giving countenance to family worship when performed by unconverted parents, we have direct revelations from the Lord; but give our judgment as those who have obtained mercy from the Lord to be faithful (1 Cor. vii. 25). If believing sons who have been baptised according to Matt. xxviii. 19, and gather according to Matt. xviii. 20, would exhibit more of the meekness and lowliness of heart described in Matt. xi. 29, and “learn to show piety at home” (1 Tim. v. 4), the family worship would soon pass from the hands of unbelieving parents to that of believing sons. We have in our mind’s vision three distinct cases of young men who, after their baptism and reception into fellowship, comported themselves in a most unchristian manner, refusing even to speak or exchange common courtesies with the other members of the family circle. But we have another case: that of a young brother, in the ointment of whose life no such “dead flies” (Eccles. x. 1) are to be found, when he goes home, and the family assemble round the hearth, is asked by the father to offer prayer on behalf of all. In this way the formal family worship meeting might be converted into a lively little prayer-meeting, where young men can “go home to their friends and tell how great things the Lord has done for them” (Mark v. 19). We had better watch, lest in straining at a gnat we be found swallowing a camel (Matt. xxiii. 24).

T. B.

**Ans. C.**—Assuming the inquirer to be one of a family where the parents are unconverted, there must be something very important at stake before a young believer would be justified in not countenancing family worship.

No better matter could be read in the family circle than the Scriptures, for even the best religious literature is far inferior to God’s Word in its naked simplicity. And surely God would have us esteem it above every word of man. The testimony of the Scriptures on this point is very emphatic—Isaiah lv. 8-11, Jer. xxiii. 29, Heb. iv. 12.

The character of the lawless is, “Thou hatest instruction, and castest My words behind thee” (Ps. l. 17); while God’s Word is “made known to all nations for the obedience of faith” (Rom. xvi. 26), and “faith comes by hearing the Word of God” (Rom. x. 17).

Perhaps the heart of the inquirer was first impressed by Scriptures read in the family circle. God continually reminded the Jew, with all his privileges, “Thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt”; and it becomes us, who by grace have been made partakers of the Divine nature, to give no needless offence to Jew, Gentile, or Church of God, but rather, in the words of the Psalmist, say, “O taste and see the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in Him.”

OBAN.

**Ans. D.**—There are such duties as national recognition of God, public conformity to the Divine law; and the nation which publicly dishonours God and repudiates morality will suffer at His hands. It is the privilege of Christians to promote and foster this first duty of the creature towards His Creator. So in the household one

should rejoice and be thankful if unconverted persons so far reverence the God who made them as to bow before Him in the midst of their families, and we ought to do nothing to discourage such actions of homage.

Refer to Psalm ii. and xvii. for the principle of national or public recognition of God as distinct from the inner spiritual faith, love, and worship of the regenerate.

G. F. T.

**Ans. E.**—Where the parents are unsaved, if it be meant by the term “countenance it” to take part in it as if it was of God, “No” could be the only answer. Family worship, as the expression is commonly accepted, is as spurious as the worship of Christendom (a form of godliness), and is only one of the many snares of Satan to keep souls from Christ. Unbelievers cannot worship God, as such must be in spirit and in truth (John iv.), and is connected with sacrifice and sins forgiven, and ascends to God by Jesus Christ (Gen. xxii. 5-13, Exod. xxiv. 1-6, 2 Chron. vii. 1-3, John ix. 31-38, Col. iii. 17, Heb. xiii. 15, 1 Peter ii. 5).

Thus, where the parents are unsaved, we may assuredly gather that it would be wrong to countenance such an action as if it was of God. But one could be present, if seeking an opportunity to present the Gospel, and yet not countenance such as being worship.

D. C.

**Editor’s Note.**—The foregoing replies give the gist of all we have received upon this question. We feel that in this, as in many other matters, the difficulty is to draw rigid lines.

By many religiously brought-up people the family recognition of God and His Word is regarded as a sacred duty akin to “the keeping of the Sabbath.” We know that, unless born again, neither their prayer nor their observance of a day can be acceptable to God; and if it is written, “He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination,” how much more abominable must be the prayer of one who rejects the Gospel?

At the same time, it would be an evil thing to do violence to such convictions, and for this reason ought a believer to abstain from doing on the first day of the week that which his own conscience might not condemn, but which would cause his good to be evil spoken of, and might prove an occasion of stumbling to others.

Even so as to being present at what is called “family worship.” To be present at the reading of the Word often affords opportunity for pointed remark either at the time or after. And if the prayer offered be formal and ignorant, may not the believer be in spirit apart from it, and within the veil lifting up his heart for those who thus ignorantly worship God?

But it may be objected, What is the difference between being present at “family worship” and at “public worship,” where converted and unconverted join in the same service? The difference is great. The father is the head of the household, and, whether present as a child or a guest, refusal to submit to his arrangements can only be justified if the thing to be done is in itself essentially sinful. But “public worship” professes to be the Church’s assembly of God over which Christ is Lord, and whose appointments alone can be recognised or obeyed. He forbids the union of believers and unbelievers in the Church; not so in the family.

## A WARNING FROM HISTORY;

Or, "The Leaven of the Pharisees."

*(Continued from page 67).*

**A**BOUT sixty years ago, when the calling and hope of the Church of God were little known, it pleased God to lead some of His people to a more diligent study of His Word, and to enable them to put into practice what they learnt. Some of the truths that became living realities to them were the heavenly calling of the Church, the unity of the body of Christ the priesthood of believers, and the bright hope of the coming of the Lord Jesus. As the result of this they gathered together in the name of the Lord alone for worship and the breaking of bread in remembrance of Him, depending upon God for the ministry of His Word through those whom He fitted to minister it; and they sought in their personal and family life to live as those who were but pilgrims here. As in their assemblies they endeavoured to own the oneness of all who are in Christ, so in their houses they gave equal proof that separation from the world by His cross was a reality to them. Thus, again, God gave some of His people "a little reviving," and the joyful sound of the Gospel went forth for the deliverance of many souls that had been held in bondage through lack of the knowledge of the truth.

But Satan's eye was upon this great work, and it was not long before it was marred. God may have seen secret pride, and allowed it to be tested. Some, not content with the plain truths of Scripture, went beyond its teaching into serious error. Error was met in the haste of the flesh, instead of in the spirit of faith and prayer. Thus division came, and many not only turned from error, but, bringing in new conditions of fellowship, gradually built up a system which by its own weight has fallen to pieces.

Others, who were no less decided in condemning and repudiating the error referred to, considered the discipline adopted by those who separated from them unscriptural, yet sought to maintain the place of simplicity to which God had called them. As a consequence of the effort to own all that is of God, up to the measure in which it is of Him, whether in individual believers or in service, some are in these days tempted to link themselves more

or less with movements in different places, which, while free from the systems around them, have not reached in all things full obedience to the Word of God.

That there is danger of compromise in such a position is very evident, and it is a danger that there are only two ways of avoiding. The one is the maintaining of a spirit of constant watchfulness and prayer, with an individual walking before God in the path of obedience; the other is that of rigid separation from everything and everyone that do not come up to what we regard as the Divine standard. We may surely cherish the spirit of readiness for fellowship with any who are Christ's without allowing ourselves to pursue a course that is contrary to God's Word, or compromising what we believe to be the truth. Let us not, however, seek to compel others to walk according to our rule, but leave them free to act according to that measure of light and knowledge to which they have already attained (Phil. iii. 16). That which Scripture lays down as the condition of fellowship is walking in the light, and a babe in Christ may as truly walk in the light as a father, even though he may have much to *unlearn* as well as to learn. Any who disallow this, and think it necessary to adopt an alternative course, must make knowledge and attainment, with perfect agreement in external matters, the conditions of fellowship.

Of these two ways the latter is by far the easier. The former can only be pursued in the grace and spirit of Christ, by wisdom and power received from Him continually, and therefore by constant dependence upon the Word and the Spirit of God. The latter simply requires the laying down of a law, which may then be carried out with the zeal of a Jehu, and with as little grace as he possessed. And it is sad to see that some are diligently pressing this mode of action as if it were the only antidote to laxity, and charging those who do not follow them with unfaithfulness to God. An historian says of the immediate successors of the *Chasidim* that they "went so far as to consider themselves defiled by contact even with other Jews, who, while faithful to the law, were not so vigorous as themselves in ritual observances;" so those of whom we speak deem it necessary to refuse fellowship with

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others who, while seeking to be obedient to the Word of God, do not join them in usurping the prerogative of our *one* Master, and sitting in the judgment-seat.

Those who were called out of worldly systems sixty years ago did not need to make great professions of being separate, simply because *they were separate*, and people knew it; nor was it necessary for them to make rigid rules and conditions, for there was *power* amongst them. They had learnt that "the Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power," and instead of being loud in their condemnation of other Christians, they were diligent in good works, and their lives were a standing witness for Christ. They thought and spoke of *Him* more than of themselves, and He was the great attraction to others; just as in Israel's brightest days they gloried in what God was to them, and what He had done for them, whereas in their days of degeneracy ideas of themselves were uppermost and their empty boast was, "The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, are these" (Jer. vii. 4).

In all human systems *ecclesiasticism* is the chief thing, with conformity to external rule. The principle of Rome is, "Be a good Catholic, go to mass, pay your pence, and hate Protestantism, and you are all right." So in this country there is a widespread feeling that if only a man is a good churchman it is of secondary importance what else he may be; and the same principle is at work wherever there is the severing of what God has joined together, and even correct church position is made of more importance than the cultivation of personal godliness.

We cannot help seeing that this dangerous tendency is steadily growing in some quarters. In conference after conference the one topic ever to the front is church position, while what would feed souls and stir hearts to practical godliness is altogether ignored. In this way those who are correct ecclesiastically are encouraged to regard themselves with complacency and despise others, and the young and inexperienced are trained to pass sentence upon the most devoted servants of Christ, who, while separate themselves from the various systems around them, would not refuse fellowship or brotherly intercourse with any

true fellow-servants who do not fully take the same stand. It has even been said that he who is right ecclesiastically, though his general conduct is not what it should be, glorifies God more than one who is in a wrong ecclesiastical position, however devoted and blameless he may be in his life. Not many, we hope, would endorse this, though the one who said it was both godly and intelligent, and was only putting into words the principle that underlies the teaching we refer to, and giving evidence of its effect upon those who receive it.

We in nowise make light of scriptural position, or of the responsibility of all believers to own the name of the Lord Jesus alone, in separation from worldly and traditional Christianity, which calls Him "Lord, Lord," but does not the things that He says (Luke vi. 46). We are quite sure that, amidst the growing pretensions of priestism and the assumptions of clericalism, the Lord looks down with pleasure upon any little companies of His people who seek to give Him His true place, keeping His Word, and holding fast His name; and those who, at much personal cost, take this despised place in fellowship with Him will have His approval in the coming day. But that against which we raise the warning voice is the strong tendency to make a certain position *the one thing*, and thus to lead children of God to put conformity to the will of God in daily life, and the cherishing of the mind of Christ towards His people, in a secondary place. For in this way pride is fostered instead of humility, and the habit of suspecting everybody takes the place of the love that "hopeth all things."

In the early part of this century, men who are now spoken of somewhat slightly as having fallen short of the proper standard so felt the power of the truth, and were so constrained by the love of Christ, that they gave up luxuries and comforts, worldly position and honour, to serve God here, or to go forth to other lands with the Gospel, thus denying themselves, and enduring much for the name of the Lord. Have those who consider that they are beyond these disciples of a past generation in knowledge and separation from evil, really surpassed them in simplicity of life, separation from the world, and self-denial in the service of Christ? Does the constant

pressing of the one line of ecclesiastical truth lead to greater devotedness to Christ, and greater zeal in helping forward the spread of the Gospel in this land, and amongst those who have never heard the name of Christ? Is it not the reverse?

In order to keep the soul healthy and fervent, *all* truth is needed in due proportion. And wherever church position is made the one prominent point, to the setting aside of that which is designed to keep the soul exercised before God, and the heart warmed with the love of Christ, the withering effect upon spiritual life and service is too evident, self-judgment is lacking, springs of sympathy and compassion are dried up, and there can be little fruit for God. Zeal and activity there may be, even zeal for God; but it is a zeal that is not tempered with grace, and an activity that shows itself mainly in the effort to spread doctrines and enforce practices in the matter of church order that are based upon strained interpretations of Scripture.

Now, this severing of church life from general life and conduct, and making more of external conformity even to what is correct than of the attitude of the heart towards God, and the walking worthy of Him, was the very root principle of Pharisaism, and we shall miss the profit we may gain from the history of the Pharisees if we do not lay to heart the fact that the tendency to this is in every one of us. The strict adherence of the *Chasidim* of old to the law of God sprang from the spirit of faith and obedience, and we may surely assume that their successors, who were first called Pharisees, never *meant* to sever the one from the other. The degeneration which led to external conformity, without the heart being in it, was doubtless gradual; but it was real. Then strained interpretations were put upon the requirements of the law, these interpretations grew into traditions, and by the time of the ministry of the Lord upon earth the external had become everything, and in most cases hypocrisy was the result.

This is the inevitable outcome of making *more* of external correctness than of personal communion with God and obedience to Him in *all* things. In the unregenerate the development of this spirit is unhindered; but even in the children of God its workings may lead to

solemn results. The first thing with God, the thing which He *requires*, is "truth in the inward parts," the result of which will be that walking in the truth which is acceptable in His sight. Let us, therefore, seek grace to cultivate this, and ever be on our guard against the severing of things which the Lord would bind together with the words, "These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

W. H. B.

## PERSONAL TYPES OF CHRIST.

A D A M.

THIS, of course, is the first type we meet with in our search into this subject. Not only is it the first, but we shall find it a very clear one. That he is a type, rests on the clear statement of the Word of God. Turn to Rom. v. 14, and read it. The word here rendered *figure* is the root from which we get our word *type*. In another Scripture (1 Cor. xv. 45),

THE NAME OF THE TYPE IS GIVEN TO THE  
ANTITYPE.

Before, however, coming to the points of resemblance, let us look a little at the contrasts, for these are enforced in the New Testament.

*Adam as a contrast to Christ.* Adam was a creature, and as such began to exist. Christ is the *Creator*, and *never had a beginning* (John i. 1-3). The most striking contrast is drawn in the words, "The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven" (1 Cor. xv. 47). Adam, in a sinless world, surrounded by all that the heart could desire, yielded to temptation and became Satan's slave. Christ, in a world full of sin, lacking even the necessities of life, and amid scenes calculated to depress and terrify, resisted the arch-tempter, and at the cross accomplished the work which will lead to his final overthrow (Matt. iv. 1-11, Mark i. 13, Heb. ii. 14). Adam brought physical, spiritual, and eternal death upon himself and all his posterity; Christ brings righteousness, peace, eternal life, and immortality to all who by grace are united to Him. Adam subjected creation to vanity and the curse. Christ, by dying, secured its deliverance therefrom, and will soon, by His power, make that deliverance

a manifest reality. In a word, the one was the author of *sin*, with all its awful consequences; the other is the procurer of *salvation*, with all its unspeakable privileges.

Adam foreshadowed Christ in his

THREEFOLD HEADSHIP

of creation, of the race, of Eve.

I. *As head of creation.* In Genesis i. there is an evident order in God's creative acts; it follows an ascending scale. Man is the last, and, consequently, the highest of God's earthly creatures. He is a unique being, with a complex nature; created, as to his spirit, in the image and likeness of God, he is, as to his body, a part of the animal creation. Man was thus a creature with wonderful capacities either for good or evil, and this distinguished him from every other denizen of earth. True, he was, as his name implies, "of the earth, earthy," yet was he infinitely raised above everything else of the earth; and he was placed as God's vicegerent in the world. Later on (Gen. ii. 19, 20) he is brought before us as the acknowledged ruler of the brute creation. Such was man's exalted position; but, alas! it was soon lost. Adam proved disloyal to his trust and betrayed his kingdom into the hands of the devil, and from then till the present hour the rule of the usurper has been an awful fact in all this lower world.

God's purpose, clearly, was that man should be lord of creation. Has that purpose been for ever defeated? Nay, that were impossible. His purposes may be, seemingly, delayed; they can never be wholly set aside. Weary centuries have rolled by since the fall, yet we hear the Spirit, in glowing language, speak of *man* as having universal dominion. Read Psalm viii. This is no sad retrospect of man in innocency; no, it is a bright anticipation of the future, a scene in millennial times. Comparing this Psalm with Heb. ii. 5-9, it is at once clear that Christ Jesus is the Man who, in a future age, will yet occupy this position. How marvellous is the *wisdom* of God as unfolded in His Word! The conviction that comes to one's soul, in thinking of the unfoldings of God's mind in the Bible, is: surely the book is from God! There is a wisdom displayed far beyond anything conceivable by man, which, in its very *conception*, stamps the Scriptures as from Heaven. The wisdom of

Jehovah devises a plan which overcomes every obstacle and clears the way for the carrying out of His original purpose. His design, as we have seen, was that man should be head of creation, and so it shall be. To the eye of reason this looks to be wholly improbable; the devil seems to be getting more power than ever in his usurped kingdom; things seem to be getting worse and worse. It is all true, and the intelligent Christian knows that it will get very much worse before it gets at all better. But faith looks beyond this scene of confusion and sin, and fixes itself on *Jesus in heaven*. Faith sees the Man Christ Jesus on the Father's throne and rejoices; for well it knows that that is the pledge and seal that the usurper shall soon be cast out, sin shall be destroyed, the curse removed, and the whole groaning creation shall be brought into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. "But now we see not yet all things put under Him. But

WE SEE JESUS,

who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour" (Heb. ii. 8, 9). He who on Calvary's cross purchased back the inheritance by blood will ere long come and deliver it by power. The Lion of Judah's tribe, who will soon roar upon His enemies and destroy them, is *the Lamb that was slain*. And it is because of this He will have the right to open the seven-sealed roll of creation's title-deeds. He is "the appointed heir of all things." Throughout the millennium the world will have a sample of rule by God's Man after God's order (Isa. xxxii. 1-3, Psalm lxxii.).

Blessed prospect! May Thy coming be hastened! Would we see creation delivered, Satan cast out, sin hiding itself and righteousness flourishing? Then let us "speak a word to bring the King back"; let us say with one heart and one soul, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (2 Sam. xix. 9-15, Rev. xxii. 20).

II. Adam, *as head of the race*, typified Christ. Adam stood in a covenant of works. To obey was to live, to disobey to die. And he stood for the whole human family. Had he proved faithful he would have secured a standing in righteousness for himself and all his descendants. But he sinned, and all sinned in him. "Therefore, as through one man sin

entered into the world, and death through sin ; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned " (Rom. v. 12, R.V.). That is, through Adam's sin all of us were constituted sinners, had the place and nature of *sinner*s (Psalm li. 5, Rom. v. 19). The Lord Jesus, the second Man, the last Adam, by dying on the tree, "taketh away the sin of the world," and thus repairs the breach that Adam had made. So now, *no soul will ever be in hell simply for Adam's sin*. Men will be judged and punished for their own sins ; and in these lands the blackest of all sins is the rejection of offered mercy through our Lord Jesus Christ. Read carefully Rom. v. 18, 19, R.V. In verse 18, through the one transgression all are brought under condemnation ; and through the one act of righteousness the free offer of justification comes *unto* all men. This agrees with chap. iii. 22, "The righteousness of God . . . UNTO ALL and UPON ALL them that believe." Thus the atonement was *sufficient* for every sinner of Adam's race. In verse 19 another aspect of the truth is presented. Notice, the term is changed from "all" to "the many" ; the object is to keep up a parallel. The first, "the many" of verse 19, is as broad as the "all" of the previous verse ; but the second is not, therefore the change. All linked to the first Adam, by natural generation, inherit his sinner-place and nature ; all united to the last Adam, in regeneration, receive His nature and are reckoned to be righteous. Thus redemption is only *effectual* in the case of those who believe.

Jesus was at the cross as the substitute of all His people, and having borne their curse and put away their sin, He ascended on high as their representative and forerunner. What wisdom, grace, and power are displayed in redemption ! When everything appeared a wreck and failure, God stepped in and began to work, and now believers on Christ have a safer standing and a higher state than the first Adam ever could have endowed them with.

"Though our nature's fall in Adam  
Seemed to shut us out from God,  
Then it was His counsel brought us  
Nearer still through Jesus' blood."

III. *Adam in his relation to Eve*. In this he foreshadowed Christ's relation to the Church (see Eph. v. 22-33, Rev. xix. 6-9, xxi. 1-3). The relationship becomes *increas-*

*ingly closer* ; first creation, then the race, and now the one individual made specially for himself.

It is the same in the antitype. In Christ's future position towards the world we are one with Him ; the saints will judge, rule, and reign with Him (1 Cor. vi. 2, Rev. ii. 26, iii. 21). He is the Son and Heir ; we are sons and joint-heirs. He is "Head over all things to the Church." That means, as I judge, He is Head over all things, not apart from, but in union with, the Church. Christ is federal-head of the *new race*, including in that all that ever will be saved. And out of these we have a distinct class spoken of as "The Church which is His body," "The Bride the Lamb's wife."

Read Gen. ii. 21-24. Here we have the inspired account of the formation of the woman. She was taken out of the man's side while he slept, built into a woman, and then presented by Jehovah to Adam. Here we have three important points, and the answer to these in the antitype is plain.

(1) *The death of Christ*. Adam slept ; not till then could Eve be taken from him. Christ must sleep the deep sleep of death, or sinners cannot be fitted to be with Him for ever. "Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone ; but if it die it beareth much fruit" (John xii. 24, R.V.). Adam, on seeing Eve, at once discerns the relationship, and gives utterance to the Divine principle, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and cleave unto his wife." Christ, having loved the Church, came forth from His Father, and gave Himself for her.

(2) *The present work of the Holy Spirit*. The rib having been taken out of the sleeping man, was builded by God into the woman. After Christ was glorified the Spirit came down and baptised believers into one body. And all these centuries He has been at work calling out the Church. He has raised dead souls out of the quarry of nature and builded them on the foundation. He is forming a Bride for the Son.

(3) *Christ's second coming*. Viewed typically, all this dispensation is the night when the second Man is sleeping and the bride is being formed ; when completed, He will publicly acknowledge her as His. Jehovah

presented Eve to Adam ; but Christ is God as well as man, and so He will present her to Himself, "a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."

THE CHRIST.

There is a remarkable portion in a Pauline epistle which is illustrated by something that is said of Adam and Eve. "For as the body is one," &c. (1 Cor. xii. 12). The first part of this verse clearly refers to the human body ; and in the last clause an analogy is drawn between it and "Christ." This cannot be the *personal* Christ, or there could not be an analogy. It must be, then, what has been termed the *mystical* Christ. That is, Christ and the Church together forming the one new, the one perfect *Man*. The Church is said to be—note the word—"the *fulness* of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. i. 23). The illustrative passage is in Gen. v. 1. Turn to it: "In the day that God created man . . . male and female created He them . . . and called THEIR NAME ADAM." Adam and Eve formed the complete man, and were called by the *one name*. They were distinct, the one in subjection to the other, yet *one*. And so—mystery of grace!—the last Adam has His Eve. They, too, are distinct, and will for ever remain so ; and yet in a very true sense *they are one*. They have the same life, identical interests, a common destiny, and the one name, "The Christ." My soul ! Believe, wonder, admire, and worship !

J. N. C.

### A FEW RECIPES FOR SAINTS.

#### A CURE FOR CARE.

O LORD, how happy should we be  
If we could cast our care on Thee ;  
If we from self could rest.  
And feel at heart that One above,  
In perfect wisdom, perfect love,  
Is working for the best.

#### AN AID TO THE CURE OF ENVY.

If every man's internal care  
Were written on his brow,  
How many would our pity share  
Who raise our envy now.

#### A CURE FOR EVIL-SPEAKING.

THOUGH never so clear a matter appear,  
I will not believe unless I receive  
Full proof, full as clear  
As matters appear.

### THE FELLOWSHIP OF ASSEMBLIES IN THE WORK OF THE LORD.

AN ADDRESS GIVEN AT A CONFERENCE IN THE  
MARBLE HALL.

BY JOHN RITCHIE.

(Continued from page 72.)

TURN now to chapter xi. 19, 20:—"They which were scattered abroad upon the persecution which arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus." And it is added, "The hand of the Lord was with them : and a great number believed." Here is another new departure. They have got further than Samaria now ; they preach the Lord Jesus to the Greeks. These simple disciples had outstripped the apostles in their knowledge of God's ways. Even Peter had been very slow to learn that the Gentiles were to hear and believe the Gospel, and to be received to the fellowship of the church (See Acts x. 14).

"Then tidings of these things came to the ears of the church which was at Jerusalem : and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch" (verse 22). This church had challenged Peter for having fellowship with Cornelius in Cæsarea ; but, through his rehearsal of God's work there, its prejudice had been so far overcome, that now its ear is open to listen to tidings of further workings of grace among the Gentiles. The church's attitude should always be that of having an open and a willing ear, to hear of God's work, wherever it may be, and there should be a readiness to help, wherever such help is possible, consistent with uncompromising fidelity to the Lord. "They sent forth Barnabas," an approved and honoured servant of the Lord, as an expression of their fellowship with God's work in Antioch, and with the infant assembly there. God is Sovereign ; He plans and arranges for Himself. Let our eyes and our ears be ever open that we may learn what He is doing, and then, according to our ability, let us be ready to have fellowship with Him in it, in His fear.

"When he (Barnabas) came, and had seen

the grace of God, he was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they should cleave unto the Lord." And it is added, "For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord" (verses 23, 24). Barnabas would find in Antioch, a condition of things very far from perfect both in knowledge and in order. The young converts there would know very little of the will of God; much ignorance would prevail amongst them. But, in the midst of all this, that "good man" and servant of the Lord sought to discern what was of God. There are many kindred companies of saints in this our day; converted, it may be, by what men call "irregular instrumentality," and surrounded by much that is of man; nevertheless, "the grace of God" is there, and the individual Christian, as well as the assembly, to whom God has given greater light, has a definite and distinct responsibility laid upon them to seek means of imparting it. It is no good waiting till they "send"; we must "go." In Nehemiah's day, when he looked upon the ruins of the walls of Jerusalem, he discerned amongst the rubbish of those broken-down walls, some stones which belonged to God, and he set himself to work—and others were brought to help him—to build them up together, according to the Divine pattern. And so, amidst much that we must grieve over and reject, it is our responsibility to gather out that which is of God, and build it together. But how can this be done unless we go to where the stones are to be found? I am not contending for the common practice of going anywhere and everywhere, to preach a restricted Gospel, and compromising the truth, by quietly ignoring every line that would offend. Far be the thought. We must claim liberty wherever we go to speak whatever message God may give us; but it has been too often taken for granted, and perhaps adopted as an excuse, for our slovenliness, and lack of heart for such work, that because people do not know the truth they have rejected it. If such work does not come through *us*, or rise to *our* standard, we are apt to condemn it, to acquit ourselves of all responsibility towards it, or even to decry it as being of the devil. But this is not the Lord's way. If He had dealt with

us in the same manner when we were groping our way out of the darkness, where would we have been to-day? The Lord leads His people on step by step, out of deep darkness into His light, as they are able to receive it, and some learn more slowly than others. How slow we all have been in learning God's mind; and how very little we know of it even yet! What we have known, how very feebly and imperfectly have we carried it out! The remembrance of this, should make us very patient with others. Barnabas, the son of consolation, "exhorted them all that with purpose of heart they would cleave to the Lord." This was good and profitable ministry; too limited, perhaps, for the taste of some zealous men of our time. But Barnabas was a faithful and wise steward: he gave them "their portion of meat in due season" (Luke xii. 42). Many a work of God is in want of such a gracious ministry. There are still sons of "consolation" among the Lord's servants, whose ministry would be of immense value to bewildered saints all around us. Why, then, should assemblies of saints delay in sending them forth? But Barnabas could not do all that was needed. So we read that he "went to Tarsus to seek Saul;" and, having found him, "he brought him to Antioch," and they continued together in the church there, teaching and exhorting the saints, until God sent them from its bosom, and with its fellowship, to preach the Gospel in regions beyond (Acts xiii. 1, 2).

There is a fellowship of assemblies in days of trouble and anxiety also. In chapter xi. 29, we see the expression of this in a gift to the needy; and, in chapter xv., in a message of comfort to the distressed.

Turn to chapter xv. It is a blessed work to gather in young converts, to feed and lead them on in the ways of the Lord; but there are foes to be withstood, and troubles to be dealt with, in the assemblies of the saints. Certain men had come down from Judea and taught these young converts that except they were circumcised they could not be saved. This was a serious crisis, and it afforded again an opportunity for the fellowship of assemblies. It was a new difficulty to this young church, and they had no knowledge how to deal with it. What more natural than for this assembly

to send Saul and Barnabas, who had been their helpers, up to Jerusalem, to seek counsel there concerning this difficulty? To whom do we generally appeal for help in our difficulties? Is it not to those who have helped us in the past? To those endowed with godly wisdom, who have the wisdom and experience of a father, with the tender love of a mother? The church at Jerusalem had expressed its love and care for them in the day of their gladness, and now the church at Antioch appeals to them for counsel in the day of their trouble. They "beckon" to their "partners," and they respond. The apostles and elders came together to consider the matter, and, through the mercy of God, a remedy was found. In the day of Antioch's distress, as well as in the day of her gladness, the church at Jerusalem manifested its fellowship in giving the counsel and help that was needed; and thus it ought to be with assemblies still. The letter and spirit of the message sent, is a fine sample of an ecclesiastical document, which of all communications is apt to be pretentious and severe. It has in it the character of an affectionate message from a wise and loving parent to a child, giving counsel and advice—borne, too, by men who had hazarded their lives for the name of the Lord Jesus, an apt expression of the church's sympathy and love. Need we wonder that they "rejoiced at the consolation." And these two servants of Christ, Judas and Silas, sent forth by the church at Jerusalem, remained with them, exhorting and confirming them, until—we may assume—they were "stablished, strengthened, and settled." I am not forgetful of the fact that the apostles there were invested with an authority which we do not now possess. They were able to *legislate* for the church, to give *decrees* which became part of the inspired Word of God, and to say—"It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us," words that would be only burlesque and profanity on the lips of any company of men assembling to legislate in matters of doctrine now. But the principle of one assembly assisting another abides, and the privilege of imparting to fellow-saints help and *instruction* in the *Word* is surely the responsibility of all. Thus what might have proved a rupture and a cause of sorrow was thus averted; the work

of the Lord at Antioch went on, and its fellowship with the church at Jerusalem was continued and strengthened.

There are hundreds of assemblies of saints—our partners in Christ Jesus—with little gift in the way of preaching and teaching, exposed to the constant fire of the enemy without, and subject to the common trials within of those who seek to walk in God's ways, who seldom see a stranger's face, or have a visit from a servant of the Lord. They long and pray for such a fellowship to be extended toward them as we have seen existed amongst assemblies in early times, and which it is the will of God should still exist, however few or feeble God's gathered ones may be. If this were practised more, it would, by the blessing of God, prevent many a sorrowful division, and hinder many a sad defection from the faith. The visit of a wise and godly brother, expressing the fellowship of the assembly from which he goes, to help fellow-saints in their day of ingathering, to counsel them in their day of trial, and to instruct and teach them the way of God more perfectly wherein they lack, would go a long way to promote and increase true fellowship among companies of saints who in this dark and evil day, are seeking to honour the name of the Lord, and uphold His truth.

From all this we may surely learn what variety of help one assembly may give to another, both in days of joy and sorrow, without presuming to dictate to it. A "fellowship of assemblies" that has its rise in the hearts of the saints, expressing itself in works of love and timely help, is not likely to be resented, even when it becomes needful for saints to give admonition and warning to any who may be departing from the way. But a "fellowship of assemblies" ordered and governed by a senate of men who are little in touch with the saints whom they thus attempt to rule, who issue their *judicial* findings to an unwilling people, under the threat of excommunication to all who resent it, will bring in its train confusion and division, instead of that unity and peace which grace and truth would ever seek to foster.

NOTHING is universally binding except what Scripture directs.

## The Seven Churches of Revelation.

## I. EPHESUS ("DESIRE").

PRIMEVAL days of truth and love,  
 Sweet foretaste of the joys above:  
 When the redeemed with one accord  
 Shall praise and magnify the Lord.  
 The Holy Ghost had first been given—  
 Blest Comforter sent down from Heaven—  
 The seal and certain earnest He  
 Of all that soon we hope to be.  
 Endued by Him with mighty power,  
 That waited for and promised dower;  
 They kindling into holy flame  
 Proclaimed salvation in *that Name*.  
 His who now liveth and was dead,  
 "Christ Jesus," their exalted Head.  
 The ardour of such zeal was felt,  
 And hardest hearts began to melt;  
 Alarmed, their lost estate they knew,  
 But soon the cry, "What shall we do?"  
 Was answered by the words, "Believe  
 On Him whom Heaven must now receive,  
 Until He comes again and brings  
 Glad restitution on His wings."  
 Three thousand that same day believed—  
 Life, peace, and pardon then received.  
 All were baptised in Jesus' name,  
 Regarding His reproach and shame  
 As riches more than gold or gem,  
 Than Egypt's costliest diadem.  
 Each laid their treasures at the feet  
 Of holy men, and deemed it meet  
 That, as one family, all should share  
 Alike the common pilgrim fare;  
 So, when the daily meals were spread,  
 Their bodies and their souls were fed,  
 Their mutual converse was with grace,  
 And joy beamed from each happy face.  
 No cold, suspicious look was there  
 To mar that scene divinely fair;  
 Nor had division's ruthless hand  
 Yet ventured to assail that band.  
 They met in Jesus' name alone—  
 None else they knew, none else would own.  
 Christ was their Head in Heaven, and they  
 As brethren owned His blessed sway.  
 Not all on the great battlefield  
 Were skilled alike the sword to wield;  
 There the most gifted took the lead,  
 To face the foe or sow the seed.  
 But when the weekly feast was spread—

The poured-out wine, the broken bread—  
 No one presided. Who would dare  
 Usurp the place of Jesus there?  
 For, though His form they could not see,  
 Yet He had said, "There will I be,  
 There in the midst My place to claim  
 With those assembling in My name."  
 Thence looked they back with tearful eye  
 To that dark scene on Calvary;  
 While in the broken bread, with awe,  
 The wounded Lamb of God they saw.  
 And also of the precious blood,  
 That perfect sin-atonement flood,  
 The purple juice of earthly vine  
 Poured in the cup, the appointed sign.  
 As this endearing feast was kept,  
 With thoughts of grief and joy they wept—  
 Grief for His sorrows meekly borne,  
 Joy in the hope of His return.

Primeval days of holy fire!  
 Would that a nobler, sweeter lyre  
 Than mine were kindled in your praise,  
 To sing those long-forgotten ways.  
 O may the sheep that scattered roam  
 On every mountain, far from home.  
 To the old paths be gently led,  
 In the one fold by *Him* be fed.  
 May that first love within us burn  
 Whilst, Lord, we wait for Thy return;  
 So shall our lamp shine clear and bright,  
 Till dawns the promised morning's light.

Primeval love! why didst thou cease  
 To be on earth the star of peace?  
 What dimmed thy lustre so divine?  
 Why thy so sad, so swift decline?  
 'Tis Jesus speaks; let every ear  
 Attentive bend His words to hear:  
 "Thy works and patient zeal I know,  
 The care thou ever dost bestow  
 To keep My house from error pure,  
 Nor evil-doers canst endure;  
 For My name's sake much hast thou borne,  
 Nor fainted though by labours worn.  
 All this I mark, but yet in thee  
 See traces of apostasy.  
 Thy first love, once so warm and true,  
 Has passed away like morning dew.  
 Remember those first holy days—  
 The loving and unselfish ways  
 Which then adorned thee—and behold  
 How great thy fall, thy love how cold.

Repent, and to thy first works 'turn,  
 Or soon thy light may cease to burn,  
 And thy dimmed lamp no more shall be  
 A witness in this place for Me."  
 Loud warning notes are sounded here—  
 They call us to heart-searching fear.  
 What though all purity we boast,  
 If the fresh dew of youth be lost?  
 Though in the fight we've foremost been,  
 If grey hairs here and there are seen?  
 May this Ephesian warning prove  
 Incentive strong to us to love,  
 If as assemblies we would shine  
 For God, with lustre all divine.  
 Then, as o'ercomers, we at last,  
 All trial and all failure past,  
 Shall gather round Life's vernal tree,  
 From sin for ever saved and free,  
 In God's own paradise above,  
 Bathed in an atmosphere of love,  
 Each bosom glows with heavenly fire  
 In that fair city of "Desire."

A. W. P. S.

(The above is No. 1 of a series of instructive poems on the Seven Churches, which we trust (D.V.) to insert monthly.—E.J.)

## MUSINGS ON SECOND TIMOTHY.

BY ROBERT STEPHEN, CHINA.

### CHAPTER II.

THIS chapter begins with encouragement to be strong, and brings to our minds one or two instances in Old Testament scripture where the same injunction is given after responsibility had been put on God's servants. When God puts responsibility on us for certain work, we are sure to realise our weakness and insufficiency for it. This is right in its own place. The humility of Moses went a step too far and became sin, and "the anger of the Lord was kindled against him." After the death of Moses, and when the children of Israel were gathered near Jordan, just before entering the promised land, the Lord spake to Joshua thus—"Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give them." The work before Joshua was great, and no doubt his heart sank within him at the thought of being left alone for such a task; but God

encouraged him to go on, as an instrument in His hands.

Then, in reply to Jeremiah, who pleaded his childhood as a hindrance to his going as God's messenger to the people, He said—"Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee." Timothy, like these, required encouragement for the work before him. No easy matter was it to live a godly life amidst sin and iniquity, to witness for God faithfully amidst unfaithfulness. He needed the words of encouragement, "My son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." We may naturally have great strength of character, great power of will, and may be able to control our passions well; but natural strength will never suffice against "the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. vi. 12). The strength that will suffice is not our own, but His who tells us to be strong. All believers are called to be soldiers, and as such must be strong. Men with maimed limbs or consumptive lungs are of no use in the Queen's army. In time of war they would be a hindrance rather than a help. Men are required who are healthy, and who will not fear a foe. As soldiers they have their regulations, and they must stand by them or be "drummed" from their regiment in disgrace. Whenever he enlists, a soldier is no longer free to act according to the desires of his own will, or to engage in any other business or profession, but must obey absolutely the orders of his commanding officer. So we are "bought with a price," and may not be "the servants of men." The moment we are saved we become soldiers, and it should be our aim to become "good soldiers of Jesus Christ," and to "endure hardness" as such. "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may *please Him* who hath called him to be a soldier." Whether the apostle uses the figure of a soldier, or a runner, or a wrestler, we find that there are rules to regulate all. The soldier must obey his commander, the runner and wrestler must conform to the rules of the game. To disobey these would mean the disqualifying of the competitor. In these days we have specially to bear in mind that for all our service directions are given in the Word of God, that in all

the work we may seek to do, and in our daily walk, we may be guided by it. By-and-by, at the coming of the Lord Jesus, when our work shall be judged, our motives, and all we have sought to do for Him, the standard of judgment will not be how much we have done or said, but have we acted in accordance with His revealed will? Many things are said and done with the intention of furthering the work of the Lord which cannot bear the scrutiny of His truth. Expediency is a poor plea for these. Here is God's Word, our guide-book; let us walk according to it and we won't get wrong. "This is an age of advancement, and we must advance with the times or be left behind," say some. *Better far be "left behind" with God than go ahead without Him.* As long as advancement is in accordance with His Word, then don't let us lag behind, but go on and He will help us; but the moment we overstep its authority we become our own masters, and cease to be in subjection to Christ. Europe just now has her large armies, kept up at enormous expense, but with little work to do. They wait for an enemy. Not so the soldiers of the Lord Jesus; they never can say they are at peace with the foe. The moment a truce is proclaimed it is at the expense of our Commander's honour, and only that we may play the part of the coward to satisfy the cravings of a carnal heart. As long as we are on this side eternity shall we have to keep the armour on, and only when in the glory shall we be able to lay it aside. "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Eph. vi. 11). In the same chapter where these words occur we have our equipment as soldiers set before us (verses 12-17). In 1 Tim. i. 18 we are exhorted to "war a good warfare," and in 2 Cor. x. 4 we learn that "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." The children of Israel were arranged round the tabernacle in three circles. The outside circle was composed of the fighting men, next came the Levites, and then the priests. Neither priest nor Levite had anything to do with the fighting. Their work was entirely in connection with the tabernacle, and their place was near it; the fighting men were next to the enemy. We as believers are all

three combined; but as soldiers we are near the foe, and in the might of God we should be ready to meet him. In verse 3 of this chapter Timothy is exhorted to "*endure* hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." In verse 10, the apostle says, "I *endure* all things for the elect's sake." As soldiers we may expect hardness, and if the cross lies heavily on our shoulders, if the world sneers bitterly upon us, we may take courage, for it is only for "a little while." How little of this *enduring* spirit we have in the present day! We need to become "rooted and grounded in love," and if so we shall experimentally know that "Love seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil . . . beareth all things, endureth all things (1 Cor. xiii.)."

#### "DAY BY DAY."

THE way the Lord would have us spiritually is that He never gives us a stock of anything—of grace or of gift—so that we can say, "I have got enough to last me so long at least." That would be taking us out of the peace of faith and depriving us of the blessing God has for us. He covets to show us what He is—His power, His love, His unforgetfulness of us. As it is said of the people whom in His love and pity He redeemed, "He bare them and carried them all the days of old." It is a great thing to get this in a real and practical way for ourselves with God. If He keeps us low down here—and you know it is His way, in more senses than one, to call and choose the poor—it is not because His hand is niggard—God forbid!—but that we may not miss realising this great blessing of His care. Often all we think of is having our need met; but how little a thing is that with God! It would cost Him nothing, we may say, to meet the need of a lifetime in a moment, and a lesser love than His would supply it at once, and get rid of a constant burden. But that is not His way. To supply the need is a small thing; but to supply it in such a way as to make us feel in each seasonable supply the Father's eye never withdrawn from us, the Father's heart ever employed about us, that is what He means.

G.

## THE BAPTISM OF LIFE AND THE BAPTISM OF DEATH;

Or, Baptism IN the Spirit and Baptism WITH Fire.

BY J. HIXON IRVING.

### II.—BAPTISM WITH FIRE.

(Continued from page 46.)

NUMEROUS STAGES.

**T**HERE will be many stages of this baptism. True it is that during the absence of the Church from earth—the seventieth week of Daniel, the days of the reign of Antichrist—there will be judgments of a providential kind poured out upon the Jews, Christendom, and the Gentiles. When the seals are opened, the trumpets blown, and the vials poured out, then judgment will be inflicted—but through agents, and not by the Lord in person. The latter in person, as the Son of Man, will be more intimately connected with the baptism of fire, the first instalment of which will be when the Lord shall appear with all His saints to plead with the representatives of the nations gathered together under the Man of Sin against Jerusalem. There, in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, He will plead with them in judgment, when they will hear from His own lips those solemn words—“Depart from Me, ye cursed (under a curse), into the eternal *fire* which is prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt. xxv. 31-41, R.V., with Joel iii. 2, Zech. xiv. 1-5).

The sentence pronounced at that time may not be fully executed till the Great White Throne Judgment. That is to say, though they will at that time be judged as to the body, but at the period of the judging of the dead they will be cast into the fire eternal.

Antichrist—the Man of Sin—the Lawless One—who will be the embodiment of a lie, and who will exalt himself against God, will be destroyed by the outshining of His coming, will be cast into the lake of fire, there to suffer eternal torment (2 Thess. ii. 8-10, Rev. xix. 11-15). With The Lie, there will be cast into the same place of suffering the false prophet, who with signs deceived those who wore the trade-mark of the beast, and worshipped his image set up in the temple. The two will be cast *alive* into the lurid lake (Rev. xix. 20).

THE KINGDOM.

In those days “shall the God of heaven set

up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed” (Dan. ii. 44). The Lord shall sit as King upon the throne of David, on the holy hill of Zion; “all kings shall fall down before Him: all nations shall serve Him” (Luke i. 32; Psalm ii. 6, lxxii. 11). He shall, for one thousand years, have “dominion from sea to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth” (Zech. ix. 10).

At the close of the kingdom, Satan will be let loose for a little season and once again he will deceive the nations of the earth, who will gather themselves together numberless as the sands upon the sea-shore against the saints—earthly saints—and the earthly city—now no longer the “great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified” (Rev. xi. 8), but the “beloved city”—determined to destroy both. At that time, elated with their hope of success, fire will suddenly come down out of heaven—literal fire, doubtless, as in the case of the *Cities of the Plain*—and devour them, and “the people shall be as the burnings of lime: as thorns cut up shall they be burned in the fire” (Isaiah xxxiii. 12, Rev. xx. 7-9). That consuming will even be preparatory to the final conflagration—the fire-storm that shall purify the heavens and the earth (2 Peter iii. 9-11).

THE LURID LAKE.

Satan, before this the last of his long-practised deceptions, had been bound in the abyss for a thousand years, but now he is cast into his eternal abode, the lake of fire—his fourth and final fall. The first was from the “Garden of God” into the air, of which he is now the prince (Is. xiv., Ezek. xxviii., Luke x. 15); his second will be from the air to the earth, and hence the woe for the earth and for the sea of Rev. xii. 12; and his third into the abyss (Rev. xx. 1-3). But now has come the last and final fall of all. Into the sulphurous lake he is cast, to keep company with the Man of Sin and his “popular preacher,” there to be tormented without hope of alleviation for ever and ever (Rev. xx. 10).

The final instalment of this fire immersion will be after the Great White Throne Assize, when all those who have despised life and chosen death will come up for the final sentence from Him whose name they have blasphemed, whose

blood they have trampled upon, whose Spirit they have insulted, and whose word they have held up to scorn; and then they will be cast into the LAKE OF FIRE (Rev. xx. 11-15): into that place where no ray of hope can ever enter, where no alleviation can ever be experienced—"where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark ix. 48).

The Baptiser in both cases is the Lord Jesus. As Son of God and Life-giver He baptises in the Holy Spirit; as Son of Man and Death-sentencer He will baptise with fire.

The subjects of the former are those who believe on Him; whilst the subjects of the latter are those who have rejected Him. The first is for nighness *to*, and union *with*, Himself; the second is for banishment from His presence.

It is solemnly true that the believer must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, there to have his deeds tested, which testing is spoken of as trial by fire—"The fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is"; and it is also true that there is a possibility of the work being burned and he "saved as through fire" (1 Cor. iii. 12-15). Yet that will be the nearest approach he will ever have to the baptism of fire; and that will, of course, be through his works, not in his person, and hence he may exultingly say—

"There is no condemnation, there is no hell for me,  
The torment and the fire my eyes shall never see;  
For me there is no sentence, for me has death no sting,  
Because the Lord, who loves me, shall shield me  
with His wing."

#### DIFFERENCES OF JUDGMENT.

Differences of judgment on minor points ought to be no barrier to fellowship among God's people. The insisting on *uniformity* where God has permitted *liberty*, and expressly forbidden us to judge one another, is one great hindrance to the manifestation of unity.

#### ON CALLING OURSELVES "THE CHURCH OF GOD."

"Before I can accede to your pretensions I must see that a union of two or three, or two or three and twenty, are entitled to take the name of 'The Church of God,' when that Church was (originally) an assemblage of *all* believers"—J. N. DARBY on the "Ruined Condition of the Church."

#### SEEING AND HEARING.

THERE are two psalms in which David expresses the desire that he may not be like unto those that go down into the pit.

The first is Ps. xxviii. 1—"Be not silent to me: lest, if Thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit."

The second is Ps. cxliii. 7—"Hide not Thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit."

I doubt not those thus described are the unsaved of his day. Their course was a downward one, ending in "the pit," just answering to the New Testament description of the "broad road that leadeth to destruction."

David realised that grace had made him to differ, and his dread is that this difference should fade away. That he should ever come to *be* one of them is not contemplated; but how easy for him to become *like* them. This is what he feared and the subject of his repeated prayer.

We cannot be too thankful for the clearness with which the doctrines of grace are preached in our day. The spirit of bondage, uncertainty, and fear of a century or less ago has given place to liberty and assurance: the groans and sighs after settled peace have been replaced by songs and rejoicing.

But how far this very liberty of grace has been abused, and license given to the carnal mind; how far shallowness of experience, levity of mind, flippancy in approach to God, conformity to the world, and low thoughts of purity and justice, have sprung up as noxious weeds amid the modern conditions of evangelical life, it would be hard to estimate. God only knows!

How many are there now who groan out as the Psalmist into the ear of God the oft-repeated prayer, that they may never become like unto the ungodly?

David does not concern himself in his dealing with God about details and externals. He goes right to the root of the matter. Two things he knows to be true of every saint: they have heard the voice of God, and they have seen His face. The unregenerate, whatever their knowledge, orthodoxy, or profession, have never attained to this. To them God is unknown.

They have heard about Him, but they never heard His voice; they have seen His operations in nature and in grace, but they have never seen His face. Herein is the radical difference between the believer and the unbeliever.

The Lord Jesus, speaking of "other sheep," not of the Jewish fold, and that consequently would never hear His voice literally, speaking on earth like the disciples, says, "Them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice." Again, after that wonderful liberating verse, John v. 24, we read (ver. 25)—"The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." Anything short of this, the genuineness of any experience short of having heard in the inmost soul the peace-speaking, life-giving word of the Lord Himself, may well be suspected.

Again, "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 6).

To those who are the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ, He is "a living, bright reality." By spiritual vision with anointed eyes they have "beheld His glory," and have sung, with the prophet of old, "How great is His goodness! How great is His beauty!" (Zech. ix. 17).

"The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the Lord hath made even both of them" (Prov. xx. 12). Man by nature is deaf and blind. Having eyes he sees not; having ears he hears not. It is by the quickening, regenerating power of the Spirit of God alone that such a change is wrought. Bless God, ye saints, then, for the opened ear to hear His voice, and the opened eye to see His face.

And if conversion be such a change, what can life be but a continuance of this unspeakable blessing? It is the constant daily seeing and hearing of God. It is to have real, direct intercourse with the living God, and with Jesus our Lord. This is the essence of communion.

But there are two sides to this intercourse. Marvellous is it, and yet true, that the Lord makes the very same request of us that David makes of Him: "O my dove, that art in the

clefts of the rock, . . . let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely" (Song of Sol. ii. 14).

It is joy to our Lord to see our uplifted face as we draw nigh to Him, and to hear our trembling voice as we say, with the Psalmist, "Be not silent to me," "hide not Thy face from me."

This is communion with God!

He who is thus living in the presence of God *cannot* be like unto those that go down into the pit. This, and this alone, is the true transforming power, the renewing of the mind that manifests itself in Christ-like, unworldly, fruitful life. Seventy of the elders of Israel saw the Lord with Moses—and they came down again from the mount, but none of their faces shone. A mere visit within the veil will not suffice. But the man who abode in the presence of God forty days, reflected upon his countenance the glory of that communion. The prayer of the Psalmist was not that he might be a visitor, but that he might *dwell* in the courts of the Lord. To translate it into New Testament language, "Abide in Me and I in you."

It is the one who thus "abides" whose countenance will be so adorned with the beauty of Christ, that all will take knowledge of him that he has "been with Jesus."

Likeness to the ungodly, conformity to the world, invariably tells of the cutting off of intercourse with God. Outward activities may be abundant; never more so. But communion with God in secret, in prayer, in the reading of the word, self-judgment in His presence, under His eye, have undoubtedly been neglected.

Many any backslider in heart who has read these lines be aroused to judge his departure at the root. It is not by cutting off the twigs that likeness to Christ can be attained, but by drinking at the fountain-head, by habitually seeing the face and hearing the voice of God.

J. R. C.

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PERFECT love never forgets, neither does it like to be forgotten; and so we have the tender request of Jesus, "Remember Me," and the holy ordinance of "breaking of bread" to call Him to mind.

## Questions and Answers.

We desire to express our thanks to all who have sent answers. We particularly request that each writer will give his name and address in full, not for publication, but that we may know who it is that seeks to help, and, if desirable, that we may communicate privately.

When more than one question is replied to, let the answer to each question be upon a separate piece of paper.

Replies to appear in the next number require to be sent in not later than 15th of present month, and so on; the 15th of the month being always the latest to which we can defer making up for press.

We again urge the importance of replies being *short*; it is essential, in this particular line of things, to be *concise*.

We shall greatly value remembrance in prayer that special wisdom and grace may be given for this service THE EDITOR.

### Replies are invited to the following:—

Does Matt. v. 39-41 forbid a Christian to go to law under any circumstances to defend himself from injustice?

Is it right, in preaching the Gospel to the unsaved, to tell them they will not be judged for original sin?

Where and what is Paradise? Compare Luke xxiii. 43, Rom. x. 7, and Eph. iv. 9, with 2 Cor. xii. 4.

What is the teaching of the labourers in the vineyard, they all having received the same for their labour? (Matt. xx.)

Is our present translation of the Bible equally inspired with the original Scriptures, or in what relation do they stand?

What are the *things in the heavens* which are reconciled to God through Christ? (Col. i. 20.)

### PASTORS AND THEIR LIBERTY.

**QUESTION 384.**—Is it in accordance with the teaching of Scripture that a Christian gifted by God, as a pastor or teacher, should give the greater portion of his time and strength to a business or profession, and only to apportion what he can spare of the residue to the work for which he is gifted, and to which he has been called?

**Ans. A.**—This is a very important and many-sided question. No definite rule is laid down in the Word that would suit every case. The elders at Ephesus were shown by Paul how they ought to labour with their hands, not only to support themselves, but also to help others who were in need (Acts xx. 35). The same inspired writer said to Timothy, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine (1 Tim. v. 17); verse 18 shows the meaning of the word "honour" in this connection. Gal. v. 6 also teaches the same principle of reciprocity between teachers and taught; and because of the neglect of this by many Christians and churches, there is no blessing attending even faithful ministry. That is, the Lord often ceases to bless ministry where there is no practical acknowledgments of His gifts.

With regard to the individual servant, it will depend on the measure of his gift and grace, and on the nature and distinctness of his call to minister. If he is able to fill a situation or conduct a business as a Christian should, and also labour in the Word to the extent of

his measure, let him by all means do so; but if he is not able to do this, he ought to put the work of the Lord *first*. Matt. vi. 33 settles that point. No man who is gifted by God as a pastor or a teacher, and called of the Lord to that work, has any right to neglect that, and then give to God his "fragments." Let HIS "righteousness" and HIS "kingdom" be put *first*, and our God *cannot fail* to implement the word of His "well-beloved Son."

The world is going at such a rate, and competition is so keen, that it is no easy matter for a Christian to carry on a business or profession and at the same time have his soul fresh for service. But as to one giving up a business or a profession and devoting the whole of his time and strength to ministry, either as pastor or teacher, or both, that must in every case be a matter between the Lord and His own servant. Others may give counsel, but that is all. "Every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that" (1 Cor. vii. 7). Some men lose power for service when they turn aside to any secular work; others, again, need some secular occupation to keep them fresh. Without that they become unreal and artificial. There is great need for pastors wholly devoted to this work; but it is a solemn step for one to give up a business or profession and go out on the principle of faith; and one ought to be sure he is called of the Lord to do so, especially if he has a wife and family, and more especially in this day when so many saints are living to themselves, and giving to God only what they do not need for their own gratification. If the eye is single, and the ear open to the voice of God, He will make the way plain, and although there may be much ignorance and stumbling, He is a "faithful God," and His word is the best security for time, as well as for eternity, which a poor sinner can get. G. A.

**Ans. B.**—I would answer this question by asking another. Does the Word of God make it imperative on a pastor or teacher that he should abandon the calling wherein he is called, or that he should cease to "pursue an honest occupation for necessary uses"? (Titus iii. 8, margin R.V.) No doubt the twelve, when called of the Lord to do so, left all and followed Him. On the other hand, it is equally certain that the Apostle Paul and his fellow-labourers continued to work with their hands (see Acts xviii. 1-3, 1 Thess. ii. 4-9). It was the apostle's delight to proclaim "freely" the precious gospel of the grace of God. He would not give any occasion to say that he made a trade of the gospel, not that he had not the power; and if he ministered to the saints in spiritual things, it was their duty to minister to him in carnal things. But He would not use his power in this respect. God was acting in grace, boundless grace, to sinners, and the apostle would not tarnish the precious testimony by doing otherwise. What a blessed lesson is taught us in 2 Kings v. 26, 27: "Is it a time," &c. God was dealing in grace to a poor Syrian leper, but Gehazi would make a profit of it for himself. Miserable man, his end was according to his works!

The true pastor or teacher will love to serve the sheep of Christ as He is pleased to give him opportunity; but he serves them because they belong to Christ, and the love of Christ constrains him. "Our-

selves your servants for Jesus' sake," said the apostle. Again, the true pastor or teacher holds his gift from the Lord, and is responsible to use the gift in the sense of the grace that has entrusted him with it, and he waits upon the Lord as to the disposal of his time, reckoning that all he has belongs to Him, and that it is for the Lord to say whether he shall devote little, much, or all his time to the exercise of his gift. Human authority has no place here, and cannot be exercised or submitted to without trenching on the prerogative of our only Lord and Master. O to be filled and constrained by His love, ready for any service He may deign to appoint us, but always getting our commission at His feet. G. A. S.

**Editor's Note.**—The rule is, "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called;" "let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God," 1 Cor. vii. 20-24; also Acts xx. 35, "I have showed you"—Ephesian elders, overseers, bishops—"how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak," &c.

The work of pastor and teacher is usually exercised in a more or less limited sphere, and connected with a locality, assembly, or group of assemblies. In this it differs from the work of an evangelist, which essentially calls from place to place (though not at such short intervals as is usual in these days—see Acts xviii. 2—nor on the monthly engagement principle which is becoming popular), and therefore in many cases cannot possibly be combined with a self-supporting occupation.

The "call of God" to depart from the "rule" as laid down in above scriptures, would require to be very clear ere the pastor would be warranted in devoting himself wholly to spiritual work. And not only would it require to be clear to himself, but also to those amongst whom he ministered. For the responsibility of supporting such would devolve upon the saints, and their acceptance of the responsibility would be a practical confirmation of a false and disastrous step, should he have failed to apprehend the mind of the Lord. At the same time it appears as if there was a crying need for more leisure to serve the Lord and His people, on the part of wise, experienced, and gifted men of God.

In this, as in every line of divine service, the responsibility to decide lies between the servant and his Lord. To any who are disposed to judge fellow-servants, we commend Romans xiv. 4-10-13: "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth." "Why dost thou judge thy brother? Why dost thou set at nought thy brother? For we must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ." "Let us not therefore judge one another any more."

#### DEDICATION OF INFANTS.

**QUESTION 385.**—In some assemblies infants are brought to the hall where the assembly meets, to dedicate them to God. Is this scriptural?

**Ans.**—It surely is not contrary to the spirit of the Scriptures to bring children into the midst of God's people—for prayer and thanksgiving in order to their being openly and avowedly dedicated to God. We have to guard against such a deed becoming a mere

form, or having any ritual significance. But in such cases—as also at marriages and other seasons—we should surely seek the true fellowship of the godly, and not fail to seek it because of the unscriptural ways existing in regard to these things. A. O. M.

**Editor's Note.**—We heartily wish that saints were alive to the value of assembly *fellowship*, in personal and domestic joys and sorrows. We believe it is grieving to the Spirit of God and indicates a deep and shameful ignorance of the mind of God, when sickness or death, marriage or birth takes place without any recognition of the Church—any seeking of the fellowship of saints in prayer or thanksgiving. If one member be honoured, all the members are called to rejoice with it; if one member suffer, all the members should suffer in sympathy with it—see 1 Cor. xii. 26.

Surely such apathy regarding a line of things so plain in scripture betrays a lamentable lack of confidence and a spirit of carnal independence inconsistent with love, and destructive of fellowship.

As to bringing the child to the place of meeting, we doubt the propriety of it. It would be evil to bring an infant out at night, and it is only in the evening that most brethren can come together. Moreover it savours of that evil principle in worldly religion which connects so many events with a *building*, which being "consecrated" is regarded as lending some degree of sanctity or acceptableness to the "service." Doubtless it originates in the attractiveness of the Levitical ordinances to the natural mind. The bringing of the "young child" into the temple and the presentation of Samuel before Eli, in some hazy indefinite way are looked upon as examples to be followed. But let the true character of the heavenly calling be learned, and at once all such ideas are judged to be mere attempts to put a new patch on an old garment, or new wine into old bottles.

Seeing that such things exist on all hands, we think it wiser either to seek the fellowship of the assembly by a simple request for prayer or thanksgiving, or to invite spiritual persons, especially those with shepherd hearts, to have such exercises "at home." To either of these courses we see no possible objection.

#### INSPIRED WORDS.

**QUESTION 386.**—Are the sayings of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, in the book of Job, inspired?

**Ans.**—The sayings of Eliphaz and his friends, in the book of Job, are accurately recorded as being their thoughts and words; but that God did not inspire them is clear from Job xlii. 7-8. A. O. M.

**Editor's Note.**—There is the greatest possible difference between inspired words and a divinely-inspired record of words.

In Scripture we have a divinely-inspired record of many evil sayings, and even of the words of Satan. The context will always give indication to the spiritual mind as to the character of the sayings recorded. This is very plain in the above reply.

The remainder of Mr. Holiday's address on "RELATION OF ASSEMBLIES" and continuation of Mr. Adam's articles on "CHURCH GOVERNMENT" will (*D.V.*) appear next month.

## THE PRESENT POSITION OF THE JEWS.

**I**T is a very common error to suppose that God hath cast away His ancient people Israel. There is an impression in the minds of many Christians that it is almost useless to preach the Gospel to Jews, that there is some special judicial blindness upon them which must necessarily prevent them from believing in the Lord Jesus.

In Romans xi. we are shown that, as in the days of Elijah God had reserved to Himself seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal—securing to Himself thus, according to “the election of grace,” a remnant of believing ones—so, in the days of the apostle the same electing grace had secured a remnant, and he instances himself as one of these numerous elect ones: “For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.”

And this election of grace still continues: a remnant of the nation of Israel still are being saved. The veil that is upon their unbelieving hearts is being taken away from many; not a few are turning to the Lord and are learning the divine significance of their weary exile, of the centuries of judgment and reproach to which they have been subjected.

Indeed, this is one of the most forcible considerations that can be set before a Jew—If God visited the idolatry and abominations into which the nation apostatised in the days of the kings with a seventy years’ exile, what is the sin, the greater sin, the infinitely more heinous *national* offence, that has brought upon them these eighteen hundred years of the manifest judgment of God?

To the Jew there is no solution of this difficulty, until he learns that as a nation they rejected and murdered their Messiah, the Saviour sent of God to save them, the Kinsman-Redeemer sent of God to redeem them.

In the days of the apostles, the number of Jews who believed must have been very great. In Acts xxi. 20, the words “how many thousands” ought to be “how many myriads,” or “ten thousands.” Wherever the apostle went, his rule was to preach the Gospel “to the Jew first.” The judgment of God

indeed came upon them nationally, “to the uttermost” (1 Thess. ii. 15, 16); but the remnant reserved unto God by Himself, according to the election of grace, and incorporated with believers from among the Gentiles into the Church—the body of Christ—must have been very numerous, and a worthy exhibition of the grace that chose such a people and such a time for its display. And, at the present time, it is computed by those best able to judge that, in proportion to the entire population of the Jews in all the world, there are a larger number of that nation converted to God than of any other. It has been our privilege to meet not a few in whom the operation of the grace of God has been most remarkable, enabling them, at the cost of losing all that nature counts dear, to take up the cross and follow the rejected Christ.

“As touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes;” but (nationally), “as concerning the Gospel, they are enemies for your sakes” (Rom. xi. 28). Concerning this people, as a nation, God has said, “Lo-ammi: for ye are not My people, and I will not be your God” (Hosea i. 9).

This sentence is specially connected in Daniel ix. 26 with the cutting off of Messiah. The sentence then was, “Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?” But the book of “the Acts” records a limited period, such as the three years’ respite granted to the barren fig tree, during which in grace God was dealing with Israel, seeking to lead them to a national repentance. But, notwithstanding the mighty work accomplished and the multitude that accepted Christ—these being the “remnant according to the election of grace”—the nation as such continued in unbelief; “the city and the sanctuary” were destroyed by the Romans, “the people of the prince that shall come”; and since then the history of Jerusalem, the Holy Land, and the people of Israel is summed up in the one word—“Desolations!”

This period of desolation is further described in Hosea thus: “The children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image (or pillar), and without an ephod, and without teraphim: afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall

fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days" (Hosea iii. 4, 5).

It also corresponds with the Lord's own words: "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke xxi. 24). From these and many other scriptures, it is evident that nationally the people of Israel must be exiled from their land, scattered among the Gentiles, and Jerusalem and Palestine must be in a desolate and downtrodden condition, till "the time of the end."

That "desolations are determined," that the scattering and peeling of that remarkable people is in fulfilment of the judgment of God, in nowise relieves those nations or persons who hate, oppress, and persecute the Jew from the guilt and responsibility of their unrighteousness.

Russia is just declaring her character as answering to the Gog and Magog of the latter day. Her Emperor is called the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, which we take to be Moscow and Tobolsk, the capitals of European and Asiatic Russia. Her hatred of the Jews is a demonstration of the truth of Scripture. But woe to that nation that "persecutes those whom God has smitten"!

Meantime, the movement of the Jews toward Palestine, the cultivation of the land, the construction of the Jaffa railway, and many other signs, answer to the budding of the fig tree (Matt. xxiv. 32).

The long blasted and uprooted tree is being planted again in its place, and is putting forth leaves, giving signs of vitality that can only be looked for and understood by those who give heed to the instruction of the Lord.

That the people of Israel will return to their land, and be found settled in it at the time of the end, is evident. The scenes of the latter-day judgments and conflicts are laid there. But this return will be *national* in fulfilment of prophecy, and not a spiritual return to the Lord. As a nation they will return to their land, and the way for their return is being most remarkably and rapidly prepared; but their return, their rebuilding of the temple, their re-institution of temple-worship, will only be preparatory to the final acceptance of the Antichrist by the nation that still rejects the Christ of God. Meantime, and so long as the Church continues on

earth, all who believe in the Lord Jesus, be they Jew or Gentile, are partakers of the heavenly calling. They look not for Christ to come and deliver them by judgment on their adversaries, and to establish them in an earthly inheritance, but for the Lord to change them in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, into His own image, and to call them up to meet Him in the air, to be for ever with Himself. Till this is accomplished, God only acts by providential means in regard to Israel. The testimony that calls to earthly kingdom, earthly blessing, earthly inheritance, cannot be begun until that which calls to the heavens is completed.

God cannot interfere directly and openly on behalf of the nation of Israel until the present testimony, which completely ignores the distinction between Jew and Gentile, has terminated. To re-open that distinction among saved persons, to own an earthly place of worship, an earthly priesthood, an earthly sacrifice or altar, during this present dispensation, is APOSTASY!

But all this will be resumed when the heavenly testimony ends at the coming of the Lord for His saints. Then again shall God interfere directly and publicly in the ordering of earthly events, owning again the national standing of Israel, their distinctness from all Gentile nations, and the earthly order of worship connected with "the Holy City," the "worldly sanctuary," and a human priesthood.

J. R. C.

## THE RELATION OF ASSEMBLIES TO EACH OTHER.

AN ADDRESS BY A. J. HOLIDAY.

(Continued from page 76.)

THE taking away of the lamp-stand seems to be equivalent to the breaking up of the assembly, or the taking from it that which distinguishes it as an assembly of God, and this is a matter that is kept within the control of the Lord Jesus. We may, and should, so be in fellowship with Him as to perceive and own what He is doing, but He does not tell us to do it. The difference may seem slight to some, but a little consideration will show us that it is one thing for the Lord Jesus so to deal with an assembly that all

shall perceive that He has removed the lamp-stand, and quite another for Him to delegate authority to a number of assemblies to remove it. The joining together of any number of assemblies to cut off another assembly is an act wholly without warrant from the Word of God. But, on the other hand, we are plainly taught that we ought to be in fellowship with the Lord as to His earlier action in calling the offending assembly to repent, and also as to His subsequent removal of the lamp-stand where there is no repentance. And in all this there is to be not only fellowship between each separate assembly and the Lord, as to what He is doing, but, of necessity, also fellowship one with another about it. Still, this is very distinct in character from the commandment as to putting away an individual from the fellowship of an assembly. In that case, if the Word of God has been faithfully carried out, the offender has been put away at a definite moment by those who were commanded by the Lord to perform the solemn act. It would, therefore, be a matter of flagrant defiance of the authority of the Lord Jesus for another assembly to receive such an one. But we have nothing similar to this in regard to our action towards an assembly that has gone astray. Here the Lord keeps the control in His own hands. He alone removes the lamp-stand, and it is our responsibility to take heed to what He does, so that we may acknowledge it in our own action.

One result of this difference is, that all may not clearly recognise the Lord's action at the same time. Some may be fully persuaded that He has removed the lamp-stand, while others may believe that the assembly character has not yet been wholly lost, but that the Lord is still granting space for repentance. When, in obedience to the Divine commandment, an assembly have put away an unrepentant transgressor from among them, they can inform others of what has been done, and should be able to count upon all to act accordingly. But we cannot put our perception of what we believe the Lord has been doing upon the same footing, or claim that, because we believe that the Lord has taken away the lamp-stand, therefore all others shall acknowledge the same thing. In the one case everything is specific. The circle of those who are called upon to

take action is clearly defined, and the sins for which the guilty one is to be put away are plainly indicated. The case of the fornicator, in 1 Cor. v., is a case in point. The Lord does not say, "I will remove him." He commands the assembly at Corinth, "Wherefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person"; and they were to do it when they were gathered together, because then alone they could act in His name and with His power. When they have thus acted the Lord says, "What ye have done shall stand, for it was first of all done in heaven." But if in this, or in anything else, we go beyond the Word of God, we are practically adding to His Word, and He will presently have to reprove us as liars because we presumed to give to our thoughts the authority that belongs to His commandments.

But all this affords no reason why we should be indifferent as to the condition of other assemblies. While the Lord tells us plainly what part He has reserved to Himself, He makes our part equally plain by the seven times repeated exhortation, "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." This is a distinct call to all to oneness of mind in discerning what is His judgment as to the condition of each assembly. And it should be a matter for deep humiliation and self-judgment when this oneness of mind is lacking. Some think the Lord has plainly removed the lamp-stand, while others are of a wholly contrary opinion; and what is to be done? What do the Scriptures teach as to the remedy for divided thought and judgment among the saints in a single assembly? Let us turn to 1 Cor. i. 10. There were divisions in Corinth, and the saints were ranging themselves under the lead of different teachers. "I beseech you," says the apostle, "by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." Is this a hard saying? Indeed it is, for our natural hearts. Nothing could be harder. But look at what goes before (verse 9), "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." Our faithful God has called us to this fellow-

ship, and in accordance with this calling He commands us to be of one mind. The fact that the Corinthian saints were not one-minded is evidence that they were carnal, walking as men; and they are called to judge themselves as to this before they can pretend to act for God in dealing with evil-doers. It is this carnality of heart that is the great hindrance to our discerning the mind of God and so becoming of one mind. The apostle does not say that some of them were carnal because they did not understand the will of God, but that, as a whole, they were carnal because there were divisions among them.

Are we ready to say that it is a hopeless thing to look for oneness of mind among those who profess to be gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus? Apart from God's faithfulness, there is nothing more hopeless. That is what we must fall back upon. And whoever shall most truly judge himself for the carnality manifested by our divisions, and shall most help on the spirit of self-judgment in his brethren, will have the most largely contributed towards that unity of mind and mouth which is so precious in God's sight.

I am not shutting my eyes to the fact that oneness of mind is impossible if there is no recognition of God's Son, Jesus Christ, as Lord. Where a human system, with its man-made creeds and laws, has been adopted, the only basis upon which a godly unity is possible is wanting. Those who profess to desire a perfect joining together in the same mind must begin by judging and departing from that which makes it impossible. But do not let us forget that the utterly divergent traditions, that are so tenaciously clung to by our fellow-saints still in the bondage of religious systems, are but the ripened fruits of that carnality which declares itself among those who have been brought out of these systems by their divided thoughts and ways.

The Lord holds us responsible, then, to take account of what He is doing among the assemblies, and He calls all to fellowship, one with another, in this. If this fellowship is to be attained and maintained, there must be no precipitate action on the part of those who see things most promptly and most clearly. Such precipitancy will lead to division, as regards those who will not follow until they can see

the thing clearly; while it will turn into mere imitators of men those who cannot bear to be left behind, whether they see the thing themselves or not. But it is not only those who will not wait that are responsible for the divisions that are so dishonouring to the name of the Lord Jesus. If, through slothfulness or indifference, through unwillingness to admit a fault on the part of those we like, or through clinging to traditional ways and thoughts, we are failing to take heed of what the Lord is doing, we must bear our share of the blame. One extreme always promotes another. The brother or the assembly who will go too fast increases the obstinacy of those who do not want to move at all. In the same way, the resistance of those who will not see increases the impatience of those who are lacking in forbearance. The one diminishes from the Word of God by refusing to act out its teachings; while the other adds to it by forcing strained interpretations upon it, to justify himself in finding a way out of a position that seems unbearable.

"But can it be the mind of God," some are asking, "that there should be such confusion as exists to-day? Here is a company acting in such self-will that some of us cannot conscientiously acknowledge them as a church at all, yet others persist in maintaining fellowship with them. Thus, while we would not receive them if they came to us, we go elsewhere and find ourselves seated with them at the table. Is not this disorder?" Assuredly it is, and disorder that we need to weep over. But there is something worse even than such disorder, and that is a man-made remedy. The disorder may exercise our consciences, and bring us in brokenness of heart to the Lord for help. But when we have adopted a human device for putting things right, confession ceases, and our hope of help from God is gone.

Let me add a word as to one manifest reason why God has not committed to any of us the power to cut off an assembly. God invariably requires us to act on principles of perfect righteousness, and on that account, when He bids us put an individual away, He commands that his sin shall be proved by undoubted evidence. In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word must be established

(Matt. xviii. 16); and the apostle repeats the same words as a reason why he would not attempt to form a judgment about some who had sinned at Corinth, until he could be present and hear all the evidence in presence of the accused (2 Cor. xiii. 2). Any one who has had any experience in sifting evidence will know how difficult it often is to arrive at the exact truth when dealing on the spot with a matter concerning an individual. How much greater the difficulty, then, when we are attempting to estimate the conduct of a whole company of people with regard to whom we can scarcely ever have the same opportunities of forming an accurate judgment. Hence the Lord bids us take note of how He is dealing with such a company. When He takes away the candlestick He will make it plain.

Sometimes we are called upon to consider the case of an assembly that has divided into two parts, each of which claims our support and fellowship, while desiring us to refuse the same to the other. In such a case it often happens that the matter about which they have ostensibly divided is little more than a pretext. It may be that for years there had been two parties in that assembly divided over some matter of doctrine, or as to what is scriptural order in the fellowship. Held together by a continually weakening bond, some personal dispute becomes the occasion of the final breach. The saints take sides about the matter just in accordance with the line of cleavage that was plainly to be seen before, and while no one is consciously telling untruths, the versions of the matter given by the opposing parties are absolutely contradictory. Then comes the danger that other assemblies will uphold one or the other according to their previous sympathies with their general line of things.

O how needful, then, to give heed to the Lord's own words, "Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

What is wanted, then, is for each assembly to seek to perceive what the Lord is doing, having heart and conscience awakened to the deep importance of knowing His mind and acting in fellowship with Him. This must needs carry with it the desire to be and act

in fellowship with other assemblies in our solicitude over a corrupt Thyatira or a lifeless Sardis. But the fellowship must be that of God's Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. He holds the stars in His right hand, and only so can they be used in the maintaining of the fellowship. It must be with churches as with individuals, for the state of each church is the state of the individuals who compose it. It is only, then, as we are holding the Head, from whom all the body by joints and bonds has nourishment ministered, that we can be knit together, increasing with the increase of God.

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### "BESTOWED."

"BEHOLD, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us" (1 John iii. 1). Divine love going out after the lost and the wandering "until He find it." Nothing in the object on which to rest; infinite and unchangeable in its own strength, it flows on like a tide through all the ages of man's rejection. This is love bestowed. The gift of God's Son for sinners is the measure of its depth and height. Its breadth and length is eternity.

The love of John iv. 21 is responsive and conditional, and is measured by our obedience, having to do with the love of God shed abroad in *our hearts* by the Holy Ghost; but the love of John iii. 16 is the overflow of *God's heart* to sinners, and knows no measure, being infinite and eternal as He is, for "God is love."

"His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain" (1 Cor. xv. 10). Grace filling the earthen vessel, first because it is empty (Psalm cvii. 9), and then because it is full (Matt. xiii. 12). Finding nothing in man, being cast back on the boundless resources of Divine wisdom for a reason to bless, our need and our fulness alike call forth the supply, because of *what God is*.

"The gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons" (2 Cor. i. 11). Not content with being the one giver to His saints, in manifold grace, Christ, as the Son over His own house, brings us into personal fellowship with His purpose, as when He gave the bread by His disciples to the multitude, thus enriching His servants by the fulness of what He

imparts to others, whether of deliverance or of power, entrusting them by the Spirit with His messages to the throne in heaven (Rom. viii. 26), and with His ministry to the members on earth; filling their hands with the Living Bread, that He may call them givers too. Thus, from the Head in heaven, enthroned and glorified, all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered . . . increaseth with the increase of God.

“Mary, who bestowed much labour on us” (Rom. xvi. 6). Yet not Mary’s labour, but the labour of the Great Shepherd of the sheep, bestowed by Mary’s hand, as a vessel into which the love of Christ to His needy servant might flow in in fellowship and flow out in service. May we thus discern in every ministry, whether concerning giving or receiving, the undying care of the Chief Shepherd, that we lose not in it the greater blessedness of contact with Himself.

“Lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain” (Gal. iv. 11). It is the labour still of the Shepherd through the apostle, “though He spend His strength for nought” (Isaiah xlix. 4). Shall we ask our hearts, as we bow in the dust before Him, how much has Christ bestowed on us personally of labour in vain? Only one thing can withstand His purposes of blessing—our unbelief. Though the floods of Divine wrath lay between Him and our redemption, yet He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem; for many waters could not quench love, neither could the floods drown it. Alone He trod the awful winepress; alone He stood, the Conqueror of death and hell, for His ransomed ones. Redemption work was done for us, but we are with Him in the work of sanctification. Let us take heed that we stay not His hand. The gates of hell shall not prevail against His Church, but unbelief within can sap her vitality and leave a door open for the enemy to enter. We who have been long in His hand for guidance, let us trace back the tenderness and the loving kindness, the training and the discipline, the restoring and the deliverance, with which He has filled our lives, and ask ourselves individually, Has He found in us the fruit for which He has laboured, for our blessing and the glory and praise of God?

A. E. W.

## “JESUS IN THE MIDST.”

THOUGHTS ON CHURCH GOVERNMENT—IV.

“WHERE they crucified Him, and two other with Him, on either side one, and Jesus in the *midst*” (John xix. 18). Such is man’s estimation of the Lord of life and glory. “They clothed Him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about His head” (Mark xv. 17). They bowed the knee in mockery before Him, they spat in His face, and finally nailed Him to the cross between two thieves.

“But God raised Him from the dead,” and set Him at His own right hand; and when the door is opened in heaven (Rev. iv. 1), and the apostle called up thither, one of the visions he records is:—“And I beheld, and, lo, in the *MIDST* of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth” (Rev. v. 6). Such is God’s estimate of Christ, and of the sacrifice He offered on the cross, that He is seen as the slain Lamb, in the *MIDST* of the throne, and is the centre of all heaven’s attraction, and the object of all heaven’s worship. The redeemed from this guilty world raise the “new song,” and all the surrounding myriads join in the universal acclamation—“Worthy is the Lamb.” Doubtless the governmental order is and will be perfect for ever in heaven; but in the scene just referred to it is evident it was not even a perfect system of government that bound all heaven together and produced the perfect harmony which ever exists there. The secret of it all is, perfect subjection to the will of Him who sits on the throne and perfect loyalty to the Lamb. The inhabitants of heaven are not kept together by anything external, but by the infinite attraction of THE DIVINE CENTRE.

As it will be in heaven when we are there at home, so it ought to be now amongst the saints of God. “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the *MIDST* of them” (Matt. xviii. 20). This passage bears on the very constitution of a scriptural assembly. It is not believers coming together by mutual consent, or for mutual

convenience, but gathered by the Holy Spirit, through the truth, unto the person of the Lord Jesus Christ; not meeting together because they like that way better than any other, or even because they get a blessing, but gathered together in obedience to the will of Him who died for them. And thus gathered not only because they have a *joint interest in Him*, but gathered by the attractive power of His love and glory, presented to the soul by the Holy Spirit, to show their *joint loyalty to Him*. Therefore gathered in separation from all that sets aside His absolute authority, unto His name, into that circle where His *will is law*. It is when saints get away in heart from the attractive power of the name of Jesus that the snare comes in of devising other means of binding Christians and Christian churches together. Hence we hear of such illustrations as comparing saints to the staves of a barrel, and "church truth" to the hoops which hold them together. There will be no such hoops needed when we are gathered around the Lord in the air (1 Thess. iv. 17), and why should such bonds be needed now? Church truth is written to teach saints how "we ought to behave ourselves in the House of God, which is the Church of the living God" (1 Tim. iii. 15); but to teach that church truth or church order in any form is God's provision for keeping saints together is to ignore and set aside the "unity of the Spirit" (Eph. iv. 3). We have a fine illustration of the truth on this point in the account which is given of the thousands who came to make David king (1 Chron. xiii.). We read, "They could keep rank," "they were not of double heart." And again, "All these men of war, that could keep rank, came with a perfect heart to make David king." These thousands were brought together and kept together by their joint loyalty to David. There was no system of eldership, or any other system, needed to keep the people together. "All Israel were of *one heart* to make David king." No doubt there was order, and discipline would be needed; but order or discipline was not the bond of their unity, it was *David himself*. So it ought to be amongst the children of God, and so it is and ever will be when they are under the power of the Spirit; saints are

then knit to one another in heart (Col. ii. 2), because they are all knit to one common CENTRE.

As it is with saints in one assembly, so it is with saints in many assemblies; they are joined together, because all gathered unto the one name, all owning the one Divine authority, and all controlled by the one Spirit. And such is the truth taught in the vision which the apostle John saw in Patmos (Rev. ii. 12), the Son of Man "in the MIDST of the seven golden candlesticks." They were all bound together, because each assembly was bound to Him. There is such a tendency in the human heart to get away from the heavenly character of church fellowship, and from the spirituality necessary to carry it out.

The suggestion that in apostolic times the unity of the Church of God in a city or district was "preserved and manifested in the oneness of its oversight circle," is one which can never be admitted. That there was a oneness of action in primitive days which is sadly lacking in our day is painfully evident, and that there was a close fellowship amongst the leading men which we also lack is clear; but the question at issue is, would "periodical" meetings of overseeing brethren either produce or maintain the harmony which then existed? All the saved were then under the power of the ungrieved Spirit of God, and all the leading men were divinely chosen, and their oneness of action was produced and maintained by all being under the guidance of the one Spirit, and without this primitive condition any attempt to reproduce primitive harmony would only intensify confusion. A system of oversight such as is being advocated might secure unity of action; but, in such a system, where is the security that such action would be the judgment of the Lord? And, if it is not that, what is it worth? It would only bring down the Church of God from its heavenly responsibility, and make it so many "district" churches of men.

The bond which unites assemblies in one city is the same as unites assemblies in many cities, or even in different countries, although, on account of distance, it cannot be expressed or manifested to the same extent. Let us by all means cultivate fellowship amongst overseers, and seek to secure unity of action

amongst the assemblies; but to do that in a godly way is one thing, and to make *oversight a bond of unity* is quite another.

The planets in the solar system are not kept in their orbits by a band round about them, or by bands running through them, but by the attraction of the central sun. So the Lord Jesus is the "centre of gravity" to the Church of God, and to the *churches* of God; but when saints get away in heart from the attraction of God's Divine Centre, other means are devised to keep saints and churches together, and then the Word of God is applied to for arguments to support these means.

Some of us remember well what a conflict we had when we came out into the name of the Lord, whether we would go on in the midst of much confusion, endeavouring to keep the "unity of the Spirit," or whether we should seek an escape from confusion by going inside the "exclusive" circle, and seek to manifest the unity of the "One Body." And, if God in His mercy prevent not, we may soon have the same conflict to go through again; we may have to choose whether we shall go on in the midst of increasing perplexity and failure, satisfied with "Jesus only," not only guided by His Word, but seeking to carry out that Word in fellowship with His own heart of infinite love and patience towards *all* His blood-bought flock; or whether we shall seek an easier path by going inside a unity which will require neither grace nor patience to keep it. Man's unities are easily discerned and kept; but God's unity, of which Christ is the centre and the Holy Spirit the power which binds all to Him, requires Divine light to apprehend it and Divine grace to keep it.

(To be continued.)

G. A.

## The Seven Churches of Revelation.

### II. SMYRNA ("SUFFERING").

**T**HICK clouds of sorrow gathered round  
 The little flock—rude tempests frowned;  
 For Satan all his rage employed,  
 And power, that they might be destroyed.  
 Men hated them, and caused their name  
 To be despised; reproach and shame  
 Their portion was; as sheep were they  
 To slaughter led from day to day,  
 Because they would not bow the knee  
 Before the Pagan deity,  
 Or incense on their altars burn,  
 Or to their former ways return.  
 Before tribunals they were brought,  
 Where oft their lives they might have bought  
 By what to many might have seemed  
 A trivial act, as nothing deemed.  
 "To throw some incense on that fire,"  
 Said they, "is all that we require,  
 That you may go unbound and free,  
 In honour, peace, and liberty.  
 But daring still to disobey  
 His word who holds imperial sway;  
 If your new faith you will retain,  
 You choose the dungeon and the chain;  
 Thence to be brought, as we require,  
 To the arena or the fire."  
 With tearful eye and quivering frame  
 The gentle maid and noble dame,  
 Strong in the Lord, stood firm and true,  
 While friends and children wept adieu.  
 Their tender hearts were sorely tried,  
 When o'er them loving parents sighed,  
 Entreating them to bow the knee,  
 To burn the incense and be free.  
 But steadfast in the faith they stood,  
 And nobly sealed it with their blood.  
 Old men of heavenly look and mien  
 In the arena oft were seen,  
 By savage beasts to fragments rent,  
 Their ransomed souls to Jesus sent.  
 Young men and maidens, children too,  
 To Christ and to His faith stood true;  
 Nor counted they their lives as dear,  
 Unmoved alike by bribe or fear.  
 And many wandered to and fro,  
 Without a home where they could go  
 In safety, but were glad to hide  
 In den, or cave, or mountain side.  
 In sheepskins and in goatskins dressed,

They found not here a place of rest.  
 The worldling—the mere child of earth,  
 Knew not their name or noble birth ;  
 Those were God's heroes of renown,  
 For whom awaits the martyrs' crown.  
 Ofttimes they met at dead of night  
 With trembling, though with glad delight,  
 In subterranean meeting-place,  
 To hear God's Word and seek His face.  
 Oft broke they there the symbol bread,  
 Drank from the cup with vintage red ;  
 There strength was to their spirits given  
 To tread the thorny path to heaven,  
 For they remembered that their Lord  
 And Saviour—evermore adored—  
 In love His life-blood for them gave,  
 That He their souls from wrath might save.

Ye Christians, in these easy days,  
 Compare your faith, your deeds, your ways,  
 With theirs, and let each ask, "Would I  
 For Jesus be prepared to die ?  
 Have I not often stayed away  
 When fellow-saints were met to pray ;  
 And even from His table spread  
 For me with more than angels' bread,  
 Because the day was cold or wet,  
 Or some slight ailment me beset ;  
 It might be did not feel inclined,  
 Waiting for better frame of mind ?"  
 Blush when ye think of Smyrna days,  
 Consider in their light your ways ;  
 Go to Rome's catacombs and read  
 The record of heroic deed.  
 Had those sepulchral caves but speech,  
 How eloquently might they preach !  
 How echo back the holy hymn  
 Once swelling through the cloisters dim !  
 Ponder that Day, so near at hand,  
 When we shall all together stand  
 Before the judgment-seat on high  
 To give account of deeds gone by.  
 With thee He may perchance contrast  
 Those faithful ones whose lot was cast  
 In those dark troublous times ; whose love  
 Raised them all human fears above ;  
 Who braved the lion, sword and flame,  
 To gather to His holy name.  
 They lost their lives for Christ, but they  
 Shall reign with Him through endless day ;  
 While all who now shrink from the cross  
 Will suffer corresponding loss.

With that tribunal full in view,  
 Steadfast in heart, with purpose true,  
 May we be fired with Smyrna zeal,  
 Though Smyrna fires we may not feel.

A. W. P. S.

## GOLIATH'S BROTHER.

BIBLICAL SOLUTIONS BY A. P. MACDONALD. No. 13.

2 Sam. xxi. 19.—"And there was again war with the Philistines. . . . and Elhanan the son of Jaare-oregim, the Beth-lehemite, slew Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam."

1 Chron. xx. 5.—"Elhanan the son of Jair slew Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam."

THERE are some various readings, or "apparent contradictions," which can only be explained on the supposition of carelessness on the part of transcribers of the sacred manuscripts ; as they cannot be referred to any other known cause, and this cause is indicated by the internal evidences.

A singular instance may be seen in the two verses quoted above, which I copy from the R.V. in order to call attention to the difference between them. The words, "the brother of," printed in italics in the A.V. of 2 Sam. xxi. 19, are by no means implied in the language of the original as we have it now, but are borrowed from 1 Chron. xx. 5.

I have no doubt myself that the text of 2 Sam. xxi. 19 is corrupt, and that the parallel passage suggests the true reading.

The variations introduced into the former verse, which cause it to differ so widely in sense from the latter, are, in the Hebrew text, very slight ; and they are just such mistakes as an inaccurate writer would be likely to make in copying a manuscript.

Thus, the first thing that strikes one on reading 2 Sam. xxi. 19 in Hebrew is that the word *oregim* appears twice in the verse :—once in the last clause where it is translated "weaver's," and once in the middle where it has been taken as part of the compound name "Jaare-oregim." A comparison with 1 Chron. xx. 5, leads us to the conclusion that, in the last-mentioned case, the word has come up improperly from the end of the verse. There is nothing astonishing in this. It is a common

## MELCHISEDEK.

form of blunder, as I should think every one has remarked, even in ordinary correspondence. A well-known example in the New Testament is Rom. viii. 1, where the clause "who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit" has been mistakenly inserted from verse 4. In such cases the transcriber's memory has caused him to anticipate a phrase with which he was familiar; or else his eye caught the ending of the wrong line in passing from one to another.

The first occurrence of *oregim* being suppressed, the name remains substantially the same in both passages: "Elhanan, son of Jair."

The next thing to notice is the word translated "the Bethlehemite." In Samuel this is written *Beth hal-lachmi*. In Chronicles the corresponding word is written *eth Lachmi*—that is, the proper name "Lachmi," preceded by the "objective article" *eth*. Again I believe the latter to be the true reading. In the former the "objective article," *eth*, has been changed by a copyist into *Beth*;—a mistake of one letter, the consonant BETH being substituted for ALEPH. This blunder would be about as easy to make as to confound an A with a B in a manuscript printed in small capitals by the hand of a child.

Lastly, in the text in Chronicles we find the words *achi Golyath* ("brother of Goliath"); while in Samuel we read *eth Golyath* ("the Goliath"). This again results from the change of one letter, CHETH being transformed into THAU. These two letters are so like one another that I fancy most readers of the *Witness* would not, at the first glance, notice any difference between them. As the last-mentioned error changed an "objective article" into the prefix of a geographical name, so, in this case, a noun in the "construct (that is Hebrew *possessive*) state," has been changed into an "objective article," and "Goliath" is stated to have been slain, instead of his brother.

The alteration of two letters, and the repetition of a word in the wrong place, account for the difference between the quotations. 2 Sam. xxi. 19 ought to be read in the same way as 1 Chr. xx. 5:—"Elhanan, son of Jair [no word *oregim*], slew Lachmi [not *the Bethlehemite*], BROTHER OF GOLIATH the Gittite."

IN our study of this subject, the above is the next clear, personal type we meet with. Melchisedek is mentioned only three times in all the Scriptures. In Gen. xiv. 18-20 we have the historical account. In Psalm cx. there is an intimation of his typical character. In Heb. vii. 1-3 the type is fully unfolded.

Different opinions have been held as to who Melchisedek actually was. Men, in their perverseness, have written volumes to make clear that which God declares He designedly hid. In the opinion of some he was an angel, others have thought he was the third person of the Trinity, while a larger number still believe that he was Christ Himself. The last, which is the most plausible, is answered by Heb. vii. 3—"Made *like* unto the Son of God." If he was made *like* Christ, it is evident he could not *be* Christ. The *building* and the *plan* are distinct things. Melchisedek was a mere man, an ordinary descendant of Adam; but, on account of *what was not recorded of him and his official position*, he strikingly foreshadowed Christ.

And here may we not see the significance of the *omissions* of Scripture? For the type, in one important feature, is based on the *silence* of the inspired record as to certain things. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." As, in music, the *pauses* prove the composer's skill as much as the notes, so the wisdom of God is manifested by what is *not* written as well as by what is written. The Bible is a divinely perfect whole. Moses may never have thought why he did not write more about Melchisedek; but the Holy Spirit, who guided him, foresaw that 1400 years later these very omissions would play an important part in another inspired writing. The more thoroughly the Bible is studied as a whole, and in all its parts, the more evident is it that God has spoken. One effect which ever follows a careful comparison of the Old Testament with the New is a deepened conviction that both are of God, and that they stand or fall together.

From Heb. vii. 1-3 we learn that Melchisedek typified the Christ in three particulars—

in *His divine nature, His priestly work, and His rule as King.*

I. *Melchisedek typified Christ in His divine nature.* "There must," some may say, "have been something remarkable about this man ere he could be a type of Christ in this point." But when we look closely at it we see that it all turns on what is not recorded of Melchisedek. That he was born and that he died in the ordinary way we cannot doubt; but these facts are nowhere mentioned, and, *in this respect*, he was "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life." And thus he was a shadow of Him who "in the beginning was with God, and was God," and who, from a necessity of His nature, can never cease to be. Melchisedek, in his priesthood, is contrasted with Aaron. Aaron's pedigree is clearly given, and no one could serve as a priest under the law unless he could prove that he was descended from Aaron (Ezra ii. 61, 62).

II. *Melchisedek typified Christ in the permanency of His Priesthood.* The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews was addressing a people who for generations had enjoyed a visible God-appointed priesthood and worship. Many of them had embraced Christianity, and this was in direct contrast to their old system. Men naturally like something visible to lean upon. Christianity was a life of faith, and not sight; it had a Priest indeed, but He was never visible to the bodily eye. A weak believer or mere professor from among the Jews would begin to think he was losing everything and getting nothing in return. To an intelligent believer, the law, with its priesthood and sacrifices, was only a *shadow* of what he possessed in Christ; to an unlearned or weak believer, the shadow would appear to be a substance and the substance a shadow.

One main object, then, of the writer of this epistle was to prove the great superiority of what was connected with Christ over their earthly system. In chapter vii. he proves the superiority of the new heavenly Priesthood over the old. In Gal. iii. 15-22, the apostle argues that God's dealing with men on the principle of faith was really His way before the law was given. The law is thus shown to be a parenthesis—that which came in by the

way—a provisional state. And in Heb. vii. it is proved that another order of priesthood existed before the Aaronic, and a quotation from Psalm cx. makes it clear that it continues *for ever*; so the Levitical priesthood was evidently not intended to be permanent.

Melchisedek's priesthood was unique in its nature, it differed in most points from the Levitical. Its distinctive marks were—(1) he held the sceptre as well as the censer; (2) and his priesthood never passed to another. In these two points he stood in direct contrast to Aaron. Of the priests under the law it is witnessed, "And they truly were many priests, because they were not allowed to continue by reason of death." But of the Melchisedek antitype it is said, "But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore," &c. (Heb. vii. 23-25).

In the historical account in Genesis, three things are recorded of Melchisedek—(1) he met the victorious warriors with bread and wine, (2) he blessed Abram from God, (3) he received tithes from Abram. I believe the Melchisedek pattern of priesthood will be particularly and fully carried out in the age to come. Not till then will Christ act as Priest and King. I may show in another paper that our Lord's priestly service *now* is after that of which Aaron's was a general type. But notice, Christ as a Priest must ever be "after the order of Melchisedek" in the great particular that *He has no successor*, and that is what is insisted on in the Epistle to the Hebrews. But, that fact established, the writer of the epistle at once drops Melchisedek as a type, and takes up the Levitical high priest.

What is recorded in Gen. xiv. in some things stands in striking contrast to our Lord's service for us. In Gen. xiv., the absence of altar and sacrifice are very noticeable. There is no hint of a sacrifice being required as a foundation for priestly service. To look upon the bread and wine brought forth by Melchisedek as a "sacrament" is a puerile figment of Rome. Again, there is nothing of an intercessory character about his acts; he simply blesses Abram, but does not speak to God for him. Again, in Gen. xiv. the scene is an *earthly* and *public* one. In these particulars it stands in contrast to what is unfolded in Hebrews.

There Christ's priesthood is founded on His sacrifice, its great feature is *intercession*, and it is a *hidden service*, carried on in the holy of holies, for a people who are partakers of a heavenly calling.

The scene in Gen. xiv. was the foreshadowing of something which ere long will be enacted in Palestine. In that land a great conflict will yet take place; God's earthly people will be involved in it, and it will go against them. But, at the critical moment, the Lord will step in and prove their salvation from their foes (Zech. xiv. 1-4, &c.). He will then be the antitype of the victorious Abram, delivering the people of God from their enemies; and likewise He will be the King-priest, refreshing and blessing them after the battle, and then reigning over them throughout the thousand years.

This, I believe, is the *interpretation* of the typical scene before us; but it has been well said, "Interpretation of Scripture is one thing, the application thereof is quite another." So, while *interpreting* this passage of something in the future, we would seek, also, to apply it to ourselves. In the general application of Gen. xiv. 18-20, Abram may be taken as representing all believers. "They which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham . . . so then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham" (Gal. iii. 7-9). Thus the event foreshadowed God blessing His people in their Divine Melchisedek. The Lord Jesus ascended to heaven in the very act of blessing His people; and that service, begun on earth, He has continued in heaven. And all the time of the church's sojourn on earth she has possessed two great blessings, viz., an ever-abiding Comforter on earth and a Priest in heaven always engaged in serving her. These are *covenant blessings*, which have not depended on our faithfulness. Thank God it is so! For alas! alas! had they depended on man's faithfulness they must have been withdrawn ages since.

But Abram paid tithes of the spoils taken in the battle. This is suggestive and important. It occurred prior to the giving of the law, and therefore, in itself, is not a legal ordinance. The same thing was strictly enjoined under the law; but here it was a voluntary act on the part of Abram. This paying of tithes,

whether by Abram, or by Jacob, or under the law, all teach, in substance, the same thing. Israel, by paying tithes, acknowledged that the land was not their's, but Jehovah's, and they were tenants under Him. Abram, in the same way, confessed that the victory just gained was not his, but the Lord's. And we, too, are expected to give God somewhat. We should bring the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, we should give Him the glory of our every victory, and, what is more practical, we should give Him of our substance. Christians are *stewards*, not *owners*. The question should be, not "How much should I give to the Lord?" but, "How much dare I (in view of the judgment-seat) use on myself?" I am persuaded that our true attitude is expressed in the hymn we sometimes sing—

"Nought that I have mine own I'll call;  
I'll hold it for the Giver:  
My heart, my strength, my life, my all,  
Are His, and His for ever."

May God exercise hearts and consciences on this important point.

III. *Melchisedek was a type of Christ as King.* He is not called *King* of saved ones of this age. Now there is a higher thing; though even now there is much that is implied in the title *King* exercised by Christ. He is *Head* of the church, and this involves *submission* to Himself. He is Lord of individuals. We are His bond-servants, and as such we are expected to do *His will* alone.

But Christ, ere long, will be actual King of Israel and the nations. As it is written, "The Lord shall give Him the throne of His father David," &c. (Luke i. 32, 33). In Heb. vii. 2 we learn that Melchisedek's name, and the name of the city over which he ruled, are full of teaching. Melchisedek signifies "King of Righteousness"; King of Salem means "King of Peace." These names tell forth the *character and effect of Messiah's reign*. That a King can reign in righteousness, and the effect on his subjects be peace, proves that a great change has taken place. As men now are, this could not be. So before then the wicked will either have been converted or destroyed. Scripture abundantly proves that the millennium will be ushered in by a series of terrible judgments. Pages might be filled with quotations proving it. I must be satisfied with giving two or

three passages, and not attempt to enlarge on them. Study carefully Psalm ii., Psalm cx., Isaiah xi., &c.

Of this time it is written: "When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." Great numbers of the wicked will "perish from the way," and the remainder will yield, at least, an outward submission to Christ (Psalm lxxvi. 3, mar.), and then for the thousand years righteousness shall reign in the earth. "The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever" (Isa. xxxii. 17).

First being King of Righteousness, and after that King of Peace. This is ever God's order (*cf.* with this James iii. 17, 18). God's peace is ever based on righteousness. In Christ, "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Psalm lxxxv. 10, 11). This poor, distracted world will never know what peace is till "the Prince of Peace" comes and reigns. And this one day He will surely do.

Melchisedek alone, in the Old Testament, combined the kingly and priestly offices. Uzziah attempted it in his day, but God's judgment fell upon him for his temerity (2 Chron. xxvi. 16-21). But of the Messiah it was prophesied, "He shall be a Priest upon His throne" (Zech. vi. 12, 13). Thus the Melchisedek type shall be fulfilled—Christ shall be Priest and King at one time. But now our Lord is rejected, and we, as His people, are rejected with Him. Our portion is not here or now. May we in the little while be true to our Divine Melchisedek. Let us worship Him as our Saviour-God. Give Him that which is His due—ourselves and our all—and own Him as our Lord. And then, in the conflict by the way, we shall know Him as the One who again and again comes forth to strengthen His fainting hosts, and who will minister to us the new wine of the Kingdom, when we are at home with Himself for ever.

J. N. C.

#### SEPARATION FROM GOOD.

It is as great a sin to *separate from good* as it is not to separate from evil. Obedience to positive precept in the Word of God must be the rule in all such matters.

## Correspondence.

To the Editor of *The Witness*.

### THE MUTUAL RELATION OF ASSEMBLIES.\*

THE paper on the above subject in the December number of *The Witness* has called forth a reply the tone of which, it may be sufficient to remark, will be discerned by those who are spiritual. As to the *substance* of the reply, if anyone will take the trouble to mark off all that has no distinct bearing on the subject, but is only designed to impress the reader with the weakness of those who oppose these novel teachings, he will be surprised to find how little is left.

Though we by no means desire to carry on any controversy, yet, as in the hurry of the day people hardly take the trouble to turn to a paper under review, it may be well to endeavour to put clearly the two sides of the three points that are taken up, especially as they are three of the chief pillars on which the modern idea of "district oversight" rests.

1. Acts ix. 31. It is asserted that the word "church" here (see R.V.) expresses the unity of "the churches of Judea and Samaria and Galilee" as distinct from other churches, and that this unity was maintained and expressed by the elders of these churches having a central place of meeting at Jerusalem. The writer of the paper before us says the literal rendering is "the church catholic of Judea and Samaria and Galilee," and he evidently regards this as having a unity of its own as distinct and separate from other churches. With any who believe that there were several such distinct churches as "the church catholic" of Palestine, the "church catholic" of Syria, and the "church catholic" of Cilicia, we are not anxious to contend; but if we are required to imitate a copy, we may at least expect that that copy shall be clearly set before us.

If, therefore, it be asserted that the unity of "the church catholic" of Palestine was maintained and expressed by a periodical gathering of the elders of "the churches" at Jerusalem, and we are required to maintain and express the unity of any number of assemblies in the same manner, we may surely ask for some evidence of at least *one* such gathering of elders at Jerusalem. In the absence of this, and the absence, too, of the slightest evidence from Scripture that the churches of any other district had a separate unity of their own, as defined by the district, we see no reason to modify the suggestion that, seeing we have the word *church*, up to this point, used in a general way, as embracing all who were Christ's, so here it is not necessary to take it as defining the church of that district to the exclusion of other churches, as though that alone *had rest* while others were *being persecuted*; but rather as specially noting the fact that *where* the church had been so persecuted, *there* it now had rest.

But interpret this verse as we will, where is the evidence in it, or in any other, of any representative gathering of the elders of the churches of *that district* at Jerusalem? That Jerusalem was the centre for a time was indeed true, and the fact that there was an apostolic ministry going forth from that city caused it to be so. But in this sense it was not a centre for Palestine simply, but for *the whole church*, and to speak

of the apostles as connected with the assemblies throughout the Holy Land in any sense in which they were not connected with other assemblies as they arose, betrays an inadequate conception of the extent of their commission.

That Jerusalem, while it was a centre, was such for the whole church, and not for any limited district simply, is evident from the fact that when questions arose at Antioch they were referred "to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders," and were settled in an assembly of "the apostles and elders, with the whole church," under the distinct guidance of the Holy Ghost (Acts xv.). The use of the expression, "the whole church," in verse 22, is striking. According to the interpretation of Acts ix., which we do not accept, it would include all the assemblies of the Holy Land; but it is very evident that the reference is simply to Jerusalem, and that the elders named are not the elders of a large district, but those who, being on the spot, were able to join the apostles in such a conference. But it cannot be too much pressed that it was the presence of the apostles and the distinct guidance of the Holy Ghost that gave this meeting the authority it had. Many, doubtless, thought Jerusalem would continue to be such a centre; but this was not God's purpose, and it has not pleased Him to direct us to any other place on earth that may be so regarded. But, while it was such a centre, it was not simply for a district, but for saints everywhere who had a common interest in apostolic teaching and decisions.

2. The exhortation of Gal. vi. i., "Brethren, if any man be overtaken in a fault, *ye which are spiritual*, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness," is considered to be addressed to all the elders of the churches of Galatia, and, therefore, to afford proof of the unity of those churches as maintained and expressed by one oversight for the whole. Our reply was, that if this had any bearing on the question it would involve the assembling of all the elders at a given spot for the restoration of one who had been overtaken in a fault. This is taken as a perversion of what is meant; and regarding the suggestion that the "spiritual ones" in any one of "the churches of Galatia" are exhorted to seek to restore its erring ones, we are told that then "the apostle also meant something he did not say, and something, too, entirely foreign to the tone and purport of his epistle."

What, then, did he mean? Is there any evidence that the exhortation is limited to overseers? Is there not proof that, at least, it has nothing to do with the assembling of overseers, whether district or local? Does not, "Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted," show that it was a word for any spiritual person who, as an individual, could act upon it, without waiting for any meeting of overseers, or stopping to consider whether he was an overseer or not?

3. 1 Pet. v. 1-3. Fault is found with the present writer for speaking of "the elders of the respective flocks," instead of the elders in "the allotted portions" of the flock. An ordinary reader would have no difficulty in understanding the meaning; and, even though the word "flocks" was used, instead of "allotted portions" of the flock, probably he would not discern the "anti-scriptural" character of the expression, or deem that the oneness of the flock was called in ques-

tion. Is not this, rather, an attempt to "make a man an offender for a word," than a fair dealing with the argument advanced?

If, however, the form of expression is amended, it may still be asked, What evidence is there that the elders here addressed had one centre of meeting? And unless some evidence of this can be adduced, what has the passage to do with the modern idea of district oversight? Peter exhorts the elders scattered over this vast district, surely expecting them all to apply his exhortation to themselves individually, and to carry it out in the definite sphere of service marked out for each by "the Chief Shepherd." The exhortation, "Neither as lording it over the allotted portions, but becoming ensamples to the flock," is as important now as it was then, and good would it be if it were carried out.

But what shall we say about the effort to render the latter part of this verse, "becoming *representatives* of the flock"? Such an interpretation is certainly new, and though the Greek word has this meaning in Rom. v. 14, where it is rendered "*figure*," can the rendering "*representative*" be said to express its meaning here? Let us turn to some parallel passages. Paul exhorts Timothy, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an *example* of the believers, in word, in conversation, in faith, in purity"; and similarly Titus, "In all things showing thyself a *pattern* of good works." These exhortations are clear enough; but will they be as clear if we render the word *representative*? Where were Timothy and Titus to represent the believers? And is not Peter giving a similar exhortation, and calling upon the elders in the flock to be "*ensamples to the flock*"?

Would not the word "*representatives*" lead to confusion of thought, and bring in the idea of acting on behalf of the flock, instead of ministering to it? It is the latter, surely, that is contemplated in the exhortation of the apostle: "Tend [*i.e.*, shepherd] the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according to God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock" (R. V.). A meeting for considering the affairs of an assembly has its importance; and every opportunity for elders—whether of a town, a district, or a country—to gather together to wait upon God, and seek the knowledge of His will as revealed in His Word, that they may be the better fitted to carry out the above command, ought to be highly prized by those who desire to promote fellowship and keep the unity of the Spirit. But to confound this with the definite work of the elder in feeding and overseeing the flock, and guiding it by presenting himself as a living example of godliness, would be like saying that a shepherd is feeding and leading his flock when, at some distance from it, he is conferring with other shepherds on the best way of feeding and leading.

We have thus sought to consider the three points in the paper before us, without touching anything beyond them, for we have no wish to pursue any controversy with our dear brethren who are seeking to establish a system of church government which we cannot find in Scripture. For sincerity, and the desire to carry out the Word of God, we give them full credit; but would remind them that all departures from the truth have begun in strained interpretations of Scripture and

deductions from such interpretations. We are never safe when we begin to press anything that is not very clearly taught in Scripture, and it is only as, in the spirit of lowliness, we keep to what is plainly laid down there that we can hope for the fulfilment of the inspired prayer: "Now the God of patience and of comfort grant you to be of the same mind one with another according to Christ Jesus: that with one accord ye may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. xv. 5, 6, R.V.).

W. H. B.

## Questions and Answers.

We desire to express our thanks to all who have sent answers. We again urge the importance of replies being *short*; it is essential, in this particular line of things, to be *concise*.

We shall greatly value remembrance in prayer that special wisdom and grace may be given for this service. THE EDITOR.

### Replies are invited to the following:—

Does Matt. v. 39-41 forbid a Christian to go to law under any circumstances to defend himself from injustice?

Where and what is Paradise? Compare Luke xxiii. 43, Rom. x. 7, and Eph. iv. 9, with 2 Cor. xii. 4.

In comparing Matthew xvii. 28 with Mark xv. 17 and John xix. 5, in one we get a "scarlet robe," in the others "purple." Why the difference?

Does the Sunday-school system (including Bible classes) rest upon any Scriptural principle? Because, if not, it would seem to be chargeable with being one of the questionable expedients of modernism.

Does the apostle Paul express disapproval of the sectarian spirit in *all* the four parties named in the twelfth verse of 1st chapter of 1 Corinthians, or only of that in the three first named, who said they were "of Paul," "of Apollos," and of "Cephas"? or, in other words, Did those err also who said they were "of Christ"; and, if so, explain how?

### RECONCILIATION IN THE HEAVENS.

QUESTION 387.—What are the things in the heavens which are reconciled to God through Christ? (Col. i. 20.)

**Ans. A.**—They are not primarily persons at all, but the "heavenly places" themselves. In a secondary sense, they are the unfallen angels who, as a class, have suffered the taint of the fall of some among them. They personally are sinless, pure, and perfect; but the angelic body or group contributed the first rebel against God's authority, and thus the whole group, as a distinct branch of creation, needs to be reconciled—that is, the stain cast upon it by some of its members must be removed. As to the primary sense of the passage, the reconciliation of the heavenly things has two parts or departments with the same sort of connection as, and analogous to, our own justification and sanctification. As to the first, I would refer to Hebrews ix. 23—"It was necessary that the heavenly things themselves should be purified with better sacrifices than these;" and for explanation of this recall Leviticus xvi. 16—"And He shall make atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleannesses of the children of Israel . . . and shall do so for the tent of meeting that dwelleth with them in the midst of their uncleannesses." The

solemn truth here revealed is that sin has had a far wider effect than in the mere corruption and ruin of the sinner. Sin has cast a slur upon the very throne of God; it has brought discredit upon His government; it has actually robbed Him of glory, and temporarily defiled His palace and shaken His kingdom. If He had visited sin at once with its desert, and instantly purged His creation by the last punishment of the offender, this stain or blot would have ceased to operate against His glory. Although it is far from us to venture to say that even in that case the claims of His righteousness would not have required some atonement such as our Lord's to reconcile again the heavenly places to Himself. But wisdom prolonged the freedom and power of Satan, and grace came in to spare and restore and save the sinner who had become his victim; and for 6000 years the universe has witnessed its God made little of and despised, His laws broken and His throne defied. The "heavenly things" themselves need to be purged of their dishonour; and in no way can this be accomplished but by the blood of the cross. "The heavens are not clean in His sight." They must be cleansed, and all His environments made meet for the presence of God. As Israel, the holy place, and the tent of meeting needed an atonement, for the simple reason that God had placed it "in the midst of their uncleannesses," so it must be in the "heavenly things themselves." It will be doubtless in the memory of all that the defilement of the "heavenly places," which has to be removed by Christ's sacrifices, is not only shown in the dishonour done to God's throne by sin, but that Satan has had the range of the "heavenly places" in the world of unfallen spirits (see Job i. 6, and ii. 1.), and access to the throne as the false accuser of the brethren (Rev. xii.); that he still bears the title of "prince of the power of the air," and that his associates are described as "spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places" (Eph. vi., R.V.) The reconciliation referred to will therefore consist, like our own, of two parts. First, the atonement by blood, typified in Lev. xvi., and explained in Heb. ix., by which in righteousness the stain of sin will be removed from the environment of God; and, secondly, the actual removal and final banishment of the wicked spirit and his legions from the realms of the blessed or "heavenly places." Thence will follow the further development of God's purpose of the ages, in which Christ, the risen Man, shall take Headship in the dispensation of the fulness of the times over all things; the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth (having first reconciled all things in the two regions), and all things shall be in willing and loving subjection to His sway, and He shall be Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all (Eph. i. 9, 10, 21, 23). G. F. T.

**Ans. B.**—What "the things in the heavens" are is made very clear by ver. 16, where they are defined by the words, "whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers." Those who are generally called simply "angels" are here more fully described according to the position they occupy by God's appointment in the ordering of His heavenly hosts. Not so easily answered is the question, which perhaps is in the mind of the questioner, How can God be said to reconcile to Himself angels who kept their first estate?

To enter in any little measure into what is so briefly intimated we have need to consider the distance which there must be between the Creator and the creature simply as a creature, and the infirmity of even the highest creature simply as part of the old creation. In a certain vision that Eliphaz received, this truth was unfolded to him, and his words show how he apprehended it, though in applying it to Job's case he misused it. "Behold, He putteth no trust in His servants; and His angels He chargeth with folly" [or *frailty*]; and again, "Behold, He putteth no trust in His holy ones; yea, the heavens are not clean in His sight" (Job iv. 18; xv. 15, R.V.). The created heavens and their inhabitants are not clean as compared with His own infinite purity, and His angels are chargeable with folly or frailty by comparison with His infinite wisdom and perfections. Moreover, the fact that *some fell* is clear evidence that, *in themselves, all were liable to do so.*

But He who in His sovereignty has provided redemption for man, has in the same sovereignty been pleased to uphold those who are called "the *elect* angels," and to establish them in holiness beyond the possibility of falling. This blessedness, however, is theirs only in the *new* creation, of which Christ is the Beginning and the Head. Hence, as He is "the Head of the body, the church," so is He, though in another sense, "the Head of all principality and power." He is Head of the church as the body that lives because He lives, her life being *derived* from His through His death and resurrection. Of course, there can never be this link of vital union between Christ and angels, yet His headship of them is no mere figure. (See Eph. i. 10.) It is in Him as Head of the new creation that they *stand*, and thus the fear of falling can never disturb their peace, or distract them in their service, while their blessedness is for ever increased by their fuller knowledge of God as He has revealed Himself in Christ, and their higher place in His new creation.

Therefore, while the word *reconciliation*, as applied to *unfallen* ones, cannot have the same meaning that it has with reference to those who by nature are *sinner*s, yet it expresses a great reality. It declares that such are brought into a nearness to God, and a place of security, which they could not have had simply as creatures apart from Christ as their Head; and it intimates that there are results of the cross of Christ of which we as yet know nothing. For it is but a mention of God's great design that we have here, and that not merely to inform the mind, but to show that the angels, whom some in their vain speculations would make objects of worship (ch. ii. 18), owe their *being* (i. 16) and their *standing* (v. 20) to Him with whom saints are one. W. H. B.

**Ans. C.**—The following lucid note from Blomfield's Greek Testament answers the question concerning Col. i. 20:—"We are not, however, to understand (by 'having made peace,' &c.) any reconciliation of the *angels to God*, but only the restoration of that amity between angels and *men*, which had been interrupted by the fall of man, and which only could be restored by the reconciliation of man to his offended Maker; so that both angels and men might, in virtue of that peace (purchased by the sacrifice of Christ on

the cross), worship God together, as forming one society under one Head." (See Ephes. i. 10; Heb. xii. 22.) A. O. M.

**Editor's Note.**—The subject of this question is very deep, and its study must be approached in deep reverence of soul. We give three replies, different from each other, yet hardly conflicting. We think they are almost wholly reconcilable.

We would only add that in Col. i. 20, where the subject is "reconciliation," and in Eph. i. 10, where it is "gathering together in one," things in heaven and things on earth are the subjects; but in Phil. ii. 10, where it is neither reconciliation nor gathering, mention is made also of "things under the earth," for the Lordship of Christ *must* be owned even by those who are excluded from the reconciliation and the eternal fellowship of glory.

#### ORIGINAL SIN.

**QUESTION 388.**—Is it right, in preaching the Gospel to the unsaved, to tell them they will not be judged for original sin?

**Ans. A.**—It is not right to add any notions, fads, nor speculations to the gospel of the grace of God. Serious mischief may result from it. What is stated in the question is very like making preliminary terms with a sinner, in order that he may believe easily, and without hurting his pride. The Jews required a sign, the Greeks sought after wisdom; nowadays sinful men require that their speculations, reasonings, and scientific objections should be nicely adjusted before they can consent to believe. The cure for it all, and the way to meet it all, is to *preach Christ crucified*. L. D. G.

**Ans. B.**—By original sin we mean the sinfulness of our nature, as descended from Adam, by whose sin, it is said, "death passed upon all men." It is written, "In Adam all die," "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." This condition makes us "children of wrath," *i.e.*, justly liable to the wrath of God. Romans ii. 1-16 shows us God's righteous principles of dealing with man. Transgressions of God's law, or sins, proceed from the inherent sinfulness of our beings. The whole nature of man is judged at the cross, and shown to be utterly unfit for God's holy presence (Romans viii. 3). Therefore, man is seen *already judged* and lost but for God's provision in Christ for those believing. A. O. M.

**Ans. C.**—No; it is entirely without Scripture precedent, and without Scripture instruction. God has left on record six cardinal addresses, or pattern sermons, in the Acts, to instruct us how He wishes to have His Gospel proclaimed under the varied circumstances in which man may be found. Take, for example, one of these, Acts x., the first gospel proclamation to Gentiles. Peter declares God to be the God of Salvation everywhere, and Jesus Christ to be Lord of All. He then declared the divine excellency and moral glory of Jesus of Nazareth, and then His death on the tree. Then His resurrection, the truth of which is so perfectly established. This Jesus is ordained of God to be the Judge of living men and dead men; but in the meantime, through His Name, remission of sins is given to whosoever believes on Him. There is no other way of escaping judgment. "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." J. S.

## THE CHRISTIAN'S OCCUPATION.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY THE LATE HENRY CUMMINS.\*

FIRST PAPER.

THE subject of how we may glorify God, in occupying "the little while," so as to please Him who has redeemed us, is surely one of the most important that can engage the attention of His believing people.

When we remember that the employment of every hour of these short lives of ours is fraught with such solemn issues, that will have their influence upon our eternal destiny, it is well that we should turn every moment to the best possible account, in view of the fact that "none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, THAT HE MIGHT BE LORD, BOTH OF THE DEAD AND LIVING. . . . For we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. . . . So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. xiv.).

Remembering this solemn scripture, let us consider, briefly, some of the teaching given to believers in special connection with the speedy "coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

In John xxi. 22, He said to Peter, "If I will that he (*i.e.*, John) tarry TILL I COME, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me."

We all know that many of the Lord's words having reference to His departure and promised return, are found in this Gospel, and that at its close Peter is told what he might expect from that world which crucified his Master. Whereupon he inquired, "What shall this man (John) do?" This our Lord answered in the words quoted, in which we have the broad range of responsibility resting upon every one of us, as servants of God, to be *individually* walking so as to please Him, in view of the scripture quoted from Rom. xiv. Also, that we should be exercised by such teaching as that found in 1 Peter iv. 1—"Forasmuch then

as Christ hath suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind.

No longer live in the lusts of the flesh, but to the will of God." Also, 1 John ii. 6—"He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." Eph. v. 1—"Be ye therefore imitators of God, as dear children, and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us," &c.

Concerning Him God said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Thus it behoves us to individually "follow" the Lord Jesus Christ, keeping Him before our souls as our example; and we should, like the apostle Paul, "press toward the mark, for the prize of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Making it *the ambition* of our lives (see 2 Cor. v. 9), that "we may be well-pleasing to Him." And this will be just in the measure we "learn of Him," "take His yoke upon us," and "follow in His footsteps." May He create in our souls more concern about our individual walk in the light of His coming, and then shall we be kept from Peter's mistake of being *curious* about the service allotted to others.

2. Another OCCUPATION, "Till He come," is referred to in 1 Cor. xi. 26—"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, shew ye the Lord's death, TILL HE COME."

It is noteworthy that this chapter commences with the exhortation, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them unto you."

There was much in those Corinthian believers that was blameworthy; but it gave joy to the apostle's heart, first to see them baptised (see Acts xviii. 8; 1 Cor. i. 13); then to know that they were gathered together unto the Name of the Lord (1 Cor. i. 2-9; v. 4); then to know that as an assembly of God, they, the Lord's people, on the Lord's day, were gathered around the Lord, at His table, to show forth the Lord's death, in view of the Lord's coming.

This blessed OCCUPATION may not be in accord with popular usage now; for we see those who profess to take God's Word as their guide *occupied* on the Lord's day with ceremonialism, music, preaching, and various

\* This esteemed servant of the Lord laboured for many years, with much acceptance, amongst the assemblies of God's people in the south of England; and fell asleep in the Lord during a visit to assemblies in Scotland in June last.

things which man has devised and tradition handed down to us. But how few, alas! are following the teaching and example set before them in the Scriptures, gathering to "the Name" of our adorable Lord, and keeping His ordinances *as they were delivered to the Church by the risen Lord*, through the apostles, as well as preaching the gospel of His grace to the world. Let us remember that all departure from the precepts and examples given to the Church in the epistles is disobedience, for which God's people will *suffer loss* in time and eternity.

And, oh! let us be careful that we who *profess* to have learnt the principles of truth, associated with the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, do not *turn aside* from Scriptural usages, and give our countenance to any associations which are at variance with His revealed will. Delusive are the pleas which seek to justify, on the ground of expediency, in regard to any form of service, our sanctioning that which is apostasy from God, and disregarding our Lord's will in respect of either of His ordinances. Let it rather be our prayer, "Teach me to do Thy will"; and let it be the business of our lives to "do the will of God from our hearts"; and we shall find that in "keeping His commandments there is great reward."

3. In view of His departure and coming again, our Lord spoke a parable to His disciples (as recorded in Luke xix.), telling them He was going into a far country, to receive a kingdom, and to return. "And He called His ten servants, and delivered unto them ten pounds, and said unto them, OCCUPY TILL I COME." This brings us to the practical consideration of those responsibilities that rest upon us, as SERVANTS of God. We are mostly clear as to the fact that salvation is the gift of God, and not of works; and we hear much of "the true grace of God, in which we stand," and which has given us the spirit of Sonship. But let us not forget that He who has brought us into this eternal relationship also said, "SON, go work to-day in My vineyard"; and THE CLAIMS OF HIS LOVE AND GRACE are ever urging us to consecrate to Him, "as our reasonable service, all we have and are."

At the outset of his Christian career, Paul

said, "LORD, what wilt Thou have me to do?" and toward the close of it he said, "Whose I am, and whom I serve."

Writing *Ichabod* on the things of this earth, Paul said, in Phil. iii., "This one thing I do." And those precious epistles give us some idea of the way he OCCUPIED, "as a steward of the manifold grace of God," labouring night and day, in his blessed Master's service, and "finishing his course with joy." Soon after he wrote those words in 2 Tim. iv.—"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."

Beloved fellow-Christians, are you *occupying* the little while in such a manner that you will not "be ashamed before Him at His coming"? Oh! think of the tremendous issues that accompany every day of our earthly lives—our use of time, talents, money, and all, for which we must give account. Few have *added* to their Master's talent by trading; and many have laid it up in a napkin, and are spending their money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which satisfieth not.

Remember, fellow-saints, there is a day of reckoning coming, and in that glorified body the degrees of effulgence, referred to in 1 Cor. xv. 38-42, will tell of the measure of your faithfulness and mine to the Lord who redeemed us, and whose love should constrain us to "thus judge, that if One died for all, then were all dead: and He died for all, that they who live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them, and rose again" (2 Cor. v. 15). May these words lead to *repentance* on the part of every "slothful servant," and stir us up to "OCCUPY TILL CHRIST COMES."

4. In the same Gospel by Luke we have, in ch. x. 35, an example deduced from the parable of the Good Samaritan, giving us our Lord's thoughts as to some of the OCCUPATION that is becoming to us during His absence.

The narrative teaches us how His grace brought salvation to us when we were lying helpless on the Jericho road to destruction.

That GRACE not only *saves*, but it also *teaches*

us to minister to the need of others who are involved in the same ruin and condemnation as sinners; and, being "delivered from so great a death," are *raised up* (Eph. ii.) and brought to the place where *care* must be bestowed upon them—*i.e.*, the Church of God.

Selfishness makes us indifferent to the necessities of others; and, alas! that this should so much characterise those who profess to follow Him "who pleased not Himself," and "left us an example, that we should follow His steps."

His parting words were, "Take care of him, and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee"; and to this He adds the injunction that we are, like Him, to show mercy to those whom we find "ready to perish" on the road to destruction, manifesting to them the kindness and love of God our Saviour, and telling of His grace that has brought salvation, in accord with Titus ii. 11. It is suggested that the words "*take care*" are synonymous with the injunction in 1 Tim. iii. 5, in respect of those who "*take oversight*" in God's little flock.

The first business of such, as set forth here, also in 1 Pet. v. 1-5, Heb. xiii. 7, 1 Tim. v. 17, Acts xx. 17-32, is to "feed the flock of God, over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers." They are to *lead* and *guide* the people of God, "being ensamples to the flock." They are to "lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees." They are to "comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, and be patient toward all." And we are certain that all such brethren, who have been truly called of God to "take oversight" in His little flock, will be animated by the care that is evidenced in Jacob's words, "The children are tender, and the flocks and herds with young are with me; and if men should overdrive them one day, all the flocks will die."

Alas! that we see so little of this *solicitude* in the conduct of many who *profess* to "take oversight" in "the assemblies of God" in our days. How many have been *stumbled* by the debating of "questions that gender strife"; how many *driven* beyond their knowledge and experience, to their soul's damage.

But, alas! alas! how few do we see around us *evidencing*, by their godly care for weak and sickly saints, and carrying the gospel to

perishing sinners, that spirit which characterised our great Exemplar, and which is so essential to the prosperity of God's Ecclesia.

Such as follow God's "more excellent way" in these matters will be recompensed with "a crown of glory that fadeth not away" when the Chief Shepherd appears; whereas those who have simply *talked* about the work, and assumed the position of overseers in the church, without divine qualifications and without exercised hearts to be *diligent* in this holy business, will then "suffer loss." But,

"How will recompense, His smile,  
The sufferings of this little while."

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## THE COMING DAWN.

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"I write unto you."—1 John ii. 13.

"To have these things always in remembrance."—2 Peter i. 15.

"In the last days perilous times will be present."—2 Tim. iii. 1.

"Be sober, and watch unto prayer."—1 Peter iv. 7.

THE portents of the social and political horizon indicate a coming storm. Only *the few* can read the barometer of this world's atmosphere. The air may be electric, but, the sky being clear, unbelief exclaims, "The storm is not at hand!" From Carmel's mount, but one individual discerned in the far-off distance the cloud no larger than a man's hand, which was gathering strength to spread over the whole heaven and deluge the land with its flood. By the busy crowd it was unnoticed, unheeded. From the peasant to the king, all were alike ignorant that the rain-storm was rapidly approaching. But the man in communion with God read the aspect of the sky, and warned the king of the coming danger, "Prepare and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not."

Only *the few*, those who "have obtained like precious faith," in sympathy with "the mind of the Spirit," can enjoy fellowship in the study of the "sure word of prophecy," a "light shining in a dark place." The majority of believers are content to abide in utter ignorance of the testimony of revelation concerning the return—*parousia*, personal presence—of the Lord Jesus, to receive them unto Himself. As to the fulfilling of "the times of the

Gentiles," the down-treading of Jerusalem, until those times are fulfilled the restoration of the families of Judah and Ephraim to their own land, the setting up of "the Kingdom of the Son of Man" in power and great glory, and the judicial subjugation of all things under His righteous sceptre, to them they are matters new and strange. They have never assayed to read up human history in the light of God's truth; the present is not understood—it seemeth to them very much like a chapter of accidents. They understand not the developing phases of the social and the intellectual, the ecclesiastical and political world around them, because they have never traced out the secret spring whence they issue. They shrink determinately from accepting the prophetic Scriptures which lift the veil and disclose the future.

Time is, however, hurrying us on towards its bourn. The ear, attent already, catches the "sound of His chariot wheels." The conviction strengthens in the minds of those who take sweet counsel together, that "the Lord is at hand." Those instructed in the "Scriptures of truth" can discern "the signs of the times," and are fully persuaded that man's long day of rebellion and hostility to God is about to close in deepening darkness and overwhelming judgments.

For the moment there is a lull; all seems calm and still. It is but the ominous hush that precedes the hurricane storm. The forces of evil, like the apocalyptic "four winds of the earth," are being held in check. For the moment the political horizon may be clear, but clouds are gathering, all dense and dark; already they fringe the social and psychological horizon. The forces now pent up, latent and unheeded, will soon exert their energy, make themselves felt, and sweep all before them. Social conditions will be changed and religious beliefs recast. It is a wondrous age in which our lot has been cast, unique in the history of mankind, an age of culminations and crises, of divergent and antagonistic principles, an age of experiment and theory! Intellectual energy, ever increasing in volume and potency for good or for evil, restless and insatiate in its aspiration, is becoming impatient of restraint, and already is developing lawless self-willedness.

Men in this mood of spirit are seeking rest for themselves in escape from present ill, but they fail to find it, because they seek it in the wrong direction. They seek it *in* themselves and *from* themselves, far away from God. Like the unclean spirit, they wander to and fro through dry places; they seek, but cannot find. Men *will* to be independent of God, to become their own rulers and guides, under the inspiration of developed intellect. Self-sufficient, faithless, trustless, rather than dependent upon the God of the Bible, they deliberately reject their own mercies, and prefer to live without God and without hope. Their lives centre in the present, the seen, the perishing; they are content if only they can "fulfil the desires of the flesh and of the mind"—in other words, the physical and the intellectual. Beyond this natural instinct cannot reach; time and sense limit the aspiration of the unspiritual, the unregenerate.

The effort of the present day is to shunt the God of revelation out of memory, to agnosticate the Most High, to extrude the Creator from His own creation. Men are attempting to set up for themselves, to frame their own laws and establish their own standard of morals. In the apotheosis of intellect, they hope to secure present gratification, the outcome of which they vauntingly call civilisation. In the imagination of the thoughts of their hearts, they vainly attempt to weave the warp and woof of an ideal elysium, a condition of universal abiding peace and plenty, the fabled golden age of classic poets, the anticipated ripened harvest of their own elaborated intellectuality. But as this popular ideal, by which they gild the horizon of the future, hath its origin in man's fecund brain, the "mid-summer-day dream," the mirage of a mind alienated from God, and antagonistic to Him, it is but a myth of the "strong delusion of the last days," the insidious demon-inspired hallucination of agnosticism, which has no basis in truth. It is a condemning, fatal falsity which ignores and rejects everything outlying the cognisance of finite reason. In the "day of the Lord" this ideal, with all men's illogical and fallacious reasonings, will be swept away before the blast of Divine judgment as chaff winnowed from the summer threshing-floor.

Eagle-eyed faith finds its rest in the unseen; its gaze is fixed upon the invisible. The faithful in Christ Jesus, taking their stand upon "the Rock of Ages," look for, and hasten unto, the coming—*parousia*, personal presence—of the Lord Jesus. They have sympathy with the purposes of the Most High—the I AM—because they have been admitted in spirit to the presence chamber of Omniscience. What are the prophecies and promises of Holy Writ if not the expressions of the loving sympathy of Father, Son and Spirit, the outflowings of God's grace in communion with the heirs of glory! From such a standpoint, in harmony of spirit with prophetic revelation, the prescient eye of the believer scans from far, with a calm and steadfast gaze, the horizon of mundane confusions and complications, he takes in the situation and foresees the end!

Time is but the vestibule of the illimitable future of infinite duration. Time issues in an endless, cloudless, eternal day. During the darkness of Time's long night, believers should watch and wait and long for the coming dawn. They know that the destiny of redeemed mankind, as headed up in the man Christ Jesus, will then be evolved; that the inscrutable mysteries, so perplexing and inexplicable in the past, will then be unfolded; that God, their God and Father, will then be vindicated in all His works and ways as to His dealings with the children of men. Amid the enshrouding gloom of the present, beset with peril and difficulty, they should strengthen each other's hands in the Lord, and encourage each other to be of good cheer. They have everything to hope for, nothing to fear. The night may seem long, but the day is at hand. Soon will the true Philosopher, infinitely wiser than Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, or any other deep thinkers; soon will the profound Scientist, distancing immeasurably Huxley, Tyndall, Darwin, and all who have graduated in that school; soon will the most sympathetic Philanthropist, far outshining those lovers of their species, the Howards, the Fays, the Müllers, the Barnardos, the Booths of modern times; soon will the self-sacrificing Jesus, the Nazarene, who "poured out His soul unto death," that He "might put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself," return to this earth, that, in the right of His own heirship, He may take

possession of His heritage, subdue all antagonistic rule and authority, reign in righteousness, and set at rest for ever the vexed questions which have throughout all time been the stumbling-blocks and disquieters of the children of men! He will come for those who, though they saw Him not, believed, accepted Him as their Saviour, loved Him supremely, and lived longing for His return. They shall see His face and be with Him for ever. With them, raised and changed, will He share all that He hath—dominion, throne, power, and glory. In their time-life they renounced themselves, took up their cross to follow Him "all along the pilgrim pathway." At His approaching manifestation He will associate them with Himself, in all the beatitude of the love, the joy, the peace outflowing from His own presence.

If, then, we rightly interpret the Scriptures of Truth, in the exercise of childlike faith, we shall not murmur. Afflictions may abound, strength may seem to be ebbing out, the way so long, so rough, so drear, at times the heart ready to faint, yet must we put a cheerful courage on; the day-star betokens the dawn of coming day—the Lord is at hand! We will not be impatient, neither will we be "envious at the prosperity of the wicked." Watch and ward will we keep for the "little while"—'twill soon be past. At the last trump "the dead shall be raised, and we shall be changed"; "this corruptible shall put on incorruptibility," this "mortal—immortality," so shall we be for ever with the Lord." "Wherefore, having girded up the loins of your mind, being sober, let us hope unto the end for the grace to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

"A little while! Come, Saviour, come!  
For Thee Thy Bride hath waited long.  
Take Thy blood-bought pilgrims home,  
To sing their own eternal song;  
To share Thy glory, and to be  
In everything conformed to Thee."

W. R. V.

It may startle, but will surely bless us, to re-read many scriptures we have been in the habit of applying exclusively to the unsaved, and find how suitable for comfort and warning they are to us who have already passed from death into life.

## GRACE GIVEN TO PREACH CHRIST.

“WHERE sin abounded grace did much more abound” (Rom. vi.) is the testimony of each one redeemed by precious blood, and grace is a theme of which we never weary here and of which we shall never tire in heaven. It is to the grace of God that we owe every blessing we have enjoyed in the past, that we are receiving at the present moment, and will receive in our future upon earth or in eternity. This being the case we should surely prayerfully and carefully ponder every scripture upon the subject of grace, and in doing so we shall be helped towards what we all long for—lower thoughts of ourselves and higher thoughts of God.

While never forgetting what grace has *done for us*, it is important we should equally bear in mind that the same grace should *lead us to do something* in return. In Titus ii. 12 grace is spoken of as a teacher, and in the same verse we find plainly stated some of the things it would teach us. Let us read the verse as in the presence of God, and then ask ourselves if, during the last twelve months, we have made any real progress in lesson number one. In what measure have we denied ungodliness and worldly lusts?

We have often told the little ones that to be ungodly is to be “unlike God”; and it may be well to inquire how far *we* are like God in even one particular. God is love, and His love *led Him to a sacrifice* that it will take eternity for us to understand in its depths and fulness. What has *our* love for the sinning, groaning, dying, and perishing world around led us to sacrifice? Is it not a sad fact that often the time, talents, and means of the redeemed are spent as if they had never known the grace of God at all, and as if heaven and hell were but dreams instead of facts as certain as the existence of the earth upon which we have been placed to spend a little time? Where is the denial of the worldly lusts of ease, self-pleasing, and covetousness, in order that sinners hurrying to the lake of fire may be warned of their danger and pointed to the Lamb of God?

An appearance of zeal at the weekly Gospel meeting may pass muster amongst Christians; but will this stand the fiery test of the judgment-seat of Christ? Don't let us forget, brethren,

that we must ALL stand before that judgment-seat, and who can tell how much loss we may then suffer for the APPALLING APATHY that seems to prevail in many quarters concerning the fate of the unsaved around us, and of the millions who have never yet heard of the grace that has done so much for ourselves.

“To me is this grace given, *that I should preach* amongst the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Eph. iii. 8) wrote the apostle Paul; and may we not say that for this purpose grace has been given to us too? O let us not “receive the grace of God in vain” (2 Cor. vi. 1). “Now is the accepted time,” in which God is putting forth His hand to save; but to how many have *we* carried the story of love during the last twelve months? It would be well if we contrasted with the efforts put forth to win souls the efforts made to “get on in the world” and to please self. May the Lord Himself awaken us to see that, with all our learning, we have as yet learned but little of the teachings of grace.

How often have we delighted in the heart-stirring words of 2 Cor. viii. 9: “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, *though He was rich*, yet for *your* sakes He became poor, that *ye* through His poverty might be rich.” He left a position, the glory of which it is impossible for us to imagine, and for years was poorer than the foxes of the earth and the birds of the air, for He had not where to lay His head. We thank Him for it from our souls, but in what measure do we seek to *imitate His example*? How many of us have sacrificed anything at all for those for whom Christ left heaven and died?

Brethren, the time is too short for us *to play* at working for God. The Lord is at hand, and then comes eternity! What if we have to wear “the starless crown”? Shall we not earnestly pray for a mighty revival of early love and zeal in our own hearts and in the hearts of all the people of God? When the prayer is answered we may then expect to find men willing to leave all in order to preach Christ, not only to sinners around, but to those in the dark regions beyond. Then those who remain at home will willingly follow the sent ones with their prayers, and help on the work in every possible way.

While seeking to follow in the footsteps of

the early saints, with regard to Church order, let us not forget that these same saints "went everywhere preaching the Word," and that their labours were used by the Lord to the conversion of souls. Let us not wait to imitate their example until the Lord allows a persecution that shall send us to the ends of the earth whether we desire it or not.

Let us thank God for every child of His who seeks to preach Christ, or to bear up and help in any way those who do so; but let us not be satisfied until there is amongst us that standing fast "in *one spirit* with *one mind* striving *together* for the faith of the Gospel" that Paul desired to see at Philippi. The grace that sufficed for these saints is sufficient for us, and may the Lord of the harvest lay upon each of our hearts the solemn burden, "Woe is me, if I preach not the Gospel" (1 Cor. ix. 16).

How many of those who read this paper if asked by the Master, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" will reply from hearts full of gratitude for His exceeding grace, "Here am I, send me"? WM. H. S.

PERSONAL TYPES OF CHRIST.—IV.

AARON.

OUR Lord Jesus is both *Priest and High Priest*. As the former, He stands alone, and is the antitype of Melchisedek; as the latter, He is associated with His people, and is the substance which the Aaronic priesthood prefigured. The Melchisedek type has especially, though not exclusively, to do with the *earthly* people; the Levitical, pointed forward to service *in heaven*. The first gives us a Divine priest ministering on earth; the second tells of a human priest officiating in heaven. Taken both together, we have priesthood fully unfolded.

It is evident that a general analogy exists between Christ's present service and that of the high priest under the law. We will look first of all at

POINTS OF RESEMBLANCE,

and then at points of contrast.

I. *Aaron was chosen from among men*. Read Heb. v. 1-3. These words refer primarily to Aaron, but in general they are true of our High Priest. Verse 3, as is proved later

on in the epistle, in no sense applies to Christ. The Holy Spirit, here, aims to show that everything that was excellent under the old covenant has been preserved to us in Christ, and that we have much now that was never known under the law. Was Aaron a man among men? The Son of God became *a man*, not an angel. Therefore, He can have fellow-feeling with us *men* (see chap. ii. 16-18). Centuries before Christ came one is heard, almost despairingly, voicing the need of human nature. His language is, "Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both" (Job ix. 33). How blessedly does the Lord Jesus answer to this description! In His Melchisedek character He lays His hand on Jehovah without sully His glory; as the antitype of Aaron, He lays His hand on man, and does not destroy him. Christ in all things was made like unto His brethren. Let us hold and joy in the blessed fact that our High Priest is *a real man*; as truly man as ourselves, as anyone we know. He has gone through all the experiences of infancy, boyhood, and manhood; He breathed the same air, He ate like food, He trod our earth; He grew weary, He thirsted, He was tested as we are. As a man He had everything in common with us, *sin excepted*. And when we say this, do not imagine that it means that He became man with one important exception. For sin is not an essential part of human nature; one may be a true man without having a sinful nature, and such was Christ.

II. A priest must be

APPOINTED BY GOD.

Every Jew knew this. The nation had been taught it in a way they could never forget. As a result of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram seeking to take this honour to themselves, they brought death and destruction on themselves and families, and on thousands in Israel (Num. xvi.). All this emphasised and confirmed the call and appointment of Aaron. And now the writer of this epistle proves to them, from their own scriptures, that the Son of God had been constituted a Priest by Jehovah Himself. Christ had not presumptuously taken this office to Himself, but He was called and appointed by God (chap. v. 4-10).

We will now look at several points in which Christ's Priesthood is

INFINITELY SUPERIOR TO THAT OF AARON.

(1) The Lord Jesus was made a Priest *by the oath of Jehovah* (chap. vii. 20-22). This tells out the solemnity, certainty, and unchangeableness of this appointment of Christ. The things they had left were imperfect, transitory, and limited to one nation; the new system of priesthood was perfect, for all time, and for believers from among all nations.

(2) *The Levitical priests were many.* They were subject to death, therefore it was constantly passing from one to another. I have seen it estimated that there were more than eighty high priests between the days of Aaron and the destruction of Jerusalem. Christ, on the other hand, is alive for evermore; death will never cause Him to vacate His office. His priestly work is continuously carried on, and it is untransferable. Thence, He is able to save *perfectly*—at all times, in all circumstances—those coming to God by Him. What joy and strength it brings when we realise that there is an *unfinished work* of Christ as well as a finished! The One who died for our sins, and was raised again, is now at the right hand of God, and *maketh intercession for us.* Every feeble, tempted believer may hear the voice of the Shepherd saying, "*I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not*" (Luke xxii. 32). He is there as the Advocate to meet all the accusations (true or false) of the great enemy. He is there to wash us from all the defilements we daily contract. He is there that in our approaches to God we may be acceptable. From our intercessions, prayers, and thanksgivings, He purges away aught of creature stain attaching to them; and in place thereof He adds the sweet savour of His own glorious person and perfect work. But we must pass on.

(3) Aaron was a *sinner*, and needed to offer sacrifices for himself as well as for the people. As a sinful one he was subject to infirmity; and this very fact, in a measure, unfitted him for his priestly work. But of Christ, it was witnessed that He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." Thus have we displayed His perfections as man; what He was before God (holy), what He was

before men (harmless); His perfection negatively (undefiled), and positively (separate from sinners). Two things follow from this—first, He is able to become the sacrifice as well as the Priest; second, He is able to perfectly sympathise with all His people. Sin is imperfection; I know it is more than that, but it is that.

ONLY IN THE PERFECTLY SINLESS ONE CAN BE FOUND PERFECT SYMPATHY.

Sympathy is not connected with sin, but with suffering or resisting of sin. That sympathy our Lord Jesus can give to all His suffering and tempted people at all times. If we sin, we find in Him *pity*—infinite pity. May we know much more of the sympathy of Him who was tempted, and who *suffered being tempted* (chap. ii. 16-18; iv. 14-16).

(4) Aaron was *only a priest*, and the sacrifices he offered *could not truly put away sin.* In Christ we have Priest, Sacrifice, and Altar. Under the law sin was never a settled question; the numberless sacrifices, repeatedly offered, could never atone for one sin. Christ's sacrifice is of such infinite and eternal value that for all who believe on Him the sin question is for ever settled. "For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (chap. x. 14). Glorious, soul-emancipating words! May we know more of their fulness!

(5) Aaron's priesthood was *of the earth.* Christ's is carried on *in heaven* (read chap. viii. 1-5). Here the climax is reached: "We have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." Our Lord's work as Priest commenced\* at the Cross; but *its crowning*

\*NOTE.—I am aware that many hold that our Lord's priestly work only commenced when He took His place at the right hand of God. This view I held for several years; but having occasion to look more closely into the matter, I came to the conclusion as stated above. And as it is not a matter of paramount importance, or one in which all might be interested, I give in a note several reasons for so judging. (a) Our Lord Himself seems to emphasise the fact that His death was to be a "lifting up out of the earth" (John xii. 32, Greek). That this primarily refers to His death the next verse proves. It is a striking expression; the full significance of it I do not attempt to bring out. But from it we may infer that, admitting that priestly work began at the Cross, it would not be accurate to say it began *on earth.* (b) But the very word *sacrifice* involves the thought of a priest, as naturally as the word *mother* suggests the thought of a child. A priest, among other things, is one who offers sacrifices. How very careful Jehovah was, under the law, that priests should offer the sacrifices. And shall *the one sacrifice*, of which all others were but types, shall it be offered by one who is *not* a priest? (see Heb. ix. 14). (c) As we have already stated, the Epistle to the Hebrews has in view Christ's sacrifice and priestly

act was when, on the ground of His own blood-shedding, "He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption" (chap. ix. 12). Into the earthly holy of holies Christ could not have entered (chap. vii. 12-14), but He has entered into the place above of which the earthly things were but *shadows* and *figures*.

The Epistle to the Hebrews brings before us *Christ* as the substance of which the great day of atonement in Israel was but the shadow. It is important to see the designed limitation of this epistle; it is not a full exposition of Christ's priestly work, but an unfolding of it in several of its most important aspects. Christ, here, is ever seen to be *sitting* at the right hand of God. And this tells out that a perfect and eternal satisfaction for sin has been made. Aaron never could sit in the holy of holies, because the question of sin was never fully settled. And thus our Lord is ever there to *represent* His people, to bear us on His heart; as one still with us so sweetly sings—

"In heaven His blood for ever speaks  
In God the Father's ear;  
His Church, as jewels on His heart,  
Jesus will ever bear."

This fact (that our Lord is seen *sitting* in heaven) does not contradict the further truth that He also, as our High Priest, daily stands and ministers at the golden altar. He is ever there as the One through whom we can draw near to God. And we ever need Him. So we further sing—

"The veil is rent : lo ! Jesus stands  
Before the throne of grace ;  
And clouds of incense from His hands  
Fill all that glorious place."

The more we know of God's holiness, and

work as the antitype to the yearly day of atonement in Israel. Turning to the account of the transactions of that day, we may learn something on the point before us. We read of two sin-offerings being offered, and of Aaron twice entering with the blood within the veil. The one offering was for himself and his house, the other was for the people. Notice that in each instance Aaron's work commenced *with the slaying of the sacrifice* (Lev. xvi. 11-15). So, we believe, it was in the work of the great antitype. (d) As priest, a service is ascribed to Christ, which was accomplished by His death (Heb. ii. 17, R.V.); *i.e.*, He made *propitiation*, or rendered satisfaction to Divine justice in respect to sins. To interpret this as referring to a service Christ is now accomplishing is, in my judgment, to terribly whittle down the force of the word *propitiation*. As far as I read the New Testament, it only knows of one propitiation—the propitiation effected by the Redeemer when He was hanging on the Cross. With these considerations before us, our conclusion is that Christ's priestly work began when, as a willing sacrifice, He offered Himself, without spot, unto God.

of our own sinfulness, the more thankful shall we be for One who bears "the iniquity of our *holy things*" (Exodus xxviii. 38). And as the One who ministers at the golden altar, He is dependent on His people on earth to supply Him with material wherewith to carry on that service. Let us daily, then, bring Him our prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, and worship, that, mingled with the incense of His peerless person and perfect work, they may ascend unto our God and Father as a sweet-smelling savour. But to come to another point.

(6) *Aaron entered into the holy of holies alone*; no one else dared follow. But Christ is there

AS OUR FORERUNNER.

As John the Baptist came as the forerunner of the Lord, to prepare His way and herald His coming, so our Lord has entered within the veil to open up the way for all His people, and to announce our speedy approach. Christ's enthronement is faith's God-given assurance that soon we shall be there *with* Him, as we are now there *in* Him.

"For this we shall find, for such is His mind,  
He'll not be in glory and leave us behind."

And even now the veil is rent, and at all times it is our privilege, in spirit, to enter into the holiest through the blood of Jesus. What a privilege! To approach into the very presence of God! Every barrier removed, the word now is: "Let us draw near." May we more and more avail ourselves of such an unspeakable privilege.

All this dispensation is the antitype of the great day of atonement of old. Our High Priest has entered into the holy of holies, and we wait for Him to come forth and bless His people. But we wait with no uncertainty; we have no question as to whether the sacrifice has been accepted. The Holy Spirit has come; He dwells in us, and He is the witness to us of Christ's acceptance, *and of our acceptance in Him*. And now our hearts are longing for Himself. We wait for Him to rise up from off the throne, to take us to be for ever with Him. Surely, as we contemplate our Priest in heaven, the word thrills our souls—"UNTO THEM THAT LOOK FOR HIM SHALL HE APPEAR THE SECOND TIME WITHOUT SIN UNTO SALVATION."  
J. N. C.

## The Seven Churches of Revelation.

## III. PERGAMOS ("MARRIAGE").

THE storm at last was hushed to peace :  
One came to power who caused to cease

The persecution that so long  
Had raged against the little throng  
Of Jesus' followers, and had made  
Them seek the catacombs' dark shade.  
'Tis said the Emperor Constantine  
Did to the ways of truth incline ;  
Again, that men at length were tired  
Of cruel deeds by hell inspired.  
Both may be true ; but surely *He*  
Who holds in check the mighty sea,  
Who to its proud waves gives command,  
And binds them with a chain of sand ;  
Who their wild fury doth control,  
Thus far no further may they roll ;  
He who can make men's wrathful ways  
Subservient even to His praise,  
And the remainder then restrain,  
As clouds are sealed up after rain :  
'Twas *He* who stayed the fiery tide,  
And gave them peace on every side ;  
Who brought their sufferings to an end,  
And made the emperor their friend.

It was a changed scene indeed,  
And pagans soon embraced the creed  
Of Christians, hoping to obtain  
Imperial favour, and to gain  
By that emolument and power,  
With gifts of gold and silver dower.  
Such sought communion with *the few*  
Who scarce as yet believed it true  
That rest had come ; they almost seemed  
To walk about as men that dreamed.  
Some of them even thought that they  
Had lived to see the Dawn of Day.  
That Day which oft in sorrow's night  
Glad hope had brought before their sight,  
When Jesus should return again  
With all His saints o'er earth to reign.

'Twas but a dream of guilty sleep,  
They failed a godly watch to keep ;  
They who the worldling's frown had braved,  
Were by the world's embrace enslaved ;  
For there were those like him of old  
Who dearly loved rewards of gold.  
They held the doctrine Balaam taught,

A deadly lie with sorrow fraught ;  
Those sheep-like wolves an entrance gained  
By subtile words and manners feigned,  
Till many in the church found place,  
Who never knew God's saving grace.

Alas ! that she, the spotless bride,  
Should to the world have turned aside ;  
Forgetful of her heavenly birth,  
To seek her glory from the earth.  
The world had wooed and won her heart ;  
Imperial Rome now took her part,  
And quickly changed her pilgrim dress  
For royal robes of costliness.  
And as year after year went by,  
She still increased in majesty ;  
Until at last in splendour seen,  
She sat enthroned, the world's proud queen.  
And since that marriage knot was tied,  
The church and world walk side by side ;  
She bowing at his golden shrine,  
He drinking her bewitching wine ;  
And fondly dreaming all is well,  
Though on the downward path to hell.

But some there were who overcame,  
Confessing nobly Jesus' name ;  
Whose works of faith and love shone bright,  
Amid the sadly waning light.  
Such were content to follow on  
The narrow path, though faint and lone.  
To them the Lord spoke words of cheer,  
For theirs was still the open ear.  
Ofttimes in secret did they eat  
God's Word, "the hidden manna" sweet.  
His promise was a pure white stone,  
With an engraving known alone  
To the receiver—a new name  
Emblazoned with eternal fame.  
Renouncing thus earth's gaudy toys,  
For them awaited endless joys.  
Those were the loyal and the true,  
Though but a feeble band and few.  
May we with such be faithful found,  
Like them in works of faith abound.

A. W. P. S.

WE must "hear the other side" to prevent wrong judgment concerning our brethren on the affairs of life ; but we must never forget there can be *no other side* when God has spoken in any matter.

## "OBTAINED."

A WORD MINISTERED AT THE LORD'S TABLE.

(Heb. ix. 11, 12; ii. 9; i. 3, 4.)

THE thought before us in these verses is one. They bring out what the Lord Jesus obtained, how He obtained it, and what we obtain through what He hath won for us; for He shareth with His own what He hath obtained, giveth us with Himself joint-heirship. We are "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."

In chap. ix. we get a comparison between the value and effect of the sacrifices of old, and the value and effect of the sacrifice of Christ. They wrought certain things, purifying for a time. "If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience," once and for ever? for it tells us there that the Lord Jesus hath, by the offering up of Himself, "obtained *eternal* redemption." "For us," you notice, is added—it is perfectly true, but not there—perfectly true; but the thought is not the personal application of the atonement, but the act itself. Now, I want you to notice the word "*obtained*," and to dwell upon its use, that our hearts may be stirred this morning to think of what that blessed One has done. Casually reading it, we might say that He obtained as a gift from God eternal redemption, that He interceded with, besought God to give a certain thing; but not so, nor did the Lord Jesus obtain it from God as though He wrung from God something for us. Oh, the false views of God which make Him seem *unwilling* to be propitious! The Lord Jesus could do nothing of Himself, for even in regard to the laying down of His life He says, "I and My Father are one" in eternal counsel that it should be done. So "*obtained*" is not used in the sense of *getting*, but of winning by title the right unto redemption. And this is brought out in chap. i. 4, "Being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." Let us ponder this in connection with that which has already been

said. What inheritance hath He won? In what sense is it said that He has obtained a better portion than the angels? Is it not again in connection with purging? "When He had by Himself purged our sins" (verse 3). He did not obtain it, again I say, by a life of devotion, or wring an unwilling gift from God for us; but, by the carrying out of salvation's conditions, He obtained by death the inheritance. Christ has "entered once into the holy place," having won by His death an eternal inheritance. Now, compare that again with what we get in chap. ii., "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death *on account* of every man," not "*for* every man," as if He died in substitutionary fashion for every man, but that unto every man might salvation be made known, proffered to every man. "Crowned with glory and honour," *because* He suffered unto death, this is the title of eternal redemption, the eternal inheritance He obtained was purchased on the cross.

Now, is it any wonder that the Lord causes to run throughout Scripture references to this, that from first to last the one theme is the Lamb slain; in type and shadow, in prophecy and history, the Lamb slain is always brought before us. People may try to touch men's minds with wondrous pictures, to touch their feelings with wondrous tales, but nothing will move us truly but the Lamb slain for us.

And God in wisdom has instituted this feast in order that we may constantly be stirred to true worship; and God has prepared the hearts of His people that have come in to worship Him, by leading them to that which is His great work. This is the leading cause of all true affection and worship. Neglect the Lord's table, and you take away one of the motive powers to serve God properly; neglect the memorial of the dying love of the Lord Jesus, and you leave your soul starving, feeding on itself instead of on Christ. God will not have His people neglect His table with impunity. This feast is an all-wise provision for us to remind us what brings us together. And this does not lift us up; instead of lifting up, it is a most deeply humbling act of worship, it puts us in our place, and exalts Him before our eyes. Let me

speak a word of loving caution: it is a day when men think to put aside God's ordinances which He has ordained for the nutriment of His own. Let us remember that God foresaw what was good and best for His own; and those who sit at the Lord's table and feed on the God-provided food, shall be strong and fruitful for God, shall be like trees planted by the rivers of water, that bring forth their fruit in their season, and whose leaves do not wither, and not like the heath in the wilderness which is in parched places. If we are striking our roots deep down into the soil of the grace of God, we shall send upspreading branches, bearing fruit such as God loveth. Oh! never turn aside from the all-wise provision of God for His people, and never think that because the world's days are changed, the laws of the all-wise God are changed. Has He not foreseen what would take place, what the vanity of man would lead to, to his setting up laws in order to meet the popular demand, and that they may sway the people. My friends, they little know that God alone can truly sway hearts, and the hearts which are God-swayed cannot be moved, but the hearts that are man-swayed are like reeds shaken by the wind. Oh! God give us to say from our hearts, "We own allegiance to one Lord." Hezekiah was called the captain of the Lord's people; so Christ is the Captain of His people, and it were secret rebellion, secret dissatisfaction to *think* even to go from His revealed will. Let us dare to stand against the world, ready to do whatever is His will, and remember His foreseeing wisdom has provided for us that which leads our hearts God-ward. And as we see the virtue of the cross in removing sin and bringing nigh to God in an everlasting covenant, as these things come afresh before us, let us see that this is a God-provided reminder as well as God-provided nutriment; that we may be kept during the time we bide down here faithful and grateful to Him, lest Satan lead us into by-paths.

May He teach us this, for Christ's sake!

GOD will never prosper the attempt to establish one truth by trampling under foot another. Every word of God is pure.

## BITTER THINGS MADE SWEET.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS ON EXODUS XV. 25-27, BY  
 THE LATE HENRY GROVES, OF KENDAL.

**H**OW soon our songs turn to murmuring if we are not watchful of ourselves before God. This chapter began with a song, and I have noticed that we do not get another song for about forty years, till they came to the well whereof God spake unto Moses: "Then Israel sang this song, Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it," &c. (Num. xxi. 17).

Murmuring killed their song all the journey through. May we be careful that murmuring kills not our songs, and robs not our God. If the heart goes not up to God in song and praise (not with the lips merely), even when we come to Marah, there is something wrong. Every one can sing when the waters are sweet. Many of us have pitiful experiences of what Marah has proved to us in years gone by. Have we had any Marahs? If so, has God got out of our Marahs a song or murmuring? May God comfort our hearts with the remembrance that we have the Cross of Christ to put into every bitter thing; and every bitter thing is made sweet when the Cross is put into it. "Whom ye slew and hanged upon a tree" (Acts v. 30). May our hearts have wisdom to know what the tree is, that so we may bring the Cross of Christ into our Marah circumstances, and find them turned into a fruitful source of joy, thanksgiving, and praise. You were praying for some sick one as I entered the meeting. God can make some of His sweetest flowers to grow on the sick-bed. If we are called in God's providence to lie on sick-beds, may they be beds fragrant with the perfume of our God. Such fruits and flowers don't grow in heaven; they are exotics. Patience cannot grow in heaven, but it can grow down here. It grows slowly; but how precious and fragrant to God is that little plant of patience. This is a grace that angels know nothing of. It is for us to know the power that brings light out of darkness, sweetness out of bitterness.

What we want is demonstration from God by the Holy Ghost making real to our souls day by day what Christ on the Cross has accomplished for us, that we may rejoice in

Him. By Christ and His work we stand, but if God by the Holy Ghost does not inwork that work in us, it is to us as if it had not been. God wants reality in His people. And pray God that we may be helped not to boast of the position in which we are through grace, but to seek to realise that condition of soul which makes that position a reality. How confidently we talk of heavenly places. Are you living there, fellow-Christian? We are apt to boast in things which we have never laid hold on. Nevertheless, *we are* in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; but, do we know it by and in the power of the Holy Ghost? If we do not, we have only learned half our lesson.

26th verse—"And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee." What we have here is the blessed result of continued obedience. A great many of God's children carry with them the botches of Egypt. Have we got the stamp of Egypt that speaks of something wrong? A great many of God's children carry Egypt's diseases with them through the wilderness. "I am the Lord that healeth thee." Most precious is this revelation of God at the very beginning of Israel's wilderness history and wanderings. How does God reveal Himself? Not in judgment, but as "Jehovah Rophi," "I am God thy healer." And so we read in that precious prophecy of Hosea—the backslider's prophecy—"I will heal their backsliding." If there is mercy that heals the guilt of our sinful deeds, it is double mercy that heals the diseases of our backsliding souls. I have been struck in reading Psalm cvi. What is the psalm about? It is one continual record of backsliding. Some of our sweetest remembrances of God in heaven shall be the record of God's healing of our backsliding souls.

May God make backsliding very terrible, and may we seek help from Him, that He may heal our backslidings as He may see needful.

OFTENTIMES we make most haste by going slow. To "*run with patience*" is the way to attain.

## THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE.

EVERYONE who has the fear of God in the heart will at once acknowledge that the authority of the sacred Scriptures is *absolute*; that from them there is no appeal; that they are as binding upon us as though we heard the voice of the Most High speaking to us individually. The Book of God stands supreme above all other books. If we take up the books of men who have written on the things of God, we may admire them and gain much help from them; but as we read we feel we have to *weigh* all that even the wisest men have written, and are at liberty to dissent from their conclusions. We are conscious that we have a *standard*, and whatever does not, in our judgment, fully correspond with it, we cannot receive, though we may leave some things for further consideration.

Not thus does the humble believer deal with the Word of the Living God. There is but one attitude that is becoming either to the youngest or the most advanced believer in dealing with Scripture—that is the attitude of the youth Samuel, whom the aged Eli taught to say, "*Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.*" Let us take up the Bible in this spirit, and we shall hear God speaking, and shall know His voice.

No one could with the mere voice of authority, or by subtle questioning, command an utterance from the Christ of God—the Living Word; but when the ear of the contrite and lowly was open He could not be silent. When the Pharisees demanded His authority for what He did, He refused to answer; when they sought to entrap Him He silenced their questionings, and then by one question put them to confusion. When Pilate presumed to sit in judgment upon Him, He answered him not a word; and Herod, who gladly caught at an apparent opportunity to satisfy his curiosity, was met with the same silence. But Mary at the feet of Jesus had only to sit and listen while He poured forth words of heavenly wisdom; the woman "who was a sinner" received at His feet the words that assured her of forgiveness and gave peace to her soul; and numbers untold who came in need and in faith heard His voice and were filled with gladness. In like manner, as one

has said, "this 'Book of books' withhold its secrets from the proud and the hostile; while to the loving spirit it becomes as the body of heaven in its clearness."

The truth of the pre-eminence of Scripture is being much assailed, and on every hand men who profess to be Christian teachers are affirming that we are to treat the Book of God as we do other books, and bring it to the bar of human judgment. As a natural consequence they find it full of difficulties, for it refuses to yield up to them its treasures of wisdom. That which is a well-furnished table to the hungry becomes a trap to the self-conceited, for "He taketh the wise in their own craftiness." Shall the saints of God be troubled because the wise and prudent of this world find nothing but difficulties in the Scriptures? Should not the fact rather remind us of the words of the Lord Jesus: "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes?" Moses lays down a great principle for our guidance in dealing with Scripture when he says, "Things which are revealed belong unto us, . . . that we may do all the words of this law"; and the Lord Jesus adds the assurance, "If any man desireth to do His will he shall know of the teaching."

We are all familiar with the fact that the psalmist often speaks of the Scriptures generally as "the law of the Lord"; but why is this term used? Is it not to make prominent the very point on which we are dwelling—the *authority* of Scripture? It is not that we have simply a book of commandments, but rather that all Scripture, and every separate portion thereof, comes to us as a voice from the eternal throne, commanding the reverent attention of those to whom God in His grace is pleased to speak. Every revelation of Himself which He deigns to give, demands our faith; and the slightest intimation of His will is a claim on our obedience. He who walks with God waits not for a decided *command*; his spirit is rather that of David's mighty men who, hearing him express a wish, risked their lives to fulfil it.

To the one who owns the absolute authority of Scripture, there are no such things as *essentials* and *non-essentials*. There are truths which are of *supreme* importance—the funda-

mental verities of the Gospel of God; and there are other truths which may be regarded as *comparatively* of secondary consideration. But no one who is taught of God will call any truth non-essential, or be content without seeking to learn the whole will of God, and to yield obedience to it. The Lord Jesus distinctly asserted that "judgment, mercy, and faith" were "*weightier* matters of the law" than the tithing of "mint and anise and cumin." And yet He does not say that the latter was of no consequence, but, "These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

Those who bring the Book of God down to the level of other books, or put any other book or any human tradition by the side of it, make it void. It is well therefore if this growing practice of the present day affects us as it did the psalmist. Having poured out his complaint—"They have made void Thy law"—he adds, "*Therefore* I love Thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold. *Therefore* I esteem all Thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way."

W. H. B.

#### NEED FORGOTTEN.

AN old saint, in deep distress, knelt down to tell her wants to God, but remembered so many blessings to give thanks for, that she quite forgot her present need. The causes for abundant thanksgiving are more than the occasions for prayer.

P. H.

#### ONE OBJECT.

WHEN we have none to please but ONE, the path becomes plain; perplexing questions are solved, the proper means to attain our ends are within sight, and anxious thought becomes a thing of the past.

### Correspondence.

To the Editor of *The Witness*.

#### "MAN OF GOD."

WE frequently hear and, in papers, intelligence, and correspondence, we frequently read of "A man of God," "Men of God," and the propriety of so freely using the term may be questioned. The terms, "The people of God," "The children of God," "The saints of God," are comprehensive and general; but an examination of the subject will show that the term, "Man of God," is limited, individual, and special. Very few, indeed, however devoted or believing

Christian men, are entitled to be so described. The term, "Man of God," is at once definite and special. A "man of God" is God's man for an emergency, a crisis, a dispensational work, or for a definite testimony. Let us examine the subject as we find it in the records of the Old and the New Testaments. Moses, whose distinct and special place in the purposes of God needs neither proof nor comment, was referred to as "Moses, the man of God," in Deut. xxxiii. 1, Joshua xiv. 6, 1 Chron. xxiii. 14. The angel of the Lord who appeared unto Manoah and his wife was regarded by them as a "man of God" (Judges xiii.). It was not a priest nor a prophet that was sent to Eli, but "a man of God, who said unto Him, Thus saith the Lord" (1 Sam. ii. 27). Samuel was recognised as a "man of God" in connection with the anointing Saul king of Israel (1 Sam. ix. 6-16). At the revolt of the ten tribes in Rehoboam's day, "the word of God came to Shemaiah, the man of God" (1 Kings xii. 22). Again, in the days of Rehoboam, "there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the Lord" (1 Kings xiii. 1). The widow of Zarephath acknowledged, and not without reason, that Elijah was a "man of God"; "O thou man of God" (1 Kings xvii. 18-24, also 2 Kings i. 9, 11, 13). When Benhadad besieged Samaria, a "prophet" was first sent to Ahab; but, "at the return of the year, there came a man of God and spake unto the king of Israel" (1 Kings xx. 13 to 28). Elisha is the "man of God" in 2 Kings iv., v. 14-20, vi. 10, vii., viii. David, also, is so written of in 2 Chron. viii. 14, Neh. xii. 24-36. In Amaziah's time "there came a man of God to him" (2 Chron. xxv.).

In most of the foregoing instances the man who was sent was a special man, sent for a special object or purpose; and none of these instances afford a plea, nor a justification, for the too free use of the term, "Man of God," in Christendom, in the present day and generation. We have had some remarkable "missionaries," such as Dr. Judson, of the first Burman mission, and Dr. Moffatt, in Africa (both "reformers," like Luther and others); but it is necessary, even in their case, to pause before giving the specially distinctive title, "Man of God." In the New Testament there is only *one* man who is addressed as a "man of God," namely, Timothy; and, though he was a young man, the whole contents of the two letters that were written to him by Paul mark him out as a dispensational man. He was left at Ephesus for a special purpose (1 Tim. i. 3-18, ii., iii. 14, iv. 11-16, v. 21, and vi. 11-13, &c.). "But thou, O man of God," is specially significant and appropriate when all the foregoing verses are studied. But *who* in our day and generation is entitled to be so addressed and spoken of? In his second letter to Timothy, Paul anticipates the time when Timothy will have been removed from the scene, and counsels him to "commit to faithful men" the things which he had heard from Paul, that "they may be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. ii. 1, 2). But he also looks forward, in the first letter, to "the latter times," and, in the second letter, to "the last days, when perilous times would come." He warns and instructs concerning all this, and, when urging him to "continue in the things which he had learned, and had been assured of knowing of whom he had learned them," he reminds him that he

has "known the holy or sacred writings from his childhood, and that they are able to make wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus; and that every writing, divinely inspired, is profitable for doctrine, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

At first sight it seems as if the term, "Man of God," in this verse, 2 Tim. iii. 17, had a more general range of application; but, taking the matter altogether, the one epistle with the other, with the fact that Timothy is the *only* man, in the records of the New Testament, who is addressed as a "man of God," the title seems to be limited to *him*, while the exhortations and instructions may extend to all of us.

Perhaps this examination of the subject may be interesting and helpful to some who desire to be careful not to use scripture terms too freely, nor apply to fellow-Christians, however devoted in life or service, a title so distinctive and significant as the "man of God."

L. D. G.

## Questions and Answers.

We desire to express our thanks to all who have sent answers. We again urge the importance of replies being *short*; it is essential, in this particular line of things, to be *concise*. We shall greatly value remembrance in prayer that special wisdom and grace may be given for this service. THE EDITOR.

### Replies are invited to the following :—

Where and what is Paradise? Compare Luke xxiii. 43, Rom. x. 7, and Eph. iv. 9, with 2 Cor. xii. 4.

In comparing Matthew xvii. 28 with Mark xv. 17 and John xix. 5, in one we get a "scarlet robe," in the others "purple." Why the difference?

Does the Sunday-school system (including Bible classes) rest upon any Scriptural principle? Because, if not, it would seem to be chargeable with being one of the questionable expedients of modernism.

Does the apostle Paul express disapproval of the sectarian spirit in *all* the four parties named in the twelfth verse of 1st chapter of 1 Corinthians, or only of that in the three first named, who said they were "of Paul," "of Apollos," and of "Cephas"? or, in other words, Did those err also who said they were "of Christ"; and, if so, explain how?

### THE VINEYARD LABOURER.

QUESTION 389.—What is the teaching of the labourers in the vineyard, they all having received the same for their labour? (Matt. xx.)

Ans. A.—The *parable* of the labourers in the vineyard (Matt. xx.) illustrates grace as giving, not according to man's estimate, but out of its own fullness. Each labourer received a day's wage, each had enough for his day's need. A generous heart would rejoice in such a gracious way of dealing; a *legal* heart complains. *The Lord* teaches us of His own way and pleasure, for our profit and exercise.

A. O. M.

Ans. B.—The teaching would appear to be—*firstly*, that God is Sovereign, and rewards only as He will; then, that He looks at the heart, and not as man seeth. "So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many

be called, but few chosen." Looked at from man's standpoint, man's work is valueless. As the Lord said, "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do" (Luke xvii. 10). And each labourer did just that which was his duty, fulfilling the terms of his hire. Therefore there is no distinction made in the reward, all being of equal value, regarded from man's standpoint. But when the service is looked at as being the work of the Holy Spirit *in the servant*, when the service is *that*, then there is a distinction in the reward (1 Cor. iii. 13). And from this we may learn that God can own nothing that is not the work of His Holy Spirit in us, nay, "Though I give My body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth Me nothing." And from this we may understand the paramount necessity of being in subjection to Him. H. G. H.

**Ans. C.**—The Sovereignty of God; that God does as He pleases, and yet so that every mouth is stopped. He will act in grace, in spite of the narrow legalism of our poor hearts. G. A. S.

#### INSPIRATION.

**QUESTION 390.**—Is our present translation of the Bible equally inspired with the original Scriptures, or in what relation do they stand?

**Ans. A.**—Our present Bible is carefully translated from copies of the original Scriptures. God has so guarded the copying from time to time that though we have no original writing to refer to, we have practically—because of our ability to compare with ancient (very ancient) copies in other languages—a translation which faithfully represents the original Scriptures, and makes itself felt as the Word of God. But to say that every copy was in every way as perfect as the original Scriptures would be saying that every translator and every copyist was specially inspired of God. A.O.M.

**Editor's Note.**—Inspiration only belongs to the original writings of the Scriptures as given by God. He chose His own instruments for this work, and they spake and wrote, "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (1 Cor. iii. 13). "Men spake from God, moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter i. 21, R.V.).

The Greek and Hebrew manuscripts from which our translation was made are very numerous, and contain many verbal discrepancies. Critical experience and research, by comparing carefully the oldest and most reliable, has secured for us in marvellous fulness "the Scriptures" as originally given. The Revised Version gives us further results of research and comparison. We welcome these efforts faithfully to represent the original, *because* we believe in the absolute verbal inspiration of the original as given by God. The translation into English from Hebrew and Greek is not the work of inspiration, and is therefore subject also to revision and correction. Even the English into which it was translated centuries ago has changed materially, so that many words have a different meaning now from what they had then. In such cases the translation would be improved and our understanding helped by a more modern English word.

#### GOING TO LAW.

**QUESTION 391.**—Does Matt. v. 39-41 forbid a Christian to go to law to defend himself from injustice?

**Ans. A.**—"Here we have our Divine Lawgiver legislating, not in the bondage of the letter so as to stultify His disciples, and in many circumstances to turn the salt of the earth into a means of corrupting it, but in the freedom of the spirit laying down those great principles which ought to regulate the inner purposes and consequent actions of His followers. Taken *slavishly* and *literally*, neither did our Lord Himself conform to this precept (Jno. xviii. 22, 23), nor His disciples (Acts xxiii. 3). But *truly*, and in the *spirit*, our blessed Redeemer obeyed it. He gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, and hid not His face from shame and spitting (Is. l. 6); and His apostles also—see 1 Cor. iv. 9-13.

"Our Lord appears to speak of the *true status and perfection of a Christian community*, not to forbid in those mixed and but half Christian states, which have ever divided so-called Christendom among them, the infliction of judicial penalties for crime. In fact, Scripture speaks (Rom. xiii. 4) of the *minister of such infliction* as the *minister of God*. But, as before, our Lord shows us the *condition to which* a Christian community should *tend*, and to further which every private Christian's own endeavours should be directed. It is quite beside the purpose to say that these precepts of our Lord are too highly pitched for humanity; and so to find an excuse for violating them. If we were disciples of His in the true sense, these precepts would, in their spirit, as indicative of frames of mind, be *strictly observed*; and as far as we are His disciples, we shall *attain to such by their observance*." (Alford. N.B.—The italics are his.) I only add for myself that we are to endure wrong for a reason personal to the wrong-doer (v. 43). Where this charity is not invaded, no law obliges a Christian to submit without protest or self-defence (Acts xxiv. 17; 1 Cor. vi. 2).

A *literal* interpretation of these precepts no reasonable person has ever defended; they express in powerful and ever-memorable language the attitude of patient grace which should characterise the followers of the Crucified.

Literally interpreted, these verses would be set in irreconcilable antagonism with the church court described in 1 Cor. vi.: for "things pertaining to this life." G. F. T.

**Ans. B.**—"Forbid" is not the proper word to use. The blessed Lord is telling His disciples the lofty and Divine principles of His kingdom, and He says now, "You behave thus, *THAT* ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven." Therefore it certainly is the nobler way for the Christian to commit himself to his Father who is in the heavens, rather than to appeal unto Cæsar to defend, vindicate, or avenge him. It is a uniform principle running down through this dispensation, "Hast thou appealed unto Cæsar; unto Cæsar shalt thou go." The decisions and awards of Cæsar are not very much to be counted on. So much is this the case that it has become a proverb: "The glorious uncertainty of the law." It is just as probable that the law may go against the man who appeals to him as in his favour. The Christian going to law descends in some measure from the noble and dignified character of Son of his Father who is in the heavens. J. S.

## CHRIST'S GREAT ALLEGORY.

John x. 1-18.

BY J. HIXON IRVING.

**I**N the fourth Gospel, which is occupied principally with our Lord's ministry in Judea, there are seven recorded miracles, four of which were wrought by Him in Galilee and three in Judea. Taken together, they furnish us with a specimen of His power over nature, infirmity, disease, and death itself.

The Judean signs were all of them remarkable in this, they were deeds of mercy wrought upon the bodies of men. The first was the restoration of strength to a man who had been infirm for the long period of thirty-eight years (Jno. v. 1-15); the second in creating the faculty of sight in one blind from his birth (Jno. ix.); and the third, and greatest of all—which brought the enmity of the Jews to a head and prepared the way for His death—the restoration to life of His loved friend Lazarus (Jno. xi).

These signs were not only deeds of mercy, but symbols of His power over spiritual infirmities, diseases, and death; and they were recorded, amongst others, that men might believe on Him, and that believing they might have life through His Name (Jno. xx. 31). The healing of the blind man was in a peculiar sense a proof of His Messiahship (Is. xxix. 10, with Matt. xi. 5), and was also a beautiful illustration of His own saying, "I am the light of the world" (Jno. viii. 12).

Two out of the three deeds of mercy which were done on Judean soil, were also, as if by design, done on the Sabbath; these were the first and the second, and on both occasions the implacable foes of His fearless forerunner, John, and now His own relentless enemies, the Pharisees, sought to make capital out of it. On the second occasion, failing for the time to find the Healer Himself, they wrecked their paltry spite upon the healed, who, when he had confessed his faith in the Lord as a prophet, and as having come from God (though at that time he did not know Him as the Son of God), "they cast him out" (Jno. ix. 34); that is, they excommunicated him from his family and from the synagogue for thirty days. It was that, and subsequent events connected therewith, which gave rise to the beautiful and

profound allegory of John x.; for allegory proper it is, and not a parable.

Before we can fully understand what the more abundant life is to which our Lord referred (v. 10), we must first of all grasp the salient features of this discourse and their teaching. We may be the more assisted in this, perhaps, if we mark that the allegory proper ends with the fifth verse (vs. 1-5), and all that which follows (vs. 7-18), is an extension and partial explanation of it.

The first feature of this profoundly deep discourse is the

## SHEEPFOLD.

This "fold of the sheep" (R.V.), what is it? Is it a *local* assembly of professed or true followers of the Lord Jesus as the Shepherd and Overseer of their souls (1 Pet. ii. 25)? Is it the Church of God looked at in its corporate character as composed of those called out of darkness into His light? Or is it that living organism, the Body, having the vitality of the Head, and called by way of pre-eminence, "the Christ"? Or again, is it that which is of a more indefinite character, that which is co-extensive with Christendom, the House? No; it is none of these. It is not a thing of the present at all. It has no existence in this age, nor will it in the future—at least in that aspect of it found in the allegory before us. It is of the past, and was entirely connected with Israel. Not with it in that phase of it as set forth under the figure of the cultivated Olive Tree, the descendants of Abraham, the man of faith; chosen to be a witness and a testimony of the goodness and grace of God to the nations of the earth, symbolised by the "wild olive tree," or Israel dispensationally (Jer. x., Rom. xi.). Neither as the nation set forth under the symbols of the Vineyard and the Vine; the former being the land and the latter the people; or Israel under *responsibility* to God for fruit-bearing (Ps. lxxx., Is. v., Matt. xx.). Nor as it under the emblem of the Fig Tree; or the people under the ministry of our Lord and His apostles, and in contrast to the True Vine. The Husbandman found no fruit upon the former, but He found abundance upon the latter (Luke xiii. 1-9).

What aspect of Israel, then, does the sheepfold present to us? It manifests the nation in

the days of our Lord in its religious character, as containing the "lost sheep of the House of Israel." The "fold" is not synonymous with the nation; for the fold was within it, and not the nation as a whole within the fold. The nation in its entirety was within the walls of the Vine and Fig Yards, which walls were built of circumcision, law, sacrifices, priesthood, and worship, but not within the walls of the sheepfold. The latter, as we have said, contained the "lost sheep of the House of Israel"; "His people and the sheep of His pasture" (Matt. x. 5, 6; xv. 24; Ps. c. 3).

The second feature of this allegory is the

DOOR. (vs. 1, 2).

There are two doors mentioned by our Lord; the first is the entrance into the *fold*, and the second into the *flock*. The first has no present existence, for reasons already stated; the second *has* an existence, as we shall shortly see. Christ declared *Himself* to be the "door" of verses 7-9, saying, "I *am* the Door." But the door of the fold is not a person at all. Many, failing to see this, in their teaching make our Lord to enter the fold through Himself, which is not very logical. Mark, the door is something having the closest connection with the Shepherd of Israel and the state of things in relation to the godly remnant in the nation at the time when he presented Himself to it; indeed, something through which He was introduced to the "lost sheep," who were bleating for the *True* Shepherd.

What, then, was the door? Was it the incarnation and birth of our Lord? No! Was it, then, circumcision and presentation in the Temple? Neither! Or was it His appearing in the same at the age of twelve to take responsibility as an Israelite? No; it was none of these. For whilst at His birth, part of the remnant referred to were apprised of His appearing (the shepherds), and perhaps a larger number still at His presentation to the Lord in the Temple, foremost among whom were Simeon and Anna, who recognised in the Divine Babe the Shepherd and Consolation of Israel; yet at that time He did not enter the fold. Neither was it when, at twelve years of age, in the same sacred enclosure, He, to the remonstrating Mary, uttered the first of His

many "musts": "Wist ye not that I *must* be about My Father's business?" (Luke ii. 49).

He did not enter the fold either as the Divine Babe or Boy, but only as the Divine Man. All males of the Pharisees and Sadducees were circumcised, and were presented before Jehovah and took responsibility at the age of twelve years, yet they did not enter the fold through the door as He did, but sought to climb up some other way, thus proving themselves to be "thieves and robbers" (v. 7 with Matt. iii. 7-12). What was there which He did as an Israelite, did voluntarily, which the priests (Sadducees of that time), and the teachers of the law (Pharisees), refused to do? What, but submitting to John's baptism; that which He did they refused to do.

The *penitential* baptism, as administered by John, was, we believe, the "door" into the sheepfold.\* Our Lord, in identifying Himself with a law-condemned, truth-convicted, sin-repenting, and water-baptised people, stooped down into the waters of baptism—in to the place of death where they lay—in order that He might reach, liberate, and save them; for His mission was to "seek and to save that which was lost." He entered the fold on that day when He entered the waters of Jordan, and also upon His ministry. Of that door, and His entering through it into the fold, the apostle John afterwards wrote, "This is He that came by (through) *water* and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by (in) *water* only, but by (in) *water* and blood" (1 Jno. v. 6).

This will appear the plainer, perhaps, as we think of

THE PORTER,

and seek to understand what is meant by him. The almost universal idea is that the Holy Spirit is meant. The root cause of this mistake (for such it is), is to be found in the loose style of interpretation called "spiritualising," which certainly is not a very spiritual method, and cannot have a very spiritualising effect upon

\* It has been suggested, and it is worthy of careful thought, that the entrance by the "door" is His coming according to all the prophetic scriptures concerning Him. The baptism of John is included in this view. His incarnation was His identification with humanity, His being of the seed of Abraham identified Him with Israel, His being born in Bethlehem identified Him with Judah and the kingship; in John's baptism He became identified in a very special way with the elect remnant of that day—He, on the principle of suretyship, taking His place beside them, making and confessing their sins as His own (Ps. lxxix. 5).

its advocates. Those who follow it, in attempting an exposition of this precious portion of our Lord's teaching, make the "fold" to be the "church"; and the "door," the Lord Jesus; the "porter," as we have said, the Holy Spirit; the "shepherd," the "minister"; and the "sheep," of necessity, "church members." That this is a "private interpretation" is very evident to those who know that the Church was not then in existence, and the Holy Spirit was not yet given. True it is the Spirit of God dwells in the Church and in the true believer—and that in a way He never abode in the Jewish nation nor in the godliest individual of it. Instead of His finding in the nation a temple in which to reside and in which to minister, they in the wilderness "rebelled and vexed Him" (Is. lxiii. 10); under the prophets they "resisted" Him (Acts vii. 51); and under the ministry of our blessed Lord they "blasphemed" Him (Mark iii. 22); and when they stoned to death the witness Stephen, "a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost" (Acts vi. 5), the cup of their iniquity was well nigh filled to the brim, and soon judgment fell upon them to the uttermost.

If John's baptism be the "door," then it necessarily follows that the Baptist himself must be represented by the "porter." "To Him (the True Shepherd) the porter openeth." He was the doorkeeper: he admitted and he excluded; he opened the door to the penitent and kept it closed against the impenitent, such as the Scribes and Pharisees. When the priests and Levites, who were sent from Jerusalem to John, said, "Why baptisest thou?" His reply, in short, was, "That He should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptising with water" (Jno. i. 19-34). These words, though little understood, are yet full of meaning, and they find their parallel in those of the Lord, "To Him the porter openeth." With opening the door to Jesus, John's ministry virtually came to an end; and hence those words which fell from his lips, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (Jno. iii. 30).

His commission was to make ready (in part by immersion in water) "a people prepared for the Lord" (Luke i. 17). This prepared people He (the Messiah) called His "sheep."

(To be followed by papers on "The Sheep, Shepherd, Flock," &c.)

## THE DOMINION OF THE LAST ADAM.

PSALM VIII.

IN this psalm we have one of the most far-reaching utterances of "the sweet Psalmist of Israel." It shows us that, while he pondered God's creation, his heart was filled with great thoughts of the Creator and His high purposes. In his youth, as he watched his flock by night, he mused upon God's works and ways, and his heart was filled with praise. The psalm may not have been written in those early days, for it seems to express a more mature experience than David then had. But, whenever it was written, it is evident, as one has said, that "the story of creation, as given in Gen. i., was before his mind. The pious shepherd-boy had treasured and pondered in his heart of hearts that record so sublime in its simplicity; the royal singer had often read it when his eyes prevented the night watches that they might be occupied in God's Word."

And in the light of 1 Pet. i. 11, 12, we may surely judge that, when he had written the psalm, he "inquired and searched diligently" into its deep meaning, for it must have been clear to him that it pointed to a state of things very different from what then existed, however little he understood of its fulness. For its meaning is put beyond question by the plain teaching of 1 Cor. xv., Eph. i., and Heb. ii. For God has caused His grace to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence in making known to us the mystery of His will, even His glorious purpose to head up all things in Christ.

The psalm begins with the adoring exclamation, "*O Jehovah our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth!* who hast set Thy glory above the heavens." God's *name* is the expression of His being, and denotes the revelation of His perfections. The time is coming when, "from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, the Lord's *name* is to be praised" (Ps. cxiii. 3), "for the earth shall be filled with the *knowledge of the Lord* as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. xi. 9). But it is "above the heavens" that His glory is especially set; for there is Christ, who is in the highest sense "the image and glory of God," and there, too, will be His bride—"the glory of the Man." Christ and His Church

in the super-heavenlies will be the peculiar expression of the glory of God, even when the earth is brought into subjection to the dominion of its appointed King, and those who will share His throne.

On verse 2, Lord Congleton writes—"It is amongst the babes and sucklings of mankind that believers have ever been, for the most part, found. Of this we have illustrations in the Israelitish youths in Babylon, the shepherds of Bethlehem, and the fishermen of Galilee. For this fact we find our Lord giving thanks to His Father: 'I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes' (Matt. xi. 25). And on another occasion, when the children were found in the temple shouting to His praise, He testified that it was a fulfilment of this principle, quoting this very psalm, 'Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise?' (Matt. xxi. 15, 16)."

The word "avenger" here denotes "*one who thirsts for and breathes revenge, one who is swift to avenge his own quarrel.*" What a description of Satan, the arch-enemy of God and man! If it expresses what the antichrist will be to the remnant of Israel in a coming day, let us remember that he will simply be the agent of Satan, from whom he will receive his throne, and whose designs against the purposes and the people of God he will seek to carry out. And it is with this great adversary, often as an angel of light, that we have to contend. But "the enemy and the avenger" shall be silenced—shall be struck dumb with shame at the futility of all his efforts—by the "perfected praise" of a delivered people, whether in the case of the Church above or Israel below. As it was seen in the cross of Christ that "the weakness of God is stronger than man," so shall it further be seen that those who are altogether weak in themselves shall, with God in the midst of them, be as bulwarks against the foe. The "worm Jacob" shall thresh the mountain. This is the principle on which God acts. Satan might, through Rome, seek to blot out God's truth from the earth; but what did it matter that the great and the mighty and the wise were with him, so long as there were those who would confess the name

of Christ as the only and the all-sufficient Saviour, and who, if they could not argue with their persecutors, were ready to seal their confession with their blood?

At the present time many of the wise and the learned of this world—not all, thank God!—are in another way setting themselves against the authority of Scripture, and denying its cardinal truths. What does it matter so long as there are those who have the truth of God in their hearts, and display its power in their lives. They may be but "babes" in the judgment of the "wise and prudent"; but they know Christ, and are able to "praise" God for the gift of His own Son, and for the great atoning sacrifice by which they are brought to Him. God's worshipping people are His bulwarks against "the enemy," for their praises have in them a power before which even scepticism must be silent. That which is merely intellectual may be met by argument; but what arguments can affect one who *knows God and worships?*

It is in this spirit that the psalmist can say, "*I consider Thy heavens.*" Vast, as well as beautiful, do the heavens appear to us, as on a clear night we behold the stars in the firmament and "the moon walking in brightness"; but we can have no conception of the brilliance of an Eastern sky. As compared with all this, he asks, "What is man"? The very word he uses, expressing as it does man in his feebleness, implies his answer—the deep feeling of his soul that man is less than nothing, and vanity. Yet God is "mindful of him" in all this weakness. But there is something further. If *man* points to Adam and all his posterity, the expression "Son of man" points to another, even to Him who claims that title as peculiarly His own (John i. 51). It is to Him that verse 5 in its fullest sense applies: "For Thou hast made Him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned Him with glory and honour." This is evident from the inspired comment in Heb. ii. 9, "But we behold Him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour" (R.V.). The psalmist speaks of both the humiliation and the dominion; the comment declares that the latter is the result of the former.

We also learn from the New Testament that

the extent of the dominion of "the Son of man" is greater than we should have supposed from the psalm alone. In Eph. i. the words are quoted to show His absolute supremacy in resurrection as "the Head over all things." Heb. ii. says, "He left nothing that is not put under Him"; and 1 Cor. xv. asserts that Christ must have dominion over everything save God Himself, who gives Him this dominion.

We should never forget that this will be the true carrying out of God's original purpose, for Adam was but "the figure [or *type*] of Him that was to come" (Rom. v. 14), and as the last Adam He will be to God's new creation far more than the first Adam was to the first creation. Adam was formed by the hand of God as the head of a finished creation. Christ is "the *Beginning* of the creation of God," and the One to whom it owes its very existence as well as its glory and stability.

That this psalm will have a blessed fulfilment in the brightness of the millennial glory of Christ and His people, and the dominion He will then possess, we cannot question. But surely we must not limit it to that period, or we shall stop short with what is but a pledge and foretaste of complete and final victory. So long as one enemy raises its head His dominion is not perfect, and it is not until after the millennium that the word will be fulfilled, "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death"; and not till then will "the enemy and the avenger" be finally silenced, by being cast into the lake of fire, where he will ever remain as the witness that all attempts to frustrate the will of God can only end in the shame of him who makes them, and the greater glory of Him who from everlasting to everlasting sitteth upon that throne which no waves of rebellion can reach. Then shall "the Son also Himself be subject unto Him" whose throne He shares, and with whom He is truly one, and shall display His full glory as the last Adam—the Head of the new creation that stands for ever in Him beyond the possibility of defilement or decay. With what intelligence and delight will all who behold that glory of God's new earth repeat the adoring utterance, "O Jehovah, our sovereign Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth!"

W. H. B.

## "The POWER of HIS RESURRECTION"\*

(Phil. iii. 10).

THE one great thought of the apostle's heart here is to be with and like Christ in glory. It is the longing of his soul; it is what he is apprehended for, and what he desires to apprehend. He is making his way through all kinds of difficulties to get to Christ where He is. The fellowship of His sufferings, even unto death, may lie in the way, but he will press through it all with real purpose of heart. What is all the suffering here when looked at in view of the glory there with Christ? What is death in view of resurrection? This, then, is the wondrous fact that absorbs his heart, and gives tone and character to his whole life and ministry in this world. Oh! that it were more so with the people of God now, and more especially with the servants of God. I am going to be with and like Christ for ever; this is what I am going on to. Blessed fact, indeed! And where it is known in real power, everything will be looked at in the light of it.

Christ, whose glory eclipsed all the things that so glitter in the eyes of worldly men, so that they were of no account whatever to the apostle, and whose love had captivated his heart, is in glory, and his great concern is to be with Him; nothing else will satisfy him. Therefore, he is making his way through the world as quickly as possible, after a glorified Christ in heaven; he does not fear anything that may lie in the way, but will press through it all. His only business in this world is to make known what he himself has learnt of Christ—that blessed One is henceforth the goal before him. Oh! that we all, as God's people, with the same Saviour and prospect as the apostle, may be more like him in this. Why is it that we do not know, in more *real living power*, the truth of Christ? We know it after a fashion; we know we are saved from hell and for heaven, and there to be with Christ. But surely this should have a power over our souls and an effect in our lives such as is not much known amongst us; at least so I think, I am willing to admit it for

\* This and former article on "The Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ" have been issued in Penny Book, entitled "THE BEAUTY AND LOVE OF CHRIST."

myself. I am persuaded that it is the verdant freshness and moral power of the truth that is wanting with us. I mean the people of God generally.

We are so much more occupied with ourselves and the state of things among us than we are with Christ and His glory, and so we find ourselves without power to act for God, and begin to fight, one against another, for different lines of truth and particular doctrines, while the sheep of Christ are scattered and bewildered, and scarcely know where to find rest or what to do. We feel the lack in ourselves. We see that we need something more than to be able to pass our judgment upon things; that instead of helping, this more often hinders the people of God. We need to bring a *power* into things such as will make itself felt, and touch the very springs and motives of Christian fellowship, and Christian action and devotedness. Where is this to come from? How are we to be made the vessels of such power? Is it possible that we should be? Yes, it is. But it is not acquired by legal effort. The secret of it is occupation of heart with Christ risen, in the intimacy of His love, the knowledge of Christ, and the power of His resurrection.

Let us turn to our blessed Lord Himself; it is in His presence and company that the reality of things becomes known in real living power to our souls. If we go on in His company, we shall know more fully the joy of His love, the attractiveness of His Person, and the power of His resurrection.

The power of His resurrection shall be fully known, in its effect upon our bodies, as well as in our souls, when He shall come forth with a shout, and this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality. But it is the realisation of it, morally, now, lifting us in heart and spirit above this scene of death through which we pass, that we need to know. And knowing, as we do, that death casts its dark shadow over everything here, that the end of all these things is death, is it not blessed to know that we have a portion altogether beyond the reach of death in a risen Christ—in resurrection glory with Him? Does not the sense of this in the soul lift our hearts above present things, and impart a power to our souls which makes us morally superior to them? And so it must be if I would act for

God in the midst of present circumstances. I must be out of this world in heart and spirit in order to go through it according to the thoughts of God. Paul was so out of it in heart that he desired to go altogether, and so we hear him saying, in this very epistle, "Having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better." But the man who is the most anxious to leave the world for the sake of being *with* Christ is the best fitted to stay here *for* Him; and so God revealed it to him that he should stay a little longer. And what for? Because it was needful to the Lord's dear ones here for the furtherance of their joy and faith. Here then is the secret of real and stirring ministry. It lies in having the heart so taken up with Christ that the deep desire of the soul is "to depart and be with Christ." And yet it is this very thing that gives rise to another desire: viz., the good of His people down here. And so it is if a saint gets near enough to Christ to get his heart drawn out to, and fixed upon, Him; he also finds his heart drawn out, with Christ's, after His people. Oh! how blessed to be able to further the joy and faith of the dear saints. May it be our souls' desire to know more of this blessedness. It is so much better than grieving, stumbling, and hindering saints. The children of God are perplexed and tried around us by all sorts of things. Bad teaching, false doctrine, and party strifes, with trying wilderness circumstances, all contributing to hinder their joy and faith; let us, in the midst of it all, seek to help them on. It is so precious to the heart of Christ to find His saints a help to each other; not only in public ministry, but in conversation and daily intercourse. Words of comfort and exhortation are always opportune in such a scene as this. And if we are in sympathy with the heart of Christ, we shall have more sympathy with and for each other. And it gives special joy to one's own heart also to be the slightest help to a fellow-saint, or saints.

But I cannot do this while under the pressure of present things myself. I must know a power that lifts my own soul above all, and sets my heart at leisure from itself, in order to be able thus to further the joy and faith of others. Where is this power, that has such a moral effect in the soul, to be found? It is in the

true knowledge of Christ Himself and the power of His resurrection, as made good in present power to the soul.

It is this power of resurrection that we know so little of—at least, I feel it for myself. Present things lose their power over our souls in proportion as the power of His resurrection is known to us. This is one great lesson that the Lord would teach us in all His ways with us: viz., that of resurrection. We are so prone to set our hearts upon present things, in some form or other, and forget that our portion and prospect are outside this poor death-like scene, in and with a risen Christ; and the moral power of this in the soul now, causes one to triumph in the midst of loss and trial of any, or all, kinds.

True, indeed, I must know something about the application of death, and that in more ways than one, before I can know, in this way, the power of His resurrection. I must know not only that Christ died for me, but that I died with Him, and my life is now in Him risen. "The old man was crucified with Christ." "I am crucified with Christ," &c. "The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Yes, it is when I see death stamped upon everything here, that, with deep longing after Christ, the soul says, "O to know Him, and the power of His resurrection!"

It may be that I have to suffer loss, so did Paul, and imprisonment as well; but He calls it "the fellowship of His sufferings," and it may be even to be conformed to His death. But still the power of His resurrection in the soul will carry a saint through it all triumphantly; and the secret of it is occupation of heart with a real living Man in the glory, One who was dead but now liveth again, who died for me, and liveth for me, and is soon coming again for me. Blessed be His Name for ever.

If I long to be with Him where He is, and know that I am going to be with Him for ever, I shall desire to have Him with me now, and enjoy as much of His company as possible before that time come.

If one's life is to be linked up with a person just for a few years down here, he seeks to know all that can be known about that person beforehand. And since I know that I am going to spend eternity with Christ, do I not wish to know all that can be known of Him,

and enjoy as much as can be enjoyed of His company while I am here?

Oh, Jesus, Lord! I now desire to be  
In heart, and mind, and spirit, like to Thee;  
That I, O Lord, may make Thy glory known,  
With heart of love that does not seek its own.  
And oh! I do a lowly mind desire,  
That never would to glory vain aspire.  
Oh that a humble spirit may be mine,  
A gracious manner, Lord, like unto Thine.

J. H. B.

## "THE VOICE OF CREATION AND THE VOICE OF SCRIPTURE."

COPY OF A LETTER.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Concerning the 19th Psalm, I should say that it might be entitled "The Voice of Creation and the Voice of the Scripture." Verses 1-6 show how God's glory is declared in creation, especially that part of it which man cannot reach and defile, viz., the visible heavens. These works of God bear witness to His eternal power and *divinity* (Rom. i. 20). The fulness of the *Deity* dwells, not in creation, but in Christ (Col. ii. 10). But the testimony of creation is enough to leave men without excuse if they deny God. Paul quotes from this part of Psalm xix. in Romans x. 18.

In verse 1 (Part I.) you find the title "God"; that is, "The Mighty One," "The Great First Cause" of all. This is the character in which the work of creation sets Him forth.

In verse 7 (Part II.) you find the name "Jehovah"; that is, "He that always was, that always is, and that always is to come." This is His character as we find it revealed in the written Word.

Verses 7-11 have for subject "The Word of Jehovah." Different expressions are used, according as it is regarded from different points of view. Thus—

1. The "LAW" signifies God's will *pointed out*. When the will of the Lord is pointed out by the finger of God, the effect is to convert or restore the soul.

2. The TESTIMONY is God's *witness* concerning Himself, and, very often, against man. Before a thing comes to pass the Lord points out His will. Afterwards He bears witness that it had been better for men if they had given heed to what He pointed out. If we are simple enough, this testimony will make us wise.

3. The STATUTES are decrees *engraven on stone*. They express divine principles which are the same throughout all ages. He who acts out these principles is glad, not because his work is popular or successful, but because it is wrought according to the Lord's will.

4. The COMMANDMENT is that of a *Father*. This is the especial word from God that tells me what to do as being His child.

5. The FEAR of the Lord is expounded in Psalm xxxiv. 11-14. This guides us in our work and in our ways.

6. The JUDGMENTS are *decisions of a judge*. As contrasted with statutes, the judgments of the Lord teach us our duty between man and man, while the statutes teach us our duty towards God. Thus, in the ten commandments, the first four are statutes, while the last six are judgments.

Verse 10 tells of the *preciousness* and the *sweetness* of the Word. I am afraid we often neglect the latter in seeking to profit by the former. But a man might starve to death in an Australian desert with a bag of gold at his side, if he could not find wherewith to satisfy his hunger. Similarly, we may have the memory stored with most valuable truths, and our souls starving all the time because we are not feeding on the Word.

In verse 11 we are reminded of *warning* and *reward*. The Scriptures always combine the two—the promise of future reward, and the enjoyment of present reward—in order that we may be kept for God; the warnings, in order that we may be guarded from evil.

The psalm concludes with a prayer, ver. 12-14.

The second clause of verse 12 and the first clause of verse 13 refer evidently to the opening words of the former verse. Therefore it would be better to read as the Revised Version, changing only the words supplied by the translators and printed in italics:—"Who can discern errors? Clear Thou me from hidden errors. Keep back Thy servant also from presumptuous errors; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be perfect, and I shall be clear from great transgression."

The word rendered "clear" in verses 12 and 13 is literally "to absolve." "Absolve Thou me . . . and I shall be absolved."

The R.V. has rightly substituted "rock" for strength in verse 14. The word means,

indeed, a rock which cannot be moved. You will find it in Exodus xvii. 6 and Psalm lxxviii. 15. There is another word for a rock that cannot be climbed. It occurs in Numbers xx. 8-11 and Psalm lxxviii. 16. Please look at these passages.

The title "redeemer" means kinsman, redeemer, and avenger. The man who stood in this relation to an Israelite saved the family name, if his brother died childless, leaving a widow behind him; bought back his brother if he became a slave; and avenged his death if he was murdered.

Hebrews ii. 14, 15, seems to give us an exposition of this title as applied to the Lord Jesus. He took part in flesh and blood; that is, He became kinsman. He rendered powerless the devil; that is, He became Avenger. He delivered those who were subject to bondage; that is, He showed Himself to be the Redeemer.

"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my Rock, and my Redeemer."

I hope you will find in the foregoing notes the help you seek.—Yours faithfully in Christ,

PARIS, 23 Rue Bolivar.

A. P. M.

### The Seven Churches of Revelation.

#### IV. THYATIRA ("SACRIFICE").

IN history's book the saddest page  
Records the dark mediæval age,  
When the apostate church was seen,  
In worldly pomp and wealth—a queen.  
Much she resembled in her ways  
Queen Jezebel of ancient days,  
Who made the people bow the knee  
In acts of gross idolatry.  
Like her, involved in deepest guilt,  
The blood of God's true saints she spilt.  
Instead of faith and love and hope,  
She had priest, cardinal, and pope—  
A trinity of evil they  
Who over every land held sway.  
Such was the earthly power she gained,  
That even over kings she reigned.  
So much they feared her awful frown,  
That none would dare assume the crown,  
Or enter on the regal state,  
However powerful, grand, or great,  
Until before the papal see

He tremblingly had bent the knee,  
And from the pope or prelate's hand  
Received both kingdom and command.

Apostate Rome loved not the light,  
So kept God's Word hid out of sight,  
Lest any by its aid should see  
The depths of her vile sorcery.  
The priests alone might dare to look.  
Within the pages of that Book,  
Though even they might not presume  
To tell its meaning, or assume  
That their own judgment they might use  
Should they that Book of books peruse.  
"The holy Mother Church," said they,  
"Must guide all thoughts; thou must obey  
Her words infallible and sure,  
Or death by torture must endure."

But there were there a feeble few  
Who to their Lord stood firm and true,  
Who from the days of pagan fire  
Had handed down to son from sire  
God's Word, a priceless heritage.  
And, 'mid the darkness of that age,  
It was to them a beacon light  
When all around was sunk in night.  
Their steps had not been turned aside  
To Rome's idolatry and pride;  
They had not owned her *sacrifice*,  
Nor to her idols turned their eyes.  
Amid their Alpine vales secure,  
Too insignificant and poor  
To be observed, for many a year  
They dwelt in peace and knew no fear;  
There worshipped God in truth and love,  
While oft the lofty peaks above  
Re-echoed back the sweet refrain  
Uprising from the verdant plain.

They, mindful of the Lord's command  
To preach the Word in every land,  
Sent missionaries two by two,  
Men of devoted heart and true.  
As humble pedlars forth they went  
Two years to spend and to be spent;  
Where'er the Lord their steps might lead,  
They bore the precious gospel seed.  
Oft when their wares had been displayed,  
And various purchases been made,  
With chosen words and serious air  
They thus addressed the listener fair:  
"O lady, there is yet one gem

Too bright for earthly diadem;  
Fain would we leave this treasure true,  
This priceless jewel, now with you.  
If you but promise not to say  
Who gave this Book, or to betray  
Us to the clergy, we will place  
Within your hand this gift of grace.  
Nay, ask not of its price, 'tis free  
As summer sunshine on the lea;  
And may the Holy Spirit shine  
Upon the page with light divine."  
In simple faith, from year to year,  
They sowed the seed with many a tear,  
And when the season had expired,  
Back to their valleys they retired.  
Not all, alas! for many sealed  
Their faith with blood; nor would they yield  
Their testimony clear and true,  
With rack or flaming stake in view.  
Nor yet when torture made each vein  
A channel of acutest pain,  
Until, the fiery trial o'er,  
They stood upon the golden shore.

Far better that than Alpine vales,  
So soon to echo back the wails  
Of murdered families, whose blood  
With crimson tinged the mountain flood,  
For persecution's wintry blast  
Blew o'er their happy homes at last,  
And Jezebel, with ruthless hand,  
Dispersed them from their fatherland—  
From vales which from the earliest age  
Had been their home and heritage.

Those were the overcomers then,  
Who, when the Lord returns to reign,  
Shall with Him o'er the earth hold sway  
Throughout the long millennial day.  
When He, the Morning Star, shall rise,  
And call His people to the skies,  
Each mountain slope and lonely steep,  
Where the o'ercomers' ashes sleep,  
Shall yield the consecrated dust  
Which long they've held in sacred trust.  
Death's bonds by Jesus shall be riven,  
The victors' crowns by Him be given;  
And theirs shall be age-during fame  
Who suffered for His faith and name.  
May we, like them, be faithful found,  
Though shades of darkness gather round,  
Present ourselves—a blood-bought prize—  
To God a living sacrifice.      A. W. P. S.

## THE CHRISTIAN'S OCCUPATION.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY THE LATE HENRY CUMMINS.

SECOND PAPER.

THERE is, however, a wider range of responsibility in respect of THE OCCUPATION BECOMING TO BELIEVERS in "caring one for another," than that considered in the foregoing chapter, and some of this is suggested to us in 1 Cor. xiv. and Eph. iv., which every member of the Body of Christ should seek grace to carry out.

Here we are taught that "those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary"; and, "God has tempered the body together, so that THE MEMBERS SHOULD HAVE THE SAME CARE ONE FOR ANOTHER, and whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it." "But unto EVERY ONE OF US is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ." "From whom the whole body, fitly joined together, and compacted by THAT WHICH EVERY JOINT SUPPLIETH, according to the effectual working in the measure of EVERY PART, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

This OCCUPATION should characterise every believer in every assembly of God; and the prosperity of assemblies will depend more upon such mutual exercise of gift and grace "in the fear of God" than upon brilliant gifts of teaching.

5. In referring to his own absence from Ephesus, and desire to come again to his son in the faith, Paul writes (1 Tim. iv. 13-16): "Till I come, give attention to reading, exhortation, and doctrine. . . . Meditate on these things; give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed to thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in so doing thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."

This is in harmony with Ezra vii. 10. "For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments."

Where this characterises God's servants now, we shall act in accord with 1 Pet. iv. 10: "As every man hath received the free gift, even so MINISTER THE SAME ONE TO ANOTHER,

as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ."

But if this is to be true of us, we must "give attention to reading." We must be diligent students of God's Word, and allow it to form our character and regulate our lives, so that, animated by "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," the love of God, and knowing more in our own soul's experience of "the fellowship of the Holy Spirit," we shall, like Timothy, have "*understanding of the times*"; and being "strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus," we shall also be "gentle unto all, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves: if peradventure God will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by the Lord's servants to the will of God" (R.V.) And we shall find this OCCUPATION far happier to our own souls, and more profitable to our hearers, than denouncing the evils of that "great house" referred to in the same chapter.

Oh, that all God's dear children were more diligent in their *reading* and *meditation* upon the Scriptures of truth. Then would others take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus, and learnt of Him, as they hear His words of grace and truth flow from our lips, both in exhortation and teaching, in the power of the Holy Spirit; and this is far more likely to bring about a true REVIVAL of His work in our midst than all the debating of questions relating to closer tests of assembly fellowship.

6. Yet another reference do we get in Rev. ii. 25 to the OCCUPATION that is becoming to us during our Lord's absence.

There is indeed something intensely solemn in these last words addressed by the Spirit of God to the churches, in which notice is taken of all that is pleasing and displeasing to our risen Lord, who seeks to encourage His people to "HOLD FAST that which they have TILL HE COMES." Here there is a reference to our being steadfast in His testimony in days of darkening apostasy.

The special form this "*departure from the*

*truth*” assumed in Thyatira was evidently associated with the subtle working of Satanic power in those ages which succeeded apostolic testimony, during which Christianity was corrupted by the admixture of pagan customs and idolatry, mixed up with sacerdotalism, borrowed from that old Jewish ceremonial worship which was *ended* when God rent the veil of the temple from the top to the bottom.

The word *Thyatira* means “unwearied in sacrifice,” and the apostate Church of Rome turned back to the shadows of that “old covenant” which had vanished away, and by her “sacrifice of the mass” denies that *better covenant* which was established upon *better sacrifices* than those associated with Jerusalem worship.

God calls all this, and the admixture of His redeemed people with THE WORLD (be it religious or profane), spiritual fornication, against which every loyal heart should *turn away*, and seek Divine grace to “hold fast” the testimony committed to us in relation to His “common salvation,” also “things that accompany it,” referred to in Jude’s epistle, and to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints.”

Dear fellow-believers, are we engaged in this holy business?

Reference is sorrowfully made in the Epistle to the Hebrews to some who were “*letting slip*” the principles of the doctrine of Christ, and others were “*going back*” to those beggarly elements of will-worship from which they were professedly separated, by the call of God, in relation to the new covenant of grace. But the apostle could refer to some loyal hearts, and call upon them in spirit to join him in their *hold-fast testimony*. “Let us go forth, therefore, unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach.”

This is what everyone of us must do now, if we desire to act in accord with Rev. ii. 25. “The camp” is defiled by man’s apostasy from God. It is a very “cage of unclean birds,” wherein every form of “*down-grade*” false teaching is finding currency, and the ordinances of God, the inspiration and all-sufficiency of His blessed Word, the priesthood of all believers, and their privilege to draw nigh, as purged worshippers, to worship the Father by the Spirit and in accord with the

*truth*, is everywhere continually set aside, and men make their own appointments and arrangements for the conduct of their “religious services,” utterly regardless of the ministry He provides, “as LORD over His own house,” for the mutual edification of His church, as set forth in Rom. xii., 1 Cor. xii., xiv., Eph. iv., &c.

Any deviation from the pattern of the tabernacle given by God to Moses would surely have incurred Divine displeasure, and its being “filled with His glory,” as recorded in Ex. xl., was associated with the declaration of His people that “they had done it as the Lord commanded.”

Beloved fellow-saints, are not our obligations limited to obedience to God’s revealed will? If so, let us “hold fast” this testimony committed to us in these days of latitudinarianism and apostasy, when many who “did run well, are hindered,” and are *going back* to those “*beggarly elements*” of *worldly* religious worship from which we have professedly separated, “with repentance, to the acknowledging of the truth.”

There is still the Adullam “place of testimony” outside Christendom’s sects, and outside Thyatira’s State established and endowed religion; and if we recognise those parting words of our risen Lord to that church, we shall seek grace to sing with consistency—

“Unto Christ, the homeless stranger,  
Outside the camp.”

Note well that the “*holding fast*” referred to in Rev. ii. 25 has no reference to what is called “the final perseverance of saints,” because we are not told to *hold fast* that *life* which “is hid with Christ in God.”

But our obligation is to “CONTINUE STEADFASTLY in the apostle’s teaching and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers”; and in the measure we do so, and glorify Him in our lives down here, will He commend us with those words: “Well done, good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

In transcribing these notes of our departed brother’s address, one’s soul is bowed down at the thought that such a valiant witness for the truth is no longer moving amongst the assemblies of God’s people. May each of us *take to heart* the words of seasonable exhortation found herein, and seek grace to be “*doers* of the truth”; also, *not forget* the exhortation in Heb. xiii. 16, “To do good, and communicate” to the needy or the widow and fatherless, remembering His words: “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.”

E. H. B.

## "The CHURCH of GOD" and "DISTRICT OVERSIGHT."

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER REVISED AND ENLARGED.

BELOVED AND ESTEEMED BROTHER,

. . . As you are pleased to ask my judgment respecting some of the teaching which has of late appeared in the paper known as "Needed Truth," I shall endeavour to tell you my convictions as concisely as I can. For some time after the commencement of that paper, I read it carefully, and it stood very high in my estimation as to its literary merit. When the teaching as to the "Fellowship of Assemblies" first appeared, I was disposed to look on it with favour, hoping there was a principle in it that would bear the test of Scripture and also help to bring about more harmony of action amongst the assemblies. By-and-by I began to discern that something was wrong. That in seeking to establish a theory about the "Church of God" and "District Oversight," the Scriptures were being strained; and certain passages in the Word were made to teach what, I believe, the Spirit of God never designed them to teach. They attach a meaning to the term "Church of God" which every passage in which it occurs will not bear out; and the theory of a system of "periodical" oversight meetings I cannot find a trace of in the Scriptures. The thought of the assemblies of God being bound together by a system of representative oversight meetings, is entirely foreign to the heavenly character of the Church. I have also been marking the effect of such teaching on individual souls and amongst assemblies. I have sought to weigh this question in the presence of God, and the more I pray over and mark its effects, I am the more convinced that the unity they are seeking to establish is not the "unity of the Spirit" which we are enjoined to keep (Eph. iv. 3), but a system which is a sad violation of that divine oneness of heart and soul which characterised the Church in primitive days.

The truth is, a unity "maintained" by a system of oversight, or oversight meetings, and a unity maintained by the power of the Spirit in the hearts of those in whom He dwells, *cannot both be kept*. There is much on this subject I do not see so clearly as I could wish,

but of this one thing I am perfectly sure, *that these two unities are incompatible and cannot exist together. If I am to keep the one unity I MUST violate the other.*

I have lately come into contact with some teaching on this question which caused me to have deep exercise of soul before the Lord. I found myself painfully out of sympathy with the whole tenor and spirit in which the Scriptures were being handled. I met with esteemed brethren who felt as I did, and at the same time I could easily discern that many others were *enjoying* what, to some of us, was *very trying*. When I got a little leisure, I sought unto the Lord as to the cause of this lack of fellowship. I wished to "prove all things," and to find out whether the condition of my own soul was wrong, or whether what I found to be so painful was wrong. I have found out that, in my zeal to "contend for the faith once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3), I had unconsciously allowed my heart to get away from fellowship with the *heart* of the Lord Jesus. Had I been more truly in fellowship with Him, and walking more fully in the light of His presence, I would have been *more deeply sorrowful over what I heard and saw*. But the truth is, I had been going down with the sinking tide without knowing it.

I fear we who have been going before the flock have been sadly neglectful of the injunctions, "Take heed unto *yourselves*" (Acts xx. 28), and "Take heed unto *thyself*" (1 Tim. iv. 16).

From what I have observed lately, I have been made to feel that through want of watchfulness we have allowed the enemy to "steal a march" upon us, and from henceforth those who will seek to carry out the *whole truth, in fellowship with Christ*, will be exposed to a "cross fire" from the enemy's camp.

There are those on one side who are not contending for the whole truth; and on the other side there are those who are endeavouring to carry out what they regard as the truth on the principle of *ecclesiastical coercion*.

It appears to me that this new "Church of God" and "District Oversight" doctrine is a development of the Pharisaic leaven which has been at work amongst the gathered saints for many years; and I believe it has its root in a departure of heart from the "Living God." The low condition and lack of spirituality

amongst many believers makes their minds a congenial soil for this theory to take root in. On the other hand, there are many dear souls who are being allured by the zeal for the truth which appears on the surface, and they lack spiritual discernment to detect the wiles of the Adversary behind it. When the Devil appears as a "roaring lion," any Christian can recognise him; but when he comes upon us as the champion of the truth of God, carnal believers and inexperienced ones are almost sure to be caught in his snare.

This doctrine is the same exclusive principle as you and I rejected when the followers of the late Mr. Darby came round, some twenty years ago. It is wrought out in a different manner and supported by a different line of argument, but, when it is stripped of all the important truth under which the snare lies concealed, it is the very same thing. A unity maintained by means of a system of oversight will be more hurtful to spiritual life, and more at variance with the "unity of the Spirit," than a Church unity based on the doctrine of the "one body."

Whilst these dear brethren mean to promote unity, the mode and spirit of their operation tends to division: and it cannot possibly be otherwise, because the Church unity they are seeking to establish is too narrow for the development of healthy spiritual life. There is not room in it for that largeness of heart and catholicity of spirit which is according to Christ Jesus. The spiritual soul feels there is an element in it which hinders that genial flow of Divine love from heart to heart, which ought always to be amongst the children of God.

Amongst many companies of saints, and even in whole districts where there is no open rupture, there is the spirit of division. There are those who are being brought under the power of a spurious fellowship, which can be maintained by human arrangement, and there are those whose souls are intuitively protesting against this principle. These have too much spirituality to be satisfied with such a fellowship, and their hearts are yearning for that Divine communion of saints which is begotten of the Holy Spirit, and is nourished by individual intercourse with the Living Head of the Church. Should this spirit of division ripen into an open rupture, we shall see the

old arrogant assumption put forth, practically, if not avowedly, "We, and we only, are the expression of the Church of God upon earth. All inside the line *we* draw constitute the Church of God, and all outside of that line are without the pale of the Church of God on earth." Another evil will soon appear. The advocates of this new phase of exclusivism, in order to justify their unwarrantable exclusion of whole assemblies and of many godly saints, will be under the necessity of gathering up all the evil reports they can find, taking little heed to whether they are true or false, about those they have thus "cut off," and making the most of them; whilst those who run to the other extreme will be in equal danger of adopting the same ungodly means of justifying their conduct. For all that is being spoken and written about being "gathered into the Name," I believe many dear saints are, unknown to themselves, slipping away from the simplicity of this Divine principle, and in *so far* as the consciences of saints have been brought under the power of this oversight unity theory, *they are not gathered into the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, but practically gathered under the auspices of the district oversight.*

I quite agree with you regarding the want of respect shown to an elder brother in the case you refer to. But this is characteristic of the whole movement. There is a spirit in it which is having a baneful effect on young men. This spirit is feeding the pride and self-confidence which is natural to all, and leading inexperienced and unbroken young men to forget that respect which is due to age and experience, and to assume a position in the Church of God for which they have not had time to attain to scriptural fitness. I fully believe, as you do, that the writers of the papers you refer to "devoutly wish to promote the honour of the Lord and the peace and blessing of the saints"; but I am at the same time convinced that the effect of their teaching will be to lead many young men into the snare of 1 Tim. iii. 6.

I do not see that argumentative writing on this question will do any good. To argue with some people gratifies their pride by giving them a fresh opportunity of showing their controversial powers. A ministration of "grace and

truth," in the unction of the Spirit, would accomplish much more than any amount of argument.

The best way of delivering saints from the wiles of the Adversary, and from human theories, is to feed them with freshly-gathered manna, and they will get tired of what gives no joy to the soul but only withers spiritual life.

I cannot close without remarking the danger of a *reaction* on the part of those who conscientiously reject this new phase of exclusivism. In thus refusing to own an ecclesiastical authority which is not of God, we are in imminent danger of giving up the endeavour to carry out Church order in its entirety and purity. I believe that those who have been careless as to whom and how they received into fellowship, and those who have fellowship with unscriptural associations on the principle of keeping back the truth of God, are largely responsible for driving many dear saints to the other extreme.

There is still one thought more which has been pressing itself on my heart lately; that is, the unwillingness of our proud hearts to take the place of utter weakness and failure and to own the complete ruin of Church testimony. This is to me in a great measure a new thought, and I feel the need of a larger measure of grace than I have ever experienced to enable me to confess the sin of one and all of us, and yet never to make our failure a reason for letting go one "jot or tittle" of the truth of God regarding the order of His house. I fear we have yet to learn how deeply we are debtors to grace, not only in saving us, but in teaching us the little we know; and did we see and own failure in the light of the presence of God, there would be little of that spirit about us which says, "We only are right, and all who differ from us are wrong."

We *are right* in as far as we are carrying out the *mind* of Christ, in fellowship with the *heart* of Christ, and no farther. As the days darken, and difficulties increase, nothing can possibly keep our feet in the "midst of the path" but an Enoch-like walk with God. Nothing but this Divine communion will enable us to love all believers according to Christ Jesus, and yet, in the exercise of that love, never set our feet upon "forbidden ground."

I am, yours in the blessed hope,

GEORGE ADAM.

## CONSCIOUS EXISTENCE of the WICKED.

I RETURN ———'s letter. I don't understand what he wants to make out. It is all negative. He must either mean that "death" is a termination of Conscious Existence, or else that the suffering of the wicked has a termination in the future at some time.

There is no occasion for *both* contentions. If death is a termination of conscious existence, then he may safely hold, with some of that school, that the punishment is *Eternal*. Such have no quarrel with the word "eternal."

If death is not a termination of conscious existence—if, therefore, the punishment is consciously endured suffering—where does he find Scripture for its termination? They all hop from the one perch to the other!

I have found no one who can get out of the dilemma consistently with any theory of annihilation.

J. R. C.

## Correspondence.

To the Editor of *The Witness*.

### CALEDONIAN BIBLE CARRIAGE.

I HAVE just had a few holidays, and having spent them with our brother Stack at the Caledonian Bible Carriage, thought a few notes as to the work would interest your readers.

I joined him at Walkerburn just in time to hear of good times there, and, having stayed over Lord's day, which was a specially good time, the preaching waggon moved on to Galashiels on Monday, August 3. The Market Square was our stand there, and in the evening we had the joy of preaching to several hundreds, chiefly young men, who listened very attentively. As our brother's hoary head was uncovered, and the Gospel told out from his lips, a very manifest interest was shown. Three nights were spent there, the Christians giving their fellowship and help in singing, and all seemed hopeful that the Word would not return void. The next movement was to Selkirk, where, in face of a holiday time in the town, the work was very encouraging. Thence we went on to Hawick in time to find the town quite in a stir owing to an agricultural show. Many country people were there, and the sons of Belial showed fight in various forms. The rain hindered a little, but Christ was preached and many Gospel books carried away, no doubt, for miles around. Surely in the day of Christ we shall find our brother has "not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."

This terminated my short tour for this time. Since then Jedburgh has been visited, and our brother (as I write) is in Kelso. May God bless the portions of His Word standing out so prominently on the carriage as it moves among the masses; and, I think I may add, it would be encouraging to know that the Lord's gathered

people were being more stirred up to prayer and practical sympathy in this arduous work, which, we believe, is presently hindered through wrong ideas as to the principle on which the work is carried on.

I am, yours in the Master's service,

A. B. GARDNER.

GLASGOW, August 19, 1891.

## Questions and Answers.

We desire to express our thanks to all who have sent answers.

We particularly request that each writer will give his name and address in full, not for publication, but that we may know who it is that seeks to help, and, if desirable, that we may communicate privately.

When more than one question is replied to, let the answer to each question be upon a separate piece of paper.

Replies to appear in the next number require to be sent in not later than 15th of present month, and so on; the 15th of the month being always the latest to which we can defer making up for press.

We again urge the importance of replies being *short*; it is essential, in this particular line of things, to be *concise*.

We shall greatly value remembrance in prayer that special wisdom and grace may be given for this service. THE EDITOR.

### Replies are invited to the following:—

In comparing Matthew xvii. 28 with Mark xv. 17 and John xix. 5, in one we get a "scarlet robe," in the others "purple." Why the difference?

What is the signification of the expression, "in the Lord"? Is it correct to say that only those gathered unto the Name of the Lord are "in the Lord"?

Is it possible for one to be "in Christ" and not "in the faith"?

Were the disciples "born again" before they received the Holy Spirit (John xx. 22)? Is being born again and the Holy Spirit taking up His abode in our hearts the same thing?

### WHERE AND WHAT IS PARADISE?

QUESTION 392.—Where and what is Paradise? Compare Luke xxiii. 43, Rom. x. 7, and Eph. iv. 9, with 2 Cor. xii. 4.

Ans. A.—The passages Luke xxiii. 43, Rom. x. 7, Eph. iv. 9, must be excluded from the question. The question is answered in 2 Cor. xii., where verse 4 should not be quoted apart from verse 2, for one verse explains the other, and determines the locality, if such a term may be allowed upon such a subject.

There are three heavens, viz., the lower heaven, in which are "the winds of heaven," "the fowls of heaven," and "the rain from heaven." The middle heaven, in which the starry host is disposed, and "the highest heaven," "the heaven of heavens," "the third heaven," the dwelling-place of God Almighty. "The third heaven" is, or it includes, "paradise," "the paradise of God."

As to the excluded passages, Luke xxiii. 43 is probably the cause of the question being asked, but Jesus did not explain His words, and we must take them as they are. Rom. x. 6-8 is an argument drawn from Deut. xxx. 11-14, and is in contrast to "the word of faith" which the apostle preached. Eph. iv. 9, 10, is a *parenthesis*, and must not be read with the main statements. It merely refers to the Lord's descent into

the earth, and His ascension "far above all heavens" to "the heaven of heavens," resurrection being implied, though not stated.

L. D. G.

Ans. B.—In Rom. x. 7 and Eph. iv. 9 allusion is made to the locality where the disembodied spirits of Old Testament saints were detained prior to the death of Christ (1 Sam. xxviii. 12-20). Christ having died, thus becoming the plague of death, and bringing destruction to the grave (Hosea xiii. 14, Heb. ii. 14), He descended *first* into the lower parts of the earth, and, re-ascending, He led back a multitude of captives (Psalm lxviii. 18, Eph. iv. 8) into the paradise mentioned in Luke xxiii. 43, 2 Cor. xii. 4. This paradise we believe to be the immediate presence of God, where Jesus presently is (Heb. ix. 24), and all unclothed spirits during this dispensation of mystery depart to be *with Him* (Phil. i. 23). Their absence *here* indicates their presence *yonder* (2 Cor. v. 8). Further, we believe that *Jesus Himself personally receives and unupbraidingly welcomes* every dismantled spirit (Acts vii. 59). Into this paradise the apostle was temporarily translated, and had abundance of revelation given him (2 Cor. xii.). Afterwards returning to earth, he "finished his course" (2 Tim. iv. 7) and was finally removed back to paradise, where he awaits "the voice of the archangel and the trump of God" (1 Thess. iv. 16). Paradise is three times mentioned in New Testament scripture—Luke xviii. 43, 2 Cor. xii., and Rev. ii. 7—where the happy overcomer will yet eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

T. B.

Ans. C.—Paradise is an Oriental word denoting a private enclosure or garden full of all that is beautiful and good. The kings' gardens in the East were commonly called paradises.

In the New Testament, paradise means the secret place of God's presence and delight; and as Christ is said to have gone *up* into heaven (Mark xvi. 19, Luke xxiv. 51), and to have *passed through the heavens*—doubtless into the third heaven—(Heb. iv. 14), there can be no doubt that paradise is situated in the third heaven *up* into which Paul was caught (2 Cor. xii. 2-4).

It may be interesting to point out that this event in Paul's life appears to have occurred about the time of his visit to Lystra (Acts xiv. 19, 20), and some think that he was caught up in spirit into paradise while he was supposed to be dead.

R. L. S.

### THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL SYSTEM.

QUESTION 393.—Does the Sunday school system (including Bible classes) rest upon any Scriptural principle? Because, if not, it would seem to be chargeable with being one of the questionable expedients of modernism.

Ans. A.—Sunday-schools for the young and Bible-classes for older persons rest upon a Scriptural principle which is two-fold—(1) that the Gospel is to be preached to every creature, and (2) that it is to be preached with discrimination of the aptitude of the hearers. The first principle is taught in the words, "God so loved the world," &c. (John iii. 16); the second rests upon Heb. v. 12-14, "For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age."

The latter text refers primarily to spiritual growth and age; but, if the principle is applicable in that case, *a fortiori* it applies to the babes in years and those of full age and intelligence, *naturally* speaking.

A sermon or address fitted for young children fails to arrest the attention of the adult, and *vice versa*.

This principle being perceived, we need not seek also a precept of Scripture or a precedent in Scriptural times. The principle is enough. It will be found applicable in much wider and more various ways than the question indicates. It has no doubt suggested, as it also justifies, such class-work as children's meetings, mothers' meetings, parents' meetings, young men's meetings, men-only meetings, police, soldiers', and sailors' meetings, midnight meetings, cab and 'bus men's meetings, &c. Let the gospel be preached by all means, to all persons, everywhere, but let it be preached in language specially fitted and under conditions specially suited for each several class. G. F. T.

**Ans. B.**—In Deut vi. 7 and Psalm lxxviii. 5-8 the instruction of children in the words and ways of God is distinctly enjoined. True, it is the proper business of parents to do this work, but seeing that we have fallen upon days when even the parents themselves are living without God, and leading their children to do likewise, it cannot but be pleasing to the Lord that those whose hearts He has stirred to look after the children should start Sunday schools and classes for the purposes of teaching them the Word of the Lord and seeking to lead them to Him. The exhortation in Gal. vi. 10, "to do good unto all," is sufficient authority for this and every other good work carried on in accordance with Scripture. R. L. S.

**Ans. C.**—There can be no doubt that the imparting to children a knowledge of "the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make them wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus," is a most blessed work, and when parents have neither the ability nor the desire to bring up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," it is surely well that those who have the time, and who have themselves "passed from death unto life," endeavour to supply, so far as the opportunity permits, the needed service to the little ones, always bearing in mind that no object short of leading them to Christ is worthy of that name. That this opens a vast field for real service to the Lord, is plain; but in this, as in all true service to Him, the essential principles are faith in and dependence on the Lord. How far "the Sunday-school system" assists or hinders the operation of individual faith and dependence is a serious question.

There is much self-denial, I am sure, and in many cases real desire, to serve the Lord; but it is doubtful whether there would not be more real fruit for God if there were less dependence on the expedients and organisation of man. G. A. S.

#### SECTARIAN SPIRIT.

**QUESTION 394.**—Does the apostle Paul express disapproval of the sectarian spirit in all the four parties named in the twelfth verse of 1st chapter of 1 Corinthians, or only of that in the three first named, who said they were "of Paul,"

"of Apollos," and "of Cephas"? or, in other words, Did those err also who said they were "of Christ"; and, if so, explain how?

**Ans. A.**—The apostle expresses disapproval of their contentions, as verse 11 shows. The four parties are all named, having their separate contention stated—"of Paul," "of Apollos," "of Cephas," "of Christ," so all are alike blameworthy. It is contention that causes division, and in verse 10 the apostle teaches, "That there be no divisions among you." But can it be wrong to be of Christ? Certainly not; but if we contend for it, so as to cause division, then it is wrong. They were contending for that which was the common property of all. "Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours" (chap. iii. 21-23). T. H. B.

**Ans. B.**—Yes; all four parties were alike wrong. What made their sectarianism worse was, that each party not only boasted in being "of Paul," "of Apollos," "of Cephas," "of Christ," but none of them gave the other credit for being right. Each using an emphatic *I*, he thereby cut off all others from *his* leader, saying in effect, "*I* am of Paul, but *you* are not," &c.

Now they were jointly "the Church of God which is at Corinth," and severally "sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints." All, therefore, who said, "*I* am of Christ," implied that those who said, "*I* am of Paul," &c., were not of Christ, thereby practically putting them outside "the Church of God." There were grave sins in the Church at Corinth, but none more so than this, and it is therefore *first* taken up and disposed of by the apostle.

The end of the matter is the exaltation of Christ far above Paul, Apollos, or Cephas, who are only put in the same category as "the world, life, death, things present, things to come," and of whom and of which the apostle says "the Church of God . . . at Corinth" had a *common* property; "all are *yours*." On the other hand, Christ is no longer irreverently linked with men, even though they be apostles, but exalted to the very throne of God—"Christ is God's." He has a *common* property in the whole Church at Corinth, no one saint being exalted above another: "*Ye* are Christ's."

The Holy Spirit of God, through the apostle, uses totally different language of the servants of Christ than He does of Christ Himself. W. H.

**Ans. C.**—That which the Holy Ghost, by the apostle, condemns in the saints at Corinth is that factious spirit which would make the ministers of Christ, and Christ Himself, to be heads of parties. Those who said they were of Christ were quite as guilty as those who said they were "of Paul," or "of Apollos," or "of Cephas," because they were making Christ the Head of a school or party, as though He could possibly be Head of anything less than the whole Church, which is His body. "Is Christ divided?"

To make Christ the Head of a party in opposition to other parties, though it may seem to honour Him, really dishonours Him. He must have the place which God has given Him, or none. See Eph. i. 22, 23, and compare Matt. xvii. 1-8. G. A. S.

## THE BASIS OF RECEPTION AND FELLOWSHIP.

THE divine principles which govern a dispensation may be departed from, or even reversed, by divine revelation. For example, the God-appointed separation between Jew and Gentile is abolished, the "middle wall of partition" is broken down in this age. The essential difference between the old covenant and the new—between the dispensation of law and that of grace—necessitated this and other equally radical changes in the divine legislation.

But within the limits of one dispensation, there may be advance or development in divine legislation, or, more properly, *adaptation* of the initial principles to varying conditions and circumstances; but essential change of principle or retrograde legislation there cannot be.

For example, in Exodus xii. 47, it is written concerning the Passover, "All the congregation of Israel shall keep it"; and the month Abib is specified as that in which it was to be kept (Exodus xii. 3; compare xiii. 4).

In Numbers ix. the first month of the second year has arrived, and the children of Israel are commanded to keep the Passover at the appointed season. But a circumstance has occurred which presents a difficulty. Certain persons were defiled by the dead body of a man. Such, according to Numbers v. 2 were to be temporarily placed outside the camp, and were thus deprived of the privileges of the congregation of Jehovah.

In the difficulty, God is sought unto; and the new condition that has arisen becomes the occasion of a fresh divine legislation, which is properly the adaptation of the original appointment to the new and altered circumstances.

In the case of defilement or absence on a journey preventing the observance of the Passover in the appointed season, it was to be observed in the second month.

Most interesting and instructive is the action of Hezekiah in 2 Chron. xxx., where the king, his princes, and all the congregation took counsel to keep the Passover in the second month.

The whole congregation took the place of the defiled. It was undoubtedly done in the

intelligence of faith, the result in them of the operation of the grace of God.

But, nevertheless, this was exceptional; it was an adaptation to special conditions; and the broad ground was not departed from, that the Passover was for all Israel. Therefore, the proclamation was sent "throughout all Israel, from Beersheba even unto Dan, that they should come to keep the Passover unto Jehovah God of Israel at Jerusalem."

No subsequent conditions or legislation could alter the original principle that every Israelite had a "*primâ facie*"\* right and responsibility to keep the Passover.

That there is an analogy between this Old Testament teaching and the teaching of the New Testament can hardly be disputed. In 1 Cor. xi. the Lord's own express command is recorded for the Church; and in chapter i. 2 it is made binding upon "all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." It is therefore indisputably the intention of the Lord that all His own—"the Church which He has purchased with His own blood"—should observe the Lord's Supper. Although New Testament legislation does not specify time and place, it is nevertheless very plain to those who have no preconceived opinions or traditional theories to hinder, that the fitting occasion is "the first day of the week" (Acts xx. 7); and that the place, is where the disciples are gathered, whether many or few, unto and in the name of the Lord. To this gathering and the observance of this ordinance every believer had the *primâ facie* right, and it was their responsibility to be there.

This principle remains unaltered and unalterable until the Lord comes, notwithstanding that changes of circumstances and conditions have brought forth divine limitations that modify the original idea, as to its practical working out. For example, in 1 Cor. v., the man who sinned was to be severed from the assembly. This was not in order to his destruction, but for his restoration, which probably did take place afterwards, if 2 Cor. ii. 7, etc., may be taken as referring to the same person. Here was a divine limitation preventing such characters as are specified from partaking of the feast, even although they may have been genuine children of God.

\* A legal term signifying "at first sight."

The ordinary phrase indicating who are to be received, viz., "All believers sound in faith and godly in walk," is unsatisfactory, for it may be taken to mean anything.

As 1 Cor. v. demands that fellowship in the feast be denied to persons guilty of evil practices, so equally do Gal. v. 9-12 and 2 Tim. ii. 16-19 demand the same exclusion of those holding fundamental error of doctrine.

But this is not all. In Matt. xviii. 15-18, one is to be ultimately given the place of "a heathen man and a publican." For what sin? None is specified. But the divinely appointed steps being taken, and taken in love and for restoration (not in carnality or vindictiveness), the proud, unbroken spirit is so manifested that it becomes apparent to all that fellowship with such in the things of God is an impossibility.

Again, there are the causers of division and stumbling-blocks contrary to the doctrine, (Rom. xvi. 17) to be avoided; and other such scriptures might be adduced.

With these before us, and taking into account the divisions, heresies, and lawlessness abounding in the present day, it must be evident that the utmost care and discernment are necessary if the keeping of the feast is to be in character conformed to the divine instructions.

But whilst all care and patience and discernment, especially on the part of those who are the guides, is requisite, the principle must never be departed from, that every believer has a "*primâ facie*" right to the fellowship, and that once the assembly be satisfied that the person is a believer he cannot be either expelled or rejected except there is plain scripture warranting such a course.

Let this simple, and we believe divine, basis of reception be departed from and it will soon become painfully evident that there is no middle course between it and the narrow, and ever narrowing demands of implicit and absolute subjection to the latest dogmas and sentences of the cleverest and strongest-willed of those who aspire to be leaders. Nay, more; the latest "question" which has arisen and been used by Satan to split an assembly into two or more fragments, will become a universal super-added test by which to determine the possibility or impossibility of fellowship.

Many do not see whither they are drifting. Having departed from Scriptural simplicity, they have accepted inch by inch, as a necessary sequence, the dicta of their authorities; and will go on to do so until some decision is arrived at too monstrous to be taken without question.

If after lengthened calculations a mathematical or arithmetical result is arrived at that is palpably incorrect, it is surely time to revise the processes by which the result was reached.

If we are called upon as the result of processes of reasoning to reject and treat as heathens and publicans, with whom there can be no fellowship in the things of God, the godliest men we know, it is time to review in the presence of God, every step by which such a conclusion has been arrived at. J. R. C.

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### CHRIST'S GREAT ALLEGORY.

John x. 1-18.

BY J. HIXON IRVING.

THE SHEEP.

THAT there are two flocks of "sheep" mentioned by our Lord in this discourse is plain: first, one in the fold which was afterwards led out of it (vs. 3, 4); and second, one which was never in the fold and never will be (v. 16). The former were believing Jews, and the latter were believing Gentiles. The first alone at that time had an existence; the second, only in the purpose of the Shepherd. Those in the fold were a baptised, believing remnant out of the nation; not the whole nation, again we repeat, "Ye are not of My sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me" (vs. 26, 27). His sheep were inside the fold, and He entered it in order to lead them out.

They were part of that "election of grace" which is again and again spoken of in the writings of Paul. If in the Spirit he looked at the descendants of Abraham, he could see two seeds, one "heirs according to the promise" (Gal. iii. 29). Or at the sons of Israel, he was compelled to say, "They are not all Israel, who are of Israel" (Rom. ix. 6): some were "Israelites indeed," like Nathanael the upright (Jno. i. 47). Or, once more, if at the seed of Judah, he was constrained to write, "He is

not a Jew, which is one outwardly . . . . but he is a Jew which is one *inwardly*" (Rom. ii. 28, 29). Those in the fold were heirs of the promise, without guile, and Jews "*inwardly*"; composed of such as the Josephs and Marys, the Zachariahs and Elizabeths, the Simeons and Annas, who were, with straining eye and hopeful heart looking and longing for the "Consolation of Israel." They had, or at least many of them had, been starved by the shepherds of Israel, who fed themselves, but fed not the flock; they had been fleeced by the hirelings, who loved the fleece more than the flock; they had become a prey for thieves and robbers.

But now the True Shepherd has come—come to gather them, to feed, protect, and lead them out into liberty. Can we imagine the joy of heart which would be experienced by those holy souls when they recognised, in the youthful Nazarene, the "Shepherd of Israel," for whom some of them had waited so long, and for whom all of them longed so intensely?—the joy ever increasing as He gave them living water and living bread; as He bestowed rest to the weary and comfort to the mourner; as He dried the tear from the cheek of the bereaved, and lifted the heavy, crushing load of infirmity and disease from the bodies of some, and also caused death to relax his grasp, and gave others back again to weeping friends. Or the thrill of joy that would pass through those who had been baptised unto repentance, unto the remission of sins, when they heard His pitiful voice saying unto them, "Your sins are forgiven you; go in peace, and sin no more."

When Naomi left Bethlehem, she "went out full"; but when she returned, she returned "empty" (Ruth i. 21). In contrast to that, our Lord entered the fold of the sheep "empty," but came out "full." He went in for His sheep, and brought them out with Him—rescued them from the false and faithless shepherds of the nation. "He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. When He putteth forth *all His own*, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him: for they know His voice" (vs. 3, 4, R.V.). They were led out of Judaism by our Lord. He was virtually outside it long before His public rejection. Disowned by the leaders of the

people—blind leaders of the blind—He disowned them in return. He saw in the cast-out, healed one—cast out of the synagogue—not only one of His own sheep, but He saw in him His own rejection set forth; and hence, in the end of the allegory, He is seen as outside the fold with the sheep. And it is in the outside place He becomes

THE DOOR OF THE SHEEP (vs. 7-9),

the antitype of the gate, door, and veil of the Tabernacle; as the way out of sin unto salvation—from bondage unto liberty—death unto life—and earth into heaven.

There can scarcely be any doubt, but that He is here seen as bestowing the very opposite of that which the sheep found in Judaism. Under the law they had been, but instead of finding life under it they found death. They, in common with all the rest of the nation, had broken it, and hence were under its sentence. John's baptism was the symbol of that death. Our Lord gave life to such as owned Him as their Shepherd: "By Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved" (v. 9). Death from the law, but life in Christ.

The law was, too, a "yoke of bondage" (Gal. v. 1). Liberty was not known under it, but believers in the Lord find in Him the very opposite of that: "They shall go in and out." Not in and out of the fold; not in and out of Christ; but in and out as to liberty. The law of love, which is the perfect law of liberty, is the only one which the true believer is under.

It was starvation under the law: "the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not the flock." But the True Shepherd feeds His sheep under His care: "they find pasture." They revel in a "fat pasture"; yea, they "lie down in pastures of tender grass."

Thus we see the remnant found under law—bondage, starvation, and death; but under the Shepherd—liberty, food, and life. Would to God all who are His were content with the food He bestows upon them: content with the unadulterated truth; satisfied with that which alone is capable of feeding the soul and satisfying the life; that which alone can give strength for suffering and service.

Later on our Lord, as the Shepherd, is seen in contrast to the "idol shepherd"

and "foolish shepherds" of Israel; whilst as the Door of the sheep He is revealed in opposition to Judaism as a system disowned of God and rejected. But as

#### THE GOOD SHEPHERD

He unfolds Himself as the very opposite of the "hireling" (vs. 11-15), who has no sheep of his own, and cares not for those under his charge, but in the time of danger leaves the sheep and flees to save himself.

There are two principal things in the heart of this, His matchless teaching, in reference to Himself and His own. The first is—*The intimate and perfect knowledge He has of them all*. This by Him is compared to the knowledge which the Father has of the Son; and again, that which the Son has of the Father. This intimacy is perfect; this knowledge is without limit. As He is known by the Father, so He knows His own—their place, number, need, weakness, difficulties, enemies, and dangers. Oh, how comforting, how refreshing is the thought that He knows us so well, and is so well able to succour us in every time of need. Tried, perplexed, tempted fellow-saint, take courage; strengthen thyself in this, He who knows thee, loves thee—loves thee too well to leave thee a prey to thy need. "Mine own know Me" (R.V.). Know Him, then, as thy sufficiency, and His peace will be thy portion.

The second thing is—*The love that led Him to lay down His life for them*. Here is one out of many anticipations of our Lord as given in this portion of His teaching. Here he is outside Judaism. Just as outside the fold He became the Door of the sheep; so outside He becomes the Good Shepherd. He calmly speaks of His death—speaks of it as if it were joy instead of sorrow, bliss instead of pain. Whilst He laid down His life in obedience to His Father's commandment (v. 18), yet it was in the highest sense a voluntary death. Five times over He said in effect, "I lay down My life of Myself" (vs. 11, 15, 17, 18). All He did for the salvation of the sheep was done of His own free will. Leaving the glory, riches, honour, praise, and power, of heaven freely; becoming lowly, poor, despised, lonely and sorrowing willingly. Meeting the malice of men—bowing to the shame and suffering of the

Cross—taking sin upon His sinless soul—dying and entering the grave—was all, all done in the most perfect willingness of heart.

In this laying down His life and taking it again, we have the strongest possible proof of His divine and human nature.

"I lay down My life for the sheep" (vs. 11-15). Our Shepherd's work upon the Cross was substitutionary. Through death He dealt with the claims of the law, which was, in itself, holy, just, and good, and by bearing its curse, for ever liberating from its bondage, and death His own who were under it and who had failed to keep it. Through death He put away sin before the holy and righteous God; nay, He bore the sins, individual sins, of believers, thus securing their salvation. Through it He became victorious over the one who had the power over it—the Devil—that He might "deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. ii. 14, 15, R.V.); thus securing the life of the flock. And because He gave His life for the sheep, they can never, never perish.

#### ONE FLOCK.

In the New Testament we see the flock looked at in a fourfold way. In the Gospels, everywhere but in John x. 16, it is the godly remnant of our Lord's day, the representatives of which were addressed by Him thus, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke xii. 32). This remnant was incorporated into the one flock at Pentecost. Next we have the "flock" locally, as at Ephesus. There might have been many assemblies there, but God recognised but one flock and one assembly (Acts xx. 28). Again it is seen as a more widely-extended thing, scattered over the five Roman provinces of Asia, Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, and Bithynia (1 Peter v. 1-4). Yet it is seen as one flock—not flocks. The only remaining mention of it is in the verse before us, and it is there seen in its universality, and as covering the whole of this age, from the incorporation of the Jewish flock, led out of the ordered walls of Judaism by the Lord Himself, till the last gathered-one shall be added before He appears as the "Chief Shepherd" giving rewards to faithful under-shepherds, who, during His absence, have

carefully fed the flock. It is co-extensive with the "One New Man," Jew and Gentile, reconciled to one another, and to God by the death of the Lord Jesus (Eph. ii. 15-17); and with the "One Body," formed by the Lord in One Spirit (1 Cor. xii. 12).

Every true believer has a place in this gathered thing; none are outside; all are inside. To attempt to narrow it down to those, and those only, who are outside the walls of sectarian "folds," whether they be folds of ancient or modern construction, is sectarianism of the subtlest kind, and betokens an unjudged condition of soul, which, if allowed to go on, must bear bitter fruit. There is a sad, sad possibility of the most scriptural of all positions being held in the most sectarian of all spirits; the only antidote to which is an imbument of mind with the changeless, deathless love of the Good Shepherd, who laid down His life for the sheep. But to return, not one for whom He became a substitute in death will He fail in gathering to Himself. Those two pregnant sentences of His, "I *have*," and "I *must*," are surely proofs of that. All those upon whom He has set His love He will lay His hand and gather them to Himself, into His "one flock." And beloved, if we would be used by Him in that most blessed work of gathering His sheep out of the wilds of this world, we must have His love constraining us in every effort. If we, too, would be successful in getting believers to acknowledge Christ as Lord, we must be in all things ourselves in obedience to Him. It is the loving and the loyal whom the Lord delights thus to use in His service.

(To be concluded in next Number.)

## "WAR WITH THE LAMB."

### I. THE CONFLICT.

WITHOUT for a moment questioning that the strict interpretation of Rev. xvii. 14 carries us on to the future, we may unhesitatingly say that few words could more truly describe the nature of the conflict that is being waged in the present day than the statement, "*These shall make war with the Lamb.*" For it is particularly in His character as the LAMB OF GOD that men are opposing the Lord Jesus. This opposition is the more

subtle because it is not avowed; it comes not from those who disown the name of Christ, but from those who bear it. A vast number of the religious teachers of the day, some of them men of ability and human culture, are most strenuously resisting the great truth of the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, while by many others it is ignored.

They will talk about the *life* of Christ, and will make much of its perfectness, talking oftentimes as if the Holy One were merely human; but the truth of His *Godhead* they evade, and in His character as *the Lamb* they will have none of Him. Thus in spite of great pretensions about "loyalty to Christ," it is very clear that though they may be loyal to a Christ of their own imagination, they stand among the foes of the Christ of God.

The Lord Jesus said of John the Baptist, "He hath borne witness unto the truth" (John v. 33); but what was that witness? It was the special privilege of John to introduce Christ to Israel, and the word by which he did so was this, "Behold the *Lamb of God* which taketh away the sin of the world!" And closely linked with that proclamation is the further testimony, "I have seen and have borne witness that this is the *Son of God*" (John i. 29, 34, R.V.). These two great truths go together, and it will be found that they are denied or ignored together. Only He who was the Son of God, in a sense in which no creature could be, could become the Lamb of God. No created being could take upon him the load of guilt which must be borne and put away, if sinners were to be saved. To Him alone whom Jehovah could own as His "Fellow" (Zech. xiii. 7) could He commit this mighty work. Deny the peculiar character of the death of Christ, as meeting the requirements of God's justice with regard to sin, and you rob the title "*Lamb of God*" of all its meaning.

### II. THE VICTORY.

But though men may make war with the Lamb, there is, thank God, no uncertainty about the issue, for it is written, "*The Lamb shall overcome them.*" The finished work of Christ is a fact, and the Word that declares it shall abide when heaven and earth shall have passed away, and every foe is silent in darkness

The Gospel stands, and shall stand in spite of all opposition, till it has accomplished all that God purposes to accomplish by it. Men know not the dignity and power of Him whom they withstand. He is "King of kings, and Lord of lords." Supreme authority is His, and if He allows the conflict to go on, it is because He has great designs to fulfil, and will reap eternal glory thereby. It is, further, a great token of His patience and long-suffering, for He could, if He chose, instantly silence every opposing voice and crush every rebellious spirit.

### III. THE VICTOR'S ASSOCIATES.

The victory is *His*; "His right hand and His holy arm" alone could obtain it; but in His grace He is pleased to associate others with Himself. The great question for every one of us who name the name of Christ is: Are we fitly described by the words, "They that are *with Him*"? Are we cleaving to His name? Are we holding fast His Word? Are we making much of Him as *the Lamb of God*? Is it our delight to consider Him as the Lamb *on the cross*, and to behold Him as the Lamb *on the throne*? It is only as a growing sense of our deep need leads to deeper appreciation of the infinite worth of His mighty sacrifice that we shall, with a becoming spirit, "contend for the faith" on this point. And only as we are proving what He is to us as the *Lamb of God*, shall we present Him with power and grace to others.

Christ's true followers are here said to be "called and chosen and faithful," and of their faithfulness it is His prerogative to be the sole judge. Not every prominent man is faithful, and not every faithful man is prominent. We rejoice when a voice that is heard far and wide bears witness for the truth; but let us not forget that the Lord's eye is upon those who do so year after year in comparative obscurity, looked down upon perhaps as narrow and bigoted, simply because in their endeavour to be "*with Him*," they refuse any other name than His, and shun paths where popularity might be found.

We are called to "fight the good fight of faith," and the "weapons of our warfare are not carnal." The best training for conflict is the diligent endeavour that our hearts may be *sound* in God's statutes, and that we may have

respect unto *all* His commandments—two things that will prevent our being ashamed, either now or in "that day" (Ps. cxix. 6, 80). Thus shall we become "meet for the Master's use," and whether He call us to a service that is comparatively hidden, or to that which is more public, we shall rejoice to be doing *His* will. We shall also ever bear in mind that His present ministry is one of *intercession*, and in this we shall seek to be "*with Him*." If we "have chosen the way of truth," we shall remember that it is by His grace we have done so, and shall feel that it becomes us to pray much for those who suffer from the many subtle assaults now being made on the truth of God, and also for those who seek to maintain that truth. Thus being "*with Him*" in the conflict, we shall soon be "*with Him*" in the victory, and "*with Him*" in His eternal joy.

W. H. B.

### MUSINGS.

CAN. v. 2.

I THOUGHT I saw them crown Thee, Jesus, Lord—  
Crowns of salvation on Thy blessed brow!  
Where once the thorns were bound, what glory now!  
And to the depths my longing soul was stirred.  
For o'er her sleep of death the light of love,  
Shed from the bosom of Thy God above,  
Had dawned, and shown that Thou Thyself hadst given  
To make me meet for love and light and heaven:  
Taking my cup, so full of guilt and shame,  
Making me heir of God in Thy dear name,  
And in my heart the deeper anguishw ell'd,  
For my faint hands nor crown nor offering held!

Again the still small voice, Thy whispered word,  
Known in adversity, my spirit stirr'd,  
"Ask what ye will." And so I bowed my head,  
Weary yet trusting, at Thy feet, and there  
Poured forth the unuttered groaning of my prayer.  
I went my way, how calmed and comforted,  
For God, Thy God, shall crown Thee in "that day"  
Beyond our utmost thought. All good and ill,  
All earth and heaven, shall lend a helping ray,  
And with the glories of Thy name shall fill  
The endless ages, and my soul shall see,  
And lose her longings evermore in Thee! A. E. W.

### A NOBLEMAN'S TESTIMONY.

The late Earl of Shaftesbury, at a conference of Christians in London, said that he had been identified with a great many humanising influences and activities during half a century, but the more he saw men improved in that way he saw that they were getting farther from God.

PERSONAL TYPES OF CHRIST.—V.

## ISAAC.

ISAAC may be viewed both as a type of Christ and of believers of this dispensation (Gal. iii. 16, Gal. iv. 22-31). It is as the former he now passes in review. And we will look at Isaac as foreshadowing our Lord in four particulars—as *Son, Sacrifice, Bridegroom, and Heir*.

I. AS SON. In Gen. xxii. 2 Isaac is called by the Lord Abraham's *only* son. Why was this? Ishmael was certainly Abraham's son, and he was older than Isaac. I think it was intended by God to show that Isaac was the only son He could acknowledge, and Isaac evidently had a place in his father's heart which none other of Abraham's sons enjoyed. This faintly foreshadowed the love of the eternal Father for His "only begotten Son." Isaac was the one in whom Jehovah's promises and purposes centred. "In Isaac shall thy seed be called."

It is evident, then, that Isaac, is to be viewed as a son of Abraham in a very special sense; and the New Testament reveals that

CHRIST IS THE SON OF GOD IN A PARTICULAR AND UNIQUE SENSE.

In the Scriptures Christ is invariably spoken of as the Son of God in a way that no mere creature, however high, could be so called. He was *the Son* even before He took upon Him human nature. Notice the beautiful accuracy of the written word: "Unto us a *child is born*, unto us a *son is given*" (Isa. ix. 6). Thus Christ is the Son of God in reference to His Divine nature. In this He is "the only begotten Son" (John iii. 16). The Son possesses the same nature as the Father, and is equally *God* with the Father. All the Divine fulness has been pleased to dwell in Christ (Col. i. 19, R.V. mar.); and for this He must be God. He is *essentially* the image and glory of God. (Read Heb. i. 1-4, and compare the "who being" of verse 3 with the "being made" of verse 4 and the "hath appointed" of verse 2.) In a word, He is

JEHOVAH'S FELLOW.

Christ is also the Son of God *as to His human nature*. The utterance to Mary was, "That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called *the Son of God*" (Luke i. 35).

It is in this aspect our type comes in. God *promised* Isaac to Abraham and Sarah; God *promised* Christ to our first parents, and again and again renewed the promise as the weary ages rolled on. Isaac was *waited for*; and so Christ. And how long! For centuries and millenniums faith waits, yet He does not appear. Sin matures, iniquity abounds, but at last, in the fulness of time, the long-promised, long-expected Deliverer comes forth! Truly, man's extremity was God's opportunity!

Isaac's name was given him before his birth; so with the great Antitype. Isaac (*laughter*) spoke of the joy there would be at his birth. The joy at Isaac's birth was confined to a very few; but what millions have, and will, rejoice in the birth of the Lord Jesus! (Luke ii. 8-14.) The birth of Isaac was something above nature; the birth of Christ is, confessedly, the great mystery of Christianity (1 Timothy iii. 16).

The Incarnation—God having become man—is a fact; we believe it, not because we can understand it, but because God has revealed it. With the wise men of old let us bow in worship at the feet of Mary's first-born; yea, with the expanded faith of him who can no longer be called "doubting Thomas," let us look upon the face of the risen Son of God, and, with the warmth of a true affection and power of a living faith, say,

"MY LORD AND MY GOD."

And thus shall we share the greater happiness of those "who have not seen and yet have believed."

II. AS THE SACRIFICE. Only as *the Son* could our Lord be *the Sacrifice*. From the beginning God made known the necessity of the atonement; He also revealed His purpose of providing a sacrifice that would both meet the demands of justice and the requirements of the sinner. Multitudes of sacrifices, all of which pointed to *the sacrifice*, were constantly offered. But there was to be one important feature, in the sacrifice God would provide, which these could not foreshadow, viz., its *voluntary* character. An animal became a sacrifice because it had not the power to resist. But this missing feature is to be supplied; hence that strange command, "Take now thy son . . . and offer him there for a burnt-offering" (Gen. xxii. 2). We are now, briefly,

dwelling on this scene—Gen. xxii. 1-14—in its typical aspect only.

We notice, first, that Isaac was of such an age that, had he desired, he could have successfully resisted the efforts of Abraham to bind him and lay him on the altar. We have seen pictures of this transaction which are entirely misleading:—Isaac is represented as a young lad of twelve or fourteen, who could not, if he had wished, escape from his father. All who have carefully studied the matter agree that at this time Isaac was a young man, probably twenty or twenty-five years of age. When this is apprehended, the beauty and fulness of the type are manifest. Isaac was willing to suffer the will of his father even though it led to an early and painful death.

From one standpoint we may speak of Christ as God's love-gift to a guilty world; from another, we learn that "Christ loved the Church and GAVE HIMSELF for it." Concerning the giving up His life He said, "No one taketh it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself" (John x. 18). At any moment between the manger and the cross, the Son could have returned to the Father. Of course, in thus speaking we have not God's purposes in view, but Christ's spotless person. Not till the cross was sin laid on Him; and not till then did Jehovah treat Him as the sin-victim. In the climax of the typical scene God spared Abraham and Isaac that which

#### HE WOULD NOT SPARE HIMSELF AND CHRIST.

In *purpose* Isaac was offered up; God reckons it so, taking the will for the deed (see Gen. xxii. 12-16; Heb. xi. 17-19). But though in purpose Abraham did it, he was not permitted to do it actually. A substitute was provided; Isaac was free. Not so, however, at the cross: "God *spared not* His own Son, but gave Him up for us all." He *spared* Abraham's son; but *Jesus* was not spared one stroke of the rod, one farthing of the debt. No voice was heard at Calvary, saying, "Stay Thy hand!" Instead, the voice of the Eternal sounded forth, "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, against the man that is my fellow, saith Jehovah of Hosts" (Zech. xiii. 7).

In view of the terrible doom he expected, Isaac had no one to sympathise with him. The servants accompanied them some distance,

but when they came in sight of the place they were left behind. Father and son were alone; and now the father must not compassionate, but must steel his heart and nerve his arm to plunge the knife into the heart of his Isaac.

And Christ was ALONE. There never was, there never can be, such awful loneliness as that which Christ suffered. He looked *around* to His disciples, from whom He might naturally have looked for sympathy, but "they all forsook Him and fled." In brokenness of Spirit, He said, "I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none (Ps. lxxix. 20). He looked *up*, but, what was never known before, even God hides His face from Him; and He cries in bitterness of soul, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

O my soul! how canst thou meditate on this without thy heart bursting with grief, thine eyes overflowing with tears? We may well ask, with Bernard of Clairvaux,

"What language shall I borrow  
To praise Thee, heavenly Friend,  
For this Thy dying sorrow,  
Thy pity without end?"

And we may add the petition which contains a Spirit-begotten resolve—

"O LET ME NEVER, NEVER  
ABUSE SUCH DYING LOVE."

(Sections III. and IV. in next Number.)

J. N. C.

#### POSITION AND CONDITION.

A wrong *condition* which is inward is even more defiling to the soul and more injurious to spiritual life than a wrong *position* which is outward. Thus we praise God for the unsectarian condition of soul of many who are still held in the bonds of a sectarian position, while we mourn over the sectarian condition of some who boast of an unsectarian position.

#### ASSUMPTION OF AUTHORITY.

All experience has shown that the assumption of authority leads to pride, to departure from the truth, and often to apostasy. It is as true in assemblies as in our personal experience that when we are weak then only are we strong.

#### CONSCIENCE AND HUMAN AUTHORITY.

If we submit our consciences to any human authority, the path is easy; but in so far as we do so, Christ is not our Lord.

## The Seven Churches of Revelation.

## V. SARDIS ("THOSE ESCAPING").

A S prisoners longing to be free  
 To breathe the air of liberty ;  
 As those who watch for morning light,  
 'Mid gloomy terrors of the night ;  
 As storm-tossed sailors, tempest driven,  
 Their cable snapped, their canvas riven,  
 Wish the long voyage to be o'er,  
 And hail with joy the distant shore :  
 So 'mid the shades of papal night  
 Some eyes were longing for the light,  
 Some spirits hungered to be fed  
 With God's own pure and heavenly bread ;  
 And groaning 'neath the oppressors' sway,  
 They secretly for light did pray.  
 God heard their cry, the inward groan  
 Rose up like incense to His throne,  
 Until in His own sovereign way  
 He ushered in the dawn of day.

Huss, in Bohemia, raised his voice,  
 And called the people to rejoice  
 In God's salvation, full and free.  
 "'Tis Jesus saves, and only He,"  
 Became the burden of his cry,  
 Till called among the flames to die.  
 Yet the fierce fury of that blaze  
 The beacon light of truth did raise,  
 Till like the sunrise clear and bright  
 It put the darksome shades to flight.

As time went on, at last there rose  
 For God, against His people's foes,  
 A hero of undaunted brow,  
 Refusing to Rome's gods to bow.  
 The voice of Jesus he had heard,  
 Through feeding on the Living Word ;  
 Had felt the light and joy and love  
 Of Christ within his spirit move ;  
 Had known at last true rest and peace,  
 When taught from his own works to cease ;  
 Had learned at last, with glad surprise,  
 That FAITH IN JESUS JUSTIFIES.  
 This truth set Martin Luther free  
 From bondage and idolatry.  
 For had he not, with aching bones,  
 Been climbing up St. Peter's stones ?  
 To him this penance had been given,  
 To cancel sin and purchase heaven ;  
 When suddenly within his soul

A light from God's own Spirit stole ;  
 A voice within his spirit spoke,  
 The silence of his soul it broke—  
 "The just shall live by faith," it said.  
 And Luther rose as from the dead,  
 To publish both with tongue and pen  
 God's glad good news to fallen men ;  
 Till Germany at last was free,  
 And ceased to Rome to bow the knee,  
 While vile indulgences for sin  
 No more the people's gold could win.

In other lands the truth fast spread,  
 And martyrs' blood was freely shed ;  
 But still the Living Word prevailed,  
 Though by fierce enemies assailed.  
 Wycliffe, to English memory dear,  
 Regardless of Rome's threats severe,  
 Gave England, in her native tongue,  
 God's precious Word, that old and young,  
 And rich and poor, both high and low,  
 Might read and God's salvation know.  
 While Tyndale, of a later date,  
 Well knowing what might be his fate,  
 In language all could understand  
 Sent forth the Scriptures through the land.  
 It cost him liberty and life—  
 And many a hero in that strife  
 Of light with darkness gained a crown  
 Of life ; they braved the hellish frown  
 Which sent them to the fiery stake  
 For Jesus' and the Gospel's sake.

But time would fail, and also space,  
 To mention every name and place :  
 As Knox and Cameron, mighty men,  
 Whose voices over moor and glen,  
 In Scotland, sounded loud and clear,  
 In tones that made the sovereign fear.  
 "For Knox's prayers," the queen would say,  
 "Fill me with dread and more dismay  
 Than a great army's swift advance,  
 With spear and shield and glittering lance."  
 There many a martyr's blood was shed,  
 Oft was the purple heath dyed red ;  
 And oft the blazing faggots piled  
 Round silvered head and blooming child.  
 What though their ashes scattered lie ?  
 The poured out blood has still a cry  
 Which reaches even to the throne  
 Of Him to whom belongs alone  
 That vengeance which His mighty power  
 Will bring on Rome in one short hour.

## NOTES ON HABAKKUK.

Rome's power was broken in those lands ;  
 Both church and state shook off her bands.  
 Yet still they to each other clave,  
 And each to each support still gave.  
 Head of the Church, the title given  
 Alone to Christ, the Lord in heaven,  
 On earthly sovereigns was conferred.  
 Hence then to Sardis comes this word  
 From Him who has at His command  
 Seven spirits, and within His hand  
 Holds safe the mystic stars whose light  
 Should have illumed earth's sable night :

" I know thy works, a name thou hast  
 To live, but living days are past  
 With thee ; be watchful and make strong  
 The few things that to thee belong,  
 Or even they will soon be dead  
 And darkness close around thy head.  
 No work of thine I've perfect seen  
 Before My God, nor hast thou been  
 A witness to thy standard true ;  
 Though e'en in thee there are a few  
 Who faithful to My Word have been,  
 Their robes preserved from error clean ;  
 Themselves thus proving sons of light,  
 And they shall walk with Me in white.  
 Remember how thou hast received  
 That Word of Life ; what those achieved  
 To make it thine ; how dearly bought  
 Those truths for which the martyrs fought.  
 Hold fast what little still remains,  
 Break free from error's subtle chains,  
 Lest coming on thee unaware  
 My advent prove to thee a snare."

Who may in Sardis have an ear,  
 Let them these words of warning hear ;  
 Cleave to God's Word with purpose true,  
 And be among the faithful few  
 To whom white raiment shall be given,  
 Whose names are registered in heaven.

A. W. P. S.

To change our opinion is not necessarily a proof of inconsistency; it may only be the admission that something has been learned to-day, of which we were ignorant yesterday.

PERFECT love considers only its object, imperfect love considers also itself. Wherever self has a place there will be change. Hence the love of God is unchangeable, being perfect. Our love is like the ebb and flow of the tide.

**CHAPTER I.** verse 1—"The burden," &c. The prophet mourns over the degraded moral condition of Judah and Jerusalem (probably in the latter days of the people before the captivity in Babylon).

Verses 2-4—His complaint to God of the lawlessness existing, justice perverted, and no notice taken apparently by God of such iniquity. Compare Ps. lxxiii.

Verses 5-11—He is informed that God is preparing the Chaldeans as a scourge, even in his own days, raising them up to a great power to accomplish His ends. Nothing withstands their progress—they take captives (verse 9) as many as the sand—no king can stop them—no stronghold can hold out, for (verse 10) they raise up mounds of earth and take them—then, elated by his success, their king will deem that his idol god has empowered him, thus bringing him under the wrath of God (compare Isaiah x., xiv. ; Daniel iv.).

Verses 12-17—The prophet pleads that the impious oppressor shall not be left unpunished, though he be used as a rod by God for the time.

Verses 15-17 describe the way in which the proud King of Babylon acts, and his glorying in his might and power to overcome the nations—taking them as fish in a net—emptying it, and then casting it for more.

**Chapter ii.**—The prophet takes the place of a watchman on the watch-tower, waiting for tidings in answer to his prayer (verse 1), what God will say, and how he is to answer in regard to his complaint. Doubtless the meaning is that many were asking him why God allowed things to be so, and he in his prayer is but speaking the thoughts of many others besides himself. He waits, therefore, for God's explanation, so that he may tell it to inquirers.

Verse 2—The Lord answers him, and tells him to write down the answer *legibly*, so that even one running might be able to read it.\*

Verse 3—It will be long before it be fulfilled, but it will certainly be, so he is enjoined to wait in certain hope.

Verse 4 seems to be a reproof against any

\* [We take this rather to mean that all may read it, and therefore run as one fleeing for refuge.—ED.]

presumption either in disowning God's judgments or doubting His ways, and points out that the just, *i. e.*, the truly righteous, will always live by wholly trusting in God.

Verses 5—The *character* of the king is depicted: a drunkard, proud, restless, rapacious, he is insatiable in his desires.

Verse 6—But the time comes when the people he has oppressed shall taunt him.

Verse 7—He shall suddenly be overthrown, and his very palaces shall testify to the evil whereby he sought to (verses 9-11) establish his kingdom for his own personal gratification. Woe unto him!

Verse 13—Is it not part of the Lord's plans that the people have only laboured for that which is to be burned (as Babylon was)—laboured for very vanity?

Verse 14—For they, the Chaldeans, shall pass away, and all their pride and glory; while the knowledge of the one true God shall cover the earth. (Verses 15-16) Woe to the one who degradeth the people to his own level of foul, bestial conduct. The Lord's cup of wrath shall be poured out on such a one, and his glory shall be brought into (verse 17) the mire. For the violence thou has done to Lebanon shall cover thee, and thou shalt be desolate, for all that thou hast done to others like vengeance shall be on thee.

Verses 15-20—The idols and their priests and oracles are useless, they lie, but Jehovah lives. Let all be hushed before Him. "Let all the earth keep silence before Him," for when He speaks, none may presume to deny that His Word alone is truth.

**Chapter iii. 1.**—"A prayer," or psalm, for public use—"Shigionoth"—may refer to the occasions when such should be used, but the meaning is uncertain.

Verse 2—"O Lord, I have heard Thy speech"—that is, Thy revelation as to what is to take place—"and was afraid: O Lord, revive Thy work"—Thy work of spiritual good. In the midst of the years of chastening, while executing Thy just wrath on us, as a nation, for our sins, remember and make known Thy wanted mercy.

Verses 3-6—God came from Teman, from Paran—illustrating the fact that God was with His people all through the wilderness—in glory and in power, like the rising sun's rays,

yet but partially revealing Himself, sending the pestilence and fever as His agents of wrath. He stands and considers the land, scattering the power of the tribes, and teaching them His power. His ways are fixed, and on principles of eternal justice.

Verses 7-11—"I saw," says the prophet, "the tents of Cushan in affliction": the Midianites also trembling (Judges iii., vi., and vii.). The whole of nature seemed convulsed when Thou didst draw forth Thy bow from its case, and force the tribes to act as Thy instruments of vengeance to execute Thy will. Sun and moon shrank back, as the lightning of Thy wrath went forth.

Verses 12-15—Thou didst march through the land in indignation, threshing the tribes of the heathen in anger. When Thou wentest forth for the salvation, even for the salvation of *Thy* chosen and anointed people, Thou didst totally destroy from the foundation up to the neck. Thou didst pierce through the very leaders. They came out to scatter, exulting; but Thou didst overcome them as a mighty conqueror. Thus the prophet describes the coming of the Chaldeans to devour; but God interposing, as He had done before, and scattering them as Pharaoh and his hosts were scattered.

Verse 16—The prophet describes his own trembling at the awful judgments which were coming, knowing he would have to abide the sorrow with his people.

Verse 17—Yet he is able, by faith, to say, although he be stripped, in the calamities, of every earthly possession, he will never mistrust God (verses 18 to 20), but rejoice in Him, who will enable him to triumph; and this song he gives to the chief singers of God to be kept as a memorial (Rom. viii. 31-39).

A. O. M.

#### SAINT AND WORLDLING.

Paul's faith stood in that which was written, his hope was toward God, and his constant occupation exercising himself to have a "conscience void of offence toward God, and toward man." As for Felix, faith he had none; his hope was for money, and his occupation to please himself and men (see Acts xxiv. 14-16 and 24-27). The difference between the saint and the worldling is still the same.

## REMARKS ON OVERSIGHT, OR RULE.

“THE God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of the Lord.”

When Jehoshaphat brought back the people unto the Lord God of their fathers, he set judges in the land, and said unto them, “Let the fear of the Lord be upon you.” “Moreover, he set of the Levites, and of the priests, and of the chief of the fathers, for the judgment of the Lord, and charged them, saying, ‘Thus shall ye do in the fear of the Lord.’”

In the book of Job the question is asked, “Whence cometh wisdom?” and the answer given is, “God understandeth the way thereof, and He knoweth the place thereof; and unto man He saith, ‘Behold, the fear of the Lord is wisdom.’”

In the third chapter of James another question is asked, “Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show it with meekness of wisdom.” Then follows a contrast between the wisdom that is earthly, natural, devilish, and the wisdom that is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, and so on, the former resulting in envy and strife, confusion, and every evil work, but the latter in the fruit of righteousness, sown in peace of them that make peace.

We refer to these scriptures in connection with the subject of rule, because this fear of the Lord, which is wisdom, is essential to godly rule. Besides, if rule is not exercised in the wisdom which is from above, it will be in the wisdom that descendeth not from above, and the only possible result will be “envy and strife, confusion, and every evil work.”

When Paul sent from Miletus to Ephesus and called the elders of the church, his first exhortation to them was, “Take heed unto yourselves, and [then] to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost has *made* you overseers.” How much need there is in these days, when there is so much talk about “oversight” and “oversight meetings,” to pause and consider these words. Yes, to take heed unto ourselves, and ask ourselves: Am I ruling in the fear of the Lord? Is it the wisdom that is from above that guides me, or the other? Has the Holy Ghost *made* me an overseer, or am I merely

*taking* the place of one? Herein lies, we greatly fear, the root of well-nigh all the envy and strife and confusion that has been manifested to our shame in connection with “oversight meetings.” Men attempting to do oversight work who never were *made* overseers. Yes, men who, if they would but read the qualifications required of God in those who desire the work of oversight—albeit it is God who alone can give the desire—would be able to see at a glance that they are outside of it altogether.

Alas! how often it is that those who have never learned what it is to rule their spirits, much less their own households, are found to the front in “oversight meetings,” talking loudest and longest. What displays of temper, what brawlings, have been witnessed in those who *take* the place of shepherds, manifesting that God has not *made* them overseers.

Again, how many young brethren, or novices, inexperienced and untried, take up this work; encouraged to do so, by those who ought to know better, resulting in their being lifted up with pride. Need we wonder if we see what ought to be a meeting for taking counsel together turned into an occasion of contention and strife, since God has told us that “only by pride cometh contention.”

The Holy Ghost “*made* overseers to *feed* the Church of God,” and “apt to *teach*” is amongst the qualifications of 1 Tim. iii. When Peter exhorted the elders who *had* oversight, he said, “*Feed* the flock of God.” Thus we see that feeding is a prominent part of the work of a shepherd, and yet how few of those who persist in going to oversight meetings are found *feeding* the flock. True, some of these occupy a good deal of time on Lord’s-day morning, and in the prayer meeting their voice is often heard, but their ministry is not accepted by saints. Why? Because it is not “feeding the flock.” It is mere “talk of the lips, which tendeth only to penury.” Moreover, nothing manifests the poverty of an assembly so markedly as the barren verbose ministry of one who assumes the place of an overseer, and endeavours to do a work to which he has not been called, and for which he has not been fitted.

Paul, in speaking to the elders at Ephesus, said, “I know this, that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not

sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things." What a contrast to the instructions laid down for our guidance, "Not soon angry," "no striker," "not self-willed." Who, with a shepherd's care, has not, with an aching heart, beheld the fulfilment of those words: men getting angry on the slightest provocation, and indulging in "hitting at" one another, self-will their guide instead of the will of God.

We write not these things to shame you, but, as beloved brethren in Christ, we *warn* you. We write for no party; we write for the flock of God. These words apply alike to every section of believers, from east to west, from pole to pole. Yea, we remind you of the words of the apostle, "Watch and remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every night and day with tears." Watch that you take heed to yourself. Bring yourself to the one standard of God's Word, and see that you are scripturally qualified for the work of oversight; see that God has put the desire into your heart. Remember, if the Holy Ghost has not made you an overseer, it is disobedience on your part to attempt to do it.

Concerning ministry, we often hear it said "that we want God-made ministers, not man-made ministers," to which we would add, nor yet self-made ministers. All this applies to oversight. And while we may have been delivered from man-chosen and man-appointed elders, or rulers, or overseers, alas! we have fallen into another terrible snare, even self-made and self-appointed ministers, and rulers and overseers. Link on to this the grievous wolves that have entered in, not sparing the flock, and the "perverse things" that have been spoken, drawing away disciples after those that spoke, and at once we have the clue to the present broken, scattered condition of the Churches. It is well also to remember in connection with ministry or service of any kind, we are not left to choose our work, but to seek to learn in His presence what our work is, for "He gave to every man his work." Again, "as every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same." If we are doing a work to which we are not called, then we must be leaving *the work* He gave us to do.

Thus if each one seeks, in simple obedience to the Lord, to follow in the footsteps of Him

who came to do the will of God, having our steps ordered by the Word of God, the result will be that many who thought they had oversight will find out their mistake. As they get occupied with the work God has given them, seeking to fulfil the ministry they have received of the Lord Jesus, leaving the work of oversight to those who have been "made overseers," then, in the mercy of a faithful God, we shall see the "flock fed" and the "lambs shepherded." Moreover, the "Word of life" will be held forth to the perishing in a way that we cannot do it now, because of the murmurings and disputings amongst us, and our blameworthiness and lack of sincerity as the sons of God. Thus our souls will be made to rejoice in the God of our salvation, now and in the day of Christ. Oh! that God would burn it deeply on our hearts as we view our condition in the light of His Word. Instead of "shining as lights" in a crooked and perverse world, has not our path been crooked and our ways perverse? Instead of carrying the light of the Gospel to those that sit in darkness, have we not fallen out by the way, and been spending our time fighting and quarrelling amongst ourselves, striving about words to no profit, each maintaining that "we are in the light," while God, who knoweth our hearts, is looking on, and sees how very little we are exercised about those who are going down to eternal darkness? Yes, and as they journey on in their dark condition, can we wonder that they fail to see in us the mark by which the Lord said all men should know that we are His disciples, even by our love one to another? May God, by His grace, enable us increasingly to pray "that our love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all sense; that we may try things that differ; that we may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ" (Phil. i. 9 and 10, mar.).

A. H. L.

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### Correspondence.

To the Editor of *The Witness*.

DEAR SIR,

I have been much exercised of late about baptism in relation to the forgiveness of sins and receiving the Holy Spirit.

Those who associate baptism with salvation are pressing their views much at present, and disturbing the

minds of many. They do not affirm that a person is saved by baptism, or that a person is lost because not baptised. They say, "We judge them not, but leave them to the Lord."

Yet they take up such passages as Acts ii. 38, xxii. 16, and say they are for Jew and Gentile alike. In reading the Acts of the Apostles, I have been struck with the following differences:—In the first passage mentioned; also in chapter viii., when the Samaritans believed and were baptised; again in chapter xix. 1-7, when the twelve heard that the Holy Spirit was come, and were baptised into the Name of the Lord Jesus;—in all these three instances it is plain the Holy Spirit was received after their faith and obedience in baptism. But when Peter was sent to preach the Lord Jesus and "open the door of faith to the Gentiles," we read differently (chap. x. 44): "As he was speaking, the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the Word." The order is here reversed, and the Holy Spirit is given before they were baptised into the Name of the Lord.

Peter, in Acts ii. 38, said to those Jews inquiring "What must we do?" "Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Why did he speak so to them? Was it not that they were men of Israel and had crucified the Lord Jesus as a blasphemer because He said He was the Son of God, and claimed to be the Messiah? When they heard and understood that they had crucified their Messiah, and that all hope for them as a nation was gone;—that their Messiah, whom they had rejected and put to death, was at the right hand of God, the cry went forth, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter told them, "Repent, and be baptised in the Name of Jesus Christ." Thus acknowledging Him to be all that God had declared Him to be, and that His death and resurrection was their only hope. Baptism was therefore necessary on their part to demonstrate their faith in, and submission to Him as Saviour and Lord. In the obedience of faith, they entered into the enjoyment of remission of sins.

In Acts xxii. 10, Saul (who, of course, was a Hebrew), in recording his conversion, says that Ananias told him, "Arise, and be baptised, and wash away thy sins," apparently in harmony with Acts ii. 38.

Now, why were such words spoken to Jews only and not to Gentiles? My thought is, it refers especially to the Jews' deep hatred to, and denial of, Christ as the Messiah. God dealt with them as those who ought to have received His Son, for He sent Him to them as their Messiah. They did not receive Him, but denied Him, and desired a murderer to be granted to them, crying out, "Away with Him, away with Him." Their obedience, therefore, to the message and command had to be open and definite.

Notice also the contrast in God's way with Jew and Gentile in the giving of the Holy Spirit.

On the day of Pentecost, the gift was conditional on their repentance and baptism. The Samaritans also, who were a mixed race and had rival worship (John iv. 20), looked upon themselves as on a kind of equality with the Jews. They did not receive the Holy Spirit either until after they were baptised. It is plain God could allow of no rivalry; there must be to be oneness in the Church of God. They had to acknowledge that

Jerusalem was God's earthly centre, that His apostles were His special channels of blessing, and that "salvation was of the Jews." They had, therefore, to wait till Peter and John came down, prayed for them, and laid their hands on them. As one has well said in connection with this subject, "This imposition of hands was both an act expressive of blessing from God through the apostles, and identification, so to speak, with the work at Jerusalem. It was an attestation before the world that God would suffer no such thing as rivalry in His Church."

But when Peter is sent down to the Gentiles in Acts x., God acts differently with them. While Peter was speaking those precious words of verse 43, "the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the Word." No mention of baptism before, only faith in the Name. Thus having received the remission of sins, baptism with water came after. It was BY THE WORD THEY WERE SAVED. No mention of anything but believing in Him for remission of sins. Peter, speaking of this in chap. xi., says, "Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as He did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?" Speaking again in chap. xv. 8, 9, he says, "And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as He did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." Simple faith; no ordinance before. From what I have written, I think it is plain up to Acts x., in the declaration of salvation through the Lord Jesus to the Jews, God always connected baptism with faith in order to salvation, simply because baptism was the first work of faith, whereby the reality of a God-wrought repentance or change of mind concerning the Lord Jesus was confessed to God and manifested to the world. But on the part of the Gentiles, simple faith only in the Lord Jesus, then obedience in baptism followed. In keeping with this, when Paul (who, we know, was the apostle of the Gentiles) states to the Corinthians, in 1 Cor. xv. 1-4, the gospel which he had received from the Lord by revelation (Gal. i. 11, 12), which he had preached to them, and by which they had been saved, he states simply three things, "Christ died for our sins, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures." Then speaking of the same gospel, in Gal. i. 8, he says, "But THOUGH WE, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be ACCURSED." Some had been teaching, no doubt, that except they were circumcised they could not be saved. Paul puts no ordinance between faith and salvation; on their receiving the Gospel they were saved. Then turning to Acts xviii. 8, we see the beautiful order carried out there. "Many of the Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptised." When Paul is speaking of how the Corinthians had been WASHED, in 1 Cor. vi. 11, he says it was in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. No word of any ordinance. Another thing is worth notice. When Paul was recording his conversion before the Jews, in Acts xxii., he tells them of his baptism and what Ananias said to him; but when he was doing the same before the Gentiles, Agrippa, and others, as we have it in Acts xxvi., he makes no reference TO IT.

I write this in a suggestive way, and if it be the means

of leading others better able to take up this subject, I shall be very glad, for many are being harassed by those called Campbellites.

Your brother in Christ,  
39 Atlantic Avenue, Belfast. WM. M'LEAN.

### "CHURCH OF GOD" AND "DISTRICT OVERSIGHT."

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I have just finished reading, with thankfulness to God, the letter from our brother G. A., in this month's *Witness*, on "The Church of God and District Oversight." It is now a considerable time since I ceased attending the "oversight meetings" held in — Hall, after intimating to one of the leaders that, call it by what name they pleased, the tendency of these meetings, because of the theories advanced, was to "exclusivism"; and that of a more pronounced and dangerous kind than we have seen in "Darbyism," with all its heart-breaking divisions and sorrows.

True, the letter of our brother G. Adam is directed against "district oversight," fellowship of assemblies, &c., as taught in the pages of "Needed Truth." But I am afraid that it will be understood by some to condemn as well many profitable and helpful conferences of overseeing brethren. Such an expression, for example, as "the theory of a system of 'periodical' oversight meetings, I cannot find a trace of in the Scriptures," requires, I think, some modification. In the same issue of the *Witness* as contains the letter referred to, those answering the question as to "the Sunday-school system," rest their proof for it being right not on any direct Scripture, but on Scriptural principle. Convenience and suitability in point of time have made "periodic" the giving effect to that principle, and in like manner as to "overseers" and their work. Certain passages of Scripture are written exclusively for their instruction and guidance in the responsibilities laid on them by the Lord. Many things they are called upon to do for, as well as in, the assemblies. Does it not therefore follow, as a matter of course, that they come together by themselves to wait on God for wisdom and direction in the discharge of the trust given them, and to strengthen each other's hands to a better understanding of their proper work, and by an exchange of experiences mourn or rejoice together, as the case may be. If this be granted, convenience again will make such meetings "periodic" in the same way as "New-year's day," "local," and "general holidays," periodically recurring, are found convenient for saints in districts to come together for prayer, praise, thanksgiving, and to be helped by the ministry of the Word.

On Saturday last it was my privilege to be present at a conference of overseers. A considerable portion of the time was spent in looking into the Scriptures on the subject of discipline in all its solemn aspects, beginning with self-discipline, the most important of all judgments, on to the various forms of discipline within the assembly, from beseeching entreaty to faithful warning and sharp rebuke, and finally the awful act of putting away from the assembly. The conference was realised by all present to be a most searching, humbling, and wital helpful season. Yet I have no hesitation in

saying that some of the things discussed would neither have been profitable in, or to the edification of, a general meeting of Christians. I am truly thankful that my eyes have been opened in some measure to see the *misuse* that could be, and has been, made of such meetings. The richest blessings have been most grossly abused. Still there would be as little reason for ceasing to "gather unto the Name" because in some it had developed a spirit of Pharisaism, as there would be for overseers ceasing to come together for conference because some had sought to make these gatherings an instrument of ecclesiastical coercion.

I would not be understood as detracting by a hair-breadth from what our esteemed brother has written. I find in his letter the expression of my own convictions; but I think it needful to pen this note, fearing lest what is helpful be condemned with what is hurtful.

I am, yours in Him,

P. HYND.

TROON, 1st Sept., 1891.

[We do not see how anyone who has at all followed the teaching on this subject in the *Witness* could so misunderstand our brother G. A.'s letter. We refer to our article on "District Oversight Meetings," vol. xx., p. 129, and "Correspondence," p. 158, enforcing by example same line of teaching. Nevertheless, in case of misunderstanding on so important a point, we gladly insert the foregoing from our esteemed correspondent. —E.D.]

### Questions and Answers.

We desire to express our thanks to all who have sent answers. We particularly request that each writer will give his name and address in full, not for publication, but that we may know who it is that seeks to help, and, if desirable, that we may communicate privately.

Replies to appear in the next number require to be sent in not later than 15th of present month, and so on; the 15th of the month being always the latest to which we can defer making up for press.

We again urge the importance of replies being *short*; it is essential, in this particular line of things, to be *concise*.

We shall greatly value remembrance in prayer that special wisdom and grace may be given for this service. THE EDITOR.

#### Replies are invited to the following:—

Does the house of God embrace all saints, or only those gathered according to the Word?

In what sense are believers made the righteousness of God in Christ? Is this the same as God's justifying righteousness referred to in Rom. iii. 26?

In Acts iii. 21, it is stated that Christ will remain in heaven until the time of the restitution of all things. This being so, the restitution of Israel will (I take it) be the first act. If I am right, 1 Thess. iv. 16 cannot take place until afterwards. The question is, when will 1 Thess. iv. 16 take place?

The preparation referred to in John xiv. 2-3—did it take place on the Cross, or is it still going on?

#### REGENERATION AND RECEIVING THE SPIRIT.

QUESTION 395.—Were the disciples "born again" before they received the Holy Spirit (John xx. 22)? Is being born again and the Holy Spirit taking up His abode in us the same thing?

Ans. A.—1. The disciples were undoubtedly "born

again," before the Lord, in resurrection power, breathed on them, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." They had (excepting Judas) received Him; (see John i. 12, 13; vi. 44). And Peter on behalf of himself and the others, declares, "We believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the Living God" (John vi. 69).

2. Being "born again" is certainly not the same thing as the Holy Spirit taking up His abode in our hearts. Far from it. "It is *because we are sons*," through faith in Christ Jesus, that the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of His Son, is sent forth into our hearts, crying, "Abba, Father" (Gal. iii. 26; iv. 6). The *operation* of the Holy Ghost was always necessary to divine life; but His *indwelling* is the peculiar privilege of saints now that Christ has died, risen, and gone on high (see John xiv. 16-20). It is the blessed result of God's delight in that work of His Son, by which He has been glorified on this earth. God honours His Son, first, by setting Him at His own right hand, and then by sending down the Holy Ghost to gather the joint heirs, and to take up His abode in the hearts of all who believe on Him. In whom *having believed* ye were sealed by that Holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest of our inheritance (Eph. i. 13). He is the Spirit of Sonship in contrast with the condition of a servant (Gal. iv. 1-5). He is the Spirit of liberty, in contrast with the state of bondage, which pertained to believers before redemption was accomplished (Rom. viii. 14, 15; 2 Cor. iii. 17). Besides the vastly richer blessing accruing to the individual believer, as compared with saints of old, it is by the same blessed Spirit that the members are "baptised into one body" (1 Cor. xii. 13). Our individual union with Christ as well as that of the whole body is the result of the Holy Ghost dwelling in us. He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit (1 Cor. vi. 17). It is not faith merely, though there can of course be no union without faith; but believers there were before Christ died and rose again, nevertheless. Except the corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone (John xii. 24). Union with Christ on high, is by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. Blessed, precious privilege, let us take care that we "do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. iv. 30). Much more might be said; but I fear I have transgressed already.

G. A. S.

**Ans. B.**—As in John i. and iii. Christ promises the new birth to those who believe in Him though "the Holy Ghost was not yet given," the new birth and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit cannot be *the same thing*. But the following Scriptures show that now that "the Son of Man has been glorified," and the Spirit has been given, the two events take place at the *same time*. "In whom also *when* ye believed ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. i. 13, R.V.). "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. viii. 9). "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to *each one* to profit withal" (1 Cor. xii., R.V.). "For in one Spirit were *we all* baptised into one body whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free, and were *all* made to drink of one Spirit" (verse 13). "How ye are the body of Christ, and *severally* members thereof" (verse 27). The moment

that by the new creation a temple has been formed for the Spirit, that moment He takes possession of it.

J. S. D.

#### THE SCARLET AND THE PURPLE ROBE.

**QUESTION 396.**—In comparing Matthew xvii. 28 with Mark xv. 17 and John xix. 5, in one we get a "scarlet robe," in the others "purple." Why the difference?

**Ans. A.**—The answer seems to me to be in the different words used by the inspired writers. John says: "And a purple garment they cast about Him" (Jesus). The word "himation" signifying the long flowing outer garment usually worn, and girt about the loins. A purple garment of this kind was a very uncommon article, and may have been supplied from Pilate's palace; it seems certain that it did not belong to the common soldiery. Matthew says: "They cast about Him a scarlet cloak" (Rotherham, "scarf"). The word "klaus" signifying a short cloak commonly worn by horsemen—a military cloak. It was fastened by a brooch over the right shoulder, and hung over the left, thus leaving the right arm free. It seems highly probable that one of the soldiers took it off himself and placed it upon Jesus. From this comparison, I gather that they first stripped Jesus and then put upon Him the long purple garment, and over all the short scarlet cloak of the soldier. Does it not seem that it was intended to add scorn to our dear Lord? The purple mocks His kingship, while the scarlet derides His power to lead His armies on to victory.

C. H. S.

**Ans. B.**—The words used for "scarlet" and "purple" in New Testament, are interchangeable and show no real distinction. Moreover, a scarlet robe would, from use and wet, become purple in hue; and this may have been the case in this instance, when to add to our Lord's humiliation they array Him in an old scarlet robe. One writer may use the word as relating to its original hue, and the other as to its actual condition.

A. O. M.

**Editor's Note.**—We may add to the foregoing replies, that Luke, who does not mention the colour, uses a third Greek word ("Esthee"), which may include both the garments specified by John and Matthew.

As to answer A it may be interesting to note that the word for scarlet, viz., "Kokkinos" is from the Greek root "Kokkos," a grain—and from it comes our English word "cochineal." Cochineal resembles a grain, though actually it is an insect dried. From it is still dyed a beautiful colour ranging, according to treatment, from bright scarlet to deep crimson verging on purple.

In Ps. xxii. the expression "I am a worm" refers to the same fact. The Hebrew word for "worm" being elsewhere translated "scarlet"; and the reference is probably to the fact that the cochineal grain is roasted, crushed, and boiled ere the scarlet colour is obtained. A marvellous picture of Him who was despised and rejected by men, wounded and bruised for our scarlet and crimson sins.

The true explanation may therefore be either of the two given. It would be quite consistent for one person to describe the colour by the dyeing material calling it "cochineal," and for another to describe its hue as deep crimson or purple.

## UNITY AND SEPARATION.

IN the wonderful prayer of John xvii. two leading thoughts are emphasised—viz., the unity of all who are Christ's and their separateness from the world.

And we think it must be apparent to all thoughtful readers of the Word that, from first to last, these two lines of teaching are prominent.

This being so, Satan has ever sought, by force or subtlety, to separate what God has united, and to unite what God has separated.

The marvellous unity of the believers, as recorded in the early chapters of the Acts, was at least a partial fulfilment of the prayer of our Lord. To Him it must have been as the anointing oil upon Aaron in its fragrance, and like dew of Hermon in its fruitfulness.

But soon the disintegrating forces introduced and fomented by Satan's subtlety manifested themselves in murmurings (Acts vi.) and disputings (Acts xv.); and later on, in the church at Corinth, the saints are found divided into factions, according to carnal preference for various servants of their one Lord.

Hence the urgent exhortation of 1 Cor. i. 10 to perfect unity of mind and judgment in the Lord, and the many weighty considerations throughout the Epistle whereby this exhortation is enforced.

The causes which led to this condition of things at Corinth are dealt with one by one. 1. There is the "wisdom of the world" (chaps. i., ii.). 2. Thinking unduly of men, and so being puffed up for one against another (chaps. iii., iv.). 3. Low thoughts as to the holiness becoming the temple of God (chaps. vi., vii.). 4. Conceit of knowledge (chap. viii.); and, after various needful instructions in chaps. ix. to xii., we have chap. xiii. presenting a full view of the characteristics of love, clearly indicating that, with all their knowledge and their gifts, this "uniting bond of perfectness" had been lacking.

And we may well learn therefrom that wherever a divisive spirit is working and divisive courses are pursued, some or all of these causes are operating now as of old.

In the second epistle another feature becomes manifest as clearly showing the working of the enemy. The children of God had

been entering into alliances with the world: becoming unequally yoked together with unbelievers. If in the first epistle Satan had succeeded in separating what God had joined, in the second epistle he has succeeded in uniting in a common yoke what God had for ever put asunder.

On the one hand are ranged righteousness, light, Christ, the believer, the temple of God. On the other hand, unrighteousness, darkness, Belial, unbelievers, idols. How could such have fellowship or agreement? How could such co-operate under one common yoke?

It was forbidden under the law to plough with an ox and an ass yoked together (Deut. xxii. 10). The one was "clean," the other was "unclean," fitly representing the utter incompatibility between those who are "washed, justified; and sanctified," and those who are "filthy still." \*

This separation from the world was essential to enlargement of heart (see 2 Cor. vi. 11-13). The narrow spirit of sectarianism could well consist with worldly associations. But the mind and Spirit of Christ demands that the world be separated from, and that all who are Christ's be loved, and their welfare and unity promoted.

Faithfulness to the truth and subjection to the Lord alike demand separation from the world. Hence, many of God's children are being led, in these last days, out from sectarian associations upon this sole ground, that they can no longer remain yoked in what is professedly Christian fellowship, worship, and service, with those who are not the children of God. "The form of godliness" there may be: but, if the power be denied, the responsibility is none the less; the heathen world, with its idolatry, and the religious world, with its profession of Christianity, are the same in the sight of God. His word is as plain concerning the latter as the former, "From such turn away" (2 Tim. iii. 5).

\* It has been asserted that the ass did not represent the "unclean" but the "redeemed"—because the firstling of an ass was to be redeemed with a lamb, otherwise its neck was to be broken (Ex. xiii. 13). If so, then no animal represented the "unclean," for the firstling of every unclean beast was in like manner to be redeemed or to be killed (Num. xviii. 15). Whatever other scriptures may teach as to limitations to co-operation in one yoke of service with Christians who are ignorant, or wilful, or entangled in unscriptural associations, we contend that in *this* scripture it is the yoking together of *believers and unbelievers* and *nothing else* that is referred to.

Obedience to these plain commands no doubt involves separation sad and painful from many children of God. Those who determine to abide in association with the ungodly are necessarily left to their associations. But this is only a necessary result of obeying the Lord. The object in view is not separation from saints. This the Lord never commanded. His will is separation from the world: but oneness of mind and heart among saints. "Love to all saints" is as plainly the will of the Lord as "Love not the world." Therefore, though obedience may separate as to walk, as to position, as to service and worship, from othersaints, it ought never to alienate affections. Fellowship will be marred, hindered, perhaps rendered very difficult or practically impossible;\* but, nevertheless, as far as it can be maintained without compromise to the truth, it is our bounden duty to maintain it.

It has been said that "separation unto the Lord" demands that there shall be "*no fellowship in the things of God*" with believers who have not so learned the will of the Lord. That the attitude towards such of the "separated" believer is exactly the same as his attitude towards the world—viz., "No fellowship."

Fellowship has lately been defined as "having, holding, and using in common." We willingly accept the definition, believing it to be the truth so far as it goes, and we would ask how much do we "have, hold, and use in common" of the things of God with the world? Surely *nothing*. With him who *has* not Christ, who *holds* not the truth, and who *uses* not the grace of God, we have *nothing* in common—fellowship is impossible.

But we would ask again, how much do we have, hold, and use in common with every saint? Surely an infinitude!

We have Christ in common. One common Lord and Saviour, one common salvation, one common faith, one indwelling spirit, one Father and God, one inheritance incorruptible and undefiled. All that is greatest, most precious, and most glorious is common to all believers, possessed, held, used, in common, though in

vastly differing degrees. To go to such an one as we would go to a worldling, refusing all fellowship in the things of God, simply to witness for certain truths which God has taught us, but which he has not learned, is practically to deny that we have anything in common until these truths are accepted.

Little wonder that such testimony, even though it be to the truth, is resented and rejected! Nay, more, has not such action turned very many away from those teachings which would have separated them from the world, and from worldly religious associations, and riveted them firmer than ever to sectarianism and tradition? J. R. C.

### HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP.

A MAN'S dwelling in one country, and holding citizenship in another and far remote country, is not an unknown circumstance. In such a case, we may have the singular anomaly of one being most a stranger in the land in which he is present, and most at home in the land from which he is absent. Our blessed Lord was the first perfectly to realise this idea respecting the heavenly country. For He speaks of Himself as "He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man who is in heaven." So truly a citizen of the other world was He that even while walking with men and talking with men He regarded Himself as there, not here. And this saying of His occurs in that discourse where, with an emphatic "verily, verily," He declares that "except a man be *born from above* he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Here is the key to the whole mystery. As the only begotten of the Father, Christ's native country was above; and during all the days of His flesh He neither relinquished His heavenly citizenship nor acquired an earthly residence. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel: for He hath *visited* and redeemed His people," is a significant note in the prophecy of His birth. And four times in the Gospels is our Lord's advent to earth spoken of as a visit. But it was a visit which never for a moment looked toward a permanent abiding. At His birth He was laid in a borrowed manger, because there was no room for Him in the inn; at His burial He was laid in a borrowed tomb, because

\* This would apply in the case of one "put away" or "cut off," according to the Word of God. Obedience to God and love to the soul of the erring one alike demand that there be *no fellowship* with such. "Let him be to thee as an heathen man and a publican." "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments" (1 John v. 2).

He owned no foot of earth; and between the cradle and the grave was a sojourn in which "the Son of man had not where to lay His head." The mountain top, whither He constantly withdrew to commune with His Father, was the nearest to His home. And hence there is a strange, pathetic meaning in that saying, "And every man went unto his own house; Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives."

Now, as it was with the Lord, so it is to be with His disciples. "*For our citizenship is in heaven,*" says the apostle. Herein is the saying of Lady Powerscourt true: "The Christian is not one who looks up from earth to heaven, but one who looks down from heaven to earth." A celestial nativity implies a celestial residence; and with a certain divine condescension may the Christian contemplate the sordid, self-seeking children of this present evil age, and say with his Lord: "Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world." Let us be admonished, however, that to say this truly and to live it really may subject us to the experience indicated by the apostle: "Therefore the world knoweth us not because it knew Him not." There is a certain quaint beauty in the apology which an old reformer made for the hard treatment which he and his friends received from the men of this world. "Why, brethren," he would say, "they do not understand court manners or the etiquette of heaven, never having been in that country from whence we come; therefore it is that our ways seem strange to them." Would that in the Christians of to-day celestial traits were so conspicuous as to occasion like remark! Perhaps it is because there are so few high saints in the Church that there are so many low sinners outside the Church, since the ungodly can never be powerfully lifted up except by a Church that reaches down from an exalted spiritual plane.

What means that lofty address of the apostle, "Wherefore, holy brethren, *partakers of the heavenly calling*"? (Heb. iii. 1.) The reference is not merely to our final destiny as those who are to be called up to heaven, but to our present service as those who have come down from heaven; sons of God rejoicing in a celestial birth, bringing the air and manners of glory into a world that knows not God. As

such we are exhorted to "consider the *Apostle and High Priest* of our profession, Christ Jesus;" an apostle being one who comes forth from God, and an high priest one who goes in unto God. And Christ Jesus not only fulfils both these offices in Himself, as He says, "I came forth from the Father and am come into the world; again I leave the world and go to the Father," but He makes us partakers with Him of the same heavenly calling, sending us into the world, as the Father hath sent Him, and permitting us "to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus," as He has entered in by His own blood.

When we are called to lay up treasures in heaven, it is because that is our country; when we are enjoined not to love the world, neither the things that are in the world, it is because this is not our country. Two practical errors spring from an earthly theology, viz., that the world is the Christian's home, and the grave the Christian's hope. On the contrary, one possessed of a clear advent faith would choose for himself such an epitaph as that which Dean Alford composed for his tomb: "*The inn of a traveller on his way to Jerusalem.*"

Ah, yes, that is it! A pilgrim's portion, food and raiment and contentment therewith; the mansion which fortune has provided, or the cabin which penury has reared, each alike counted a hospice where one lodges as "a pilgrim and stranger in the earth"; and the grave a narrow inn whose windows look towards the sunrising, where the sojourner sleeps till break of day,—this, without question, is the ideal of the Christian life as outlined in the Gospel.

An impracticable ideal, it will be said. But it was not so in the beginning. To say nothing of apostolic Christianity, let us ask what it was that gave the Christianity of the first two centuries such extraordinary vigour in its conflict with heathenism. An eminent writer, Gerhard Uhlhorn, has shown with a graphic hand that it was just this quality of absolute unworldliness which constituted the secret of its power.\*

The men who conquered the Roman Empire for Christ bore the aspect of invaders from another world, who absolutely refused to be naturalised to this world. Their conduct filled

\* *Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism.*

their heathen neighbours with the strangest perplexity: they were so careless of life, so careful of conscience, so prodigal of their own blood, so confident of the overcoming power of the blood of the Lamb, so unsubdued to the customs of the country in which they sojourned, so mindful of the manners of "that country from whence they came out." The help of the world, the patronage of its rulers, the loan of its resources, the use of its methods, they utterly refused, lest by employing these they might compromise their King. An invading army maintained from an invisible base, and placing more confidence in the leadership of an unseen Commander than in all imperial help that might be proffered,—this was what so bewildered and angered the heathen, who often desired to make friends with the Christians without abandoning their own gods. But there can be no reasonable doubt that that age in which the Church was most completely separated from the world was the age in which Christianity was most victorious in the world.\*

It was also the era of undimmed hope of the Lord's imminent return from glory, so that it illustrated and enforced both clauses of the great text: "For our citizenship is in heaven, *from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus* (Phil. iii. 20).

Our Lord set forth His departure from the world under the parable of a "certain nobleman who went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return" (Luke xix. 12). As a Roman, living in Judea, on appointment to the governorship of that province, would go to Rome to be invested with office, and then return to rule, so Christ has gone to heaven to be invested with the kingship of the world, and now He and His watchful servants are eagerly waiting for the same thing—He sitting at God's right hand "expecting till His enemies be made His footstool," and they expecting till He shall return to reign over the earth. Of the kingdom, the King and His kinsmen, the same avowal of unearthly origin is made by

\* These few sentences from a writer of the second century give a graphic portrait of the Christians of that period: "They inhabit their own country, but as strangers; they bear their part in all things as citizens, and endure all things as aliens. Every foreign country is a fatherland to them, and every fatherland a foreign country. . . . They live in the flesh, but walk not after the flesh. . . . They dwell on earth, but are citizens of heaven. They are poor, and make many rich; they are in want of all things, and they have all things in abundance; they are dishonoured, and in dishonour glorified."—*Epistle to Diognetus* 1.

Christ: "My kingdom is *not of this world*;" "They are *not of the world*, even as I am *not of the world*." The kingdom is the "kingdom of God," the kingdom of heaven; its constituency are those who are "begotten of God," and "born from above." True, this kingdom is now in the world in its rudiments and principles, in its citizens and representatives: those who, like their Lord, have been sent hither to accomplish the work of gathering out a people for His name. But, lest we fall into fatal error, let us not imagine that we are now reigning with Christ on the earth, or that the kingdom of God has been set up in the world. The Church's earthly career during the present age is the exact fac-simile of her Lord's—a career of exile rather than of exaltation; of rejection rather than of rule; of cross-bearing rather than of sceptre-bearing. Grasping at earthly sovereignty for the Church, while the Sovereign Himself is still absent, has proved the most fruitful root of apostasy. It may be said that this picture of the Church, as despised and rejected in the world, suffering, outcast, and in exile, does not correspond to the facts. Not to the facts of our own generation, we admit, wherein the world is on such excellent terms with Christians. But that it represents the character of the dispensation as a whole cannot be questioned, when we recall the dark ages and martyr ages of the Christian era—the prisons, and racks, and dungeons, and stakes, which stretch on through so large a portion of this age. And the pictures of prophecy are composite pictures, gathering up the main features of the entire dispensation, and presenting them in one. Viewed thus, prediction and history perfectly accord.

"The kingdom is now here in mystery, and to be here hereafter in manifestation," one has tersely put it. And to this the predicted destiny of believers corresponds. "*Your life is hid with Christ in God*. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also *appear with Him in glory*" (Col. iii. 4). "*Sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not*, because it knew Him not" (1 John iii. 1). "The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the *manifestation of the sons of God*" (Rom. viii. 19). "If we suffer, we shall *reign with Him*" (2 Tim. ii. 12). Obscurity, rejection, exile, and trial in the world now; manifesta-

tion, vindication, enthronement, when the King comes—this is the foretold calling of the children of the kingdom. The unprecedented exemption of the Church from persecution, and the extraordinary triumphs of the Gospel which have characterised this nineteenth century, may tend to seduce us into the notion that the kingdom has already come, though the “nobleman” who has gone into a far country has not yet returned. That we may think truly on this subject, let us hear our Lord’s voice, saying: “*Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom*” (Luke xii. 32). In spite of widespread conquests of the Gospel, the Church is still “a little flock,” amid the vast populations of Pagans, Mohammedans, Infidels, and Apostates. This flock, in every age, has been branded with opprobrium, and torn by persecution, and beaten by hireling shepherds, and the end is not yet. As good Samuel Rutherford says: “So long as any portion of Christ’s mystical body is out of heaven, Satan will strike at it.” However favoured in our times, this flock is not the kingdom; but it has the promise of the kingdom, in which rejection shall give place to rule, and crucifixion to coronation. When? “*And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away*” (1 Peter v. 4). Whatever temporary respite from persecution we may enjoy, so that, for the time, it may be said, as of old, “then had the churches rest,” no permanent peace is guaranteed until the Lord’s return. “And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven” (2 Thess. i. 7). “*Ecce venit!*”

“THE ephod was specially and characteristically the official garment of the priest in Israel, and was fastened by chains of gold (Divine righteousness) to shoulder-pieces and breast-plate, on which were engraven the names of Israel; so that Aaron could never be in God’s presence as priest without those names, which were thus to be kept as a memorial before God continually” (Exod. xxviii. 28), ‘*written in heaven*’ (Luke x.).”—J. B. M.

KNOWLEDGE may be misused, but wisdom never. Wisdom is the right use of knowledge (Prov. xv. 2).

PERSONAL TYPES OF CHRIST.—V.

## ISAAC

(Continued).

III. AS THE BRIDEGROOM. Isaac only died in *purpose*, and consequently was only raised again in *figure* (Heb. xi. 19). Christ died in reality, and in reality rose again. The next event in the typical history is the father sending forth his servant to seek a wife for the risen son. The connection and order of Gen. xxiii-xxiv. have often been pointed out and enlarged on. In chap. xxii. we have, in type, the offering up of Christ; in chap. xxiii. the earthly people, in figure, are set aside; and in chap. xxiv. God’s work of grace in this age is foreshadowed.

The teaching of chap. xxiv. is more or less familiar to all my readers; but we will briefly notice several points therein. The opening of the chapter gives a description of Abraham sending forth his trusted servant to seek a bride for Isaac. Two things were to be guarded against: first, the woman was not to be of the nations among whom they dwelt; second, Isaac was on no account to be brought unto the place where the woman lived. The latter injunction was surely of great moment, for it was twice given (verses 6-8). The messenger’s journey was prosperous; in answer to prayer he meets with the woman he is seeking, and she consents to go with him. He provided her with raiment and adornment (ver. 55) and conducted her in safety across the desert, to one who was awaiting her. When near the journey’s end, Isaac came forth to meet his espoused, and she became his wife. The narrative, as it stands, is extremely interesting; but how much more so when read in the light of New Testament scriptures.

Whether it is strictly *typical* I will not take upon me to decide; but surely one must be blind if he cannot see in it,

### AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE CALL OF THE CHURCH.

Space will only allow us to touch on it in the briefest manner possible. God has purposed that His Son, the crucified and risen Redeemer, shall have a people who shall be peculiarly and eternally near to Him. This people—the *Bride*—are not chosen from among *angels*, holy or fallen, but they are being sought from among us sinners. The Holy Spirit has

become the Servant of the Father and Son, in order to woo, sanctify, and guide home the elect of God, the Bride of Christ. The Holy Spirit, through the Gospel, reveals the grace, riches, and glory of the Man of Calvary: the question is pressed home to the individual heart—

WILT THOU GO?

And constrained by Divine grace every saved one has responded, "*I will go.*" At that moment our filthiness was cleansed, our nakedness covered, and we were "made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." And from that time the blessed Paraclete, who won us to Christ, has been our Companion, Teacher, Guide, and Protector, who will remain with us till we meet our Lord in the air. "And Bride and Bridegroom reign for aye!"

I would suggest, however, that Eliezer not only represents the Spirit of God, in His work of seeking, sanctifying, and guiding the believer, but that he also represents *servants of Christ*—evangelists, pastors, and teachers. The Holy Spirit ever was, and ever will be, the agent in all work in the soul; but He uses instruments. The labourer in the Gospel is used in finding the sinner, and the instruction given by men of God is employed to fit the soul for its wonderful destiny. So that all who are desiring to serve the Lord, whether in the Gospel or among His own people, may with much profit study the character and conduct of Eliezer as seen in this chapter. What a beautiful example we have in this man of simple, earnest, faithful, prayerful, self-denying, and single-hearted service! May these same things characterise those who in these last days are *stewards*, not of Abraham's possessions, but of "*the manifold grace of God*"; who are servants, not of Abraham, but of *Abraham's God*.

IV. AS HEIR OF ALL. Isaac was Abraham's heir. When he was quite a child Sarah demanded the dismissal of Ishmael, lest he should be a rival to her son. Her language was: "Cast out this bond-woman and her son: for the son of this bond-woman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac" (Gen. xxi. 10). This was evidently the language of a fond, jealous mother, but it expressed the mind and purpose of God. Eliezer testified that Abraham

had given *all that he had to Isaac* (chapter xxiv. 36). Gifts were bestowed on his sons by other wives, but Isaac became heir of all (chapter xxv. 5).

The Lord Jesus, in resurrection, announced that all authority in heaven and on earth had been committed to Him. As the humbled One He was poor and had nothing; as the risen One He possessed all things. As a reward for His obedience unto death, God has exalted Him to the highest place in heaven (Phil. ii. 5-12; Heb. ii. 9). As the first-born from the dead,

HE IS TO HAVE THE PRE-EMINENCE IN ALL THINGS,

and He is the risen Son who has been "appointed Heir of all things." But while Christ is *the Son and Heir*, He is not alone. He is "the first-born among *many brethren*;" and has been "anointed with oil of gladness above *His fellows*." HIS FELLOWS! What a word! Could even God do more for us? I trow not!

The man Christ Jesus can call Him who was ever His Father—*God*; and, through His death, we can call Him who is our God—*Father*. On receiving the Son we become *sons* (John i. 12). Among men to be a child is not necessarily to be an heir; but in spiritual matters it is so. "And if children, then heirs, heirs of God and

JOINT HEIRS WITH CHRIST."

And now, since we are all of One, He is not ashamed to own us as brethren. We are now heirs, but we have not yet come into the inheritance. The morning of the first resurrection is hastening on apace; and then, at the same time, all the saints of God will come "of age," and enter on their possessions. And then to wondering worlds we shall be manifested as children of God and fellow-heirs with Christ.

Christ as *the Son* became the *sacrifice*; we who are sons are also called to be sacrifices. Not, of course, in the sense of making atonement for sin; in that work no one else can share. But as those who are alive from the dead we are urged to yield our members as instruments of righteousness unto God; yea, to "present our body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is our reasonable

(*intelligent*: as with the type we are considering) service" (Rom. xii. 1, 2). May every reader of this paper, who has not done so, deliberately, definitely, unreservedly yield up himself unto God, spirit, soul, and body! Oh, the sin and disgrace of keeping back a part of the purchased possession! May the Lord exercise the consciences of His own that they be not among those who *rob God!*

We are now *the espoused Bride of Christ* (2 Cor. xi. 2); the Devil would make us unfaithful to our Lord. A Christian by friendship with the world commits spiritual fornication, and grieves his Lord (James iv. 4, R.V.). Let us beware of this very common sin among professing Christians.

We are joint-heirs with Christ; but He is now rejected and cast out by men, and we are called to share His rejection. Our inheritance in the world is tribulation; for before we reign we must suffer. Let us look upon the world, its pleasures, honours, and glories, with the holy indifference of those who have something of infinitely greater worth. We can well afford to do it. Oh, to get such a sight of the glory that we may be forever blinded to every carnal and worldly ambition! Amen.

J. N. C.

## A VOICE FROM AFAR.

A REVIEW.

WE must now go farther afield and scan and note things around in their prophetic significance, whether political or ecclesiastical. In the former the struggle between labour and capital continues to smoulder, ready at any moment to burst into flame, when fanned by sinister communistic demagogues. The effects of the late strike are still felt. Hundreds of families are distressed, if not ruined. Distrust and uncertainty prevent the employment of capital, and repress enterprise. Labour candidates lately returned to the Parliaments of New Zealand and New South Wales hold the balance between the rival parties, and are masters of the situation. They are the most potent factors in to-day's Colonial politics. Their power will preponderate increasingly as the contending parties bid for their support. Successive elections will add to their numbers, and this will induce the time-serving expectant neutrals, now holding

off, to fall in with the current of public opinion, which will enable the Demos to clutch the reins of government.

The same process is operating in Europe, more slowly, it may be, but not the less surely. The masses already practically rule, though not as absolutely and directly as they soon will. At present they are pandered to, flattered, by those who would fain prolong their tenure of place and power. Ere awhile they will become conscious of their combined strength, and will co-operate to seize the helm of executive government. Universal democratic legislative power will develop the last phase of Gentile self-willed domination. The history of past civilisations and their governmental culminations testify that the democratic issues in the autocratic. So now the rule of the masses will eventuate in bringing to the front an absolute dictator, the man of the times, forced up into prominence by popular ebullition; a man towering head and shoulders above his fellows in self-assertiveness and strength of will, violating all law, whether human or divine. Such the issue of the crisis now impending. Such a man, the prophetic lawless one, the Antichrist, will be the people's idol, emphatically the man of their choice. Borne upon the shoulders of the mob into lawless, irresponsible absolutism, he will be the embodiment of the spirit of the age. His utterances, the volitions of his own will, as the oracles of Deity, will be hailed, "Vox Antichristi, vox Dei!" Servile obedience, absolute submission, "the mark of the beast," or death the only alternative,—no appeal!

In these days of easy-going Christian life, of comfort and of ease, of folding the hands and self-gratulation, the faculty of forecast is blunted by desuetude, few search the Scriptures desiring to arrive at God's teachings, and fewer still are able to "discern the signs of the times," by reason of their non-acquaintance with the prophetic foreshadowings of God's Word. Time, prayerful meditation, and abstract thought, spirit fellowship with the *Unseen*, are required if we would apprehend the Divine unfoldings of the "Scriptures of Truth."

The whelming tide of popular opinion has set in, and who shall stand in the day of its flood? It will sweep away the landmarks of the ages, and leave nought but ruin and

desolation, the chaotic debris of Gentile ambition, in its hostility to God and His Christ.

If such be the portentous aspect of the political horizon, what of the ecclesiastical—the external phase of to-day's religionism? We doubt not that there are still the seven thousand in Israel who have not bowed the knee to Baal, who have not sacrificed, are not sacrificing, and will not sacrifice principle to expediency upon the altar of public opinion, to gain popular applause. We may hope that many are the Simeons and Annas, in "these the last of the days," who wait before God, sighing and crying, for all the failure and worldliness, declension and error, abounding on every hand. These dwell in the secret of the Most High. He makes known His ways unto them; they are sheltered 'neath the shadow of His wing. They are in sympathy with His purposes; assured are they that the storm-cloud darkening the horizon all around is but the harbinger of the coming Deliverer. In patience they possess their souls, anticipating their Lord's return to receive them unto Himself.

As in the political, so in the ecclesiastical, the democratic element is preponderating. Sacerdotal consolidation is giving way to democratic disintegration. By the hierarchy from the so-called "Holy Father," the Pope of Rome, down to the lowly curate and street-preaching evangelist, the masses are courted, the breath of popular favour is sought, the *vox populi* is propitiated—bid for. Even amongst the most scripturally conservative believers, those who have given up much and taken an outside stand, the same tendency is manifesting itself, democratic wilfulness is making itself felt, majorities fain would rule. "One man, one vote," is becoming the watchword; as in politics, so in religion. The opinion of the novice, whether child or young man, attempts to assert itself as potentially as the maturer utterances of the elders or fathers in Christ. The universal tendency is to level up and level down, irrespective of individual age, attainment, experience, gift, or position. Unhallowed communism lurks on every hand. It is the secret, unsuspected cause of much of the disquiet and threatened disintegration which afflicts so many of the assemblies, generating schism with all its concomitant bitterness and

evil speaking. Which way soever we turn, from whatever standpoint we scan the horizon, every indication points the eye of faith to the one consummation, the "coming of the Son of Man," the blessed Head and Hope of the Church, the expectation of the groaning creation. The Lord keep us "strong in faith," living to His glory. Sometimes the knees may wax feeble, the hands may hang down; it is in such seasons of depression that the "Blessed Hope" shines in to reanimate and cheer. But for it the dark "valley of the shadow of death" would be darker still, hope would die out, despair set in. As it is, every cloud has its silver lining! The future of reward and glory gilds this scene of patient endurance. W. R. W.

### The Seven Churches of Revelation.

#### VI. PHILADELPHIA ("Brotherly Love").

THE Reformation brought to light  
 Truth that was long concealed from sight;  
 Faith's buried shield o'erlaid with rust  
 Had then been rescued from the dust.  
 But Hope, that helmet of the brave,  
 Still hidden lay as in a grave,  
 Though in the Church's early day  
 It was the Christian's strength and stay.  
 Then "*Maranatha*" was a word  
 That touched in every heart a chord;  
 It wove a garland for the tomb,  
 And shed a glory o'er its gloom.

Her helmet buried 'neath a heap  
 Of man's traditions, she asleep,  
 Unmindful of the Bridegroom's voice,  
 Earth's patronage her boast and choice—  
 What wonder that the Church's light  
 So faint illumed surrounding night?

But in those latter days a band,  
 Whose hearts were touched by God's own hand,  
 Together drawn by cords of love,  
 With one accord sought from above  
 Light that would make them wise to know  
 God's mind, and prayed that He would show  
 To them His ways, that they might seek  
 The path divine with spirit meek.

Prayer, by the Holy Ghost inspired,  
 Ne'er fails to bring the grace desired;  
 Hence when they read the holy page,

Or in like converse did engage,  
 The Holy Spirit ope'd their eyes  
 And wondrous things they with surprise  
 Saw in God's law ; but with dismay  
 Beheld how very far away  
 From the old paths the sheep had strayed.  
 And pondering o'er those things they prayed  
 That God would lead their footsteps back  
 To tread the old though long-lost track ;  
 That He would lead them by the hand,  
 Though but a feeble little band.

Their eyes thus opened, to the light  
 Revealed to their astonished sight  
 That England's church, to most still dear,  
 To Rome had turned a listening ear.  
 Nay, more, her foremost trusted men  
 Were diligently, by their pen,  
 Engaged in scattering evil seeds  
 Of error's most obnoxious weeds.  
 The "Tracts" from Oxford issued then  
 Stirred deeply those devoted men,  
 To test all that they heard or saw  
 By the true standard of God's law.

They quickly learned God never meant  
 To work through but one instrument—  
 One only channel of His grace,  
 In an assembly or a place.  
 They read of *various gifts* bestowed,  
 Each to be exercised for God.  
 As in our wondrous human frame  
 Are parts of different use and name.  
 One body many members owns,  
 Some are the bands that bind the bones  
 Together, some are active seen,  
 Some passive, yet no jar between  
 The members of the human frame  
 Takes place ; they own one common name—  
 Are guided only by one head,  
 And by one living spirit led.  
 So in Christ's body—He alone  
 Is the great Head, nor may we own  
 In right another ; none but He  
 Who bore the curse to set us free  
 May claim our "*Reverential*" awe.  
 His precious word our golden law ;  
 This chart in hand, where is the need  
 Of binding article or creed ?

The truth received thus set them free  
 To worship God in liberty.  
 It broke the chains which long had bound

Them to the Babel scenes around.  
 Forth from the guilty camp they went,  
 Though tears were shed and hearts were rent,  
 Old ties were sundered, friendships lost ;  
 But pausing not to count the cost,  
 Attracted by one image fair,  
 Nor fearing His reproach to bear,  
 To *Jesus* and *His word* they turned,  
 With fervent love their spirits burned.

Led by an unrieved spirit they  
 Made haste Christ's precepts to obey ;  
 Despising for His sake the shame,  
 They were immersed in Jesus' Name :  
 A sign that showed to all around  
 How firm, how stable was the ground  
 Where faith had dropped her anchor sure,  
 A rock that would for aye endure.  
 One with the Lord in death and life,  
 Made more than conquerors in the strife,  
 No need to fear though hell's rage  
 Should every earthly power engage  
 'Gainst them, for He whom thus they owned  
 Above all angels is enthroned,  
 "All power into His hand" is given  
 O'er things on earth and things in heaven.

Taught still by God they soon were led  
 In fellowship to break the bread,  
 And drink the symbol cup, while love  
 Her banner waved their heads above.  
 Each "first day of the week" they saw  
 Was indicated in that law,  
 Which binds all loyal hearts and true,  
 What they find written straight to do.  
 First *do*, then *teach*, such was His way,  
 Who as the Son of Man could say  
 He always did His Father's will,  
 Was careful ever to fulfil  
 His holy word, till all was done,  
 And life by His obedience won  
 For sinners by transgression lost,  
 But ransomed at such awful cost.

Close knit together heart and hand,  
 Though but a small and feeble band,  
 With "little strength" they "kept the word"  
 Of Jesus their exalted Lord.  
 Sectarian names on every side,  
 All minist'ring to human pride,  
 Whate'er their origin of shame,  
 Deny that high and holy NAME  
 Enshrined in every Christian's heart.

Though many in that wrong take part,  
 And think it matters nothing where  
 They worship, or what name they bear,  
 So long as all is right within  
 And they saved from the doom of sin.  
 From such dishonour to their Lord  
 That company with one accord  
 Withdrew, and turned their willing feet  
 To follow Him whose NAME was sweet  
 To them as precious ointment poured :  
 Thus owned they Him as *Christ* and *Lord*.

While searching, as for hidden gold,  
 For truth which God might yet unfold,  
 The long-lost helmet met their sight—  
 They gazed upon it with delight,  
 "That blessed hope," that Christ will come  
 Himself to take His people home,  
 The dead to raise, the living change,  
 Burst forth with lustre new and strange :  
 It filled each heart with holy joy  
 And peace, which nothing could destroy.  
 The harp of Sion, freshly strung,  
 Quick caught the strain, new songs were sung ;  
 This the glad theme, the sweet refrain,  
 That Jesus will return to reign !  
 O'er town and hamlet, mountain high,  
 Went forth the solemn midnight cry,  
 "Behold He comes," in glory bright,  
 To scatter every shade of night—  
 The message far and wide did ring,  
 "Prepare, O earth, to meet thy King !"

'Twas like a fresh espousal day :  
 The Bridegroom's accents, "Come away,"  
 Had fallen on their raptured ear,  
 And banished every faithless fear.  
 The barren wilderness *with Him*  
 Fair as a paradise did seem ;  
 Earth's gold and honours but as loss  
 Beside the glory of His cross.  
 Their hearts with Gospel ardour glowed,  
 God's love they preached with power, and showed  
 How He in *righteousness* could meet  
 The vilest one who at His feet  
 Lies down in conscious helplessness,  
 And from His hand of sovereign grace  
 Receives that gift so freely given—  
 The robe that fits the soul for heaven.

Some of them crossed the surging sea,  
 And He who holdeth "David's key,"  
 Their service owning went before,

Unlocking many a foreign door  
 Fast shut for centuries gone past,  
 But opened by His power at last,  
 That gospel light with cheering ray  
 Might usher in a brighter day ;  
 That all the nations round might hear  
 The glad good news ere yet the year  
 Accepted of the Lord should close  
 In judgment and unthought-of woes.

Rome's priests tried hard, but all in vain,  
 Those opened doors to shut again ;  
 For back that key they could not turn,  
 Though with wild rage their hearts might burn.  
 And so the "old, old story" flew  
 Through lands where it indeed was new,  
 Till e'en in Rome's most public street  
 Stood messengers of *beauteous* feet,  
 Proclaiming freely, *without fear*,  
 The grace that brings lost sinners near ;  
 The faith that justifies the soul,  
 The wounds which make the sin-sick whole.

Those precious Philadelphian ways  
 Receive the Master's highest praise :  
 No word of censure from Him falls,  
 Only to constancy He calls—  
 "Hold fast that none may take thy crown,  
 For great the glory and renown  
 Awaiting the o'ercomer who  
 To Me and to My word stands true.  
 Thy works I've seen, and opened wide  
 Doors for the truth on every side,  
 Though but a little strength is thine  
 My holy Name and words divine  
 Have been thy care ; and though oft tried  
 Have never been by thee denied.  
 Those ritualistic would-be Jews,  
 Whose deadly ways thou didst refuse,  
 Shall by and by form Satan's shrine  
 Yet shall they own that ye are Mine ;  
 And humbled low, on bended knee,  
 My special love to you shall see.  
 My word of patience thou has kept,  
 Watching for Me whilst others slept ;  
 So will I keep thee from that hour  
 Of darkness and Satanic power  
 Which over all the earth shall be—  
 A night of untold misery.  
 As on the earth a pillar true,  
 My truth found resting-place with you,  
 So in the heavenly temple fair,  
 High place of honour thou shalt share.

A pillar shalt thou be secure,  
Which shall for evermore endure ;  
No sin can ever enter there,  
Nor subtle error taint the air.  
From thence ye shall go out no more,  
Tears have no place on that bright shore.  
As to *My Name* ye fast did cleave,  
So shall ye from My hand receive  
A fair inscription that shall be  
A praise for all eternity ;  
Triunely shall it intertwine  
My Father's holy Name and Mine,  
Together with that city's where  
My glory and My throne thou'lt share."

Where is the opened heart and ear  
Receptively His word to hear ?  
'Mid Babylon's confusing noise  
Who listens for the Master's voice ?  
When He appears may such be found  
Apart on Philadelphian ground.

A. W. P. S.

### CHRIST'S GREAT ALLEGORY.\*

John x. 1-18.

BY J. HIXON IRVING.

MORE LIFE.

THERE are two epithets, "the thief," and "the wolf" (vs. 10, 12), which belong, not to the false and faithless shepherds of Israel, but to Satan, and which bring before the mind the subtle, fierce, and malignant character of the foe of the flock of God. Now the Lord places Himself in vivid contrast to the Evil One, in that He gives, sustains, and bestows life more abundantly (v. 10). Here, then, we have yet another of the many anticipations of our Lord found in this fruitful portion. He saw, as it were, His rejection, death, resurrection, and ascension, all past, and the Spirit as come upon, and abiding in, the "little flock," giving them a fresh accession of the life they already possessed. Life equal to that enjoyed by patriarchs, prophets, priests, and pious ones of the past: a life which the Holy Spirit was about to largely augment.

Need we say, beloved, that this anticipation was fully realised when the day of Pentecost had fully come. Another "first day" blessing was that; for just as the Lord brought life and

incorruptibility to light through His resurrection on that day, so on another "first day of the week" the Holy Spirit conveyed life more abundant to the waiting remnant (Lev. xxiii. 15, 16; Acts ii. 1, 33; 1 Peter i. 12)—a life in the indwelling, presence, and power of the promised Paraclete.

Is this life the common possession of believers? Do all have it? Yes; all have received it potentially, as all have the Spirit, for He is *with* all and *in* all. And each one may have it experimentally and evidentially too; that is, as a matter of blest experience and also of manifestation. That all the children of God have *not* this life in equal degree is beyond question, but that each one may have it in a greater degree is equally certain; for it is a life capable of development. Every form of life is, under given conditions and up to certain limits, capable of growth. And can we imagine that the highest form of all vitality does not possess power of expansion? Yes; life spiritual and eternal is a growing thing, and its growth is just in proportion to the use of the divinely-appointed means—means, such as a right use of the Word of God, living in an atmosphere of prayer and praise, and jealously practising self-scrutiny. With regard to the former, see 1 Peter ii. 1, 2. The life there is identified with the individual, with the "ye"; in fact it is the evidential side of growth which is presented.

But to be more particular as to the method and means. It is not having or reading the Word merely, need we say—or memorising it even—that makes it to be food for the new life. It must be meditated upon, believed in, fed upon, and thus applied to the present need of the heart and of the life. Assimilation of the Word is a thing better experienced than described; many of those who know the graciousness of the Lord are not able to put their knowledge into simple language, so as to cause others to understand it, yet can with assurance say—"O taste and see that the Lord is good" (Ps. xxxiv. 8). Even so it is with an assimilation of the truth. But even a right and constant use of the Word must be accompanied with prayer; for it is prayer that puts it into the heart. Prayer before, whilst, and after reading is essential to an entrance of the Word. Prayer brings divine light; imparts

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faith; clears the vision; puts the heart with its secrets, and the life with its issues, into the presence of God; and in many ways contributes to life abundantly. Meditating upon the truth of God, praying in the Holy Spirit, if supplemented by self-scrutiny, must eventuate in a marked degree of growth. Failing this, from the root of evil within, which in the present life is never eradicated, weeds of selfishness, self-pleasing, and self-gratification will spring up and choke the life. If, for example, we allow intellectual speculations over the Word to take the place of fear, and trembling, and faith; or if love for the pre-eminence be fostered instead of esteeming each other better than ourselves, and desiring to take the low place; again, if a love of display of earthly possessions, endowments, spiritual attainments, and a knowledge of divine things be allowed to usurp a place in the heart, then farewell to progress, to growth. Such things must die—must be put to death—or spiritual decay will ensue (Rom. viii. 12, 13). There must, of necessity, be a continual putting to death of the deeds of the organised body within us—sin, or life will be starved; the holy, heavenly, and God-like will grow feebler and feebler, whilst the unholy and diabolical will develop itself.

The high-water mark of this life has never yet been reached by any, neither will it ever be on earth; but it will be, and that by each believer at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Then life in all its fulness and power will be known and enjoyed throughout the "Day of God"—the day of eternity. May we, beloved, by a growing faith feed upon the unadulterated spiritual milk—by increasing prayerfulness, and watchfulness over ourselves—antedate the time of our perfect spiritual manhood and likeness to our lovely Lord Jesus.

#### RIGHTEOUS DISCIPLINE.

Any system which demands the excommunication of persons who are sound in doctrine and whose individual walk is uniformly godly, because of failure to apprehend the mind of the Lord as to Church discipline and fellowship, is on its face unscriptural. Differences of judgment as to Church discipline and fellowship are not taught in Scripture to be offences demanding excommunication.

#### THE CHRISTIAN'S GOD.

**G**OD, who of old appeared to the fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, by the name of "God Almighty," and to Israel by His name "Jehovah," hath in these last days revealed Himself more fully by the name of "the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit"; not three names, but one name, even as God is one.

The Father is God, the Infinite Holy Being who inhabits eternity, "whom no man hath seen nor can see," omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent, the Sovereign Over-ruler of all, who disposes everything after the counsel of His own immutable will.

The Son is God in personal manifestation, the image of the invisible God, the effulgence of His Glory, and the exponent of His ways.

In creation, redemption, and government, the glory of God's attributes is displayed, but not until the eternal Word became flesh had the perfections of God's nature found adequate expression. In Jesus Immanuel were seen, in beauteous combination, glory as of the Only Begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth, and all that which must needs characterise that perfect Man in the earth; who, according to eternal counsels, is destined to wield the sceptre of the universe.

In every respect God must be vindicated in that sphere wherein He has been dishonoured. His image, in the which man originally was made, had been defaced, and the lie of Satan had found place in the mind of the favoured creature whom God had formed for Himself, when lo! in the person of Jesus Christ, "the mystery of Godliness" appeared. Truth sprung out of the earth, and righteousness looked down from heaven, and on the cross, where the Lamb of God bore the sin of the world, mercy and truth met together; righteousness and peace kissed each other. Death, to Him who endured the cross, despising the shame, was the perfect finish to a perfect path through a world still in rebellion against God, and the value of that death none but God can truly estimate. Thus far, at least, we know, that with respect to sin, God's requirements are fully met. His love to mankind has been demonstrated beyond question. The serpent's head is bruised; and

at Calvary was ratified the charter of creation's deliverance from the bondage of corruption. We now await the further development of God's wondrous purposes. Perfect administrative power also must be displayed in Him unto whom all judgment is committed, because He is the Son of man. He must reign until all enemies are subdued unto Him, then shall be fully realised the glorious results of all that perfect work, in the accomplishment of which fallible man has not had part, when in the new creation home, based upon redemption, God with men will dwell. His glory and their happiness eternally secured, because the Living One who died, shall evermore remain Himself the visible connecting bond between God and creation.

Finally, the Holy Spirit is God in active operation, carrying out in detail all the purposes of the infinite mind: as the Father wills, the Son performs through the Spirit's omnipotent agency. Father, Son, and Spirit one in being, mind, and purpose. When God, by the Son, created the heavens and the earth, the Spirit brooded over the watery waste. When the appointed time had come for the fulfilment of Isaiah vii. 14, the Holy Spirit accomplished, in the Virgin of Nazareth, the mystery of the incarnation. Through the Eternal Spirit Christ offered Himself, without spot, to God on the cross, and by the same mighty power God raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory. By the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, the world is convicted of sin of righteousness and of judgment, by Him also the mystic body of Christ is being perfected; and the hour is at hand when, in response to the voice of the Son, the mortal bodies of saints, with those of the sleeping raised, shall be changed like in fashion to the body of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself. Well may the redeemed of the Lord unite in the doxology:

"To the only wise God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and power, before all time and now and for evermore. Amen" (Jude 25, R.V.).

R. S.

TRY not to capitulate even in little things. It is the small surrenders which lead too often to the loss of the spiritual fortress.—*Macduff*.

### " FROM GLORY UNTO GLORY."

2 Cor. iii. 18.

"FROM glory unto glory":  
O speak it soft and low,  
As step by step, from grace to grace,  
We in His likeness grow.  
For we are wayward oft and dull,  
And steep the upward way;  
And sore the shepherd's toil and care  
For sheep that will but stray.

"From glory unto glory"—  
A hidden glory now:  
For sorrow's touch has left its trace  
Upon both heart and brow.  
And weary grows the waiting band,  
Tho' home and rest are near,  
When all the travail of His soul  
Shall in His saints appear.

"From glory unto glory":  
But who shall tell the cost,  
To Him who seeks in desert ways  
The wand'ring and the lost.  
Into whose Shepherd-hand the flock  
Of God, our God, were told,  
To bring without a stain of earth  
To the eternal fold.

"From glory unto glory":  
Tho' flesh and heart should fail,  
His strength shall be our refuge still,  
His purpose must prevail.  
Then work in us Thy blessed work  
From grace to grace, until  
We for Thy glory perfected,  
Shall all Thy joy fulfil!

A. E. W.

EVERY precept has its added promise; but before every precept lies the unfolding of God's mercies, a sense of which filling the soul gives willingness to obey the precept.

CONFLICTS are the warfare between the new man and the old nature. *Experiences* are the blissful provings of God's sustaining grace.

FELLOWSHIP with saints is comforting, and a refreshing to the heart; but acceptable service must spring from fellowship with God, and its measure is our individual faith.

## Correspondence.

## THE GOSPEL OF THREE DIVINES.

To the Editor of *The Witness*.

SIR,—It is to be noted that the philosophy and science of the day has had at different stages in the history of Christianity a remarkable counterpart in the kingdom of God. And the claims of God in this day seem to hold a secondary place to the claims of humanity. The philosophy of Compté put humanity forward instead of God as an object of worship. And in religious meetings how often is it heard that doctrine is not wanted, but Christian life and conduct!—a system that has been well styled “building from the top.” The consequence is that the *foundations* are often being shaken and well-nigh destroyed. And “if the foundations be destroyed, what shall the righteous do?” Now all Christian life, to be of value with God, must be based on faith, and faith must be based on an object—and that object must be Christ. Not the Christ which the priest gives in the Mass, nor the Christ of the protestant human imagination—but the Christ that God has given us, and whom He has revealed to us; now this is doctrine. And these thoughts crossed our mind on reading sentiments and statements lately promulgated by three notable divines at public meetings and religious conferences. We will briefly give the extracts, marking them 1, 2, 3. These gentlemen speak well about what Christians ought to be, and about the work of the Holy Spirit, but when they come to the foundations, and speak of the Lord Himself, it is most deplorable.

No. 1. H. G. G—— reported in *The Christian*, July 9, p. 13, speaks of our Lord as follows:—“He becomes human, He takes the seed of the woman, He takes the seed of Abraham, He takes the seed of David, He is born of Mary, He is born under the law, under the *broken law*, and the *curse of that broken law*; and placing himself in that position, the woes descend upon the Man of Sorrows, and on the cross the burden of their guilt is rolled upon Him, for Jehovah makes to meet upon that One the iniquity of us all. But when we have said that we have only said *half the truth*, for we view Jesus Christ thus only as the descendant, I cannot say the outcome of humanity, but as the Son of Man, as the *Heir of our sin*, as the Heir of our sorrows, as the *Heir of our death*, as the *Heir of our curse*.” (The italics are ours.) This is sore divinity, no doubt! and if this be the doctrine the collegiate missionaries are sent to preach, they had much better stay at home. For then Christ was born under the broken law, and the curse of that broken law! The woes descend upon the Man of Sorrows! What woes? And on the cross the burden of guilt, and the iniquity of us all was made to meet upon Him! One would think this a climax; but no!—for this, Mr. G—— says, “is only half the truth.” The rest of it is that “He is the Heir of our sin, the Heir of our death, the Heir of our curse.” Alas, this was poor Irving’s doctrine! but more logical, for having made the Lord to be exactly like us, born under the curse, the Heir of sin and death, then He worked His way out of it, and redeemed Himself as well as us from the curse of the broken law under which He was born. Mr.

G—— does not say this, but why not? Before then it was not heard that Christ was the Heir of our death and curse, as born under them, nor do we know of any Scripture to support such monstrous teaching. If such were the case, He had surely to redeem Himself as well as us. And alas! this is the Christ put forth to the multitude at the M—— Conference!—a man who should have to redeem Himself with other sinners under the curse like Himself! Where did Mr. G—— learn that Christ was under the curse of the law till He was on the cross? It is not a sentimental Christ in whom we are to believe, but in the Christ whom God has revealed to us.

No. 2. CANON W—— We next light on Canon W——’s eulogy of *Lux Mundi*, as follows:—Speaking of throwing ourselves with confidence into the outstretched arms of our Lord, he says—“And I believe that to *encourage us in this virtue of faith* is the object both of the first essay and of all the other essays of *Lux Mundi*. Even the expressions as to the Old Testament which have been felt by many of us to be irreverent, and by most of us to be rash, were intended by the authors not to disturb faith, but to *protect against the inroads of doubt*. They were intended (as appears more fully in the *new preface*) not to express acquiescence in destructive theories of the Old Testament, but to show that if even these *theories were proved true* they would only affect our ideas as to the nature of the mysterious blending of the Divine and human in Christ, but need in no way diminish our certainty of the facts of His life, death, and resurrection on which our faith is based. I have long felt (and have often expressed) how important it is to recognise that many modern difficulties, and many apparent objections to the Christian religion have really no bearing on the *truth or falsehood of our creed*, but on the separate, though deeply interesting subject of the nature and degree of the guidance given by God to the writers of Holy Scripture.” (The italics are ours).

This is *sore* divinity like the last; for *Lux Mundi* is a book that outstrips in satanic subtlety any book of the century. In it our Lord is said to accommodate His language to the current notions of the time, knowing them to be false! And how this can encourage faith is a puzzle beyond our solution. And in the new preface, praised as above, our Lord is said to have had in His nature human evil in common with the criminal! But what matter all this, if these objections to the Christian religion, as we are told, have really no bearing on the truth or falsehood of our creed? The book uses all the skill of rhetoric to neutralise the integrity of Scripture, and lower the estimate of the Son of God, whilst professing zeal for the faith, by mixing up with lies much that remains true in the form of philosophy.

No. 3. H—— B—— in *Word and Work* (July 3)—at M—— Conference on the Righteousness of God and Justification, having fancifully connected justification with the spirit, sanctification with the soul, and redemption with the body, speaks of our Lord as set forth in 1 Tim. iii. 16, the great passage on the incarnation, as follows:—“’Tis said of the Lord Jesus in a passage which I think if closely examined points to *His people as associated with Him—Christ mystical rather than personal*, ‘He was justified in the spirit.’ It is in the soul that sanctification is to be experienced,

and it is in the body that redemption hereafter is to be experienced." (The italics are ours).

The fanciful application of those subjects to the "tripartite" nature of man, we pass by in face of the more weighty subject. But why has the great portraiture of our Lord, as drawn by St. Paul, to be thus vacuated and made void? Even Bagster in his Greek Testament very properly brings in the last words of the former verse, and reads the passage thus:—"The pillar and ground of the truth and confessedly great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory."

This faith, and not the Church, was and is the pillar and ground of the truth, and from which Christians were to depart and apostatise, as the apostle shows in the next verse. Indeed the internal evidence of the two epistles shows that the apostle did not intend to state that the Church was the pillar and ground of the truth; for he speaks in the first epistle of apostasy from the faith of Christianity, and in the second from the practice of Christianity; and even *then* that "all they which be in Asia have turned away from me." Yet the critics tried to eviscerate the passage by excluding the name of God, but Dean Burgon exposed this desideratum in his famous onslaught on them. However, now we are informed of another method by which this great passage may be eviscerated, viz.:—when it can be applied corporately to Christ and the Church. "If closely examined, points to His people as associated with Him—Christ mystical rather than personal," says Mr. B——. Perhaps when he "closely examines" it, he may tell us how this is to be done, and how Christ corporately and not Christ alone was to be "justified in the spirit"? To our thinking, the effort to examine with a view to deprive the verse of its singular and unique application to the Lord Himself would be, and probably was, the first step in the apostasy from the faith, foretold by the apostle at the time.

To justify in connection with Christianity, is used in two senses—either to be just absolutely, or else to be declared or accounted just, but *never to be made just*. Hence justification as explained by St. Paul is utterly unknown to modern teaching, the fruits of which are unfortunately conspicuous in the sentiments quoted above. The Lord only could be justified in the spirit. But we do not at all think that whilst those sentiments lower the Lord and destroy the Gospel, the three gentlemen who uttered them intended to do so, much less concerted to do so. Yet the simplest person can see the drift of them to be mainly against the Son of God. Now why is this? The only way that we can account for it is that *Arianism*, *Rationalism*, and *Ritualism* are all in the air, and in vogue at the present time, and Satan is the prince of the power of the air. None of us is outside his range. And well we know that whenever possible the enemy has always chosen good men to propagate wrong teaching. The better they were the better for him. And if those three good men, instead of giving way to sentimentality and the pleasing of men, had stuck fast to Scripture and tried to prove from it those teachings regarding our Lord, they would, no doubt, have gone on opposite lines. For it is to be remembered that the main efforts of the enemy are always levelled against the person of

the Son of God, to lower Himself, His Deity, or His doctrines, in some one way. And the mischief is when he persuades them that the sentiments are true—for then instead of giving them up they are defended as right and true. Let us pray, and say, "That which we know not, teach Thou us." Yours,

AN OBSERVER.

## Questions and Answers.

We desire to express our thanks to all who have sent answers.

We particularly request that each writer will give his name and address in full, not for publication, but that we may know who it is that seeks to help, and, if desirable, that we may communicate privately.

Replies to appear in the next number require to be sent in not later than 15th of present month, and so on; the 15th of the month being always the latest to which we can defer making up for press.

We again urge the importance of replies being *short*; it is essential, in this particular line of things, to be *concise*.

We shall greatly value remembrance in prayer that special wisdom and grace may be given for this service. THE EDITOR.

### Replies are invited to the following:—

Does the house of God embrace all saints, or only those gathered according to the Word?

In what sense are believers made the righteousness of God in Christ? Is this the same as God's justifying righteousness referred to in Rom. iii. 26?

The preparation referred to in John xiv. 2-3—did it take place on the Cross, or is it still going on?

### "IN THE LORD."

QUESTION 397.—What is the signification of the expression "in the Lord"? Is it correct to say that only those gathered unto the Name of the Lord are "in the Lord"?

Ans. A.—The expression in Philemon xvi., both "in the flesh" and "in the Lord," seems to point to the gain Philemon would then have in Onesimus. Ere his conversion, his value was *only* "in the flesh"—now saith Paul, "he will be profitable to you 'in the Lord'"—as he had been to Paul himself. Then he points out that if Philemon be *gracious* to his slave, Paul will have "joy in the Lord," and be "refreshed in the Lord." To simple souls this is plain. In the same line note, 1 Thess. iii. 8, Col. iii. 18, Eph. ii. 21, vi. 1, 1 Cor. xi. 2, 1 Cor. ix. 2, vii. 22, 39, Rom. xvi. 2, 8, 11, 13. The remaining verse in Rom. xvi., viz., verse 12, may be connected with 1 Cor. xv. 58, Eph. vi. 21, Col. iv. 7, 17, all pointing to labour "in the Lord," as opposed to labour "in the flesh," as in Phil. i. 15, 16. All these verses seem to bring out, that "in the Lord" and "in the flesh" are the expression of opposite conditions—that in regard to labour, or work, it may be either in the one or the other. All would admit Corinth was gathered to the Name of the Lord; and yet it is manifest their labour, as a whole, was not "in the Lord," but "in the flesh"; see 1 Cor. iii. And let us remember, that "where ENVY and STRIFE is, *there* is confusion (Babylon) and every evil work" (James iii. 16). T. C.

Ans. B.—In Rom. xvi. the words "in the Lord" are frequently used as interchangeable with "in Christ." In 1 Cor. vii. 22 we have "called in the Lord." In Eph. ii. 21, "groweth to a holy temple in the Lord." In Phil. xvi., "a brother beloved . . . both in the flesh and in the Lord." In Rev. xiv. 13, "Blessed are

the dead that die in the Lord." Could any person read the words in these passages as synonymous with "in fellowship" or any words having that meaning?

J. S. D.

**Ans. C.**—The expression "in the Lord" is always used by or in reference to believers. They become saints because "chosen in the Lord." Everything they are is in Him. They are "strong in the Lord" and "light in the Lord." Everything they do ought to be in Him. Their rejoicing, glorying, obedience, and even salutations are said to be in Him. The frequent use of the expression in such connection seems to spring from the truth of the indwelling of Christ in each believer's heart, and of His thus controlling and bringing them under His authority as Lord,—thus Christ working in the believer's heart, it is in Him everything is done.

**Editor's Note.**—It appears to us that, as a rule (not without exception), the term "in Christ" describes *position*, and is applicable to all believers. The term "in the Lord" defines the character of actions. In Acts xiv. 3 Paul and Barnabas spoke "boldly in the Lord." In Rom. xvi. 2 the Corinthians are exhorted to "receive" Phebe "in the Lord." Eph. vi. 1, children are to "obey in the Lord." Phil. iv. 2, two are besought to be "of the same mind in the Lord."

To substitute "in Christ" in any of these passages, and in very many more such, would spoil the sense.

For instance, "Children obey your parents in Christ" would signify "obey your parents if they are Christians." Whereas, the instruction is "whether your parents be in Christ or not your obedience is to be in the Lord." Subjection to the Lord is that which is to characterise their obedience—therefore if commanded to do what is contrary to the revealed will of the Lord, say to steal, or lie, obedience could not be rendered "in the Lord," but in defiance of the Lord.

So to receive Phebe "in the Lord" means to receive her in all the grace and holiness that will ever characterise intercourse that is in subjection to the Lord.

Rom. xvi. 7 gives position; they were "in Christ" before Paul was converted. Verse 11, "Salute them of the household of Narcissus which are in the Lord," signifies not that some of them were spiritual Christians, and therefore to be saluted, and others carnal Christians

and therefore not to be saluted, but evidently that some of the household were unsaved.

Here is evidently an exception to the general use of the term. As a rule, the alteration from one to another would change and mar the meaning. In some cases, such as Rom. xvi. 11, they seem to be interchangeable.

But though the signification is so distinct it gives no ground for stating that any Christian, as to position, is in Christ, but not in the Lord.

Nevertheless, the behaviour of one who is in Christ may be in the Lord, whilst that of another who is equally in Christ may be not "in the Lord," but in the flesh.

A Christian professedly gathered unto the Name may in behaviour and spirit be living far from "in the Lord." Another, though a member of a denomination, or an association, or an army which in principle sets aside the Lord's authority, and substitutes the doctrines and commandments of man—may, in his family, his business, his personal behaviour and testimony among men, fear, honour, and obey the Lord, and live a life that puts the other to the blush.

#### RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS.

**QUESTION 398.**—In Acts iii. 21, it is stated that Christ will remain in heaven until the time of the restitution of all things. This being so, the restitution of Israel will, I take it, be the first act. If I am right, 1 Thess. iv. 16 cannot take place until afterwards. The question is, when will 1 Thess. iv. 16 take place?

The explanation is simple, viz.: that the descent of the Lord Jesus from the highest heaven to the air in order to change the living and quicken the sleeping saints (all which will be accomplished in an inconceivably short space of time), and to take both together up to the heavens to be for ever with Himself, is not an infringement of the Word "Whom heaven must receive until," &c.

The heavens do still remain His dwelling-place, and will be so until He descends publicly with His saints to accomplish "all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets."

Then truly His first work after His descent from heaven to earth will be the restoration of Israel; for until this is accomplished, earth's blessing under the government of the Son of David is necessarily postponed.—Ed.

It is our intention to continue this Periodical as we have been enabled to do by the grace of God now for nearly twenty-one years, adhering to the lines upon which we have hitherto gone.

These are mainly:—

I.—To keep back nothing that we believe to be generally profitable.

II.—Whilst not shunning to declare, in so far as we have learned it, all the counsel of God, to do so in the Spirit of Christ "always with grace" though also "seasoned with salt," thus seeking to combine "truth and love."

III.—We desire to present the various truths of Scripture, so far as in us lies, in due proportion, not specially giving prominence to one line of truth or another, but seeking the edification of saints, that they may be filled with the knowledge of the will of God, and stand perfect and complete in the same.

IV.—To this end we shall continue, with the help of God, to give such teaching as we are able on the great fundamental doctrines of the Word, on the practical bearing of these, on prophetic subjects, on assembly principles and difficulties; also articles for the young and inexperienced in the ways of the Lord.

V.—We heartily thank all who have helped us by replies to questions, although many replies have necessarily not appeared, owing in many cases only to want of space, and we trust this willing aid may be continued.

We earnestly desire the help of all who love the Lord by prayer for the supply of all needed grace.

We also seek the help of those interested, in the way of obtaining new subscribers, and so increasing the usefulness of the periodical.

EDITOR.

## ON DIFFERENCES OF JUDGMENT.

BY JOHN R. CALDWELL.

IT is the will of God that His children "be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." To this end the apostle prays (Rom. xv. 5), "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like minded one to another according to Christ Jesus; that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

That this blessed attainment of oneness of mind and judgment should have been frustrated through the working of Satan hitherto, and instead thereof the spectacle presented of a Babel of conflicting doctrines and opinions is matter for deep humiliation, confession, and sorrow before God.

If any measure of divine unity is to be brought about it must needs come down to us from above, and the beginning of the blessing will be found in brokenness of heart and true contrition concerning the enormity of the evil.

This, if genuine, will be accompanied by self-examination. "For the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart" (Judges v. 16). The root of all divisions and contrarities of mind and judgment is the deceitful heart. "They are a people that do err in their hearts," that is the root; "they have not known My ways," that is the result (Ps. xcv.) One of the most stupendous manifestations of the judgment of God upon human self-exaltation ever known was the confounding of the language of those who had been till then of one language and of one speech, so that they could not understand one another. It was "Babel" or "confusion." Is there not even such a judgment from God upon His people at this present time? Are not the conflicting views upon almost every subject within the boards of the Bible; the weird and twisted interpretations; efforts to arrive at oneness of mind, whether on prophetic, ecclesiastical, or any other subject resulting only in the fuller manifestation of the greatness of the gulfs that seem fixed between those who ought to be perfectly joined together—are not these things evidence that judgment has indeed begun at the house of God?

But there was another form of judgment more dreadful still—viz., when God turned the sword of every man against his fellow (see Judges vii. 22; 1 Sam. xiv. 20). And the application of it to New Testament times is no fancy; for do we not read, "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another" (Gal. v. 15)? Is it not the case that the precious Word of God, to be used in the grace of the Spirit for edifying and comforting, has been handled in the flesh, and made the instrument for hacking and hewing, for dividing and consuming?

It has been well said by one that if unity is ever to be manifested on earth, it will, somehow or other, come by way of the Bible. This we are persuaded is true. Departure from God and from His Word is the root of all the evil, and the cure can only be in a genuine return to that same God and to that same Word.

This return must be individual—each one in his and her own soul's relation with God—and when grace for such return is given from above, there will be certain infallible marks. First, there will be meekness of spirit and humbleness of mind. Of such it is written—"To this man will I look" (Is. lxvi. 2). "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise" (Ps. li. 17). "The Lord is nigh unto and saveth such" (Ps. xxxiv. 18); and finally, "With this man will I dwell" (Is. lvii. 15). "When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel" (Hos. xiii. 1). There is a gentleness that makes great and a grace in the trembling speech that wins respect and esteem. The truly contrite will tremble at the Word, and will tremble as they speak it. Alas for the hypercritical dogmatism that issues as thunderbolts its latest constructions and conclusions, demanding that they shall be implicitly received; or, if not, the man who dares to question or reject, is denounced as dishonest or sneered at as an imbecile!

Such a spirit may build indeed a structure in keeping with itself, and boastingly cry, "The temple of the Lord are these;" and glory in a unity gained at the expense of excluding all who have not so learned. But if aught is to be ever wrought that God will own, it will be marked by meekness of spirit and lowliness of mind.

Another mark will ever be characteristic of that which is of God. The element of love will pervade and encircle it. The truth will be spoken in love, and acted in love, and pressed upon heart and conscience in love. Where this exists, evil surmisings will be at an end—"love thinketh no evil." There will be no vaunting of self—no being puffed up, as at Corinth, for one party against another; no glorying in majorities; no seeking of our own, but a bearing, a believing, a hoping, an enduring, a long-suffering accompanied with kindness that only God can impart.

The cause that is divine will need no resort to evil-speaking to advance it, and no unseemly forwardness or disparaging of others to maintain it.

Another mark will be the firm refusal to judge in matters concerning which God has not given command to judge.

There are definite rules laid down for the judgment of evil in the assembly, and those who are acting in fellowship with God will seek to act up to these rules, but not to go beyond them.

Who shall dare to legislate for or judge a fellow-servant of the Lord as to how far he shall go in becoming all things to all men, that he might gain them? And if now, one servant of the Lord goes with the Lord's message where another would not feel liberty to go, who shall judge or condemn him? "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?" "To his own Master he standeth or falleth."

The fact that every one of us shall give account of himself to God, effectually prohibits fellow-servants from judging one another as to their individual path or motives.

The repeated injunction not to judge, first spoken by the Lord (Matt. vii.), again by Paul (Rom. xiv. 10-13), and by James (James iv. 11, 12), *must* have a more definite and general application than is usually accorded to it. We are persuaded that the spirit which indulges in perpetual judgment and censure of others, is not of God. It alienates and separates very friends; it fosters pride and self-righteousness, and results in barrenness and joylessness of soul.

Very different is the spirit, which in love

would seek to enlighten, to direct by patient instruction—line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little—into ways and paths more pleasing to God. Love, whilst dealing with the conscience, only draws its gentle cords the tighter. Not so the spirit of judgment. It censures, it condemns, it rebukes, it casts off, it imputes evil motives, and says, "Let the Lord be glorified!" "Malicious words" are not lacking now as of old, wherewith to follow those whom fleshly zeal casts out (3 John).

Differences of judgment there will be, and must be, until perfect knowledge is attained. There is the ignorance of a child in the infant class—the ignorance of the boy in the higher form, whose slowness and negligence make him a dunce. There is the ignorance of those who have attained to years, but never had the opportunity to learn, and the yet deeper ignorance of those who have been wrongly taught, and who have afterwards with greater pains to unlearn what they learnt. All these distinctions are to be found in the spiritual sphere, and must be reckoned with. Discernment is needed, suitably to deal with every case, as well as patience and grace. Love will wait and welcome every little step of attainment, whilst impatience and fleshly zeal will seek escape from the burden in the heartless sentence of expulsion from the school.

Unchristlike as well as disastrous and hopeless is the policy that gathers around a little company of clever learners, and denounces all the rest as wilfully ignorant.

There is an essential difference between a *precept* and a *principle*. Concerning a precept or command, there is little or no room for diversity of judgment. Disobedience can scarcely be accounted for on the ground of misapprehension. It arises from the want of the will to obey. Very different is it with a principle. The present dispensation is more than any previous period one of principles, requiring spiritual intelligence to apprehend and apply them. And the difficulty of such application is a thousand-fold increased by the divisions and confoundings of these last days.

Nothing is more contrary to the mind and spirit of Christ than the judging of others to be ungodly or reprobate, who fail to apprehend the policies which to us may be very plain

and afford very definite guidance. Yet, is it not the case that some who, after years of blindness, have had their eyes opened to the application of a principle, attempt to force their present judgment upon others who cannot see it, charging with wilful ignorance or dishonesty some who far excel their judges in grace and godliness.

The poor, bewildered sheep know not which way to turn. Thousands are waiting to be gently led and fed with food convenient for them as they are able to bear it. But if their "doubtful thoughts" are to be judged (Rom. xiv. 1, margin), ere they are accounted fit for any fellowship whatever, how are they to be reached, how helped, how led on into ways which are according to truth? On some, this burden is pressing heavily; yet, to tell the truth, they are hindered, perhaps unconsciously, from acting upon their convictions, through fear of the judgment of brethren.

At present there is a process going on which is loosening the bonds of sectarianism. Many minds are being prepared to surrender traditional teaching, and to accept the Word of God as the only and final appeal. If such are held at arm's length, and if fellowship with them is regarded as necessarily a compromise of the truth, is it any wonder that they are stumbled and turned away from a position which seems to them to involve a bondage to man more exacting than the sectarianism in which they were born and brought up.

## THE BRANCH PRUNED.

JOHN xv. 1, 2.

BLEEDING like a pruned tree,  
Christian, it is well with thee;  
Sound and healthful in the Root,  
Thou hast borne a little fruit;  
So thy Keeper wise and good  
But removes the barren wood;  
Droop not—thou art in the Vine—  
Greater fruitfulness is thine.

Very painful though it be,  
Chastisement is good for thee;  
Rebel will, affections wild,  
Are not seemly in a child;  
So thy Father needs must show  
He would have thee holy grow:  
Kiss the rod, and take thy place  
As a true-born child of grace.

## THE SEVENTY WEEKS OF DANIEL.\*

BY THOMAS NEWBERRY.

Daniel ix. 2.—"In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; in the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem."

In the reign of Jehoiakim, B.C. 607, God gave the kingdom of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon (Dan. i. 1, 2), and Jehoiakim became servant of the king of Babylon three years (2 Kings xxiv. 1). Subsequently Jerusalem was besieged again, the king and people carried captive, the Temple was destroyed, and the holy vessels carried away to Babylon (2 Kings xxiv. xxv., 2 Chron. xxxvi.). The transferred kingdom into the hand of the Gentiles, as shown in Nebuchadnezzar's image, was divided into four parts—the golden, the silver, the brass, the iron and clay kingdoms (Dan. ii.).

At this time, when Daniel writes, the first division, the head of gold, had come to an end, because of the iniquity of their kings, and for their profanation of the holy vessels (Jer. xxv. 12-14, Dan. v. 22, 23). Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar had reigned from about B.C. 607 (Jer. xxv.) to B.C. 538 (Dan. v. 30), about 69 years; so that Daniel understood by books that the seventy years to be accomplished in the desolations of Jerusalem, spoken of by Jeremiah the prophet (chapter xxv., xxix.), were drawing to their close. He therefore sets himself by prayer and supplication with confession, to seek Jehovah his God; for though God's purposes and promises are sure, yet He will be enquired of for these things by His people to do it for them.

Daniel ix. 3.—"And I set my face unto the Lord God [Adonahy the Elohim], to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes."

Daniel ix. 20-23.—"And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord [Jehovah] my God for the holy mountain of my God; yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation [gift offering]. And he informed me, and

\* Issued in book form at 3d. See Advertisement.

talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill *and* understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications *the* commandment came forth, and I am come to show *thee*; for thou *art* greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision."

This reminds us of the promise—"before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear" (Is. lxxv. 24). Daniel had not to wait, as in chapter x. 2-12, three whole weeks, or weeks of days; the way was now clear, and the answer comes direct.

There is a beautiful analogy between the prophecies of Daniel and the book of the Revelation, and between Daniel and John. John was the disciple whom Jesus loved, and Daniel was a man greatly beloved, not only beloved of God, but, as it would appear, an object of affection to the angels who ministered to him.

In the expression, "the man Gabriel," the word "*ish*," employed for man, signifies an individual of high degree. And the time when the answer came, being "about the time of the evening oblation," may intimate that accepted sacrifice lies at the foundation of answered prayer. The angel not only came forth from God to show him the vision, but to give him skill and understanding, for "interpretations belong unto God." But in order to the understanding of the matter, the vision needed to be considered in the presence of God, and according to the ability which God alone can give.

Daniel ix. 24.—"Seventy weeks are determined [cut out, or divided] upon thy people, and upon thy holy city."

The weeks here spoken of are weeks of years, as distinguished from weeks of days (chapter x. 2). "I Daniel was mourning three full weeks" (weeks of days). The word for "week" and the word for "sabbath" are both from a Hebrew root signifying seven. The Jews divided their years into weeks as well as their days, and the seventh year as well as the seventh day was a sabbath (see Lev. xxv. 2-4). Seven sabbaths (or weeks) of years brought the jubilee (verse 8). "Thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years: and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years.

And after seven sabbaths (or weeks) of days

Pentecost commenced. (See Lev. xxiii. 15, 16.) "Seven sabbaths shall be complete: even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days."

The "seventy weeks" of years, making in the whole 490 years, are "cut out" or "divided" thus—seven weeks, or forty-nine years; and sixty and two weeks, or 434 years; together sixty-nine weeks, or 483 years. And after an indefinite interval comes the last week, or seven years, completing the sum total of 490 years, or seventy weeks of years. These periods are divided upon Daniel's people Israel, and Daniel's holy city Jerusalem. After Israel had rejected their Messiah, they are no longer nationally regarded as a people, nor is Jerusalem regarded as the holy city; until the period when the last week of years commences, when 144,000 of Israel will be sealed as the people of God (Rev. vii.), and Jerusalem will be again recognised as the holy city (Rev. xi. 2). Indeed the book of Revelation, from chapter iv. to chapter xix., is occupied with this last week of years, divided into two halves, after which comes the millennial sabbath of rest.

"To finish (shut up) the transgression,  
And to make an end of (seal up) sins,  
And to make reconciliation for (atonement for) iniquity,  
And to bring in everlasting righteousness,  
And to seal up the vision and prophecy (prophet),  
And to anoint *the* most holy (holy of holies)."

At the conclusion of these seventy weeks of years, all these various purposes of God will be fully accomplished, and the millennial reign of righteousness and peace will be established. For the atonement having been made by the cutting off of Messiah, righteousness, holiness, and truth will be brought in, iniquity restrained, the prophetic Scriptures fulfilled: and through the anointing or the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth, according to Joel ii., the Temple on the mountain of Jehovah (Isa ii. 2-5), with its holy of holies, will be the centre of spiritual and acceptable worship for Israel and the whole earth.

Daniel ix. 25.—"Know therefore and understand, *that* from the going forth of *the* commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto *the* Messiah *the* Prince."

These seventy weeks of years include the whole period from the going forth of the commandment unto the coming of Messiah, the Prince of peace, to establish His Kingdom,

and to reign; in harmony with the prediction in verse 24, which we have considered. They date, not from the edict of Cyrus to rebuild the Temple (Ezra i.), but from the going forth of the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, in the twentieth year of king Artaxerxes, according to Neh. i. ii., 446 years before the birth of Christ, not before Anno Domini, which commenced four years after His birth, see margin of Bibles (Matt. ii.); so that in A.D. 8 He was twelve years of age (Luke ii. 42).

"*Shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.*"

The seventy weeks are thus cut out, or divided; the first seven weeks, or forty-nine years, during which the street and wall of Jerusalem were rebuilt, even in troublous times. (See Ezra and Nehemiah.)

And sixty and two weeks, or 434 years; which, added to the previous seven weeks, or forty-nine years, made the sixty-nine weeks, or 483 years.

Daniel ix. 26.—"And after the threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself [*literally, and nothing to Him*]."

Adding the seven weeks first mentioned to the threescore and two weeks just quoted, makes sixty-nine weeks, comprising the whole period of 483 years, from the going forth of the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, to the crucifixion of Christ. Allowing for the mistake made in the common account, called Anno Domini, which begins four years after the birth of Christ, instead of dating it from His nativity, all is perfectly plain. A.D. dates from the period when Christ was 4 years of age (Matt. ii. 1), "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem," (see margin of Authorised Version) "The fourth year before the common account called Anno Domini"; (also Luke ii. 21, margin.) Therefore four years must be added in order to obtain the real length of the life of Christ, which was 37 years.

See also Luke iii. 23, "Jesus Himself began to be about 30 years of age;" in margin of Authorised Version, "A.D. 26."

From A.D. 26 to A.D. 33 are seven years; so then as Jesus was 30 years of age in A.D. 26, He must have been 37 in A.D. 33—the time of the crucifixion.

From the going forth of the commandment to rebuild to the birth of Christ was 446 years, and adding the 37 years of the life of Christ, we have the exact period of 483 years, or sixty-nine weeks—the time when Messiah was cut off.

The expression "but not for Himself," literally, "and nothing to Him" [*Heb. veeyn lo*] is very suggestive, and may imply either, that it was not for His own sin that the Messiah was cut off, for He was sinless; or, that He did not immediately receive the result of His suffering in the establishment of His kingdom; or, that the nation of Israel, having rejected their own Messiah, were no longer regarded as His people—but "Lo Ammi," "not My people." Hence the long interval or times of the Gentiles between the sixty-ninth week and the seventieth, extending already well-nigh two thousand years. During which period the Church of God, composed of Jew and Gentile, baptised by one Spirit into one body, is being called out and formed, to be a witness for the name of God in time, and destined to be the Bride of the Lamb, when complete and perfected in everlasting glory.

"And the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined."

We are here told what transpires during the interval between the sixty-ninth week of years and the seventieth, a period which has already extended over 1800 years. The first great event was the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, and the sanctuary. The city not being now regarded as the holy city, nor the people of Israel as the holy people. This event we know took place A.D. 70, that is seventy-four years after the birth of Christ, adding the four omitted years. By this it appears that the crucifixion of Christ took place exactly half-way between His birth and the destruction of the city. When Christ was thirty-seven years of age He was cut off, and thirty-seven years afterwards the city and Temple were destroyed.

The people that executed the judgment were the people of the fourth great empire (chapter vii.); that is, the Roman people. And the Prince that shall come will be the head of the Roman empire at the period when the seventieth

week commences; the same as the little horn of Daniel (chapter viii. 9-12), and the lawless one or son of perdition of 2 Thess. ii., and also the wild beast of the Apocalypse. According to the prediction of our Lord (Luke xxi.) Jerusalem will be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled; with overwhelming judgments at the end.

Daniel ix. 27. —“ And he shall confirm *the* (a) covenant with many for one week; and in the midst of the week he shall cause *the* sacrifice and *the* oblation (*gift offering*) to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate (and upon the wing abominations making desolate), even until *the* consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon *the* desolate (desolator).”

We now come to the last or seventieth week of years, one of the most momentous periods in the history of the human race. It will be observed that as each of the sixty-nine previous weeks is a week of seven years only, the last or seventieth week must also mean a week of seven years, and cannot be interpreted to mean one thousand two hundred and threescore years, twice over, according to the theory of some. With this period a large portion of the book of Psalms is occupied, and much of the prophetic Scriptures. The details of these seven years are given in the book of the Revelation from the fourth chapter on till the nineteenth. In the first three chapters we have the history of the Church on earth, under the symbol of the seven lampstands, “the things which are.” From the fourth chapter onward, “the things which are about to be after these things,” that is after the history of the Church on earth is complete. The seven seals (chapter vi.) embrace the whole period from the going forth of the lawless one, until the scenes immediately preceding the manifestation of the Son of man. This week of seven years is divided into two portions, the first three years and half being the time when the two witnesses prophecy (chapter xi.), and the latter three years and a half the time of the full manifestation and actings of the man of sin. The first portion corresponds with the three years and half of John the Baptist’s prophetic teaching, and the latter three years and half with the public ministry of the Lord Jesus.

During the first three and a half years the symbolic trumpets will be blown, and during

the latter three years and half the vials will be poured out.

The prince that shall come, or head of the empire of the beast, will confirm a covenant with the many, or with the mass of the people of Israel for seven years. Of the people of Israel a hundred and forty-four thousand will be sealed, according to Rev. vii., as the servants of God, and distinctively as belonging to the twelve tribes, which sealing cannot take place during the present dispensation while the Church is on earth, for in it there is neither Jew nor Gentile. But at its close, when the mass of Israel are again recognised as the people and servants of Jehovah, he, the prince that shall come, will confirm a covenant with them for seven years, allowing them to return as a nation to their own land to re-occupy the holy city Jerusalem (Rev. xi. 2), to set apart a building which will be acknowledged as the Temple of God (see Matt. xxiv. 15, 2 Thess. ii. 4, Rev. xi. 4), and to offer the daily sacrifice. But in the midst of the week he breaks the covenant, takes away the daily sacrifice, and sets up the abomination of desolation in the holy place (Matt. xxiv. 15), sitting in the Temple of God as God (2 Thess. ii. 4), and upon the wing of the Temple setting up the visible sign, and commencing that fearful persecution of the saints of God known as “the great tribulation.” The dragon, that old serpent the devil, will give him his power, and seat, and great authority (Rev. xiii. 2). The time of the culmination of evil will then arrive, to which present things are already tending, when lawlessness, which is now working, will be headed up in the lawless one—the man of sin; when false religion will be fully developed and manifested in Babylon the Great; and when the oppositions of science, falsely so called, will find a fit exponent and practiser in the false prophet. Babylon the Great, or the apostate church, will come to an end through the instrumentality of the ten kings (Rev. xvii. 16); then after the marriage of the Lamb (Rev. xix.) He, Messiah the Prince, will come, will execute judgment upon the lawless one, and upon the false prophet (Rev. xix. 20); and having taken out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them that work iniquity, He will establish His millennial reign of righteousness, and blessedness, and peace.

## SANCTIFIED BY THE GLORY.

Exodus xxix. 43.

PERHAPS no other thought has so fixed the attention of God's children in these days as that of sanctification, until one almost fears the subtle temptation to put Christ's gift to the Church in the place which He alone should occupy; or of bringing one truth so exclusively to the front as necessarily, though unknowingly, to leave others, equally important, in the background. And yet the Divine instruction given to Paul is simple and clear as when he wrote it by the Spirit for us in his second epistle to the Corinthians. "We all beholding"—by one continuous act of our redeemed lives—"are changed into the same image" (chap. iii. 18). Let us remember it is the active participle of the verb, denoting one unfinished attitude of soul through all our blood-bought service. There is no pause allowed to look within at the work of the Spirit; for let us bear in mind it must ever be a reflected, because an untransferable, glory. "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John i. 14). The work of the Holy Ghost is to shed into our dark hearts this living glory from the face of Jesus Christ; but only in one divinely-appointed way—"Reflecting as a mirror" (R.V.). When we turn our eyes away the reflection is gone, for it was never ours. May the Spirit of God write it in letters of fire on our hearts, that it was never ours. Paul could give to Timothy no higher charge than to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; all ours to use in the blessed fellowship of His life, for it is written, "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them" (John xvii.). Ours in its fulness by the will and gift of Christ; ours in our soul's experience only as we enter in and take possession in God's way. Blessed with "all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Alas, how much of our rich inheritance remains for ever uncoveted and unclaimed!

Yet the grace of John xvii. 22 is as truly Christ's gift to His Church, under Divine conditions, as is the eternal life of chap. x.; and as the one life is our unbroken oneness in the presence of God, so the grace by which it is "made perfect" (v. 23) is the manifesting

of this oneness to the world. The Spirit of God has wrought in us, by the new birth, a new nature in which the grace of Christ can be displayed, and into which the light of the knowledge of the glory of God can shine; but the riches of Divine provision, in which God has left nothing lacking, has involved us in the deeper responsibility "lest we neglect so great salvation"—a daily, hourly salvation (Heb. v. 9, 10), as complete in God's purpose in the fellowship of Christ's life (Gal. ii. 20), as is the salvation from wrath finished for us by our fellowship in His death for our sin. In His own counsels, and by His beloved Son, God wrought out redemption for us, untouched by our foolishness or unbelief; and when He would enrich us with sanctification, He loved us too well to put it into our hands to use to our own hurt; and thus, in His manifold wisdom, instead of giving us each a portion, He put into Christ the infinite fulness of supply that it might flow out inexhaustibly, fresh from the heart of God, as Israel in the wilderness drank of the spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ: and that ever, as we drink it in the presence of such a glory, we might the more deeply learn our own emptiness and need. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"

We trace foreshadowings of the same truth in the Old Testament Scriptures. When Moses had made all things after the pattern showed to him in the mount, and had literally followed out every instruction given him, still not the perfections of gold or of shittim wood sanctified the earthly sanctuary; but the presence of the God of glory. So that "Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle" (Ex. xl. 33-35).

Again, in the ordering of the temple, obedience to the Divine command was of such intense importance that God gave beforehand, by the Spirit, to David His servant, the pattern of all that Solomon his son was to do; and while the exact copying of the minutest detail was the one ground on which the promise of indwelling could be fulfilled, yet the obedience

was not the glory, but the presence that revealed every outline, and searched out every precious thing by its uncreated light. "So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God" (2 Chron. v. 14).

Not only now is this God's way with His people, but when the image of Christ shall be perfected in His glorified saints, still shall He, and He alone, be "admired in all them that believe;" and when we reign with Him in His kingdom, the light that lightens the millennial earth shall be caught from Him who sits upon the throne. "Her light was like unto a stone most precious, *even like a jasper stone*" (Rev. xxi. 11). Compare chap. iv. 3, "Clear as crystal." Still it is the immutable law of reflection, perfected when we see Him as He is, and never more turn these wandering eyes from off the wondrous vision.

Perhaps we need more than we know to have quickened in our souls the love which is the first principle of our new nature, that in fellowship with God's unchanging purpose we may be willing to let Christ stand, not only first, but alone, in the glory of our sanctification.

A. E. W.

## VII. LAODICEA ("Justice for the People")

**T**HIS vision vividly portrays  
 Things as they are in these last days.  
 The form of godliness, indeed,  
 Abounds with many a varied creed,  
 And buildings vast with spires that rise  
 As if to pierce the vaulted skies.

Philanthropy of every kind  
 There is to suit each varied mind  
 Of this or that class—great designs  
 In which with good the bad combines.

Religion, gorgeously attired,  
 Parades herself to be admired;  
 Not "pure religion, undefiled,"  
 Which feeds and clothes the orphan child;  
 But that false thing whose gaudy glare  
 Attracts the simple everywhere.  
 It soothes the conscience, drowns the thoughts,  
 In music's soul-bewitching notes.  
 Professing much to worship God,  
 Yet trampling on the Saviour's blood;

Esteeming it a thing unclean,  
 Too shocking—so some say—and mean  
 For cultured ears; so with disdain  
 They turn from *Him* for sinners slain.  
 By far too learned and too great  
 To credit that God did *create*  
 Man *in His image*, nobly fair,  
 His Sovereign attribute to share;  
 Too proud to take the story in  
 Of ruin wrought by Adam's sin.

Rejecting thus God's record true  
 In search of something strange and new;  
 Guided by fancy's quagmire light  
 Gleaming through unbelief's dark night;  
 What wonder men are left alone  
 In their own way to stumble on,  
 Until in abject blindness they  
 Believe that in some far-back day  
 Our ancestor was but an *ape*,  
 Who gradually improved in shape,  
 Until in progress, slow but sure,  
 He proudly saw himself mature  
 Into a full-sized perfect man—  
 Then human enterprise began!

To *demon voices* some give heed,  
 Though their dark whispers surely lead  
 Seductively, by speeches fair,  
 Down to the regions of despair.  
 Delusions from this source received,  
 By tens of thousands are believed:  
 Are preached by men advanced of mind  
 Who leave "old-fashioned thoughts" behind.  
 They do not hesitate to say  
 That hell has no existence! Nay,  
 Speak of God's Word as "fabled lore,"  
 By such broad minds as theirs no more,  
 As inspiration from above,  
 To be received with cordial love.

Would that all those so blindly led  
 Could see with loathing and with dread  
*Who* are their teachers! and would flee  
 In haste from such iniquity  
 To Him who is alone the Light,  
 Who giveth eye-salve for the sight;  
 In whom there is a full supply  
 For all who will in faith apply.

*Democracy*, with lawless force,  
 Sweeps every barrier from its course;  
 With gathering power its rising tide

Is swelling high on every side.  
 Servants are masters, and expect  
 All things to be as they direct.  
 Masters, full oft, with servile mien,  
 Subservient to their men are seen.  
 E'en children in rebellion rise,  
 Parental rule dare to despise ;  
 While ties of kindred scarcely seem  
 To wake responsive love. The stream  
 Of pleasure rolls with turbid tide,  
 And thousands think of nought beside :  
 Of God's great love they only hear  
 Derisively, with scornful sneer !

The *people* now rule o'er the land,  
 They govern all and give command ;  
 The sovereign sits upon the throne  
 The *people's* laws to guard and own.  
 The people's voice they love to say  
 Is as His voice who holds in sway  
 The boundless universe—whose hand  
 Rules the wide ocean, sets the sand  
 A boundary line ; thus far the flow,  
 No further may its waters go.

Such pride and blasphemy combined  
 A fitting answer yet shall find ;  
 Though all their powers in one unite,  
 He shall be bruised by Jesus' might—  
 Shall at His presence pass away  
 When comes the long-predicted Day.  
 Earth then shall like a drunkard reel,  
 That shock e'en to her centre feel.

The spirit of this present age  
 Defiles, alas, God's heritage ;  
 Because iniquity prevails,  
 And Satan's lie the truth assails :  
 Because unrighteousness is bold  
 The love of many waxes cold.  
 Some hold that we must trim our ways  
 To suit the times, and that the days  
 In which we live more scope demand,  
 If we attention would command.  
 And so the *people's* ear to gain,  
 And popularity attain,  
 God's counsel they agree to shun,  
 Declining in His ways to run.

Elsewhere democracy and pride  
 Tend to estrange and subdivide  
 Those in life's bundle closely tied,  
 And by one Spirit sanctified.

For lawlessness too often takes  
 The place of liberty—and makes  
 God's house, where holiness should be,  
 A scene of strife and anarchy.

Though all have heard the midnight cry,  
 " Behold the Bridegroom draweth nigh,"  
 Yet many slumber, fast asleep,  
 Failing a faithful watch to keep.  
 The virgin's lamps but faintly burn,  
 For thoughts of Jesus' swift return  
 Move not their hearts—as when at first  
 That long-lost hope upon them burst.

No word of commendation here  
 Falls on the watchful listener's ear :  
 The faithful Witness—holy, true—  
 Speaks plainly, " From My mouth I'll spue  
 Thee, for thy luke-warm ways I hate ;  
 Repent ere yet it be too late,  
 My counsel take, and buy of Me  
 Gold that for all eternity  
 Its owners shall enrich ; for thou  
 Art poor and miserable, I trow,  
 Though rich thou deem'st thyself, and great,  
 Supported by earth's wealth and state ;  
 Salve for thy blindness, clothing too,  
 To cover thy deep shame from view.  
 A Stranger I *outside* thy door  
 Now knock as I have knocked before ;  
 If any one may hear My voice  
 And open—o'er such I'll rejoice,  
 Will sup with such, and they with Me,  
 And sweet our fellowship shall be.  
 Who in these *people-pleasing* days  
 Shall overcome and keep My ways,  
 Upon My throne his place shall be  
 To share My royal majesty.  
 As I on earth once overcame,  
 Refused its honour, bore its shame,  
 Now at My God's right hand of love  
 Enthroned I sit, all thrones above."

Assembly—testimony, all  
 May crumbling into ruins fall,  
 Iniquity yet more abound,  
 Yet faithful ones will still be found  
 Who fear the Lord, and often speak  
 Together of His love, and seek  
 Each other's drooping hearts to cheer  
 With thoughts of Him whose Day draws near.  
 A very special treasure they  
 Will be to Jesus in that day ;

Of such He says, "They shall be Mine,  
Bright jewels in My crown to shine."

'Tis evening now, the waning light  
Will soon be quenched in darkest night;  
The time for Gospel service past,  
All testimony hushed at last.  
But lo! in splendour, from afar,  
Behold He comes, "the Morning Star,"  
To call His blood-bought saints away  
To realms of everlasting day.

Farewell, then, deepening shades of gloom;  
Each vacant chair, each empty tomb,  
Shall to the unbeliever say,  
"The ransomed ones are caught away."  
For in one twinkling *all* will rise  
Who "with the Lord, by sacrifice,  
A holy covenant have made"  
Through Christ, who has the ransom paid.  
The Alpha of our faith is He,  
Of Godliness the Mystery;  
He shall appear in glory then  
The Mighty God—the great Amen.

A. W. P. S.

## Questions and Answers.

We desire to express our thanks to all who have sent answers. We particularly request that each writer will give his name and address in full, not for publication, but that we may know who it is that seeks to help, and, if desirable, that we may communicate privately.

Replies to appear in the next number require to be sent in not later than 15th of present month, and so on; the 15th of the month being always the latest to which we can defer making up for press. We again urge the importance of replies being *short*; it is essential, in this particular line of things, to be *concise*.

We shall greatly value remembrance in prayer that special wisdom and grace may be given for this service. THE EDITOR.

### Replies are invited to the following:—

In what sense are believers made the righteousness of God in Christ? Is this the same as God's justifying righteousness referred to in Rom. iii. 26?

How, when, and where does the believer reap the corruption threatened in Gal. vi. 8?

Is it right for a believer to join a trade's union?

How should a saved husband, brother, parent, &c., behave toward a wife, brother, or son excluded from fellowship according to I Cor. v.? Ought such an one to be passed unnoticed on the street as a perfect stranger?

### RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS (*continued*).

**QUESTION 398.**—In Acts iii. 21, it is stated that Christ will remain in heaven until the time of the restitution of all things. This being so, the restitution of Israel will, I take it, be the first act. If I am right, I Thess. iv. 16 cannot take place

until afterwards. The question is, when will I Thess. iv. 16 take place?

[The following reply to question on "Restitution of all Things" came too late for insertion last month. We gladly give it now as it affords further help, and that quite in accordance with the answer already given.—Ed.]

**Ans.**—The subject treated of in I Thess. iv. 16, viz., the descent of the Lord into the air for the purpose of taking up His saints, is not one which lies within the scope of the testimony "which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." It is an event quite independent of prophecy, as "the Church, which is His body," was unrevealed in Old Testament times (Rom. xvi. 25, 26)—for "the scriptures of the prophets," read "prophetic writings" (Eph. iii. 4-6)—so the translation of the saints is the subject of a special revelation. "This we say unto you by the Word of the Lord." "The restitution of all things" waits for the manifestation, in glory, of the sons of God (Rom. viii. 19-23). The Lord Jesus will not actually leave the heavens until the saints are with Him, inasmuch as they are caught up to meet Him in the air; and when He *appears* for the restoration of Israel, and the deliverance of a groaning creation, they will "appear with Him in glory." When we who now, though having the first fruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves on account of our connection—as to our bodies—with this groaning creation, when we receive the redemption of our body, when these bodies of humiliation are changed and fashioned like unto His glorious body, and we appear in glory with our blessed Lord and Saviour, the glorious things "spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets" will have their complete fulfilment.

We need not ask when will I Thess. iv. 16 take place; enough that He has said, "Surely I come quickly." May our hearts ever respond—"Even so, come Lord Jesus." G. A. S.

### THE HOUSE OF GOD.

**QUESTION 399.**—Does the house of God embrace all saints, or only those gathered according to the Word?

**Ans. A.**—Two Scriptures would answer this. I Peter iv. 17. Here we have the house of God and them that obey not the Gospel contrasted. "Judgment" in the sense of I Cor. xi. 32 has begun at us. "If it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them who obey not the Gospel?" Then Heb. x. 21 gives us an High Priest *over the house of God*. This clearly means every Christian, and he would be a bold man who would teach that the weakest and most ignorant has not the Great High Priest to restore his soul and intercede for him. Where would we all be, and wherein would be our access to God, if we had not this High Priest "OVER THE HOUSE OF GOD?" It may be contended that Heb. ii. 6 makes it conditional, but conditional in the sense of I Cor. xv. 2, I Peter ii. 3, Coloss. i. 23. T. C.

**Ans. B.**—The "house of God," the Scripture plainly says, "is the church of the living God" (I Tim. iii. 15). The temple and the tabernacle were of old his peculiar residences. In them the symbol of the divine majesty dwelt, and His chosen people were His

family—the house of Jehovah. Num. xii. 7, Hosea viii. 1. So now, when the spiritual has taken the place of the material, and the unlimited that which was limited, the Christian church is God's house, in which He lives and works. Every believer is a habitation of God in the spirit, and a living stone, and with others groweth up into a spiritual temple in the Lord. J. H. H.

**Ans. C.**—May not this question be fairly paraphrased thus: Does the church on earth cease to be the house of God because of corporate unfaithfulness? I think the answer will be found without uncertainty by looking at the passages where the term occurs.

In Heb. iii. we find—"Whose house are we, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." The condition here points, I believe, to the question of our being, or not being, truly "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling." But if any think otherwise, yet is it not plain that individual and not corporate faith and faithfulness is the condition given.

In 1 Tim. iii. 15 the house of God is interpreted in the next words as, "*The Church of the Living God.*" I doubt if any one of the existing groups in Christendom, except Rome alone, would be so self-exalted as to arrogate this title to itself in an exclusive or proprietary sense. It seems to be given purposely to prevent any limited, narrow, or local application of the words first used.

With this agrees the language of Eph. ii. 20-22, where not the walk of the saints, nor the gathering of the saints, is in view, but the divine plan of the ages and our place in it. The saints, all of them, are the stones, which, ever coming in, are added to the building, so that it grows into a holy temple—"a habitation" (or house) "of God in the Spirit."

In the same sense Peter (chap. ii. 5, 1st epistle), addressing all the elect strangers, says: "Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house." Whoever, therefore, may be truly described as a living stone in Christ is truly part of the house of God. And if later (iv. 17) he teaches that "judgment must begin at the house of God," he uses the words in no other sense, but rather indicates that, although evils have crept into the house in its earthly form and presentation, so that God has to open a controversy with His people in judgment, yet are they not the less His house on that account.

A careful survey of the Old Testament use of the term, and of God's attitude towards Israel in their apostasy, will, I feel sure, confirm the unanimous testimonies of New Testament scriptures as above briefly collected. G. F. T.

**Ans. D.**—There are four figures employed by the Holy Spirit to convey to our minds the relationship and responsibility of the Church to God and to Christ, viz., the "Body of Christ," the "Bride of Christ," the "House of God," and the "City of God." Two of the figures apply especially to the Church during her sojourn in the world, viz., that of the "Body of Christ" and that of the "House of God." The other two more particularly look at her in the future, as the "Bride—the Lamb's Wife," and the "City of God." Of course these have a practical bearing on the Church's character in the world, particularly on the *individual*

character of the saints as the "Spouse" of Christ and "citizens" of a heavenly city. The former two involve responsibility. First, that of the "Body" as to the relationship of saints, as members one of another, to minister to and care one for another. Second, that of the "House" as to collective order and discipline.

Now, as all saints are included in the figures of the "Body" and "Bride" of Christ and the "City of God," whether they are true to the figures or not (see Eph. i. 23, 1 Cor. xii. 12, 2 Cor. xi. 2, Eph. v. 25-32, Eph. ii. 19, Rev. xxi. 9, 10), so all saints are included in the figure of the "House," whether subject to the ordinances and order of the House or not, because they belong to the Church which, as a *whole*, is represented by the figure.

This figure is a double one. The "House" may mean either the "Spiritual House," being builded of "living stones" (1 Peter ii. 5), which of course includes all saints (Matt. xvi. 18), and of which Solomon's Temple is a type; or it may mean the "household," of which the "House of Israel" is a type, with Moses as God's "appointed household servant" in it. All the sons of Israel were included in the term, "House of Israel," even when they were "a rebellious house" (Ezek. ii. 1-27); so all the sons of God are included in the figure of the "House," or "Household of God," over which Christ is the appointed "Son" and "High Priest" (Heb. ii., x. 21).

"Whose house are we, if we hold fast," &c., lays down a condition which is fulfilled by every true believer, for those who do not fulfil it have not become partakers of Christ, as well as not of God's "House." All believers are responsible to practise collectively the principles of the "Body" and observe the order of the "House"; but, alas, they do not. T. R.

**Editor's Note.**—As used in Scripture the word house has a double significance, and may refer to a building of stones, or to a household or family. In the latter sense he who was instrumental in adding to the family was said to be a builder of the house. The sons and all descendants of Aaron constituted "the house of Aaron." They were brought into it by birth, and belonged to it however they might be scattered. It was no question of abiding under one roof but of *relationship*.

In this sense the passages referred to in 1 Peter iv. and Heb. x. are to be understood, and therefore they embrace all who are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, even the blood-bought Church of God. But it is also clear that, in the mind of God, the figure of a house or building is also applicable to the Church. And as the House is for God to dwell in it is called also a Temple. What then constitutes this House? We answer, Every living stone built upon the living rock. What constitutes the Temple of God? We answer, the aggregate of those in whom the Spirit of God dwells. "Ye are the temple of the living God," as it is written, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them," &c. (2 Cor. vi.). But, it may be asked, did not God intend that this house, building, temple of God should be a manifested thing in the earth? Assuredly we answer, yes. And the building work was committed to human instrumentality. Paul, as a wise master-builder, laid the foundation at Corinth of that which was to be the

expression of the divine thought and Temple of God there. He laid the foundation by preaching the foundation doctrine of "Jesus Christ and Him crucified." Others followed, and through their preaching and teaching those already quickened were edified or built up and others added, and so the building grew.

But this building, as committed to human responsibility, and as wrought out by human instrumentality, was liable to two things: first, to be corrupted by man, and secondly, to be judged by God.

The corruption by man, through the introduction of false teachings and false principles, had begun in apostolic days, and the time also had come when judgment was about to be executed upon it.

At first the building committed to human responsibility corresponded to and was commensurate with the operation of God. So that if Paul wrote to saints at Corinth "ye are God's building," the thing contemplated was identical, whether looked at from God's standpoint or as presented to the world.

But the corruption by man introduced elements that were not of God. And the judgment of God in due time broke up the unity of the building until, as to outward presentation, nothing remained that could be called the House of God, nothing to which God could attach the manifested glory of His presence.

So it continued all down the dark ages, and so it continues still. Attempts have been made again and again, as God granted a little reviving, to gather the living stones out of the rubbish of tradition, and to build them together upon the original foundation after the divine pattern. But hitherto failure has marked every such attempt, and the wrecking of divine judgment has been the more manifest the higher the pretensions of those who made the effort. Who shall put a limit to what God might do in these last days of abounding evil, and yet superabounding grace, were the endeavour to return to the first principles of the Word of God carried out in the patience and lowliness of Christ, in love to every living stone, and in the grace and power of the Holy Spirit?

But again and again the elements that corrupted the temple at first have reasserted themselves and corrupted every attempted restoration. Human arrogance, conceit of knowledge and of gift generally, fleshly authority and influence, and carnal means and principles, glorying in position rather than in Christ, and handling the Word of God deceitfully, have marred the work and sown the seeds of quickly-ripening disintegration, and incurred the manifest judgment of God. We see it before our eyes to-day, but instead of being humbled by it, the cure is being sought in higher and higher pretensions, narrower and narrower limitations of fellowship, and ever-intensifying denunciation and judgment of those who decline to concede to such their claim to be exclusively the Church and the Temple of God.

#### THE PREPARED PLACE.

**QUESTION 400.**—The preparation referred to in John xiv. 2, 3—did it take place on the Cross, or is it still going on?

**Ans. A.**—No doubt the Cross is the basis of everything; but, inasmuch as the Lord is speaking of His

Father's house as the place to which He was going, the unavoidable conclusion is that His preparing a place for His own would be when He was there. He has gone into the Father's house and taken possession for those whom the Father has given Him. His having gone in by His own blood entitles those who believe in Him to be there with Him; and it is only a question of gathering in the joint heirs and He will come again and receive us unto Himself in the Father's house. Blessed, precious portion for all who have believed on Him.  
G. A. S.

**Ans. B.**—The preparation of John xiv. 2, 3 seems to be clearly explained by Heb. ix. 11, 12, 23, 24. The preparation for the reception of the redeemed is the virtue of the blood of His sacrifice. "The Lamb slain" will be the eternal meetness and comfort, as well as the eternal *title*, of the saints for the inheritance. His now-accepted sacrifice has made the needful preparation for us.  
A. O. M.

**Ans. C.**—The *going* of our Lord to prepare a place for His people cannot have referred to His journey to the Cross, for then "I will come again to receive you to Myself" would be unintelligible. His return journey from the Cross was but the first stage of His *departure* from His disciples. It must refer to His going to God—His ascension.

The work of preparation is explained when once we have fully taken in that our glory depends on our walk, that our walk is affected by our own free will, and so that it is necessary to adapt the rewards of heaven, the place in glory, to the history both of the individual and of the Church at large.

It is a sad but true thought that while we may well be assured the dear Lord was contemplating, when He used these words, a work for Himself in the time of His absence from His own, which should have been wholly one of joy, a work of making glory more glorious for our reception, as matters have turned out, the Church's unfaithfulness and individual worldliness, sin, and ingratitude, must have largely deprived Him of this joy (Matt. xxv. 14-30). See Rev. xvi. 15 and and xix. 8, R.V.  
G. F. T.

**Editor's Note.**—It appears to us that the general use of the word, "prepare," or "make ready," in the New Testament, does not admit of its being made to signify "*procuring a title to a place.*" It is the preparation of a place that is spoken of—a place to which the Lord is coming again to receive them that they may be in that place along with Himself.

The earth was made for the children of men. Heaven is not man's natural habitat; but "Immanuel," "God manifest in the flesh," having gone to dwell there, the many sons whom He is bringing to share His own glory must also be provided with a suitable place in the house of the Father.

It was therefore in contemplation of His ascension to heaven, and not of His descent to the Cross, that He said, "I go to prepare a place for you."

We believe the idea in the well-known hymn is as true as it is beautiful:

"He is fitting up my mansion,  
Which eternally shall stand,  
And my stay shall not be transient  
In that holy, happy land."