THE WITNESS.

An Unfettered Montbly Journal

OF

Biblical Literature, Expository Papers,

Notes of Addresses, Conference Reports,

Questions and Answers, Intelligence,

Poetry, Correspondence, &c.

EDITED BY

J. R. CALDWELL,

Author of "Because Ye Belong to Christ," "God's Chosen People," "Shadows of Christ," "Things to Come," "Earthly Relationships," &c., &c.



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THE WITNESS:

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE

THE WAR

VIEWED FROM A DIVINE STANDPOINT.

IT is not for us to enter into the rights or wrongs of the controversy which has issued in this disastrous war with the South African Republics. The country is passing through a crisis unparalleled in this generation. It is for us to look at it from a Divine standpoint, and to learn the lessons that our God intends for us in all that is passing.

Separated as the Christian is by "the Heavenly calling" from the world's politics and warfare, he is nevertheless bound to be affected by surrounding circumstances, and it is his wisdom to enter into the secret of the presence of God, and there to learn what the mind of the Lord is from the Scriptures of truth, and so to be used by Him for blessing amid surrounding trouble and sorrow.

That God has a controversy with the nation is evident to all who have been observing its "down-grade" course as to God and His Word, its pride and boastfulness as to its relationships with all other nations, and its awful sum of iniquity.

As to the first, Ritualism and Rationalism, or utter absence of religion, are everywhere rampant. Liberty for every man to act according to the dictates of his conscience is a priceless boon; we do not value it, or thank God for it, as we ought. Its value is hardly known until it is lost. But this very liberty has been turned to license; the Word of God has been set at naught, and life has been wholly secularised by the great bulk of the rising generation. The Continental Sunday is fast superseding the old-fashioned, quiet, God-fearing Sab-

bath; the churches are being emptied, and the efforts to popularise the services are futile, and powerless to attract the many.

The spirit of boastfulness has developed alarmingly amidst the many years of national expansion, victories, and prosperity. It would seem as if Britain, by her own might, was competent to defy the world. Her navy, her army, her statesmen, and her generals are gloried in and openly declared to be her safety. No mention is ever made of God as the Supreme Governor among the nations, To judge from all that is popularly spoken and written, the world with one consent is saying in its heart, "There is no God."

That iniquity abounds is evident to all. Covetousness, or the love of money, lies at the root of all its enterprise (excepting, of course, such efforts as are purely Christian, and therefore not of the world). Every event of interest is constituted an occasion of all but universal gambling; drunkenness piles up its victims by myriads, despite the advocates of temperance, and every effort to repress the evil; immorality is sapping the foundations of society, and the streets of our cities, nightly paraded by tens of thousands of abandoned women and men, declare the awful cancer that gnaws at the vitals of the nation.

Alas, alas, for our highly privileged but all the more guilty nation! Can it be that God's time has come to humble her pride and so to awaken and to bless her? The sin of Sodom is graphically described in Ezek. xvi. 49: "Pride, fulness of bread, abundance of idleness.. neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and the needy." Could words more fitly describe

the moral characteristics of this nation at the present hour?

Amidst it all our God has a numerous people. As the time of the promise drew nigh, the chosen people of God grew and

multiplied in Egypt (Acts vii. 17).

It may be that the great increase of late years in the number of the saved, and in evangelistic and other Christian efforts, is an evidence that the fulfilment of our Lord's great promise, "I will come again," is nigh at hand.

But many of these are actually engaged as soldiers and officers in the present war, and few Christians of any rank in society are without friends or relatives dear to them who are either in the thick of danger, or

wounded or killed in battle.

For all such danger, suffering, sorrow and anxiety, there is but one resource. It is "the Mercy Seat," "the Throne of Grace." That is the place of the Christian's power. Our priestly calling as worshippers is often spoken of, but our priestly privilege as intercessors is seldom alluded to. indeed it may be that we are being rebuked by our God for the prevailing neglect of His plain command, that, "first of all [as though it were a very prominent and important part of the Church's ministry supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."

Through the mercy of God the sound of actual warfare has not been heard in our land in our day, and the lengthened period of peace and liberty, it may be, has led to a false security that practically ignores the part that the Living God has in our mercies.

Well may we now pray that the God of Peace would put a limit upon the awful bloodshed that appears only to have begun, and bring to a speedier issue than appears likely to human calculation the war in which these two professedly Christian nations are engaged. Already hundreds of families of every rank are plunged into mourning, and all the sorrow and disaster that are taking place must tell severely upon the sympathetic heart of our aged and beloved Queen.

Let her have a special place in our approaches to the Throne of Grace. God has told us to pray for her, and it is our privilege and our

duty to obey.

What all these international troubles involve in the way of anxious thought and toil to our rulers we little know. This is no question of party politics. Power belongeth unto God, and whatever party is in power, it is God who has permitted them to attain that position. But those in authority are also to be the subjects of our prayers. Personally they are men of very varied character and opinions, but officially they are in power by the will of God, and He is able to guide and control their deliberations and counsels for the glory of His Name and for the best interests of this great nation. Let us own our sin and folly in having given so little heed to these instructions before, and seek grace to obey them in the future. Well may we pray for the protecting care of God to Christians in the army. Jehoshaphat was in the very thick of the fight in his day, but not a shaft could reach him. It may be that in answer to prayer our God may graciously interpose and spare valued lives.

Some have gone out specially for the purpose of ministering the Gospel to the wounded and the dying. Let them be very specially the subjects of prayer. It is a trying but a blessed work, and surely such as

the Lord will richly own.

Finally, let us all learn "to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God." Let us seek grace to "shine as lights in the world, holding forth the Word of Life." The time is short; the opportunity will soon be past; the Lord is at hand. May we be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

J. R. C.

TO KNOW HIM.

"FILL up the gap between the Cross and the Glory with this, 'that I may know Him.' How can we do it? You will never know Christ until you are much in His company. As you know Him so you will love Him. Make Him the study of your life, and the object of your heart" (Phil. iii. 10).

A FEW REFLECTIONS ON THE WAR IN SOUTH AFRICA.

ME are in the midst of the horrors of war. True, the war is not being waged in this land where our lot is cast. Yet the armies of this country are engaged in deadly conflict in South Africa, and the suffering, directly or indirectly, is great. Many and fierce battles have been fought. The carnage has been appalling. At the time of writing these lines the picture is at its darkest—if a deeper darkness has not yet to be reached. Has God a voice for His people in the terrible state of things now prevailing? Has He a voice for the people of this land? A few practical reflections bearing on these points may not be out of place at this time.

Since the outbreak of this war, prayer earnest and fervent prayer — has ascended from the hearts of thousands of the people of God, that He would interpose—that He who "gave to the sea His decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment," would roll back the tide of war. Besides the unspeakable horrors of war itself, it was felt that a state of war was hostile to the spread of the Gospel of peace. The work of the Lord must suffer. It was felt that His people would find it a hard matter to wait on Him "without distraction;" while, in regard to the unsaved, it was feared that a war such as the present would absorb their entire attention. For all these and many other causes the cry went up from all corners of the land -yea, even from the ends of the earth-"O Lord, shorten these awful days for the elect's sake—for Thy Great Name's sake stay the carnage, and bring this war to a close." Day and night His people have been crying unto Him. Yet the war goes on, with not the slightest apparent token that the days will be shortened. On the contrary, there is every appearance of a prolongation of the strife. What does it all mean? Truly He has shown unto His people great and sore trouble, and has filled them with "the cup of astonishment and desolation." The trial of faith is severe. But we need not doubt that our God has great and beneficent ends in thus seeming to give no heed to the cries

of His elect ones. "God is His own interpreter, and He will make it plain." If a sparrow cannot fall on the ground without your Father, we may be assured that this devastating war has been permitted, and shall be over-ruled, to work out His purposes for His eternal glory by Christ Jesus.

There may be a voice to the children of God in His thus permitting the land of our pilgrimage to be distracted by the realities Before hostilities had actually broken out, and when war was only among the possibilities, perhaps the people of God in these realms were not sufficiently alive to the situation. If there had then been united humiliation and prayer that God would deliver the country from war, who shall tell what might have been? But it is to be feared there was not a very deep exercise of heart, even in view of impending conflict. If we believe that "the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much," we cannot repress the thought that the united cry of the righteous might have prevailed with God to avert this evil day. It is not for nothing He has said that He will be "enquired of." If the lamp of Christian experience has been burning low in the temple of the Lord, we have indeed had a startling awakening at this time.

And perhaps God has a voice for this country in the horrors of the present situation. We remember a minister of Christ remarking as to the physical prostrations in the Revival of forty years ago, that indifference had reigned, and when the ordinary means of grace failed to awaken men from the dream of sin, God used extraordinary means to that end. May this not be the Divine purpose Truly, indifference to the call and claims of God has been holding high carnival. The people as a whole seem to have been shutting God out of their thoughts. Gospel has had a hard time, if we may so The "ordinary means" of grace have failed to awaken them. What if it should come to pass that the voice of God, through the carnage and the disasters of this war, is destined to reach hearts that have long seemed to be hard as the nether millstone? If the war had proved a short triumphal march for the armies of this country, as many expected it to be, the national pride might have become inflated. Self-sufficiency would still have been But the roll of victories was supreme. short-lived; and in the fearful disasters that have overtaken the British arms, there is opportunity for reflection. In the humiliation of the country a deep stillness and solemnity is settling down on the minds of men. Many are connected by the ties of kindred with those at the scene of conflict. Many have dear ones, and some their dearest, there. God's people and the people of the world are alike touched by the awful scourge of this war. Many homes are desolate, many hearts are bleeding, while the whole country is mourning in bitterness of soul, like Rachael weeping for her children, and will not be comforted because they are not. Now is the time to tell it forth that there is a Refuge —the only Refuge—in the time of storm, and that Refuge is God—the reconciling God in Christ Iesus. We shall be mistaken it the hearts of many are not being prepared at this time to hear that God is behind it all -to hear of Him who came to preach the Gospel to the poor, and to heal the brokenhearted. The scene is still dark. But we must remember that our God is He who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, and the God who "maketh wars to cease." Let us humble ourselves before Him, that He may still be entreated, for His name and mercy's sake, to hear the cries of His people, and so order events that the fruit thereof shall be peace. "O Lord, though our iniquities testify against us, do Thou it for Thy name's sake; for our backslidings are many; we have sinned against Thee. O the hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldest Thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night? Why shouldest Thou be as a man astonished, as a mighty man that cannot save? Yet Thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us, and we are called by Thy name; leave us not" (Jer. xiv. 7-9).

ONE can look on the wilderness as the place formed by God for the display of Himself; Christ being hid in God. G. v. w.

GOD'S REMEDY FOR DEPARTURE IN HEART.

HEBREWS III.—PART III.

Notes of Address by James Wright, Bristol.

Previous Papers—I. God's Remedy for Heart Hardening.

II. God's Remedy for Erring in Heart.

THE third downward step is "Departing I from the Living God." And what is set over against that? "Holding fast the beginning of our confidence." You cannot do both these things at the same time. Look at the nature of this evil: "Departing from the Living God." The emphasis is on the word "living." If the believer departs from God, he departs from the Living God. Living, when applied to God, always means life-giving, not simply life self-sustained and always existing; that is implied, but that does not exhaust the meaning. "God, who quickeneth the dead," Paul says (Rom. iv. 17), and this expression, "the Living God," is almost confined to his epistles; you do not find it in the others. It is one of the expressions that the Holy Ghost continually puts into the mouth and pen of the apostle. And whom does He quicken but dead souls?

Now, if we turn from the Living God, whatever we turn to is, compared with Him, dead. And this is the comparison in Jeremiah ii.: "My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me, the Fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." Now, hewing out a cistern is hard work in itself, but when, after all our labour, it is found to be leaky, it is hopeless. And that is the case with every soul that leaves the Living God; everything else is dead, lifeless, and cannot impart or sustain life, whereas the Living God both imparts and sustains it. Therefore prayer is the great instrument of renewing and sustaining life, because by it we come into contact with God, by laying hold on His Word—resting upon it. By prayer we come into contact with Him. As Montgomery says:

" Prayer is the Christian's vital breath."

Now, as in breathing there are two actions, inspiration and respiration, so in prayer we inspire, breathe in, the promises of God in His Word, on which our faith rests, for "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. x. 17). When

we take in any promise of God as true, and rest upon it, it is like the first action in breathing, we *inspire*. And then we respire; we plead the promise as the ground on which God hears us. Two actions in prayer as in breathing, and this keeps us in contact with the Living God. That is why prayer is such a prominent function in the spiritual life: we inspire the promises, and respire "Prayer is the Christian's vital breath." These are not inspired words, but this is the very testimony of the Word of God.

Now set over against "Departing from the Living God" is, "Holding fast the beginning of our confidence." The great object of the Epistle to the Hebrews, which was written to believers who had been delivered from Judaism, was to preserve them from going back to that out of which they had been delivered.

Who was the beginning of their confidence? Christ. Aaron the "high priest" was a shadow of Christ, who is called the GREAT High Priest—that title is reserved for Jesus. Now, this *Great* High Priest was presented to them in the apostolic testimony, and they embraced Him; they saw that Christ offered Himself to God as the True Offering, in whom all His people were accepted, and that He had gone into the Holiest to appear in the presence of God for them, and that just as the names of the twelve tribes were on the breast-plate of the high priest when he went in to the holiest in the sanctuary made with hands, so the name of every believer is on the heart of the Lord Jesus as He stands before God in the holiest of the temple made without hands, even Heaven itself. Now, if they went back from the Reality to the shadow, they would cease to "hold fast the beginning of their confidence."

And then, just as of old the high priest, after being out of sight in the tabernacle, came out again, so "unto them that look for Him shall the Great High Priest appear a second time without sin unto salvation" (chap. ix. 28), to the eternal blessing of His people. In other words, the Apostle Paul by the Holy Ghost taught these believers that lesus was the Substance answering to every type and shadow, and His ministry brought them into contact with the Living God, and to go back from the Reality to the shadow was to "depart from the Living God" (chap. iii. 12).

There is a message here for us in the 19th century, when men are going back to shadows, and so "departing from the Living God" for those things directly opposed to His Word. Now, if He has "made" the first covenant (which was His own making) "old," what will He say to humanlydevised forms and ceremonies? much more hateful to God to go back to The Lord enable us, then, to hold fast Christ, "the beginning of our confidence "-to hold Him fast as the Substance of all the Old Testament ritual, and the eternal contrast to all human devices! The Lord give us to see that to sanction any pretended "sacrifice of the mass," or any ritualistic forms here on earth, is dishonouring to Christ, as implying the unsatisfactoriness of His sacrifice, and is an insult to God.

The Lord give us to hear His voice every day in His Word, so that we may not harden our hearts!

The Lord give us to "enter into rest" rest of conscience and rest of mind in Christ —that we may not err in heart!

And the Lord give us, by the power of the Holy Ghost, to hold fast "the beginning of our confidence," which is "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever" (chap. xiii. 8), that we may be preserved from that awful declension and apostasy, "departing" from the living, quickening, life-giving God!

BIBLE READING. " THYSELF."

- How Thou oughtest to behave Thyself (1 Tim. iii. 15).
- 2. Exercise Thyself unto Godliness (I Tim. iv. 7).
 - 3. Take heed unto Thyself (1 Tim. iv. 16). 4. Thou shalt save Thyself (I Tim. iv. 16).

 - 5. Keep Thyself Pure (1 Tim. v. 22). 6. From men of corrupt minds withdraw
- Thyself (1 Tim. vi. 5). 7. Study to show Thyself approved unto
- God (2 Tim. ii. 15), and Thou shalt be a busybody, but not in other men's matters (1 Peter iv. 15). J. M. H.

GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE .- XIV.

CHRIST AND ANTICHRIST CONTRASTED.

By JOHN R. CALDWELL, Author of "Shadows of Christ in the Old Testament," "Things to Come," &c.

BEFORE leaving behind us "the time of Jacob's trouble," the unparalleled tribulation of the latter half of the final "week" of Daniel's prophecy, I wish to bring before you, as presented in many scriptures, the direct contrast there is between Christ our Lord and antichrist.

Christ is the perfect manifestation of God. His character and ways were entirely according to the holiness, justice, truth, love, and grace of God. He showed in His life on earth what man ought to have been, and what redeemed man will be when the purpose of God is accomplished, and he is "conformed to the image of His Son."

Antichrist is the perfect natural fruit of sin, therefore called the "man of sin," exhibiting in his character and ways the mind of Satan, and therefore we expect to find him in every respect the contrast of Christ, "the Son of the Father in truth and love."

Of Christ it is written (Phil. ii. 8):

"Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross."

Of antichrist:

"Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."

It is an oft-repeated spiritual axiom:

"He that humbleth himself shall be exalted; he that exalteth himself shall be abased."

It is true of all, but pre-eminently so or Christ and of antichrist.

The first characteristic of the man of sin is: He opposes the will of God and exalts himself. Such is the flesh, ever rising up in opposition to the Spirit. Romans viii. 7:

"The carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

There is an antichrist in every breast. Selfexaltation is the very essence of the carnal mind, and it works havoc wherever its bane-

ful influence reaches. It is the root of all the madness and blasphemy of the man of sin. It is said of money, that the love of it is the root of every evil. But why is it so loved? Is it not because by means of it self can most readily be exalted and self-will asserted? What a contrast is He who said, "I am meek and lowly in heart." It was by the way of the Cross, the deepest depths of humiliation to which He could possibly descend, that the Lord Jesus reached "the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." And still the only way to authority is humiliation and obedience. He is not fit to rule who has not learned to humble himself and be subject. Matt. xx. 27; see R.V.:

"Whosoever would become great among you shall be your servant, and whosoever would be first (i.e., chief of all) among you shall be your bondservant, even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Surely it is not without significance that it is written (I Kings vii. 22):

"Upon the top of the pillars was lily-work; so was the work of the pillars finished."

The lowly lily of the valley forms the crown of the mighty pillars, Jachin and Boaz, in the Temple of God. The exaltation of the lowly is the completion of the work of grace. The coming day of glory will declare how, not the showy gift, but the lowly mind, was that which pleased the Lord.

Again, of the Lord Jesus it is written in

Isaiah liii. 3:

"He is despised and rejected of men . .; and we hid, as it were, our faces from Him."

You know what that means. You see some one coming along that you would be ashamed to be seen with; he will pass quite near you, so you turn away your face and become intently occupied with something in a shop window or on the other side of the street. Such was the treatment received by the Lord Jesus from the men of His day—passed on the street with averted face. But more than that, He was "despised." The very meekness of His character, the very unresistingness of His sufferings caused Him to be despised by proud man. But He also

came with the rights and titles of a King. To this end was He born: Seed of David, King of Israel was His rightful claim. As, in His lowly person He was "despised," so in His rightful claims He was "rejected."

Not so the antichrist. All the world wonders after the beast, and all those that dwell on the earth worship him. His most cruel, unjust, and blasphemous edicts are respected. He is neither despised nor rejected, but worshipped and obeyed. None pass him with averted face; to be saluted by him would be esteemed an honour. Such is the world that would not have the Son of God.

In Mark xiv. 36 the Lord Jesus says:

"Abba, Father . . . take away this cup from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what Thou wilt."

In Daniel xi. 36 it is written of antichrist:

"The king shall do according to his will, and he shall exalt himself and magnify himself."

"I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will," so says Christ; and, put to the severest test, approaching the sufferings of the Cross His obedience remains unwavering; "Not My will, but Thine be done."

Antichrist, "the lawless one," owns no will but his own.

Let us apply this to ourselves. What is our habit day by day? Is it to exhibit the lowly, obedient spirit of Christ, and to do the will of God, even if it lead to our being despised and passed by? Or is it to exalt self, to do our own will, to get our own way at all costs, even in the assembly of the saints, for there self-will may rule as well as in the world, to the grief of the spiritual, the dishonour of the Lord, and the trailing of His truth in the mire? Only in the lowliness and gentleness of Christ can I serve the Lord or His people acceptably. His Spirit will lead me to put in the first place the will of God, and my own will in the dust.

Antichrist exalts himself and magnifies himself. The Lord Jesus says: "I have glorified thee on the earth." The One glorifies God; the other glorifies himself.

In many scriptures Christ is called "the Branch." Isaiah xi. 1:

"There shall come forth a Rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots."

In Zechariah iii. 8:

"Behold, I will bring forth My Servant the Branch."
Isaiah iv. 2:

"In that day shall the Branch of Jehovah be beautiful and glorious."

Zechariah vi. 12:

"Behold the Man whose name is the Branch."

It has been beautifully remarked that this title is given to the Lord Jesus in the same four characters in which He is represented in the four Gospels. In Jeremiah xxiii. 5 and Isaiah xi. 1 the Branch is the King of the house of David, answering to Matthew's Gospel. In Zechariah iii. 8 it is "My Servant," as seen in Mark. In Zechariah vi. 12 it is "the Man," corresponding with Luke. And in Isaiah iv. 2 it is the Branch of Jehovah, corresponding to John.

In Isaiah xiv. 3-20 we have a marvellous description of the great oppressor of the last days. The characteristic utterances of his heart are given in verses 13, 14; his oppressive rule is in verse 6, but the man who made the earth to tremble and the nations to quake is brought down to the sides of the pit. Verses 18-20

"All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house. But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit, as a carcase trodden under feet. Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial."

We learn from Revelation xix. 20 that the beast and false prophet are cast alive into the lake of fire. This is the "abominable branch." What a contrast in character and end to "the Branch of Jehovah"!

In this same chapter another title given to him is "Lucifer, Son of the Morning" (verse 12). Christ, "the Morning Star," does not fall from heaven in disgrace, but descends in power and glory, as the quickener of the dead, to receive His redeemed to Himself.

In 2 Thessalonians ii. 11 we read:

"And for this cause God shall send them a strong delusion [or a working of error], that they should believe a lie" [or that which is false].

Antichrist is the embodiment of Satan's lie, and as such he is the arch deceiver.

Christ is "the Truth." His work is to

undeceive, to open men's eyes, to enlighten with the light of life, to give them to know the truth that sets free from the power of Satan and of sin.

In John x. 11 we have the Good Shepherd that giveth His life for the sheep; in Zech. xi. 15-17 we have the "foolish shepherd," and the idol shepherd that eats the flesh of the fat and leaveth the flock. Those who reject the one must fall under the power of the other.

Many more contrasts might be given, but it is a subject best followed out by quiet searching and meditation.

In conclusion, I want you to observe the unity that will be constructed out of the conflicting elements of the last days.

In Rev. xvii. 13 we read concerning the ten kings represented by the ten horns of the beast: "These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast." It is a Satanic unity. God puts it into their hearts thus to agree in order that unknown to themselves they may fulfil His will (see verse 17). But what is that will of God which they are thus unanimous to fulfil? It is evidently the destruction of the woman that sits upon the beast.

In the typology of Scripture a woman is often used to represent a religious system. This woman, sitting upon and so controlling the beast, or world power—full of names of blasphemy, drunken with the blood of saints—can represent nothing else than apostate Christendom, with Rome as its centre and

fullest development.

It is supposed by many that the Pope, or the Church of Rome, is the antichrist. But if the woman represents Rome as a religious system, then that system cannot be antichrist, seeing it is the seven-headed beast with which antichrist is in full agreement that hates the woman, and makes her desolate and naked, and eats her flesh, and burns her with fire! Romanism and the other apostate systems of Christendom may coalesce and yet attain to great power, even dominating the political movements of the nations; but this restraint will ere long be resented, and she who burned the martyrs alive will herself be made desolate, and be burned with fire.

THE DAY BREAKETH.

"Let me go, for the day breaketh" (Gen. xxxii. 26).

LET me go, for day is breaking; See the hill-tops tinged with gold; Morning sounds the vale is waking; Let me go, nor longer hold.

Let me go to peaceful Salem, Where the Lamb is all the light, Where with palm and song they hail Him, Serving Him both day and night.

Day and night is God's "for ever," For no darkness veils that place; Earthly shadows there shall never Hide the shining of His face.

Let me go afar from conflict,
To the saints' eternal rest,
There to bathe in Love's pure sunlight,
Where no foes our peace molest.

Let me go where living fountains Glisten with the rainbow sheen, Where the amaranthine mountains Wear their robes of fadeless green.

On their sunny slopes frankincense, With the myrrh and lily, grows; Oh, to breathe that air of sweetness, Wafted scent of Sharon's Rose!

Let me walk by yonder river, Gaze upon its living rill, Crystal waters flowing ever From Mount Zion's holy hill.

On its banks in fruitful splendour Trees of life in beauty grow; Ever verdant they, and tender, Never chilling winters know.

Let me go, for day is breaking—
Here I can no longer stay;
Hark! His voice the morn awaking:
"Rise, my fair one, come away."

A.W. P. S.

"WHAT MEANEST THOU, O SLEEPER?"

A S one who has been saved by the blood of Jesus from hell-fire, I appeal to you in deep earnestness, as "before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead," and in view of "His appearing and His kingdom," that by the grace of God you will make it your one aim and

object to live for God, for souls, and for eternity, and that all other interests and occupations of life shall be held subject to these eternal interests.

The godlessness of this present age, the wide-spreading apostasy of professing Christians, and the growing disbelief in the inspiration and authority of Holy Scripture, should impel you to this end. There is a world without God, without Christ, without life, without hope, without excuse, and without escape, tottering upon the brink of a burning hell, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," and the smoke of the torment "ascendeth up for ever and The alone remedy is the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Will you not rise to your feet and exclaim, "I mean to preach it, though it bring not social advantage, but a losing, a throwing away of one's present life, and a putting to death of one's personal interests.

I see the world in rebellion against God, lying in the wicked one, with its hands red with the blood of the Son of God. I see the judgment impending, the gathering of the thick clouds of the wrath of Almighty God. I see the false security of the much-vaunted nineteenth century "progress"; I see the thin veneer of outward appearances of culture and refinement; and thrown around it all is the fair mantle of modern Christianity. But underneath, and undisturbed, lies a mass of putrid rottenness. I hear the hireling shepherds cry, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace. The finely-worded, bloodless discourse is but striking the dying knell of multitudes. Down, down, down goes the christened world in its onward march to perdition; while the cries wrung from the heart of the suffering Christ are unheeded, and the import of His death is forgotten. "Let us," say they, "exalt the life and example of the Great Teacher, whose cross was but the martyr's death, and expunge that dogma of a burning lake and everenduring judgment—fit themes of the ignorance of the Middle Ages. Let us away with 'the blood of the everlasting covenant' as revolting to a refined intelligence, and let us think of the life rather than the death of Christ." I see the stupor of the crowds as

they drink the poison ladled out from the ecclesiastical bowl; and they know not that concealed behind the gilded pomp and show gapes the pit's hideous mouth. But over they go—damned! I see doctors of divinity—venerable-looking men—at their study tables, scissors in hand, clipping at the old Book; and, without remorse, they trample a littered floor thick with "uninspired," "unhistorical," "unreliable" portions culled from the Statute Book of the Eternal!

O for trumpet blast, "waxing louder and louder," to awaken and re-echo amongst sleeping saints! Shake off that drowsiness, with its fatal tendencies! Who would be a sleeping body over which a poor soul shall stumble and fall headlong into hell? Get up, and shake yourself—your Lord is coming! Soon shall He summon you to stand before Him to render up a full account of your stewardship; and, with drooping eyes, you may have to hear His disapproval of the life not lived, but lost.

Think now upon Christ's conception of the believer's relation to this present, though passing, scene. "Chosen out of the world," but not for any good in you; "in the world," yet kept from its ways; "not of the world," even as He is not of the world; and "sent into the world," as a witness for Jesus (John xvii. 6, 11, 14, 18). Think, too, of the value of souls! Think of the dying, pleading love they are slighting! Think of the ever-enduring damnation they are hastening to! Think of the Heaven of increasing glory they are losing! Think what glory it would bring to God the Father, God the Son, and to God the Holy Spirit to be used in the conversion of some of them! Think of Gethsemane, Calvary, and the blood-sprinkled Mercy-seat! Think of what Jesus has done and is willing to do for them!

The great day of the ingathering of the harvest is coming, and it behoves us to be busy in the field early and late, counting no toil or hardship too much, that we may hear the Master's own words, "Well done, good and faithful servant." The "perilous times" of the "last days" have surely set in, and the tide runs strong. A lukewarmness is clutching at the hearts of God's saints, tearing out their vitals and destroying all power

for faithful testimony in this God-forsaking age, of which the vintage is well-nigh ready for treading in the winepress of the wrath of God. Let me appeal in deep earnestness to all my fellow-labourers for God that you will seek His face that He may enable you to put some heart and vitality in your ministrations, to put some soul into your gospel preaching and into your exhortations to saints, and act as men on the eve of a catastrophe—for the climax of the age is approaching. Remember, "the crowning day is coming by-and-bye." Olet our eyes and hearts be on that day! Now is the day for toil and labour; then comes sweet rest and reward in heaven.

F. F. (Napier, N.Z.).

FIGURES OF THE CHRISTIAN - XIII.

A WITNESS.

By Dr. J. N. Case, China,

THE apostles of our Lord, in a special way, were chosen and prepared to become witnesses of Him to the world. "And ye also," Christ on one occasion said to them, "shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning" (John xv. 27). And, it may be with this very word in mind, the apostle Peter claims that function for himself and the rest of the twelve (Acts x. 38-42). As these were appointed by Christ on earth, so Saul of Tarsus, for a like purpose, was chosen by our risen and glorified Lord (Acts xxvi. 16). Of old, the nation of Israel was designed to be a witness to the great truth of Monotheism, and that those who worship and serve Jehovah become a prosperous and happy people (Isa. xliii. 10). Had they been faithful to God and kept the covenant, their whole history would have been witness to this. But as a witness for Gcd Israel sadly failed. As a whole they lost all true and personal knowledge of Him, so that when Emmanuel appeared, when the Word became flesh and tabernacled among them, they recognised Him not. "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. came unto His own [possessions], and His own [people] received Him not." And yet in Him, as well as from Him, men might have seen and learnt Gcd and His truth. Of this whole realm the Son of God claimed

to be King. "Art Thou a King?" Pilate doubtfully, perhaps sarcastically, enquires. With a dignity above that of the earth or of the creature. Christ answered: "Thou sayest that I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, THAT I SHOULD BEAR WITNESS UNTO THE TRUTH. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice" (John 18. 37). To Him alone, in the fullest sense, belongs the title, "The faithful and true Witness," for all through His life, as well as when standing before Pilate, He witnessed a good confession (1 Tim. vi. 13). Having been rejected, He returned to heaven, from whence He sent forth the Holy Spirit to witness of Him, even as He had witnessed of the Father. Therefore, during this age the Paraclete is the great witness for Christ; but being invisible and inaudible to man's bodily organs, He carries on His testimony through regenerated men and women: and in a very real sense every believer is a witness for the Lord Jesus.

In later New Testament times the word witness came to have a special meaning, viz., one who by dying sets his seal to the truth of what he affirms (Acts xxii. 20; Rev. ii. 13, &c.). From this root we get our English word martyr. But that is the exceptional use of the term; and though none of us, perhaps, may in this sense ever be called upon to be a martyr for Christ, each one of us ought to be a witness for Him daily.

There is not a Sunday-school scholar in England but is in possession of infinitely higher and more valuable knowledge than all the philosophers and sages of non-Christian lands. He knows the great Jewish truth that the Lord our God is one Lord; he knows, further, that an omnipotent and omnipresent Saviour has been provided for men in the person of Jesus Christ. Even men with only an intellectual knowledge of the Bible can witness to these and kindred truths: but it would not be true Christian testimony. A witness is one who testifies as to what he himself has seen, heard, or experienced. The apostles could testify from these three aspects; through grace we can speak as to the latter, for have we not experienced the sin-convicting power of the Holy Spirit?—the peace-giving power of the Gospel?—and the double-saving power of the Lord Jesus, from the guilt and dominion of sin? And all the world over there is a need for such witness to be borne, for even in the most favoured lands there are comparatively few who can so testify. what shall we say of other lands where the light of the Gospel has scarcely yet penetrated? He may be a plain, blunt man, lacking in learning and eloquence, but if he can say, "I was all this or that, but Christ has saved me," he possesses the sine qua non of a true witness for Christ; and when his life backs up his words, he is a power for God. Apart from this he had better far not open his mouth to speak.

A witness in the Gospel is not necessarily a preacher, any more than a wifness in a court of justice is necessarily an advocate. In his own way he simply testifies as to something that he knows. A smart opponent may trip him up, puzzle, or silence him on many points, but he always comes back to where he began. I may not know this, or be able to explain that, but one thing I know is, that whereas I was once a blind, bound, or hardened sinner, now I see, have liberty, or have found rest. Such a testimony, given in a simple, natural, and courteous manner, may be the means of effecting much good, whether spoken to an individual or to a company; and it is a means for winning souls which we do not well to ignore.

But we can only testify to purpose as we are in the present enjoyment of the things whereof we speak. It will be of little use to tell of what we think the Lord did for us some months or some years earlier, if we are not realising just then in our hearts the sweetness of His love and the reality of His salvation, and hearers can usually tell whether it is so or not. Hence the necessity to constantly be hearing the Shepherd's voice speaking to us through His Word.

The one who speaks when out of communion with God may be a false witness, and his words shall fall to the ground, while "the man that heareth speaketh unchallenged" (Prov. xxi. 28, R.v.). As with the protomartyr—none shall be able to withstand the wisdom and spirit by which he speaks. Such an one speaks "so as to endure" (margin).

His words will sink into the memories and work effectually in the lives of some of his hearers. In a word, he will be among the true witnesses who deliver souls.

In the formula of our courts of justice a witness must tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Such must characterise those also who are called to be witnesses of Christ. We, too, should aim at being able to say, "I kept back nothing that was profitable I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts xx. 20-27). Such a man will probably not become a popular preacher; for even professing Christians do not relish the clear, full truth of the Word, as the time has come when people will not endure the healthful teaching, but having itching ears they heap to themselves teachers after their own heart's desire. There is, therefore, all the greater reason why those whose one ambition is to be Christ's faithful witnesses should tell out the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

But no man can do this of himself. Left alone, he is sure to be a pitiable failure. This our Lord knew and provided against. The gift of the Holy Spirit was His answer to a known and confessed need. Only as we have the Spirit of God resting upon us in the fulness of power for service, only as He dwells in us ungrieved, and burns in us unquenched, shall we be Christ's effective wit-To have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us as the illuminator, comforter, and teacher is one thing; to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and power for effectual witnessbearing and service, is another. Let us not confound things that differ, or imagine that a part is as great as the whole. The one is the portion of all true believers of this dispensation; the other is given in God's sovereign grace to those through whom he intends to do a special work, or who, moved by the Spirit, from right motives, in God's own way, specially seek from Him this great gift. Can it be said of us, as witnesses for Christ, that we have received POWER, the Holy Spirit having come upon us? or do we speak words, words, mere words? Space forbids our pursuing this subject further just now.

In witnessing, the aim must be to please

God alone. Let us never forget that, however small our audience, He is always present, and it rejoices His heart to hear His Son well spoken of. Remembering this, we shall never become as the many who adulterate the Word of God as the huckster often tampers with his goods; "but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ" (2 Cor. ii. 17). We shall speak as those who, in the Gospel, have been made trustees of something of infinite worth and value, and whose wish it is not to please men, but to please God; and in that case we shall not be found false witnesses of Christ when we testify to His power to save, sanctify, satisfy, and keep; and so, through grace, having confessed Him before men, we shall be among those whom now and in that day He will confess before the angels of God.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

By THOMAS NEWBERRY, Editor of The Englishman's Bible.

VIII. GOD ALL IN ALL. (Matthew vi. 13.)

"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever [unto the ages]. Amen."

HEN God created man in His own image He made him to have dominion over the works of His hands, and put all things under his feet (Psa. viii.), thus constituting him the head of this lower creation (Gen. i. 26); but, as the apostle shows, it is manifest that He is excepted who put all things under him (1 Cor. xv. 24-28; Heb. ii. 6-8). Thus Adam was "a man under authority," and he exercised this authority so long as he himself was subject to his Creator. When, under the temptation of the old serpent, he transgressed, his supreme authority was broken, and the creature became subject to vanity. But what has failed under the first Adam, God will re-establish on a larger and firmer basis in the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, and set at His own right hand, far above principality, and authority, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all (Eph. i. 20-23). During the millennial period, as the Son of Man, He will execute this authority until He has brought all things into subjection, and then He will deliver up this delegated authority to God the Father, that God the Triune God, Father, Son, and Spirit may be all in all. To whom will be the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

THOUGHTS ON LEVITICUS XVI.

AS I have already written two papers on the same line of thought which I believe this passage mainly teaches, I will only point out three things which I believe the Lord has shown me to be taught in this

chapter.

I. It was the sins of a people already redeemed which the high priest laid on the head of the scapegoat, and which it bore away into a "land not inhabited." This confirms all I have been trying to teach in my former articles, namely, that Christ is the "propitiation for our sins" as children of God, as well as for the sins of the whole world; and we need to know Him and use Him as such all the path along if our consciences are to be kept "good" in the light of the presence of God.

It is true the law had only the "shadow of good things to come"; but there can be no shadow without a substance. So if God's earthly people needed the shadows revealed in Lev. xvi. to keep them right with the Lord who dwelt in their midst, so we who are a heavenly people need to know and use the substance, if we are to follow our Great High Priest into heaven itself, and worship and walk there in the holiest (Heb. x. 19;

I John i. 7).

II. If we are to understand the teaching in this passage aright, we require to see that, whilst the Lord begins with His own claims first, yet, experimentally, it has to be learned backward. This is also true of the various other offerings. God began with the burnt-offering, and came down step by step to the trespass-offering. But man, in learning the value of the sacrifice of Christ, begins with Him as the trespass-offering; and if

he is a learner, he rises to have fellowship with God in Christ as the whole burnt-offering.

So here God begins with His own claims That is, the high priest with the blood of the bullock and the blood of the Lord's goat, goes inside the most holy place. And having made atonement for Jehovah's dwelling-place in the midst of an unclean people, he comes out in the type to make provision for the people's need. It is beautiful it see this, "And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, he shall bring the live goat" (verse 20). All the claims of Jehovah having first been met, he could come out, and on "holy ground" deal with the people's need. It is true that in the order of time Christ bore our sins in His own body on the tree (I Pet. ii. 24) before He began His ministry as High Priest in heaven; but in the type the two goats appear in their relative importance—the Lord's goat first, then the people's. God's claims always first, then man's need.

III. I wish to notice another thing, more as a suggestion to thoughtful Christians, that is, that there is a twofold truth in the command given to Aaron to lay both his hands on the head of the live goat. It is the only instance where both hands were to be laid on the head of the substitute. I have long believed that we have here the two sides. "My sins were laid on Jesus," and "I lay my sins on Jesus." The one hand points to what the LORD has done, according to Isaiah liii. 6. That was eternally finished when Christ hung on the cross; but it was never mine until I as a guilty sinner made it my own by a personal appropriation of that sin-bearing. And to my mind that is the teaching of the other hand. Some may think I am going too far in thus using this type, but no one can find fault if I say it is a most telling illustration of a twofold truth; and I believe this personal appropriation of the sin-bearing of the Lord Jesus is needed as long as we have sin in us and live in a world under the power of sin and Satan—not bringing our sins and laying them on Jesus now that He is in heaven. "For in that He died, He died unto sin once" (Rom. vi. 10); but it is rather a state of appropriation of the one sin-bearing which

He finished once for all on the cross, and this as the Holy Spirit reveals to us more and more our need of it.

G. A.

GOD NEVER FORGETTING.

God never forgetting, as seen in Isaiah xliv. There are two vast truths, amongst many others, embedded in this wonderful chapter, which have become of late more aboundingly precious to me. The one is the magnificent challenge of God, His own declaration of Himself: "Is there a God beside Me? Yea, there is no God; I know not any." Eternal in duration, and infinite in knowledge—none beside Himselt. Our God is the only wise and true God whom we know, love, worship, and adore. The other truth is His promise. Speaking of Israel, and through them to us, He says, "Thou art My servant . . . thou shalt not be forgotten of Me." We may and do forget even those who faithfully served us; but poor, faithless, worthless servants, which in our own eyes we seem to be, He never will and never can, after such a promise, forget us. In sickness, in suffering; at home or abroad; in travelling or at rest; in life with all its vicissitudes; or in death with all its pangs, His sweet word is, "Thou shalt not be forgotten of ME"; and note especially that this was said to a sinful, backsliding one.—J. DENHAM SMITH.

Correspondence.

SAVIOUR AND LORD.

To the Editor of THE WITNESS.

My Dear Brother,—I am in receipt of yours or the 11th, and now avail myself of your kind offer to insert an explanatory note to remove the apparent divergence of thought between your note and my reply to the above question.

The Apostles Paul and James would seem to contradict each other when they were writing on the doctrine of justification, whilst they were only looking at it from different standpoints, and guarding against two opposite errors. I believe it is so in our case.

I quite agree with you that everyone who has believed on Christ to the saving of the soul must own Him as the Lord; and also with what you say in your letter as to how the Spirit has been grieved, and our power in testimony greatly hindered by the assumption that we, and we only, who are called "brethren," own the Lordship of

Christ. But what I am afraid of is, that some of us endeavour to regain the power we have sinned away by allowing the truth we have been taught as to the distinctive calling of the Church and its relative truths to lose their hold upon our hearts, instead of seeking to get a restoration of power by confessing the pride of our hearts before the Lord, and seeking grace to live out the truth we have learned in true heart and life separation from all which is opposed to the word and will of the Lord, as far as we know it.

There has been a separation from fellow-saints taught and practised amongst us which is not of God; and some have insisted on a Church authority which is not found in Scripture. But divine rule in the Church is clearly taught therein, and after the severe conflict we had some years ago in resisting the spurious thing, there is serious danger of a re-action setting in; and whilst we are guarding saints against one snare, our wily adversary may be leading young ones who are following on into the opposite extreme, and under the plea of refusing to bow to any human authority, they may be led into the snare of the last days, that of "despising dominion," and so refuse to bow to any authority in the Church, either divine or human.

What I mean by owning Christ as Lord is, to own Him as my Lord by walking in lowly obedience to all the light He graciously vouchsafes to

give me.

I have always looked on what is said in I Cor. xii. 3, on saying that Jesus is the Lord, as introductory to the section of revelation which follows; as if God would say to His people: "Before you are in a condition to learn the truth as to the gifts in the body of Christ, and as to their exercise in the assembly, you need first to learn by the Holy Spirit to give Jesus His true place in your own heart as LORD.—I am, yours in His service, Geo. Adam.

THE STRUGGLE FOR SUPREMACY. To the Editor of THE WITNESS.

DEAR EDITOR,—My mind has been dwelling lately on the three great principles struggling for supremacy in the world to-day—the IMPERIAL, the ECCLESIASTICAL, and the DEMOCRATIC.

If we turn, for instance, to Germany, the working of these three principles can be clearly observed. The Imperial exalts the symbol of its greatness, the Kaiser (or Cæsar) almost approaching deification. The Ecclesiastical (or Ultramontane) is satisfied with nothing less than the dominion of Rome—the rule of clerisy in the political as well as the spiritual realm. The Democracy aims at making the people (thoroughly infidel) the virtual sovereign of the State. We

know how bitter the fight is between these ten dencies in that part of Europe.

Now, in the Book of the Revelation we are permitted to mark the issue of this great conflict, which, I believe, is going on everywhere to-day. Satanic ingenuity will bring about a remarkable fusion of these contradictory elements, the seven-headed monster arising out of the sea of the Gentiles (Rev. xiii.) being a combination of triumphant Democracy with blasphemous Imperialism, while both together will support the drunken harlot of Ecclesiastical apostasy (Rev. xvii.). No wonder those that dwell on the earth shall marvel at the sight. But we know the old adage: "Two is company, three is none." "The beast" will tire of "the woman," who, as in her past history, will never be content to be one of three; she must be supreme.

The triumph of clerisy will be brilliant, but brief. The very grasping at earthly power will be its destruction. The kings of the earth shall hate the woman with which they have lived in

guilty intimacy.

Can we not understand why in the providence of God the compromise, by Satanic diplomacy, between Imperialism, Democracy, and Ecclesiasticism, has not yet been permitted to overshadow the world? The postponement of the inevitable is the guarantee of an open-door for the Gospel. When the scarlet woman, drunken with the blood of the saints, shall rule "the beast," the dreadful inquisitions of the dark ages will return to Europe.

May not the present broken-up condition of things in Church and State, the never-ceasing struggle of parties for power, be a means of keeping each other in a state of impotency, so that the blessed message of God may still go forth in peace to the weary nations of the earth?

London.

Max I. Reich.

Questions and Answers.

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

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 are most thankful to all our friends who have endearoured to help us by replying to Questions, but the Editor hopes that Correspondents will study brevity, and when too long he will take the liberty of "using the scissors" freely in preference to rejecting Answers, on account of their length, in which there may be points of value.

REPLIES ARE INVITED TO THE FOLLOWING:

Christ's Perfection.—Please explain in *The Witness* Heb. ii. 10, "Perfect through suffering," and v. 8, 9, "Learned obedience," and "Being

made perfect." Was not Christ pre-eminently the perfect and obedient One from the beginning?

INFECTION AND ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS.—Is it according to the mind of the Lord to hinder a brother from breaking bread with the Lord's people because of fever being in his home?

AN OLD TESTAMENT APPARENT CONTRADICTION.—According to Numbers xviii. 18 the first-ling was for the priest, but according to Deut. xv. 20 the owner and his household were to eat it before the Lord. According to Numbers xviii. 21 to 32 the tithes were for the Levites, but according to Deut. xii. 18 every man, with his household, and the Levite within his gates, was to eat the tithes before the Lord. Please explain these apparent contradictions, and also notice Deut. xiv. 28, 29.

CORRECT ORDER OF "RECEPTION."—If no form of procedure is prescribed in the New Testament for the receiving of a believer, what then is the proper course to adopt, or what principles ought to guide?

THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN—WHEN?—What is the meaning of Matt. xxiv. 34, "Till all these things be fulfilled"? Have not many generations passed away since then?

"THE EXPECTATION OF THE CREATURE."—What is "the creature" to which reference is made in Romans viii. 19-21?

The Lord's Coming—A Query.—Are we warranted in expecting the Lord's return at any moment, seeing that in Rev. v. 9 the bloodwashed are out of "every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation"? Has every nation heard the Gospel of the Grace of God?

LIVING OF THE GOSPEL.—What is meant by these words in I Cor. ix. 14: "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel?" If it mean that those who preach the gospel should in temporal things be ministered to by those who hear the gospel, why is there not opportunity given in our gospel meetings for such ministry?

CHRIST'S INTERCESSION.

QUESTION 405.—What is the meaning of John xvi. 26, and how is it to be reconciled with Hebrews vii. 25?

Answer A.—When the Lord said, "I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you," He gives the reason, "For the Father Himself loveth you." It was not necessary for Him to pray to the Father in our stead, as if we could not go to the Father directly for ourselves, nor as if the Father did not love us. On the contrary, Hebrews vii. 25 shows that we go directly to God

by Him. Instead of being between us and God in that sense, He, by His finished work and constant intercession on our behalf, has enabled us to pray directly to the Father. "Through Him we both have access, by one Spirit, to the Father." His intercession for us is in view of our infirmities, and His advocacy, if we sin, not because we may not go to the Father ourselves, but to enable us to do so when that comes in which would hinder us.

J. J.

Answer B.—Any contrast there may seem to be between these verses does not necessarily imply any contradiction, but a difference in the state and condition of the believers addressed. In John xvi. the Lord is speaking to His disciples, who have followed Him through the years of His public ministry. They have been witnesses to His acts and words of tenderness, grace, and love, and realised His Divine power exerted on behalf of themselves or others. Now He is about to leave them, and their hearts are filled with sadness. Before leaving them the Lord promises to send the Spirit to be with them, and reveals to them the tender love of the Father and His readiness to hear their prayers for help in the trials and persecutions they will have to

pass through in the world.

The Epistle to the Hebrews is addressed to believers who once belonged to the people of Israel. They are looked at as passing through the wilderness of this world and liable to encounter temptation from the enemy, besides feeling the weakness and sinfulness of our fallen nature. In this chapter the writer contrasts the earthly priesthood of Aaron and his sons, and its constant changes, with the heavenly and unchangeable priesthood of Christ, which was illustrated or typified by the priesthood of Melchisedec. Though always without sin, yet Christ has been through this world, and can therefore sympathise with those who are in it (Heb. ii. 18). What a comfort for us to know that should we come short of God's glory, or feel the weakness and sinfulness of our condition as in the body, we have a great High Priest in the heavens, who always did the things that pleased the Father, and ever lives to make intercession for us. In the abundance and riches of God's grace, should we not know what to pray for as we ought, the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered (Rom. viii. 26, 27), and His intercessions are always according to the mind of God. Thus we can rejoice that in all our need the Father is ever ready to hear our prayers; if we feel weakness and failure the Son ever lives to make intercession for us; and should we fail in expressing the mind of the Spirit He translates our words into such as are acceptable above.

Answer C.—Five times in His address to the disciples the Lord tells them that in future they are to ask in His Name, and to each injunction a condition is attached—(1) in chapter xiv. 13, 14, He says, "Ask in My Name and I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son; (2) chapter xv. 7, 8, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Therein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit"; (3) chapter xv. 16, "Ye did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My Name, He may give it you"; (4) chapter xvi. 23, 24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, if ye shall ask anything of the Father in My Name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ve asked nothing in My Name; ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be fulfilled." Then in verses 25-27, "These things have I spoken unto you in parables; the hour cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in parables, but shall tell you plainly of the Father. In that day ye shall ask in My Name; and I say not unto you that I will pray [make request of] the Father for you, for the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from the Father." In the first two passages it is the glorifying of the Father (1) in the greater works which they should do; (2) by their bearing much fruit; in passage (3) it is that they should bear fruit, and that their fruit should abide; in (4) it is that their joy may be fulfilled; and in (5), which is near the end of His address, the Lord expresses the close communion (as we read in Isaiah lxv. 24) that exists between the Father and His chosen ones. The love of the Father is so great when His children walk with Him and keep His commandments according to His Word, that He has said, "Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear"; and in this the Father and Son act in unison—intercession is unneeded. The spiritual food that is contained in this address of the Lord Jesus to His disciples is truly wonderful.

In Hebrews vii. 25 Paul is speaking of the unchangeable priesthood of Christ, who "once for all offered Himself a sacrifice for sin." "He, through His own blood, entered in once for all into the holy place, into heaven itself, having obtained eternal redemption." He is a Priest for ever, and hath His priesthood unchangeable. Wherefore "He is able to save to the uttermost [completely] them that draw near unto God through Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." He is able to save now and to all eternity the vilest sinners that repent and come to God through Him, right down the ages till the time when death and hades shall

have been cast into the lake of fire, and sin shall be no more. And He is continually interceding for all who confess their sin. Is there one Christian who is not constantly in need of His intercession? All believers have sin in them; but, blessed be His Name, through faith in His Name they have no sin on them. This work of intercession will be proceeding until that time shall have arrived when Jehovah will say, "Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. xxi. 1-5); also Heb. x. 10-24.

In John xvi. 26 communion with the Father is the theme; in Heb. vii. 25 Christ's intercessory work for sinners, repentant and saved, is dwelt upon.

W. D. B.

Answer D.—Reference to the context is the surest way of arriving at the true meaning of a given text. In John xvi. 4-15 Christ speaks more specifically of the expediency of His death and session at the Father's right hand in order that the Comforter may be sent, while in verses 16-28 He deals more in detail with His death itself, their (the disciples') sorrow in consequence, His seeing them again after a "little while," and how they would no more ask Him personally any question. Verse 16 caused some anxiety among the disciples as to what He could mean by it, and "Jesus knew they were desirous to Ask Him." In reply, He taught them by means of a parable that He spoke of His death, and in verse 23 says: "In that day (i.e., subsequent to His death) ye shall ask Me (i.e., personally) nothing." Then the Saviour goes on (verse 25) to tell them that the foregoing things He has spoken unto them by parable, but that the time cometh when He will no more do so, but show them plainly of the Father. If verses 13, 14, 15 are referred to just here I think there can be no doubt that the time coming (verse 25), when He would speak no more by parable, is the time subsequent to Pentecost, the time when the Holy Spirit—the Comforter—the Divine Paraclete should be their instructor—their teacher.

Now we come to verse 26, which is truly a difficult one, and which I understand as follows: "At that day" (the days or time subsequent to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit) "ye shall ASK" (not Me personally, but taught of the Holy Spirit, "ye shall ASK") "the Father in My NAME, and I say not unto you that I (I emphatic) will pray (ASK) the Father for you." I will not then occupy the place I now occupy. Then the Holy Ghost will occupy the place I occupy now, and I shall have gone to a higher place. No more on earth will "I pray the Father for you," but the Holy Ghost, helping your infirmities, presenting them to Me in heaven, I will intercede for you (read carefully Rom. viii. 26, 27). The questioner will see from above how I reconcile it with Hebrews vii. 25. D. J. R.

PERSONAL GLORIES OF THE LORD JESUS.

Notes of an A dress on 1st chapter of John's Gospel, by ALEXANDER STEWART.

I WOULD almost call this first chapter of John a panoramic chapter,. I will explain what I mean. Of course, it is all about the Lord Jesus Christ Himself personally, but it begins with Him before all worlds were made—as "the Word that was with God and was God"—and then it follows Him all through His Incarnation, through the work that He has been doing since He rose from the dead, and on till in the end of the chapter you have Him in the character of the King of Israel and the Son of Man—the character that He is going to sustain for the blessing of this earth when He comes again.

Perhaps the best way will be for us to

take each point separately.

Verse 1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The next is the 14th verse, "And the Word was made [or became] flesh, and dwelt among us." Then the 29th verse, "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." The next step is in the 33rd verse, the testimony of John the Baptist, "The same said unto me, upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptiseth with the Holy Ghost." Then follows the result of the testimony of John. Two of the disciples to whom he preached Christ (verse 37) "followed Jesus," and the next is the 49th verse, "Nathanael answered, and saith unto Him, Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel." Our last point is the 51st verse, "... Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

"IN THE BEGINNING WITH GOD."

Will you go back in your thoughts to the very farthest point of Time past, and look over, if you can, into the Eternity that is behind? In that past Eternity you read this (it is all you know about it), "The Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The same was in the beginning with God." God was, therefore, never alone. From all eternity He was the God of communion, and He had the Lord Jesus as His Word, His daily delight. The expression is very simple and very deep. Who is able to fathom the depth of it—that the "Word was with God?" If God is ever to communicate with you from the inaccessible light in which He dwells it must be by sending His Word, and that is just what He did. Just as we commonly speak of "sending word to a person," so God sent His Son to us as an expression of what was passing in His mind and heart. As we read further down, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son . . . He hath declared Him," and all you need to know about God you can learn in the Lord Jesus Christ—the Word of God.

THE WORD BECAME FLESH.

The next step was that in Time—not in Eternity—"The Word became flesh." He was born in Bethlehem of Judea, but yet, as you read in the margin of that passage, it is He "Whose goings forth have been from the days of Eternity" (Micah v. 2). He was born in Bethlehem of the Virgin, and the Word became flesh, and what then? He dwelt among us, or the word in the original is, He "tabernacled" with us, and the thought carries us back to the dwellingplace of Jehovah in the wilderness. What was the crowning excellence of the Tabernacle? That there was the pillar of cloud resting, in which was the glory of God; and now, when the Lord Jesus Christ came in flesh, the glory of God rested on Him, the glory of God shone from Him. His whole pathway here on earth was the display of it. As you read, His first miracle "manifested forth His glory"—not the glory of the Transfiguration Mount, where "His raiment became shining . . . so as no fuller on earth can white them" (Mark ix. 3), a visible, shining glory from His bodily frame, but what has been happily called "His moral glory.'' As we sing—

> "O the glory of the grace Shining in the Saviour's face, Telling sinners from above God is light and God is love."

If anyone should ask me, What is glory? I do not know whether I could give a definition, but I say this, that glory always means display. It once happened to me to see the wonderful diamond that is one of the great possessions of the Queen. It is called the Koh-i-nûr, which means "Mountain of Light." It is of enormous size, and you may suppose how it sparkles and flashes when the light shines upon it. Once it was lying as other diamonds—in the earth—but someone got it, and now it has passed through the hands of the lapidary, and it is what you see it. was just as valuable intrinsically before that process as it is now, but the value that was then in it is now shining out of it, and people might apply that epithet to it, "glorious." Well, all this virtue and excellence was in the Lord Jesus Christ, but it was in passing to and fro among men that he manifested forth His glory, not a glory like that which shone in the face of Moses, that had to be veiled because of the people's fear— His glory drew men to Him; there was not a broken-hearted sinner but felt the attraction of the glory of the Son of God.

And that characteristic of the Lord Jesus Christ was communicable—one that we can get hold of and make our own. is a loch about forty miles away in the Highlands, and for many a day people went to see it and praised its beauty. what good was it to the inhabitants of Glasgow? "Oh," you say, "none whatever." But then it was a possible good. What was in Loch Katrine was communicable. It was possible for Glasgow to get the benefit of what lay yonder, and so they made the connection, and the waters of Loch Katrine are to-day pouring through Glasgow for its good. There was a communicable element in that loch. So with the Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore we read—"Of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace."

Turn to a passage in the Old Testament in the Book of Deuteronomy, chapter xxxiii. When you read the Bible always look for Christ in it. Well, here are two blessings that are put together, verses 23 and 24: "And of Naphtali he said, Oh, Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the Lord, possess thou the west and

the south. And of Asher he said, Let Asher be blessed with children "-that is not being filled with good for yourself; that is productiveness. "Let him be acceptable to his brethren"-that is not dwelling alone and enjoying everything for yourself, but helping others—"and let him dip his foot in oil." That refers, you will doubtless say, to the earthly prosperity of Asher. But take the figure simply. Suppose a vessel is full of oil as Naphtali was full of favour—it stands by itself, and no man is the better of it—but if a man should dip his foot in the oil and walk across a newly-cleaned floor, what would be the result? Every place where the man put his foot, a mark of the oil in which the foot had been dipped would be That was so with the Lord Jesus Christ—not only full of grace, but grace flowing forth in His ways as He moved about among men. I would just say in passing. that is how we are called upon to act. It is a good thing to be a righteous man, to pay 20/ in the f, and to be like the blacksmith in the poem, who

"Looked the whole world in the face, For he owed not any man."

But the Christian is called on to do more than that. He is not only to be a righteous man, but a gracious one also. Well, you say, I know the difference — there are some brethren more grumpy than gracious. Now, we should act so that people are not frightened to come to us, and so that even little children would draw near us. That was the case with the Lord Jesus Christ. He was the most accessible of men. The filthiest leper or the smallest child readily approached that fountain of grace, and they could have everything from Him they wanted. Is not that what a Christian ought to be like? Not only satisfied with favour and blessing from the Lord, but like Asher, leaving the characteristics of grace wherever he goes among men. Such was our Lord Jesus Christ.

"THE LAMB OF GOD."

Our next point is in the 29th verse—the testimony of John the Baptist. "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." What does that mean? That that life of grace was to be con-

summated by sacrifice. Now, remember that though our Lord Jesus Christ had spoken all these gracious words, and had done those blessed miracles, if He had gone to heaven even from Gethsemane, no man could have been saved. That work must be consummated by His dying on the Cross, and shedding the Blood of Atonement.

Long ago, in Genesis, Abraham and Isaac were going together, and Isaac said, "Here, father, is the fire, but where is the lamb?" And that father put faith in God (I do not know what kind of feelings he had, but he had faith in God), and said, "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt-offering." Abraham uttered more than he knew himself at that moment, and therefore he called the place Jehovah-jireh—"The Lord will provide." God provided Himself a Lamb, and God accepted Him. John said, "Behold the Lamb of God." Oh! mind you, there is no "wale" of Saviours. He is THE Lamb of God, and there is no Salvation in any other. It is an exclusive Gospel, though an inclusive one as regards poor sinners. There is only one Lamb of God, and only one way to be saved, and that by Him.

(To be continued.)

God's Chosen People-XV.

THE COMING of the SON OF MAN.

By JOHN R. CALDWELL, Author of "Shadows of Christ in the Old Testament," "Things to Come," &c.

I N apostolic days "the mystery of iniquity" or "lawlessness" did already work. This working, as we have seen, will culminate in the man of sin, the antichrist. But God is not going to allow this full development of iniquity to remain long upon the earth; the Lord Himself will bring it abruptly to an end by His manifestation in glory. It is to this appearing of the Son of Man that I wish now to direct your attention.

Read Daniel vii. 13, 14:

"I saw in the night-visions, and, behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

Notice that when the coming of the Son of Man is spoken of it is always in connection with judgment, and with dominion over the earth.

In Matt. xxiv. the Lord is again called by this title, which of itself defines the character of the whole passage. See ver. 27:

"For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be."

Also verse 30:

"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

Also verse 37:

"As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be."

Now, in contrast to this, read John v. 25:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, 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."

Here, you observe, the title is not "Son of Man," but "Son of God." It is as Son of God that He is the quickener of the dead. This verse does not refer to the future, but to the present time—"the hour...now is." The dead in trespasses and sins are being quickened into life eternal, through hearing the voice of the Son of God, and believing on Him. Verse 26:

"For as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son [that is, Son of God] to have life in Himself."

Now follows another operation:

"And hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man."

He is not only Quickener of the dead, a work of sovereign grace; He is also the appointed Judge and Executor of judgment.

Now let us read Acts xvii. 30:

"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repen:"

This is a wonderful word! All men, everywhere, commanded to repent! Would God command any man to repent if He were not prepared to grant him forgiveness? The very universality of the command tells the fulness and freeness of the grace that has provided pardon. But why this present urgency?

^{*}A Scotch word implying a selection out of many.

"Because He hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained."

This is not grace; it is judgment. It is the time of which the prophet speaks:

"Judgment also will I lay to the line and righteousness of the plummet."

Observe it is the Man that is to judge, and this office, "Judge of all," is committed to Him "because He is the Son of Man." It is a Man who has trod this earth, who has suffered being tempted, who met the devil and overcame him; a true Man, who is ordained to be the Judge of the living and the dead.

I think this gives character to those passages where the Lord Jesus is called by this title.

Now look at Luke xxi. 34:

"And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth."

I have already remarked on that expression so often occurring in the Book of Revelation, "They that dwell on the earth." It corresponds with Phil. iii., "Who mind earthly things." Verse 19:

"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."

This passage again presents Him as coming to reign, and coming to judge.

Now read Revelation i. 12-15:

"And I turned to see the Voice that spake with me. And, being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters."

I think we clearly recognise here the same Person of whom we have just read in Dan. vii. Here again His title is Son of Man, not as coming in the clouds of heaven to judge the world, but standing in the midst of the Churches in the attitude of judgment—the priestly Judge of the ways of His Own servants. Hence the appropriate title, "Son

of Man." He begins each or the seven letters, "I know thy works." His flaming eyes have been discerning them all the time, and now He expresses His judgment. As we sing, "The Crowning Day is Coming by and by," remember that, inseparably connected with it, "the judgment day" is coming too. There cannot be a crown bestowed apart from the discernment of the righteous Judge. Thus, Paul, speaking of "the crown of righteousness" which he knew was laid up for him, says,

"Which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me at that day."

Not the compassionate Saviour—He is that; but here it is in another character He appears

—it is "the righteous Judge."

Oh! that in our assemblies our eyes were opened to see that vision of the One who is "in our midst." Did we but catch a glimpse of those flaming eyes, those burning feet, that girded breast and two-edged sword, how solemn, how subdued would be our demeanour; how careful lest the flesh should assert itself, lest the carnal mind should find expression, and so the Spirit be grieved and judgment incurred! Blessed be God, it is to Him who is "touched with a feeling of our infirmities" that the judgment of our work and service is committed.

"As many as I love I rebuke and chasten."

That is the form His priestly judgment takes, and many can bless Him for it, and say,

"Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept Thy Word."

We are in the hands of a true and righteous Judge. We are bad judges of one another, and perhaps worse judges of ourselves. Sometimes we judge too harshly, and sometimes too leniently, but the Judge before whom we shall stand makes no mistakes, and His decisions shall have our full and irrevocable approval.

Now let us turn to Revelation i. 7:

"Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen."

This, I think, clearly points to the same event as Matt. xxiv., where the coming of the Son of Man is as the lightning which lighteneth from the east to the west. It is

a public manifestation to the world of the Son of Man, whom long ago they nailed to the Cross, and whom ever since they have rejected. The result is conviction; all kindreds wail* because of Him; but how far this conviction issues in salvation we are not informed. The world will then awake to see that it has been deluded by Satanic lies. They would not believe on Him who came in lowly grace; now they behold Him arrayed in all His kingly majesty and power.

I hope after this to show the distinction between this public manifestation of the Son of Man, coming with clouds, accompanied by all His saints, when every eye shall see Him, and His coming for you and me and all the living and sleeping saints, to take them up from earth to be with Himself for ever. They are two events clearly distinguished in Scripture. Meantime, I want to go a little further in considering the coming of the Son of Man to take possession of His kingdom.

We have seen from Dan. vii. 14 that His kingdom is universal and everlasting. All the kingdoms of this world, monarchies or republics, pass away when the kingdom of our God and of His Christ is set up.

As the stone cut out of the mountain without hands fell upon the feet of the great image of Nebuchadnezzar's vision and ground the whole to powder, so that it became like the chaff on the summer threshing floors, so shall the kingdoms of this world pass away at the coming of Him who is "King of kings and Lord of lords."

It is commonly held that the kingdoms of the world will gradually, by the spread of the Gospel, as by a leavening process, become changed in character, until all acknowledge and bow to the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ as supreme Ruler; but I fail to find any Scripture to support such a view. No indication is given of any change in the character of those wild and monstrous beasts to which the kingdoms of this world are likened in the prophetic Scriptures.

The body of the final beast is given to the burning flame, and the image is ground to powder. The heavenly kingdom destroys and supersedes them all.

Let us now read Zechariah xiv. 1-5:

"Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah King of Judah; and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee."

Here again is the coming of the Son of Man, not to the air to receive His saints to Himself; but His coming to the earth accompanied by all His saints (who must previously have been taken to be with Him). His feet alight upon the Mount of Olives, the ground so often trod by those same feet in the days of His flesh, and from which He ascended up in the presence of His disciples, till a cloud received Him out of their sight.

In the moment of that wondrous descent He will transfigure the face of the whole land. A mighty earthquake will rend the Mount of Olives, and a valley will be created, extending from the Mediterranean Sea, and allowing its waters to flow in and reach even to the Dead Sea, raising its level, healing its deadly waters, and opening up a channel into the Red Sea, which shall at once supersede and answer more majestically the purpose of the present Suez Canal. Thus shall Jerusalem become the centre of the world's commerce, the city of the great King, the metropolis of the kingdom of "great David's greater Son."

And this manifestation of the Son of Man takes place just at the very time when the armies of all "the great powers" are round about Jerusalem. The city has been taken, as described in the passage before us, and even the elect remnant who wait for the promised Deliverer appear on the verge of destruction, when, lo! the heavens are rent asunder, the King of kings appears, and the armies of heaven are with Him.

^{*}The word for "wail" here is not the same as in Matthew xiii. 42 and 50, but rather points to conviction of guilt.

CHRISTIANS AND THE WAR.

LET me invite and exhort the numerous Christians in Great Britain and the colonies who read The Witness to ponder I Tim. ii. I-4, and Jer. xxix. 7. In the former Scripture specially to mark the words, "First of ALL," and the prominence thus given by the Holy Spirit to this exhortation. In the latter Scripture the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel—our God—says, "Seek the peace of the city where ye are, and pray unto the Lord for it." Thus, as foreigners and sojourners, we ought to pray for the city or country where our God causes us to sojourn.

Great Britain is now in a death-and-life struggle of war; shall we not cry, and cry mightily, unto God for it? Let us pray much for the venerable, worthy, and beloved Queen. Her heart and mind cannot but be greatly troubled by the present terrible war, and its awful casualties. Shall we not cry to God for those who bear the seals of office, and the tremendous responsibilities of office, that they may be controlled and led of God in the right way? Shall we not pray much for those in authority in the military department, from the commander-in-chief down to the humblest corporal in the army, that God may be graciously pleased to guide their counsels, control their movements, and give success to their endeavours as He sees right?

Great Britain, with all her failures, is the best administrator of government, and even justice, on the earth, both at home and throughout her colonies. The civil and religious liberties which we, the inhabitants, enjoy are exceedingly precious. The protection of life and property with which we are sheltered is very assuring. The peace which we enjoy in these islands, where not a battle of the warrior has been fought since Culloden's Muir, 155 years ago, is certainly a marvellous privilege. Our hearts should be full of gratitude, and our mouths full of praise and thanksgiving to our God, as we think of these things. God has been pleased to give us all these liberties, protection, and peace through the hands of British administration. The British Queen and the whole administration have therefore special claims upon our prayers for gracious, Divine preservation, and that they may be kept in the good ways pursued hitherto for many, many, long years, in the protection of Jews, and all other oppressed races and nationalities, who come under their sheltering wings.

I cannot calmly contemplate the eventuality of the final victory of the campaign being on the side of the Boers. That the Boers should dominate the whole of South Africa by conquest would be an appalling contingency. The uniform testimony of missionaries (including the venerable Moffat and Livingstone, who lived and died for Africans) is to the effect that Boers treated, and still treat, the natives with relentless barbarity and cruelty. Secular history, also, since the British assumed the governance of the Cape 85 years ago, fully and entirely corroborates the testimony of the missionaries, that the Boers treat the native population with less kindness, consideration, and mercy than they treat the sheep and cattle on their farms.

Great Britain and the colonies are making tremendous efforts, and sending forth thousands and thousands of men and horses to the seat of war, but we know that "there is no king saved by the multitude of a host; a mighty man is not delivered by much strength; a horse is a vain thing for safety; neither can he deliver any by his great strength" (Psa. xxxiii. 16. 17); and although "a horse is prepared against the day of battle, safety is of the Lord" (Pro. xxi. 31). "He delighteth not in the strength of the horse; He taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man. The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy" (Psa. cxlvii. 10, 11).

Let us hope in God's mercy, lay hold upon His grace, and unceasingly pray. Let us pray in our secret chambers, in our families, and in our meetings. Let us plead with God, even our Father, to interpose, and to speedily finish this terrible war in the best interests of humanity; that He also would save life as far as possible; soothe and help the wounded and the dying, both on the British and Boer sides; bring back to the dying words which they may have learned in the Sunday-school, or heard preached on the street or elsewhere, and save them. Let us pray that the storm may soon be turned into

a calm, and that peace and prosperity, with a wide-open door for the Gospel to all races and tribes, may be an accomplished fact, by His mighty power and sovereign goodness, throughout South Africa, from Capetown to the Zambesi.

J. S.

[The Boers are descendants of those who suffered for the truth of God, and had to leave their own people and country in consequence; and there is doubtless among them an acknowledgment of God, for which we should be thankful. Their dividing of the Word of Truth is, however, manifestly not right, and, probably as a result of this, their treatment of the natives, as borne witness to by missionaries generally, as well as others, shows a grievous misuse of power. All such matters, however, are known to and weighed by God, to whom we do well to commit them, and to pray for them, and especially for their rulers.—J.L.M.]

THOUGHTS ON BAPTISM.

"For thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness" (Matt. iii. 15).

BEHOLD the Christ, the Son of God, On Jordan's banks He stands, And marvel, too, for baptism He seeks at human hands.

We wonder not the words we hear,
"How comest Thou to me?
A weak and sinful man should need
To be baptised of Thee."

"But suffer it to be so now,"
He said, and onward prest,
For thus it e'er becomes us to
Fulfil all righteousness.

"Becometh us!" O wondrous word, And He the Church's Head, In figure takes the place of death, And rises from the dead.

Beneath the Jordan's troubled waves Obediently He goes, Faint shadow of the greater death And Calv'ry's deeper woes.

The waters part, now raised again—
'Tis God's appointed type
Of triumph over death and hell,
Of resurrection life.

Baptised into our weaknesses, The sorrow, suffering, shame, That He, the Head, when raised again, Might all His members claim. O, Son of God, most holy One, Most holy Son of Man, How perfect this revealing of God's own redemption plan.

We see the heavens opened,
The Spirit, as a dove,
Descend, abiding upon Him
In peace and joy and love.

We hear the Father owning Him His "well-beloved Son," Well pleased in Him, to see the work So faithfully begun.

O Trinity of love and power!
The Spirit doth abide
Upon the Son, who worketh now,
And God is glorified.

This wondrous union, holy Lord,
What did it mean to Thee?
The sin, the curse, the wrath of God,
To set Thy members free.

This wondrous union, holy Lord, What did it mean to me?

A feeble member, who by faith Has been to Calvary,

And seen the floods of judgment roll O'er Thy most blessed head; My Substitute, my Saviour, Thou Hast raised me from the dead.

It means myself for ever dead,
It means Thyself in me;
It means myself no more my own,
It means myself in Thee.

In resurrection life I stand,
And by the Spirit sing,
Salvation unto God belongs,
Through Christ, my Lord and King.

The figure here is Thine, O God—
It is Thy holy will;
In meekness now, and faith and love,
I hasten to fulfil.

My conscience and my heart, my God, Make answer here to Thee, That Christ is mine and I am His— That He has died for me.

Baptisèd in Thy Triune Name,
My soul in this glad hour
Commits itself once more to Thee,
Thou Trinity of power.

s. p.

DERELICTS ON THE SEA OF LIFE.

OOKING back over the "Vineyard" for the last twenty-five years or so, we are struck with this circumstance, that a goodly number who set out as promising young converts have entirely disappeared from the field of Christian testimony. Many are alive to this day; but the light has ceased to shine. Not a few were young men; and for a time they ran well. They even preached the Gospel, and testified in other ways for Christ. Many young women, too, came out to all appearance clear on the Lord's side, and toiled, and visited, and sang for Him. Yet there comes a sad reckoning up when one asks the question, Where are all those who in that happy day could joyfully exclaim,

> "All for Jesus, all for Jesus, All my being's ransomed powers"?

Some have crossed the flood, we know, leaving behind them the fragrance of a devoted and Christ-like life. Some are still found with the eye of their spiritual vision undimmed—their strength now as it was then, like Caleb of old. But of others, and their number is not small we grieve to say, a different tale must be told. They entered the path of Christian testimony with every promise of a prosperous and fruitful career. Yet one after another settled down on their lees, and drifted right back to the world. In some cases the downward movement was accomplished suddenly, and the profession of Christianity was thrown off with an evident sigh of relief. In other cases the downward motion was of such a gradual character that it was difficult to tell at what particular point the apostacy took place. It would seem as if the devil can let his victims down so gently that they themselves scarce know they are falling. But although the descent is gradual, it is none the less sure. Whether suddenly or by degrees, the end is the same; the world is reached—the Christless, ungodly world. He is hailed as a "right good fellow"; and, whether "a profession" is kept up or not, the once promising convert has become a seemingly hopeless derelict, driven at the mercy of wind and tide, over the tempestuous sea of life!

Why are there so many of these "derelicts?" This is a question of considerable magnitude; and the answer is manifold. We may be assured that there are causes—many causes; and our task at this time is to point out a few of these causes that seem to us to lie on the surface.

No doubt a goodly number of those who have "gone back" had never really gone forward. We live in a day of superficiality in the things of God. In the rush to have "a successful work" in the Gospel, souls are often pressed into a profession before the ploughshare of conviction has done its work. The result is that "strange children" are begotten. Converts are made, but not from above. These, whenever the novelty of the thing has worn off, are found "gravitating" to their own company in accordance with that "law of affinities" by which like draws to like.

But we cannot suppose that all cases of "going back" are to be accounted for in this way. True children of God may be caught in the world's snare and become a prey to the wiles of the devil. We believe that many are thus caught because of a careless walk, and departure from God in the neglect of secret prayer and waiting on the Lord in the pages of His Word. If these "means of grace" are neglected, shipwreck, sooner or later, will be the result. The outward form may be kept up even for a long time, but the truth will eventually come out, and the man will stand revealed as what he is, instead of what he seems to be. Whereever there is unreality in Christian testimony, the duration of that seeming testimony is only a matter of time.

Failure is also due to waning joy. We know that the joy of the Lord is strength. When this joy is lost through "sin indulged while conscience slept," the worst is to be feared. The devil and the world have no argument against a "full cup." But when the cup is empty—when the believer's joy is a thing of the past—he is at the mercy of every wind that blows. His heart, like a vacant throne, is making mute appeals for someone to come and take possession of it. The world steps in to fill up the vacuum, and the light goes out!

Others, again, drift downwards by simply doing nothing in God's service—that is, doing nothing more than they must do in order to keep up a decent profession. We know that the curse of Meroz was due to this, that they came not to the help of the Lord against the mighty. Taking things easy in God's work is a sure way to open departure. Ease in Zion is simply one of the stages in the downgrade movement of the soul.

We might go on tabulating causes of departure from God, but we will at present only refer to one other cause, which perhaps goes to the root of the whole problem now before us, and that is, failure in the matter of individual faith in the Living God. In the midst of a revival movement it'is not a difficult matter to "keep up a testimony," as it is called. The "inspiration of numbers" has a wonderful effect in keeping people "in rank." Professed converts are then, so to speak, hemmed in on every hand. They are borne onward with the crowd, even although they may know little or nothing of what it is to "live by the faith of the Son of God." So long as the crowd continues, they continue. But whenever the outward excitement subsides and things settle down into their usual condition, and reproach and persecution arise—then it is not such an easy matter to "keep up a testimony." In the day of small things and the storm of trial, only those stand who can stand alone. And they are able to stand alone because they walk by faith in the Unseen One. They are not leaning upon leading men, nor resting in numbers, nor drawing their consolation from the thought that the "cause" is successful. It matters not to them who comes or goes. They have taken their stand for the rejected Christ; and they are prepared, if need be, to stand alone with Him. What is the secret? It is faith in the Living God—a faith that waiteth not for man, nor tarrieth for the sons of men. The child of faith thus "follows on," and "continues," and "abides," and "faints not," because his "fountains" are in God; while he who depends on externals, and must be borne up by the crowd, is at his wits' end in the time of trouble, and easily tempted to "throw up the whole thing" in a dark and cloudy day.

THE SHUNAMITE WOMAN;

or, the reward of faith, obedience, and
patience.

An Address by Jas. Wright, of Bristol, on 2 Kings viii. 1-6.

WE learn from chap. iv. what a blessedly spiritual woman this Shunamite was; her care for the servant of Jehovah, her humility, which declined great things for herself when she had the offer of them, and especially her simple faith in God as the One who raiseth the dead, all mark her out as one who had learned of God. A year has passed since the period referred to in that chapter, and what do we find? We find this believing woman in fresh trouble.

Now, sometimes the children of God are staggered at the providences of God. That man after God's own heart, David, once was, as we see in Psalm lxxiii. 1-14. But when he went into the sanctuary of God what did he say? "So foolish was I, and ignorant." That is, he learnt that external prosperity is no necessary sign of God's favour, and that, on the contrary, a very trying pathway and frequent affliction are no proofs of God's disfavour. "What son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?" We do well, beloved fellow-believers, to take this to heart, and never to reckon the state of God's heart to us by His external dealings with us.

> "Blind unbelief is sure to err, And scan His work in vain; God is His own interpreter, And He will make it plain."

When taught by the Holy Spirit, we see in the Cross the expression of the changeless love of our God and Father toward us. We see that, once reconciled to God through the death of His Son, all evil is impossible for us; but, on the other hand, "No good thing will He withhold," and "All things work together for good."

But along with this trying experience of this holy woman, we find that a great honour is conferred upon her, for she was taken into the secrets of God. The psalmist says, "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." Now, Jehovah reveals the secret of the famine that was coming to His servant Elisha, and Elisha, guided and instructed by God, reveals this secret to His

peer in faith (she used the same words to him as he had used to Elijah, see chaps. ii. 2; iv. 30), "As the Lord liveth," &c.), and told her to prepare for it.

Now, mark the action of this true daughter of Abraham. Abraham was called to leave house and lands, and to go out he knew not whither. She is called to the same experi-

ence, and we see in her the same grace that was in him, that is the grace of prompt obedience. And more, it is unquestioning obedience—when the voice of God, through His representative, comes to her, "Arise and go," she does not hesitate a moment. She does not now object, "I dwell among mine own people." She said that when the prospect of worldly aggrandisement was allowed to test her humility, but became "Content with such things as she had"; but now, when she hears that God called her to forsake her own people, she immediately obeys. She does not question about her property, "What will become of my house and lands in those seven years? Who will look after them, and who will see that I have possession of them whenever I come back?" Not a word; she had learned to rest in that promise of God to Jacob and his seed, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," and

now, on the strength of that word, she can

commit all her affairs to His care. "If He

calls me to go out He will look after my

And she goes out,

affairs and my land."

not knowing whither,

Now, how beautiful is that faith, that prompt obedience, and how the Spirit of God instructs us by such a history as this! Beloved fellow-believers, this is the purpose with which we should read the Scriptures, to find out how we can please our God and Father. Here we see just such an object lesson, how one taught of God, and guided by the Spirit of God, pleased Him, and, as the sequel of the narrative shows, abundantly pleased Him. And this is brought before us that we may walk in the steps of Abraham, and be ready to obey the word of our God and Heavenly Father whenever He calls us to go out on an unknown journey, to tread a path we have never trod hitherto, to enter circumstances for which we are inexperienced and, as to any resource in ourselves, unqualified. It, distinctly and clearly, we can make out from His Word that He calls us to another path, the spirit that delights Him in His child is perfect confidence in Himself.

Observe another thing, her patient endurance. She went out, and she remained seven years in exile, the duration of the famine as foretold to her by Elisha, and, as far as the narrative shows, without one day's restlessness or thought of turning her feet back again till the last day of the seven years. Now, this is the patience of faith. It is one great thing to start right in the path of obedience, but the next thing is to patiently continue in well-doing. Satan would tempt us to think very little of patience. thinks so much about this grace in His children that he tells us by James, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." Why? Because "The trying of your faith worketh patience." Now, if anything could show how God delighted in seeing that grace manifested more and more in His children, such a sentence as this does. Our Father is "very pitiful, and of tender mercy," and has no pleasure in seeing His children in trial, perplexity, and trouble. If it were for our good He would always give us bright, happy days, but just as a sky without clouds produces dry, parched ground, so our Lord knows it would not be for our good to give us unmingled circumstances of prosperity, but very dry and barren for our souls. So He is bound to let clouds come between us and the sky that the showers may come. But we have to remember one thing, our God and Father is training us in patience. Why does He set such store by patience? Because it is a lineament in His own character, and as an earthly parent likes to hear people say, "How like that child is to his father," so does our God and Father delight to see His children become more and more like Himself. We know with what patience He bears with the sins of our unregeneracy. We know what trouble we have given our Father's heart since we have known Christ. He is indeed "the God of patience," and because that is one of His attributes He loves to see it reproduced in His children. Therefore, let us welcome all circumstances that tend to produce this in us.

Now, this woman could not only wait, but act. Notice her all-round character. She was a great lover of His servants; she had marvellous faith in all God's providential arrangements; and she could wait. But no sooner is the seven years up than now, in the fulness of time, having waited patiently to the exact time that God had appointed her, she comes back and cries to the king for her house and land. Why to the king? Ah, mark her spiritual intelligence! She recognises Elisha as God's mouth to her, but the king as God's hand. She dealt not with Elisha, the man, but with Elisha as the "man of God"; and she dealt with the king, not as Jehoram, but as the "minister of God to her for good." That is the light in which we are taught in the New Testament, as children of God, to look upon rulers (Rom. xiii. 1). We are not to rebel or agitate against them, but glorify our God by recognising them.

Look at the response of God to the patient, simple, obedient faith in Him of His child. Oh, bring these two things together, fellowbelievers; see how God recognises and recompenses full confidence in Himself. She went forth at His bidding, committing the whole care of her lands and house to Him, and He on His part (I speak reverently) became, so to speak, her attorney and bailiff all the time she was away. He watched over her house and land, and took good care of them, and when she came back she lost nothing, for she not only got back her house and land, but, by a mandate of the king, all the fruits of the land from the day she left to the day she returned.

Now, isn't that like God? Beloved fellow-believers, in reading the Scriptures it is a good thing to pause before such a verse as that and say, with exultation in our hearts, out loud if we are alone, "This God is our God; my Father, this is like Thee." We get good from this scripture when we recognise for ourselves that this woman's God is ours. In other words, if we in this 19th century trust Him as that woman trusted Him, He will act toward us as He acted towards her. He is "able to do exceeding

abundantly above all that we ask or think." Would not she have said that? Yes, and so shall we if we really trust Him. Not if we profess to trust Him, but if, with real confidence, we repose in Him, then He responds, "According to your faith, so be it unto you."

Now, notice another and very beautiful teaching of this passage, and that is the simplicity of the instruments by which God brought this wonderful coincidence about. There was a poor leper talking to the king, and, with a natural desire to gratify his royal listener, who had asked to be informed of "all the great things that Elisha hath done," is telling what appeared to him the very greatest of all, the bringing of this woman's child to life. And just as the king's interest is wrought up to the very highest pitch the woman and her son appear on the scene. Gehazi points to them, "Why, here is the very woman I am speaking of, and that young man is the very boy." How simple are God's instruments for the accomplishment of His purposes! The effect on the king is instantaneous. "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord," &c., and his heart was turned instantly, and he issued a royal mandate to restore her house and lands and every bit of fruit since she had been away. Now, the king and Gehazi had not been thinking of her an hour before, but God had, and in the end these things so converge and fit that the king is mightily wrought upon, and grants the suppliant more than she asks.

That is how God works. It is a great mistake to think that God must work a miracle to deliver His people. For one time He delivers by a miracle He delivers a million times without a miracle—one thing is brought to fit into another, and when these things converge His purpose is accomplished. So we learn this deeply-important truth, that in the simplest and most natural way God can accomplish the most mighty purposes. The tale of this poor woman's son's death and resurrection was the means of recovering for this woman her lost heritage. The record of the death and resurrection of God's Son is the power of God to recover to poor, guilty sinners their lost inheritance!

THE LORD'S OWN PRAYER.

An Epitome of the Truth the Lord gave us at our Meeting in Stranraer on January 1st.

Read John xvii. from verse 6.

THIS chapter is, properly speaking, the "Lord's Prayer." The passage which usually gets that name was the prayer He taught His disciples; but this is His own prayer for those He was about to leave behind Him in an evil world. Let us mark the clear line of distinction He draws between those who were given to Him by the Father, and the world. Also note well the truth of verse 20, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one." All who shall believe the Spirit's testimony concerning the Lord Jesus whilst He is now in heaven are included in that divine oneness which is here revealed, and consequently have a like interest in this intercessory prayer with those who were present when it was offered, and are all called to the same separation from the world.

The truth that led me to this portion of the Word is contained in verses 14 and 16, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Perhaps there never was a time when the children of God more needed this truth written on our hearts by the Holy Spirit than now. When the war feeling is so strong in the British Isles and in the colonies, believers are in great danger of being carried away with the strength of the current, and to forget that we do not belong to this scene at all. "Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth" (Isa. xlv. 9). All who have been born again do not belong to earth. Every believer as really belongs to heaven as the Lord did. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."

Turn to John iii. 3 and 7. Observe the expression "born again" is rendered in the margin "born from above." Earth is our native country by our natural birth; but by our spiritual birth—the only birth which God recognises—heaven is our native country. We sometimes sing:

"There no stranger God shall meet thee; Stranger thou in courts above." We will be strangers when we get to heaven, in the sense of never having been there before, but we will not be strangers in the sense of being from home. We are going to the place prepared for us in the "Father's house"; and what child was ever a stranger in his father's house? Every child of God can sing:

"Heaven is my fatherland; Heaven is my home."

Turn now to Phil. iii. 20: "For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." The Christian is a freeborn citizen of heaven. Our nativity is in heaven, our home and our inheritance are in heaven, and our hearts ought to be there also. It is whilst we remain upon earth that we are called to be "as strangers and pilgrims" (I Peter ii. II), and we are called to look for the Lord Jesus from heaven to give us the final instalment of redemption, and to take us home to be with Himself where He is.

Turn now to Heb. xi., and read from verse 8 to 16. The three patriarchs mentioned in this passage were "called out" to sojourn in the Land of Promise, as in a strange country, and to dwell in tents. When Jacob was on his journey from his temporary banishment back to the Land of Promise, he settled down at a half-way house (see Gen. xxxiii. 17 and chapter xxxiv.), and brought sad confusion and sin into his family. many heavenly pilgrims have done the same, and reaped the same bitter fruits in the ruin of some of their children? God in His mercy and faithfulness wakened Jacob out of his sleep, and brought him back to Bethel; but his poor and only daughter never recovered from the fatal mistake her father made when he for a little time forgot that he was called to be a pilgrim and a stranger on the earth.

But to return, read again verse 14, "For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country." The word "country" in this verse means a native country (see Newberry). "They desired a better country; that is, an heavenly. Wherefore God was not ashamed to be called their God." He may well be ashamed of some who say with the lips that they are bound for heaven; but

these "called out" ones declared plainly that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. They told it by their lives, as well as by their lips. They not only "embraced" the promises, but they confessed them. They looked on through the vista of ages to that time spoken of in Luke xiii. 28, and the attraction was so strong that it sustained them in their pilgrim character. We have sometimes heard of those who have left their native land for another clime becoming homesick. I was told lately of an aged woman who left her native home by the seaside in Scotland, and went out to reside with her daughter in Australia, becoming so homesick that at a very advanced age she travelled by rail several hundreds of miles to get a sight of the sea, and have a last look across the wide ocean towards her native land, and then returned to die in her foreign home. She almost died of homesickness.

Are ever we affected with homesickness? That dear woman's heart longed for the home she had left in Scotland; but the Christian's heart ought to be longing for the home we are going to. It was so with the worthies we have just read of. They might have had opportunity to have returned, but their hearts were set on the "heavenly"

country they were going to.

I once lost two canaries. When I was bemoaning them in this cold climate, a bird-fancier told me the native birds of this country would soon set upon them and kill them. They know that they do not belong to this clime. I asked how would they know that? He said they would know they were strangers in this country by their plumage, and by their song. Are we known by the worldlings around us to belong to heaven by our plumage and our song?

There is one, and only one, object in the universe of God that can produce in our hearts this heavenly-mindedness, and that

object is Christ.

"O Christ! He is the fountain, The deep, sweet well of love."

Not meetings, not gifted ministry, but Christ. Paul had "a desire to depart, and to be with Christ." It was not the glory nor the gloryland that had captivated his heart; it was Christ, and Him alone.

"O, it is not to shun the thorns

That hedge my homeward way;

No wish my task were done

That makes me long, dove-like, to fly away.

But my heart's love has gone to Him,

Whom yet I have not seen; Whose glory I have known;

On whose meek breast e'en now

I fondly lean.

And I would see His face, And taste His matchless grace,

Where sin and weakness come no more between."

May the Lord give us all much of this heavenly homesickness for His own Name' sake.

G. A.

BIBLE STUDIES.

READY.

God is ready to pardon - - Neh. ix. 17
The feast is ready - - Luke xiv. 17
Salvation is ready to be revealed 1 Pet. i. 5
The sinner is ready to perish Isa. xxvii. 13
The day of darkness is ready - Job xv. 23
Destruction is ready - Job xviii. 12
The Son of Man is ready to judge

the quick and the dead - I Pet. iv. 5

SOME THINGS WE OUGHT TO BE INCREASING IN.

Learning - - Prov. i. 5; ix. 9

Joy - - - Isa. xxix. 19

Faith - Luke xvii. 5; 2 Cor. x. 15

Fruits of righteousness - - 2 Cor. ix. 10

Love - - I Thes. iii. 12; iv. 10

Strength Prov. xxiv. 5; Isa. xl. 29; Actsix. 22.

"I BESEECH YOU, BRETHREN,

Suffer the word of exhortation " (Hebrews xiii. 22).

- I Follow peace with all men, and holiness (Heb. xii. 14).
 - 2 Let brotherly love continue (Heb. xiii. 1).
- 3 Remember them that are in bonds . . . and them which suffer adversity (Heb. xiii. 3).
- 4 Let your conversation be without covetousness (Heb. xiii. 5).
- 5 Be content with such things as ye have (Heb. xiii. 5).
- 6 To do good and communicate, forget not (Heb. xiii. 16).
- 7 Offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually . . . giving thanks to His name (Heb. xiii. 15).

Correspondence.

THE INDIAN FAMINE.

(Mark vi. 34-44; 2 Kings vii. 9)

To the Editor of THE WITNESS.

Almost every letter received from India during the past month or two makes mention of the near approach of famine, but a letter received from Mr. Hunter, Belgaum, Bombay Presidency, dated 21st December, presents the impending distress so forcibly that it seems God's time to draw attention to it so as to awaken sympathy for the suffering millions that may have to pass through this dire calamity during the present year, and possibly the next also.

MR. HUNTER'S LETTER,

referring to the plague that has cut off tens of thousands of lives, says:

"Now we dread the coming famine, and that you may have some faint idea of it, it is only necessary to say that in the Bombay Presidency alone there are 100,000 square miles affected by lack of rain, which means 15 millions of people who must suffer more or less. Foodstuffs have already risen. What used to cost 6 annas is now 16 annas, even though the famine has not yet developed. My thought is to interest the friends of India and others by asking whether gatherings and families and others would commence a Pence Fund, which the poorest might take a part in, and as the need will run on for many months, this method would not interfere with givings for the Lord's servants in other lands.

ONE PENNY A WEEK

from the many in our assemblies over the land would be a great help, and burden no one, and if the Sunday-school children took it up (and the saving of the lives of starving Indian children would come home to them), what a boon it would be, casting back a blessing on the givers. This need not, and will not, limit the spontaneous giving of larger sums as God prospers, but the point is, not to divert the usual help given to other objects.

Mr. Hunter also mentions that Mrs. Hunter, and daughter, and himself, and Mr. M'Gavin work amongst soldiers and English-speaking children, who are surrounded by strong Romanising influences, besides having a district 150 by 50 miles, with no one but themselves to make known the gospel to the Marathis.

AN APPEAL HAS BEEN ISSUED

by missionaries in Central India, who state that the rain has been almost a total failure from the Deccan to the Punjab, and the famine threatens to be more severe and widespread than at any other period during British rule.

THE NUMBERS ALREADY RECEIVING RELIEF,

compared with 1896-97, indicate the severity of the calamity. On November 30, 1896, there were on relief works, 252,000; and on December 11, 1899, there were 2,205,000—about eight times the former number. On April 28, 1897, the figures went up to 3,120,000. Then, what will it be in April, 1900? In a

LETTER FROM LORD GEORGE HAMILTON,

dated Indian Office, Dec. 14, 1899, to the Lord Mayor of London, he states that probably 350,000 square miles, and a population of 30 millions of souls, will be affected by the present famine.

The late Governor of Bengal Province,

SIR CHARLES ELLIOT,

who appears to be a Christian gentleman, says: "In all the gloom and misery which the famine entails, I see two points of light: one is that the flow of sympathy and help from Britain will draw the people of India to them as nothing else will; the other is, that the number of children left by the roadside, and rescued by Christian orphanages, may in turn go forth with the gospel that sought and found them—[Pundita Ramabais Home at Patna is a case in point]—so that such sowing will spring up and bear fruit to the honour and glory of God."

THE EXPERIENCE OF LAST FAMINE

taught this lesson, that funds wisely used by missionaries in providing work, &c., by making tanks, roads, and other buildings, not only saved the lives of hundreds, but had a double blessing, as it went hand-in-hand with the gospel, while the administration was faithful and impartial. On the other hand, many of the public funds were left in the hands of Brahmins and other natives, in many cases to the loss of the poor sufferers.

We count upon the prayers and sympathy of the Lord's people in again taking up this service, depending on the grace of God for wisdom, and lowliness, and strength, and gladly will we send on to the Lord's servants in India either pence or pounds which any might be led to give.— Yours in our Lord Jesus Christ,

THOS. M'LAREN,

31 Barrington Drive, Glasgow.

P.S.—I can send suitable boxes for meetings, Sunday-schools, families, &c., to any who may apply for them. A small charge will be made for each box.

Questions and Answers.

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

Replies to appear in the next number require to be sent in no 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 are most thankful to all our friends who have endeaworred to help us by replying to Questions, but the Editor hopes that Correspondents will study brevity, and when too long he will take the liberty of "using the scissors" freely in preference to rejecting Answers, on account of their length, in which there may be points of value.

REPLIES ARE INVITED TO THE FOLLOWING:

Conditional Life—Texts to Explain.—Luke xii. 45, 46; Matt. xxiv. 48-51. Please explain how, in the face of these and similar Scriptures. a man can preach a free, full, and unconditional salvation by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ: saved once and for ever? The above Scriptures seem to grant the servant life on condition of faithfulness, and to teach Methodism straight.

WHY WAS THE LAW GIVEN?—Does Gal. iii. 21, "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law," teach that the law was not given to be kept?

STATEMENTS CONCERNING JUSTIFICATION—How RECONCILED?—How can James ii. 24, "By works a man is justified," be reconciled with Romans v. 1, "Being justified by faith"?

INFECTION AND ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS.—Is it according to the mind of the Lord to hinder a brother from breaking bread with the Lord's people because of fever being in his home?

AN OLD TESTAMENT APPARENT CONTRADICTION.—According to Numbers xviii. 18 the first-ling was for the priest, but according to Deut. xv. 20 the owner and his household were to eat it before the Lord. According to Numbers xviii. 21 to 32 the tithes were for the Levites, but according to Deut. xii. 18 every man, with his household, and the Levite within his gates, was to eat the tithes before the Lord. Please explain these apparent contradictions, and also notice Deut. xiv. 28, 29.

CORRECT ORDER OF "RECEPTION."—If no form of procedure is prescribed in the New Testament for the receiving of a believer, what then is the proper course to adopt, or what principles ought to guide?

THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN—WHEN?—What is the meaning of Matt. xxiv. 34, "Till all these things be fulfilled"? Have not many generations passed away since then?

"THE EXPECTATION OF THE CREATURE."—What is "the creature" to which reference is made in Romans viii. 19-21?

THE LORD'S COMING—A QUERY.—Are we warranted in expecting the Lord's return at any moment, seeing that in Rev. v. 9 the bloodwashed are out of "every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation"? Has every nation heard the Gospel of the Grace of God?

LIVING OF THE GOSPEL.—What is meant by these words in I Cor. ix. 14: "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel?" If it mean that those who preach the gospel should in temporal things be ministered to by those who hear the gospel, why is there not opportunity given in our gospel meetings for such ministry?

CARNAL AND SPIRITUAL.

QUESTION 406.—Do the words, "no condemnation" and "the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us" of Romans viii. apply to both those "who walk in the flesh" and "in the Spirit?"

Answer A .- The translators of the Revised Version, following the best authorities, omit altogether from Rom. viii. 1 the words "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," while leaving them in their true place in verse 4. It is not difficult to see how the words may have become wrongly inserted in verse 1. copyist before the days of printing, unable to appreciate the bold and blessed statement of the opening words of the chapter, may have sought to qualify them by the words from verse 4 written in the margin, and then some other scribe may have incorporated the marginal gloss into the actual text. But however it happened, the words have no right in verse 1, for there it is a question of the believer's standing in Christ, hence the absolute statement, true for every one "in Christ Jesus" (that is, for every true believer), "there is no condemnation"; and though it is perfectly true that what ought to characterise such is that their walk should be "not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," it is nevertheless a serious error to make the standing of the believer depend upon the measure of his attainment in practical walk. In verse 4, however, it is not a question of standing in Christ, but of practical righteousness to be exhibited in the life of the believer in the world, and here the words "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," have their right place. It is to those who walk in the Spirit that the promise is addressed, "Ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh," and it is in those who "work out their own salvation with fear and trembling" that God most manifestly works both to will and do of His good pleasure.

Editor's Note.—In chapter vii. the believer's deliverance from the law is asserted; he is be-

come "dead to the law by the body of Christ." "But now we have been discharged from the law, having died to that wherein we were holden, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter" (verse 6, R.v.).

The apostle is thus careful to show that deliverance from the law does not bring in a state of lawlessness, but rather a manner of life altogether in accordance with the righteous requirements of the law, which requirements (being apart from the Levitical ceremonies), are the same in all ages, and do not vary with changes

of dispensation.

He is dead to the law, as to a first husband, and is married to another, even to Him [Christ] who hath been raised from the dead. The will of the Lord [the new husband] obeyed, the example of the Lord imitated, the leading of the Spirit followed, all necessarily involve the fulfilling of the righteous requirements of the law.

The statement of the first verse is we believe absolute, as contended for in reply given above.

CHRIST'S PERFECTION.

QUESTION 407.—Please explain in The Witness Heb. ii. 10, "Perfect through suffering," and v. 8, 9, "Learned obedience," and "Being made perfect." Was not Christ pre-eminently the perfect and obedient One from the beginning?

Answer A.—In answering this question we do well to keep close to the Scriptures. Chapter ii. 17, 18 is to my mind a clear answer to this question: "For in that He hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." Chapter iv. 15 teaches the same truth. To sympathise with and to succour His tried and tempted followers necessitated an expersence which our blessed Lord as a servant had to pass through. The expression, "Yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered " (v. 8), is a mystery which we ought to ponder over upon our knees. It shows what an important place obedience fills in scriptural Christianity. The perfection spoken of in these verses can have nothing to do with the absolute perfection of the Son of God. It must refer to His fitting, as the Father's Servant, for His ministry as Great High Priest.

Answer B.-1. "To make the Leader of their salvation perfect through sufferiugs," Christ became responsible to retrieve God's honour outraged everywhere by the creature. He therefore came down into the scene of moral ruin, and in obedience bore all the consequences, glorifying God infinitely even as to sin, and on the road endured sufferings in every form and degree, as none else could, according to His moral perfection and personal glory, till all was exhausted on the Cross, so that it was for God's righteousness to exalt Him, as now in glory. Thus was He perfected, thus was His course finished, that He in glory might bring "many sons" to glory; but

the path lay through sufferings.

2. "Though He was a Son, learned obedience from the things which He suffered." We learn to obey as God's children who were once sons of disobedience. He being Son was used to command, and it was done. He knew not what obedience was; but when He became Man He took loyally that place. "Lo, I am come to do Thy will, O God." Truly He suffered it to the uttermost, as well as did it in all perfection.

3. "And having been perfected." This means the completion of His path through sufferings in resurrection and heavenly glory.

surrection and heavenly glory. J. W. D. K.

Answer C.—It became Him, i.e., God. as worthy of His Holy Name in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation officially and personally perfect, through His experiences among men, and His sufferings, even unto death, of the Cross (chapter v. 8, 9). Though Son of God He ever was, yet this experience of "learning obedience by the things He suffered" was needed, not to purify Him, but to prove Him and manifest Him as God's chosen High Priest; and so, being made and manifested perfect in having fulfiled God's will, He thus became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him.

Editor's Note.—" Perfected through sufferings" can only mean that it was by the sufferings He voluntarily endured that He became qualified to fulfil perfectly the office of High Priest. It was thus that He acquired the power to sympathise and succour as only He could who had passed through the sorrows and temptations that He is now exalted to relieve. "Being made perfect" has the same force, being now perfectly fitted or

qualified for priestly service.

"Learned obedience" does not imply more than that He learned experimentally what obedience costs under conditions such as His people are placed in, and therefore He has acquired a fitness to minister all needed grace to the tempted and hard pressed which could have been attained in no other way. It is the knowledge that the Lord Jesus has passed through temptation and sorrow, suffering and death, that enables us to open out our hearts to Him in perfect confidence, and with the assurance of sympathy and succour.

What it cost the Holy One to be obedient unto death, when that death implied the hiding of His Father's face, the being made sin and enduring sin's curse, it is beyond our power to conceive. "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt," was the final and crowning expres-

sion of the subject-will.

A LIVING SACRIFICE.

Romans xii. 1.

N that awful night when the Lord smote Egypt in their firstborn, Israel would have fallen under the same judgment, had they not been redeemed by the lamb whose blood was sprinkled on the door of their dwellings. And now those whom the Lord in His mercy had spared from death, and from the bitter bondage of the oppressor, He claimed for His own, as purchased by Him for His special service in connection with the work of His sanctuary.

When the time came for putting this in order, God had a gracious plan, whereby, instead of a conscription which would deprive each family in Israel of its eldest son, the tribe of Levi, whose numbers nearly agreed with those of the firstborn of all Israel, should be taken as their substitutes, and be set apart to the office, with its honours and its labours.

Accordingly, in Numbers viii. this tribe was brought before the Lord, and the children of Israel laid their hands on them in token that they thus presented themselves to God in the person of their offering. And the Levite order became the representative of the reasonable service of those whom the Lord in His mercy had redeemed for His own in the night of His judgments.

The other sacrifices of Israel to God were for the most part spotless animals brought to the altar, and their blood sprinkled there. The offering of such to Jehovah was priestly function. It set forth the only way of access into the presence of God as worshippers— Christ, the One who alone could be our sinoffering, our burnt-offering, our peace-offer-But all this was to come through priestly ministry. In it the Levites had no share. To it Aaron and his sons were consecrated. No Levite outside that one family could ever touch that service. Their part was to bear the burdens, and do the menial work, so to speak, of the sanctuary. But it did not give access to God in the strict sense of worship. It was a blessed service indeed, but it was bond-service.

And the Lord made full provision for all their labours. There were plenty to share the work. No heavy burdens, grievous to be borne, were laid upon their shoulders, only such as were of easy weight and precious privilege. For all that needed waggons, these were provided. Each family had its allotted duty—one to bear on their shoulders the holy vessels; a second had charge of whatever was of textile material: the third took what was of metal or wood: and to each individual was assigned his place under the hand of one of Aaron's sons, so that all might go on in perfect order, worthy of the King who thus had set His royal Tent in the midst of His people.

This type may have been in the apostle's mind when by the Spirit he penned the first words of Romans xii. Having in the previous eleven chapters so fully set forth, under its various aspects, the Gospel of Christ—how it has been, and must be, mercy from first to last: how the Gentiles had obtained mercy through the unbelief of the lews; and when the lews should come in, it would be on the ground of mercy, the climax of the mystery of grace—he now comes, as is his wont, to the practical point, of what we owe to God for all these wondrous mercies. It is not that He asks us to lay ourselves on the altar as a sin-offering or a burnt-offering. Our blood could never atone for our sins. Equally vain to give our firstborn for our transgression—the fruit of our body for the sin of our soul. Only by the Lamb could we be redeemed. Nor is it for us to find a substitute to whom we might transfer our obligation of service. Ourselves are the sacrifice we are to present to Him who has found the Ransom and redeemed us from death and from bond-A living sacrifice, ourselves, with all our powers, a life yielded to Him. We are not our own; we are bought with a price. Such a sacrifice is holy, acceptable to God. Reasonable service indeed for those who, but for such mercies, would yet have been in the chains of Satan, if not in the pains of hell.

Romans xii. does not countenance the idea that when we have been brought to the point of yielding our bodies a living sacrifice, the end has been attained. It does not teach that our being in a state of devotedness would in itself secure to us the knowledge of God's will, and render needless the teaching of His Word. Rather it is the means to this end, preparing us to learn and obey the precepts with which the Holy Spirit is careful to follow it up. Having laid the foundation, he now builds on it the needed directions for our Levite service. And these commands are not grievous. How sweet the burdens he lays upon us! Not, indeed, easy or light while we are conformed to this world; but if we have learned of Jesus, and so become transformed by the renewing of our mind, constrained by His love, it becomes happy bondage, reasonable service.

Let us, then, never stop at the first verses of this chapter, but take them as the introduction to the chapters that follow, and study out these as the details which are to govern our life of consecration to God. We can only touch on them here. First, so to speak, it is of bearing the burdens of the sanctuary, the service of "the body, the Church." In this matter the Lord distributes the gifts, and calls each severally to minister these one to another. All have not the same office. Each is not called to do everything. The spirit of the world leads us to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think. None of us is the best judge of his own gifts. this each needs to take the lowest place till the Master bids him go higher. Thus learning what his place is, each is to do well and heartily whatever he is called to do.

But in what follows it is not a question of gifts differing; it is of blessed service for all alike to render one to the other. How it needs transformed minds to walk in a way so contrary to everything that is of this world!

Next comes the greatly-needed teaching as to our behaviour towards earthly rulers—how we ought to be patterns of subjection, thus adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour, and earning respect from the world for our character, in proportion as we are despised for our faith.

And, finally, as to the important matter of forbearing in love with those of God's children who differ from us in judgment and practice while serving the same Lord, he teaches how the unity of the Spirit is to be maintained in the bond of peace. Sad experience shows the deep need of instruction in this, so prone are we to judge one another, forgetful that we shall stand before the judg-

ment-seat of Christ. Zeal for Christ, unless divinely guided by His Word, leads to strife, division, and everything contrary to the edifying in love, the peace we are here enjoined to follow after.

One thing more, and most important. The Levite must never intrude himself into the priest's office. These were kept essentially distinct. Honourable as his service was, he could never approach to the altar or present the offerings. So our Levite service, a life of consecration, must never be brought into the sanctuary as a ground of access as worshippers. Such a sacrifice would be at best but a victim with blemish, and lacking in its parts. Only by the spotless Lamb and the sprinkled blood have we any right to draw near. Yet, the priest's office too is ours by virtue of the Sacrifice once offered. Our continual burnt-offering is given us to present as our ground of access. But all our works and labours outside this are acceptable to God as reasonable service. It is the work of the Spirit in us. The work of Christ for us is that which alone makes the way into the holiest, and sanctifies us to enter there. W. COLLINGWOOD.

GOD'S WORD THE SUREST OF ALL CERTAINTIES.

How much do we walk by sight; and how little by faith—the very opposite of what we are called to do (2 Cor. v. 7). With perfect faith our spiritual strength would actually have no bounds (see Matt. xvii. 20; Phil. iv. 13), while our continual joy would be unspeakable (1 Peter i. 8). But how often is it that our blessed Lord might say to us, as He did to the twelve, "Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?" We step on the solid rock of God's Word much as timorous people would venture on thin ice over deep water, or as one might risk a serious sum of money in buying a ticket in a lottery, which he hoped might turn out a prize, but which he thought was likely to be a blank. God's promise is no ice, no lottery ticket—it is the surest of all certainties. Let our faith be courageous and firm.-John Dickie.

GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE.-XVI.

"THE YEAR OF MY REDEEMED."

By JOHN R. CALDWELL, Author of "Shadows of Christ in the Old Testament," "Things to Come," &c.

IN the passage referred to (Zech. xiv. 1-5) observe that when the Lord Jesus returns to earth and His feet stand upon the Mount of Olives "all the saints" come with Him. It is surely quite evident that before they could come with Him they must previously have been taken to him. The same is taught in Jude 14:

"Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, 'Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints'."

In the midst of the abounding wickedness before the flood Enoch comforted himself with the thought that the Lord would take judgment into His own hand in a coming day, and that in the end righteousness would be vindicated. Such was his testimony to an ungodly world, in the midst of which "he walked with God"; and as Abraham in his day looked for a city with foundations, so doubtless Enoch in his day looked for a place among the ten thousand whose wrongs He was coming to avenge.

His suffering, downtrodden, persecuted saints, raised from the dead and glorified together with Christ, previously caught up to meet Him in the air, will then "appear

with Him in glory."

In Revelation xix. the same scene is yet more graphically predicted. There the saints are seen as the armies in heaven, clothed in white linen (the "righteousness of saints"), mounted on horses, and following on His triumphant way Him whose garments are dipped in blood, and whose name is "the Word of God."

Wherever we look the scene is one of judgment; every detail and circumstance declares that "the acceptable year" will have ended, and that "the day of vengeance" has begun.

The world's great want is a righteous, infallible, omnipotent judge. In the Psalms His coming to judge is abundantly spoken of:

"Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad.

before the Lord, for He cometh to judge the earth; He shall judge the world with righteousness and the people with His truth" (Psalm xcvi. 11-13).

In Psalm xcvii. it is, "The Lord reigneth:

let the earth rejoice"; and then there is described His coming with fire and lightning, melting hills and trembling earth.

In Psalm xcix. it is, "The Lord reigneth:

let the people tremble."

In Isaiah xxxii. the same is foretold:

"Behold a King shall reign in righteousness and princes shall decree judgment."

From other Scriptures we know who those princes are. (Compare Luke xxii. 29, 30; I Corinthians vi. 2; Revelation ii. 26, 27).

Such a King and such a kingdom can cause no joy in the heart of those who have rejected the Gospel of God's grace. Their portion is to tremble, not to rejoice.

Together with the beast and the false prophet, all who "received not the love of the truth that they might be saved," must

perish eternally in the lake of fire.

All this is confirmed in Isaiah xi. 4:

"But with righteousness shall He judge [that is, execute judgment on behalf of] the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall he slay the wicked one" ["the wicked" is here in the singular].

"And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins

and faithlulness the girdle of His reins."

There is no blessing apart from righteousness:

"The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever."

But first it must be righteousness—after that comes peace. Melchizedek was "first king of righteousness and afterwards king of peace."

So the righteous judgments of the Lord

in Isaiah xi. are followed by peace:

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them, And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain."

The result of this appearing of the Lord and His saints as the executors of judgment upon the wicked will be blessing to the world, but in the first instance it is the Jew who must be delivered, restored, and blessed. The ancient covenant of promise made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob must have the

first place. Israel restored, and Jerusalem the centre of worship and of Divine government, is the first step toward the blessing of Gentile nations.

So we read in Isaiah xxx. 26:

"Moreover, the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be seven-fold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of His people, and healeth the stroke of their wound."

Thus, whilst His coming is judgment upon the wicked and vengeance upon the guilty oppressors of His people, it is also the rising of the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings (or beams). The acceptable year shall have closed, the longsuffering of our Lord will have come to an end, and now, as He says in Isaiah lxiii. 4, "The day of vengeance is in Mine heart, and the year of My redeemed is come."

When He came the first time it was grace that occupied His heart. The work then set before Him was to fully manifest the grace of God. He would accept no place as judge —if asked to adjudicate between two brethren about an inheritance, His only answer is, "Who made Me a judge or a divider over you?"—that was not the character in which He was then called to act. All His works were grace—they were salvation works. But when He comes again He will be invested with all authority as Judge and King—it will be the day of judgment and the year of His redeemed. His redeemed of this age will then appear with Him in His glory— His redeemed of Israel are at Jerusalem waiting for His appearing to deliver them from impending destruction.

To the nation of Israel the appearing of the Lord will be more than a deliverance, great and glorious as that deliverance is. It will be the inauguration of a millennium of blessing. It will be the morning without clouds, in which the Sun of Righteousness shall shed His healing beams upon the people of the covenant.

"In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely, and this is the Name whereby He shall be called, 'The Lord our Righteousness'."

The ground of this earthly blessing is the very same as that on which our heavenly blessing rests. It is Christ, "made unto us

wisdom from God, even righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. i. 30, R.v.). Their King is "the great Shepherdof the sheep brought again from the dead through the blood of the everlasting covenant." They will know that He is Jehovah when He has wrought with them, not according to their evil ways, nor according to their corrupt doings, but according to the eternal counsels of His grace by Christ Jesus.

This spiritual restoration, which goes on simultaneously with their national restoration, is referred to in Ezekiel xx. 37:

"And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant."

The allusion here is to the shepherd holding out his rod over the entrance to the fold, and counting each one of his flock as it passes.

The same idea is in Exodus xxx. 14:

"Every one that passeth among them that are numbered."

None shall in that day be suffered to enter the land of the covenant but the chosen remnant:

"I will purge out from among you the rebels . . . they shall not enter into the land of Israel, and ye shall know that I am Jehovah" (yerse 38).

shall know that I am Jehovah" (verse 38).
"In mine holy mountain . . . saith the Lord God, there shall all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, serve Me: there will I accept them, and there will I require your offerings, and the firstfruits of your oblations, with all your holy things" (ver. 40).

Ezekiel xxxvi. 24:

"For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean mater upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God."

Blessed and glorious prospect for the people that for ages have been scattered and peeled, a byword and a hissing. And it is all of grace. Grace laid the foundation, and grace will bring for the top stone. The heavenly or celestial glory of the Church and the earthly or terrestrial glory of Israel will each in its way and measure exhibit the glory of the grace of God.

PERSONAL GLORIES OF THE LORD JESUS—II.

Notes of an Address on 1st Chapter of John's Gospel, by ALEXANDER STEWART

BAPTISING WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT.

THE next testimony that John the Baptist gives is this—look at the 32nd verse— "And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him." Does that not carry your thoughts back to the ark in the beginning of Genesis? Yes, you say, I remember that—how Noah took the dove and let her go out of the ark, and how she went to and fro over the waste of waters until she came back to the ark, and Noah kindly drew her in: no place in the whole earth that God made except one—the ark—and here is the Holy Ghost and that world of sinners, that moral waste spreading out before the eyes of God, and in all that multitude there is only one Man on whom the Holy Ghost can rest, and that is Christ. "And it ABODE upon Him." There is such significance in that word "abode!" It tells of the permanent dwelling of the Holy Ghost in the Lord Jesus Christ, and when by-and-by later in the Gospel He speaks of the coming of the Spirit of God, it is that "He might abide with you for ever." When the Holy Spirit comes—I say it with reverence—He comes to stay, and so the Holy Ghost came down on that spotless Lamb of God.

Now here again, mark you, as I said about His fulness, it is communicable. What good would it do me that Jesus Christ was a Saviour if I could not get at Him? But just as His fulness was communicable, so He could give to man the Holy Ghost. This is part of His grace, the grace of the great Giver, the Lord Jesus Christ.

How often I remember that little anecdote about the woman who dreamt that she was in heaven and saw the Lord Jesus. On being asked what the Lord Jesus was doing, she replied, "He was giving away pardons as fast as ever He could." He is always giving, and it was possible for Him to do it, and it was the office He undertook when He rose from the dead—to baptise men with the Holy Ghost. Now you see the double tes-

timony. "Behold the Lamb of God." That is sacrificial work—it is the finished work, work that does not need revising. I suppose there was never yet a large picture painted but the artist thought, "If I had to do that over again I would not put in this touch, or I would put in that other effect." All these things have to be revised; but not so with this work—if it had to be done over again it would be done in exactly the same manner.

No sooner did He rise from the dead than He began another work, that of an active Saviour in glory, and one great part of that work is expressed in those words, "He baptiseth with the Holy Ghost," or if you want it literally, "He baptiseth in the Holy Ghost." Now, we want to know what that means. Well, whether it is the Gospels or whether it is the Acts, there are two things that are named together, and the one so far explains the other-John baptises with water, the Lord Jesus Christ baptises with the Holy Ghost. That makes it plain if you will think about it. You know water is employed variously as a symbol in the Scriptures. If one thinks of the water that overflowed the world, it is a sign of judgment. Nothing remained for God to do but to sweep them all away, and He brought the flood on the earth to the destruction of all except Noah and his family. That is the proper thought to have about water baptism; it is something which expresses the judgment of God on evil in His sight. Of course, if I think of the water that Moses struck out of the rock, that was not judgment-it was life and blessedness to all who partook of it, and very often it is used in that sense; but in connection with baptism it means death and burial of that which is obnoxious to God. But what is the baptism of the Holy Ghost? Those who have experienced it can tell, but perhaps they would find it difficult to express. The baptism of the Holy Ghost is liberty and blessedness from the hand of the Lord Jesus Christ, and He loves to bestow it. If I may say so, it is part of the feature of this age in which we are living that the Holy Ghost is sent down to empower men for the service of God.

Will you look at a passage in the first chapter of Acts, fourth verse, for a moment? It is best to take the Scripture with us. The Lord had risen from the dead in the first chapter: "For John truly baptised with water; but ye shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Then in the second chapter that was fulfilled: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of a mighty rushing wind." You will notice the Spirit was like a dove, and the sound was like a mighty rushing wind, and the tongues were as of cloven fire: "And it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

I think it has sometimes been said that God is never in a hurry. Well, neither He is—that would be an unworthy thought in our minds about God. There is nothing in Him of that raw haste that is half-sister to delay; but God can be very quick and sudden in His movements, and occasionally we read in the Scriptures about them. In the sixth of Isaiah we read of one who said: "Woe is me, for I am undone." I can see there was an altar there and a sacrifice, but the moment that was said, "Then flew one of the seraphims having a live coal in his hand and laid it upon my mouth." Oh, not tardily, not lingeringly—it was the Sacrifice and sinner brought together. In the fifteenth of Luke I see the same thing— "When yet a great way off, his father saw him, and ran and kissed him." Here again, in the Acts of the Apostles, the waiting had been long; but when the time came, how the Holy Ghost came down! It was like a mighty rushing wind. That is how the Holy Ghost came, and in a moment

"They began to tell to all around What a dear Saviour they have found."

That was the effect of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Now, here is a difficulty which people sometimes have in grasping the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures. The Holy Spirit is a person, but He is also spoken of as an element, like water, or wind, or fire.

When the people came down to the river with John they were baptised by him; but when the Holy Ghost came down He was the element that surrounded these people and filled them, like the air in this room which is around you while you listen and I speak. It filled the house and people, and they began to speak and to testify. That was the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Christ

was the baptiser.

The only two other passages I know of where the expression "The baptism of the Holy Ghost" is used, are, first, in the tenth chapter of the Acts, Peter at the house of Cornelius; and, secondly, a passage in I Cor. xii.: "For by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body." But my point is, that that is the blessed work which the Son of God, risen from the dead, is doing in this day for men who believe. There are some things He has delegated to others; there are some things your hands can do for the Lord Jesus Christ, but not this. Just as Peter preached in the house of Cornelius, and people received a full Christ, then the Holy Ghost came down; and the one way to receive the Spirit is to receive the Christ of God as He is offered freely in the Gospel.

"THEY FOLLOWED JESUS."

Hence, as I said, the chapter is panoramic. Having given testimony, immediately a result followed, and two of the disciples heard him speak, and followed Jesus. Then they said, "Where do you live, because we want to stay with you?" "Rabbi, where dwellest thou?" The first thing is to hear, and the next thing is to follow, but the third and eternal thing is to abide in that Christ whom you have heard and whom you follow. You see in a moment the Lord Jesus becomes the centre around which the disciples are gathered, and that is the effect the baptism of the Spirit of God produces—it brings us into contact with the Lord Jesus Christ, and joins us to Him for ever. You may gather a number of people together, but if you don't gather them to Christ, they will go away. You know the difference between apples in a barrel and apples on a tree. So long as the hoops remain on the barrel the apples will stay together, but remove the hoops and the apples will separate. Apples on a tree, however, will stick on. "Oh," you say, "that is living union." Well, just the same when a man preaches Christ. When John preached Him, the people got into a union with Him that nothing could break or destroy.

THE KING OF ISRAEL.

We are now at the end of the chapter where Nathanael calls Him King of Israel. This is the work He is to do when He comes back again to reign as God promised, whose dominions shall be to the end of the earth.

"HE SPAKE, AND THE LOCUST CAME."

(Psalm cv. 34, R.V.)

"HE spake, and the locust came." There is something majestic in these words. They come to us clothed with a sublimity that is divine. The same One speaks who had spoken "in the beginning" -who had said, "Let there be light, and there was light" (Gen. i. 3). God's judgments were being poured out upon Egypt. In His counsels the next executors of judgment were to be the locusts, that devouring host which is the terror of the peoples of the East. But how shall they come? By what power shall they be gathered together and made to concentrate their forces on one particular spot? God speaks, and it is done. The Authorised Version gives locusts in the plural, but in the Revised Version it is simply "the locust"—a fine poetic touch: "He spake, and the locust came."

Whether we view these words in reference to the Egypt world, or as bearing on the people of God, we think their solemnity will be admitted on all hands. When a nation is overtaken by calamities that cause men's hearts to fail them for fear and bring widespread suffering in their train, the philosophers of Egypt at once set to work to account for the "phenomenon" by tracing it to certain natural causes. They are not prepared to admit that God has anything to

do with it. They seem to think that everything is left to haphazard. The locust, or some other devouring scourge, may be in the land, yet the wise men of Egypt harden their hearts. They do not recognise God's voice in the thunders of His judgment. They do not know what the humblest child of God is privileged to know—that "He spake, and the locust came." If, after repeated strokes of judgment, the people are constrained to admit, as the magicians of Egypt admitted, that "this is the finger of God," it shall be well—if that admission be followed by repentance. Let us trust and pray that such may be the happy issue in the present crisis in the history of this country.

Among the various assemblies of the people of God we doubt not that these solemn words have often had their fulfilment —"He spake, and the locust came." If there be departure in heart and ways from God a careless walk, a failure to mortify the deeds of the body, strife, envy, backbiting-we shall waken up some morning to find that God will blast the corporate testimony associated with the works of the flesh—that He hath spoken, and that the locust has come. We may even attempt in our wisdom to trace the "catastrophe" to "natural causes," or even to persuade ourselves that our "faithfulness" is the cause of our calamities. We are so prone to blame everybody and everything but the condition of our own hearts! But no real comfort is ever found in any

such refuge of lies.

Our God would have us learn that holiness becometh His house. His Name, in its power and sweetness and blessing, will only be associated with those who are honestly striving to walk worthy of that Name. has only to speak the word, and the locust shall come. How solemn is this! It may be, as, alas! it has often been, the locust of open division-God, as it were, taking vengeance upon the inventions of His people, and permitting them, as He permitted Balaam of old, to follow out a path which they were determined to follow. Or the locust may come in quite another way-leaving the external fabric of Church order intact and untouched, yet devouring "every green thing." The assembly may be still firm and

correct in its externals, rich in numbers, and increased with goods as pertaining to "gift." Yet, ever since the locust came, it has been little better than a barren wilderness as to its testimony. But even in the desolation wrought by the locust the God of all grace has a voice for His people. His judgments are designed to bring us back to Himself to teach us that apart from Him we can do nothing, and that if we are "willing and obedient" the "land shall yield its increase again." We know it is He that "commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind." But we also know that when His people cry unto Him in their trouble He "bringeth them out of their distresses, and maketh the storm a calm." "Then are they glad. So He bringeth them unto the haven where they would be" (Ps. cvii 23-31). Let us therefore humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, exalting Him in the assembly of His people, while each of us is found praying, "O Lord, let no iniquity have dominion over me," thus judging ourselves that we may not come within the terrible potentialities of that word—" He spake, and the locust came." w. s.

BIBLE STUDIES.

FOUR P.'S IN JOSHUA I. II.

T	Pass throu	ıøh	-	_	- Ex	amination
	Prepare	0	-	_		reparation
	Passover	-				rogression
	Possess	_	-	-		Possession
7						т. в.

CHRIST OUR LIFE (COL. III. 4).

Source of our life -	Eph.	ii. I	; Gal. ii. 20
Sustenance of our life	-		John vi. 51
Solace of our life -	-		Heb. xiii. 5
Object of our life -	-	-	Phil. i. 21
Pattern of our life -	-	-	
Crown of our life -	-	-	1 John iii. 2

PERFECT-FOUR POINTS.

Perfect pardon Ps. xxxii. 1, 2; Isa. lv. 7; Acts
xiii. 38, 39; Eph. i. 7
Perfect peace Isa. xxvi. 3: Jno. xiv.27; Eph. ii. 14
Perfect portion Lam. iii. 24; 1 Cor. iii. 22,
23; Phil. iv. 19
Perfect prospect Ps. xvi. 11; xvii. 15; Isa.
xxxiii. 17 S. E. R.

THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE.

"For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven."—2 Cor. v. 2.

"Now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly."—Heb. xi. 16.

M INGLED toil and sadness
Mark the earthly scene,
Weakness, trial, conflict,
Day by day has seen.
Seeking peace and gladness,
Praying for the right,
Groping in the darkness,
Longing for the light!

Yet thro' all the conflict,
In our deep distress,
God's own hand hath led us
Through the wilderness.
Whispering the promise,
In the weary land,
"Fear not, I will help thee,
Holding thy right hand!"

If His words thus give us
Peace amid the strife,
Oh, what joy their portion
With the Prince of Life!
Gazing on His beauty,
Listening to His voice,
Sounding loud His praises,
All their powers rejoice.

Ours the time of waiting,
Theirs the day of joy!
Ours the earthly service,
Theirs heaven's sweet employ.
Ours the clouded pathway,
Theirs the realms of Light,
Ours the trusting moments,
Theirs faith lost in sight!

Haste the blissful dawning
Of that morn so fair,
When the ransomed, blending,
"Meet Him in the air!"
Then the conflict over,
Then the cares laid down,
Then heaven's joy for ever,
Then the Victor's crown!

Reading. J. Sharrat Horne

THE CLEFT OF THE ROCK.

By THOMAS NEWBERRY, Editor of The Englishman's Bible. (Exodus xxxiii. 21-23.)

"And Jehovah said, Behold, there is a place by [with] Me, and thou shalt stand upon a [the] rock; and it shall come to pass, while My glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of [the cleft of] the rock, and will cover thee with Mine hand over thee [original] while I pass by; and I will take away Mine hand, and thou shalt see My back parts; but My face shall not be seen."

M OSES had prayed to God, "I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory"; and Jehovah said, "There is a place by [with] Me." In order for sinful man to be able calmly to contemplate the divine perfections of an infinitely righteous, holy God, it is necessary that he should be put into a position of security and peace. This, God, in His infinite condescension, graciously considers and provides for, hence He says, "There is a place by Me, and thou shalt stand upon the rock." To faith that rock is Christ. Augustus Toplady has caught the idea, and beautifully represents it in his well-known hymn:

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me. Let me hide myself in Thee";

or perhaps better, as more in harmony with the text:

"Grace hath hid me safe in Thee, Where the water and the blood, From Thy riven side which flowed, Are of sin the double cure, Cleansing from its guilt and power."

This reminds us of Gen. ii. 21, 22, "And Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which Jehovah God had taken from man, made [builded] He a woman." This is quoted in Eph. v. by the Holy Ghost as concerning the great mystery, Christ and the Church. Again (John xix. 34) we read, "One of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water." The deep sleep which God caused to fall upon Adam was symbolic of Christ's death; the open side and the rib taken out and builded a woman foreshadowed the Church. Calvary and Pentecost, the blood and the water, laid the foundation of the Church of God; on this God's Church was built. The healing of the wound by God closing up the flesh instead thereof

foreshadowed resurrection, hence in Isa. liii. 5, "And with His stripes we are healed." The Hebrew word here for "stripes" is in the singular, and signifies the cicatrix or mark left by a healed and closed-up wound, for "He who was delivered for our offences was raised again for our justification" (Rom. iv. 25). Hence, when Jesus on the evening of His resurrection presented His hands and feet and side to His disciples, the wounds were healed, and the Lamb that had been slain appeared in all the vigour of immortal youth.

"Thou shalt stand upon the rock," saith God. So the Holy Ghost witnessed to us (Rom. v. 1, 2), "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

"Firm on the ground of sovereign grace We stand before Jehovah's throne."

Grace puts the believer in a risen and glorified Christ, and the Spirit from the ascended Lord baptises them into Christ, "There is one Spirit with the risen Lord. therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. viii. 1). "And it shall come to pass, while My glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with My hand over thee while I pass by." believer is not only secure in Christ, but under the shadow of the Almighty, and none can pluck him out of the Father's hand. "And Jehovah descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of Jehovah. And Jehovah passed by before him, and proclaimed Jehovah, Jehovah-God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,"

"And I will take away Mine hand, and thou shalt see My back parts." This reminds us of Zechariah xiii. 7, "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the Man that is My Fellow, saith Jehovah of Hosts; smite the Shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered, and I will turn back Mine hand upon the little ones"—so revealing by His grace as much of His glory as we are able to bear, for we see in part and we

prophesy in part. Now we see by means of a mirror obscurely, but by-and-by face to face; then shall we know even as also we are known, and when we see Him face to face we shall be conformed to His image. To Moses God said, "Thou shalt see My back parts," for the law had a shadow of good things to come, not the very image of the things; it was the only begotten Son that revealed God to the full, for He was the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person. And 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. And Jesus can say to His disciples, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." This is the great mystery of godliness-God manifest in the flesh.

In Exodus xvii. 5, 6 we read, "And (chovah said unto Moses, "Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand and go. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it," We have here again the rock in Horeb cleft; ehovah stands upon the rock, and Moses, by His commandment, smites the rock with the rod wherewith he had wrought the signs in Egypt—the rod of God, and the water flows forth abundantly, and satisfies the people's thirst. This is a beautiful foreshadowing type of Pentecost and the supply of the Spirit of God as the result of Calvary and the sacrifice of Him who was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. This occurred at the BEGINNING of Israel's journey through the wilderness. Towards the END of Israel's wanderings there, just previous to their entrance into the Land of Promise, we find in Numbers xx. that they again thirsted for water, and Moses was commanded to gather the assembly together before the rock in Horeb, and he was to take, NOT the rod of JUDGMENT, as on the former occasion, but the blossoming, fruit-bearing rod from the sanctuary, where it had been laid up—the type of the RISEN glory of the Lord Jesus; and Moses was to SPEAK to the rock, with the promise that it should give forth its waters. Herein Moses failed.

Instead of speaking to the rock as commanded, he smore it the second time, and as the result he was not permitted to enter the Promised Land. Is there not a danger in these last days of the Church of God failing in a similar manner? in neglecting to seek the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ from the risen and glorified Lord by prayer and supplication, and hence failing to realise their entrance into the heavenly inheritance, as raised up together and made sit together in heavenly places in Christ. Christ having been raised from the dead, dieth no more; there is no second smiting, and whilst we look back with adoring gratitude to a crucified One on Calvary's tree, we have now to do with a risen and glorified Saviour at the right hand of God. For Jesus having been glorified, the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, has come to abide with us for ever, that we, being in communion with Him, may have our spiritual thirst fully satisfied out of the fulness which is in Christ Jesus.

A WORD IN SEASON.

M OST people in this country are not competent to judge the merits of the controversy between the South African Republics and Great Britain, and probably only a very few even of those who have for a considerable period resided either in Natal, Cape Colony, the Dutch Republics, or in all of them, and are therefore personally familiar with all that has transpired for many years past. Yet how many there are who freely express their opinions, though they are often the least informed, as if they possessed all the qualifications of the most competent judges. A few, however, refrain from any expression of opinion because they do not think themselves competent to judge, for want of reliable information; others, because they consider it is no part of their business to interfere in political questions, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, "Who made Me a judge or a divider over you?" (Lu. xii. 14).

In the Church of God, too, alas! there have again and again been bitter controversies and strifes, to the dishonour of her absent Lord and her own loss of spiritual power. During the past fifty years there have been many such amongst those who have in some measure apprehended their "heavenly calling." How often brethren have sought to "judge the question," whether competent, or incompetent for want of proper evidence, or a due regard to their moral and spiritual fitness. The result has been confusion and strife.

It is just possible that God has a controversy with this nation, and has allowed the reverses of the present war as a rebuke for her covetousness, pride, self-sufficiency, love of pleasure, and forgetfulness of God. May it not also be that He has a controversy with the Church, and that our spiritual declension and want of power may also be due to the same cause? "Thou sayest I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." The best thing for the nation at present would be repentance and confession of sin; at least, so think many of God's servants. Surely the Lord's people have also need of the exhortation that "If we would judge ourselves we should not be judged." "Let us not judge one another any more."

Now, "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," and "Ye are not under the law, but under grace," yet what a common thing it has been of recent years to apply law principles and methods in that body which can only be governed by "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." We have tried to coerce our brethren into what we have thought was right for them because we had judged it right for us (rightly or wrongly), with the result that strife has been the order of the day, and Romans xvi. 17 and other scriptures, of a more or less judicial character, have been misapplied. In many instances, the strife has been increased, division has been wrought, the primary object of the Church's continued presence in the world—namely, to "preach the Gospel to every creature" has been neglected, and our Lord's return delayed. "Where envying and strife is there is confusion and every evil work," and it may safely be asserted that those who are most exacting of others are themselves amongst the least spiritual, as witness the Pharisees of old, and the Papists and Ritualists of our own times.

Let us, therefore, "Humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt us in due time," confessing our sins to Him, and our faults one to another. w. H.

PRAYER IN RELATION TO THE GOVERNMENTAL WAYS OF GOD.

"If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John xv. 7).

"If we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us" (1 John v. 14).

BEFORE we look at the truth taught in these passages, let us glance at some of God's governmental ways with this world.

First we have the clear, graphic way in which God has foretold the programme of this world's history in Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Daniel ii.), and in Daniel's visions in chapters vii. and viii., adding more minute

details in chapter xi.

It may be true (as some teach) that what is going on just now has no place in these prophecies, and also that God is not now ruling in the world in the same direct way as He once did, and as He will again when the Church is taken out of this scene; nevertheless, it is still the fact that "the heavens do rule," and the truth taught in Daniel iv. 35 is still applicable. This we see in Romans xiii. 1-7: "There is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God." Our God still holds the reins of the government of this world.

Another thing is worthy of notice: that is, the complete control He has over the hearts of even His avowed enemies. The ten kings spoken of in Rev. xvii. "make war with the Lamb." Yet God "will put into their hearts to fulfil His will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled." When God's time came to depose Nebuchadnezzar, He led his lords and counsellors to turn him out with the beasts of the field; and when God's purpose on him was fulfilled He led them to seek unto him again (Dan. iv. 33-36).

There is still another principle we cannot pass over in God's method of dealing with this world. It has always been His way to take up one nation as His rod to chastise or punish another. Many instances could be given of this, but I refer the enquirer to one only, viz., Isaiah x. 5-15. As one has said, "The Lord took up Gentile kings to punish His people Israel, and then destroyed them for the ungodly way in which they did it."

It would not be possible to trace out the present war between Briton and Boer on the page of prophetic revelation—perhaps it has no place there—but God is in it, and He is speaking to His people with a loud voice. If my memory is not at fault, the great Revival which began in America about the year 1858 was preceded by a great financial crash, in the midst of which the failure of the Western Bank brought many who were Then some living in affluence to poverty. of the Lord's people began here and there to gather in little companies for prayer, and as they continued to pray God began to work, and the movement spread in America, and then to the British Isles.

Does God mean through the "terrible things in righteousness" which He is now doing to waken up His people from their deep slumber, and lead us all as the children of "one family," and as "the salt of the earth," to begin to gather together for united prayer that He would bring great spiritual blessing out of the sad sufferings, sighs, and sorrows which many are passing through. If this is so, we may well ask ourselves, Are our ears open to hear His voice? or are we only desirous that this bloody war should be brought to a close, and let Church and world sleep on?

I saw lately in *The Christian* a report of a daily prayer meeting now being held in Ladysmith, and I have been told of conversions among the garrison there. It will be a wonderful thing if God begin a work of grace in the very centre of this deadly conflict. Should He be pleased to use the untold suffering which many are passing through on account of this war to waken up His people and lead us to gather around the Throne of Grace, as in 1859, the many precious lives which have been lost will not have been lost in vain. "For He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men" (Lam. iii. 33). Our God has some purpose to attain in allowing so much suffering. Let me, then, ask, Would it be according to His will" to ask Him to put a stop to the suffering before His purpose has been fulfilled? Strong is the tendency in us all to shrink from suffering; but has it not often, very often, been His way to bring about great blessing through suffering? Did not the late George Müller exhort saints to "look out for the blessing" after trial? We are not able to discern what God's purposes may be at this time, and it is not for us to speculate. He may design, amongst other things, to punish the Boers for the way they have treated the "oracles of God." In possession of the Bible for generations, they have withheld it from the natives; and not only this, but have wrested it to justify their cruel usage of the ignorant idolaters around them. Might we not cry to God that He would use the terrible suffering the poor Boers are passing through, and what they may yet have to endure, whatever be the issue, in opening their eyes and leading them into the enjoyment of "the Gospel of the grace of God"; to confess their sin in the past, and to learn the privilege of passing on to the less favoured races the truth which God has put into their hands.

Then there are the many gold-hunters who thronged to the Transvaal, who have had to leave it, and much if not all they gained is left behind them. We might pray that many of these may be led to seek a portion "above the sun." And so of many others. The anxious, sorrowing, and bleeding hearts at home, the suffering and maimed in the various hospitals, and the poor "refugees," many of whom have been driven out of comfortable homes, and are being housed

and fed on charity.

Let us plead with our God that He would soon come in and put a stop to this war, if it be His holy will; but if in His all-wise and righteous government. He sees there is a need-be for even more terrible sufferings yet, let us not ask Him unconditionally to stay His hand. That might be a far greater calamity than if He allow both combatants to punish one another until they "both know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will." It would be too much to expect that nations as such will learn this truth during the present age; but surely what is going on just now ought to teach the Lord's people to look past statesmen and governors, and to discern and own the over-ruling hand of God. The men whom He has placed in authority are His instruments for carrying out His will, and let us be careful how we speak of them, even if in our judgment some of them may be "the basest of men" (Dan. iv. 17). Above all, let the children of God be stirred up to lay hold on the Living God, that He would in His grace make the solemn events now transpiring a great spiritual blessing to all, from the Queen on the throne down to the humblest of her subjects, that this time of suffering and sorrow may prove the forerunner of a great revival of spiritual life and power amongst the saved, and a great ingathering of lost sinners before the Lord comes, to close the present age of grace, and to begin His work, "His strange work" of judgment (Isa. xxviii. 21). G. A.

Correspondence.

THE JEWS AND ANTICHRIST.

To the Editor of The Witness.

DEAR SIR,—In The Witness for November you say "it was the Jews—not the Ten Tribes—who rejected the Messiah and crucified the Lord of Glory"

I am aware that this view is shared by many able students of prophecy, but it appears to me that it has no warrant from Scripture—in fact, is quite opposed to it.

Peter, in his address on the day of Pentecost, says: "Let all the *House of Israel* know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ," thus clearly indicating that the ten tribes, as well as the two tribes of Benjamin and Judah, under the generic title of "Israel," were implicated in the murder of their Christ.

Your statement is based on the assumption that only two tribes, viz., Benjamin and Judah, were in the land during the time of Christ, whereas it is clear, not only from this scripture but from such a scripture as we have in Matt. x. 6, where our Lord commanded the disciples to go rather to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel," that all the tribes were represented when He was here upon earth. Of course the word "lost" is used here in a moral and spiritual sense, and not in a physical sense. Turning to Zechariah xii. 10-14, I read that God's chosen people are to "look on Him whom they have pierced, and mourn every one in his own house." Here are two tribes indicated in addition to Benjamin and Judah, and certainly other tribes are implied in the words, "All the families that

I am aware that the ten tribes were deported to Assyria in the reign of Hoshea, but it is evident that they did not all remain there, but were afterwards scattered abroad, because the scripture, in referring to their restoration, clearly indicates their coming from all parts of the earth. Assyria was no great distance from Palestine, and what difficulty is there in assuming and believing that numbers of these tribes found their way back to their own land, and were in it when their Messiah appeared.

Then, again, in *The Witness* for October you identify the "wilful king" of Daniel xi. 36 with the second beast or false prophet of Revelation, and you therefore consider that the second beast corresponds exactly with the description given in Thessalonians of the man of sin, &c.

How can that possibly be, when in the scripture you quote from—Rev. xiii. 11-17—it is clearly stated that the second beast acts entirely in a subordinate character, doing all that he does for the glory of the first beast, whereas, both in Daniel and Thessalonians, the "wilful king," or man of sin, exalts himself, and assumes the place of God, &c.

I am glad to find myself quite in accord with your teaching usually, but in these two instances I cannot see that your views are based upon scripture.

w. c.

Stamford Hill, N.

[REPLY.]

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I am obliged by your letter of 10th, and value your kindly criticism. In reply, permit me to say that I do not regard Peter's words, "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly," &c., as proof that all the house of Israel was represented in his audience. The indictment, "whom ye have crucified," is for those to whom he was speaking; the proclamation, "God hath made," &c., is for all Israel, and for the world also for that part; but Peter, by the Holy Spirit, had in view at that time the house of Israel only.

I have already in these papers referred to the fact that certain individuals were resident in Jerusalem among the Jews belonging to other tribes; but even though there were a good many of these, the fact of their presence among them would not answer to what appears to me to be plainly taught in such passages as Ezek. xxxvii. 15, Isa. xi. 12 and xxvii. 12, 13, Jer. l. 4, and Hos. i. 11, viz., that the distinct nationality is maintained during the whole period of their dispersion, and that, at a given time in the future, they shall be re-united as distinctly as two sticks becoming one in the prophet's hand.

In the reckoning of our Lord, Judah, Benjamin, and Levi, with the individuals of other tribes then among them, were all "lost sheep of the house of Israel." It is a mistake to suppose that the term "house of Israel" excludes Judah, and Benjamin, or Levi.

As to Zech. xii. 10-14, it is evident that the conviction of verse 10 is different in character from that of verses 11-14.

The remnant of Israel, of whatever tribe—the ten as well as the two—will mourn, as also do the Gentiles, when they see how they treated the Lord of Life and Glory. See Rev. i. 7.

I do not think there is any real inconsistency between the character and ways of the man of sin in Thessalonians, the second beast of Reve-

lation, and the wilful king of Daniel.

Whilst the second beast is subordinate to the first, he nevertheless exercises all the authority of the first, and being in direct relationship with the Jews, his seat of authority at Jerusalem, and his oppression of them, in the first instance, rather religious than political, he is able in that sphere to do exactly as he pleases, though not in the larger political sphere of the first beast.

J. R. C.

WORK AMONG JEWS IN EAST LONDON To the Editor of The Witness.

DEAR SIR,—I shall esteem it a great privilege if I may be allowed to bring to your readers' notice the claims of the work carried on by Mr. Israel Isaiah Aschkenasi in East London. Owing to his annual visits to the Continent each summer, when portions of God's Word are distributed, and the message of life is proclaimed to lews of various nationalities, our brother's name is known to many through reading Echoes of Service. But some who may read Mr. Aschkenasi's letters in Echoes with interest may still be unaware that he is God's instrument in carrying on a similar work all the year round in that part of East London which has been called "the English Ghetto," owing to the number of its Jewish inhabitants. A large proportion of these are immigrants from the Continent.

What English person would be induced to attend a Gospel meeting where the Word was ministered in some foreign tongue, even though it were in a language not wholly unfamiliar to him? The obvious answer to this question is an eloquent plea for our brother's work, wherein these foreign Jews have the opportunity of hearing the good news of God's free favour proclaimed to them in their native "Yiddish," and in particular on that day of the week which they have been taught from their earliest years to associate with the worship of Jehovah.

These people's children are, however, for the most part either London born, or, at least, London-bred, and are as familiar with the English language as with their own. For them, therefore, classes are held on Saturday afternoons and Thursday evenings, conducted by workers from various parts.

Our brother has just brought out his Report of the past year's work, a year during which your readers have had much brought before them to interest them in the Jews as a nation. Will they please also interest themselves in these Jewish folk in East London. Our brother has undergone sore trial, and the work has suffered incalculable loss through the absence, owing to severe illness, of Mrs. Aschkenasi. Another devoted worker has been withdrawn through sickness in her home. Furthermore, less has been received than ever before both in the way of money and clothing, yet the needs of the work are not diminished.

Copies of the Report will be gladly sent to any of the Lord's children applying either to Mr. Aschkenasi, 43 King's Avenue, Muswell Hill, London, N., or to myself; and any who may be in London are invited to call and see the work in progress; also, if any brethren could arrange meetings for this purpose, not too far from London, Mr. Aschkenasi would gladly attend to give an account of the work.

The meetings for the Jews are held at the school-room of the Baptist Chapel (hired for the purpose), Commercial Road, London, E.—Yours in Christ's service,

F. ORTON SMITH, B.A.

"Hilldene," Roxborough Park, Harrow.

THE INDIAN FAMINE.

To the Editor of THE WITNESS.

Sir,—In Isaiah lviii. the Spirit of God contrasts the fasts of Israel at the time—the mere self-inflicted or man-imposed penances of a religious routine, with that true fast which God Himself could recognise and bless. "Is not this the fast that I have chosen?. Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house?" We remember in whom all this, and much more, was in spirit carried out to perfection, for we know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich (2 Cor. viii. 9), and He has left us an ensample, that we should follow His steps.

It is to be hoped that the suggestions of Mr. M'Laren may be widely taken up; but some might also be led to adopt a little plan which a Christian known to the writer has followed since the beginning of last December in view of the present famine, namely, of foregoing two or three articles of diet not necessary to health, and putting the price of the same away daily for transmission to India. Not only has he thus been able to put aside a certain sum over and above what he might otherwise have been able to send, but he has also, he says, realised the blessing of the Lord on what has been to him the happy privilege of thus "dealing his bread to the hungry." W. H.

Questions and Answers.

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

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 are most thankful to all our friends who have endeawoured to help us by replying to Questions, but the Editor hopes that Correspondents will study brevity, and when too long he will take the liberty of "using the scissors" freely in preference to rejecting Auswers, on account of their length, in which there may be points of value.

REPLIES ARE INVITED TO THE FOLLOWING:

WHY WAS THE LAW GIVEN?—Does Gal. iii. 21, "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law," teach that the law was not given to be kept?

STATEMENTS CONCERNING JUSTIFICATION—How RECONCILED?—How can James ii. 24, "By works a man is justified," be reconciled with Romans v. 1, "Being justified by faith"?

INFECTION AND ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS.— Is it according to the mind of the Lord to hinder a brother from breaking bread with the Lord's people because of fever being in his home?

AM OLD TESTAMENT APPARENT CONTRADICTION.—According to Numbers xviii. 18 the firstling was for the priest, but according to Deut. xv. 20 the owner and his household were to eat it before the Lord. According to Numbers xviii. 21 to 32 the tithes were for the Levites, but according to Deut. xii. 18 every man, with his household, and the Levite within his gates, was to eat the tithes before the Lord. Please explain these apparent contradictions, and also notice Deut. xiv. 28, 29.

CORRECT ORDER OF "RECEPTION."—If no form of procedure is prescribed in the New Testament for the receiving of a believer, what then is the proper course to adopt, or what principles ought to guide?

LIVING OF THE GOSPEL.—What is meant by these words in I Cor. ix. 14: "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel?" If it mean that those who preach the gospel should in temporal things be ministered to by those who hear the gospel, why is there not opportunity given in our gospel meetings for such ministry?

THE LORD'S COMING.

Question 408.—Are we warranted in expecting the Lord's return at any moment, seeing that in Rev. v. 9 the blood-washed are out of "every kindred, and tongue, and people, and

nation"? Has every nation heard the Gospel of the Grace of God?

Answer A.—In Rom. x. 14 the question is asked, "How shall they hear without a preacher?" but in verse 18 is added—"But have they not heard? YES, verily, their sound went into ALL the earth, and their words unto the end of the world."

Again, in Col. i., verses 5, 6, and 23, we read, "The Gospel... is come unto you, as it is in all the world." "The Gospel... which was preached to every creature which is under heaven."

If this could be said in A.D. 64, how much more now? During the last few years the servants of God who proclaim the Gospel have rapidly increased; and this seems to be one of the many signs of the near return of our Lord. We need not dispute as to when He will come; surely our only concern need be to see that we are "hasting the coming," as reads the margin of 2 Peter iii. 11, 12.

M. M. D.

"THIS GENERATION."

QUESTION 409.—What is the meaning of Matt. xxiv. 34, "Till all these things be fulfilled"? Have not many generations passed away since then?

Answer A.—Some thirty years ago a Christian young man, being pressed by a sceptic with the apparent failure of the Lord's prediction in the above Scripture, sought help from his Bibleclass teacher, who gave as the explanation most commonly accepted, that "generation" here is in the sense of a race, or of character, as it is sometimes so found in Scripture: the meaning being that the present generation of evil, or the Jewish race, would go on until the end.

He asked, "Will that satisfy the sceptic?"
"Most likely not," was the reply. "Does it satisfy you?" The answer had to be, "Not altogether;" but that having never fully examined it for himself, he said he would, for his friend's sake and his own, give himself to the prayerful study of the Scriptures on the subject.

In view of the deep importance of the question to the faith of God's people the result is here stated. The examination brought out the following facts:

r. That whereas the pronoun "this" (oùros) appears to have been generally taken for granted to refer to the time and object then present when the words were spoken, it is, on the contrary, often used to refer to what is remote—as John xii. 27: "Father, save me from this hour"; not the hour then present, but one later, to which He had just alluded. Luke xvii. 24: "In that night," the same pronoun, but rendered by the translators "that," as best expressing in

English the future event so evidently referred to. Heb. iii. 10, "This generation" in Revised Version—a generation centuries removed from the time of the writer.

- 2. These latter are examples of the proper force of the Greek pronoun. It is thus defined in Liddel and Scott: "It is mostly used to refer to the latter of two objects as being nearest to the subject." It is true that most commonly the "object" immediately and last spoken of is the one then present to the speaker, as in Matt. xxiii. 36: "Upon this generation"; verse 25, "Upon you"; or Luke xvii. 29, the generation of which He had just said He "must suffer," etc. But, as in the above definition, it is "to the latter of the two objects," the last spoken of, not as being the nearer in time or place, that the pronoun refers in all the above examples. In English we usually express the more remote by "that," and the present by "this." The Greek pronoun refers rather to the latter as occurring in the sentence or the discourse.
- 3. Not to multiply quotations, take the four examples in the prophecy itself as we find it in Luke xxi., where three times it clearly refers to the future. In verse 22, "These be the days of vengeance"—not till many years after; verse 28, "These things," not now, but "then"; and verse 31, "These things," events to occur in the future. The fourth is verse 32, "This generation," which, consistently with the rule and the three examples in immediate connection, would mean "this" in the same future sense, the generation that shall be living at the time of which He was then speaking, not the present in which He was predicting it.
- 4. There is no grammatical reason why the prououn rendered "that" in Luke xvii. 34, should not be so in chapter xxi. 32. To be grammatically correct it might, and should have been so rendered.
- 5. The expression, "Shall not pass until," indicates its relationship to point of time; and
- 6. It is not easy to see the purpose of the Lord's words if otherwise interpreted.
- 7. This portion of the prophecy (in Luke xxi. from verse 25 onward) is occupied with the signs which are immediately to precede the coming of the Son of Mau; when they are to "lift up their heads, for their redemption draweth nigh"; when, as by the budding of the fig-tree, they may "know that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand"—"at the doors." And thus, continuing in the same strain, the following verse declares that "this" generation of which He speaks, living when "these things" take place, will see the speedy end: that whatever centuries may intervene (and these the Father has kept in His

own power), yet when these things begin to come to pass all will be fulfilled within a very limited time.

8. In the above notes the record in Luke has been specially referred to as being the more concise; but all will be found equally true of those in Matthew and Mark.

9. If this be so, if we may translate the phrase in question "that generation," the passage is simple enough. We are under no necessity to seek its solution in explaining the word "generation" as a continuous race existing throughout the dispensation; and it removes the difficulty that has stumbled the faith of some, and of which scepticism has forged one of its most powerful weapons.

Editor's Note.—The foregoing reply seems to afford a most reasonable solution of a difficulty which, though it be easily solved otherwise to some minds, has remained insurmountable to many. We shall value correspondence on this point from competent critics, as it is rather a

question of scholarship.

THE EXPECTATION OF THE CREATURE.

Question 410.—What is "the creature" to which reference is made in Romans viii. 19-21?

Answer A.—The word "creature" here should be rendered "creation" throughout this passage. The whole creation is represented as awaiting "the liberty of the glory of the children of God." God knows its groaning and the meaning of it—the remedy is at hand.

A.O. M.

Answer B.—Paul having adverted, verses 17, 18, to the glory awaiting the Christian, as a ground of joy and comfort under present sufferings (cf. 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12; 2 Cor. iv. 17), exalts our idea of it still higher by representing the external world as participating and waiting for it. The very creation, on account of man's sin, has been subjected to the curse, and has become "vain" or useless in regard to its original design, having been made subservient to man's evil purposes and passions. But the curse will be removed from the very ground, and the lower animals relieved from oppression and cruelty. In this place it must be interpreted "the creation" as in R.V., which almost invariably translates it thus (cf. Col. i. 23; Mark xvi. 15). It doubtless in this passage (Rom. viii.) includes the whole animate and inanimate creation as distinguished from man-The passage is a beautiful instance of the figure common in Scripture, called "prosopopæia," by which things inanimate are invested with life and feeling (Jud. i. 10-20; Jer. xii. 4; Isa. xxiv. 4-7). J. H. H.

GOD'S CHOSEN PROPLE-XVII.

THE EVERLASTING KINGDOM OF OUR LORD.

By J. R. CALDWELL, Author of "Things to Come," "Christ in Hebrews," "Earthly Relationships," "Levitical Offerings," &c.

"HE "groaning creation" awaits the time of "the manifestation of the sons of God." Even the saints of the past dispensations await the completion of the elect who form "the Body of Christ," for "they without us shall not be made perfect," that is, perfected in resurrection glory.

"When He shall appear [be manifested], then shall ye also appear [be manifested] with Him in glory" (Col. iii. 4).

"He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe, in that day"

(2 Thess. i. 10).

"Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Cor. vi. 2).

"He that overcometh, to him will I give power [authority] over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers, even as I received of My Father" (Rev. ii. 26, 27).

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them" (Rev. xx. 4).

To the apostles the Lord said:

"I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me, that ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke xxii. 29).

These and many other passages show clearly that when the Lord, as Son of Man, shall come to reign as "King of kings and Lord of lords," His saints shall come with Him, be manifested in the glory with Him, and reign with Him for ever. The special honour of judging the tribes of Israel is conferred on the apostles; but the saints will all have their place in that kingdom under Christ, and will be appointed to service therein more or less honourable according to faithfulness here and now. This is shown in the two parables of the talents (Matt. xxv. 14) and of the pounds (Luke xix. 12). This, also, is the application of 2 Peter i. 11. The "abundant entrance" there alluded to is not entrance into heaven, or into the Father's house; all "the children" have equal right and title there—it is entrance "into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord." All the redeemed shall enter it, all the "born

again;" but the "abundant entrance" is for those who have been watchful and diligent, as the context clearly shows.

Some may enter, saved as by the skin of their teeth, like Lot dragged out of Sodom, saved, and called "righteous Lot"; but no record of fruitful service or testimony. Others enter, as it were, with acclamation. "Well done, good and faithful servant!" This is beautifully foreshadowed in the history of David. His "mighty men," when he came to the throne, whom he appointed to places of honour and trust, were those who had continued with him in his trials, who had shared with him the sorrows and reproaches of the days of his rejection, when Adullam's cave was his dwelling, and Bethlehem's well was guarded by the Philistines, and the snow and the lion told of sufferings and dangers that only faith in Jehovah, who had caused him to be anointed, and would surely make good to him the promised kingdom, could patiently endure.

No mention in the "list of honours" of loab, his mightiest general, cool, powerful, unscrupulous, carnal—his own sister's son; he joined him not till Saul was dead. He sat on the fence, as men say, till he saw what way things would go. He was a man of expediency and policy, far-seeing and wily, but not a man of faith, and not one whose heart's affections were true to David, his

king.

How much of practical truth is for us in all these inspired records! Not "Church truth," it may be, but "Kingdom truth" important for us to know, and the practical value of which will be seen when His Kingdom comes.

In 1 Peter iii. 9 there is a most suggestive reference to the ministry of the saints in the age to come. The exhortation is to us now, instead of rendering evil for evil, to render blessing for cursing; but why?

"Knowing that ye are thereunto called "-this is the character of your calling-"that ye should inherit [not 'a blessing,' but] blessing," or to make its meaning, as we believe, clearer, "that ye should inherit the bestowing of blessing.'

Whenever the inheritance is spoken of, it looks forward to the time of the Kingdom. Our inheritance is not here and now, but in the Kingdom of God. The future heritage of the saints is the bestowment of blessing. We are to be the channels of blessing in the world to come. Now, doubtless there is an unseen angelic ministry—see Hebrews i. 14—but in that age, which is not put in subjection to angels but to man—in Christ and in union with Him—the ministry of blessing will be sustained by saints of the heavenly calling, Melchizedek priests, who have qualified here for this kingdom ministry.

It was upon Nathaniel's confession of the Lord Jesus, as "Son of God and King of Israel," that He bounded forward in Spirit, so to speak, into the glory of the age to come and uttered in His own fervent way these remarkable words:

"Verily, verily. I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

The allusion is doubtless to the ladder which Jacob saw in vision. That ladder was the Son of Man. Angelic messengers it was, no doubt, that Jacob saw, but in the age to come the ascending and descending messengers may be none other than the heavenly saints—even we, who are learning now the Christlike lesson to bless and not to curse.

There are occasions mentioned in Scripture when the heavens have been momentarily opened, but this is the only mention of the heavens being "open" as a permanent condition. Just now our eyes may peer into the infinite blue by night or day, but we fail to get even a glimpse of the "heavenly things" that lie so near to the believing soul. We walk truly by faith, and not by sight. Sin has shut out the heavens from the earth, and covered them as with an impenetrable vail. But hereafter we shall see the heavens open! Heaven open to earth, and heaven and earth united in the Person of the glorified Son of Man, and communication established between the heavenly and the earthly departments of the Kingdom of God.

The earthly centre of that kingdom will be Jerusalem. It will be the centre of government from which the law shall go forth (Isa. ii. 1-3), and the centre of worship unto which the nations shall go up (Isa. lxvi. 23; Zech. xiv. 16-17).

"The Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation" (Psa. cxxxii. 13).

The same oath to David, "Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne," secured also that Zion should be Jehovah's rest for ever.

True, "Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead," and is at the right hand of God. Thus far the promise has been literally fulfilled; but as surely as it is so far accomplished, so certainly will that Son of David sit upon the throne of His father David and reign over the house of Jacob for ever. All this is yet future, but none the less certain of accomplishment.

Zechariah informs us as to the building of the future temple:

"Behold the Man whose name is 'the Branch.'.. He shall build the temple of Jehovah... and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."

So also in Acts xv. 16:

"After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up; that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things."

Of that day it is written:

"Great is Jehovah, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King. God is known in her palaces for a refuge" (Psa. xlviii. 1-3).

"Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty; they shall behold a far-stretching land" (R. v.,

Isaiah xxxiii. 17).

And in Isaiah xxxiii. 20-22:

"Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities; thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down. . . But there the glorious Jehovah will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams, wherein shall go no galley with oars. . . . For Jehovah is our judge, Jehovah is our lawgiver, Jehovah is our King; He will save us."

Many other passages equally clear and definite might be referred to, but these will suffice to show that the world's metropolis in the age to come will not be Rome, or Babylon, or London, but Jerusalem. There will be Jehovah's throne and dwelling-place, and the temple that shall be truly "an house

of prayer for all nations." There will the King be seen in His glory and beauty, and as when the Queen of Sheba came to Solomon and heard his wisdom and beheld his glory, there was no strength left in her—it exceeded all that had been reported to her, "the half hadnot been told"—even so will those that are left of the Gentiles be astonished and awe-struck as they behold the earthly glory of the Son of Man, and recognise Him as the One who was nailed to the Cross on Calvary, and over whose head was written: "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."

AHIMAAZ, THE MESSENGER.

THE battle of the Forest of Ephraim
(2 Sam viii 6) had been fought and (2 Sam. xviii. 6) had been fought, and the followers of Absalom had been smitten before the servants of David. It was needful that tidings should be carried to the king concerning what had taken place on that eventful day. Just at this point we find it written (verse 19), "Then said Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok, Let me now run, and bear the king tidings, how that the Lord hath avenged Him of His enemies" (verse 19). Joab, however, declined to give the needed permission, and instructed another-"the Cushite"-to run with tidings to the king. After this messenger had set forth upon his mission, Ahimaaz renewed his petition to be allowed to run; and, obtaining a tardy permission, he "ran by the way of the Plain, and overran the Cushite." Though starting last in the race, he was destined to come in first. Meanwhile the watchman on the wall spied the two runners in the distance, with a space between. And he said, "Me thinketh the running of the foremost is like the running of Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok." "And the king said, He is a good man, and cometh with good tidings" (verse 27).

How deeply suggestive are these words— "A good man, and he cometh with good tidings." In David's mind there was a close connection between a good man and the nature of the tidings he bore. Nor was he disappointed when Ahimaaz arrived and told what he had to tell. He brought news of victory, but he could say nothing as to how it fared with Absalom. Perhaps it was in keeping with the fitness of things that the fleet-footed Ahimaaz, known in Israel as "a good man," should *not* be the bearer of those "heavy" tidings that were soon to make David's heart desolate indeed. The "bad news" was reserved for another to carry, even for the more leisurely "official" messenger of the scheming captain of David's host. David feared nothing when he knew that Ahimaaz drew near. He expected good tidings. He did not associate tidings of disaster with such a messenger, and it was even as he expected; but as the Cushite approached one can easily understand that David would be fearing the worst. If so, his darkest forebodings were at once realised —he was authoritatively informed that Absålom was no more.

Truly, there is a fitness—an eternal fitness —in the things of God. A good man is associated with good tidings; and this is surely seemly and pleasant. If effective service for God is to be done, the messenger and message must be one, if we may so speak. There must be an assimilation. There must be a connection, a similarity, between the messenger and his message. If the messenger has been truly "sent," no matter how humble his sphere may be, his resemblance to his message will be not only visible but manifest. He will be known as "a good man," even as Ahimaaz was known in Israel, from the king on the throne to the watchman at the gate. It does not say that he was a clever man, or an able man, or a man of dazzling gifts. We are simply told that he was "a good man." If good tidings are to be borne, such is the man to bear them.

Now, we, the saved of the Lord, have good tidings to carry—even good tidings of great joy. But if we are to carry these tidings to the glory of God and the blessing of souls, we must see that the Gospel power, and the Gospel righteousness, and the Gospel graciousness, have been interwoven with our very being. In God's service character is more than ability, and the Master's spirit is more than dazzling gift. "Be good," says the poet, "and let who will be clever." He who thus wrote knew his Book, for is it

not written that "for a good man some would even dare to die" (Rom. v. 7)? Ahimaaz in the Old Testament will no doubt suggest to many the "parallel passage" of Barnabas in the New, of whom it is recorded that he was "a good man" (Acts xi. 24). He was also a bearer of the "good tidings of great joy." Messenger and message being thus in agreement, we are not surprised to read, in connection with the testimony of Barnabas, that "much people was added unto the Lord."

Thus it comes to pass that character is ever telling for God; and by "character" we mean the assimilation of the believer to the Gospel which he has received—the impress of God upon the believer's life. This "impress" will measure the results of our testimony here.

Much more might be said as to the two messengers from the field of Ephraim. we shall meanwhile content ourselves with pointing out that Ahimaaz was known by his "running" long before his voice could be heard (2 Sam. xviii. 27). Blessed are those messengers of whom this can be said. Blessed are they whose running, whose walk, whose manner of life, bears silent witness to the Gospel's power. It is good when a believer's "running" arrests your attention before you can even hear his voice. When this is the case you may be sure he is the bearer of good tidings. Even as he comes in sight in the distance, the watchman's eye brightens, and David's anxious heart is cheered for the time, as he says to himself, "No evil tidings yet; he is a good man, Ahimaaz." And though the "official" messenger had the start of him, the man of the kindly heart somehow got over the ground so quickly that he left his rival messenger behind, and reached the goal before him. This is characteristic of men of the Ahimaaz type. The Lord seems to prosper their way (Gen. xxiv. 42). this also is in keeping with the fitness of things, for it is written (Psa. xxxvii. 23), "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord. W.S.

OTHERS may love us because of what we are—God loves us because of what Jesus is.

THE PERSON, PRESENCE, AND MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

By the late Mr. HENRY HEATH.

I SOMETIMES think that generally—perhaps it is true of all of us—while we rejoice and sing of the love of God in sending. His Son, and the equal love of the Son in coming and giving Himself, we do not think so much of, speak so often of the love, equal love of the Holy Ghost in coming down in the name of the Father and the Son to reveal both, and to remove the scales of ignorance from our eyes that we may see more clearly the beauty and the glory of Christ.

We are advantaged in this dispensation compared with those who walked, and talked, and ate, and drank with the Lord Jesus Christ. It was expedient for them that He went away. He went away and the Spirit came in order to reveal the glory of His person, the perfection of His work, the meaning of His words, the beauty of His actions, and the value of His death the death of the Cross. So that none of us should wish we had lived when Christ was on the earth. We should not wish that we had eaten and drunk with Him, and heard the words drop from His lips as He uttered them, for we are gainers by His absence, and by His going away to the Father.

To speak of that glorious Person is the business of this hour. Before I come to the New Testament I will refer a little to the presence of the Holy Spirit before that wondrous period of the Incarnation. We go back even to the Book of Genesis, and there we read of His brooding over the dark waters before the introduction of light. The Spirit of God moved on the face of the deep to disturb the death-like silence, and to introduce light, and separation of light from darkness, and the separation of the waters above the firmament from those beneath, and the division between the waters of the sea and those of the earth, and then fruitfulness of life, till we come to the sixth day, the day for the creation of "Man." And that day is marked by a peculiar form of expression. In each day before it was simply said, "Let it be," and it was. But on the sixth day we read. Jehovah said, "Let us make man." Here is taking counsel for the creation of man (and woman in man), the masterpiece of creating power on the earth. Now He, God, did not at any time take even Gabriel or Michael into counsel with Himself, and therefore the use of the words, "Let us make man," reveals the joint-counsel and co-operation of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the creation of man. The Spirit of God was present and working then.

Then we can trace Him down through the Old Testament, sometimes coming upon persons for a given action, as on Samson, and David, and others. We hear the psalmist saying that by His Spirit He garnished the heavens. We read of His being in the prophets, coming upon them, and being in them for a time, or for a special purpose. And nearly in the end of the Old Testament we get these precious words—when Israel had gone far back from God, and was brought very low, He speaks thus:

"As I covenanted with you when I brought you out of the land of Egypt, so My Spirit remaineth among you; Fear not" (Hag. ii. 5).

Beloved, that is applicable to these days. We are far down on the decline from Pentecostal condition. The unity that once was manifested is broken up. Nor will God mend the breach, but will presently bring in a better thing. But now He says to those who trust Him, and who seek to serve Him in the midst of the declension:

"My Spirit remaineth with you; My Spirit remaineth in you, as well as with you; Fear ye not."

We have grieved the Holy Ghost; we have dishonoured Him, hence our weakness, and worldliness, and divisions. But wondrous to say (and yet when we think of grace it is but like Himself), we have not sent away the Holy Ghost. He remains with us.

But now we come to the New Testament, and I wish to draw your attention to a few passages in which we find the part the Spirit of God took during the entire course of the Lord Jesus Christ, from His descending until His ascent up to the right hand of God. He must descend first, you know. Remember the words of Paul to the Ephesians:

"He that ascended, what is it [what does it mean],

but that He first descended into the lower parts of the earth?"

Why is He thus spoken of? Because, simply, as the Son of God He could not ascend. He could not ascend, for He was equal with the Father.

If, therefore, the Lord is to know ascension, He must first descend. So He did—from the throne to the virgin's womb, a mighty descent.

And then we begin by proving from Scripture the personality of the Holy Spirit. Kindly turn to the first chapter of Luke:

"When the fulness of the time was come for God to send forth His Son, He sent Him."

He sent Him according to the sign given to one of the kings of Israel; he was told to ask for a sign, but refused to ask. The sign God gave was:

"Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel."

That was the prediction. When the time was come for its fulfilment the angel appeared to the Virgin Mary, and announced the birth of the Son of God into this world; and she, considering for a moment her circumstances, asked the question, "How can this be?" The explanation was given her without any rebuke for the question:

"The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee. Therefore that Holy Thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

And before I say more on her words, will you just look at the announcement to Zacharias of the birth of John, to trace the difference between the two? Zacharias was aged, and so was his wife, and the promise was that she should bear a son, and he questioned, doubted, and stated what his age was, and his wife's age. He could hardly believe it, and yet he was not without a precedent, for his father Abraham and Sarah had experienced the same mighty power, and if that had been fresh in his remembrance, he would in faith have said, "My father Abraham and Sarah experienced this power, and why should not I?" Now, he did not do that. He was not like his father. He was descended from him, but he did not reflect, as it were, the features of his father's image, because Abraham, we are told, when God gave him the promise, grasped it with such simple faith that he did not even think of age at all. He did "not consider his body"; it was not worth the thought. His faith grasped the promise, and the promise grasped him with such power that everything else was, as it were, forgotten. "He believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness."

But Mary had not a precedent, for never had there been such a thing (and there never will be such a thing again) as a virgin to retain her virgin character and be the mother of a son. That is another display of God's grace, and of the creating power of the Holy Spirit; and therefore Mary gets a plain answer to her question, "How can this be?" Here, then, we trace, not the effects of "an influence," or something that cannot be described, emanating from the Father and the Son, but the action of a real Person, co-equal in power with the Father and the Son.

Then in Matthew you find that when the time was approaching for the birth of this Son, Joseph was troubled about it, and was in difficulty as to how he should deal with his espoused virgin, and was minded to put her away privily; but a voice checked him:

"Fear not, Joseph, to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost."

Thus his difficulties were met.

Then we pass from this to the time when He went into the temple. The child was brought into the temple where Simeon was waiting, we are told, "for the consolation of Israel," and the Holy Spirit had revealed to him that he would not see death till he had seen the Lord's Christ. The Holy Spirit was upon him, revealed a secret to him, and so he came, led by the Holy Spirit, into the temple at the very moment when the child was brought in. The Spirit was upon him; the Spirit instructed him; the Spirit led Now, dear young believer, think for a moment, and carry the thought home with You are indwelt by the same Holy Spirit, and if you wish to grow in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in perfect conformity to Him, be guided by the Spirit. You know you are not saved to do as you like; you are not saved to go

where you please; you are not saved to form associates according to your own taste; but you are called to obedience to the revealed will of God in His Word, and that comes only by learning there—remember the Spirit of God indwells you, and can give you light in all cases of difficulty; direction in all cases of perplexity; and He can give you power to walk in the right path.

Then we pass on to the baptism of the Lord Jesus Christ, when He went down into the waters of Jordan, and coming up He prayed, and in answer to his prayer heaven opened, the Spirit of God descended, and a voice came out of heaven saying:

"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

There is the Holy Spirit again, and it was all significant—Jordan, the river of judgment; Christ baptised in Jordan, the shadow of the baptism of the Cross. The fruit of that baptism, the opening of heaven and the descent of the Spirit of God to reveal the glory of the once crucified Nazarene as the Son of the Living God—that is the Spirit's testimony in this dispensation. O how we need it in these days, when Satan is trying right and left to detract from His glory, how we need the teaching and the strengthening of God's Spirit to hold fast the simple, the glorious truth, that the Nazarene crucified on Calvary was and is the Son of the Living God.

Then followed the temptation. But the Holy Spirit is the leader, and the one by whom He is driven. One gospel describes Him as leading the Lord Jesus Christ. I suppose he speaks of leading as indicating the gentleness of the Spirit's guidance. In the other he says he "was driven," indicating, I fancy, the power of this gentle leading of the Holy Spirit. He was the subject, not only the object, the person, on whom the Spirit rested; but Christ was the subject of the guidance, gentle and mighty, of the Spirit.

Then Christ comes from His baptism to the temptation—led up by the Spirit to that wonderful scene, the temptation of forty days, the secrets of which we do not know. We do not know what His soul passed through during the forty days. I have sometimes thought, if I may speak it with reverence, that He will tell us yet: that

when we see Him and are with Him forever in the glory, He will reveal to us many things now hidden, for He delights in our fellowship, as we delight in His. You know the first Adam was tempted on three points through the woman. He had everything around him to make him happy, but God prohibited him touching the tree of life. When Eve, who was away from him at the time—she did not hear the original prohibition except from Adam's lips—was tempted by the devil, she did not come to consult Adam on the temptation. She saw that the tree

"Was pleasant to the eye and good for food, and a tree to be desired to make one wise; and she took it and gave to her husband,"

and we know the result of the deed. The first Adam, a perfect creature, was put into the garden, which was fitted for him before he entered it with everything that might keep him happy; but not being subject to Him who had created him, he partook of the fruit of that tree. One blast of temptation swept him off. There was no promise to keep him. Starting as a perfect creature, one blast of temptation removed him—he fell. He fell into the snare of the devil—pride—and then fell into the condemnation that pride always brings.

But the last Adam in the wilderness with the wild beasts, succoured by angels we are told, was tempted on three points, viz., To make stones into bread to meet His hunger; One born in obscurity to cast Himself from the pinnacle that would make Him popular; and One who had not a foot of ground on earth was tempted to possess the kingdoms of the world. But He stood the test, and how did He overcome? By the might of the Spirit of God, and by the simple quotation and application of the Word of God without comment, without exposition: "It is written," "it is written," "it is written." And when He had allowed the tempter to shoot every arrow from his quiver, bade him quit the field. There was the work of the Spirit of God, not of an influence, but of a Person —His temptation and His victory.

Next to that is His entrance to the synagogue, and standing up He read the words:

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

There He divided the prophecy. It goes on:
"And the day of vengeance of our God."

That is His future ministry, but, until then, He came to preach the acceptable year of the Lord, and O, how many thousands on thousands have during that period, up till now, been saved by simply believing the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

NOTES FROM A YOUNG MAN'S BIBLE—I.*

NEW TESTAMENT.

THE Gospel narrative is like a high tableland, but we cannot be spared the ascent from Genesis to Malachi.

The solvents which act so readily when employed on the fables of the twilight past, are utterly impotent when applied to the life and character of Jesus Christ our Lord. His matchless character has been frescoed on the corridors of history in undying colours by the evangelists. Matthew, official in the Roman kingdom, wrote of the King; Mark, Paul's servant, useful to the ministry, writes of the Servant; Luke, Paul's companion, a Gentile, writes of the Man; John, who leaned on His bosom, writes of the Son. Deeper and deeper (Ezek. xlvii. 4, 5).

"REPENT YE" (Matt. iii. 2).

No mere temporary and superficial change will satisfy the Word. Repentance is not shame because sin is discovered, or rage because it has falsified its promise. It requires a reversal of the whole existing attitude of men's hearts and minds towards God. These words take God and sin for granted.

"IT IS WRITTEN" (Matt. iv. 4).

Here are no Pharisees to refute, no Jewish people to convince. He refers not to conscience. He does not appeal to His own feelings. He does not bring forward thoughts and opinions, but the written Word; as if He

^{*}E.H.B.-A young man of rare ability, spirituality, and promise, who departed to be with Christ after a very brief illness, 3rd February, 1892, aged 27

meant to say, the written Word is the ultimate authority, not merely on earth, but in the invisible realms, in the world of Spirits.

MATTHEW IV. 22.

To follow in the path marked out with pleasure, sincerely, boldly, humbly, and diligently, with no fear of man, and seeking no glory from man, is the way to the Green Pasture, is the way to have an easy yoke and light burden, a joy unspeakable, a peace past understanding, to be more than conquerors, to have a successful life, and to enjoy the secret of His presence.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT (Matt. v.).

Every sentence ought to teach us that from beginning to end it is a call to repentance rather than a counsel of perfection. It was a preparation for a Saviour—not a substitute for one—a disclosure of sin to persuade men of their need of a Redeemer.

"Consider," not simply "look," but carefully observe, notice, and think over, how flowers grow first in God's great mind—are exactly what He wishes them to be. When we gaze at a delicately-tinted, exquisitely-shaped flower, we are getting a glimpse of the loveliness that is in God.

God's Will (Matt. xi. 25, 26).

At that time, when John the Baptist was wavering, he who had boldly preached repentance, who had said with such conviction, "Behold the Lamb of God," he who was a witness of the Light, was doubting and sending to see whether Jesus were really the Christ:—At that time, when His own called Him gluttonous:—at that time, when the preaching in Chorazin and Bethsaida was a failure:—at that time, when Capernaum, the scene of so many of His mighty acts, was shutting Him out—when all was failure— Jesus answered and said, "I thank Thee, O Father Even so, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." Jesus delighted in the will of the Father. It was boundless, joyful confidence in the will of the Father which enabled Him to endure all He as Man had to endure on earth. Even at the last, this pierces through the surrounding agony: Nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be

done." And here, after thanking the Father, He says, "Take My yoke upon you." This was His yoke, a joyful embracing of the Father's will. This is the yoke He bids us, He invites us to take. God will always reveal His will clearly and unmistakably to those who are prepared, when the revelation of His will does come, to obey it entirely and immediately. There are some who do not know His will, because deep down in their hearts (they will not say so precisely), perhaps deceiving themselves, there is a purpose to obey immediately only that part of the revealed will which meets with their approval (either because it is easy to accomplish or because it will not cost much), leaving the rest (not deliberately meaning to disobey it) for some more convenient time. Not to obey is to disobey. We must make up our mind to obey entirely and immediately.

DIVINE SUSTAINMENT UNDER TRIAL.

What was that which in His bitterest and most abject moment sustained and consoled our blessed Lord? Was it the Godhead power? No; for it was not with Him, as we find Him saying, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" His sweetest sustainment arose out of His supreme love for, and devotedness as Man to, His heavenly Father; as we find by that word, "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" and by His reception of it, when He said, taking it up in His hand in Gethsemane, "Not My will, but Thine, be done." It was only this that was His sustainment. And what must be ours in the midst of our sorrow, or our solitudes or forebodings, but the same? It is a privilege we too little know to be like our blessed Lord in this, that we are brought by our cup of trial or sorrow into such close and endearing communion with the Father. Our cup of suffering comes from the same hand, has been prepared by the same love; and taking it as He did, we do as He did—get nearer to the Father, resting in Him, His nature, His will, His compassions, all which are Love.—[. Denham Smith.

THE BURDEN-BEARER.

"Cast thy burden on the Lord, and He shall sustain thee" (Psalm lv. 22).

NO weary burdens bear, But cast them all on Him; So shall thy cup of happiness Be filled up to the brim.

A blest tranquility
Is their's who trust the Lord;
Night's terrors dark they need not fear,
Nor pestilence, nor sword.

Safe and secure they rest
Beneath Jehovah's wing;
There, in the confidence of faith,
'Mid trouble they can sing.

Hid in the rock's strong cleft
The coney fears no harm;
The lion prowling far below
Wakes in her no alarm.

The daisy is secure

When oaks are downward hurled;
And those who hide in Christ are safe

Though judgments shake the world.

He'll carry thee Himselt,
And all thy burdens too;
He never standeth still perplexed,
Not knowing what to do.

Nought is too hard for Him;
His strength knows no decline;
Then, child of faith, lift up thy head,
That mighty God is thine. A. W. P. S.

THE INTERCESSION AND ADVOCACY OF CHRIST.

By GEORGE ADAM, Stranraer.

THIS subject is of such importance, and has so much to do with the peace of believers, and with their power to withstand the assaults of the adversary, that it deserves a more comprehensive notice than can be given to it in a brief answer to a question.

The question has often been asked, not in a curious way, but by those who have a godly desire to know the truth: Is the intercession of Christ active, or only passive? I have seen an answer given affirming that it is passive, and then another that it is active.

I do not believe that any answer which can be given to such a question will bring rest to the troubled heart of a child of God. It is very much like trying to lead a sinner into rest of conscience by discussing the question of the "extent of the atonement."

We did not find rest to our consciences by having the sufferings of Christ on the Cross analysed to our understandings. It was faith in, and appropriation of, its all-sufficiency to meet our individual case as guilty sinners which gave settled rest. It is very much the same regarding His present work of intercession before God. We do not find rest to our hearts and liberty in the presence of God by having His ministry now in heaven "analysed," so as to bring it down to the measure of our finite comprehension. faith in its all-sufficiency to meet all the claims of divine holiness and righteousness on his own individual account which gives rest and liberty to a believer in drawing near to God. It is not by comprehending Christ's intercession that we enjoy settled peace; it is by believing in it.

Romans viii. 33, 34 is very helpful in revealing the place which the intercession of Christ occupies in the economy of redemption. The Holy Spirit is there dealing with the perfect standing of a justified sinner before God. That perfect standing rests on four grand doctrines: "Christ died"; "He is risen again"; He is "even at the right hand of God"; "Who also maketh intercession for us."

To my mind it is clear that intercession has to do with the believer's standing before God, and is essential thereto. Christ's advocacy has to do with the believer's state, as it affects his fellowship with God as the Father. We shall see this more fully when we come to the doctrine of advocacy.

Let us be clear on this point, that neither the intercession nor the advocacy of Christ can be of the character of *inducing* God to be more willing than He is to continue to bless His children on the principles of perfect grace. Intercession must be something else than that. So the advocacy of Christ cannot be of the nature of securing a continuance of the Father's love, nor of inducing the Father to forgive the sinning child. The advocacy of Christ cannot be the procuring cause of either the Father's love or His forgiveness. The intercession and advocacy of Christ are a necessity arising out of the infinite holiness of God and the imperfection of His children. The blessed God has a character, and if believers so defiled and so unworthy are to have "access into this grace wherein we stand" (Rom. v. 2), then the holiness of the Name or character of God must be guarded. As far as I have light, this is the essence of intercession. It is to meet the demands of infinite holiness in allowing His children to draw near to Him, whilst there is so much within us and about us which is unfit for His presence.

We must also remember that the devil. as the "accuser of the brethren," has not yet been cast out of heaven (see Revelation xii.), and were it not for the intercession of Christ, he would effectually bar the way of access into the presence of God; and not only would he do this, but were it not for the intercession of Christ, the devil would slander the character of God, because of His admitting His children into His presence in our present imperfect condition. But Christ, "now in the presence of God for us" (Heb. ix. 24) as the once slain Lamb, refutes the accusations of the adversary; not by denying the truth of these accusations, but by showing that these very sins and imperfections which Satan brings up against the people of God were all judged and borne away on the Cross. It is in the light of the infinite holiness of the divine glory that the Spirit challenges all creation to lay anything to the charge of God's Elect (Rom. viii. 34), and He clenches His argument by the truth of Christ's present intercession for us in the presence of God.

When we come to look at the advocacy of Christ, it seems to me we have an entirely different line of thought. Here we have the Father and the child. In the line of truth we have been considering, it is God as the Judge (Rom. iii. 9-19), becoming the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus (verse 26). And not only this, but He allows them to have access into His presence, as if nothing had ever stood against them, Christ being there as the Intercessor, to silence the ad-

versary, and to vindicate the holiness of the Name of the LORD.

When we come to advocacy, it is *fellow-ship* which is the thought, not the believer's standing in the sight of law and justice.

I have long had a thought that the word "Advocate" in 1 John ii. 1 does not-as that word is now understood—convey a right The same word is rendered impression. "Comforter" in John xiv., xv., xvi., and conveys the thought of a helper. This word is applied to Christ in relation to a child of God who has fallen into sin (I John ii. I). Now, it seems to me it is the fallen child who needs help, not the Father. What a child who falls needs is to be lifted up again, and if he has got soiled in the fall, the filth has to be removed. The Father does not need to be entreated to forgive the child. passage in John xvi. 26, 27 fits beautifully in here, but it will not fit in with the doctrine of intercession at all. To my mind it was never designed to do so. It is helpful to contrast the above passage in John xvi. 26, 27 with 1 John iv. 19:" We love Him because He first loved us"; but here it is "the Father Himself loveth you because ye have loved Me." There is no contradiction between these two statements. In the first case it is love as it is revealed in John iii. 16, and is the procuring cause of our love to God, whilst in the latter case it is the Father's love to His children as such. By receiving Christ as the gift of God, we become His children, and have been loved ever since with a new love, because we are His children. To me it seems clear that the advocacy of Christ consists in keeping the children of God right with the Father, not the Father right with the children.

The Comforter with the believer and the Comforter with the Father are one and act in perfect harmony. The Holy Spirit in the believer leads the sinning one to confession, and directs the eye of faith to the Comforter or Advocate above; and Christ, as the Helper who is with the Father, takes the penitent child, so to speak, by the hand, and leads him back into the Father's presence, who is ever "faithful and just to forgive" and to restore to full fellowship. The restored soul then learns that although sin had shut him

out from the enjoyment of the Father's love, that love was never changed. Neither the Father's glory nor the good of His children could allow them to enjoy His love whilst they walk in forbidden paths, but His love never changes. But let us ever bear in mind that the action of Father, Son, and Spirit in restoring a sinning believer to fellowship is all based upon the propitiatory work of Christ.

God could never deal in grace with an unsaved sinner, or with one of His own children about sin, except upon the ground of perfect atonement. When we think of how God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have each His own office to fill in convicting, restoring, and forgiving a sinning child of God, the thought fills the heart, "How precious the children of God must be to Him, and what delight He must take in the fellowship of His own children, when He has made such abundant provision for their coming into, and dwelling in, the light and love of His presence!"

CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

Notes of an Address by Mr. James Wright, Bristol, on Psalm xi.

AVID speaks here as became a man after God's own heart, "In the Lord put I my trust." Sometimes very different utterances escaped his lips, as, "I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul," but his course of life is expressed in this first utterance, "In Jehovah put I my trust." God looked at the whole tenor of his course. It was when hotly pursued by Saul that the expression escaped him, "I shall one day perish." His experience with Saul just taught him what another servant of God in a later dispensation expresses in these words, "All flesh is grass." It is very remarkable that the words, "In Jehovah put I my trust," should have been uttered just after David gave way to unbelief. How blessed is that word of Peter just after his fall, "Kept by the power of God through faith" —by faith we overcome.

In this happy state of soul David was able to reprove those around him who counselled him to doubt God—as did Nehemiah—"Should such a man as I flee" (Neh. vi. 11)?

David was at that time entering into his relationship with God. Unbelief could adduce very plausible arguments, "For lo, the wicked bend their bow," This is the reason why you should flee, "They make ready their arrows upon the string that they may privily shoot," etc. It was an undeniable fact that Saul was seeking his life. Thus, when unbelief argues with us it often brings facts, and "facts are stubborn things." But David at this time was trusting in God. "The king shall joy in Thy strength, O Lord; and in Thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice" (Psa. xxi. 1).

Unbelief has another very strong argument in this Psalm. "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" "What can you do, David?" It looks as if the trusting one would have to give way: but faith in answer to these plausible arguments just does as Stephen did, "Looks up steadfastly into heaven."

"Jehovah is in His holy temple; the Lord's throne is in heaven." Faith sees a Temple the foundations of which are immovable.

David was very much occupied with the temple; it was his life-work to build a house for Jehovah, and it was God's purpose to establish David's throne. Have we not, beloved friends, in this beautiful shadow a type of the true Temple, the Lord Jesus Christ? What did He say? "Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up." He showed that the foundation of this Temple was laid in His death and resurrection, and we are built on Him. Jehovah is not in His throne but in His temple. The Lord Jesus Christ was promised a throne, but see the order:

The temple was founded in His humiliation and death; "therefore God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name." David was not filled with the thought of making for himself a throne when he built the temple. It was God's thought to make David a throne. "This is not after the manner of man, O Lord!" It is so instructive to see that David's thought was not to build a throne for himself. This was pre-eminently true of a greater than David. His thought was

to build a house. "He loved the Church and gave Himself or it." It was God who gave Him a throne. God has wondrous counsels in regard to us. "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God." Pillars are not always for support. They are erected for memorial tablets (Rev. iii. 12); we are pillars upon which shall be inscribed the wonders of grace. More than that, in the end of the chapter we read, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne." The same ground or principle—the ground of union with Himself by faith.

"His eyelids try the children of men." David said, "I am a righteous one, and the Lord is trying me." The object of trial is not to destroy but to refine. The refiner highly values the metal, and seeks to purify it from dross. God treats the wicked as dross-"Upon the wicked He shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their That cup was our due—fire and brimstone—that is the righteous portion of every finally impenitent sinner, and but for the infinite grace of God, we should be drinking, or going on to drink of it now, had He not said, "The cup that my Father giveth Me, shall I not drink it?" Our sins added to that bitter cup. Now He has put another cup into our hands. "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord."

"For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness; His countenance doth behold the upright." This is for each one of us sinners saved by grace. He beholds us with complacency. "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand." Perpetual favour—we stand in it, because brought nigh by the blood of His cross. Let us rejoice in that sunshine day by day, and never be drawn into the dark caverns of unbelief. If we do not apprehend it, let us never put the blame on God, but let us see to it that the cause of our nonapprehension is not allowed sin. We stand in grace, but directly we allow sin, our apprehension of it ceases.

BIBLE STUDIES.

Hands, Eccl. ix. 10; Pro. xxxi. 13; Acts ix. 39 Lips, - Prov. iv. 24; x. 13; xiii. 3. Hearts, - Prov. iv. 23; x. 8; xvi. 5. Eyes, - Prov. iv. 25; xvi. 30; xx. 13. M. E. S.

THREE THOUGHTS IN PHILIPPIANS.

Work begun - - - chap. i. 6
Work being carried on - chap. ii. 12, 13
Work completed - - chap. iii. 23
w.].

TWO GREAT ISSUES.

I The issues of life - Prov. iv. 23
2 The issues of death - Ps. lxviii. 20

The word issue is capable of many meanings, but the sense in which it is employed here is as the end or ultimate result of either life or death.

T. B.

Correspondence.

ADAM MILLIGAN, of KILMARNOCK.

To the Editor of THE WITNESS.

DEAR SIR,—As we went to Kilmarnock lately to the funeral of our brother this passage kept coming into mind, "Know ye not that a prince is fallen in Israel," and although perhaps not so well known as many servants of the Lord who have a more public ministry, yet we believe the words quoted truly indicate the character of Adam Milligan.

Our brother spent the greater part of his life in connection with the assembly meeting in Waterloo Hall, Kilmarnock. He was not a preacher, nor a teacher, and his voice was rarely heard in public, yet all the same he must be well known to many a Christian in this land, and in other lands, who came in contact with him through his devoted life and ministry.

Those of us who knew him best indeed feel we have lost a friend and brother of no common order, and many a time the writer was cheered in his visits to Kilmarnock, on arriving at the Railway Station to find dear Adam there with his quiet and cordial welcome.

His house was always open, and his devoted wife, with the cares of a young family, was not a whit behind him in the service of hospitality. Many a timehis house was used to gather together various elder brethren to confer about some young brother who was exercised about work in other lands, and the going forth of Messrs.

Wilson and Anderson was thus arranged under his loving roof.

He was converted at the early age of twelveand-a-half years, and baptised and received into fellowship shortly afterwards. At the age of thirteen years, it is told, he would go with his worthy old grandfather, the late William Justice, of Ayr, to carry a banner at the Ayr Races, while the old man preached a warning to the "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." For over twenty years he served the saints, and although his own estimate of his service was very lowly, yet it was highly valued by others. He was assuredly a God-given pastor; the saints were upon his heart; he knew them all by name; he sought out the sorrowing, and comforted them; the weak, and strengthened them; the unruly, and warned them; the backslider, and tried to restore them.

He was a man of order and method, and when any of us knew that Adam Milligan had the arranging of any business relating to the work of the Lord we felt satisfied that it would be carried through in an orderly and godly way.

He only served one earthly master, and remained with him twenty-four years. This gentleman stood by his graveside and helped to lower the coffin. His testimony was that he never had a difference with him, and he did not think he would ever look upon his like again. Adam's service to his earthly master was unto the Lord, and therefore he was blest.

He died at the early age of thirty-nine, leaving behind him a sorrowing wife (who was in every sense a true helpmeet) and a young family. In 1898 he was advised to visit Australia with the hope that his health would be restored, but he returned in the following year without any improvement, thankful to get back, as his heart's affections were among the Lord's people whom he had served so long.

One or two lessons might be pointed out rom the life and service of our loved brother: Firstly, He was converted at a very early age, showing the value of early conversion, which was proved by a long life of service afterwards; secondly, that a man may be a great blessing in the Church by humble, Christ-like devotedness, although he has no public gift, and therefore this may well encourage many a weary worker in the Lord's vineyard whose name is very little known among men, but whose work is recorded on high, and may meet with a higher reward than much which is seen by men.

The deepest sympathy of many goes forth to Mrs. Milligan and her children, believing God will care for them and reward them for loving service in days gone past, also his mother and other relations.

T. M'L.

THE LORD'S WORK IN TASMANIA AND NEW ZEALAND.

To the Editor of THE WITNESS.

DEAR SIR,—Since I last wrote you we have been privileged, in health and peace, to continue our visits to assemblies of God in the Southern Hemisphere.

We spent in all about five weeks in Tasmania. It is the smallest colony of the Australasian group, both in size and population. The climate is rather like that of England, and the conditions. of life differ somewhat from the colonies previously visited. The business pressure is not generally so great; the people are simpler and more ready to listen to the preaching of the Gospel. There are, I think, about twenty assemblies in different parts of the island. And though no one gives himself wholly to labouring in the Gospel, or in word and doctrine amongst them, on the whole they seem to go along happily, in the main answering the purposes of scripturally-gathered Churches. They are helped by conferences for believers at different centres, when they are visited by ministering brethren from Victoria and elsewhere, some of whom give themselves wholly to the work, such as Messrs. Ord, Grove, and Brewster. among themselves there are some wise, experienced, and faithful men for whose lives and labours we thank God. The special need at present seems to be for two or more gifted and spiritual gospellers, who would go in for aggressive work, and plod on. Such, I am sure, would be welcomed by many.

From there we took ship for New Zealand, more than one thousand miles from Hobart. Our first stopping-place was at Invercargill, where we were heartily welcomed, and spent eight or ten days ministering the Word of God among saved and unsaved. At this place there is one of the largest and, I judge, one of the heartiest assemblies we have had fellowship with in the colonies. The amount of Gospel work regularly carried on might put many a larger and more gifted assembly to shame. May they be all kept simple and humble, and become increasingly useful to the Master!

At Christmas time we were present at three all-day meetings for believers at Christchurch; at New Year time we were at similar meetings at Dunedin. The average attendance at the meetings, I should think, was about 250. Visiting brethren occupied most of the time in speaking. The meetings were generally spoken of as being humbling and refreshing—leading us to see more and more beauty in Christ, and less and

less in ourselves to be satisfied with.

We passed northwards, spending a few days at Wellington, Napier, Palmerston North, Waverley,

&c., and finishing up with Auckland. must not occupy space to speak particularly of these places. We were led to expect to find a good many more, and larger, and heartier assemblies in New Zealand than were to be found in Australia proper. We were not disappointed. There are now more assemblies in New Zealand than in all the other colonies combined, and all these, practically, have been gathered through the labours of evangelists within the past fifteen or twenty years. The people are simpler, and more like old-country people in their reverence for the Word of God. But I mention two facts which help to explain to me the contrast between this and Australia in the matter of simple assemblies. First, there are now in New Zealand considerably more brethren giving their whole time to itinerating and aggressive Gospel work than all the other colonies combined; second, few in New Zealand were carried away by the one-sided and extreme teachings as to assemblies which wrought such havoc in Melbourne, Sydney, and elsewhere. For these ninety or so scripturally-gathered Churches in New Zealand we may well thank God, while continuing to remember them in prayer.

We are seventeen days out from Auckland, and hope to reach San Francisco in two days' We purpose spending a few weeks in America, but hope to reach England by the end

of May. "Brethren, pray for us." Yours in that blessed hope,

I. NORMAN CASE.

S. S. Maribosa.

Nearing San Francisco, 7th March, 1900.

Questions and Answers.

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

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 are most thankful to all our friends who have endea-voured to help us by replying to Questions, but the Editor hopes that Correspondents will study brevity, and when too long he will take the liberty of "using the scissors" freely in preference to rejecting Answers, on account of their length, in which there may be points of value.

REPLIES ARE INVITED TO THE FOLLOWING:

STATEMENTS CONCERNING JUSTIFICATION — How Reconciled? — How can James ii. 24, "By works a man is justified," be reconciled with Romans v. 1, "Being justified by faith"?

AN OLD TESTAMENT APPARENT CONTRADIC-TION.—According to Numbers xviii. 18 the firstling was for the priest, but according to Deut. xv. 20 the owner and his household were to eat it before the Lord. According to Numbers xviii.

21 to 32 the tithes were for the Levites, but according to Deut. xii. 18 every man, with his household, and the Levite within his gates, was to eat the tithes before the Lord. Please explain these apparent contradictions, and also notice Deut. xiv. 28, 29.

Correct Order of "Reception."—If no form of procedure is prescribed in the New Testament for the receiving of a believer, what then is the proper course to adopt, or what principles ought to guide?

LIVING OF THE GOSPEL.—What is meant by these words in 1 Cor. ix. 14: "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel?" If it mean that those who preach the gospel should in temporal things be ministered to by those who hear the gospel, why is there not opportunity given in our gospel meetings for such ministry?

CONDITIONAL LIFE-TEXTS TO EXPLAIN.

QUESTION 411.—Luke xii. 45, 46; Matt. xxiv. 48-51. Please explain how, in the face of these and similar Scriptures, a man can preach a free, full, and unconditional salvation by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ: saved once and for ever? The above Scriptures seem to grant the servant life on condition of faithfulness, and to teach Methodism straight.

Answer A.—If we notice the distinction which God's Word makes between a "servant" and a "son," we have no difficulty in understanding the above scriptures. The Jews all considered themselves "servants" of God. What sort of servants they were may be seen in Malachi i. 6, 10. But the "servants" who alone are acceptable to God are seen in chapter iii. 16, 17: "They shall be Mine and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." Believers are "created (i.e., made sons) in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. ii. 10). "The servant abideth not in the house for ever; but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John viii. 35, 36). "God sent forth His Son . . . to redeem, . . . that we might receive the adoption of sons. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ" (Gal. iv. 4-7). In Gal. iii. 21 we read: "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law;" in which case eternal life would have been given or withheld according to the merits of faithful or unfaithful servants. But the next verse adds: "The Scripture hath concluded all under sin,

that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (verse 26). "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye... heirs according to the promise" (verse 29), and "all the promises of God in Him are Yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." "Who establisheth us, and hath also sealed us," &c. (2 Cor. i. 20, 22). But what sadly imperfect servants of God some of these were who were "sealed" as "sons," the verses which follow the above, and also the next chapter, show.

Here Psalm lxxxix. comes in most helpfully, more especially verses 27-37: "I will make Him, my Firstborn (this was spoken prophetically of Christ), higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for Him for evermore. . . . His seed also will I make to endure for ever. If His children forsake My law, if they keep not My commandments—(mark carefully the next words: God does not say, 'then will I cut them off and appoint them their portion with unbelievers,' as He does to the unfaithful servant of Luke xii. 46, but)—then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes" (i.e., "with the rod of men and stripes of the children of men," as in 2 Sam. vii. 14, 15; and we get the same truth in John xv. 6, where our Lord says of those who abide not in Him, "Men gather them, and they are cast into the fire and burned." This is not the lake of fire, for none but God has power to cast into eternal fire, but is the same as what the Apostle Paul calls "the destruction of the flesh," as in 1 Cor. v. 5 and 1 Tim. 1. 19, 20). "Nevertheless," and here we come to the point at issue, "My lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer My faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of My lips. Once have I sworn by My holiness, I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, as a faithful witness in heaven."

Yes, God has pledged Himself to save eternally every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and each one will bear everlasting witness to God's faithfulness, showing the exceeding greatness of His power and the exceeding riches of His grace (Eph. i. 19; ii. 7). Though once "by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. ii. 3), having become "children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26), the wrath of God can never come upon such, since God's Word declares, "When we (believers) are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (I Cor. xi. 32).

Answer B.—These passages are similar, and are addressed to those who, as the Jews did,

take the ground of being the professed followers of the Lord. The Jews were warned (as in John viii. 31-59, which see) that all profession is duly tested, and that true condition is proved and manifested by "patient continuance in well-doing" (Rom. ii. 6-11). The question of how to obtain such true condition (see Titus ii. 11-14) is not here entered into.

A. O. M.

Editor's Note.—We are persuaded that the distinction between "sons" and "servants" affords the key to the questioner's difficulty as to these and many other passages. The servant is ever liable to dismissal. Sonship is an indissoluble relationship, and is eternal. In this respect of responsibility Christendom unregenerate is very much on a par with Israel after the flesh. They have the knowledge of God in the Scriptures more or less at their finger ends, and profess and call themselves Christians.

INFECTION AND ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS.

QUESTION 412.—Is it according to the mind of the Lord to hinder a brother from breaking bread with the Lord's people because of fever being in his home?

Answer A.—Although sympathising with enquirer, I earnestly feel that it would be right in the Lord's eyes to remain away from the Lord's table or any other meeting during the period of infection, as a risk to a community would result

from one person's error.

Knowing that nothing happens to any child of God without His cognition and permission, He must of necessity work good out of it all. Probably the isolated one would be blessed in a manner he could not have been if otherwise situated. God can keep his children free from fevers or any manner of disease, but He also gives wisdom and discretion not to discard the laws of nature when avoidable, and quarantine is a wise precaution.

M. R.

Answer B.—If there be any infectious disease in a brother's home, his own good sense ought to tell him that he is endangering the health of others by mingling with them, and his own mind can hardly be in a right state if he persists in doing so after the impropriety of his conduct has been lovingly put before him. The Lord would have us do to others as we would have others do to us (Luke xi. 31).

W. D. B.

Answer C.—In cases of violent infectious diseases the brother's presence would be dangerous, particularly at breaking of bread, and if he had not considerate prudence (some Christians lack here) to stay away, it would be right to make representation to him. His absence would be as justifiable as if he was ill himself.

It would not be the Lord's mind to endanger others, though in some cases timorous souls might exaggerate the danger. Yet it would be better to practically compassionate their own fearfulness even then. No hard and fast rule can be laid down. Such cases demand godly wisdom. The general rules apply. "Follow atter that which is good one toward another. Consider one another."

J. H. H.

Editor's Note.—"Circumstances alter cases;" and this saying specially applies to infection. In some houses the sick one can be so isolated that persons coming from other parts of the house are hardly liable to carry infection. In other cases—the house being small—isolation is impracticable. Again, some through ignorance of the danger, and some through faith, have no fear of infection. Some have never experienced the sorrowful results of infectious disease in their household; others have had bitter experience of it, and dread it greatly. The strong may regard this as weakness; be it so, they that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please themselves. If, in deference to the fears of others, one who is "strong" absents himself from the "breaking of bread," he will surely be no loser by so acting. It is after the spirit of Christ, and is very different from one absenting himself through indifference,

WHY WAS THE LAW GIVEN?

QUESTION 413.—Does Gal. iii. 21, "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law," teach that the law was not given to be kept?

Answer A.—The law was "added because of transgressions" (verse 19). "By the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom 3. 20); "Moreover, the law entered that the offence might abound" (Rom. 5. 20). These scriptures show that God's object in giving the law was to prove to man his sinfulness, and to take away his ground of self-boasting. The law in itself is "holy, just, and good," but addressed to men in the flesh who are sinful to the core, it only reveals antagonism towards God, and self-inability to love or keep it. Addressed to men in the Spirit, i.e., born again, it finds holy response (see Rom. 8. 1-14).

Answer B.—The law was added to manifest to man the sin which God knew to be in him (verse 19; Rom. 5. 20), and that he never could attain to righteousness by that means; but it provided no remedy. It had sacrifices and purifications, manifestly insufficient to take away sins, which yet were typical of Christ and His expiation. It thus shut man up in his sinfulness, impotence, and hopelessness to the promised and foreshadowed Redeemer.

It was not given to be kept as a law of life, yet compliance was justly demanded. The law in itself was just, and holy, and good. None of its precepts were merely arbitrary. God's constant indictment against rebellious Israel was that they did not keep His commandments and his statues. It was ordained until the time appointed, and could not be set aside.

J. H. H.

Answer C.—I. "The Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another" (Rom. ii. 14, 15). "They are without excuse" (Rom. i. 20). "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Rom. iii. 19). We thus see that, whilst the Gentile was already "without excuse," the mouth of the privileged Jew had also to be stopped, and for this purpose the law was given. It will do the same for all who vainly trust in creature merit, and make their "boast of the law."

2. Gal. iii. 21 teaches that the law cannot give life, and Rom. vii. 9-13 that it rather kills. If I use the law aright I shall say, "O wretched man that I am," and forthwith seek deliverance "through Jesus Christ our Lord." w. H.

Editor's Note.—The scriptures referred to in the foregoing replies show clearly that the law was not given with the intent that man by keeping it should obtain righteousness before God, but rather to prove and manifest his inability to do so.

Nevertheless, to assume that it was not given to be kept, is unwarrantable. The Lord Jesus kept it. "Love is the fulfilling of the law." "The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in those who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit." He who is subject to Christ as Lord, and who follows His example, will never become a law-breaker.

Even under the old covenant there was a measure of blessing vouchsafed to those who, however imperfectly, honoured the law. So long as Israel, nationally, kept even the first two of the ten commandments, it went well with them. And still, if nation, family, or individual will honestly take the law of God as their standard of morality, it would surely prove to be for their good.

There is no other summing up in existence of the will of God concerning man, nor is there anything at all comparable to it as a rule of life for man in the flesh.

HIS DWELLING-PLACE AND HIS DOMINION.

By JAMES WRIGHT, Ashley Down, Bristol.

"A LL that are able to go to war in Israel" (Numbers xxvi. 2). This sentence presents the redeemed people of Jehovah in one especial aspect, as the host of the Lord, that is, the armed host of the Lord, implying, you see, conflict. Reference is made to this in Psalm cxiv. 2, a remarkable passage where two aspects of the redeemed people are given: "When Israel went out of Egypt," sheltered by blood from judgment, brought out through the Red Sea into the wilderness.

- I. JUDAH WAS HIS SANCTUARY.
- 2. ISRAEL HIS DOMINION.

Two names of His redeemed people. The first presents them as the place where He would dwell. He said afterwards, "Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them" (Ex. xxv. 8). There was the tent made with hands, but the real dwelling-place was the people of God, and God first gives a hint there of His ultimate de-In Revelation xxi. you will find a glorious time spoken of: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." God will never have His ultimate purpose finally frustrated—He will bring it to pass. A great many things may happen between this and that, and, sometimes, apparently, occurrences very unfavourable to that end, but the time will come when God's tabernacle shall be with men, and He shall dwell with them, yes, on this very earth, but it will be a new earth (Rev. xxi. 1).

Now, Jehovah's dwelling-place was with a people which He had separated from all other nations. He chose one man, Abraham, and of him made a nation. It was a grand point to make that nation

HIS DWELLING-PLACE.

We find no other instance of such a thing, and can give no other account of it, but that He chose it. And the redeemed heart just delights in the manifestation of His pleasure in any detail, and this will be one of our con-

templations throughout eternity, the design of God's wisdom in that chosen nation. Aye, and when He had chosen it He arranged the positions of all the other nations with reference to Israel. "He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel" (Deut. xxxii. 8). But the same people were

"HIS DOMINION,"

the place where He ruled—"the sphere of His influence," as the phrase goes now. Does that mean that only Israel was to be the sphere of His rule? Does it mean that the literal Israel were to be His people, who would acknowledge His rule and submit to No; they were stiff-necked, and did not answer His purpose, but "all Israel shall be saved" (Rom. xi. 26)—all brought into the promised land—the Spirit poured on them from on high. They will become a righteous nation, and that word will be true, "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation, which keepeth the truth, may enter in" (Isaiah xxvi. 2), and God will make them again His dominion. They will be wholly His dominion—all the nation, and the individuals composing that nation—and they will be found delighting in doing the will of God, carrying out the will of God.

Ah, but it means more than that! means not only that He chose that nation to be subject to His rule, but another glorious thing, it means that they will be the willing instruments, in the hand of Jehovah, of extending that influence. The nation of Israel will be God's great "Salvation Army," God's great army of missionaries, and in the Millennium they will carry the knowledge of God to the uttermost parts of the earth, and then will come at last the fulfilment of that word, "It shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it" (Isa. ii. 2). whole trend of national desire in that blessed time of Christ's reign will be towards God's earthly sanctuary at Jerusalem.

Of their own accord they will say (because He makes them willing in the day of His power), "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord" (Isa. ii. 3). It is not yet, but it will be, blessed be God!

Look at two passages only that speak of that day. Luke i. 32, 33, where the angel, speaking to Mary of the One to whom she was to give birth, says: "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end." There you see the connection with the chosen seed. "Made of the seed of David, according to the flesh." That is one part of the Gospel, according to the definition given by Paul in Romans i. "And declared to be the Son of God with power"—the God-Man. But He was a man in the line of David, of Abraham. He took the flesh and blood of the chosen people, "Of whom, concerning the flesh, Christ came" (Rom. ix. 5), so "The Lord shall give unto Him the throne of His father David" (Luke i. 32). That will be

A UNIVERSAL DOMINION.

One more passage, Daniel vii. 13, 14, where we have it from the heavenward side. The passage in Luke shows that the Son of David will have it, now this shows how David's Lord will have it—the same Divine Person. "I saw in the night visions, and behold, One like unto the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." It was the fulfilment of that prediction that the Lord Jesus brought before Pilate, when He challenged Him to say whether He was the Christ.

Between the time when the Lord told Moses to number the host of the Lord in the plains of Moab and the period to which we look on in the prophetic word, is a long interval. And, by-the-by, that expression, "host of the Lord," is used by the Lord Jesus Himself in speaking to

Joshua (Josh. v. 13-15), where He appeared as "Captain of the host of the Lord." He named Himself as such.

This numbering of the host of the Lord in the plains of Moab, the aggregation of all the chosen people of Jehovah, who were able to go to war, was a definite stage in the accomplishment of this ultimate purpose of which we have been speaking. You can easily see it. God reveals His purpose to dwell among men, to have a dominion coextensive with the whole human race, and that shall be in the hands of One—His own Son—who in the likeness of sinful flesh suffered on the Cross, and who will have universal dominion

AS THE REWARD OF THAT HUMILIATION

and obedience. He reveals that as the ultimate scope of His purpose, and goes step by step toward that purpose. He chose a nation—allowed that nation to go down to Egypt, and to be in bondage—to be redeemed, brought out into the wilderness, and thus to show that this redeemed people is His army, His host, with which He will crush His enemies.

You see evil is in the world (it is not a question for us how it came), and Satan has power as the god of this world, and therefore there must be conflict in this world, whatever the dispensation—conflict between a holy God and evil—conflict manifested in one form under one dispensation, and in another form under another. But the holy God, the righteous God, hates sin, and must punish sin; as Sovereign He must exert His power to put down the evil which assaults His throne. Only, in different dispensations you see the thing going on in different ways

Now God calls out a host to be His army, to do conflict with flesh and blood with His enemies, the seven nations o Canaan. Why were they enemies? "By wicked works." They were nations with whom He bore most patiently till the cup of their iniquity was full, but now thei time had come, and He must sweep thes seven nations off the earth.

By their sins they had defiled the land and it "spued them out" (Lev. xviii. 28). I could not bear to be trodden by such

people, and Israel was God's sword in accomplishing this. You see from the book of Joshua how rapidly it was done, city after city, none left that breathed—so awful is God's judgment when executed.

But there is a long interval between this stage in God's purpose and the period to which we look on in the prophetic Word; but it went on-God was obliged to set aside Israel. Why? Because they in ignorance did not recognise the Prince of Life, and instead of owning Him as King of kings, threw Him back, as it were, in the face of God. "We will not have this Man to reign over us" (Luke xix. 14). Thus He has ceased His dealings with Israel since the Cross, only preserving them, and they remain in full vital energy as a nation, notwithstanding the centuries that have passed, not decaying, but retaining their full vigour. What are they doing? Waiting for their restoration, waiting for their land. It will never be at peace till then. Israel is

THE TRUE SOLUTION OF THE EASTERN OUESTION.

They will go back. After they have gone through the furnace of affliction, the Great Tribulation, they will be brought into the secure blessings of the Millennial kingdom. But during this interval God is dealing eminently in grace with this sinful world, and taking out of every tribe and nation "a people for His name" (Acts xv. 14). A very different procedure from taking one nation and having nothing to say to any other nation, except to the few who came to trust under His wings, like Ruth. But now He is dealing in quite a different way.

He is sending the message of salvation to all people, and gathering out of all nations an elect people, who form the Church the Body of Christ, and when that is accomplished He will take up Israel again.

Now, as they had an earthly warfare, so we have a warfare. Ours is a perfectly different position. They had an earthly inheritance and promises. We are "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. i. 3), and all our blessings are characteristically spiritual. And now we, because of the evil all around, because

of the evil in our hearts and in the world, have conflict, but a totally different conflict from that which these hosts of the Lord had to wage. We have not to take our sword and plunge it into men and women, slaying them by tens. "The Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Luke ix. 56), and so we ought not to be destroyers of men's lives. Ephesians vi. deals with our warfare. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." There the Holy Spirit plainly shows me the sphere of my warfare—it is wholly spiritual, and has nothing to do with carnal weapons. So the apostle says, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds" (2 Cor. x. 4). "Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (verse 5). That is a totally different warfare, you see at a glance. But inasmuch as both warfares are ordained of God, contemplated and provided for of God, we are instructed by the principles of older warfare as to our combat, for the rules' as to *Israel's* warfare contain profitable principles for our guidance.

To be followed by "Israel's Warfare Typical of Christian Combat." The necessary qualifications.

GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE-XVIII.

Offerings," &c.

"ALL ISRAEL SHALL BE SAVED."

By J. R. CALDWELL, Author of "Things to Come," "Christ
in Hebrews," "Farthly Relationships," "Levitical

I T has already been shown from Scripture that the future restoration of Israel will be spiritual as well as national. That which has at present begun will probably very soon become a recognised national movement, but it is purely of the will of man. It is an unbelieving generation that is returning to the land. It is so predicted by the Lord in that solemn parable in Matt. xii. 43-45. The unclean, idolatrous spirit has truly been cast out, but seven other spirits of evil shall have possession, and the last state of that generation shall be worse than the first.

Not so will it be when according to the New Covenant promises Jehovah restores them. The spirit of grace and of supplication shall have been poured upon them according to Zech. xii. ro, producing genuine confession of sin, and chiefly of the sin of the rejection of Christ, and the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness will be availed of, and its boundless efficacy proved.

"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: . . . a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: . . . and I shall cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be My people, and I will be your God" (Ezek. xxxvi. 25-28).

Then

"The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity" (Isa. xxxiii. 24).

A delightsome land it will be indeed! No sickness, no suffering, no death, except it be in judgment for transgression or of the very aged. "The child shall die an hundred years old"; that is to say, at the age of an hundred years he will be in comparison but a child, for the length of human life will be extended again as before the flood:

"For as the days of a tree are the days of My people, and Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands" (Isa. lxv. 20-22).

"I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in

her, nor the voice of crying."

There shall be no more war, for the nations shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: peace and plenty shall be found in all their borders. Special, evident, and instant answers to prayer will be given:

"Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."

The very nature of the wild beasts will be changed:

"The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like a bullock."

"The leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together."

"They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. xi. 6-9).

The present experience of the believer is necessarily one of conflict. Not necessarily of defeat, for the presence and indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the guarantee of victory to faith. But conflict it must be, for the

flesh in the believer is unchanged; the devil is loose in the world, ever on the watch, with his legions of emissaries, to deceive and lead astray by his subtlety, or to harass by his fiery darts, or to assault as a roaring lion the children of God: and the world is one vast network of entanglement and temptation, one organised force of opposition, devised and marshalled with the experience of six thousand years by the arch enemy of God and man.

In the age to come all this will be changed. Satan chained and cast into the abyss can no longer tempt and harass. The world, remodelled by the power of Christ, shall no longer be a snare to the saints, but a fitting sphere of intelligent occupation and enjoyment. The flesh, no longer acted upon and inflamed by Satanic and worldly influences, but disciplined and held in control, will be powerless to assert itself against the spiritual force of the new nature.

The shortness of time, the presence of evil, the liability to disaster, the fear of disease and death laying claim to those we love, considerations which ever mar the enjoyment of earthly things in this present age, will all be absent then.

It will be the fulfilment of all that the heart of man has craved for, and imagined,

and vainly sought after since the fall.

Whilst the land of Israel will thus be the scene of gladness and glory unparalleled, Jerusalem will be pre-eminently glorious with the presence of the Lord. The name of the city from that day will be "Jehovah Shammah"—"the Lord is there" (Ezek. xlviii. 35).

In Jerusalem, "Holiness to the Lord," the very inscription that was graven in the plate of gold borne on the mitre of the high priest, will be inscribed upon the bridles of

the horses, and

"Every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of Hosts" (Zech. xiv. 20, 21). "The streets of the city shall be full of boys and

girls playing in the streets thereof."

"Thus saith Jehovah; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the Lord of Hosts the holy mountain" (Zech. viii. 3).

God never did own more than one place of worship upon earth. Even when Israel

was divided into separate kingdoms it was Jeroboam's crime perpetuated by the kings of Israel, that Jerusalem, the place which He chose out of all the tribes to put His Name there, was set aside and another centre of worship set up, and another order of priesthood and ordinances devised.

In the coming day of glory, when Jehovah, the Lord Jesus, shall be King over all the earth, there will only be the one centre of

worship.

"It shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it; and many people shall go and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountains of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isa. ii. 2, 3).

"Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve Him, and to love the Name of the Lord, to be His servants, every one that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of My covenant; even them will I bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer: their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be called an house of prayer for all people" (Isa. lvi. 6, 7).

"It shall come that I will gather all nations and tongues, and they shall come and see My glory"

(Isa. lxvi. 18)

"And it shall come to pass that from one new moon to another . . . shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith the Lord" (verse 23).

But the blessing will not be limited to Israel. The promise to Abram, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," must be literally fulfilled. Just now the grace of God is for "all nations," but whilst many out of the nations are being blessed, the nations, as such, are yet under the power of Satan. But in that day the nations shall share the blessings of the kingdom.

"Israel shall blossom and bud and fill the face of the world with fruit" (Isa. xxvii. 6).

They shall be known as "Jehovah's priests," and as "the ministers of our God" (Isa. lxi. 6).

"And it shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen, . . . so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing" (Zech. viii. 13).

The prayer "Thy kingdom come" will no longer be heard, for the promised kingdom of heaven shall indeed have come, and the King who hung on Calvary's cross will reign enthroned the Sovereign Lord of all.

"A HOLY THING UNTO THE LORD."

Leviticus xxvii. 23.

THIS is a remarkable chapter; it comes up rather abruptly, and at first sight appears somewhat uninteresting. But sometimes gold is found where least expected, and it so here. Herein lie principles and truths of practical importance. The special form has passed away, but the principle remains.

The chapter relates to extraordinary vows; to things not exactly obligatory, but nevertheless encouraged and provided for, viz., the dedication of persons and property to the Lord. Notice:

1. The thing contemplated or suggested.—It is anticipated that Israelites will at various times, as an expression of gratitude for mercies and special providences, make such vows as those indicated. Observe, it is not prescribed that they shall do it, but it is clearly indicated that such acts will be acceptable. The laws really contain suggestions. Room is left for something over and above prescribed duty; a spirit of devotion is expected and encouraged. And so it is now. There are, indeed, prescribed duties which are of the very essence of Christianity, but they do not cover everything. There is room for Christian affection to work and expand in acts of voluntary service. Love asks, not, What must I do? but, What may I Christ does not order the alabaster boxes to be lavished on Him, but if love brings them He will gratefully accept them. Observe:

2. The conditions of acceptance.—In all these acts an Israelite had to remember that he was dealing with a holy God. He could not do exactly as he liked. There was room for freewill but not for selfwill. instance, someone now wished to make a present to the Queen, he could not act as he would in the case of an ordinary or private friend. He would, in making his presentation, have to conform to certain rules of Court etiquette. We need not wonder, therefore, that the King of kings lays down certain conditions to be observed in the making of these special vows. So we find rules as to the estimation of value, the specification of things which might or might not be dedicated, and one express rule forbidding exchanges. There

must be no unholy freedom, but the greatest reverence in approaching God with such offerings. They were not to imagine that God was laid under any obligation by their vows—the truth was rather the other way; they were laid under obligation by His acceptance. But the next point is one of much importance, viz.:

3. The seriousness with which God regarded the whole matter.—All the conditions laid down show this, but especially the one forbidding any exchange. Here is a principle touching voluntary service now, and it is one often forgotten. They were free to vow or not to vow, but once they had vowed they were to abide by it. God would have no trifling or mockery; everything must be sober, serious, earnest. Better that they should not vow than vow and not pay. Ananias and Sapphira were free to give or not give their property, but God abhorred their dissimulation in offering as they did. Now, how does this touch Christian service at the present time? In this way: You resolve to devote a portion of your time to the service of God as preacher, Sundayschool teacher, tract distributor, district visitor, singer in the choir, or in one of the many forms of voluntary Christian work. How do you regard this purpose? Do you look upon it as a holy thing unto the Lord? It is to be feared that very many who take such work upon themselves do so with the idea that, being a perfectly voluntary thing, they can take it up or lay it down at pleasure; they can be present or absent as suits them best; in fact, that they can study their own convenience, and can lay down the work either when they become disinclined for it, or when they take offence at something done by a fellow-worker. Does not this explain many an irregular attendance on the part of Christian workers? Is not the work too often taken up in a dilettante spirit, instead of being done seriously as unto God? Surely all Christian workers should endeavour to write upon all their undertakings, a holy thing unto the Lord. Then with punctuality, fidelity, and regularity would all the work be done. We expect God to keep his word with us; let us, then, keep our word with Him. Finally, consider:

4. The importance of the Divine estimation.—Note how often the phrase "thy estimation" occurs throughout the chapter. The priest was the representative of God, and his valuation (not the offerer's) settled everything.

How significant! We are not competent for the estimation; we are not sufficiently disinterested. It would be well for us to remember this in regard to "sinless perfection." It is God's business to estimate, not The Divine and the human estimate are often at variance—"that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." But at the same time, remember, God often puts a high value on that which the offerer esteems but lightly. So Christ put a high estimation on the widow's mite cast into the treasury; and bestowed high praise on Mary, who anointed Him with the spikenard. She, in the love of her heart, anointed Him as a guest. He, in the love of His heart, accepted it as an anointing for His burial. Let us follow her example and copy her spirit. J. L. S.

THOUGHTS ON THE DEW. By MAX ISAAC REICH.

In Hosea xiv. 4, 5, we have the gracious words of the triune Jehovah to the penitent Ephraim of the latter days: "I will heal their backsliding; I will love them freely; I will be as the dew unto Israel."

The first "I will" is evidently the Saviour's word. We begin with Christ. "By His wounds we are healed." Our sin is not only our crime from which we need to be justified; it is our malady, on account of which we need to be healed.

The second is the expression of the Father's complacency. The saved prodigal has been placed upon His bosom of love.

Thereupon follows the tender language of the Spirit: "I will be as the dew unto Israel," that the Father may gather fruit.

The divinely-chosen metaphor is full of instruction. The operations of the Spirit as the dew are unseen and silent. For over 1800 years He has been sojourning in this rebel world, still stained with the blood marks of Calvary's awful crime. The world has neither seen Him nor heard His voice.

The rush and tear of its own business have drowned the gentle sound.

No power of man can produce the dew, or imitate it, or hinder it from falling upon the tender herb of the field. Such are the ways of the Spirit of God. He is Sovereign in the exercise of His divine will. We cannot command Him at our pleasure.

You cannot force the Spirit to act at your will. I feel I have often transgressed on this point; but it may be it has been a transgression begotten of ignorance. I am to pray, worship, and minister "in the Spirit." I must not go beyond His leading, beyond the measure of faith, grace, and power bestowed upon me moment by moment. How often have I spoken when He led to silence! How often have I prayed on with my lips beyond His movement in my soul!

In our meetings we deplore the lack of spiritual ministry. If the Spirit of God would use you as a vehicle for speaking just five simple words, utter them and then sit down in divine peace. "Let him keep silence in the church, and let him speak to himself and to God" (I Cor. xiv. 28), is, I fear, a forgotten exhortation. Fifty big, striking words out of your own mind will minister no real blessing to a single hearer, and will most likely be a distress to your own spirit afterwards.

Now, though dew cannot be brought down at our will, there are certain conditions favourable to its descent. I have noticed it does not fall on a cloudy night, or when the wind is high.

If we long for heavenly refreshings we must be silent. This fussy day is no friend to inward soul quietness. Excitement, confusion, disorder, noise, are never marks of the Holy Spirit's leading. They are the marks of the false guide. The Good Shepherd, the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, who dwells in us by His Spirit, leadeth beside the still waters. He would teach us to bring our own restlessness into subjection by breathing His peace upon us. He would hush the workings of pride and unholy desire. Then will the dew descend.

There must be also the clear sky. Not a cloud above, and not a spot within. Temptations, lusts, passion, temper, unbelief, produce the clouds. Everything must be judged.

Thank God, clouds are not fixtures. The horizon of the soul must be unclouded—nothing to intercept the view of heaven, else there will be no dew.

Observe the beautiful results in Israel after the dew has spread its silver-studded garment over them. Nature is ransacked for fitting metaphors. A lily in growth; cedarlike for the way in which the roots and fibres of the soul reach down into the infinitudes of the divine life; as the olive tree for beauty, and the wine of Lebanon for fragrance. This is what the Spirit can do with such unpromising material as an unbelieving Jew.

În Micah v. 7, the promise is that the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many nations as a dew from the Lord. "The remnant" will have become Spirit-like—"spiritual." It is the silent yet mighty influence of a company where the Holy Ghost has the control. Psa. cxxxiii. shows us that if there be unity like the precious ointment which was poured out upon the high priest's head, the dew of Hermon shall visit the mountains of Zion. Whatever death and barrenness there may be around, there the Lord commanded the blessing—even life for evermore.

NOTES FROM A YOUNG MAN'S BIBLE.—II.

MATTHEW XII.

THE acts and words of Christ recorded in the twelfth chapter of Matthew were in the twelfth chapter of Matthew were an open and deliberate condemnation and defiance of the Pharisees, and their answer was to meet in solemn council and decree His death (v. 1-14). From that hour His ministry entered on a new phase. Hitherto His miracles had not been reserved for those whose faith responded to His words; the only qualification was that the recipient should belong to the favoured race (x. 5-8). The miracles continued, for He could not meet with suffering and refuse to relieve it; but those whom He thus blessed were charged that they should not make Him known (v. 16). The gospel of the kingdom ceased; His teaching became veiled in parables (xiii. 3, 13), and the disciples were forbidden any longer to testify to His Messiahship (xvi. 20). From the expression "began" in Mark iv., compared with the question of the disciples in verse 10, and with verse 34, it appears that this was the first beginning of our Lord's teaching by parables, expressly and so delivered, and properly so called. Instead of the proclamation of the kingdom, He taught them "the mysteries of the kingdom" (xiii. 11). His mission changed its character, and instead of a King come to reign, He described Himself as a Sower sowing seed.

MATTHEW XII. 41.

Men talk of Christ's words respecting the prophet Jonah as though He only used the story for an illustration, bearing no testimony to it as a fact. Do they forget verse 41? How can the story of Jonah be a fiction if these words are true? If Christ spoke as an ordinary man, how did He know what would happen on the day of judgment? If He was more than man, how could He be mistaken on the question whether the story of Jonah was true? If He was God, how could He speak of it as true, knowing it to be false? Verse 40, if it stood by itself, might refer conceivably to a Jonah in history, or a Jonah in fiction, but with verse 41 it is impossible. There can be no profitable knowledge of the Bible unless we receive it as true. If the Bible is partly true and partly false, who is to draw the distinction? What was true with scholars thirty years ago, they give up and alter now. What is true now, by the same rule, may be false thirty years hence. Dr. Duncan said he was "conscious of an air that comes from the Word of God." was air to breathe; not fog to mystify, learning to puzzle, criticism to perplex. No: but air to breathe in this dark world. gives up its best in all things only to patient, loving labour. Skim over the pages of Scripture and you inhale an evanescent scent of hidden sweetness. It is the busy, lingering bee that forces its way down into the deep chalice of the flower-blooms that carries the golden honey home, and gathers against the dark days that must come a rich store of comfort, strength, and sustenance. The accumulation of neglected commands has gathered over our eyes as scales. Habitual disregard of God's will has imparted a sense

of unreality and vagueness to the whole tenor of His revelation. Mists, born out of the morasses of our disobedience and neglect, obscure our vision. We have not made use of what we had, and we have come into great danger of losing that.

MATTHEW XIII. 24, ETC.

1. What is the difference between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven? The same difference that there is between the empire of Victoria and the British em-The same difference that there is between the two forms used by Daniel: "The Most High ruleth," and "the heavens do rule." But there is this further difference: the kingdom is the same, but the term "kingdom of heaven" suggests the truth that it is more than an earthly kingdom; that its motives, principles, glories, and rewards are heavenly; and that as the heavens are higher than the earth, so is the kingdom of the heavens higher in essence and character than the kingdoms of this world.

2. Why does Matthew always say "the kingdom of the heavens," and not "the kingdom of God," while the other New Testament writers use the latter formula? Matthew wrote specially for the Jews. They were familiar with the idea of "the kingdom of God"—they were the Lord's inheritance, and looked for the restoration of the kingdom of Israel, but they had no knowledge of its All they thought of heavenly character. was deliverance from the Roman yoke, headship of nations, &c. "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth." Compare Acts vii. 5, Heb. xi. 8-10, 2 Tim. iv. 18. In writing for the Gentiles the other evangelists consistently use the more general term, "the kingdom of God," as the Gentiles had been outside the theocracy.

MATTHEW XIV. 30.

Generally speaking, men have too little faith and too little courage to leave the shore, which is something tangible and solid, and has the support of sense, and to go out upon the sea, which has the support of faith only. They advance, perhaps, some little distance, but when the wind blows and the sea is tossed to and fro, then they are dejected; they cast anchor, and often wholly desist from the prosecution of the voyage.

MY CROSS. By WILLIAM LUFF.

"It is a cross too heavy for my back."
"It is My cross, beloved, I have laid [track."
It on thy shoulders: bear it o'er Life's

And so I took the cross, and it became
No heavy burden, but a two-edged sword
With which I slew, in my Redeemer's name,
The enemies of my victorious Lord.

But I grew weary in the desperate fight.
"I cannot bear this sword," I said at last,
And dropped my weapon nerveless in the fight,
When, lo, into a cup of milk it passed.

I drank the draught, until within my hand The cup seemed dry. I would lie down and rest.

At once the empty cup that I had drained Became a pillow, soft as downy nest.

I rested, then arose, when in my hand
I found a sturdy staff for pilgrim feet,
And marched right bravely through Immanuel's land,
[fleet.
With buoyant steps and footfall light and

I reached a river, and my staff became
A wand with which I touched the parting

Bearing it high, it told a victor's fame, And was a palm-branch of the true and brave.

I passed the river, and the old, old cross
Of days gone by became a jewelled crown
Of purest gold, unmixed with earthly dross,
That at my Saviour's feet I might lay
down.

And in its forefront, set with many a gem,
I thought the old, familiar form I saw,
Now a fair cross of light, a diadem,
In diamonds that flashed without a flaw.

Take up thy cross! It will become a sword,
A cup of life, a pillow for thy head,
A staff, a wand, and then before thy Lord,
A palm-branch and a crown, as He has said.

CHRIST HIMSELF is that which feeds our hearts, and His love so realised that it becomes the one object of our hearts to love Him.

G. v. w.

"CONSIDER YOUR WAYS." Haggai i. 5, 6, 7.

WE are astonished at the trifling excuses Christians often make for staying at home from the Lord's Table, and we cannot fail to see that it arises from getting into a low state of soul, the heart's action being so feeble towards that blessed One who died, that in some cases it might be questioned

whether it pulsates at all.

Are we forgetting the character of the Lord's Day, and imagining, in the blindness of our hearts, that a little indulgence is excusable, and lightly regarding the claims of God upon His people? He expects us to be in the Spirit on this His day, to cease from our usual daily work, and have as little to do about the house as we can, so as to be at leisure for God. Great is the privilege of uniting with the saints around the Lord Jesus Christ in worship and praise, partaking of the bread and wine, emblems of the Body and Blood of Christ, and thus showing His death till He comes. What a privilege, too, having some little service to do as a tribute thankfully rendered to the Lord, instead of spending a portion of the day either sleeping or lazily reading some not over-helpful book, or doing something quite as unprofitable.

Not infrequently is it found that only some from the house will go out to the morning meeting; and that good old custom is becoming rare of both parents walking to the meeting, with all the household going on before them in a quiet and orderly manner. Never let it be left to the choice of your family whether they are to accompany you, but rather let God have it to say of you as He said of Abraham: "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord" (Gen. xviii. 19). A grave responsibility rests upon us, dear fellow-Christians, to let all in our family circle observe how careful we are in attending upon the Lord, for when laxity is shown on the side of parents, can we any longer wonder at the rapidly-growing indifference exhibited by so many children to what is divine?

For some time now we have felt this matter as a weight upon us, and because we judge there is a needs-be for something plain

we have penned this article. We are pained as we write, and probably shall pain some who read; but if you have had a badly-festering sore, you are grateful to the doctor who lanced it, though at the time it was very painful.

Now let us deal with a few common excuses for being absent from the Lord's Table.

A husband will say to his wife, "You take the children along to the meeting this morning; I think I'll stop at home." "Oh," says his wife, "how is that? I don't like to go without you." "I don't know," he replies; "I don't feel like going." So he stays behind, whilst she goes with the children. But how does he spend that time of which he has robbed God? Just aimlessly sauntering round the place, half-dressed, in his old clothes, and maybe not even washed. There he is, without any excuse for his absence which his Lord can accept, and the only thing that can be said is, he lacks inclination! Such conduct on the part of a child of God is deserving of severe censure, being insulting to the Lord Jesus who endured the death of the Cross to save his soul.

As a fair sample of excuses given by Christians for not being at the Lord's Supper, how does this one sound to you? "They meant to come, only, somehow or other, when they came to look at the clock it was too late to get ready." Not to keep your appointment with the Lord is bad enough, but to excuse it in this sort of way is disgraceful.

"Oh, but we must have," many say, "a good dinner on Sundays at anyrate." The wife remains away, turn about with some other member of the family, for no other reason but to save them having to "put up" with a cold meal; and while you are communing at the Lord's Table, someone else is sweating over a cooking-range. Surely we should be none the worse of a trifling self-denial, which, coupled with a little planning to lay a cold dinner before leaving the house, would enable all, more particularly mother and daughter (and why not the servant too?), to be present at the breaking of bread, and so please Him who has so

marvellously dealt with us. Is it not true that we are all very good at managing to carry out our own wishes?

Now, let us have an example of how we can contrive for everybody to go out, unless sick. Let the Lord's words have weight with you: "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is." And furthermore: "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you." Surely a hot dinner is not going to be allowed to come in between you and the Lord's expressed desire, is it?

A Lord's Day comes when the weather is cold, and not very promising—in fact, it rains. You have a consultation, and conclude that "people will hardly expect us to stir out on a day like this." A side glance at a nicely-glowing fire and an easy chair upsets your moral balance, and you hear some one say, "My dear, I think we will enjoy a Sunday at home." Shame on such self-indulgence! It ill becomes "soldiers of Jesus Christ" of whom it is expected that they are to "endure hardness." That noble company whose faith and deeds are recorded in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, would blush for you! The old Covenanters of Scotland turned out in all weathers to hold their meetings on some lone mountain side, or in cave, or fastness of the forest. Alas! that the advance of light and truth should oftimes mark the decay of moral "grit" and heart devotion! A little headache, a slight cold, a triffing indisposition, a melancholy feeling, all serve in turn to empty seats which by rights should be filled. "It is rather far to walk," "the day is hot," "I feel rather upset to-day," "there is so much to do when you have a family," &c., are paltry excuses which cannot be entertained in the face of our Lord's request on the night of His betrayal: "This do in remembrance of Me." The Son of God, having before Him the appalling death of the Cross (and all for our sakes), could set His face steadfastly towards Jerusalem, the place where He had to suffer, whilst we have to-day the melancholy spectacle of professed followers of Christ excusing themselves from attendance at the Lord's Table by the lamest pretexts imaginable.

Lastly, let us for a moment look on and

observe the ways of these Christians when it is Monday, and not "the first day of the week," and when their objects in life are again prominently to the front. What an astonishing transformation! But can these really be the same persons? They are! Now there is an energy and persistence about them which is truly heroic, and the difficulties of home-life and business are undertaken with a spirit worthy of a better cause. Hail, rain, or sunshine, they will be found at their post; and even though sick they venture out when they ought to lie in bed, and to the remonstrance of a friend they will smile and say, "'Diligent in business,' you know!" At home, too, just see how the children are washed and dressed, and despatched to school in good time for 9 a.m., whilst on the Lord's-day morning it means quite a hurry-scurry to be ready by half-past 10 or 11 o'clock.

"Now, therefore, thus saith the Lord of Hosts: Consider your ways" (Haggai i. 5). Your whole course of life and testimony will without doubt break down unless this deplorable state of things is adjusted.

THE HEART IS OFF ITS CENTRE—CHRIST. Once upon a time you heartily sang:

"Thou, my everlasting portion, More than friend or life to me."

And a once favourite text, but now seemingly forgotten, was: "He is the chiefest among ten thousand." It used to be "I was glad when they said unto me, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord'." The day was when the memorial feast would not have been missed had we to weather a gale to be there. We would sit at the Table and weep as hearts were softened at His "free grace and dying love." Shut in with Him, the light of earthly glory died, while our lips took up the song:

"Fade, fade each earthly joy— Jesus is mine!"

We looked not with restless eyes at the clock on the wall; but, entranced, we gazed on the crucified but risen One, and we wished for a thousand tongues to tell our great Redeemer's praise. A day in His courts was better than a thousand, and this we knew beyond all controversy.

"Remember, therefore, from whence thou

art fallen, and repent and do the first work, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent " (Rev. ii. 5).

F. F (Napier, N.Z.).

"THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL."

By Wm. Collingwood, Bristol.

WHILE associating, and rightly so, with the holiness of God all that is righteous and pure, and His claims upon us to be thus holy because He is holy, we may be in danger of overlooking a very precious aspect of it presented to us in the Scriptures, strikingly shown in the title, "The Holy One of Israel."

Purity and righteousness are inseparable from holiness when regarded in the abstract, as of God's essential character, or of what ours ought to be. But when it is in a possessive relation, "holy to," or "of," as in the title now before us, it has a distinct and special meaning.

According to Hebrew authority, the word is derived from a root signifying clean; and it is used to express clean in the sense of fitness for a given purpose; not necessarily implying moral excellence, but whatever may constitute the fitness. It may be either

I. Intrinsic, as of the holy angels, fit for God's immediate presence and service; or (as described in Isaiah xiii. 3, and often elsewhere) of heathen nations "sanctified," that is, fit instruments for the execution of His judgments.

2. By a process of cleansing literally (see 2 Tim. ii. 21) of a vessel "sanctified, meet for the Master's use"; or the Temple (2 Chr. xxix. 5, 17, 19) cleaned for the restored worship of Jehovah; or as the priests were sanctified for their service by a process of ceremonial cleansing.

3. Under the dispensation of the Spirit the believer is sanctified, that is, cleansed from guilt of sin by the blood of the One perfect Sacrifice, and so fitted to be a worshipper—the perfected sanctification, as in Hebrews; or by the Spirit and the Word (1 Pet. i. 2; Eph. v. 26), by faith and obedience fitted for service and communion—a thing of measure and growth.

4. By divine appointment. Thus meats

formerly by the law made unclean, are now "sanctified by the word of God" (I Tim. iv. 5); and husband and wife are "sanctified" to each other (I Cor. vii. 14) by the original decree, "And they twain shall be one flesh;" by God's word fitted to dwell with each other, though one be an unbeliever, and so might have been regarded as defiled and defiling.

5. Once more. To "sanctify" what is thus fitted, is to apply it to its appointed use.

Turn now to the wondrous words of Isaiah liv. 5: "Thy Maker is thy Husband; the Lord of Hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel"—the last gathering up in one all the preceding titles. Wherever it occurs it expresses the same thought—the relationship of God to His people as their Saviour, their Redeemer. As by the original decree husband and wife are sanctified to each other, so that the relationship is indissoluble, so the Lord's eternal covenant had made Him the Holy One to His people, though "for a small moment He had forsaken them," even in Babylon. See Isaiah xliii. 1, 4, 14. It is the character in which, in His infinite grace, He desires to be known and appropriated by them, to be trusted and gloried in (Isa. xii. 6)—"Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee." And the remnant, in x. 20, "shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth."

The title is most frequently seen in Isaiah (some thirty times), but not confined to that book, having always the same meaning. Psalm lxxi. 22; or lxxviii. 41, where they "limited their Holy One"; Jer. l. 29 and li. 5; Hosea xi. 9; and the touching plea of Habakkuk (i. 12), "Art Thou not . . . my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die." The Name thus appealed to tells of relationship in grace, in which the believer lays claim to God as his God; and as Jehovah says to His poor, sinful people, "Thou art Mine" (Isa. xliii. 1), so they look up to Him, saying, "Thou art MINE" (Psalm xliii. 1; lxxxiv. 2, &c.).

Not only where the possessive pronoun is used, but often elsewhere the "holiness" of God has the same meaning. Hannah took it so when she said (I Sam. ii. 2), "There

is none holy as the Lord." And Moses, when he sang, "Who is like Thee, glorious in holiness" (Ex. xv. 11). And how often God's "holiness" is thus invoked in prayer and praise (Psa. xx. 6; xxx. 4; xcviii. 1; ciii. 1; cv. 3), setting forth the Lord as a Saviour in grace, true as it might have been said of His righteousness in judgment; for it is written, "a just God and a Saviour."

This leads us to the meaning of the term "sanctifying" God. When He sanctified Himself, it was by the exercise of grace to His people; as at Meribah, in spite of their evil murmurings, when Moses failed so to sanctify Him. In Ezekiel several times, it was by restoring Israel, or by judgments on their enemies, He was showing Himself their holy One.

And when the people were called to "sanctify" Him, it was by appropriating Him in this relationship (Isa. viii. 13). While others were looking to their confederacies they were to "sanctify," to claim for their Helper "the Lord of Hosts Himself." And Peter in his first epistle applies this to the believer now; he is to take the Lord God as his confidence and his peace in the presence of man's enmity and opposition.

To Israel Jehovah was their God, their Own, their holy One, their Redeemer. "Thy Maker is thy Husband." To us the Son came to reveal God by the blessed name of Father. When He put into the lips of His disciples the model prayer, He taught them to say, "OUR FATHER, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name." The name Father was to be "sanctified" to us, and by us; the name by which we were to know Him, and claim Him, and worship Him. Reverent indeed must we be in the presence of One so great and glorious. But the "sanctifying of the name of Father" is the appropriating Him as ours in that blessed relationship, and all that it contains. He has sanctified us through the atoning work of Christ, making us meet to come into His presence as worshippers and children. He sanctifies Himself through the same atoning work, to be to us our Father and our God. Name had to be more fully "declared" by the Lord Jesus when the great work was accomplished. And then His first message proclaimed it: "I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God," thus bringing us into fellowship with Himself in all the fruits of His death and of His resurrection when He became the firstborn among many brethren, and in virtue of which we, by nature children of wrath, are quickened, and made partakers of the Spirit of the Son, crying, Abba, Father, claiming Him as our own, our "Hallowed One."

FELLOWSHIP WITH ONE ANOTHER.

FELLOWSHIP with one another may be defined as "something of Christ in you that responds to something of Christ in me." Between two believers enjoying a large supply of the Spirit of Christ there will be a large measure of fellowship. If there be a feeble apprehension of the fulness of Christ, the measure of Christian fellowship will be correspondingly feeble. We say Christian fellowship, for there may be fellowship between two persons—even between two believers apart from Christ. He may be practically shut out, and yet there may be fellowship, and a very intimate bond of fellowship too. Men may be bound together by sheer indifference to the things of the inner court of the Lord's temple. Yea, friendship may spring from the bond of a common enmity, as was the case with Herod and Pilate. fellowship you simply find your fellow—some one after your own heart. Then you sit down and enjoy each other's company. know something of what it is to enjoy an ever-present Lord Jesus Christ, you will naturally desire fellowship with one who is enjoying a similar experience. If, however, you are following "afar off," you will not care to be brought into too clear a light. You will soon discover some one of the required "standard." Thus it comes to pass that, no matter what condition of spiritual declension a brother may be in, he can find one whose fellowship will be congenial. But what passes as fellowship may not be Christian fellowship, just as the experience of a Christian may not be Christian experience.

"If we walk in the light" there is fellowship with God, and with all who walk in the light. We do not know of any higher aspect of fellowship than this—to walk in the light with Christ. When two are walking in the light there is fellowship. Both are resting at the same spot—Christ; and eating the same spiritual bread—Christ; and drawing from the same spring-Christ. They are resting where God rests. They all have thus something in common. They are at one with God, and with each other as to Truly their fellowship is with the Father, and with the Son. They are bound together, not by the bond of a common enmity to any one, but by the bond of a common attachment to the Person of the Son of God. They may not see eye-to-eye as to church government and certain lines of truth; but they are at one as to Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. They may have been trained in different schools of thought, and circumstances may conspire to keep them apart, yet the bond is there—the affinity is there. They feel that they do not need to make that bond; it has been made already.

We readily admit that this "fellowship in the Spirit" will be all the sweeter and stronger if there be also fellowship in the truth—an agreement in matters of doctrine, and the things generally believed among us. We are exhorted to "speak the same thing," and we are to seek to be "of one mind in the Lord." It is a sad drawback to fellowship in the Spirit when two believers find they have so little fellowship in the truth that their paths must widely diverge the one from the other. Yet even the "stolen interview" (reminding us of David and Jonathan in the wood, I Sam. xxiii. 16) has its uses. suggests the question, Why are these things so? How is it that I am seemingly doomed to be separate in testimony and worship from those with whom I feel I am worshipping in the Spirit within the vail? Whence come these laws that divide those whom God has not divided? The spiritual instinct perceives that "something is wrong somewhere." When once you taste that "fellowship of love" which rises far above the war of creeds and the strife of tongues, you unconsciously say, "It is good to be here." Let this fellowship of love—this union or hearts—be recognised, and enjoyed, and abound; and the union of bodies will become a very small difficulty indeed. The apostle says, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (3 John 4). This does not mean one side of truth, but all sides of truth. It means truth as to the condition of our heart as well as truth as to the path of our feet. It means truth relating to the Christ-like spirit as well as truth relating to the ecclesiastical position. Thus honestly seeking to contend for all the truth, shall we be able to comprehend with "all saints" something of that love which passeth knowledge. w.s.

Questions and Answers.

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

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 are most thankful to all our friends who have endcavoured to help us by replying to Questions, but the Editor hopes that Correspondents will study brevity, and when too long he will take the liberty of "using the scissors" freely in preference to rejecting Answers, on account of their length, in which there may be points of value.

REPLIES ARE INVITED TO THE FOLLOWING:

CORRECT ORDER OF "RECEPTION."—If no form of procedure is prescribed in the New Testament for the receiving of a believer, what then is the proper course to adopt, or what principles ought to guide?

Baptism and Fellowship.—Must a Christian be scripturally baptised before he can sit at the Lord's Table?

Worship and the Worship Meeting.—(1) Is our Lord's-day morning meeting exclusively a worship meeting? (2) What is worship?

MINISTRY: ITS SPHERE.—Do the words "which is among you" in 1 Peter v. 2 limit the ministry of the teacher to his own meeting, or to the circle of believers with which he is associated?

OUR RELATION TO THE LAW.—What does Paul mean when he says that he was alive without the law once, and when the commandment came he died, and the commandment for life he found to be death (Rom. vii. 9-11).

How are some Sacrifices an Abomination?—Please explain in *The Witness* the true teaching of Isaiah i. 10-15. Are not the people addressed in this scripture God's chosen, earthly people, and if so, why does He tell them that

their sacrifices and oblations are an abomination to Him, seeing that He had ordained them?

STATEMENTS CONCERNING JUSTI-FICATION—HOW RECONCILED?

QUESTION 414.—How can James ii. 24, "By works a man is justified," be reconciled with Romans v. 1, "Being justified by faith"?

Answer A.—1. We are "justified freely by His grace" (Rom. iii. 24): i.e., the origin of it—"grace."

2. "Much more, then, being now justified by His blood" (Rom. v. 9): i.e., the ground of it—"His blood."

3. "Therefore, being justified by faith" (Rom. v. 1): i.e., the medium of it—"faith."

4. "By works a man is justified" (Jas. ii. 24): i.e., the evidence of it—"works." W.H.

Answer B.—In James ii. 24, true faith is evidenced by works, and the man of faith shows by his life-works he has true faith in the Son of God. In Romans v. 1, the cause of good works is shown: viz., "faith" in Him who gave and raised up His Son from the dead. The Scripture order seems: "Justified freely by His grace" (Rom. iii. 24); "Justified by His blood" (Rom. v. 9); "Justified by faith" (Rom. v. 1); "Justified (openly) by works" (James ii. 24); "One faith."

A. O. M.

Answer C.—The scope of James's epistle is practical, not doctrinal. He rebukes common faults and enunciates vital graces, but never expounds Christian doctrine. He deals with Christianity in its outward aspects, and to suppose him setting forth an anti-Pauline doctrine would be to introduce something foreign to context and the character of the epistle.

J. H. H.

Answer D.—In verse 14 of the same chapter of James we read: "If a man say he hath faith, and have not works, can that faith (or such faith) save him?" (see R.v.) James shows the twelve tribes, to whom he wrote the epistle, that so-called faith is not real faith unless it produces good works.

James shows that faith is but a barren root Unless good works do crown the tree with fruit.

James does not contradict Paul; he rather corroborates and emphasises what Paul wrote to the Romans. (The three epistles cited were written at the same date—A.D. 60.) For when Paul speaks of being "justified by faith," he means living faith, such as James argues for in chapter ii. See, for instance, Romans x. 8-10, together with the whole of Romans xii. And in 1 Thess. i. 3 Paul speaks of "your work of faith and labour of love." Further evidence of the reality of their faith is found in 2 Thess. i. 3, 4, 11: "Your faith groweth exceedingly," "We

glory in your patience and faith," and "We pray that our God would fulfil in you the work of faith with power." When the tree is alive and in health it is sure to bring forth fruit in its season. Just so, faith may be likened to the root which springs up and brings forth the fruit called "good works." Paul includes the fruit in the root, or tree, just as we do when we speak of an apple tree.

M. M. D.

Answer E.—In James ii. 24 the works spoken of are not works of law. The argument in this passage from verses 14 to 26 is that a man's faith is made manifest by his actions. For instance, a man has to cross a river on one plank; he says he has no doubt that the plank will bear his weight—he quite believes it—but at the same time he does not cross it. Another man says, "Of course it will bear your weight, and mine too," and he walks right over the plank. one man's professed faith is dead, because it is not confirmed by his deeds—works, actions; the other man's faith in the strength of the plank is made manifest, and proved by his works actions, deeds: so a man's actions make manifest and prove his faith to be genuine, or alive. The same word $\epsilon \rho \gamma ov (ergon)$ is used in James ii. 24 that is used in Romans iii. 20 and 28. It means, actions, deeds, labour, task, &c. It is akin to the Hebrew word areg (to weave), which may indicate continuous action, with fruitful

"By works (deeds) of law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight" (Rom. iii. 20). Therefore it is impossible that the works mentioned in James ii. 24 can mean works of law. It is a man's faith demonstrated by his actions (deeds, works) that justifies him in the sight of God.

We are told to "present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable, to God, which is our reasonable service." w. D. B.

Answer F.—The key to the apparent contradiction will be found in the words, "The scripture was fulfilled which saith" (James ii. 23). The scripture was, "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness.' The trial of Abraham's faith (and to which James refers) took place about forty years after the giving of the promise, the believing of which by Abraham was imputed for righteousness. Hence Abraham was justified by faith forty years before he had the great opportunity of justifying himself before men (his servants, for instance), and manifesting his faith in the promise of God. It is solely with "the Scripture" that Paul deals; James brings in the fulfilment. Paul deals with our justification before God, James with the manifestation or necessary result of that justification in our lives as they are viewed by our fellow-men.

LIVING OF THE GOSPEL.

QUESTION 415.—What is meant by these words in I Cor. ix. 14: "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel?" If it mean that those who preach the gospel should in temporal things be ministered to by those who hear the gospel, why is there not opportunity given in our gospel meetings for such ministry?

Answer A.—The words quoted above are a summing up of what has gone before. Paul begins by showing that both he and Barnabas had the power or right to "forbear working," because they were apostles and preachers of the gospel. He illustrates his argument by the "warfare," "vineyard," "flock," "altar," &c., to show that those who are constantly engaged about these live by them; so those who preach the gospel should live of the gospel. That unsaved people who hear the gospel should contribute to those who live of the gospel is one of the errors of this day, and has no example or precept in Scripture for its support. Did Paul or Philip set a box or plate at the door of any place they visited for all and sundry to throw in money? We search in vain for such evil, though it is a common practice now. Paul was at times supported by his own hands working (Acts xx. 34; xviii. 3; 1 Cor. iv. 12; 1 Thess. ii. 6-10); yet he should have been free from work. At other times saints sent "once and again" their gifts to him (Phil. iv. 14-18). Any "benefit should not be of necessity, but willingly," even from a saint (Philemon 14). Further, we see Gaius commended for his hospitality to those who went forth "taking nothing of the Gentiles" (3rd John).

The primitive churches of the New Testament contributed for the support of three parties only, viz., apostles, preachers of the gospel, and saints The first are gone; the latter two remain, and will be during this age. Both have a claim on saints for support. The duty of those who proclaim salvation is to make disciples, baptise them, and teach them all things (Matt. xxviii.). These only should live of the gospel, while all who are gifts *inside* the Church, such as elders or bishops, and pastors, &c., whose duty is dual, viz., to feed and rule, have no right to pecuniary support, and we never find any church giving to such. See Paul's charge to the elders of Ephesus in Acts xx. They are there told to follow Paul's example, to work and give, instead of take.

Answer B.—We think an examination of the context gives no support to the interpretation suggested in the question. The apostle is writing to Christians, and is showing it to be the duty

of the Church to supply the temporal needs of those who, devoting themselves exclusively to the Lord's work, have neither time nor opportunity to earn a living by following a secular occupation. Had the apostle intended to enlist the contributions of the unsaved hearers of the gospel, he would hardly have used verse 13 to strengthen his argument, for the "things of the temple" mentioned there were the offerings, not of the heathen, but of the Lord's people. gospel is addressed to the unsaved, who, as such, are "enemies in their minds by wicked works," and we could not suppose that the Possessor of heaven and earth needs, or could accept, the help of His enemies in carrying on His work. To pass round a collection-box amongst the unsaved is equivalent to teaching them that their offerings are acceptable to God, whereas the Word plainly says that they which are in the flesh "cannot please God."

One of the many glories of the gospel is that it is offered "without money and without price," but how could a preacher consistently announce this precious fact while asking the unsaved for contributions? And what an opportunity is thereby afforded to the enemies of the truth to arrive at the conclusion that Christianity is, after all, only a money-making scheme. Compare the actions of Achan (Joshua vii.) and Gehazi (2 Kings v.) with the divinely independent answer of Abram (Gen. xiv. 23) to the offer of the King of Sodom to reward him for his services. From a human standpoint he well deserved a reward, but we find him replying in these memorable words, "I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the Most High God, the Possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich." It might be urged that Abram modifies this in the next verse, but it will be seen that he is speaking there for others, and the fact remains that he himself was as good as his word, and received nothing.

Answer C.—The whole passage in that chapter, from verse 7 to 14, as well as Gal. vi. 6 and I Tim. v. 17, clearly teach that those who are called of the Lord to lay aside all secular work and devote all their time and energies to ministry, either towards the Church or towards the world, have a spiritual claim to be supported. But who are called to minister to their temporal needs? Is it all those who "hear the gospel," or is it only those who receive the gospel? So far as I have light, it is only the latter. It was the willing offerings of a redeemed people which Moses was to take for the building of Jehovah's tabernacle (Ex. xxv. 1). When the Lord sent out the twelve, the injunction was, "Freely ye

have received, freely give" (Matt. x. 8). It was a commendation given to the brethren who went out for Christ's Name's sake, that they took nothing of the Gentiles (3 John 7). On the other hand, it is clear from Matt. x. 10 and Luke x. 7 that those whom the Lord sent out to preach the gospel were instructed to accept the hospitality of those who received them. But for an evangelist to accept the hospitality of an unsaved person who is friendly is quite a different thing from setting a box or plate at the door, where saved and unsaved alike may put in their offerings. The divine order is, "They first gave their own selves to the Lord;" then, "Unto us by the will of God;" and then gave their offerings (2 Cor. viii. 5). Let the saints have a scriptural opportunity of giving to the gospel, and let the unsaved learn that God can accept nothing from them till they have accepted His-Son.

Editor's Note.—It is contended by some that only evangelists, or preachers of the Gospel, and poor saints should be supported by the voluntary contributions of believers, and that pastors and teachers ought under no circumstances to receive such support.

It seems to us that this cannot be maintained in the face of Gal. vi. 6 and 1 Tim. v. 17, 18. A pastor's is particularly a local ministry. He may be in a position to fulfil it while supporting himself by his own labours; and from Acts xx. 35 it is clear that such a course is according to the will of God.

But all elders are not qualified to "labour in the word and doctrine" (1 Tim. v. 17). Those who are so gifted, even though not specially evangelists, often find that their ministry is far from local, and that an extensive sphere for the exercise of their gifts opens up for them among widely-scattered, hungry saints. Such greatly value and profit by the visits of teachers divinely

qualified and spiritually minded.

If any, called of God and qualified by the Holy Spirit, give themselves wholly to such ministry, or to any ministry that supplies the spiritual need of the saints or of the work of the Lord, such clearly come under the terms of Gal. vi. 6 and 1 Tim. v. 17, 18. If they have private means, and do not require the contributions of the assembly, then it would be pure covetousness to accept them. But if not, then if any would deny them support on the ground of their not being evangelists, surely they may freely be communicated with on the ground of being poor saints who are diligently serving the Lord and His people according to their gift and ability.

This does not really touch the question of the clerical position and all its associated evils.

THE TEACHING of the THREE DAYS MENTIONED IN JOHN I.

BY MAX ISAAC REICH.

THE testimony of John the Baptist concerning the Lord Jesus is recorded here, a testimony connected with three days, which seem to me to indicate the way in which souls are led on by the Spirit in the knowledge of God. You get, in those three days, in the testimony of John concerning Christ the history of a soul that receives blessing from God—a most important subject for us indeed.

There is a wonderful similarity between John i. and Genesis i. Both commence with the word "beginning," but John goes further back than Moses in Genesis. takes us away back to eternity before the creation of the world, and reveals to us the Person who never had a beginning. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (i. 1). Then, seven days are spoken of in Genesis, and John i. also speaks of seven days. On the first day, in Genesis, "God said, Let there be light, and there was light" (i. 3). So in John i. it is said that John the Baptist came to bear witness of the light (ver. 6, 7). In Genesis ii. we have recorded the marriage of Adam to Eve; so when you come to the seventh day in John ii. there is the marriage at Cana foreshadowing the last marriage that Scripture speaks of, "the marriage of the Lamb." Just as the Lord turned the water into wine at the marriage in Cana, so the Lord will turn water into wine at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Then He will turn the water of earth's afflictions into the wine of heaven's joy. As beloved Mr. Dyer said at one time, "The more water now, the more wine then." As the Lord manifested His glory in connection with the marriage in Cana, so surely He will manifest His glory in His coming marriage day in heaven; not only His own glory, but His bride will be associated with Him in His glory then. Let me point out the seven days mentioned in John i. and ii. In verse 29 we read: "The next day"—that is the second day. Then in verse 35 we read: "The next day after"—which is the third day. Then

in verse 43 "the day following" is mentioned, which is the fourth, and in chap. ii. 1 the "third day," i.e., the third day after the previous one mentioned in verse 43, which makes up seven days in all.

I would call your attention to the remarkable difference between the testimony of John the Baptist, as recorded in the first three gospels, and that in John's gospel. His testimony, as given in the first three gospels, is dispensational. He said, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." In John's gospel there is nothing said about the kingdom in connection with John's testimony. Dispensational truth has its place in Scripture. We cannot understand the Scriptures aright if we do not understand dispensational truth. But there are great moral principles running through all dispensations in the Scriptures, some of which are presented in John's gospel. The first thing you get is that Christ is the light. It is not so much that "God is light": that is told us in John's epistle. Christ is presented here in His divine character. His divine glory is constantly mentioned in this gospel, so you get in the first epistle of John that "God is light," and in his gospel that Christ is light.

John came bearing witness to the light. This is the first thing that a soul learns divinely. In our spiritual experience this was the first truth impressed upon our conscience, that God is light, that Christ is light. The effect of the light is to disclose God and expose us. In the gospel of John you get these two things running side by side—the effect of the light upon all those who come in contact with the light. It exposes and discloses—man exposed, God disclosed.

Let me mention a few instances of the many in this gospel. Nicodemus comes to the Lord to get instruction. He was no mean man—he was a ruler of the Jews. He says to the Lord: "We know Thou art a teacher come from God," &c. The Lord met him on his own ground. He comes to the Lord as a teacher to be taught. He could not teach that which was born of the flesh, for it is incapable of receiving divine teaching. The flesh cannot be instructed

in spiritual things. It is nothing else than flesh. You may educate it as much as you please, but you cannot make spirit of it. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." That was the light turned on a religious man. "You must know Me as a Saviour before you can know me as a divine instructor."

There is not only here the exposure of man, but there is also the disclosure of the heart of God, as Christ takes this religious man to the type of the brazen serpent, the Son of Man lifted up on the cross. There we see the love of God shining forth in all its saving power. Not only do we see the love of God shining forth from the cross, but we learn there also that the Son of Man, the only begotten of the Father, gives everlasting life to all who believe in Him. Here we have not only light exposing man, but the

love and grace of God revealed.

We have another instance of this in John iv. As the Lord of Glory sat on the well in Sychar, a woman of Samaria comes to draw water. He pours into that desolate heart the treasures of divine grace. But before He does that He turns the light of the Scripture on her past life and present state. She was exposed to herself by that searching light. Next, the heart of God was disclosed to her, and then, in the joy of that revelation, she goes and says: "Come, see a Man [I love these words, 'a Man'] who told me all that ever I did." That Man was "God manifest in the flesh," the Christ of God, the Man who gave joy to the heart of God. There you get the exposure of man and the disclosure of God.

Then take John viii. Here you get, again, man exposed and God disclosed. These Scribes and Pharisees bring to the Lord a woman taken in adultery, and they say unto Him: "Now, the law of Moses commands us to stone such. What sayest Thou of her? And He stooped down and wrote on the ground." I have often pondered this act of the Lord. It seems to imply this: He stoops down just to rise up and turn the flashlight upon them. They could not stand it. They went out; they could not bear the blaze of divine light upon

their conscience. That woman was left alone with the light. There she was exposed, but the grace of Christ was also disclosed there to her. He says: "Hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more." Peace and power.

That is the story of the gospel of John. That is the beginning of a soul's history with God. If you have not commenced there, then I am afraid of you. The first real teaching is this: "God is light," and in that light I see myself a poor, vile, hell-deserving sinner. But in that light I read what God is able to do for me, a poor, bankrupt, en-

slaved sinner.

"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world" (verse 29). First it is the Light, then it is the Lamb. This is divine order. The Son of God has come down as the Lamb of God to put away by His death everything that has been exposed by the light. Am I near to the light? Do I live in the light? In the Book of Revelation (xxi. 23) we read in connection with the great city, the holy Jerusalem, that the Lamb is the light thereof, and the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it. The Lamb is also the light in the gospels. I am not afraid of that light. I see it shining in the face of Jesus Christ. Every ray of that light is an encouragement to me to draw near, because it shines in the face of Him who has put away my sin by the sacrifice of Himself. All has been settled to the glory of The One who met the claims of that glory adorns that throne. nothing the light makes manifest which the blood of the Lamb has not already blotted out. There is no single revelation that the light gives that Christ has not met according to the claims of the throne of God. That gives perfect peace. There are many souls born again, and even in the companies of the Lord's people, who lack this peace. I don't doubt their conversion, but they don't enjoy peace. Peace is connected with apprehending the value and preciousness of the work of Christ on behalf of the sinner.

There is another thing connected with the second day—the communion of the Spirit.

This One who is set before us as the Lamb of God is the Son of God who baptiseth with the Holy Spirit. Power is connected with the The blood makes it possible for the Spirit to dwell in all who have known its cleansing power. I have that in me (the flesh) which is offensive to God. How, then, can the Holy Spirit dwell in such? The children of Israel despised the bread from heaven. The flesh in me has no more desire for the divine manna, no more heart for Christ than it had in my unconverted days. But God takes my side against the flesh. All in me so offensive to God is already condemned. don't look for the flesh to be sanctified; the flesh has been judged once for all in the Person of Christ on the cross. The old man has been crucified. God has gone into the whole question of sin. He has condemned sin in the flesh; on that ground the Spirit dwells in every believer.

Verse 31: "Again the next day after [the third day] John stood, and two of his disciples, and looking upon Jesus as He walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God." He does not say here anything about sin taken away. That is not raised now. It is the Person of Christ we are here called upon to "They followed Jesus." This implies discipleship. 'The Lamb who redeemed me is the Lord to guide me. The Lamb to cleanse my conscience is the Lord to command my heart's deepest love. The One who brings me in perfect peace into the light of the presence of God is the one who is to fill every crevice of my heart. third day speaks of satisfaction. The blood for the conscience; but the Person for the heart.

Let your eye run over this wonderful verse. What a setting forth of the perfections of Christ! Here John is not preaching at all. God made use of him when he left off preaching. He was simply en-That rough man of the joying Christ. desert, as he stood there enjoying Christ, had such an influence on these two men that they were soon lost in that wonderful Person whom John was adoring and worshipping. John was not jealous although his congregation became smaller. First he was "the voice of one crying in the wilderness." People come to our meetings; they hear the voice, but how few are attracted to Christ through our preaching. John said he was the friend of the Bridegroom, rejoicing greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice. You don't hear further of John after that. You don't miss the stars when the sun rises.

The two disciples followed Jesus—they became disciples. Discipleship costs a great

deal; salvation costs nothing.

They followed That is the third day. Jesus, and He encouraged them. "What seek ye?" "Thou art the object of our search. Where dwellest Thou?" What you get in the gospel of John is the sight on earth of a lowly Man, and that blessed Man the only-begotten Son dwelling in the bosom of the Father. He was always there in the deepest joy of His soul. These men were encouraged to see where He dwelt. were brought into intimacy with His wonderful Person. That is what we are called into even now. They disappear for the time, but afterwards one of them comes out as a missionary. Those mighty men who were honoured by David in his kingdom were the men who came to him at the first in the cave of Adullum. They were the most disreputable lot of men you ever saw. They were discontented men, disgusted with everything; but they gathered to David, and owned him as God's anointed king. David transformed them completely. They came out with the stamp of noblemen, the real aristocracy, and they gratified the heart of David, who longed for a drink from the well of Bethlehem. These three mighty men took their lives in their hands and broke through the host of the Philistines, and brought water to David, who poured it out to the Lord as a drink-offering.

How can such characters be produced to-day? Keep in the company of Christ. There is power in being with Him. Keep company with Christ and you will become assimilated to Him. Andrew comes out of that heavenly company, and says: "I must bring my brother Peter into it." He begins at home. You read no more of Andrew, and you don't need. Having found Simon, he would surely find many others after.

O that we knew the secret of this third day's experience following Christ, our souls being attracted to Him in the power of the Spirit. GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE-XIX.

THE MILLENNIAL REIGN AND THE ETERNAL STATE.

By JOHN R. CALDWELL, Author of "Shadows of Christ in the Old Testament," "Things to Come," &c.

OUR thoughts concerning kingship and reigning are necessarily formed by what we know from history. Of one reign only, that of Solomon, it is said there was "neither adversary nor evil occurrent." This condition of things lasted but a little while, and was a part of the glory of Solomon and his kingdom which rendered him peculiarly a type of Christ as the Prince of Peace.

Every other reign throughout the world's history involved the subduing of evil within and the conquering of enemies without. No kingdom could exist without forces at command adequate to overcome every opposing element, to uphold law, and so to preserve

independence and liberty.

And such, in the first instance, must be the character of the Kingdom of our Lord. The right to overcome and finally destroy the devil and all his works was acquired at the Cross. Meantime the Lord is not asserting His rightful authority, but, in accordance with the eternal counsels of the Father, is allowing Satan to work as the world's god and prince in such a way and to such an extent as to bring iniquity to a climax. The Lord Jesus is now invested with "all authority in heaven and on earth," and consequently the ultimate control of Satan is in His hands. The adversary can go no further than he is permitted, and as the natural enmity of the dog is made use of by the shepherd for the benefit and not for the destruction of the sheep, so Satan's enmity is used by the Lord for blessing to His own, as for example in the case of Job, or of Paul's thorn in the flesh, "the messenger of Satan to buffet him."

But the hour is approaching when the Lord Jesus shall rise up from His place at the right hand of His Father's throne, and be manifested in power and great glory as the only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Associated with Him in His Kingdom will be the risen and glorified saints.

The sphere of His Kingdom then as Son of Man will be first "the House of Jacob,"

according to many prophecies, and then His dominion shall extend until the whole earth is filled with His glory. The whole of Psalm lxxii. is to the point here.

We have already seen a little of the peace and glory and blessedness of the millennial reign. During that period righteousness shall no longer suffer, but be in the ascendant; not the proud but the meek shall inherit the earth. But though it be filled with His glory, all the world will not be truly converted. A regenerate world will not be seen till the present creation is superseded by the

new heavens and the new earth.

It has yet to be demonstrated that human nature, delivered from Satan's influence, put under gracious restraint, instructed in right-eousness, and basking in the summer sunshine of the glory of the Lord for a thousand years, is just the same still, ready to fall before the first assault of Satan, to believe his lies, to enlist under his banner, to yield itself to his sway, and defy once more the

very majesty of heaven.

The obedience rendered to the Lord during the thousand years will be genuine and hearty, and the result of grace in all the seed of Israel, and also in multitudes of the Gentiles, but not in all. This is indicated in Psalms lxvi. 3 and lxxxi. 15, where "submit" signifies, as found in the margin, to "yield feigned obedience." That is, the subjection is forced, or a matter of policy, not the result of a change of heart. Such, being unregenerated, will be prepared to accept the advances of Satan as soon as he is let loose from the abyss in which for the thousand years he had been imprisoned.

It has been asserted that this final apostasy, and subsequent vengeance from heaven upon the rebels, proves the millennial kingdom of the Son of Man to have been "a

gigantic failure."

That it proves the hopeless depravity of man is true; that it demonstrates, finally and for ever, that no kind of salvation avails for the Adam race but a new creation—"ye must be born again"—is also unquestionable; but all this was included from the beginning in the divine programme, and is but the working out of the scheme of the eternal counsels of God.

The Son of Man will thus have reigned until every enemy has been subdued. The purpose of His reign shall have been accomplished. The triumph of divine grace and power through the great redemption work of the Lamb of God will be complete. The judgment of the Great White Throne will finally dispose of every source of evil, and the way will be clear for the introduction of the eternal state, "the new heavens and the new earth," wherein righteousness will neither suffer nor be dominant, but shall peacefully "dwell" as in the rest of an eternal home.

It is at the close of the millennium that the great conflagration shall take place spoken of by Peter:

"The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up."

And again:

"Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter iii. 10-13).

The period here spoken of as "the day of the Lord" and "the day of God" is therefore not a day of twenty-four hours, but, as explained in verse 8, a period extending over a thousand years, and from other Scriptures we gather that the final burning up and passing away of the heavens and the earth that now exist does not take place at the beginning but at the close of that period.

The view has recently been propounded that "after the thousand years" there is another dispensation in which, for an indefinite but very much extended period, the Lord Jesus shall reign as Son of Man, and at the close of which He will resign His delegated authority—practically abdicate the throne of His kingdom, deliver it up to the Father, and thereafter be "subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all."

But although much learning and critical acumen have been enlisted on the side of this view, and some thoughtful students of Scripture have accepted it, it still appears to us that there is no room in the leading pas-

sage on the subject, viz., I Cor. xv. 23-28, for such a dispensation between the close of the thousand years and the eternal state.

It appears plain that the delivering up of the Kingdom to God, even the Father, is consequent upon all [i.e., all opposing] rule, authority, and power having been put down. The Lord Jesus, the Son of Man, must reign till then. The final act will be the abolishing of death. Sin shall never stain and death shall never shadow the new creation.

"When all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all,"

It appears to us that in verse 24 "when" repeated, in verse 25 "till," in verse 28 "when" and "then," all point so definitely to the one period that there is no escape from the conclusion that the point of transition is one—that it is at the close of the millennium and at the inauguration of the new creation in its eternal beauty and glory.

It is beyond our power to imagine such conditions, so blessed, so glorious! All ordinary ideas of kingship and dominion utterly fail. The Regal authority for judgment, punishment, and administration with which Christ as Son of Man was invested, will be no longer required or suitable to the eternal conditions. The all-pervading blessedness of the presence of God, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, will secure the perfect order of the new creation, heavenly and earthly.

The Son, ever God and Man, and the Church throughout eternal ages blessed in Him and with Him, will be the administrators of that glorious, eternal kingdom in subjection to God, who is eternally all in all

Already the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is a new creation. He looks and waits for the Son from heaven, and for the blessed change at His coming; but he also looks forward to the eternal blessedness of the new heaven and the new earth, when the former things will no more be remembered, or come into mind.

"Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless."

THE THREEFOLD SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER.

By THOMAS NEWBERRY, Editor of *The Englishman's Bible*.

I Cor. vi. 10. 20.

"WHAT! know ye not that your body is the [a] temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of [from] God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

Chosen of God the Father in Christ before the foundation of the world.

Redeemed in time to God by the blood of the Lamb. Regenerated, sanctified, and indwelt by the Holy Ghost. "In whom also, after that ye believed [having believed], ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory" (Eph. i. 13, 14). The Church of God commenced at Pentecost, and, properly speaking, the EXPERIENCE of believers also should BEGIN with Pentecost. The indwelling presence of the Holy Ghost being not so much a matter of attainment at the close, but God's provision at the COMMENCEMENT of the Christian course. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus setting free from the law of sin in the members, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in those who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. As we read in Romans vi. 1-3, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. Know ye not that so many of us as were baptised into Christ Jesus for so it was written by inspiration] were baptised into His death?" The baptism of the Spirit unites the believer with a risen Christ in heavenly glory, for the Holy Spirit as Comforter was not given till Jesus was glorified. Christ Jesus having been raised and glorified at the right hand of God, and the believer having been baptised into Him by the Spirit, is made partaker in Him of all the benefits of His life, service, and sacrifice, so that he may reckon himself "to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Greek), not in himself as a matter of attainment, but as God's provision for a holy life. "Created in Christ Jesus

unto good works which God hath before ordained that we shall walk in them "(Eph. ii. 10). For "whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not" (1 John iii. 6). "What! know ye not?" implies there is a danger of this truth not being known, realised, nor acted upon. And is not this too much the case? It is the presence of the Holy Ghost that constitutes the believer's body a holy temple in the Lord, and being filled with the Holy Ghost is the result of allowing Him to take full possession of the whole, ungrieved and unquenched, whilst full communion with Him is fully kept up. This precious gift is FROM GOD, thus sealing for Himself the entire man, as says the Apostle Paul (I Thes. v. 23, 24): "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it."

The believer is precious in God's estimate, not only for His value of him, but because of that price at which he was purchased, the precious blood of His beloved Son; and thus the whole Church of God becomes the pearl of great price which Christ loved and gave Himself for. Hence the exhortation to glorify God in our body and spirit, which are His; not the body only, but body, soul, and spirit, for says the apostle, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Being thus transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.

THE SECRET OF COMMUNION.

The secret of communion for you and for me. The prophet Jeremiah tells us that there were certain men who were "near the king's person"; or, as the margin reads, "saw the face of the king." Though this is said of one of Judah's kings, yet how sweet in our case to dwell near the Person of our Divine King, and to see His face.—J. Denham Smith.

EMMANUEL'S LAND.

"Born from above." "They seek a native country."

O BEAUTIFUL beyond compare, And dearer than all lands to me, That heavenly country, bright and fair, The Land of my nativity.

While nations strive, and peoples fight, And fill the world with misery, I flee to that dear land of light, The Land of my nativity.

No earth-cloud stains its atmosphere, No discord jars its melody; No sin, no sigh finds entrance there— Bright Land of my nativity.

Stranger and pilgrim in the earth!
What are its countries unto me?
I seek the Country of my birth,
The Land of my nativity.

O loyal souls! nor shame, nor death Can dim your heavenly fealty While ye confess, with dauntless faith, The Land of your nativity. E.S.W.

NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS.

THE words, "Not slothful in business," have been used by not a few to justify themselves in bending all their energies to the making of money. They admit that the things of God and eternity demand a certain amount of attention; but they argue that these must take a second place, seeing we are expressly exhorted to be not slothful in business. We have even heard professed children of God use, or rather misuse, this Scripture in the same fashion. But it is needful to remember that the passage in question has no exclusive reference to what is called a "secular occupation." In the Revised Version the word "business" does not occur, the reading being simply, "In diligence not slothful." The passage has also been translated, "Not remiss in zeal," But in either case there is no special reference to an earthly calling. The exhortation is directed against slothfulness, whether in our daily work or in what is called "the Lord's work." It is just another way of saying, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to

do, do it with thy might" (Eccles. ix. 10). There is no shadow of justification for the thought that we are to bury ourselves in our earthly business, and let the Lord's work take care of itself—that in our daily work we are to be diligent and faithful, while in the Lord's work we need not be at all so particular. It will be an evil day for us when we are found thus putting self in the foreground and letting the work of the heavenly sanctuary come in for a little patronising attention. It has been said that some Christians, in their service for God, act as if "anything will do for God." This was the ruling thought in Malachi's time—truly a dark and evil day. But "anything" will not do for God, if we are to be well-pleasing unto Him.

We remember a devoted Christian who sent to all the known Christian workers in the place a card bearing the words, "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully"—margin, "negligently" (Jer. xlviii. 10). That simple message, without note or comment, occasioned considerable searching of heart at the time. It was directed against the tendency to easy-going Christianity—a tendency to which we are all exposed, and which leads to a sheer indifference to the claims of Christ, while we strain every nerve

to attain our own purposes.

But this question has another side, and must be looked at from that side, if we are to hold the truth in an even balance. have been pointing out that there is such a thing as doing our earthly work with diligence, while doing the Lord's work with negligence. We now proceed to point out that the reverse of this is sometimes to be There are those who, up to the time of their conversion, gave "an honest day's work for an honest day's pay." Yet, strange to say, after undergoing the great change and learning to do a little work for God, there has arisen a lack of interest in their secular calling. Dazzled by the great effect that seems to be produced by a fluent tongue, and by the vastness and importance of the work of preaching Christ to the perishing, many a promising young convert has been tempted to look upon his daily work as a kind of necessary evil, if not a positive waste He wearies for the way to open up of time.

so that he might devote himself entirely to the work of the ministry. But it may be that the way is slow to open up. Meanwhile he becomes half-hearted in his daily work. Now, wherever this is the case there is something seriously wrong. In the truest sense there is nothing "secular" to a child of God. All my work is really work for God. I am serving Him as truly in toiling as a day-labourer as in standing on a platform and preaching to a thousand people. If I am a servant to an earthly master, then conversion to God should not make me a worse servant. On the contrary, it ought to make me a better servant. In serving my earthly master I am serving God, for it is written, "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God. And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ" (Col. iii. 22-24). I thus see that my whole work down here is to Godward, and it is to be done not only diligently but *heartily*. The humblest toil is invested with untold dignity whenever you see it in relation to Christ. If God has called me to go forth and serve Him exclusively in the work of the ministry, He will vouchsafe certain tokens from which I may "assuredly gather" that such is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning me. The way will be made plain, and there will be an open door which no man can shut. But while I am waiting to learn His will as to my path of service, this much is clear: If I am in His leading I will wait patiently and serve heartily, in whatever calling I find I can "abide with God." The service may be of a different kind from publicly preaching Christ, but the Master we serve is the same. Moreover, are there not untold opportunities for service, although we labour at an earthly calling? See how many hornyhanded sons of toil there are who do their hard "day's darg" and yet find spare moments in which to proclaim the unsearchable riches. These are true ministers of Christ: and who shall tell what their crown of rejoicing shall be in the coming Day! w. s.

ISRAEL'S WARFARE

TYPICAL OF THE CHRISTIAN COMBAT.

By JAMES WRIGHT, Ashley Down, Bristol.

Continuation of "His Dwelling-Place and His Dominion," in last number.

NOW, what was the first thing that constituted their ability to go forth to war? That every one of them could prove their pedigree. Not simply a soldier, but a true Israelite—he might be of Reuben, Dan, Issachar, but he must be one of the twelve tribes; he must be a son of Abraham, or he could not be a warrior of Jehovah.

The parallel in our spiritual warfare is clear. No warrior is able to go to war who doubts whether he is saved or not. I do not say he will not be saved and get to heaven, but he is not fit to go to war—to be a soldier. If he went to war he would be a fainthearted, cowardly one, who would spread disaffection, and dread, and discouragement. So Jehovah provided that the officers should go through the host, and challenge all who were afraid, lest they should make the rest faint-hearted. So you see the first thing every soldier of Christ must be able to do is to prove his pedigree; that he is born again, a child of God; that his sins are forgiven; that he is a saved sinner; that he is united to Christ.

Any man can tell whether he has stood before God as a lost sinner, and accepted forgiveness through the blood of Christ. Again, if he has trusted in Christ he has eternal life, and is "made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. viii. 21). And again, if he has trusted in Christ he is in Christ, united vitally to Him, so that the Father looks upon him as a child. "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26). Now, that is a man, so far, able to go forth to war. That is the first requisite, to be able to prove his pedigree.

A man may be a true believer who has occasional doubts, but when one day he thinks he is going to heaven, and is in the highest heights, and another day is in the deepest depths, that man is not able to go to war. He must be *certified*. If you doubt whether you are a Christian, do not think that is a sign of grace. Unbelief is not a

sign of grace, though through false teaching you may think so. Unbelief is hateful to God. What delights our Father is that His children should be full of confidence, and not have a shadow of doubt.

Another thing: "From twenty years old and upward." What is that? Men in the prime of life—strong men. The soldiers of Jehovah must be strong. This conflict is a real one. It is not a dream—it is a reality. It is an inward thing first; it is bringing into subjection the stronghold of our own hearts and thoughts. I cannot deal with the errors outside until I have laid hands on the traitors inside. must lay hands on them first. It is a real conflict. You will never go through this warfare if you are not clothed in armour. In earthly warfare the Roman soldier had shoes that would keep his feet from being injured, and you must have shoes. And a helmet, or the enemy's sword will come down and crush your head. And you must have "the sword of the Spirit" (Ephes. vi. 17). O, we need the whole panoply of God to preserve us in this warfare!

Now, to carry arms requires good strength. A poor, weak mortal could not wear armour —it would only encumber him. So we must be strong. How am I to be strong? Our natural thought is that there is to be an end to the conflict when we are old. Not so. The Christian renews his strength every day. What is the secret of strength? "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you" (I John ii. 14). That is the secret of strength in the believer - the Word of God abideth in him. That is, he takes every word as that on which his faith can rest, as on a rock. "Every word of God is pure" (Prov. xxx. 5). Now, the soul that does that rests on that, takes that Word as his heritage for ever—and it is the only sword that will not be worsted in the conflict that man is strong, because "the Word of God abideth " in him.

Can that strength be renewed? You remember it says in Psalm ciii. 5, "Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." That is the way God renewed the vigour

of His children. And He renews the spiritual vigour of the old believer by satistying the mouth of that old believer with good things. Do not you remember how God renewed the youth of beloved Mr. Müller, so that the very last time he spoke in Alma Road Chapel, it was with surpassing spiritual vigour. Why? Because God had that very morning renewed his youth by filling, "satisfying," him with the good things of His Word. Therefore, never despair, grey-headed believer. Do not think that, because of this, you are getting effete, or decaying spiritually. "Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things," that is, not satisfying it with good things out of newspapers, magazines, or those wretched books which are so accepted in these days, that spread doubts and uncertainties. What is satisfying the mouth with good things? Satisfying the soul with the good things of His Word that is the secret of our strength.

But another thing: To be able to go to war soldiers must be able to "keep rank" (I Chron. xii. 38). Just look at Num. ii., where we have the first numbering: "They shall set forth in the second rank" (verse 16). You will see they were not only divinely placed at the outset of the march, but they were to continue in that order. It is one thing to set out well; it is another to keep on well. They not only went forth in rank, but they kept rank, and you get it again in verse 24: "They shall go forward in the third rank."

We must be able to keep rank if we would be able to go forth to war. Now, wherein does that quality consist? In every one thinking himself least. That is what Paul did. "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly," &c. (Rom. xii. 3).

Paul could say, "Sinners, of whom I am chief" (1 Tim. i. 15); and more wonderful still, "Less than the least of all saints" (Eph. iii. 8), and that is the reason he can come to say to his fellow-believers that they are not to think of themselves more highly than they ought to think. And the testimony of their consciences would be, "Paul,

you have a right to say that, because you

are yourself so lowly."

Here, then, is one of the great requisites in this holy war, to keep rank, and we cannot do it if each one wants to get first. There would be a terrible disorganisation of the army of Christ if each one wanted to get to the front. It is said that all through the Waterloo day Wellington kept one regiment on its face, and would not let them be seen. If they had been self-willed and said, "We do not like being kept here in this inactive position," and had rushed into the battle, they would have frustrated the Duke's plan, for that was to keep them still until the right moment.

Now, it is our Captain's prerogative to put each soldier into his place, and if we do not keep the place God has given us we are

not able to go to war.

One other thing to which I must allude, and that is, not one of these soldiers would have been able to go to war if he had not been able to handle weapons. "Of Zebulon, such as went forth to battle, expert in war, with all instruments of war" (I Chron. xii. 33). We have various weapons, "The sword of the Spirit," "The shield of faith" (Eph. vi. 16, 17), and we have "all prayer" (verse 18). Now, unless we are expert, and becoming, by the help of the Holy Spirit, more and more expert in these, we are not able to go forth to war. Are we reading and meditating on the Word of God? Are we diligent in prayer. These are two essentials for all ability in this holy war.

Then let me just remind your heart and mine of our glorious Captain. Our Captain is our Saviour, the One who died for us, who purchased us with His blood, who put away our sins by the sacrifice of Himself, the One who fasted forty days in the wilderness, and there met Satan, our great foe, face to face, and conquered in this warfare. To what end? That He might be fitted to sympathise fully with us, because He had passed through the same things. Our Saviour and High Priest is our Captain; it is He who is leading in this battle, and our wisdom is to be close to Him, so that we may catch the very whisper of His voice. Shall I remind you how He won the battle?

"By weakness and defeat He won the meed and crown; Trod all our foes beneath His feet By being trodden down."

A very unique way of carrying on a battle, was it not? It was God's plan; and His people must have fellowship with Christ in Paul had, "We also are weak in Him" (2 Cor. xiii. 4). "I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling" (1 Cor. ii. 3). Ah, what fellowship He had with Christ! Now, are we prepared for this most unique way of carrying on a battle—to be very weak? "But you said just now that we must be very strong." Yes, but strength in God consists with perfect self-weakness. "We also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you" (2 Cor. xiii. 4). These two things form a wonderful paradox. The believing one who is weakest in himself is strongest in God.

THE RESURRECTION SONG OF JESUS.

Psalm xl.

THIS Psalm is the utterance of the Lord Jesus in resurrection. Its 6th, 7th, and 8th verses are quoted in Hebrews x., and the "poor and needy one" of its last verse remind us of Him who became poor that we might be rich. It is the "new song," the resurrection song of Jesus, and also of His members — the sharers in the "common salvation" (Jude 3.)—His and ours. He never could have uttered it unless He had been made sin for us (2 Cor. v.), and unless "Jehovah had laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

The first two verses tell of His trust in God—"Thou wilt not leave My soul in Hades, neither wilt Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption." Thus, in obedience to His Father (John x. 17, 18), He laid down His life, and waited patiently the third, the appointed day. Strong crying and tears He made unto Him who was able to save Him out of death; and in this Psalm He glorifies His Father.

Four things occupy His mind. He remembers what we are called "to remember till He come" as assemblies (1 Cor. xi.).

The words "horrible pit" ought to read "noisy pit." Let us think of it, "He brought me up also out of the 'noisy pit'" -our unconverted days were noisy - the laughter of fools; the Bacchanalian songs of the drunkard; the dance music of the gay and thoughtless sinner; the oaths of the profane were all laid on Him, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. If the chaste maiden would shrink from the company and surroundings of the profligate, what must Jesus have suffered?—all that, and ten thousands more was in the cup held up to His holy lips when He said, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." God took Him out of this, and out of the "miry dirt." The same words are used in Psalm lxix. and Isaiah lvii. "I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing"; "the wicked are like the troubled sea, casting up mire and dirt." Oh, throughly as our Substitute was He "numbered with the transgressors," and as thus numbered, He had no standing before God, and sunk in our mire and in our filthy sins till His spotless soul cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" But Jesus now praises His God and our God, who set His feet on a rock, saying, "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee." "Thou art a Priest for ever." The rock is God's Word; the sand, on which so many are building, is human opinions.

At the third verse He brings His members in (1 Cor. xii. 12). "He hath put a new song (a resurrection song, see Rev. v. 9) in my mouth, even praise unto our God." In John xx., "I ascend unto My Father and your Father, unto My God and your God." Only God could "devise this way to bring us banished ones back," and at what a cost! His only Son in eternity, "His delight" (Prov. viii.), to be so numbered with us that He and we share the "common salvation," and in the midst of the Church will He sing

the new song (Heb. ii. 12).

"Many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord" (John xvii. 20-23). Yes, the world will see it, for "He will come with ten thousand of His saints" (Jude 14, 15). Israel will see it. "I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and

by a foolish nation I will anger you'' (Rom. x. 19). "Ye are a chosen generation . . . a holy nation" (I Pet. ii. 9). See also Zechariah xiv., "Jehovah thy God shall come, and all His saints with Him. In that day there shall be one Jehovah, and His name one."

Meanwhile, may our language and spirit be that of the blessed Lord Jesus on the Cross. He represents us before our Father now. All our poverty and needs are His concerns, and may we be able ever to say, "I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me," even as an earthly father thinketh upon his child, for "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." Thus, as partakers of this great salvation may our desire be that "God may be magnified," so that many may see it in us and turn to the Lord. "Now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light." T. C.

BIBLE STUDIES.

THREE ASPECTS OF CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS.

I Pet. iii. 18, As the Lamb of God—on the Tree—for our Sins—to bring us to God.

I Pet. iv. I, As the Redeemer—on the Tree
—Redeem us from Sin's
Power—Live to the Will
of God.

r Pet. ii. 21, As Jehovah's Servant—in the World—for His faithfulness to God—an Example for us.

CHRIST LEFT US AN EXAMPLE THAT WE SHOULD

Wash one another's feet, - John xiii. 15.

Not please ourselves, - Rom. xv. 5 (mar.).

Suffer for well-doing and take it patiently,

1 Pet. ii. 21.

ASHES.

Ashes of Atonement, Heb. ix. 13. Propitiation for sin.

Ashes of Humiliation, Job xlii. 6. Contrition for sin.

Ashes of Judgment, 2 Pet. ii. 6. Retribution

for sin.

NOTES FROM A YOUNG MAN'S BIBLE.—III.*

MATTHEW XVII.

"A FTFR six days"—silent days—He had no one to talk to. Three times in which, if help had not come from above, Christ must have been crushed. Once when His body would have died of hunger, no earth's harvest to minister to Him (iv. 11); once when His heart would have broken (Luke xxii. 43); and once when His brain would have been crushed if He had had no outlet—when angels could give no help, and there appeared Moses and Elias talking with Him (xvii.); in each of these cases no human sympathy—nothing but blank astonishment and unconcern from earth. From this hour alone—alone—alone (see Mark ix. 32-34).

Verse 7—Moses and Elias His familiar friends! Will He think still of our friendship? "Jesus came and touched them." Exquisite tenderness at such a moment, answering all the unspoken fear, "I am yours still, identified with you for ever." "This same Jesus" (see Rev. i. 17).

"HE WENT AWAY SORROWFUL" (Matt.xix.22.)

This was because the Master made a direct demand upon his capital, and he felt he could not yield *that*, even for the sake of that eternal life he was craving after (see ch. vi.).

MATTHEW XX. 1-16.

In the distribution of rewards by our Lord at His coming, there will be a manifestation of these great and glorious principles— Justice, Sovereignty, Grace. The householder (verse 1) guarantees a full and just remuneration for service. No sacrifice, however trifling, will be overlooked. Each will receive the due recompense of the reward. The Lord of the vineyard (verse 8) claims the sovereign right to do what He wills in His own affairs. The goodman of the house (verse 11) retains to himself the privilege to exercise grace, whatever may be thought of his generosity. Sovereignty will not be exercised at the expense of justice and grace, whilst the magnificence of the grace, the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, will be for the honour of justice and the glory of the sovereignty displayed. Our language will be, "Not unto us."

Faithfulness (Matt. xxv. 21).

If we truly serve our Master, we shall be rewarded according to our fidelity, not according to our activity or success. It is not the weight of the load you draw, nor the distance you pull it, but keeping the traces tight all the time. "I cannot light a world, and make seasons, and lift tons of water into the skies," said the dim lantern to the sun one morning, "but last night I kept burning, and helped a dozen express trains full of sleeping people to run swiftly and safely on their way."

MATTHEW XXVI. 36, ETC.

How much were the sufferings of Gethsemane enhanced by the failure of the sympathy of His disciples. To deny that Christ values our sympathy is to deny the existence in Him of one very essential attribute of humanity, and to sever the strongest tie that binds together Himself and His people. Union, true and spiritual union, such as exists between Christ and His people, supposes community of feeling, and a mutual feeling; not that He only sympathises with them, but that they also sympathise with Him; not that they prize His sympathy merely, but that He also prizes theirs. Christ has by the assumption of the nature of man, and by the work done in that nature, so identified Himself with humanity that He is literally no longer independent of it. If we are hurt, He is hurt; if we are happy, He is happy; if we rejoice in His love. He rejoices in ours. If His sympathy is precious to us, our sympathy is likewise, even now that He is in Heaven's highest glory, precious to Him.

"They Crucified Him" (Matt. xxvii. 35).

Who can tell the hundredth part of all that is summed up in these three words? The sin that needed it, the love that ordained it, the malice that wrought it, the patience that endured it—all are past our utmost thought. We can but bow down and silently adore Him who, though God, yet, "being found in fashion as a man, humbled Himself

^{*}E.H.B.—A young man of rare ability, spirituality, and promise, who departed to be with Christ after a very brief illness, 3rd February, 1892, aged 27.

and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross" (Phil. ii. 8).

Verse 46—He bore in silence the spitting, the mockery, the scorn, the robing, the crown of thorns, the scourging, and afterwards the reviling of the passers-by, of the chief priests and elders, and of the thieves; but at last from the patient, loving, loval, true heart is wrung this exceeding bitter cry, with all the force of the "THOU" and the "ME-left alone in the height of the storm—when the pressure was most severe, when the agony was most intense, without the support which hitherto through life had been ever ready to His hand. He bowed His head (John xix. 30) for very shame of the sins He was bearing, the head that had not bowed before, even under the crown of thorns, and gave up God forsook the only One who never forsook God. Have a care of all forms of Christianity which do not put God's pardoning mercy in the foreground. They are maimed, and in them mist and cloud have covered with a roof of doleful grey the low-lying earth, and separated it from the highest heavens. The true glory of the revelation of God gathers round that central Cross, and there, in that Man dying upon it in the dark, the sacrifice for a world's sin, is the loftiest, most heavenly revelation of the all-revealing God. The distinctive glory of Christianity is this—it tells us how God sweeps away sin.

Verse 51—The rent veil. If unrent, as it had hung for ages, we must see Jesus incarnate to be the impassable barrier between God and man.

"HAIL!" (Matt. xxviii. 9).

The original of our English word was born among the dwellers in the highlands of Central Asia—shepherd tribes. The shepherd's camp is like a ship at sea. Far as the eye can reach, their own is the only friendly shelter; beyond there is only mile after mile of uncultivated land. Watch must be kept against the onslaught of enemies—ravages of wild beasts and robbers, sometimes the midnight storm, the hurricane, the lightning and thunder, the black clouds full of fury. Under such conditions the terrors of the night are very real. How

welcome the dawn! They called it by the word which signified "delight," "joy," "salvation," for to them it was fulness of comfort. "The morning cometh." "Take courage." "Look toward the sun-rising; see far away a pale, tender gleam of light silently breaking the darkness, as, like a polished shaft, it flies upward into heaven; and now it spreads itself over the clouds like a mantle, growing brighter and brighter, and the nearer clouds catch the light in pale rose-colour and iris, and send it down to bathe the hills in gold and pearl."

"Hail!" What a change! Three days ago the ruler of day was darkened. Midnight blotted out mid-day. Death laid hold of life and bound Him for a moment, and now—"Hail!" The Day-spring from on High

has come!

Verse 18—When Almighty power comes. in, finite difficulties are no more.

Verse 20—

"No promise what the days will bring—
Some must be dark with storm and haze;
To each the measured load will cling,
But 'I am with you all the days.'

"With us at morning to inspire
Fresh work with ever-freshened zest,
At noontide that we may not tire,
At evening to restore and rest."

LOVE IN THE SPIRIT, Col. i. 8 and ii. 1.

SISTER in Christ sent a small present to a needy fellow-saint she had never seen, but knew through conversation with a Christian who visited her. On receiving the gift she seemed dazed, and it took repeated explanations to make it plain that it was for her from a fellow-saint in sore affliction. At first she could only weep, but by-and-by she said: "To think, through a' her pain, she could think o' me—what for, I wonder? jist because we a' belang tae Him. a feelin' atween His that's no atween the world. When ye write, will ye gie her my best respects. I thank her, and if it's the Lord's wull may He raise her up again; but if no, He kens best when's the richt time, and I'll see her yonder, though I dinna ken her here. Gie her my best wushes, and I ken He'll be wi' her in the dark valley up. to Himsel'."—Amicus.

Questions and Answers.

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

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 are most thankful to all our friends who have endeawoured to help us by replying to Questions, but the Editor hopes that Correspondents will study brevity, and when too long he will take the liberty of "using the scissors" freely in preference to rejecting Answers, on account of their length, in which there may be points of value.

REPLIES ARE INVITED TO THE FOLLOWING:

Baptism and Fellowship.—Must a Christian be scripturally baptised before he can sit at the Lord's Table?

Worship and the Worship Meeting.—(1) Is our Lord's-day morning meeting exclusively a worship meeting? (2) What is worship?

MINISTRY: ITS SPHERE.—Do the words "which is among you" in I Peter v. 2 limit the ministry of the teacher to his own meeting, or to the circle of believers with which he is associated?

OUR RELATION TO THE LAW.—What does Paul mean when he says that he was alive without the law once, and when the commandment came he died, and the commandment for life he found to be death (Rom. vii. 9-11).

How are some Sacrifices an Abomination?—Please explain in *The Witness* the true teaching of Isaiah i. 10-15. Are not the people addressed in this scripture God's chosen, earthly people, and if so, why does He tell them that their sacrifices and oblations are an abomination to Him, seeing that He had ordained them?

The Lord's Coming.—Does not Psalm cx. I declare that Christ will not leave the Father until He comes to execute judgment on Israel's foes? If this is correct, then my long-cherished hope of our Lord's speedy coming must be in abeyance until that time; but I cannot help still praying, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

THE SECOND COMING AND THE GREAT TRIBULATION.—Have we plain evidence in Scripture that when the Lord appears believers who are then on earth will be caught up to meet Him in the air, previous to the great tribulation, and are there any passages which would lead one to suppose that some Christians will be left behind to go through that time of trouble and do not form part of the Church?

CHRISTIANS AND THEIR CIVIL RIGHTS.—In cases of persecution, injustice, oppression. assault, &c., from which protection is clearly

granted by treaty or law, is it for a Christian, regardless of rights and privileges, to meekly suffer himself to be wronged, or ought he to apply for the protection legitimately his due? In case of theft, should he notify existing authorities, or merely commit his case to God?

AN OLD TESTAMENT APPARENT CONTRADICTION.

QUESTION 416.—According to Num. xviii. 18 the firstling was for the priest, but according to Deut. xv. 20 the owner and his household were to eat it before the Lord. According to Numbers xviii. 21 to 32 the tithes were for the Levites, but according to Deut. xii. 18 every man, with his household, and the Levite within his gates, was to eat the tithes before the Lord. Please explain these apparent contradictions, and also notice Deut. xiv. 28, 29.

Answer A.—Reading Deut. xv. 19, 20 leaves us beyond all doubt that the eating of the first-ling is intended, like in Numbers, for the priest and not for the owner. In verse 19 the owner is commanded not to work with the firstling of his bullock (Numb. xix. 2; Deut. xxi. 3; Mark xi. 2), and that he is not to shear the firstling of his sheep. In verse 20 he is commanded to bring the firstlings up year by year. These special instructions, not given in Numbers, certainly mean to tell that the owner was to have no benefit whatever from the firstlings.

Answer B.—On carefully comparing the different scriptures, the apparent contradiction disappears. (See verse 14.) The context of Num. xviii. 20 shows that the firstlings referred to, and which were to be eaten by the priests, were only those that were devoted to sacrifice.

Those that are spoken of in Deut. xv. 20 as to be eaten by their owner were sanctified to the Lord (as every first-born creature had to be), but not devoted to sacrifice. This was at the owner's option with regard to clean and perfect animals, but blemished ones were forbidden to be offered in sacrifice (verse 21), though, being first born, they must be sanctified to the Lord and slain. The perfect were eaten in the place chosen by God, the blemished ones within the owner's gates.

With regard to the second question, while Num. xviii. 21-32 refers to tithes only, Deut. xii. 17 speaks also of firstlings, things vowed, freewill and heave offerings, which were dedicated to the Lord, but not devoted to sacrifice. The Levite of the house would receive the tithes, and with the givers go to the appointed place; there he would enjoy the tithes, while they would be eating of the other things mentioned in verse 12, as plainly allowed in verses 5-7.

Deut. xiv. 28, 29 speaks of an additional tithe, a triennial one. This was not to be levied upon all the produce (a tenth having already been taken from that), but upon the increase of the year. This extra tithe might be eaten within the giver's gates, and in addition to the Levites there might be at the feast strangers, fatherless ones, and widows. This special hospitality affords a delightful display of the heart of God, but this is not the place to enlarge upon it. We may live in more enlightened times, but it is a question if we live in more generous ones than those the verses under consideration refer to.

w. H. s.

CORRECT ORDER of "RECEPTION."

QUESTION 417.—If no form of procedure is prescribed in the New Testament for the receiving of a believer, what then is the proper course to adopt, or what principles ought to guide?

Answer A.—Had Doeg the Edomite (1 Sam. xxi.) been accurately instructed in the law of Moses, he could have found in Leviticus xxiv. 9 scriptural warrant for accusing Abimelech of extreme looseness in receiving David into the house of God and allowing him to eat of the shewbread, and according to the strict reading of the law he would have been right. Our Lord, however, in Matt. xii. 3 justifies the high priest's conduct on this occasion as alone compatible with that principle of mercy which underlay the precepts of the ceremonial law. There is another instance of the same thing in 2 Chron. xxx. 18 which might be quoted. At the celebration of the Passover in Hezekiah's time, "a multitude of the people, even many of Ephraim," Manasseh, &c. (who had responded to the proclamation of Hezekiah inviting them to come and keep the Passover), had not cleansed themselves, yet did they eat the Passover otherwise than it was Though Numbers ix. 9 provided for the case of one prevented by uncleanness from participating in the Passover in the first month, there was no scriptural warrant to justify those who were unclean in the second month, as here, in partaking of the feast at all. Were all these Israelites, then, to be inexorably rejected? The principle of mercy again comes in, and we read that the Lord graciously hearkened to the king's prayer on their behalf. If such exceptions were possible, where everything was accurately prescribed by rule, how needful it must be now to avoid hard-and-fast lines, to seek in dependance upon God to deal aright with each case as it arises. It is much simpler, of course, to make rules and apply them stringently, but what is simple is not always scriptural, and human ways out of spiritual difficulties will only land us in

worse difficulties. There are, of course, certain broad, clear principles of fellowship which nothing could invalidate, and on these all professedly gathered to the Name of the Lord are practically agreed, such as the necessity of true spiritual life in those to be received. Can they show their fathers' house and their seed whether they are of Israel? (Ezra ii. 59); in other words, Have they been received by Christ? (Rom. xv.) Here, too, the principle of 2 Cor. x. 18 would hold good: "Not he that commendeth himself is approved." Something more was required by the apostle than merely the expressed desire of Saul to join himself to them "on his own responsibility." It sufficed, however, for them to learn on good authority that "he had seen the Lord in the way, that he had spoken to Him, and how he had preached boldly in the Name of Jesus (Acts ix. 27). With life must clearly be linked holiness of walk and soundness of doctrine, for a "tree is known by its fruits," and where there is manifest departure from consistent conduct and fundamental truth, then the question may be rightly raised of the relation the professor really bears to Christ and the honour of His Name would prevent fellowship. So far all would be agreed, but there are other points, such as believers' baptism or questions of ecclesiastical order, on which the New Testament gives no uncertain sound as regards the use prevalent in primitive times, and which some would seek to press as absolute conditions of fellowship. Such would charge with looseness others who would feel free to receive undoubted Christians, blameless in the main in life and doctrine, though enjoying little light on such points as those mentioned just now. May there not be light for us in such cases in the two instances quoted above? and "in the present distress" may there not be a call for us too to go and learn what that meaneth, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice?"

Answer B.—Under the dispensation of law all things connected with the life, worship, and service of Israel were prescribed in minutest detail. The legislation was for men in the flesh. Eli's sons, although men of Belial, performed priestly functions, being of the seed of Aaron. In contrast to this, under the present dispensation of grace and truth the legislation is for spiritual men, having the Spirit of God dwelling in them, the living Word of God in their hands, and the risen, glorified Son of God controlling all ministries in His Church. Principles, therefore, rather than rules or forms, are the guidance of Christians to-day.

The four Gospels bear a common testimony as to who ought to be received—Matt. x. 40-42; xviii. 5; Mark ix. 37; Luke ix. 48; John xiii. 20.

The sum of these scriptures is: Receive all who belong to Christ.

Romans xiv. 3, "God hath received him," and verse 4, "God is able to make him stand," show that, although weak in the faith and deficient in knowledge, all who belong to Christ have been received by God, who is pledged to keep them by His mighty power. It is our bounden duty, and ought to be our most cherished privilege, to receive all such. God was glorified when Christ received us, and we glorify God when we receive one another as Christ received us (Rom. xv. 7).

A sinner who comes to Christ, and is received by Him, is in fellowship "with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" (I John i. 4), and has also the witness in himself (I John v. 10). Received by Christ, received by God, in fellowship with the Father and with the Son, the reception of all such by one another, to share together every privilege and responsibility common to all, is the natural result of the

operation of God.

There are those who, whilst bearing the marks of belonging to Christ, may have fallen into moral transgression as enumerated in I Cor. v. 11, or doctrinal errors as defined in 1 Tim. i. 19, 20, 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18, 2 John 9-11, which things are "filthiness of flesh and spirit" (2 Cor. vii. 1). When this has become manifest, and is proved beyond dispute, those who have thus become an offence to Christ, and a grief to their brethren, are to be refused or put away from companying with those calling on the Lord out of a pure heart, but to be welcomed again, after evidence of confession and restoration to God. All others, notwithstanding varying degrees of knowledge, are to be received, and helped as they are able to bear it.

To carry out divine principles requires spiritual power. Alas! here is the root of all our troubles. In the absence of spiritual power it is so easy to make rules that will operate mechanically. Our true defence against the entrance of the ungodly, or error in any shape or form, is not the setting up of machinery that oftentimes excludes the godly and admits the carnal, but to have the Lord Himself as the glory in the midst, and a wall of fire round about. And this we shall surely prove when we are found walking humbly before God. I don't know of one instance in Scripture of reception as a formal, ecclesiastical

act.*

From Acts xvi. 5 we learn that the *churches* increased in number daily, thus showing that the Christians of early days recognised that im-

mediately one took his stand as a disciple of Christ, God had also given him such a place amongst them. It could therefore be only a plain, explicit commandment from the Lord that should debar any from the birthright privilege of all who are born of God.

To argue that times have changed, and that what was sufficient at the beginning of Church history will not now suffice, is to forget that the end is as the beginning with God. Although there is a full unfolding of the development of evil in the last days plainly set forth in the Scripture, there is no addition made to the principles first laid down, thus showing their sufficiency for all times and all circumstances.

To make anything a matter of discipline to the extent of refusing or putting away without a plain, positive commandment from the Lord has been, and where practised will continue to be, the occasion of trouble, sorrow, and divisions. It was so in the first division in the Church (3rd John); it was so when what is known as "Exclusivism" took shape; and it has been the

cause of almost all divisions since.

Every meeting has a purpose and a character peculiar to itself. The purpose of our coming together at the call of the Lord on the first day of the week to break bread may be expressed in the words, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come" (1 Cor. xi. 26). This was the whole burden of prophetic Scripture. "The sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow" (1 Peter i. 11). It consists of a retrospect and a prospect. "Present things are excluded." Here may be two brethren who differ on many things connected with present things in every-day life, but they can sit down side by side, and when rightly exercised, and in the current of the Spirit's leading for the purpose in hand, can have perfect fellowship in the backward and the forward look. What infinite wisdom and perfect love are here shown, in having arranged such a meeting on such a basis as permitted the strong and the weak, the learned and the ignorant, aye, even the spiritual and the carnal, to become partakers of the one bread in figure, and according to their measure delight in their common possessions in Christ. P. HYND.

Editor's Note.—Any principle or rule that excludes those who belong to Christ without a definite warrant from Scripture, or that practically if not deliberately bars their reception, cannot be of God. On the other hand, any principle or rule that gives access to the ungodly, by means of which such can "creep in unawares," or to Christians professedly, who in life or doctrine are such as Scripture plainly puts outside,

cannot be of God either.

^{*}The reception of Paul at Jerusalem is not referred to because of its having been discussed in *The Witness* of October last. See volume for 1899, page 165.

PRACTICAL AND PROGRESSIVE HOLINESS.

Address by the late George Muller, at Stokecroft, Bristol, 16th May, 1897.

THE words on which we shall meditate, by the grace of God, are, "Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. xii. 14).

I. In the first place let us ask ourselves what is meant by "holiness." It must assuredly mean far more than merely avoiding drunkenness, theft, habitual lying. It means habitual conformity to the mind of Christ. The word "follow" in this verse is very strong in the original. It means following with diligence, earnestness, perseverance—not merely in a light, and trifling, and careless way seeking a little more conformity, a little more likeness to Christ, but just as a greyhound pursues a hare and will not be baulked till he lays hold on it.

II. The question naturally follows, Were any of the holy men of whom we read in the Bible as completely holy as our Lord Jesus Christ in action as well as in word, in feeling, thought, inclination? This is deeply

Let us turn to Philippians iii. As we all

know, the Apostle Paul was one of the holiest men that ever lived on earth, and he here tells us how far he attained to this complete holiness (verse 8) — "The loss of all THINGS." He was a man of reputation greatly honoured; all this he gave up when he became a believer on the Lord Jesus Christ. Verse 10, "Know Him"—that is fully, particularly. Every believer knows Him, but here it means more fully than in the ordinary sense. Verse 11, Not whether he should be a partaker in the resurrection of the just, but while yet in the body be brought into the same state of holiness as would be the case when risen from the dead. After this he was aiming. Now notice what follows in verse 12, "Not as though I had ALREADY ATTAINED, EITHER WERE ALREADY PERFECT." Do not let anyone think that I say that I have attained to this complete perfec-

tion. "I FOLLOW AFTER"—I strive after,

I aim at it. Verse 14, "I PRESS TOWARD

THE MARK." This "HIGH CALLING OF GOD

IN CHRIST JESUS" is to be presently made

holy like Christ in body and soul. Let us notice what this perhaps the most holy man that ever lived on earth says, verse 13, "I COUNT NOT MYSELF TO HAVE APPREHENDED." He had not attained to it. Verse 15, "PER-FECT." There is an apparent contradiction between this and verse 12, but not so really. In the first verse the word is used as we ordinarily understand it, without the least flaw or deficiency. In the latter it has to do with growth, and refers to all those who were not babes, but men—of age in the "LIKEMINDED"—more and Divine life. more seek after this conformity to the will of God.

Regarding the second point of the subject we see clearly and distinctly that perhaps the most holy man of whom we have any knowledge says, while seeking after this holiness more and more, he had not attained to it.

III. Now we come to the third point, I John i. 8, "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Here is the statement made by God the Holy Spirit Himself, that if we meet with persons who say that they are without sin, perhaps have been so for the past seven years (as I have often during my long Christian course), all those who speak so They may be good deceive themselves. persons, seeking truly to please God, but they are self-deceived. Never since the fall has one human being lived on the earth without sin. Our business is to stick to the Word of God whatever other people say. Therefore, if the most holy person comes before us and says that he or she is without sin we must say, "My brother, my sister, the truth is not in you. You may have abstained from gross outward inconsistencies, but in your thoughts, inclinations, purposes, for one single month, nay, one single week, or day, you have not been perfectly Christlike. In the glory it will be so, but not so long as you are down here."

IV. Now for the last point in our subject. What are the means whereby we may be brought into more perfect holiness, such as our Lord manifested from the manger to the Cross?

Turn to 2 Peter i., beginning at verse 5.

important.

Here the supposition is that we have "FAITH," for that is the foundation of all real, true godliness. Verse 5, "Know-LEDGE." Evidently of spiritual things. Look that you become more and more acquainted with God, more and more acquainted with the Lord Jesus Christ, with the blessedness that awaits you hereafter, with the vanity of earthly things, and all through the Word of God. Now, the great point is, Do we, beloved, seek to add to our faith all this knowledge? We shall do so just in proportion as we read the Word of God, with prayer, as we read the Word of God habitually and meditate on it, asking, What does this teach me? What has this chapter for me? In so far as we neglect to do this we shall not grow in "knowledge" - "TEMPERANCE" - SELF - CORRECTION self - control - increasing mastery over everything in us hateful to God-all evil tendencies.

Now, all this is to be aimed after, and in the degree in which we apprehend it we shall increase in holiness; and in the degree in which we go on in the evil things spoken of in Ephesians iv. 31 we shall not attain to holiness.

"PATIENCE." This is, submit with humility to all God's dealings with us. Again and again we hear true children of God say, "I shall never get the mastery over impatience." Now, this is a perfectly unscriptural statement. We shall never be perfect, but by little and little, by persevering prayer against it, you will get the mastery over it. I will here say, especially to my younger brethren and sisters in Christ, that when I was converted I saw all my former course of life must be altered, but I felt it very difficult to get the mastery over my evil tendencies. I had been passionately fond of the theatre, was in the ball-room twice in the week, loved billiards, being nicely dressed, travelling about! I have never been in a ballroom since, but twice in the theatre in the first few weeks under peculiar circumstances, never touched a pack of cards since, and though I have travelled many thousands of miles in the service of Christ, not five miles for my own pleasure. I do not speak by way of boasting, but just to encourage others. Expect help from God—you will get it. At first it seemed as if I must pray in

vain, but I got it.

"Godliness." Doing nothing in our own strength, or to please or get honour for self—all for the honour of God, till we never put a morsel of bread in our mouth or drink a drop of water but for God's glory. "Brotherly kindness." Love to brethren in Christ. "Charity." Love; universal love. "Barren." Every child of God who seeks to build up himself on his most holy faith (Jude 20), everyone thus walking cannot be idle; he must be a labourer for

God in one shape or another.

Verse o. "DIM-SIGHTED." We meet with such continually. The child of God ought never, never, never to be in such a state as not to know what to do, and if he seeks after conformity to the mind of Christ would never, would never, would never be in such a state. Ah, let us lay this to heart! Again and again I have had persons coming to me from Scotland, from Ireland, from the most remote parts of Wales, to ask me what they should do. Unless babes, only just converted, every real child of God, if living according to the portion we have just read, would know how to act. In my own case perplexing circumstances arise every day, but by looking to God, reading the Scriptures, and asking what it would be in accordance with the honour of God for me to do, I know how to act. It is not the will of God that any of His children should be dim-sighted.

But here it is not dim-sighted alone, but "HATH FORGOTTEN that he was purged from his old sins." There are thousands, and tens of thousands of real children of God who have no assurance that they are children of God, that they have forgiveness. What is the reason of this? Because they have neglected to build up themselves on their most holy faith. What a lamentable thing this is! What is the result? They are weak spiritually, and this leads to halfheartedness, and by little and little they go back to beggarly things. On the other hand, if we know that we are forgiven, that God is our Father, that we have a certain home hereafter, all this draws out our heart to God and makes us, in a measure, follow out what we see in these verses.

Verse 10. We shall know for a certainty that heaven will be our portion, that God is our Father, Christ our Elder Brother, that we are called from the world and form part

of the heavenly family.

Have we done so? Do we all know that we are on the road to heaven? I have known it for 71 years and 6 months, and I have never all that time had the least doubt of it. I am as sure of it as if I were there, though I only deserve hell. God only deals with us who believe according to Christ's merits and not our sins, and I am one of those who believe in Him, and, therefore, I, George Müller, shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

Verse 10. "NEVER FALL." according to these verses, we shall never bring open disgrace on the cause of Christ. We may be weak and feeble, but we shall

never cause open disgrace.

Verse II. "MINISTERED ABUNDANTLY." This is the last point. There are two ways of getting into heaven—as a vessel under full sail; or saved as out of a fire, a few chairs or a table dragged out of the flames! For more than 60 years it has been my prayer that I may finish my course with joy. I have sent up my feeble cry to God for this. My beloved brethren and sisters in Christ, which do you desire? Saved as by fire, or entering under full sail? Let us each one aim at the latter!

. ____ GAINING BY LOSING.

I gain most by what God takes from me, for I am an immense, yea, an eternal gainer, when He fills up with Himself the want of that which He takes away. Whatever brings me this blessing I can welcome it. Welcome every cross which brings me nearer to Jesus, and makes me live in stricter fellowship with Him, and then I can say, and feel it too, Farewell, fine world; farewell, all thy fine things; farewell for ever! when they would keep me one moment from the enjoyment of my greatest good, and from the love of my best and eternal Friend, Jesus.—WM. ROMAINE.

NOTES FROM A YOUNG MAN'S BIBLE .- IV.*

THE GOSPEL BY MARK.

THE SERVANT.

" He has trod the path so lately, That the warm, heart-cheering glow Has not faded from the footsteps That we love to trace below."

THE word "Lord," markedly omitted in this gospel until after His resurrection. The word "forthwith" ("immediately," "straightway"), characteristic of the servant, occurs forty times out of eighty in the New Testament.

CHAPTER III.

Verse 5—This gospel lifts the veil and shows something of the wear of spirit which His service cost this Divine and blessed Servant.

Verse 17—The sons of thunder—John: He speaks to us in a voice (having no sign of the perturbation of earthly passion in it), that seems to come with a sovereign tone from the upper sky, startling souls that are held in a "dead sleep," and oftentimes melting down as into glad echoes. Take the opening paragraph of his gospel. men so different as Chrysostom, Augustine, and Bengel remark: "Hear how he thunders."

CHAPTER IV.

Verse 35-"Let us pass over unto the other side.

1. An invitation which includes all.

2. The terms of it meet all possible objections. "Let us."

3. "Go"—start—progress.

4. "Over to the other side" - Tasting salvation.

Three reasons: (1) Because it is getting late; (2) Because Jesus is going, and if we want to be with Him we must go; (3) Because if we will not go, we must be left behind—a very definite transaction.

*E. H. B. —A young man of rare ability, spirituality, and promise, who departed to be with Christ after a very brief illness. 3rd February, 1892, aged 27.

[An esteemed correspondent has taken exception to certain paragraphs in "Notes from a Young Man's Bible" in our June number, where mention is made of what would have happened had not strength been ministered to the Lord Jesus. That similar unguarded expressions have, in days come by been worked up into positive evil doctrine and gone by, been worked up into positive evil doctrine, and have occasioned much and bitter controversy, is true, but the writer, we are sure, had no such thoughts. He was only regarding issues as from a purely human standpoint. Nevertheless, it is not wise to speculate at all on what would or might have happened in connection with the work of Christ, and possibly the paragraph in question would have been better omitted.—ED.] Verse 38—"In the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow." A tired Man, not over careful as to His couch. But, why asleep? To teach you and me to go to sleep sometimes. When you get very nervous and anxious and fidgety, good sister, go to sleep. When you become troubled and a little peevish, good brother, go to sleep. You smile at that, but I am giving you good medical advice, I might almost say good spiritual advice. The worst thing for you is to be trying to be somebody else. Be what you feel, is evidently the intention of God in the making of such an one as you are.

CHAPTER VIII.

Verse 25—His practice: "Again." We may expect Him, whether just rescued (Luke x. 35), or whether we have known Him long (John xvi. 22). He is certain to come! That is as brightly sure as that dawn shall deepen into day. Then let us have the joy of it in advance, and look steadfastly for it. When the link of life is formed for ever between the Saviour and the saved, by His own life's blood having rested on the soul, He is irresistibly attracted to that one again and again. It is as if He could not stay away; could not do without further opening up His heart of love to the one He has made His own, and who shares His very life.

CHAPTER IX.

Verses 32, 33—They understood not; were thinking of other things. Why do I say He was alone? He asked them what they disputed among themselves by the way. He would not have done so if He had been with them. Alone—thinking of the deep sorrow and humiliation that lay before Him, and, borne upon the breeze, the sound of angry wrangling and strife.

CHAPTER X.

Verse 32—"Again." He is resolved that we shall know. How much it must have cost Him to repeat over and over what He was going to face to those who did not realise what it meant. Alone—going before them—the tired, weary step—alone—alone—and the wrangling for place went on. How could Peter have said that 28th verse?

GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE-XX.

PRACTICAL LESSONS.

By J. R. CALDWELL, Author of "Things to Come," "Christ in Hebrews," "Earthly Relationships," "Levitical Offerings," &c.

H AVING considered some of the Scriptures bearing upon the past history, present scattered condition, and future restoration of the children of Israel, nationally, it may be for our profit to gather up some of the practical lessons that flow naturally from the subject.

And, first, Israel, or as they now are generally known and popularly called, "the Jews," afford an incontestible proof of the inspiration of the Scriptures. The main features and numberless details of their history for the past 2000 years could be written from "the scriptures of the prophets."

Their rejection of the Messiah, their combining with the Roman authorities to crucify Him, the destruction of Jerusalem, their being scattered amongst all nations, their being hated, feared, persecuted, not in some nations only, but in every nation whither they were scattered (Britain included, until comparatively recent years), nevertheless their being preserved as a distinct people, increasing in numbers and influence until fitted to take a place among the nationalities of the world—all this, and much more, we have seen was predicted in the Old Testa-It is not conceivable that human skill could forecast such a history! The scientists of to-day, with all the means at their disposal, scarce can forecast the weather for the morrow; how, then, could human prescience anticipate, not centuries, but millenniums of national events altogether unprecedented and in the highest degree improbable? From a purely rational standpoint, it is easier to believe in the theory of inspiration than to believe that man by merely natural foresight or calculation could have written the prophecies.

The Jew is the great outstanding miracle of this age. None but the God of the Bible could have wrought such a stupendous and continuous wonder as the people of the Jews present to the world hitherto and now.

And this brings us to another consideration of vast importance, namely, that as the fore-

knowledge of God is seen in the prophetic Scriptures, the certainty of all His eternal counsels being fulfilled is guaranteed by the

operations of His providence.

It is a miracle that Israel's history should have been predicted ages before the fulfilment; it is equally a miracle that every detail as predicted should be fulfilled, and that in spite of all possible opposition by man and by Satan. In fact, it is in many cases the enmity of man and the subtlety of Satan that God uses to further His own purposes.

The infidel will find it hard to explain the evident and undeniable correspondence between prophecy and history as regards Israel. And even "the critics" who profess to honour the Bible, but at the same time cease not to proclaim its fallibility, to challenge the authorship of its books, and to teach that its miracles are fables or myths, will find it hard to deny the miraculous, with the double miracle of inspiration and the Jews before

their eyes.

Thus although God hides Himself, and seems in this present age to have withdrawn farther than ever from direct and obvious interference in the course of things in the world, nevertheless He has not left Himself without a witness—a witness of such a character that, if it fails to convince, it certainly will not fail to condemn those who

ignore or deny it.

The same Almighty power that has secured the fulfilment of prophecy, so far, may be relied upon with absolute certainty to make good all that is yet future. This is the confidence of faith. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away" (Luke xxi. 33). And though it is not for us to know the times and the seasons, nevertheless it is of deepest interest to see with our eyes the gradual unfolding of the purposes of God according to expectations moulded by an intelligent acquaintance with the Scriptures of Truth.

The current news of the day becomes thus in many instances not a mere Athenian gratification but an occasion of adoring worship. The present "Zionist" movement, which gathers force from year to year, is of itself an evidence of the direction in which

national aspirations are developing. The eye of the Jew is upon Canaan; he yearns for the land of promise. All other countries, however he may prosper in them, and whatever liberty he may enjoy, are but the lands of his exile. In the possession of Canaan alone can he discern any escape from his wanderings.

But the movement is not of faith. Indeed, in their congresses the Zionists make no reference to the prophetic Scriptures. It is national and political, and in this respect it is just exactly what Scripture leads us to expect. The return to the land in the first instance is, as we have seen, a return in unbelief, and not for blessing, but

for judgment.

What, then, is our attitude as Christians toward this marvellous race? centuries past the Church has treated the Jew with utter neglect. It has been called a "Gentile Church," as though the "one new man" had not been formed in Christ "out of twain"—even of an elect company composed of Jews as well as Gentiles. "casting away" of Israel has been regarded as final and individual, and as equivalent to a denial of the Gospel of the grace of God to an accursed race; whereas seen in its true light as national and not personal it leaves the Jew on the very same footing as the Gentile, both alike "guilty before God," both alike "by nature the children of wrath," and therefore both alike subjects for the grace of God.

But in Romans xi. the mystery of God's governmental ways with Jew and Gentile is unfolded, and from it we learn that "through their fall salvation is come to the Gentiles." Israel in the past was Jehovah's olive tree, His fig tree, and His vine. From them He looked for fruit, as seen in Jotham's parable, fatness, sweetness, and joy, even joy to the heart of God, and blessing to ruined man.

All the privileges that God could in grace bestow upon a nation were theirs, as we have seen; precious privileges they were, but all abused and forfeited. Then came the cutting off of the natural branches, the seed of Abraham according to the flesh. Nationally no longer owned by Jehovah as His, "lo-ammi" (not My people) has been

branded upon them. "As touching the election they are beloved for the fathers' sakes," but "as touching the Gospet they are enemies for our sakes."

The grace of God thus shown to the Gentile is "contrary to nature." Much may be learned of spiritual things in Nature's parables, but Nature has no parallel to this! The wild olive, the Gentile, is grafted into the stem of the good olive tree, and partakes of its root and fatness.

Even so, whilst Israel is scattered and peeled, meted out and trodden down, Gentiles by myriads have enjoyed the privileges that formerly were the exclusive right of Israel. The saving knowledge of Israel's Messiah, nay more, union with Him in resurrection life, the gift of His Spirit, witness for Christ in the world, Spirit-taught acquaintance with the Scriptures (Old Testament and New), Faith's grasp of the promises, and Hope's foretaste of the glory to be revealed, all has come through Israel's fall to the Gentile.

"As ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have these also now not believed God, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded [shut them all up together] in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all."

Have we, as Gentile believers, realised God's purpose that through our mercy Israel now, blinded though they be through unbelief, should obtain mercy? We speak of Israel as the future missionaries to the world. Have we taken in the fact that the Gentile is now God's appointed missionary to the Jew?

The Church having totally failed to apprehend its calling in this, as in most other respects, God is at the present time raising up Christian Jews to bear the Gospel to their brethren. And they are being richly blessed. It is doubtful if any evangelistic work is more fruitful at the present time than that among the Jews. Yet how seldom does one hear of prayer for the conversion of Israel! How seldem are collections made for the furtherance of such work! The Jew had always the first place in the mind of the Lord: "Beginning at Jerusalem" was His command (Luke xxiv. 47).

"The Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. i. 16).

"Unto you first, God having raised up His Son

Jesus, sent Him to bless you."

Again Paul says:

"It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you," &c. (See Acts xiii. 46). Though the Apostle of the Gentiles, he invariably first sought out the resident Jews and proclaimed the glad tidings to them.

Never let it be forgotten that "salvation is of the Jews." Our blessed Lord was, according to the flesh, a Jew of the seed of David, and from heaven He spoke "in the

Hebrew tongue."

Many who have tried to befriend individuals of the race have had trying experience of deception and hypocrisy. So low have they fallen that conscience in many cases seems extinct. But let not such experiences induce those who love the Lord to join in the world's abuse of the Jew. Remember that he is either, as concerns the Gospel, an enemy for our sakes or beloved for the fathers' sakes, and as such let us seek grace, if an enemy, to view him with divine compassion, and if a Christian to love him in sympathy with the heart of the Lord Jesus.

A CALL TO PRAYER.

Gal. iv. 19; Acts xx. 19-21; 2 Cor. v. 11; Rom. ix. 2, 3

ALL the mighty men of war in the service of God, since the foundation of the world, who have shaken hell to any amount, have been sons of the closet. Moses pleaded until he had power to turn aside Heaven's red-hot thunderbolt of wrath, although God said: "Let Me alone, that I may destroy them, and blot out their name from under heaven." He threw his strong arms of faith round 600,000 wicked reprobates.

Elijah, after long and powerful pleading, shut and opened heaven. But I will not speak of what prophets, apostles, and other inspired men have done through faith and prayer, lest Satan should take advantage, and tell you that it would be impious to expect the power with God which such holy men had.

Look, then, at a Baxter, who stained his

study walls with praying breath; and after he was filled with the power of the Holy Ghost, sent a river of living water over Kidderminster, and was the means of converting hundreds.

Again, Luther and his coadjutors were men of such mighty pleadings with God that they broke the spell of ages, and laid nations subdued at the foot of the Cross. John Knox grasped in his strong arms of faith all Scotland; his prayers terrified tyrants. Whitfield, after much holy, faithful closet pleading, went to the devil's fair, and took more than one thousand souls out of the paw of the lion in one day. See a praying Wesley, a pleading Bramwell, Stoner, Smith, and Carvosso, each of whom led thousands to Jesus; Anne Cutler and Mrs. Fletcher, whose breath was prayer, and who won souls wherever they went.

John Oxtoby, with his one talent, sighed, wept, fasted, groaned, and prayed for sinners, threw them on the atonement, and bound them there for hours by faith's strong arms, entered the pulpit and spoke words of flame, so that hundreds were saved by his means.

"Thou must be true thyself,
If thou the truth wouldst teach;
Thy soul must overflow, if thou
Another's soul wouldst reach;
It needs the overflow of heart
To give the lips full speech."

Intensity should mark the preaching of the day. . . . Intense—not in its diction grandiloquent, or sensational, or dramatic for God was not in the fire, or in the earthquake, but was audible in the still, small voice. Intense in what, then? Intense in holy lovingness, inspired by the Spirit of God. Some preachers do not seem quite to know what spirit they are of. It is not sarcasm, or scoldings; it is not high orthodoxy, or powerful polemics; it is not the most masterly sermons; it is not the most eloquent appeals—it is a certain sublime tenderness, it is fervent love in the preacher, before which a congregation is bowed like a cornfield before the wind. It is the unction of the Holy One, the savour of a devout earnestness that yearns passionately for souls, "dying a'most," as a Scotchwoman said of

M'Cheyne, "to have ye converted"; the glow of a holy ardour in the preacher's heart, kindled from the altar before the throne; the sympathy that casts itself upon the hearer's sympathy; the simple eloquence of a strong sincerity that pleads with men for Christ—"with tears in its voice," as the French say—from knowing and feeling what it means for them if they make full surrender to Him; the importunate longing for men's souls that would give up anything to make men yield to Christ, and will not let them go, even if they refuse; that would cry with Chrysostom, "If ye reject my words I will not shake off the dust of my feet against you; not that herein I would disobey my Master, but because the love He has put into my heart for you forbids my doing so."

"O let Thy Spirit all my powers inspire
To preach salvation—present, full, and free;
Open my lips—bestow a tongue of fire,
A heart of love in fellowship with Thee.

"Give me to see, with Faith's clear, eagle eye,
The unseen worlds, with all their weal and woe;
With Thee—eternity of bliss on high;
Without Thee—night, eternal night below.

"I want to learn the value of one soul—
One soul that's saved, one soul for ever lost—
By pondering well its everlasting goal;
And more than all, what Thee its ransom cost.

"O let Thy cross be e'er before my sight;
Teach me its endless wonders more to know,
Sin's righteous wage, Love's all-surpassing might,
That I may far and wide Thy praises show."

I am sure you must see, if the Bible be true, that multitudes are on the road to hell. Many are fighting for wealth, as if they had an eternal lease of life. Many are as proud as if they were not heirs of wrath. Multitudes flock to Satan's encampment on the racecourse, and are there murdered for Multitudes press into theatres, eternity. where devils cry louder than men, "Again!. again!" Multitudes crowd into the tipplinghouses, which are the devil's shambles—the open mouths of hell! Young men and women, think of it! Tippling-house keepers, think of it, and give back your license; or, if you still are resolved to retail for the devil, O write, for the sake of miserable souls, above your doors, "A short road to the pit."

Look at your evening streets! How many sally forth to glut their eyes with sin? How many stagger along to the pit? Satan is quick to strike so good a bargain! He buys souls cheap in this busy market, and never more than on the Lord's Day, when multitudes flee out of town by land and water, as if the plague were in it, and travel with tenfold railway speed to hell. Alas! sinners seem now to ride post-haste to perdition as if they were afraid of being too late to get in. Sinners, is this state of things to continue? It cannot. Mercy or judgment must end it. Every soul is ripe for Christ's atoning BLOOD, or for God's devouring wrath. Sinners, you must repent and be saved, or go on and be damned! There is no middle ground to stand upon. The blood of Jesus and the power of the Holy Ghost are the only refuge! To these turn, while God waiteth and putteth a drag to the wheels of vengeance.

Look at them—look at them—look at them! Do you see them? Then you see them on a slippery hill, and all around is hell! Think how they dishonour God; think how they pierce the Saviour; think how they grieve the Holy Spirit; think how they damn the rising race; think how they people the wide, burning pit! See how they push one another off the stage of life into perdition! See how thousands of them have taken all but the last step, so that, if you do not pluck them thence at once, the next step will be hell's fire, hell's demons, hell's wails, hell's deep death-groaning, hell's darkness; hell's howling, blasting, fiery tempest, and that for ever and for ever. O, brother, all this is true! And will you not use the weapon which God has Himself placed in your hands? Think of the origin, value, and destiny of men's souls! Think of the bleeding, pleading love they are slighting! Think of the eternal damnation they are going to! Think of the heaven of increasing glory they are losing! Think of the influence they have in drawing millions with and after them to perdition!

Think what glory it would bring to God the Father, Son, and Spirit, if you could bless them! Think deeply, think long between their living in sin and drawing multitudes after them to hell, and being converted by God's Spirit, given in answer to our prayers, and becoming themselves the instrument of conversion of others. Think of Gethsemane, Calvary, Olivet, and the blood-besprinkled mercy-seat! Think what Jesus has done, is doing, and is willing to do for them. Think of what He has done for millions as bad as they. Think of what He did for bloody Manasseh, the murderer; David, the wicked adulterer; mad Saul, wicked Magdalen, swearing Bunyan, the infidel Rochester, and millions of other drunkards, thieves, harlots, and the very worst of sinners, on this side of the pit. Nay, think until your soul harrows up within you, and melts into pity, or flames into burning charity.

"The Spirit, then, will speak
Through lips of feeble clay;
And hearts of adamant will break,
And rebels will obey."

Then with your full, love-stricken heart, enter your closet, and bewail the sins of the people before the Lord. Yoke yourself in with them, like Moses, Daniel, Jeremiah, Nehemiah, Paul, and other holy ones; confess them again and again. While you are mourning over them, keep casting their souls and their sins on the atonement; recognise the more than infinite willingness o the great Redeemer to save them, and plead with Heaven to save them. Do not plead to make God willing to save them, for He is already infinitely willing. But plead because it is your duty; plead because God does, and always will, answer the pleadings of bold, holy faith.

Never mind spending your time in studying the philosophy of the thing—it is so. The Book of God and every page of Church history says it is so. The success which has always attended such closet prayers sets it beyond all doubt. As you are pleading, imitate Moses. When God was about to cut off guilty Israel, he pleaded His promise, His oath, His stretched-out arm; he pleaded again and again, even after God said, "Let Me alone": he pleaded in faith. Go thou and do likewise. Plead the power of God; plead the love of God; plead the mercy of God; plead the "yea" and "amen" promises

of God. Plead the life of Jesus. Plead His death, resurrection, ascension, and prevailing intercession. Span your strong-nerved arms of faith around sinners and bind them to the blood-stained tree. Plead heaven with its everlasting glory; hell with its darkness. fire, and adamantine chains. Plead the shortness of time; plead the length of endless eternity. Enter deeply and fully into their awful state. And if you plead in this way in faith for hours you will soon learn the grand secret of shaking any town, and sending a wave of living water over the land. Christ says, "He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Believe, then, and flood your district, no matter what stands in the way.

"Filled—filled to overflowing!
Say, my soul, can it be so?
Filled to overflow for others—
Filled from God's own overflow.
O, if filled from Him I be,
His outflow must flow from me." Anon,

NOT THE GLORY-BUT HIM.

My soul thirsteth for Thee; My soul shall be satisfied. (Ps. lxiii. 1, 5.)

THERE'S a light that gleams from the hills afar,

The hills of the Morning Land, Where the gates of God in their sheen of pearl For ever open stand;

And bright ones walk in a wondrous peace That no heart can understand.

There's a song that floats from those glorious hills,

No angel can join the strain; Not theirs to swell those rapturous chords, Not for them was the Lamb once slain; And they stand and listen, in wonder deep, To the joy they may not attain.

There are mysteries sweet in that fair, fair land,

And sights and scenes to unfold
That never shall enter the heart of man
Till he walks on the streets of gold;
But, oh! these things are but joys by the way,
The secret is yet untold.

Oh, heart ot mine! will the light and the song
That stream from that heavenly hill
Be enough for thee as thou passest through,
And its raptures within thee thrill?
Will the joys of heaven before thee spread
All thy deep desires fulfil?

The bright-robed myriads around thee press, Each glorious in Love divine,
And beckoning joys on every hand
Allure thee to call them thine;
Can these not satisfy thee, dear heart—
For what, then, dost thou repine?

There is a mysterious bliss beyond,
That makes these glories dim;
They are but the outward fringe of heaven,
Like the setting sun's bright rim;
But, oh! for the ecstasy untold
For the first, first sight of HIM.

Not in these fair scenes, nor bliss, nor song,
Not here, not here my rest;
One spot—the heart of heaven—alone
In radiance stands confessed,
Thither my eager spirit flies,
And sinks upon His breast.

Is it thus with thee who dost read these lines, What heaven dost thou desire?
Is it only the rest, the songs, the peace, To which thou dost aspire?
Or is there a glory beyond all these That sets thy heart on fire?

The sight of HIM, whom the hosts adore,
To worship before His feet,
And gaze and gaze till all light grows dim
In the light of that face so sweet;
For heaven's own bliss lies wrapped in this—

When the soul and the Saviour meet.
Portswood, 21st May, 1900. EMILY J. A. PEARSON.

DIRECTION FROM GOD.

HAVE felt a sinking of heart in view of the indifference and uninterested state of the people of my district; it may be the Spirit of the Lord will rouse them. Twice I have got very marked answer to prayer when seeking direction before reading a passage of Scripture when a few friends were assembled—most marked direction. Why not in greater things?—A. Bonar.

A FEW THOUGHTS ON THE "ART" OF PREACHING.

IN seeking to set down a few practical reflections on the subject of preaching, we duly remember the saying, that "the perfection of art is to conceal art." That is to say, it may not be desirable, even if it were possible, to tell all the secrets of powerful and effective ministry. Certainly these secrets will not always lie upon the surface; and he who is a master in the "art" of imparting heavenly instruction will not be ready to let people know "how the thing is done." The great poets and prose writers often startle us by the simplicity of their language, even in their most telling passages, leaving the impression on the mind of the reader that "any one might have said that." There seems to be no art about it. Yet that is what constitutes the perfection of art. In the work of the ministry pertaining to preaching teaching, who has not observed the same thing again and again? A message of remarkable power, and conveying remarkable instruction, is often as remarkable for its simplicity. The people are held, for a There is perhaps time, as by a spell. nothing startling, or "original," as the word is understood. Indeed, you perhaps anticipate what is coming. Yet the message comes with a force that is irresistible. Where was the art? It was invisible. There seemed to be none. Very likely there was none—none, that is, of that studied art which is carefully acquired to produce an effect.

Yet there is an "art" in the effective presentation of truth, but it is a heavenly art. It is not to be acquired in the world's schools, although these may play their part in the matter of externals. "He that winneth souls is wise." But his wisdom comes "from above." And he that would win saints—who would allure them to a closer walk, and a more heavenly frame—needs no less of the heavenly wisdom.

Public ministry exercises a great and beneficent effect in the building up of the people of God on their most holy faith.

Such, at least, is its true purpose. How, then, shall those of us who have any little gift for ministry so use it that our God shall be glorified, and His people fed, and sinners won for Christ? How shall we acquire the art? We do not say, "How shall we act the part?" for the part cannot be acted. Preaching, in its popular sense, is often a mere matter of acting. But the true preacher is no actor. He deals with realities—solemn yet blessed realities. office has a far higher aim than merely to tickle men's fancy, or even to instruct the intellect. No one will dispute that there are those who evidently set themselves to startle people with things that no one ever heard of before, while there are others with whom the "Christian ministry" is reduced to a mere "entertainment" for those who care to listen. But the true aim of the ministry is to allure to Christ.

It appears to us that the great element in the art of preaching is the concealing of ourselves. "Not I, but Christ," is the motto for the Christian life; but it is no less the motto for the Christian ministry. If the people in Moses' day had found something very astonishing about the pole on which the brazen serpent was exalted, their eyes might never have got the length of the brazen serpent at all. There is such a thing as our "points" and hair-splittings being so astounding that they absorb all the attention, and Christ is not seen. It is an evil day for us when the messenger eclipses the message —when the treasure cannot be seen because the earthen vessel attracts all the attention. It fares ill with us though many say, "What a wonderful address—what a splendid handling of the subject!" while few, if any, are saying, "What a wonderful Saviour is Jesus the Lord!" or, perchance, "How far away I am in heart from God!" These latter, we believe, will be some of the signs that follow true ministry. There will be a humbling of ourselves, and there will be an admiring of the beauty of the Lord.

We never had a more signal proof of this than when an aged servant of Christ broke his journey at a certain place to have a few meetings "to help the saints." One night he spoke on the moral glory of Christ. The servant stood to one side, if I may so speak, that his Master might be seen. The teaching was objective, and the object was Christ. It was altogether different from a vehement succession of appeals as to the spiritual condition of the audience. Yet the teaching on this occasion was more searching than any appeal could be. The speaker was happy in his theme, and everyone eagerly followed the delineations of Christ. I could think of it as nothing less than an unveiling of the Son of God. We came away saying to ourselves, "What a wonderful Saviour!" And we felt abased as no personal appeals could have abased us. The preacher, carried away with his vision of the Risen One, felt that his had been the heavenly art on that occasion at least; for at the next meeting he said, "I think I was more sweet last night." And so he was. Those who were there must have gone away laden with spoil; and as for those who were absent—well, all I can say is this, that if I had not been there I would be poorer in a very real sense to-day. The perfection of art must have been there. Yet I thought not of art, and almost forgot about the preacher, for the excelling glory of that One who is fairer than the children of men. W. S.

"WITH CHRIST."

Is it at the "departing" of the believer, or does the soul sleep till Christ's coming?

"One thing he earnestly desired: and that was that Christ should be magnified in his body whether by life or death. To live was Christ. To die would be gain: a happy issue out of all his afflictions. 'But if' (i. 21 goes on to say) 'living in the flesh (is Christ): this (dying) is for me the fruit of work' (i.e., the end of my labour), and which I shall choose I eannot tell.

For I am being pressed (pres. pass. part.) out of (ἐκ occurs 857 times, and is nowhere else rendered 'betwixt,' but 165 times out of) the two (i.e., living or dying), having (a third thing) the earnest desire for the return (τὸ ἀναλῦσαι—to analusai) the return (i.e., of Christ) see Luke xii. 36, the only place where the word occurs in the New Testament except here—and to be with Christ, for it is far, far better (than either living or dying). Then,

resuming from verse 22, 'Yet what I shall choose I cannot tell,' he goes on to say:

But to remain in the flesh is more needful for you (i.e., better than dying; not better than 'the return of Christ,' which is far better than either).

There is only one way of being 'with Christ': and that is stated in I Thess. iv. 17: oîtws (houtōs), thus, 'in this manner shall we ever be with the Lord,' i.e., by being caught up to meet Him in the air. There is no other way of being 'with Christ,' except by His Return and our Ascension for which we wait; and that is why the Apostle had so earnest a desire for it, and esteemed it as better than either living or dying. Yet his concern for the Philippian saints was so great, that, though dying would be the end of his labour and of his trials, as it was more needful for them that he should 'abide in the flesh,' he was content to stay."

THE above is an exact quotation from *Things to Come* (February, 1900), a monthly paper edited by Dr. Bullinger.

We would ask our readers, ere going further, to read carefully the Revised Version, which amply sustains the Authorised Version.

Dr. Bullinger's interjected remarks call for a protest, and are certainly open to criticism. His remarks are all within brackets.

We venture to ask, What authority has he for the statement that only in resurrection (I Thess. iv) can a believer be with Christ; and this in the face of our Lord's words to the dying thief: "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise"?

The inference he draws from I Thess. iv. seems to us quite untenable, unless on the supposition that he believes in the sleep of the soul, whereas it is only the body which sleeps (Dan. xii. 2, and 2 Cor. v. 1-8), from which last (2 Cor. v.) we learn the blessed truth—that to be absent from the body is to be "at home with the Lord"; and, as a friend remarked to me, "this must be before resurrection, for certainly after resurrection the believer will not be "absent from the body."

The rich man's body was buried (slept), the tenant of that body went to Hades, and instead of being asleep was never more awake than then (Luke xvi. 19-31); and there can be no doubt it was a real incident our Lord mentioned, for Jesus said there was a certain rich man. Who will dare to

say there never was?

Now, in 1 Thess. iv. it is the changing of the believers' mortal body into an immortal, or the changing of his corruptible dead body into an incorruptible, and both together caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Besides, the Holy Spirit says, them also (the departed saints) "will God bring with Him," pointing clearly to the manifestation of the children of God (Rom. viii. 19), for "when He shall appear we shall be like Him" (1 John iii. 2; connect Phil. iii. 20, 21).

In Phil i. Paul says: "To me to live is Christ," "to die is gain." That needs no alteration; but Dr. Bullinger put an "if" before the sentence, and then goes on thus: "This dying is the fruit of work, the end of my labour." Surely he forgets Romans vi. 21, in making the end of Paul's labour death. Death was the crown of his labour, like his Master (in his measure). He was obedient unto death, and thus, in Paul, Christ was magnified both in life and in death.

Dr. Bullinger then speaks of Paul being "pressed out of the two (living or dying), having the earnest desire for the return" (as in

Luke xii. 36, &c.).

A competent scholar we consulted as to this passage writes thus: "The exegesis of the passage (Phil. i. 23) shows clearly that the apostle is speaking of two things, not three—abiding and departing. Concerning the former, he says, 'To live' (verse 21), 'If I live' (verse 22), 'To abide' (verse 24), 'I shall abide' (verse 25). Of the latter he writes, 'To die is gain,' 'To depart is very far better. There is no mention of dying, and being changed at Christ's coming.' The strait is betwixt dying or departing, and living and remaining here."

Now, Luke xii. 36 evidently refers to the marriage of the Lamb (Rev. xix. 7). Before that time the Lord Jesus has gone to receive for Himself a kingdom, and to return. He left the scene of His rejection to return, and in plain English to "come again"; He de-

parted to return.

In the time of Luke xii. 36 He will have

departed from the Father's throne, where He now sits—in other words, to return, or come again (John xiv. 3), to receive us to Himself, that where He is, there we may be also.

The marriage (Rev. xix.) takes place after we are caught up, and then He returns to earth (departing from the wedding feast), and returning to execute judgment, as detailed in Rev. xix. 11-21, and all His saints with Him (Jude 14; Rev. ii. 26-28, &c.).

We must be on our guard, that no words of men, however learned, take the sweetness out of "absent from the body, at home with the Lord." True, the interval betwixt death and resurrection is not a perfect one, but it is "very far better" than our present lot.

The spirits of just men of the old dispensation were in Hades till the Lord led them up to be with Himself; they (the spirits), without us, could not be thus made perfect. They, and all who have since departed, are now with Christ, waiting on the bright side (very far better) for His coming, and we on the dark side for the same.

To be "out of the body" in Scripture is to be unclothed; resurrection is to be "clothed upon" (2 Cor. v.), while to be with Christ, which is "very far better," is the portion of our spirits till the resurrection morn if we die. Now we are at home in the body, but when Peter (in 2 Pet. i.) speaks of his "departure"—putting off this tabernacle—the margin reads "exodus," so that Peter as truly, at his death, made an exodus out of the body to be with Christ as Israel made an exodus out of Egypt to be in Canaan.

We again quote from our friend whom we consulted before finishing this article:

"It is scarcely honest to refer to Luke xii. 36 as the only other place in which the verb analuō occurs, without stating that the noun analusis is to be found in 2 Timothy iv. 6, for that passage is much more akin to Phil. i. 23."

But, in reference to Dr. B.'s rendering in Phil. i., the reference to 2 Timothy iv. 6 would be inconvenient, for he would scarcely venture to give "the time of my return is at hand" as the English equivalent of that passage. There can be no question that here the apostle, who had finished his course, speaks of his departure, or release. The metaphor underlying the word is that of

loosing tent cords, or weighing anchors for

starting up to depart.

The Lord grant us childlike simplicity in handling His Word, and avoid strife about words to the subverting of the hearers. T.C.

"THE GLORY OF CHRIST,"

What a wonderful expression which Holy Scripture applies to the Lord's true servants; they are "The Glory of Christ" (2 Cor. viii. 23). What a word to apply to dust and ashes. Such a thought could never have entered into the heart of man to conceive, had it not been most graciously made known to us by the Holy Spirit in the Word.—John Dickie.

Correspondence.

THE RECEPTION OF BELIEVERS.

To the Editor of THE WITNESS.

My Dear Brother,—The question as to the reception of believers naturally falls into two

(1) The reception of one newly brought to

(2) The reception of any who, though not recently converted, come to an assembly for the first time.

I. The practice of the apostles was very simple. At Pentecost the Word was both preached by Peter and carried to the hearts of many believers in the power and demonstration of the Spirit of God. They gave evidence of their repentance by being baptised in the Name of Him who had so lately been crucified; thus confessing their faith in Him as raised from the dead and exalted by God, they were added to those already known as His disciples. Throughout the inspired Word we find no hint of any other form of procedure. Those who gave evidence of repentance and faith were owned as belonging to the one company of the followers of Christ; for one Church it was, however, widely scattered (Acts ix. 31, R.v.). The principle underlying the practice of the apostles and their co-workers abides, though circumstances may somewhat alter the mode of its being carried out. We live in the midst of a wide-spread profession of the Name of Christ, much of which is avowedly profession alone, and cannot be recognised by those who exercise godly discrimination. But even a more definite profession of His Name may in many cases be made without cost, and therefore a strict imitation of those early methods would not be a true carrying of them out. We cannot say that

apostolic preaching and a deep and manifest work of grace in hearers are characteristic of these days, though, thank God, there are still cases of conversion whose reality seems so evident that for thankful reception it can only be asked, "What doth hinder?" But a series of meetings which might properly be described as chiefly emotional may produce results calling for quite a different course. A good number were moved and professed to be converted, would it not be a mistake there and then to baptise them and reckon them as in the Church of God? Is it not more fitting to seek to help them. by wise and careful teaching, and by giving due time to ascertain, as far as practicable, whether there is in them a real work of God? We cannot in this matter lay down definite rules, but those who are true guides in an assembly will seek and obtain wisdom from God to do such work, and then to commend to the assembly

those in whom they have confidence.

2. In apostolic days one who was in fellowship in an assembly in one city would, as a matter of course, find his place in the assembly in another city to which he might go. Saul of Tarsus, who had been with the disciples at Damascus, sought out, when he returned to Jerusalem, a company of those who owned Jesus as Lord and Christ, and evidently the only thing that made them hesitate about receiving him was that they "believed not that he was a disciple." As soon as that question was settled everything was settled. Anyone going from Thessalonica to Philippi would naturally look for those in that town who bore the name of Christ, and would as naturally be welcomed by them. The very absence of any rules about reception shows that the matter was so simple and natural that rules were not needed. Teachers, apparently, were specially commended from one place to another (Acts xviii. 27; I Cor. xvi. 10; 2 Cor. iii. 1), and it may be that others were also, though we have no example of it except in one special case (Rom. xvi. 1). Is it possible to rise up from a careful reading of the New Testament without the conviction that anyone confessing and honouring the Name of Christ would find an open door for fellowship. among the saints in any place? It was apparently only in the latter part of the time covered by inspired history that warnings were called for both against the reception of teachers holding false doctrine on the one hand and on the other hand the spirit of pride that led to the rejection of some who were sent even by the Apostle John (see 1st and 2nd Epistles of John).

The principle, surely, is unchanged, for wherever any company of Christians assembles truly in the Name of the Lord alone, there is an open door, and a welcome too, for all who come in

the same Name. When a believer goes from one assembly truly owning the Lord's Name to any similar assembly, the case is very simple, the only thing required being credible testimony to the fact that he is in fellowship in the first-But when a believer has named assembly. hitherto only met where some confessedly sectarian name is linked with that of the Lord, the carrying out of this great principle of the tellowship of the one body of Christ is more difficult, and it becomes increasingly so by reason of the wide tolerance of teachings which undermine the foundations of the faith. In the absence of reliable commendation it would certainly be needful to ascertain in some way whether the one thus coming holds with reverence the fundamental doctrines of Scripture, and is "walking in the fear of the Lord." Yet even here care is needed not to make intelligence the ground of fellowship, for many may truly trust in Christ, and sincerely desire to follow Him, who know very little of the Scriptures, and the assembly is the place where the needed instruction should be found.

Such matters as these, again, cannot be settled by rule. The Lord, who Himself is the "great Shepherd of the sheep," looks for His servants to be shepherds after His own heart, and where it is so there will be the exercise of both wisdom and love, and true regard for the order befitting any assembly that bears the Lord's Name will be combined with readiness to welcome all who are Christ's, and real ability to help them.

Though these principles are comprehensive, difficulties are found to arise in their application. How are we to treat a Christian coming from a sectarian body, who is not prepared to turn at once and for ever from all that we deem to be unscriptural? It is to be feared that the growth of sectarianism amongst believers assembling professedly in the Lord's Name alone, makes such applications for fellowship at the Lord's Table more rare than formerly, yet only one course can be pursued by those who truly recognise that Christ is the head of His body, the Church. They can only welcome one coming in His Name, because he belongs to Christ, holds the great foundation truths touching His Person and work, and is seeking according to his knowledge to follow Him. The question whether such an one is prepared to renounce a sectarian name and position would fittingly be a subsequent matter; his personal responsibility to his Lord must be recognised, and if we know His will more perfectly it is our privilege to seek to help him, as Aquila and Priscilla helped Apollos. If the effort to do this fails, and he goes back to a human system, does our having received him involve fellowship with that system? Surely not.

If any one comes now and again to a scripturally-gathered assembly, and, even without private instruction from those in it, returns to that which is not scriptural, have we not cause to humble ourselves rather than judge him? There is a vast difference, let us remember, between the mere profession of having God's presence and the reality of it (Zech. viii. 23; r Cor. xiv. 25). "The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power."

LIVING OF THE GOSPEL.

To the Editor of THE WITNESS.

Dear Sir,—The Witness for May lies before me. Among other matters, I have read with interest answers to the question as to the meaning of "Living of the Gospel." In the answer of G.A. and the Editor's Note the only tenable and scriptural ground has been taken. The principle of support applies equally to evangelists and teacher-pastors.* The apostle, it should be noted, quotes the same scripture to justify ministering to the temporal needs of both classes of Christ's servants (I Cor. ix. 9; I Tim. v. 17).

In the passage referring to the teacher-overseer, another reason is given: "The labourer is worthy of his reward." The latter is a quotation from the Master's own teaching on this important subject. I have not a Greek Testament beside me as I write, but, if I remember rightly, the word in I Tim. v. 8, rendered "reward," is the word which in Luke iii. 14 is

used of the pay of Roman soldiers.

The Editor says: "If any would deny them (teachers) support on the ground of their not being evangelists, surely they may be communicated with on the ground of being poor saints, who are diligently serving the Lord," &c. This is clearly a concession made to meet the state of mind of some who may not be clear on the question. Nevertheless, in my humble judgment, it is a false principle, and a principle that I have ere now protested against.

If one, taking the place of a servant of God, cannot be ministered to as such, he should not be ministered to as a poor saint. If called of the Lord, and diligent in His service, he has the same right to support that a gospeller has. Speaking of the Levite and the tithe, the word runs: "It is your reward for your service in the tabernacle of the congregation." The theory of ministering to him as a poor saint puts both sides in a false position. A man who can work and get employment, speaking generally, ought not to need or be willing to receive help from

^{*}Acts xx. 34, 35 seems to us to teach that when the service is purely pastoral and local, support by the Church is not called for.—Ed.

others; and the servant of Christ who receives help on that ground would only be justified in

doing so when in absolute need.

The word is still true: "And the labourer is worthy of his hire." We must distinguish things that differ. A paid servant of the Lord is not necessarily hired, and a hired minister is not necessarily "a hireling." It depends upon the man—the motives that move him, and the spirit in which he serves.

It is outside of the present question, and space forbids our touching on what is most certainly believed among us as to ministry and gifts in general. But we need to hold all the Word of God on this, as well as on all other matters.—Yours in Christ the Lord. I. NORMAN CASE.

New York, 16th May, 1900.

Questions and Answers.

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

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 are most thankful to all our friends who have endeavoured to help us by replying to Questions, but the Editor hopes that Correspondents will study brevity, and when too long he will take the liberty of "using the scissors" treely in preference to rejecting Answers, on account of their length, in which there may be points of value.

REPLIES ARE INVITED TO THE FOLLOWING:

Baptism and Fellowship.—Must a Christian be scripturally baptised before he can sit at the Lord's Table?

Worship and the Worship Meeting.—(1) Is our Lord's-day morning meeting exclusively a worship meeting? (2) What is worship?

THE LORD'S COMING.—Does not Psalm cx. I declare that Christ will not leave the Father until He comes to execute judgment on Israel's foes? If this is correct, then my long-cherished hope of our Lord's speedy coming must be in abeyance until that time; but I cannot help still praying, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

The Second Coming and the Great Trieu-Lation.—Have we plain evidence in Scripture that when the Lord appears believers who are then on earth will be caught up to meet Him in the air, previous to the great tribulation, and are there any passages which would lead one to suppose that some Christians will be left behind to go through that time of trouble and do not form part of the Church?

CHRISTIANS AND THEIR CIVIL RIGHTS.—In cases of persecution, injustice, oppression. assault, &c., from which protection is clearly granted by treaty or law, is it for a Christian,

regardless of rights and privileges, to meekly suffer himself to be wronged, or ought he to apply for the protection legitimately his due? In case of theft, should he notify existing authorities, or merely commit his case to God?

OUR RELATION TO THE LAW.

QUESTION 418.—What does Paul mean when he says that he was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came he died, and the commandment for life he found to be death (Rom. vii. 9-11).

Answer A.—Paul avers he was in his own sight and estimation alive unto God—without the law -once, i.e., before he knew its infinitely holy and strict requirements. But when the commandment, or direct spiritual demand of the law, came, it aroused the dormant antagonism of his natural sinful heart—he found himself opposed to God, and then saw he was as one spiritually dead, and liable to eternal death. The commandment which was accompanied by the promise of life for obedience, Paul found to be his death as a transgressor. For sin, using the holy law to provoke him, deceived him, and then he saw he was condemned, i.e., liable to death. A. O. M.

HOW ARE SOME SACRIFICES AN ABOMINATION!

QUESTION 419.—Please explain in *The Witness* the true teaching of Isaiah i. 10-15. Are not the people addressed in this scripture as God's chosen, earthly people, and if so, why does He tell them that their sacrifices and oblations are an abomination to Him, seeing that He had ordained them?

Answer A.—The Jews were here addressed as the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, whom spiritually they resembled (Jer. xxiii. 14; Ezek. xvi. 46; Rev. xi. 8), their incidental mention in the preceding verse having suggested this. Sacrifice was not absolutely disparaged here, but only when unaccompanied by obedience of heart and life. No sentiment more common to the Scriptures (1 Sam. xv. 22; Psa. l. 8-13; Isa. lxvi. 3; Jer. vi. 20, vii. 21; Amos v. 21-24; Hos. vi. 6; Micah vi. 7). In Psalm li., veres 16-19 are verbally, but not really contradictory. God commanded sacrifices, not for their mere sake (Prov. xv. 8, xxi. 27). "Positive precepts are only means; moral obedience is the end." They foreshadowed the Gospel when the real sacrifice was to supersede all the shadows. Outward ritualism may self-delude, but can only grieve

A iswer B.—The people here addressed are the

nation of Israel, though specially Judah and Jerusalem are named (verses 1-4).

Verse 10 calls upon the rulers and heads of the people—who, morally, were as evil in their ways as Sodom and Gomorrah—to hear the law and words of God.

In verses 11-15 God tells them that their attendance on outward rites—while their lives were impure and godless—was an insult to Him. Incense, the feasts of the new moon, their Sabbaths, their solemn assemblies, were abominable to God, because of their unholy lives. He would not hear their prayers, nor notice their worship, for they were as murderers in their conduct—so degraded had the nation become.

A. O. M.

Answer C.—Though God had indeed ordained them, they were not acceptable to Him if the weightier matters of the law were omitted.

In a sense, all that God has ordained is alike binding—"These ought ye to have done." Yet we have the Lord's own word that all are not of equal weight in His sight.

Religious ordinances, we learn from Isaiah i. 10-13, were not what He "required of them." Micah vi. 8 shows that what He "requires" is "to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God."

Not only the teaching of our Lord but that of the prophets uniformly bears witness to the small value of such things as compared with righteousness and mercy. For example, Amos v. 21-27 declares that even their offerings in the wilderness were to God no better than worship of Moloch. And this, as Stephen points out (Acts vii. 42), refers not to their overt idolatry, but to the tabernacle service as He had appointed.

Further, in Jer. vii. 21-24 the Lord, instead of regarding their sacrifices as "obeying His voice," puts them in contrast thereto. These were not what He commanded them in the day that He brought them out of the land of Egypt. They came in, besides, for the purpose of setting forth the better things to come; and when that purpose was fulfilled he abolished them. And as Matt. xxiii. indicates, the stricter the attention to these, where "judgment, and mercy, and faith" were wanting, the less pleasing they were to Him.

Nor are religious observances, though ever so scriptural, the weightier matters of the law of Christ. We cannot too earnestly seek to know His will as to the smallest things, or to fulfil it when we know it. But in doing so we are ever in danger of giving these the most important place in our own practice, or in our judgment of our fellow-Christians; as if the kingdom of God consisted in these, instead of "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." If our Christianity shows itself in strictness, or even

correctness, in external ordinances, rather than in the fruits of the Spirit, it is not what the apostle describes as "serving Christ" so as to be "acceptable to God and approved of men."

W. C.

MINISTRY AND ITS SPHERE.

QUESTION 420.—Do the words "which is among you" in 1 Peter v. 2 limit the ministry of the teacher to his own meeting, or to the circle of believers with which he is associated?

Answer A.—Peter as an elder exhorts, by the Holy Spirit, his fellow-elders everywhere to feed the flock of God, wheresoever they were situate, as true shepherds.

The oversight of the various portions of the flock is here alluded to—the shepherd care—not the matter of teaching wheresoever the Lord might send and give acceptance.

A.O.M.

Answer B.—In I Peter v. the Holy Spirit is writing to "elders," not "teachers." A Christian man may be both an elder and a teacher. As an elder his *authority* is limited to the assembly where he is located. Whilst his counsel may be of much value in other assemblies, yet his sphere of rule, or shepherd care, is limited. But as a teacher his sphere embraces the whole Church of God, as far as he is able to reach it. The elder's work is to tend the flock over the which the Holy Spirit hath made him an overseer (Acts xx. 28). The teacher's work is to expound the written word. This last gift, which was the third gift in the Church (see I Cor. xii. 28), is becoming very rare, and, by many, little valued, to the great detriment of the assemblies of the Lord's people.

Editor's Note.—The elders addressed by Peter are those who take the oversight.

Oversight consists to a large extent (even as the word by its use indicates) in visitation. It is an humble, laborious, often painful service, but much needed, and very fruitful where it is diligently carried out in the Spirit. It is easier to attend "oversight meetings"; hence so many novices and unspiritual find their way to the front as leaders-men who have no heart for visiting, counselling, comforting. The nature of the service necessarily limits it to one district. Nevertheless he who has a shepherd heart will care for the flock, even though, in the providence of God, he may remove from one locality to another. To him it is the one flock loved of God, and for which Christ died, therefore he cannot but care for it.

As replies A and B show the ministry of the teacher is of a different kind, and may be exercised among saints in as wide a sphere as can be reached.

"TO DIE IS GAIN."

By W. H. BENNET, Yeovil.

IN Philippians i., after expressing his earnest expectation and hope that Christ would be magnified in his body whether by life or by death, Paul adds,

"FOR TO ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST, AND TO DIE IS GAIN."

Taking our Lord as the Example, the Strength and the Object of his life, and proving the blessedness of fellowship with Him, he felt that death would be gain, because it would lead to his being "with Christ" in a higher sense than he could know on earth, however conscious he was that while here Christ was with him.

We are not told much in Scripture of the state of departed believers. At first sight this may seem strange, seeing that so many generations would be called hence before the coming of the Lord; but does not this very silence teach us that God would have His children ever cherish the bright hope of the fulfilment of our Lord's promise, "I will come again and receive you unto Myself." Yet true and important as this is, God has graciously given us clear testimony concerning the present blessedness of the departed, even as He has told us most definitely that their bodies will be raised in the glorious image of their Lord at His coming.

FALLEN ASLEEP.

The earliest words on this subject are in I Thess. iv., where, while comforting sorrowing saints with the certainty of resurrection, Paul incidentally speaks of departed believers as those who "sleep in [or, as some judge, through] Jesus"; for the man who had taken his part in accomplishing the "death" of Stephen had since learned the meaning of the words "he fell asleep." The figure is a beautiful one, as signifying that the time of toil and endurance in the suffering body is past, and that the child of God as seen by us falls asleep, to awake at the resurrection morn, when the loved and familiar features will be recognised. But we must carefully observe that it is only as compared with our present condition of activity in the body that we are said to fall asleep, for whenever a figure is pressed beyond what it was designed

to teach, error is sure to be the result. In this case the passage which speaks of the believer as sleeping has been perverted to teach that the soul is unconscious between death and resurrection.

AT HOME WITH THE LORD.

The next scripture on this subject is 2 Corinthians v., where again incidentally the subject being resurrection—Paul declares that "whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord," and expresses willingness "rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord." That he is speaking here of a condition prior to that of being "clothed upon," no careful reader of the whole passage can question; and one at least of the things we learn here is that there is nothing between being absent from the body and being present with the Lord. Not only is there no word to countenance that purgatorial state of which Romish teaching is so full, and by which Romish priests make "gain" of the world's wealth through the death of those who belong to that system; but the whole passage is against such a doctrine. Nor is there the slightest hint that those who are "with the Lord" are helped by the prayers of others to advance from one stage of bliss to anotheran idea on which many Anglicans, who discard the Romish doctrine of purgatory, base their teaching of prayers for such as have departed in "the faith."

DEPARTURE.

Another point clearly brought out in this passage is that our personality is regarded as attaching rather to the spirit which departs, than to the body which remains. In accordance with this, Paul, who knew that his body would soon be mangled by the executioner's axe, writes, "The time of my departure is at hand." Peter also speaks of himself as being "in this tabernacle," meaning his body, and adds, "knowing that shortly I must put off this tabernacle," which event he also calls his exodus, or departure. All this beautifully harmonises with the inspired statement concerning Abraham and others, that they were gathered to their people—which is distinguished from the burial of the body (Gen. xxv. 8, 9; xlix. 33; l. 5), the expression being used even of Aaron, whose body we know was left in the solitude of Mount Hor (Num. xx. 25-29). And does it not equally accord with the Lord's word concerning Lazarus—the beggar—that when he died he "was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom"? This was not said of his body, but of him.

VERY FAR BETTER.

In the Epistles we have much teaching on the resurrection, because that was denied by some; but it is clear that there was in apostolic days no questioning of the happiness of "the spirits of just men" (Heb. xii. 23). Think of Stephen. So full of joy is he as he beholds the Lord that his very countenance reflects the heavenly glory. Thus enabled to endure his terrible suffering without a murmur, and to pray for his murderers, as his Master had done, he committed his spirit to Him. imagine that in a few moments—when "he fell asleep" and his eye closed upon that heavenly vision—all became an utter blank to him, and that his spirit, which he had committed to the Lord, fell into a state of unconsciousness? Was this the idea of the man who witnessed Stephen's last moments, and afterwards wrote, "To depart and to be with Christ, which is far better"? Would a condition of oblivion, equal to non-existence, be very far better to Paul than that communinion with and service to the Lord which he loved and delighted in while still on earth?* CAUGHT UP.

But the record of Paul's own remarkable experience gives us conclusive evidence that he at least had no idea that the soul when separated from the body is in a state of unconsciousness. When the Corinthians compelled him to "come to visions and revelations of the Lord," he wrote that he was "caught up to the third heaven," "caught up into paradise," and concerning each he said, "whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell;

God knoweth" (2 Cor. xii. 2-4). Now, if Paul had believed that when he was "out of the body" he would be in a state of unconsciousness, he would not have been in doubt as to whether he was caught up "in the body" or not; but the very way in which he refers to these events shows his conviction that his experience was quite independent of the body.

WITH CHRIST.

The question, Where are those who have been called hence? is plainly answered. They are "with the Lord"—"with Christ." And if the expression "carried by angels to Abraham's bosom" told of blessedness, how much higher must be the blessedness expressed in the words "with Christ"! Still we may further ask, Where is this? and we have to turn to the Lord's own words for the When the robber by His side, taught by the Spirit of God, recognised the truth of the title written over Him in scorn, and prayed, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest in Thy kingdom," he received the ready reply, "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." On this narrative of grace we need not dwell, but just remark that addressed as a king the Lord responds as only the King of kings could do. He does not simply grant the boon asked, and tell the suppliant that He will remember him in that future time of which he had spoken, but gives the assurance that must have filled his heart with grateful joy,

"TO-DAY SHALT THOU BE WITH ME IN PARADISE."

Questions as to the locality of paradise are speculative rather than profitable, but we may observe the link in Paul's words between paradise and the third heaven. He tells us he was caugat up "even to the third heaven," and also caught up "into paradise." The Lord's promise to the Church at Ephesus is, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God." Here our thoughts are led to that final state of blessedness described in Rev. xxii. 1-5. But the difference between the portion and the joy of those who are "with Christ" before and after resurrection can only be one of degree and not of

^{*}Though we are only speaking of the state of the saved, it is important to observe that conscious existence between death and resurrection is equally true of all. "The rich man also died and was buried; and in hades he litted up his eyes, being in torments." That this describes a state of things prior to resurrection is evident from all that follows.

kind. To be with Christ is to be in paradise; to be with Christ is to be in heaven.

"In heaven they see the Saviour's face, So bright, yet so endearing; His bosom is their resting place, They call to mind their finished race, And wait for His appearing."

As God has been pleased to tell us in few but all-sufficing words that those who depart in the faith are "with Christ," and as He fully reveals His purpose that in resurrection we are to be "conformed to the image of His Son"—like Christ—may we not say in conclusion that, while rejoicing in the blessed hope of our Lord's coming, we should be perfectly at rest concerning those who have fallen asleep, or as to ourselves also should we have to follow them instead of being "changed" at His coming.

BIBLE STUDIES.

RESERVED.

The Inheritance reserved for the Believer (1 Pet. i. 4).

The Believer kept or reserved for the Inheritance (1 Pet. i. 5).

The Unjust reserved for the Judgment (2 Pet. ii. 9).

Punishment reserved for the Unjust (2 Pet. ii. 17).

J. M. H.

PERFECTION OF JESUS.

In Him is no sin (1 John iii. 5). He knew no sin (2 Cor. v. 21). He did no sin (1 Pet. ii. 22).

He was without sin (Heb. iv. 15).

And yet He, "His own self, bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Pet. ii. 24).

THE GROANINGS OF ROMANS VIII.

The Groanings of Creation (Rom. viii. 22).

The Groanings of the Church (Rom. viii. 23).

The Groanings of the Spirit (Rom. viii. 26).

THREE-ONE LOVE.

John iii. 16—The Love of the Father: World-wide.

Eph. v. 25—The Love of the Son: The Treasure in the World—the Church.

Rom. xv. 30—The Love of the Hely Spirit: Drawing men to Jesus. w. J.

BAPTISM.

By J. R. CALDWELL, Author of "Things to Come," "Christ in Hebrews," "Earthly Relationships," &c.

WHATEVER differences may have arisen among Christians as to the proper subjects for Baptism, or as to the mode of administering it, all Christendom, from Apostolic times, have recognised it to be a Divine institution and have administered the ordinance after some fashion.

In the following papers it is our intention to set forth as simply as possible from the Scriptures, first, its significance; secondly, who are the proper subjects for it; thirdly, the apostolic mode of administration; and lastly, to consider certain prevalent difficulties and objections to those views for which we contend.

Every Divinely - instituted ordinance, whether the elaborate ritual of the Old Covenant, or the two simple appointments of the Lord under the New, points to the Lord Jesus Christ, and is intended to set forth some aspect of His Person, character, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory.

Not seeing this, many have regarded modern humanly-devised ordinances as similar in importance to the Mosaic ceremonial, and attend to the carrying of them out much in the same spirit as a religious Jew would attend to those under the law.

But such religious services, not being of God, can form no part of the worship which alone is acceptable—which is in spirit and in truth.

But baptism, being a Divine appointment, takes us at once to the cross of Christ. "I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished" (Luke xii. 50). This is the great reality of which baptism is but the figure, the substance of which baptism is the shadow.

From I Peteriii. 20-22 we learn that the passage of Noah and those that were with him in the ark through the waters of the flood was a like figure to baptism. That is to say, the waters of the flood pre-figured that which the waters of baptism commemorate; they both point to the great baptism of Calvary, where all the billows and waves of the judg-

[&]quot;With the exception of the "Friends," or perhaps some few others.

ment of God passed over Him in whom the believer passes from death to life. Psalm lxxxviii. 6, 7, 16:

"Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and Thou hast afflicted me with all Thy waves. . . . Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; Thy terrors have cut me off."

Jonah ii. 3-5:

"For Thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas, and the floods compassed me about; all Thy billows and Thy waves passed over me. Then I said, I am cast out of Thy sight, yet I will look again toward Thy holy temple. The waters compassed me about, even to the soul; the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head."

Again, in r Corinthians x. 2 the passage of the Red Sea is described as a baptism. But whilst the passage through the flood expresses deliverance from a doomed world, the passage of the Red Sea sets forth deliverance from the power of the enemy and a new start under the guidance and leadership of the Mediator.

Although it is not stated in so many words, nevertheless it is perfectly clear that the passage of Jordan sets forth another aspect of the same truth.

It is not here a doomed world, nor yet a mighty enemy who had held them in bondage, but entrance into possession of the inheritance after wandering "in the wilderness of uncircumcised flesh." Joshua took twelve stones up out of the bed of the river of Jordan, where the feet of the priests had stood, and set them up on the Canaan side. "Jordan" means "the river of judgment," and the twelve stones, representing the twelve tribes, show forth the truth that the people of God are a risen people—"risen with Christ," and joint-heirs with Him of the heavenly inheritance.

But there were also twelve stones taken from Canaan soil and put down in the bed of the river, and it is significantly added, "and they are there unto this day" (Josh. iv. 8, 9). Thus the people who, in God's reckoning, are "risen with Christ," are also reckoned by God to have been crucified, dead, and buried with Christ. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Christ, that

the body of sin might be destroyed." Rom. vi. 3, 4:

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into His death? Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

There was no resurrection for the stones that were put down in the bed of the river of judgment, and there is no resurrection, blessed be God! for that "old man which is corrupt," and which has met his judgment at the cross of Christ.

"I have a baptism to be baptised with." How the dark shadow of Calvary hung over the path of the blessed Son of God! Again and again He spoke of it to His disciples as though it were ever before Him.

There "He suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust," "bare our sins in His own body on the tree," "was made sin for us," "redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." Never can we understand what that baptism was to Him. But it has assured our passage through the judgment from death to life dry-shod. Not a drop of the wrath can reach the one who is in the ark; the enemy can never repossess himself of those who have passed through the sea.

All this is shadowed forth in baptism, See Colossians ii. 12:

"Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead."

Here it is plainly taught that the ordinance is a typical representation of the believer's burial and resurrection with Christ. We bury only those who are dead. It is those who are reckoned by God, and who, therefore, ought to reckon themselves to have died and been buried with Christ, who are baptised. It is the privilege of the believer thus to have put before him in this ordinance, beautiful in its simplicity, the position that grace has given Him in Christ the risen One.

As Israel were baptised unto Moses, so is the believer baptised unto Christ. Christ is His Captain, His Leader, His Law-giver, His Mediator—all that Moses was to Israel, and infinitely more, Christ is to him. Now he is called, as risen from the dead, to walk in "newness of life." Not the old Adam life over again, but a new life in the spirit and power of the risen Son of God.

In the Lord's Supper it is the atoning work of the Lord Jesus that is specially set forth, and herein it corresponds with the truth foreshadowed in the *altar*. In baptism it is the truth of regeneration through the death and resurrection of Christ that is prominent, and herein it corresponds rather

with what is typified in the laver.

Baptism declares that regeneration is no mere educative process. It is not a development of latent good in humanity. It is a positive execution of the old man and the creation of a new man. It is the Adam nature condemned and set aside, and a new nature, even that of Christ, begotten and implanted within.

It exhibits the separation of the believer from the world which abides under the wrath of God. He has passed out from it and is no more of it. As "dead with Christ," his connection with it is severed; as "risen with Christ," his treasure, his inheritance, and all his vital interests are transferred to the heavenlies.

In baptism the believer is further shown his complete and special triumph over all the power of the enemy. By his death and resurrection the Lord Jesus spoiled principalities and powers—openly triumphed over them—and the believing one shares the

victory of his Lord.

He is delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. i. 13). The believer may have little apprehension of these great truths as with joyful alacrity he keeps the ordinance, but it is his privilege to learn them, and to be powerfully influenced by them, and in this he is helped as he passes through the likeness of the death and resurrection or the Lord.

Little is it to be wondered at that Satan should seek to pervert an ordinance so pregnant with the vital truths of the Gospel, and so eminently practical in its bearing upon Christian life and experience.

NOTES FROM A VOUNG MAN'S BIRLE .- V.*

THE GOSPEL BY MARK.

CHAPTER XI.

Verse 24—Prayer is not for the purpose of making God cognisant of our wants, for He knows what things we have need of before we ask. It is specially designed by God to exercise our faith, and consequently increase it; to give us a restful mind; to bring us into communion with God, and to call forth our gratitude.

CHAPTER XII.

Verses 26, 27—Christ proves the resurrection by the spiritual exposition of a single expression which God had used, and which is recorded by the Holy Ghost in the book of Exodus, and on this occasion He shows the source of error. If we know not the power of God and the Scripture, we err. An outward knowledge of the letter of Scripture without an inward experience of the power of God is without avail.

CHAPTER XIII.

Verse 3—"As He sat upon the Mount of Olives, over against the temple." His last open appearance in Jerusalem had taken place, and on the afternoon of that day He goes out as usual to Bethany, and on the way thither, as one taking a last, sad adieu, He sits down on the slope of Olivet. That little group is one of the most remarkable that ever appealed to human imagination; the very quietness of the withdrawal—like the going down of the last light on a finally impenitent soul—infinitely solemn and pathetic. The holy city lies completely under their eyes, crowded with more than a million worshippers, and hemmed in both east and south by deep, rocky glens, which already lie in evening shadow. The temple seems within a stone's-cast; the smoke of the evening sacrifice still floats above its courts in the clear air. Looking upon the mighty pile bathed in the gorgeous lights of sunset, "like a mount of alabaster, topped with golden spires," He pictures far on in the perspective as One to whom "one day is

^{*}E. H. B.—A young man of rare ability, spirituality, and promise, who departed to be with Christ after a very brief illness, 3rd February, 1892, aged 27.

as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." Chapter XIV.

Verse 14—"Where is the guest-chamber?" The guest-chamber yielded becomes, 1st, the place of remembered redemption; 2nd, teaches fellowship of His sufferings; 3rd, the place of blessing in breaking bread; 4th, He sings. It is not an ordinary song, no mere outflow of joy. The guest-chamber song is something very sacred, very moving. It is a song in the face of the cross, a song under the very shadow of Calvary, "a song in the night," and knowing that Calvary was only a few hours away. This is no mere hallelujah of exuberant joyfulness, but the deep, deep music of a heart in full harmony with His will. It is only with Him that it becomes possible. If we try it alone, it will be false and unreal. It does not ignore pain, but takes the pain and sings. He went forth to die for others. Shall we go forth to work and to suffer for Him? This was His last feast, His last rest, His last song.

CHAPTER XV.

Verse 17-"They platted a crown of thorns, and put it about His head." That God is anxiously desirous and willing to save is testified here. Jesus, with bleeding brow from the crown crushed on, says: "Your sin caused the thorns; I bear them." that brow once thorn-crowned, let us entwine our laurels. Upon that ear once familiarised with threats and scorn, let us pour the fulness of our adoring devotion. So shall we gain and give new thoughts of the supreme dignity of the Lord Jesus. Those sublime syllables, "Light be," were spoken by the voice that trembled in dying anguish on the cross. Rolling rivers, swelling seas, waving woods, bursting flowers, carolling birds, innumerable beasts, stars sparkling like diamonds on the pavilion of night; all newly made, all throbbing with God-given life, all very good, but mainly and gloriously all the work of those hands which were nailed in weakness to the cross, which itself, as well as the iron that pierced Him, was the result of His creative will.

CHAPTER XVI.

Verse 16—"He that believeth, and he

that believeth not." What a tale is in the words! How do they express the experience of One who knows all the results of even the best service; now His disciples are to take His place, and He will serve in them.

SOUL PROSPERITY.

Notes of an Address by the Late John G. M'VICKER.

"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth" (3 John 2).

WHEN would you say a soul is prosperous and in health? Let us be willing that our souls be examined to see if they are so or not. I shall take the soul, as it corre-

sponds with the body.

Is the HEAD right? If the head is wrong, the whole body is wrong. Now, are our souls growing in the knowledge of the truth of God? because that is the foundation of our whole life and practice. If a man does not know his standing in Christ, if he is not acquainted with the purpose of God in saving him, if he does not grow in the hidden wisdom—the wisdom of God—his life will fail to be influenced by the truth. He will not walk like a man who is in the place in which the grace of God has put him.

I should like that we ask ourselves, Arewe so searching our Bibles and getting acquainted with the mind of God, that we know better the truth that saves and keeps us than we did at the beginning? You remember it is written, "The riches of Hisgrace, wherein He hath abounded toward usin all wisdom and prudence" (Eph. i. 7, 8). God does not save us for our own individual blessing. He gave His Son to die for us, and He has raised Him again; He has put us into Christ, given us His Holy Spirit, and made us His children, all as a part of His great plan. He is going to head up all things in heaven and earth in Christ. He has also taken us for His inheritance, and given us a very special place when He put us in Christ. Now, are we growing in intelligence as to this? Are you and I like men who know their place in God's family, who know we have got the Holy Spirit? and are we going through the world relying upon God?

Is the head growing in clearness as to the truth of God? I remember when I was baptised I knew very little about the spiritual meaning of baptism. And when I began to "break bread" I knew very little about the "one body of Christ," which, of course, is set forth by breaking the one loaf as we are members of one body—the body of Christ.

As you go on living with God and studying your Bibles, the dimness of the truth will disappear, and things begin to stand out clear and solid before you. You can take steps with confidence, because you know what you have to depend upon—you know your relationship to God.

I would impress upon you young Christians especially the need of intelligently reading your Bibles, and studying the truths contained in them, so that you may grow in acquaintance with the truth. It is the truth that sanctifies (John xvii. 17); that is the girdle round your loins (Eph. vi. 14); it strengthens you for the battle you have to fight (Eph. vi. 17).

Now, what about the LUNGS of the soul? The power for breathing is life. Are you quite sure you received the Holy Ghost when you believed? I do not mean in theory. I know you could give me texts of Scripture, but do you know in your experience that you have got the power within you that helps you to overcome the world, and strengthens you to serve God? We all ought to have more than a theoretical knowledge. It is good to live in a healthy clime, and breathe in the pure, fresh air. I once heard Mr. Stewart say that the opening verses of the 5th chapter of Romans are like the building of a house. We do not merely build on a good foundation, but we build in a good clime. "We have access by faith into this grace" (Rom. v. 2). We breathe in the grace of God-it is a fine, wholesome clime to breathe in. Are you growing in the knowledge of the grace of God? you breathing in the grace of God?

I remember being with Dr. Neatby in Switzerland, and when we were high up on the mountains he said to me, "Breathe deep and fill your lungs with this fine air." Are

you filling the lungs of your soul with this fine air—the grace of God? Do you understand the grace of God a little better? I know Christians who are miserable half their time. But when Christians get to understand the grace of God, I do not say the battle is over, but the worst of the battle is over, because they know that God gives them the victory.

When I began forty years ago in Ballymena, oh, the fighting I had! I thought, how am I to "hold on?" But I found after a while that if I put the battle into God's hands He would gain the victory for me. Who is it that sustains our faith? It is God. He it is that puts His fear into our hearts. Everything is given to us of God. God has undertaken to save us from beginning to end. We have to do what God tells us; and God is far more concerned about our salvation than we are ourselves.

Suppose any of you here to-night are workmen; if you turn out a piece of bad work that is a disgrace, you are ashamed of it. "We are God's workmanship" (Eph. ii. 10); let us count on God glorifying Himself in us, and breathe deeper into the grace of God. I do not think there is anything I love more than grace—I need it so much that I have learned to love it. I am a poor, feeble creature without the grace of God; but God says, "My grace is sufficient for thee " (2 Cor. xii. 9). Let us seek to breathe in deeply of the grace of God. But we have not only to breathe in, we have also to breathe out. We have to breathe out our desires to God.

"Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air,
His watchword at the gates of death—
He enters heaven by prayer."

Have we learned to pray without ceasing? We should count on God helping us to do so.

Then, what about the HEART of the soul? We read about the love of God being shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Are our hearts getting to respond to the love of God? God does not want slaves in His house; He wants children—those who can return His love. John tells us that "if we love Him that begat" we will love "those that are begotten." We know a

good many intelligent Christians, but how many Christians do we know who are remarkable in that they have learned by the love of God to love one another. This is why divisions come among us—want of love. If a brother differs from us we quarrel with him, instead of loving him. The Lord Jesus Christ did not push His disciples away from Him when He reproved and instructed them. Let us love one another, even with all our faults and differences. If a brother does not agree with me about something, I can talk the matter over with him with an open Bible! Let me set him right, or he set me right; but if we cannot agree on the matter, we can agree to love one another. We are members of the one body—all members of the same Church, the body of Christ—and let us love one another, and draw closer to each other.

I once read a story about the power or love. A lady had taken twenty poor, diseased, cripple children into her home. One of them was a poor, skeleton-looking child, covered with disease, and gave her more trouble than all the other children in the house. The lady nursed and fed the child, but she could not get herself to love it. One day as she was nursing this child she became half asleep, and something like a vision was brought before her. She thought she had changed places with the child. There she was lying where the child was lying, only far more repulsive, and the Saviour was looking down upon her with eyes of love, but with a rebuke in His face. He seemed to say unto her: "I have been able to love you notwithstanding all your sin and repulsiveness; could you not love this child who is suffering for the wrong-doing of its parents?" She awoke with a start, and the child awoke at the same time and looked into her face. The love came into her heart as it had never done before, and she kissed the child as tenderly as though it had been her own. The child felt the power of love, and from that day it became a different child. Love made the difference.

If we could only get this love into our hearts, it would cost us something, but it is worth the cost. I speak also to myself, for it condemns me. The Lord help us to test

ourselves as to soul prosperity not merely by our intelligence, by our prayers, and acquaintance with the grace of God, but by our growing in the power to love God first (the most lovely of all beings), and then love each other notwithstanding all our faults. If others can bear with me, cannot I bear with them? Let us get closer together, and love one another more.

But, further, what about the digestion of the soul? This is an essential point. I have heard it said that one thing which the Church of God was suffering from was dyspepsia—eating too much, and inability to digest the food. Christians go to meetings and get all sorts of truths, and, as it were, they get surcharged with truth, but have no ability to digest it; consequently, in place of it contributing to their health of soul it tends to sickness. We need to spend more time alone with God, meditating on His truth and digesting it.

Now, have we got an APPETITE for our food? I think it is a sign of soul prosperity when a Christian seeks the "sincere milk of the Word," and grows thereby. What we take in of the Word of God should be turned into something else than mere words; it should be turned into power and life in the soul, and shown out in love, zeal, and devoted service for Christ in our daily life as we journey through this world.

A FEW THOUGHTS ON THE "ART" OF PREACHING.

SECOND PAPER.

THE man or the world has often expressed his surprise at the fluency with which the working-man preacher can deliver his soul. A hardy son of toil, he has done his "day's darg" like his fellows, and perhaps the same evening he is heard proclaiming the unsearchable riches. He has had no college training, and perhaps only a very ordinary education; he never attended a school of elocution, nor took evening classes by way of a "preparation for the ministry"; he had no previous experience whatever in public speaking, and up to the time of his conversion his voice had never been heard

on a platform of any kind. Yet he is now standing forth, calm and self-possessed, declaring the truths of the Gospel without a stammer, and with a command of language that causes the mere onlooker to wonder how it has all come about. What is the explanation? It is this, that conversion to God has come in; the man has been regenerated; a new monarch is established on the throne of the heart, and that monarch is Christ. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

We do not for a moment mean to imply that in every case of conversion the tongue is thus unloosed. It is only given unto "some"—yea, comparatively, unto few—to stand acceptably in the place of public testimony. We are just now trying to explain how it is that men of humble "parts," and often of a retiring disposition, are found proclaiming, with a wealth of untutored eloquence, the tidings of salvation for lost and guilty men. The preacher's heart has been won for Christ. As he reads and ponders the Gospel story a fire burns within him until he is weary with forbearing and cannot stay. He seeks in a humble way to "say a word for Jesus." His beginning may be small indeed—the reading of a text, and a remark on something in the text that has been carried home with power to his own soul; or perchance an enlargement of heart comes upon him as he gives out a hymn in the open-air meeting at the corner. But who hath despised the day of small He goes steadily onward from strength to strength—line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little - until, almost without intending it, he finds himself acknowledged as one of the ministering brethren in the circle where his lot is cast.

He never expected to be a preacher; and even now he feels that if it were not for the grace of God he would be utterly helpless in himself for this great ministry. Yea, even as he rises to speak, he realises that he is cast upon God for the sympathetic heart and the words of utterance. If he cannot have help from above, he feels he has none, and wants no other. He is a child of faith. Whatever be the measure of his "gift," he

knows that that gift will only be as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal if it be not immersed in the atmosphere of the upper sanctuary. Whether it be in the Gospel hall or the cottage meeting, or in "streets and openings of the gates, where pours the busy crowd," he finds himself saying: "If Thy presence go not with me, carry me not up hence."

The mechanical preacher may get on, and seem to get on very well, without the presence of God. He has "got up" his subject, as they say. It may lie before him in black and white, or it may be in his head, neatly arranged in all its divisions and subdivisions. No matter what happens—let God's presence be realised or not-that address "comes off the reel." The thing is done in the easy, matter-of-fact style in which a joiner saws up a board, reminding us of the remark of an aged saint that "there are preachers who could preach just as well if there were no Holy Spirit of God." But this is far from being the case with the man of faith. If he is not in touch with the things that are unseen and eternal, he does not attempt to do business for God by means of things merely seen and temporal. If he be not conscious that he has power with God, he does not want to have power with man. He prays to be delivered from the unholy traffic in unfelt truth.

Saul may be able to go on without God, trusting in his armour and in those valiant men who had been carefully selected by his own hand (1 Sam. xiv. 52). But David the man of faith—cannot move without God. None so weak as he if he be not conscious of the approving presence of Jehovah. And thus it ever is with those whom God hath owned in the proclamation of His Word. If they have studied the art of preaching it has been to discover that the highest art is to be in touch with God. If they have learned anything of that art it is this, that to let Christ have the dominion is higher than art. "He that is of God heareth God's words." "He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God." The opening of his lips shall be "right things." A true witness, he shall deliver souls, and his words shall "feed many,"

TAKE ME BY THE ARMS.

"I taught Ephraim to go, taking them by their arms."—Hosea xi. 3. TENDER Father, take me by the arms,

"Teach me to go." I am a little child, fears and alarms

Distress me so. Uphold me, and direct my tottering feet, For I am weak,

Wilful, and wayward, full of vain conceit— Can't walk or speak.

O take me by the arms; the waves I see, Boist'rous and wild;

Like him of old who sought to walk to Thee, A faithless child,

I've ventured on the waters and I quake. Shield me from harms,

Teach me to go, my Father dear, and take Me by the arms.

Let me not wander from the narrow way, But keep me still

Close to Thyself, seeking from day to day To do Thy will.

O may I ne'er to this vain world go back, With its false charms;

"Teach me to go" in Faith's unwavering track,

Held by the arms.

D. G. S.

INCENTIVES TO SERVICE. By EPHRAIM VENN.

IN Ecclesiastes xi. 1-6 we get a series of precepts, promises, and principles acting as much-needed incentives to stir us up to

practical service for the Lord.

"Cast thy bread upon the waters" (verse 1). "Give a portion to seven, and also to eight" (verse 2). "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand" (verse 6). Three precepts exhorting every saint to hasten at once into the sphere of true, practical service, and every one who is in some measure serving the Lord to increased faith and whole-hearted diligence in His work.

We like to eat our bread, and enjoy our portion, and keep our seed for a favourable opportunity, because we are so selfish even

in spiritual things, as if everything were intended for our own blessing and enjoyment only. We forget that the law of increase is to scatter abroad, and the path to poverty is withholding more than is meet (Prov. xi. The wealthy man of Psalm cxii. prospered, for he had dispersed abroad—"he had given to the poor." "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye always, having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." The promise to Abram, "I will bless thee," was followed by the precept, "and be thou a blessing" (Gen. xii. 2, marg.). Let us each ask himself the question, What blessing am I bringing to others? How much are those around me enriched by my gifts, or benefited by my labours and prayers? What have we that we have not received? That which we have freely received is to be freely given (Matt. x. 8). According "as each one hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." If we keep to ourselves the precious treasures we have found, and hold our peace in a day of good tidings, we do not well; and yet this is the solemn condition of very many, if not the greater part of the Lord's people. We need to-day, more than ever, Paul's entreaty to the slothful Corinthians, "We, then, as workers together, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain."

It was thus that devoted servant, who laboured more abundantly than they all, sought to impress the elders of Ephesus both by example and exhortation. "I have showed you all things, how that so labouring, ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to

receive'" (Acts xx. 35).

When our own needs have been fully supplied, there is "bread enough and to spare"—not to be hoarded, but "cast upon the waters," or given as "a portion to seven, and also to eight," for in this way only will it become seed to produce a plentiful harvest.

Many of the Lord's people are complaining of spiritual barrenness, enfeebled strength, loss of heavenly joy and peace, and nowonder, when our spiritual privileges have been so little used in the Lord's interests! Too many of us are little better than forgetful hearers of the Word, and so we miss the joy and blessedness realised by those who do it.

One great design of God in saving us was that we might be a help to others. "For this cause I obtained mercy," says Paul, "that in me Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe on Him." So also the youthful Solomon asked and obtained wisdom, not for his own distinction or enjoyment, but that he might therewith care for the interests of the Lord's people; and the thing pleased God, who added therewith riches and honour in abundance.

If we have not, is it not because we ask amiss, that we may consume it upon our own lusts, as James reminds us? When we can truly sing,

"Nought that I have mine own I'll call,
I'll hold it for the Giver."

Or, even when we bring all the tithes into God's storehouse, the windows of heaven will be opened, and God will pour us out His blessing. O that every dear child of God would honestly pray, "LORD, WHAT WILT THOU HAVE ME TO DO?" that, as those sent into the world, we may be constrained by the love of Christ to live no longer unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us and rose again.

But we are not left with precepts only for our encouragement. Divine promises and principles are added to incite us to this work of faith and labour of love.

1. There is a Divine assurance of success. "Thou shalt find after many days." How many weary workers have been cheered by the promise, "They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy"? In any engagement nothing is more inspiring to zeal and courage than the certainty of the desired issue, and this is assured to each of us in our feeblest effort. It may be "after many days," but the end is certain. He that soweth and he that reapeth shall rejoice together. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Gideon might well fear and shrink with such a feeble band to encounter the untold hosts of their combined foes, but when strengthened with the assurance of victory he could worship in the triumph of an overcomer. It would be disheartening, if not alarming, for us to face the fearful odds arrayed against us in the ever-thickening conflict of our day, without the like certainty, but we can sing,

"The victory is ours;
For us in might came forth the Mighty One,
For us He fought the fight, the triumph won;
The victory is ours."

- 2. The changes and uncertainties about to come upon the earth should be a powerful motive for immediate and diligent effort. "For thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth" (verse 2). This may seem a strange reason for liberality, but "Now is the day of salvation." What golden opportunities are now surrounding us for holding forth the Word of Life! But who knows how quickly they may cease? night cometh when no man can work. How soon the evil may time is short. come! While doors are open for doing good, may we have the heart to enter them, and do with our might what our hands find
- 3. We are further reminded that those who have received freely must give freely. "If the clouds be full of rain they empty themselves upon the earth" (ver. 3). Like the clouds, we must receive before we give any spiritual blessing, and we must be full before we shall empty ourselves upon others. We have little to spend upon the Lord, or our brethren, or the poor world, until our cup runneth over. So Paul was persuaded of his brethren at Rome that they were "full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another"; but to boast of a false gift is "like clouds and wind without rain." If our work is to be fruitful the rain is as necessary as the seed, for the ground is parched with drought and needs the softening showers. To plant without watering there is not much chance of the Godgiven increase. Our Gospel must come not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit.

The clouds never choose their direction or destination, but are simply borne up and on by the wind, which bloweth where it listeth; so will every true servant of Christ, filled and controlled by the Holy Spirit, be also upheld and directed to the right spot, to empty himself in the place of need, at the right moment, like Philip in the desert of Gaza, or Peter in the house of Cornelius.

4. The eternal destiny is fixed when the tree falls. "And if the tree fall toward the south or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be" (ver. 3). Surely this should stir our hearts to rescue the perishing, and, as far as in us lies, "to deliver them that are drawn to death and ready to be slain." What we do must be done quickly, for every tree must soon fall, and the eternal stamp will be put upon both saved and unsaved. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy Only in this brief NOW, the last tew moments of an almost spent salvationday, may the unrighteous and the unholy be washed, sanctified, and justified, and made meet to be partakers with the saints in light. May each of us become more devoted and earnest, willing to "endure all things for the elects' sakes, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."

5. Difficulties will often appear, but should never deter us. "He that observeth the wind shall not sow, and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap" (ver. 4). those with no purpose of heart there is no lack of plausible excuses for delay, but, while the idler and the trifler are yielding to present discouragements, the labourer must seize the present, if not to find, to make his opportunity. The eye and heart of every true servant should be so engaged with his master that there is no disposition to observe hindrances or regard circumstances, or he may become so prudent in awaiting favourable providences for a time to sow and a time to reap, that He will miss the one and lose the other. It is a thousand times better to sow the incorruptible seed with but little skill than through over much prudence to sow nothing, for God can bring a rich harvest out of a poor attempt. He can make the seed dropped from an infant-hand just as fruitful as that from the hand of the most experienced sower. We are to be in season, out of season, for "blessed are they which sow beside all waters."

6. The work is God's. Our ignorance makes us distrust ourselves and rely on Him. We should never be swayed by appearances, or judge by apparent results, "for we know not what is the way of the Spirit" (verse 5). "The Spirit breatheth when He will, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but canst not tell whence He cometh, and whither He goeth" (John iii. 8, R.v., marg.); "so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The work of God will grow, but very much of it goes on, secretly hidden from our eyes, until the due time for bringing it to light. Let us therefore be content to sow in faith and hope. Let us both plant and water, for God giveth the increase.

7. This should not restrain but rather constrain us to increased activity, diligence, perseverance, and expectancy. Since we cannot say beforehand which is wayside, or stony, or thorny, or that which will prove to be good ground, we must give to all alike with lavish hand, and as we know not whether in the morning or in the evening it shall prosper, or whether both alike shall be good, we must be diligent and hopeful, for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. Therefore, "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand, for thou knowest not whether it shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."

POWER FROM GOD.

I AM learning, when despised by men and disesteemed for want of intellect, and the like, to take it as a call to go direct to the Lord, with Whom is the hiding of power, and by prayer move Him to work upon men. I never feel the want of eloquence or talent of any kind making me ashamed at the mercy seat. Here is a field of labour.—A. Bonar.

STRAY THOUGHTS.

Spoken by the late H. Dyer at Dublin Believers' Meeting. 2 Corinthians iv. 7.

THE earthen vessel is frail; everything around us teaches this, and everything makes the vessel feel its own frailty.

We have the Christian ministry running through this chapter from verse 3 to 7.

Gideon's pitcher was only an earthen vessel, but the light was inside. At the end of chapter ii. we have the powdered incense or communion (verse 14). We are led about, our will is gone. I triumph in the leading, for I am always a conqueror. A dear brother says: "I always get my own way," because he is led about by Him. "What would'st Thou have me to do?" was the beginning of incense from Paul. Though everything about Paul was in confusion, yet He was not confused. I may be to others sometimes a savour of death unto death, but unto God I am always the same sweet savour (ii. 15).

Gideon's pitcher is now here to-day, used in ministry, a poor, frail thing; persecuted but not forsaken; troubled on every side; perplexed naturally, for I cannot trust my very tongue.

Your will is subdued in chapter ii., now

your frame in chapter iv.

"We have this treasure." What treasure? That divine grace bestowed upon you.

The Spirit cracks the vessel, and makes it feel its own weakness. The tongue is the last thing to be subdued. It is not to be used save as you are given words to speak by the Spirit. It is the most difficult part of the earthen vessel, and yet it is to be used for God. Paul did not speak until the words were first given him. People might have said to him, "I thought that you were brought up at the feet of Gamaliel: I thought, Paul, you could speak well: you once spoke Greek on Mars Hill." He was the aristocrat among the apostles, yet he said, "I only speak five words if given me by the Spirit: you may speak ten thousand to no profit if you will." Paul says again, "I distrust this earthen vessel: there is nothing I distrust more than this tongue of mine."

I beseech you that the word spoken here to-day may be of God, and that our brethren may only speak as many words as are given them. I like to think of our adorable Lord Jesus, who could not speak of Himself, "who is blind as My Servant, and deaf as My Messenger that I sent?" He judged not after the sight of His eyes: He never spoke unless words were given Him by His Father. Psalm cxvi. refers to our Lord.

Giving up your own will is incense. Are you prepared to let Him teach and lead you? It is only a little while; only a few more tears, a few more trials, a few more wearings. of my warm cloak, a few more letters to write-" Bring me my cloak and my parch-

ments" (2 Tim. iv. 13).

"The love of Christ constraineth." It not only urges us onward, but it also binds us up with all fellow-servants. I Sam xxv. gives us Abigail's bundle of life. We are all bound up in the bundle of life with Christ. Cannot you leave out one stick—one crooked stick? The timber in a luggage. No; not one. waggon reminds one of this. The strength of the chain is tested by the crooked sticks. in the bundle. Are you ready to take in awkward or weak saints? Will you embrace in fellowship all such? And remember that all things are of God—all things of God. Grace of God given to all. We are all His servants.

I must not make too much of myself at fellowship meetings. Make yourself very small in the bundle, and remember it is only a straight stick that can occupy a small space.

If you meet a crooked stick, try to get it straight again. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things. of others." Christnever said much about Himself. "I am glorified in them." The earthen vessel must be a clean vessel. The chief thing of which we must never forget the frailty, is the naturally unsubduable tongue.

Correspondence.

THE CRISIS IN CHINA.

To the Editor of THE WITNESS.

DEAR SIR,-Through the alarming events of the past few weeks the attention of the civilised world has been called to China. Probably a score of Europeans, mostly professed servants. of Christ, have been murdered in different places. in the north; thousands of natives who make a profession of Christianity have been crully tortured and killed, in some cases being burnt to death; and there is little reason for hoping that any of the foreigners who were shut up in Peking have escaped with their lives.

Of its kind, I suppose the latter will prove to be the most terrible tragedy of the century, outdoing even the most terrible massacres of the Indian mutiny. It will, I fear, be found that fully eight hundred foreigners have there perished. Ambassadors and their wives, and other officials; business men, and soldiers of different nationalities; male and female missionaries of various societies, and little children—all brutally butchered. Almost half of these will turn out to have been English and Americans, and eighty or ninety of them Christian missionaries.*

Some of us were greatly relieved in mind by the receipt of a telegram at Bath telling of the safe arrival at Che-foo of our Pa-kou friends, Mr. and Mrs. R. Stephen, Mr. and Mrs. Eagger, Miss Moore, Mr. A. Grant (who had just before joined the little party for a short visit), and Mr. H. Barnett. It will be some weeks before particulars of their journey down can reach us, but the important matter is that they are in a comparatively safe place.

Those known to us on Shan-tung promontory will, we judge, be ordered to Wei-hai-wei, and will there, we hope, be safe from attacks by Chinese.

So far, the movement does not seem to be spreading to the Southern and Western Provinces; and we hear of no particular stir in North-west Kiang-si or Hu-peh, where others in whom we are specially interested are located. But this may only be temporary. Before this can reach your readers the flood of anti-foreign hate may have swept over the whole empire. This is what those who know the country best dread will happen. If there is a probability of its occurring, all missionaries will certainly be called to the nearest open port; even then they may not be safe, but may have to go to Shanghai or Hong Kong, and all missionary work may be put a stop to for months to come.

Of course the people around will be calling on their Governments to avenge the murder of their fellow-subjects; but true followers of Christ cannot indulge such a thought in their heart, much less join in a popular cry for vengeance. Of the most of those taking part in these terrible doings it may be said, "They know not what they do." The Church of the Living God should bestir itself to take hold of Him in earnest, believing intercession for China. Would it not be well that special and (in towns or cities with a num-

ber of assemblies) united prayer meetings should be arranged? Subjects for prayer in this crisis are many:

1. For all native Christians, that they may prove faithful even unto death, and for the children and relatives of all such, that they may be truly converted, so that again it may be seen "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church."

2. For all foreign missionaries and their families, that their lives may be spared, and that, amid all these doings, their hearts may be kept in peace, being stayed upon God.

3. That friends at home may be kept at rest concerning loved ones in that land, and that any already bereaved may be comforted by the God of all comfort.

4. That "The Powers" may not disagree among themselves as to the mode of proceeding to re-establish a stable and just Government there.

5. And, finally, that all these things may fall out for the glory of Christ in the spread of the Gospel and the general welfare of the Chinese people.—Yours, in Christ's love and service,

London, July 16. J. Norman Case. P.S.—The material needs of Christ's servants should not be forgotten at this time. The expenses of many of them will doubtless be considerably augmented, and I have reason to fear that for the past year or so the ordinary needs of some of those in China for whom assemblies gathered to Christ's Name are morally responsible, have not been well met. This should not be. We sincerely hope it is from want of thought rather than want of heart; though there is an ignorance that is culpable.

Questions and Answers.

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

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 are most thankful to all our friends who have endeavoured to help us by replying to Questions, but the Editor hopes that Correspondents will study brevity, and when too long he will take the liberty of "using the scissors" freely in preference to rejecting Answers, on account of their length, in which there may be points of value.

REPLIES ARE INVITED TO THE FOLLOWING:

The Saints in Hades.—Does Scripture teach that the saints who had died before the death of Christ were confined in Hades, and that the Lord Jesus, at His death, descended into Hades and released them?

Baptism and Fellowship.—Must a Christian be scripturally baptised before he can sit at the Lord's Table?

^{*}The absence of authentic information encourages us still to hope that these paragraphs are premature.—ED.

THE LORD'S COMING.—Does not Psalm cx. I declare that Christ will not leave the Father until He comes to execute judgment on Israel's foes? If this is correct, then my long-cherished hope of our Lord's speedy coming must be in abeyance until that time; but I cannot help still praying, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

The Second Coming and the Great Tribu-Lation.—Have we plain evidence in Scripture that when the Lord appears believers who are then on earth will be caught up to meet Him in the air, previous to the great tribulation, and are there any passages which would lead one to suppose that some Christians will be left behind to go through that time of trouble and do not form part of the Church?

Christians and their Civil Rights.—In cases of persecution, injustice, oppression. assault, &c., from which protection is clearly granted by treaty or law, is it for a Christian, regardless of rights and privileges, to meekly suffer himself to be wronged, or ought he to apply for the protection legitimately his due? In case of theft, should he notify existing authorities, or merely commit his case to God?

WORSHIP AND THE WORSHIP MEETING.

QUESTION 421.—(1) Is our Lord's-day morning meeting exclusively a worship meeting? (2) What is worship?

Answer A.—(1) Presuming that the question refers to the meetings in which we break bread, and that the teaching of Scripture is what it enquires, we have to look for this in the two examples that are left on record.

First, at the institution the meeting was chiefly occupied with the Lord's discourses, the excision of Judas, and the many words of warning, instruction, commandment, and comfort. The Supper itself occupied only a portion of the meeting. The giving of thanks was worship; so was the prayer and the hymn. The rest could not in any way be so described.

If it be objected that this is exceptional, and does not apply, we have in Acts xx. the practice of the apostle who by revelation gave us the teaching of I Cor. xi., "When the disciples came together to break bread, Paul discoursed to them, and continued his speech until midnight." Then he broke the bread, and further talked till break of day.

Thus in New Testament times, so far from the meetings being exclusively devoted to worship, the Sacred Feast, bringing the family together, was the occasion for the varied instruction they needed.

When we see what evils have come of the departure from the New Testament model and

practice in the matter of the Lord's Supper, we cannot be too careful lest we on our part shall be found to have fallen into error by a systematic deviation in this particular from the scriptural example.

(2) What is worship? The question is a large one, and has many sides. I offer here only two

brief remarks.

1. While the worship of heaven (as seen in the Apocalypse), where confession and prayer have no place, is simply adoration, yet for us worship embraces whatever is addressed to GOD. Scripture is very broad on this, and does not define or limit its scope, hence our difficulty if we attempt to define or limit it.

2. Scripture lays the stress usually on the Object of the worship, rather than on the act. "Worship HIM, all ye gods." "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." And if we read the Scripture thus the subject loses much of its difficulty. w.c.

Answer B.—The question is asked, "What is worship?" Some have an idea that worship consists of prayer and praise, reading the Scriptures, and thanksgiving. This may be a form of worship, but the worship of God must be in spirit and in truth (John iv. 24). True spiritual worship springs up from the deep well-springs of the heart when contemplating, meditating upon, and realising the unfathomable love of God to us sinners, in the gift of His well-beloved Son to redeem us from the curse of a broken law and eternal punishment, and raise us to the position of sons in Him. The more we realise the magnitude of the spiritual blessings wherewith He hath blessed us in heavenly things in Christ Jesus, the more ardently will our hearts' affection go out to Him in unutterable reverence and adoration. This is scriptural worship. The blind man who was restored to sight by the Lord, when asked by Him, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" said, "Lord, who is He, that I may believe on Him?" When told by the Lord, "It is He that speaketh with thee," the man said, "Lord, I believe, and he worshipped Him." This worship was a silent act performed in his heart, but the Lord understood it.

The Lord Jesus said to the woman at the well, "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth;"...." God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth."

The words "in spirit and truth" contain the special force TRULY OF REALLY SPIRITUALLY. That is to say, in a manner thoroughly consistent with the spiritual nature and essence of God. This can only be done by those who have received the gracious gift of the Holy Spirit.

From the foregoing it will be seen that what the morning meeting is will depend upon the condition of the hearts and minds of those present. If they are filled with "the fulness of Christ," it will indeed be a worship meeting, though not a word may be spoken, but they may be like David in Psalm xxxix., where he says, "My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned, then spake I with my tongue." (Rev. iv. 9-11 and v. 13, 14.) W. D. B.

Answer C.—Worship is the adoration of the heart going up to God, sometimes silent and sometimes expressed. It also includes the voluntary or spontaneous offerings out of that which He has bestowed upon us. In confirmation of this see Deut. xxvi.; Matt. ii. 11; Rev. iv. 10, 11 and. v. 14. When the saints are gathered to "remember" the Lord, and to "show His death," surely the spirit of adoring worship ought to characterise that meeting; but to shut out ministry which comes down from God to man is neither according to divine precedent as given in John xiii., xiv., xv., and xvi., and in Acts xx. 7, nor according to divine instructions given in r Cor. xiv. No rules can be laid down, but the principles inculcated in 1 Cor. xiv. embrace two things. All exercises ought to be in the Spirit, and also to the edification of those who are listening. Let us beware of getting into ruts of our own which would hinder the liberty of the Holy Spirit, as also to watch against that spiritual blindness which mistakes the restlessness of our own spirits for the leading of the Spirit of God.

Answer D.—1. In Acts xx. 7 the disciples gathered together to break bread, but the same passage also shows that after that ministry was permissible. Indeed, then, as often now, it might afford the only suitable opportunity. Their fixed purpose was to "remember Him," and that especially in connection with His death, by which they had received the remission of sins. It was then a service of loving remembrance, which inevitably made it principally a worship meeting, but not exclusively, so as to preclude ministry, so long as in accordance with the purpose of meeting. Indeed, alas! prayer and confession at times may be necessary, as worshippers do not always come with prepared hearts.

2. The homage of the creature to God. Hence the Greek and Hebrew terms both refer primarily to action of body by which respect or worship was outwardly indicated, *i.e.*, prostrating one's self before another. They frequently indicate "the occupation for the time being of the worshipper with an object outside of himself." In prayer we are occupied with the needs thereby presented to God, but in worship with God

Himself alone. Worship, then, is "the spiritual act of believers, in which, by the power of the Holy Ghost, they offer to God spiritual sacrifices acceptable to Him through Jesus Christ" (Davis, I Peter ii.), and may take the form of praise or thanksgiving, or both. If praise, "We tell out what He has discovered to us of Himself"; if thanksgiving, "we speak of what He has done for us, or of what we have received from Him." In any case we give to Him of His own, who supplied that which hearts bubbling over return to Himself.

Editor's Note.—The replies on this subject are various and edifying, and we therefore give several.

In Christendom, generally, worship is for the most part either supplanted by ceremonial, external observances, or by the form of service in which "the sermon" is nearly everything. When the bulk of the congregation are unregenerate it is only natural that worship should be evaded or counterfeited, seeing it can only be offered by those who are consciously reconciled to God and possessed of the Holy Spirit. In our recoil from such unscriptural order it may be that another extreme has been reached, and the attempt has been made to have a service altogether consisting of worship—excluding the ministry of the Word, and even prayer and confession.

But worship, if "in spirit and in truth," will ever be dependent on the spiritual condition of the worshippers. Possibly, though such ought not to be the case, the outflow of adoration may be kept back until confession has been made of

what is burdening the heart.

Possibly there is a sense of distraction and emptiness which can only be overcome by a ministry of the Word in which Christ is presented in all His fulness and grace, and His

sufferings and death set forth.

Hence the folly of excluding ministry. The grace and wisdom of God will always deal with things as they are and not as they ought to be. A rule practically prohibiting ministry may result in worship becoming as formal and lifeless as if it were a round of ritualistic ceremonies.

After the observance of the supper there may be more room for general instruction and exhortation, and seeing this is in many cases the only occasion when the bulk of the assembly can be got together, such an opportunity should

be wisely availed of by the gifted.

On the other hand, there is the danger or depending upon "gifts" and waiting for the accustomed address which, in many cases, is as long, and as regular, and as out of keeping with the occasion and the present need, as could well be. The real leading of the Spirit is essential, otherwise all will degenerate into formality.

GOD OUR FATHER.

Notes of an Address by J. R. Caldwell, Author of "Because ye Belong to Christ," "Things to Come," &c.

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (I John iii. 1)."

"We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the Wicked One" (1 John v. 19).

I READ these passages at the outset in order to draw your attention specially to the tenth verse of the third chapter: "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil." There are two evidences that a man has become a child of God, viz., RIGHTEOUSNESS and LOVE; these are the characteristics of the newly-begotten life.

I want you to look at two or three descriptions of what man is by nature. We have here one of them: "The children of the Wicked One." Then if you look at the Epistle to the Ephesians, the fifth chapter and the sixth verse: "Let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience," or the children of unbelief, because unbelief is disobedience, and disobedience is the result of unbelief, and the two are bound up inseparably together. Then in Ephesians ii. 1-3: "And were by nature the children of wrath."

In these portions we have

PARENTAGE, CHARACTER, AND DOOM.

"Children of the Wicked One," "Children of disobedience," "Children of wrath," and every man is born into this world in that condition. He is born, and is by nature, a child of wrath, a child of disobedience (or unbeliet), and a child of the Wicked One; and in Scripture, to be a child implies likeness, similarity of disposition. In John viii. 44 you will see how that is emphasised by the Lord Himself: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth." Then in the 42nd verse: "Jesus said, if God were your Father ye would love Me." You see that which characterises a child of God is, as we have seen, righteousness and love. Lord Jesus is here speaking to those who did not love Him, those who saw " no beauty in Him that they should desire Him;" those who hated Him, the generation that was about to murder Him, and He said: "Ye are of your father the devil." He was a murderer from the beginning. "He that hateth his brother is a murderer" (I John 3. 15); that is to say, the seed of murder is in the heart, so that love is the test of the child of God, of those that are born of God, because "God is love." "If ye were of God, ye would love Me" (John viii. 42), says the Lord Jesus Christ, "and he that loveth Him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of Him" (I John v. I). Scripture is very clear about this.

True, God at first had created man, breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. Paul, speaking to the Athenians, said, "As certain of your own poets have said, For we are also His offspring" (Acts xvii. 28). But that is in the sense of being created by God originally, when Adam was set in the garden in innocence, surrounded with every blessing God could bestow. But God said to Adam concerning that fruit which he was forbidden to touch, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die" (Gen. ii. 17).

I would call your attention to that statement about death. In Scripture there are

THREE ASPECTS OF DEATH.

I. There is physical death: "Fear not them that kill the body, but cannot kill the soul" (Matt. x. 28). This is DEATH PHYSICALLY; it is the death of the body, but the assassin's knife that can kill my body and leave me a corpse has not touched the soul; the soul remains, the soul exists, and that soul exists either in misery or in blessedness.

It is an awful delusion taught nowadays by many that death is annihilation, and that, I believe, is the reason why there is such an alarming increase in the number of suicides. In America I suppose suicides are ten to one of what they are in this country, and that is just in proportion to the way this "damnable heresy" is held in that country, that for a man to die is to escape from all suffering and punishment, and so he takes away his own life. Poor man! deluded by the devil. I would press upon you that this is only one

aspect of death—it is the death of the body; but the killing of the body does not touch the soul.

II. Another is in Revelation xx. 14, and is there called "THE SECOND DEATH." when soul and body are cast into the lake of fire, which, again we are told, is extinction of being; but the Lord Jesus most emphatically declares it is not an extinction of being, for, drawing aside the veil of the unseen. He shows us a man after death "in torments" (Luke xvi. 23), and asking for a drop of water to cool his tongue. He speaks again and again of "the fire that is never quenched and of the worm that never dies" (Isa. lxvi. 24). We read of "the smoke of the torments of the lost ascending up for ever and ever" (Rev. iv. 11). "These shall go away into everlasting punishment" (Matt. xxv. 46). "But," says someone, "it is everlasting extinction; the consequences are eternal, but not the suffering." In the First Epistle of John we read, "Fear hath torment." The word is the same as that rendered "punishment" in Matthew xxv. 46. Can torment be unconscious? The whole Scriptures declare the awful, solemn truth of the conscious existence of man after the first death, and his conscious existence after the second death—solemnly awful fact. It is not called life; it is the second death, but it is existence—it is conscious existence.

When God speaks of "life" He means something better, something higher, something more glorious. To talk of everlasting life in hell is an absurdity. In Scripture "everlasting life" is union with the Lord Jesus Christ. The second death is an eternal death, but it is not annihilation.

III. Now I come to the third aspect of death—that is, DEATH SPIRITUAL. "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die" (Gen. ii. 17), and the day that Adam ate of that fruit he did die; it was spiritual death—his soul was severed from God. That very evening when the Lord God came into Eden to talk with His favoured creatures, He did not find them there; there was no response, they did not come to meet Him. "Adam, where art thou?" No reply! Where were they? They were hiding behind the trees of the

garden. Something has come in that has severed them from God. It was spiritual death. In whatever sense Adam was "of God," he was not long "of God" in spiritual likeness; he was "of that Wicked One"; he had believed Satan's lie, he had done the act of disobedience, and he was spiritually dead.

Let me give you an illustration of this. We are all familiar with the parable of the Prodigal Son in Luke xv. He goes away from his father, he is lost to his father, he never hears from him, there is no communication with him, he is as one dead. Years passed away, during which the father and son were separated. When he comes back the father says, "This my son was lost and is found, he was dead and is alive again." He had been dead to him; there was no response, there was no intercourse.

You stand beside the sick-bed of a friend, you speak to him, there is a response; you press the hand, there is a gentle pressure in return; he may be almost unconscious, but still there is the response; but at length the last breath is drawn, there is dead silence, that loved one is dead. You whisper into the ear, you press the hand, there is no response. You may sing the sweetest song; the eyes may be open, and you may put the most striking and beautiful object before them, but there is no response. That is death.

So God may commend His love to man by the story of the Cross, but there is no response. God may speak in tones of thunder to arouse and alarm him, but he is like the blacksmith's dog that lies below the anvil and does not heed the sparks, from which any other dog would fly. What does it tell? He is dead. He is dead to God! Nevertheless, he is alive to the devil, he is alive to sin, he is alive to every evil suggestion; it is an awful living death.

Men think of the death of the body as the great event, but the death of the body is merely an outward visible type of the great inner reality—that is the sinner dead to God.

When once you see that the sinner is dead in trespasses and in sins, then the meaning of his being called a child of the Wicked One, a child of disobedience, a child of wrath becomes apparent; then you see

the need there is that he be born again—converted. To enter the kingdom of God, not only must his sins be atoned for by "the precious blood of Christ," for nothing less can atone for them, but he must be quickened into new, divine life by the power of the Holy Spirit—he must be "born of the Spirit." Sin is an awful fact, and, blessed be God, deliverance from it is a blessed fact too.

Now look at one other passage as to the character of those who are the children of the Wicked One. The 13th chapter of Matthew and the 36th verse: "Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and His disciples came unto Him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom [that answers to those elsewhere called the children of God, the born-again ones; but the tares are the children of the Wicked One" -whose end is to "be cast into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth"; or, as in xxii. 13, "Weeping and gnashing of teeth." An awful, solemn word of our Lord. Weeping everywhere implies sorrow; wailing implies despair; the gnashing of teeth implies unchanged enmity towards God.

Now look at the contrast, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. xiii. 43).

You see how broad the distinction is between "the children of the Wicked One" and "the children of God." Why, men would make us believe that everybody is a son of God, that everybody has a right to say, "Our Father which art in heaven," whereas only the child of God can say it from the heart.

But what I want you to notice is, Who are called "the children of the Wicked One"? They are the "tares." Now, what is the peculiarity of the tare, or darnel, which is a better name for it? It is a sort of bastard wheat that looks so like wheat that anyone going to pull out the tares might very readily pull up the wheat. The distinction was not apparent until "the time of the

harvest." It was not until the wheat was in the ear that the tares became apparent.

Christendom consists of persons who have accepted the doctrines of Christianity, or they have been constituted "Christians" by the process called "christening," or it may be by education. There are many ways of becoming nominal Christians, but there is no way of becoming a true Christian but by being "born again" (John iii.). It is the professing Christian that is here distinctly called the child of the devil. There are thousands in this land, professing Christians, sitting in churches every Sunday, and hearing the Bible expounded, and bowing their head in prayer, singing in choirs, ministers in pulpits, Sunday-school teachers, thousands who are "children of the Wicked One"; they have never rejoiced in the forgiveness of their sins, never have been reconciled to God in Christ; they have never experienced the change called "being converted"; they have never known what it is to be born again. What an awful position to be in! These are what are called here "the children of the Wicked One." You don't see what a tare is; it is only God that sees that; not until the time of the harvest does it become manifest.

Is it any wonder the world, that wants to sleep on with an undisturbed conscience, hates the doctrine, "Ye must be born again"? Is it any wonder it loves the doctrine of "the universal Fatherhood of God"? No such thing as tares and wheat, children of God and children of the Wicked One; regeneration with them is simply an awakening to a relationship that has already existed. Therefore there is no such place as hell, and therefore there never was such a thing as atonement by blood. If these doctrines be true, all the Bible goes by the board.

(To be continued.)

THE ALTERING OF GOD'S PURPOSE.

Numbers xiv. 34.

I N reading the prophecies concerning Israel it is not always easy to distinguish between what refers to their restoration from Babylon and what yet awaits fulfilment in the glorious future. To take one passage, Isaiah xlv., where Cyrus is called by name,

the chosen of the Lord, to build His city and let go His captives. In close context therewith (ver. 17) it is declared: "Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation." So throughout this strain, and many others, as Jer. xxiv. 7; l. 18-20. On the surface it might appear as if all the blessings so richly pronounced were to follow on their deliverance from that captivity. At least we find there no express statement of any interval in the fulfilment of these promises, unless perhaps such passages as Zech. vi. 15 may indicate their conditional character.

Later revelation has shown us what God had in view in His dealing thus with Israel. We now know what part the advent of Christ has had in these great events. The Holy Spirit has revealed the mystery of God's will regarding the Church. That He had purposes of grace for the Gentiles was dimly shown in His Word. But He kept in His own power the time and the way. These were not clearly made known in the prophecies themselves. They were hidden in mystery till the time was come. God had reserved for Himself the apparent "altering

of His purpose."

This was not the first time He had thus dealt with His people. And His actings in earlier days may help to throw light on His ways in this. The same had taken place with Israel in the wilderness. He had redeemed them from the bondage of Egypt and taken them to Sinai to receive the Law and to make Him a Sanctuary. He had led them straight to the borders of the promised land, all now ready for their possession, and He bade them enter in. But they rebelled, and vexed His righteous Spirit. They knew not His ways. So He sware in His wrath that they should not enter into His rest. They should fall in the wilderness. They and their children should wander there forty years. As for themselves, "they should know His breach of promise" (revoking, R.v.; the altering of His purpose, marg.). Not that His promise to Abraham should fail. Only it should fail as to the experience of those that believed not, and should wait its fulfilment in another generation.

The same has happened to Israel in relation to the promises with which the Prophets abound, and which as it might seem should have found their fulfilment on their restoration from Babylon, or at least when in the fulness of time Christ came to His own, the Promised One in whom all the Divine purposes were centred. Everything was then ready for them had they accepted Him. But, like their fathers at Kadesh Barnea who said, "Let us make a captain, and return into Egypt," they cried, "Not this man, but Barabbas." They killed the Prince of Life. Again they rebelled, and God gave them up to their own ways. This has gone on even until now, awaiting the generation that shall at length turn to the Lord, and come in on the ground of mercy (Rom. xi. 31).

In the sight of this the apostle exclaims, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" But why could He permit Israel thus to fall? To go back further, why did He allow Adam to fall? In His own wondrous wisdom it made way for the new creation, so infinitely better. We cannot search His judgments, or find out His ways; yet we can see that He rules over the powers of evil, and makes of them His instruments for working out His designs. He uses them to do what only evil can do. He did not—could not—employ elect angels or godly men to put to death His beloved Son. "By wicked hands He was crucified and slain." By their deadly deed they were accomplishing His work. And so it came to pass that the Victim's blood was shed which is now sprinkled on the mercy-seat. Let us be assured that in bearing with the terrible evil, and all the powers of darkness which now rule the world, He is overruling all to work out His glorious ends, and vindicating His longsuffering and the righteousness of His judgments. Let this be our comfort and stay while waiting patiently the day when He shall come whose right it is, when His enemies shall be made His footstool.

Had Israel accepted the Promised One when He came to them, God could easily in some other way have accomplished Hispurpose of grace to the Gentiles. As it was, He took occasion by their fall to bring us in.

For this His Word had made provision, though then in mystery. What they have forfeited for a time we have been put in possession of. The inheritance of the promises has fallen to us. What should have been theirs had they believed on the Son of God, have become ours who believe on Him. These precious words which often seem to rise too high for earthly blessing in the land, it is because in the infinite foreknowledge of God they were to serve a higher end, to picture and to voice the spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ, which we are called to enjoy. And to enjoy them now, none the less though for the full unhindered fruition of them we have to wait till Jesus comes and we find ourselves at home with Him in the heavenly mansions. There they will be fulfilled to sight. Now they are spiritual, and to faith. If we are walking by faith we have not to wait till then to make them ours. As Paul triumphantly applies Isaiah liv. 1, &c., to believers now, not in the future, or makes ours 2 Cor. vi. 16 the presence of God in their journeys. Or where we read of the land of milk and honey, the wells digged for us, and the vineyards planted for us, we claim as our present enjoyment what these prefigure, and draw water for ourselves out of the wells of salvation with which God's Word abounds. These are for us to claim and appropriate, none the less though we know that Israel shall yet have their own in God's good time.

As Israel in that generation came short of the promised land, and Israel in this dispensation wanders in blindness far from their home, so we have to be warned lest, a promise being left us of entering into God's rest, any of us should seem to come short of it. The charge of Ps. xcv. comes down to us in Heb. iii.: "To-DAY, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." On God's part all the blessings that Israel rejected are made over to us, purchased for us by the Cross of Christ, the title-deeds sealed for us in His resurrection. Our part is to "enter in." This we do by "mixing faith with the hearing." Our part is to open the door to Christ's knocking, or He will not come in to feast with us. They "despised the pleasant

land"; it was not worth trusting their God for! And He took them at their word.

Let us therefore labour (literally, be diligent) to enter into that rest. So Isa. lv. 2: "Hearken diligently unto Me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." It is by this diligent hearkening to God's Word that we may attain to the blessing He sets before us.

And "To-day." Why lose a month, or a day, in shutting up our hearts against such gracious words, grieving our God and His Holy Spirit, finding excuses for not coming to His feast, loving better the ease of the flesh than the fight of faith? When Israel of old did so, He sware in His wrath that they should not enter into His rest. How terrible if that were so in our day! But the word to us is yet "To-day, if ye will hear His voice."

There was a Caleb then, and a Joshua, amidst the abounding unbelief. Their example is well worth imitation. "Let us go up at once and possess it." "It is an exceeding good land: if the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into the land, and give it us." And the Lord "delighted in" their faith. He brought them into the land, and gave it them, according to their word.

W. COLLINGWOOD.

A FEW THOUGHTS ON THE "ART" OF PREACHING.

THIRD PAPER.

"WHEN God means a creature to fly,
He provides it with wings." This He provides it with wings." This remark was made by an aged brother a number of years ago, when speaking on the subject of "Gift." We noted it carefully down on the tablet of memory at the time, and there it still remains. We believe the words we have quoted will be found to go to the very root of the somewhat vexed question of "gift" for ministry. In seeking to discover the particular line of ministry to which I should addict myself, I must not ask, "What line would I like to follow?" but "What line of ministry has God fitted me for?" If He means me to "fly," I may be sure that He has provided me with "wings"; and if He has not provided me with "wings,"

I may be sure that He does not intend me to "fly." We know that there may be such a thing as a man neglecting the gift that is in him (see I Tim. iv. 14). At the same time there is such a thing as a man fancying he has a gift that he does not possess. In the one case the saints are deprived of ministry designed for their building up; in the other case ministry is inflicted upon them which is

only a weariness of the flesh.

It may be said of preachers as of poets, that they are born, not made. You must have the celestial spark to begin with. If the spark is there, you may fan it, develop it, refine it; but if the spark is not there, you may save your pains. Perhaps you will make a preacher—after a kind; but he will exhibit the undoubted marks of a manufactured article. Our God is sovereign. He "hath set the members, every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him" (1 Cor. xii. 18). "He gave to some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the Body of Christ" (Eph. iv. 11, 12, R.v.). Man can neither make nor meddle in this matter. It is God who has made the difference; and happy is it for the Church when she recognises those, and only those, upon whom the anointing oil has come—those who have been thus given by the great Head of the Church.

These "gifts" have a wonderful "art" in their preaching, being "to the manner born." They are sent and they are furnished by their Master in heaven. They are not concerned as to how their style will "take," and as to whether their gestures and voice-modulation are in strict accordance with conventional rule. Their great concern is that Christ be exalted. Hence, in their case, what is known as "self-consciousness" is conspicuous by its absence. In the case of the speaker whose ministry is largely a work of art, it is a different matter. His self-consciousness is patent to all who have eyes to see. He is manifestly anxious about "how he is getting on." He delivers his address before the people, instead of speaking to them. They view it as a panorama passing before their vision, instead of receiving it as something that has come from above. It is a performance rather than a message.

In looking back over the great revival periods of the last fifty or sixty years I think we cannot fail to observe this striking circumstance, that God's chosen instruments in these great movements have, in the majority of cases, been men who were never inside a Divinity Hall, and who underwent no systematic training for the ministry. Students of the Bible they undoubtedly were—yea, even mighty in the Scriptures. But the point we wish to emphasise is this, that with very few exceptions they were men outside the pale of the so-called "ordained" ministry, and not even what are now known as "evangelists systematically trained for the work." They were specially raised up by God. By Him they were called, and fitted, and sent. Truly theirs was like that dew from the Lord that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men. Perhaps one was called from the coal mine, another from his desk; one from behind his counter, another from the quarry; one from the lowest depths of the social scale, another from the highest circles of refined society. But they all went forth a devoted band, impelled by the constraints of infinite love—willing in the day of power—and their hearts prepared by the hand of the great Master of assemblies to tell the story of His redeeming love. And they told it with a power and a pathos unknown to the art of the schools. Yea, the "chief priests and scribes" were compelled to stand still and look on in wonder while one revival tide after another swept over the land.

Surely all this has its significance for us. Our God giveth no account of His matters. If work is to be done for eternity He finds and fashions His own instruments. In our short-sighted wisdom we may be tempted to say, "Ah! we think we see how it is Why should not we have 'schools done. of the prophets' from which we may turn out men to preach after that fashion?" But the men who preach "after that fashion" did not receive their inspiration in the "schools of the prophets." God took them into the wilderness with Himself, and taught them there. We fully concede the advantages of education, and have to thank God that it

has seemed good unto Him to call many of His ministering ones from the ranks of scholarship and culture. But so far as "halls of divinity" are concerned, it is not without its significance that so few of God's witnesses in the great revival movements of recent times knew anything of these! And in the cases in which they had been duly trained and "ordained" they had simply to unlearn a vast amount of "systematic theology" when the true light took possession of their hearts.

Let us continue, in the path of humble dependence on God, to look unto *Him* to meet the need of His people and thrust forth labourers into His harvest. His *sent* ones are ever His *furnished* ones, for when *He* sends them they "lack for nothing." w. s.

AT THE CROSS.

THE prayer, "Jesus, keep me near the Cross," ought to be on our lips continually. It is only as we are abiding there that we shall be safe, and in a secure place. The minds of many just now are being troubled by Satan as to the things clearly revealed in the Scriptures concerning the eternal punishment of the wicked.

Isaiah closes his wonderful prophecy, so full of Gospel light and glory, with this solemn text, "And they shall go forth and look on the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me, for their worms shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched." And the Lord Jesus Himself takes up the same words and quotes them three times in Mark ix., putting their meaning and application beyond all question. Away from the Cross of Christ we would be overcome with horror at the thought of the infinite depth of suffering expressed in them, but here "at the Cross" we learn also that above our heads there are heights of infinite love and mercy, and around us there are lengths and breadths of infinite compassion and forbearance. And these lines of Divine love, compassion, and wrath that radiate around the Cross extend equally beyond our horizon and power to comprehend. We can put no limit to His love, neither dare we put any limit to His wrath.

BAPTISM: THE SUBJECTS.

By JOHN R. CALDWELL, Author of "Shadows of Christ in the Old Testament," "Things to Come," &c.

W^E search the New Testament in vain for any instance of the baptism of infants. The original command was:

"Go ye, therefore, and teach [or make disciples of, R.V.] all natious, baptising them [clearly the disciples—not the nations] in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; teaching them [that is the disciples] to observe all things whatsoever_I have commanded you" (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20).

To this agrees Mark xvi. 15, 16:

"Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

The order here is that uniformly found throughout the New Testament, viz., first faith and then baptism.

The first recorded instance of the carrying out of this injunction is in Acts ii. 41:

"Then they that gladly received His Word were baptised."

They were thus manifestly dissociated from the unbelieving nation which had rejected and crucified the Messiah, and confessed their faith in the One who died for them and rose again.

Again, in Acts viii. 12:

"But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the Name of Jesus Christ, they were baptised, both men and women."

Why not here as in Matthew xiv. 21:

"Five thousand men, beside women and children?"
Why no mention of the children? If children had been baptised, how is it possible to account for the omission?

We come next to the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts viii. 36):

"What doth hinder me to be baptised? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest."

Thus the order is maintained uniformly—first faith, then baptism.

So also in the case of Saul. It was not until he had received sight, that Ananias, being assured by the Lord that he was "a chosen vessel," commanded that he should tarry no longer, but arise and be baptised (Acts xxii. 16).

We next come to the household of Cornelius:

"Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptised, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptised in the Name of the Lord" (Acts x. 46-48).

The gift of the Holy Ghost being the evidence of their faith, baptism follows. Some would contend that the baptism of the Holy Ghost being the great and essential thing, water baptism is of no consequence, and may be dispensed with. The Apostle Peter argued exactly the reverse. Who would dare to forbid water, seeing they had received the baptism of the Holy Ghost?

Next we come to Lydia (Acts xvi. 14, 15):

"Whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptised, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there."

Here, no doubt, were infants, say some. But Lydia was hundreds of miles from her home. She was travelling on business. We are not informed that she had a husband or children of her own. Even if she had a young child, it is most unlikely that she would carry about with her on her commercial tours such an encumbrance. It appears from verse 40 that Lydia's household consisted of "brethren" who were "comforted." To build a doctrine upon so slender a foundation as the supposition that there were infants in Lydia's household is surely most unwarrantable.

The next instance is the household of the Philippian jailor. The Word of God was spoken by Paul and Silas to the jailor and to all that were in his house. He

"was baptised, he and all his, straightway... and he rejoiced, believing in God with all his house."

It is clear from this that, however young any who composed the household may have been, they were old enough to hear the Word of God, and to believe and to rejoice.

Sometimes "adult baptism" is spoken of as opposed to infant baptism; but it is by no means sure that all who were baptised were adults; children of very tender years have been known to be true believers, and as such were entitled to baptism. The age at which a believing child may be baptised is a question that must remain to be decided in each case according to the spiritual discretion of parents, guardians, or pastors.

Next we have the account of the work at

Corinth (Acts xviii.), where

"Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house, and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptised."

The order here, as in all the other cases, is, faith first, and then baptism.

The only other instance of household baptism is that of Stephanas (1 Cor. i. 16).

"And I baptised also the household of Stephanas; besides, I know not whether I baptised any other."

Of them it is afterward said that they were "the first-fruits of Achaia," and that "they addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints" (I Cor. xvi. 15). This is evidence conclusive that, whoever composed the household, they were not infants.

To Noah the Lord said, "Come thou, and all thy house, into the ark." This is one notable instance of a household in which were eight persons, but no infants. Nor is it at all singular or uncommon. We have ourselves known households where all were believers, and none were infants.

"Suffer little children to come unto Me," &c.,

is adduced in support of infant baptism; but there is no mention of baptism in the passage. Surely parents can bring their chidren to Christ in a better way than by subjecting them as unconscious infants to an ordinance that Scripture reserves to believers only as an intelligent act of obedience and confession of faith. Let the little ones by all means be brought to Him; presented to Him in faith; instructed in the knowledge of Him—as Scripture says, "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord"—but we require a better warrant for baptising them than a text that has no bearing upon the subject whatever.

It is further argued that as the male children of the seed of Abraham were circumcised, and so brought into the commonwealth of Israel, so all the children of believing parents now ought to be baptised, the privileges under grace being larger than under

law. This argument proceeds upon a mistaken view of the relation that exists between the Old Covenant and the New. Under the Old, it was the children of Abraham according to the flesh, *i.e.*, by natural descent from him, who were owned as the people of Jehovah. All such were to be circumcised on the eighth day.

The analogy now is, that those who are born again, who being believers are therefore children of God, who being Christ's are therefore Abraham's seed spiritually (see Gal. iii. 26-29)—these are entitled to be baptised, and to all the privileges of the household of

faith.

"The flesh profiteth nothing." The child of believing parents is "born after the flesh," and is by nature a child of wrath. He must, therefore, sooner or later be "born again," "not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible —by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." All fleshly distinctions are done away in Christ as regards spiritual standing and blessing. The Jew has no precedence over the Greek, nor the male over the female. All are one in Christ Jesus. The initial rite of God's earthly people in the flesh was circumcision. The initial ordinance of God's heavenly, born-again people is baptism. Such was the teaching and practice of the apostles.

The Roman Catholic, the Greek, the Lutheran, and the Anglican Churches all attach divine efficacy to the ordinance of baptism. To this, Scripture, rightly under-

stood, affords no support.

The Church of England Catechism has it thus: "Wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." The Shorter Catechism of the Presbyterian comes perilously near it: Baptism "doth signify and seal our engrafting into Christ." Thus in nearly all the Churches the efficacy of baptism is taught, and the children grow up in the belief that they are members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. What need, then, is there of being born again through belief of the Gospel? Could anything act more effectually as a quietus to the conscience or better lull the soul into a sense of false security?

There are happily in at least the Protestant Churches many "evangelicals" who with marvellous inconsistency subscribe to these doctrines, and yet make nothing of them, but preach the great doctrines of Ruin, Redemption, and Regeneration fully and powerfully. Thus many are awakened, and born again, and made truly the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. Souls under conviction of sin by the Holy Spirit find no comfort in the efficacy ascribed by their standards to baptism. They flee to Christ just the same as those who never underwent any such ordinance, and in Him alone, and not in ordinances, they find life and peace.

But for the most part Christendom has nothing to show in support of its claim to the title but the certificate of its baptism—christened flesh that grows up in open defiance of God and His Word, of Christ and His Gospel, and yet retains the name and the form of Christianity, without the

power.

And we cannot close this part of the subject without reference to the parable of the tares and the wheat. The sowing of the tares was the enemy's work. The peculiarity of the "tare," or "darnel," was its similarity to the wheat. A peculiarly appropriate representation, not of the heathen or of the avowed infidel, but of those who are professedly Christian, but unregenerate. "The tares are the children of the Wicked One."

Could anything more effectually work this result than the Christianising of the flesh by baptism?

BIBLE STUDIES.

BE IN EARNEST.

I	Give earnest heed to the	TT 1 ''
	voice of God	Hebrews ii. 1
		James v. 17
3	Contend earnestly for the	
	truth of God	Jude 3
4	Covet earnestly the best	
	gifts	1 Cor. xii. 31
5	Groaning earnestly to get	
	out of this tabernacle	
	and get into our house	
	which is from heaven.	J. K. M'E.

"FOR MY SAKE."

"FOR My sake" cheer the suffering, help the needy;

This was My work on earth; I give it thee. If thou would'st follow in thy Master's footsteps,

Take up thy cross, and come and learn of Me.

"For My sake" let the harsh word die unuttered

That trembles on the swift, impetuous tongue.

"For My sake" check the quick, rebellious feeling

That rises when another does thee wrong.

"For My sake" press, with steadfast patience, onward,

Although the race be hard, the battle long. Within My Father's house are many mansions:

There thou shalt rest and join the victor's song.

And if, in coming days, the world revile thee, If "for My sake" thou sufferest pain and loss, Bear on, faint heart, thy Master went before thee;

They only wear His crown who share His cross.

C. M. S. J.

THE CHINESE BOXERS. By Dr. J. N. CASE, of Wei-hai-wei.

READERS of The Witness may be interested in an article on the causes, aims, and probable results of this movement.

THE NAME.

For centuries past China has been honeycombed with secret societies, most of which have had political aims. The I ho-chuan, or Boxer Society, is, I believe, of quite recent formation. The name in Chinese tells the professed aim of its founders, viz., to establish righteousness and peace by force. Thus in one point it is similar to the anarchist madness of Europe. The Boxers are also professedly zealous to uphold the ancient religions of their country; so there are elements in the movement tending to produce fanatics by the hundreds and thousands.

THEIR RISE.

In the province of Shantung an extensive

flood one year, followed by a severe drought the next, rendered thousands homeless, and brought them face to-face with starvation. Among these desperate people, I understand, the movement took its rise. It "caught on" in a way its founders could have little anticipated. Thousands of hungry, desperate men flocked to its standard. Their motto was boldly announced: "Protection to China (or the dynasty), and destruction to the foreigner." They were soon able to defy the orders of the local rulers. Native Christians were attacked, and all their property stolen or destroyed, and many of them were massacred. As far back as last November an English Church missionary was most barbarously murdered.

THE PEKING COUP.

After the war with Japan a few of the more patriotic and intelligent Chinese scholars saw that if China was not to go under in the struggle for existence, many changes would have to be made. Different methods of educating and training civil and military officials were insisted on as of prime import-The leader of this movement—Kangvu-wei—gained the ear and confidence of the Emperor. Some changes were announced, and many others were spoken of. The reformers were jubilant. Great things were expected by all. But the new regime had hardly commenced before a great reaction set in. In September, 1898, the Dowager Empress, contrary to all law or right, caused the Emperor to be imprisoned, beheaded or banished the leading "reformers," and seized the reigns of government.

Europe and America quietly accepted the new government without, as far as we know, a protest, and thus indirectly they became responsible for the Boxer movement, with all its horrors; for the movement would never have gained its present proportions but for the passive and, later, the active sympathy and help of the Jezebel of China and her minions.

CAUSES OF THE MOVEMENT.

In the social and spiritual realm, as well as in the physical, there must be an adequate cause for every effect. It is the judgment of not a few who are personally acquainted with China that one great cause is the *modus*

operandi of Romish priests in that country. They do not aim at spiritual conversions. To some this may seem incredible, but only to those who do not know her methods of missionary work in heathen lands. Francis Xavier, the famous early Jesuit missionary to India and other Eastern lands, was certainly one of the most zealous and devoted men Rome has ever sent forth; yet he wrote as if he had converted whole communities to Christianity when, in the name of the Trinity, he had sprinkled them with a little water. Spiritual Christianity is almost nil among Papal converts from heathenism.

In China the interference of Romish priests in public affairs had become almost unbearable. For some three hundred years they have been tolerated in China; but considering the length of time they have been there, their progress has been slow. In recent years they have plotted and schemed to get political influence. At length, through the French Government, bishops and priests were given a regular official status by the Chinese Emperor. Having this recognised standing, they have been able to interfere with magistrates in the exercise of their duties, especially where it affected members of their system. In law cases between Romish and non-Romish Chinese, they have been known to demand a verdict in favour of their side, and often without a question as to the justice or injustice of the decision. To avoid trouble at Peking, the magistrate gives in. The verdict and its cause are soon noised abroad. Result: Official and popular hatred of the foreigner and his ways, as seen in these emissaries of Rome. Result No. two: Unprincipled Chinese, when in trouble, often join the Church just to gain her aid or protection. Probably in recent years thousands of converts have thus been received. That they are heathen still except in name, goes without saying. Protestant missionaries, here and there, may have received converts with similar motives, but not in large numbers. And there is a vast difference. With Rome it has become a settled mode of working: Protestant missionaries, almost to a man, refuse to use their influence, except in cases of unlawful persecution of Chinese because they are Christians. And even this most representative men have as little to do with as possible.

Not a few are induced to become Romanists in hope of borrowing money on easy terms. They do so; and usually, after a few years, the land and building become the property of "the Church." The families continue in the Church, or they are turned out of property which may have been in the family for generations. We do not say that they get the property through unjust means, but we do say that it is an unwise way for foreigners in interior China to act, for it is calculated to stir up mistrust and hatred. These things are pretty widely known in China, though perhaps they are not spoken much of outside that country.

As we believe, because of such proceedings the Boxer movement, in the first instance, was directed against Romish missionaries and converts; a few of the former, and hundreds—perhaps thousands—of the latter have paid for it with their lives. But after a time it took in Protestant missionaries and their converts, and ultimately, in intention, it killed or drove out every foreigner in China.

A SECOND GREAT CAUSE.

A rurther undoubted cause of the movement was the seizure of territory in the north by three European Powers. A little under three years ago, following the murder of four Roman Catholic priests, German subjects, an island and territory on the mainland in L. Shantung were taken possession of by Germany. Shortly after this, Port Arthur and Talienwan, a little to the north on the other side of the gulf, were occupied by Russia. A little later England followed suit and "leased" Wei-hai-wei—a convenient term for politicians, but we need not be sur-

These are, in our judgment, some of the causes which have led up to the lamentable state of affairs in China. It would be a humiliation to any country to be ousted out of its best harbours by other nations; and to the proud, ignorant Chinese it is especially so. They see the same spirit of injustice characterising the acts of European Powers as on a smaller scale they have so often observed in the doings of Romish priests. Is

prised if the Chinese generally look upon all

these acts as outrageous robberies.

it a wonder, then, that some of them dream of establishing righteousness and peace by force? Their conduct has been most wicked and foolish, yet one can understand it. A nobler impulse, we believe, than the mere love of murder and robbery must be looked for to account for this terrible anti-Christian and anti-foreign outbreak.

THE RESULTS.

The results aimed at we have incidentally indicated. A few words as to what the actual results are likely to be. In the present temper of Europe there is little doubt but that it will strain every nerve to speedily crush the movement and punish the ringleaders. In doing this it is probable that some thousands of lives will be sacrificed; but in a few months, at the latest, we believe, the movement will be forced beneath the A stable Government will be established under the guarantee or protection of the Western Powers and Japan. There will be monetary compensation for those who claim it; perhaps, in some quarters, also territorial. We do not think that China will be broken up just now. She will have another chance of national redemption. The dividing up may later have to come.

But till the return to the *status quo*—what? Perhaps more of God's servants may secure the martyr's crown, much property will be destroyed, and probably hundreds of professing Chinese Christians will be put to death. Work generally, one fears, will come to a stand-still. Yet, when matters have again settled down, missionaries will return to their fields of service; from British Isles and other lands, many gospel volunteers will flock into China, and after a time thousands there will be led to Christ. These, in the providence of God, may become the moral preservative, preventing the nation from wholly going to corruption. Politically speaking, they may form the nucleus of a new China.

In the meantime, let us pray much for that distressful country; and as believers with great privileges, who have been entrusted with the Gospel of God and other divine truths, let us see to it that we are prepared, when the time comes, to have our share in the onward movement in China. A small army of men and women evangelists have in recent years entered China. Their labours have been blessed to the salvation of thousands. The hatred and active opposition of Satan and his angels have been incurred. He is making a supreme struggle in China against the Gospel; but we must press forward, and be on God's side in the work there. "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

NOTES FROM A YOUNG MAN'S BIBLE.-VI.

THG GOSPEL OF LUKE.

SOME SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS GOSPEL.

Praise.—Here alone are found the songs of Zacharias, Mary, Simeon, and the song of the angels at Christ's birth.

Prayer.—The six occasions on which Christ prayed, and two parables on prayer.

Calling of Gentiles.—Elijah and Elisha being sent to Gentiles. The mission of the seventy. Parable of Good Samaritan. Conversion of dying Roman thief. Words "grace," "Saviour," "salvation," and "glad tidings" occur more frequently than in other gospels.

Womanhood.—Widow of Nain; ministering women, ch. viii. 1-3; Anna, ch. ii. 36; Martha and Mary, ch. x. 38-42; daughter, ch. viii. 48; daughter of Abraham, ch. xiii. 16; daughters of Jerusalem, ch. xxiii. 28.

Gospel of the Outcast.—Ch. ix. 52-56 and xvii. 11-19: Samaritan, publican, harlot, the prodigal, &c.

THE Gospel of Luke is from beginning to end a message of mercy to the sinful and the depraved. Here we see Mercy bending over a wounded enemy; receiving the homage of a woman of the streets; sitting at the table of a blackballed publican; pressing forward to kiss a prodigal; telling in parables how the joy of finding such is like that of those who find a lost sheep, or lost silver, and flinging Heaven's gate wide open to receive a thief who had been driven from the world. Such is the character of these gracious and graphic incidents, a sacred song of the mercy of God.

Chap. i. 3.—Human affection is displayed

in the evengelist addressing his friendspeaking of his own knowledge brings something human into his task—so verse 5 begins like a simple tale touching the sons of men, and as it proceeds the narrative introduces us to human sympathies and relationships unlike the other gospels.

Chap. vi. 38.—"Give, and it shall be given unto you." All lakes that have no outlet sooner or later become salt lakes—dead seas. The law of perpetual freshness is in being a

channel of blessing to others.

Chap. vii. 38.—The deepest sorrow for sin comes after conversion.

Chap. viii. 45.—"Who touched Me?" The written Word is the vesture. Humbling to think how often we have read, and missed the near, intimate contact with Himself which He yearned for us to have.

Verse 48.—"Daughter!" Eternity cannot undo the relationship formed by the

Master's word.

Verse 49.—Don't we often find unbelief flinging its cold shadow over us? Lord never trifles with us. If He keeps us waiting, it is but to give a larger and fuller gift than we had dared to hope for.

Chap. ix. 32.—The sleep must not be regarded merely as a sign of their human weakness, but as preparation for the glorious vision. It is a thing well known, that waking in the watches of the night out of a deep sleep, the false excitement of the day being gone, some eternal truth will often present itself to the mind with awful, self-revealing clearness and overwhelming power. a shorter road into the unveiled kingdom of When their eyes were closing they had been beside the Man of sorrows as He knelt in prayer. Now, what a change!

Chap. x. 17-24.—Christ was always the embodiment of His precepts. He sympathises with them. He allows Himself at once to fall into the current of their joy. He purifies and directs the course of it; but the great outstanding fact is, He sympathises with them. If the Lord has given your brother some special cause for joy, fall into it and swell it. If you can, purify it—it will

be better for both; but fall into it.

Verse 18.—This remark of the seventy disciples to Jesus leads forth His holy soul

in prophetic vision, gives Him occasion to glance at "the great perfected purpose of God." "It shall bruise thy head" (Rev. xii. 7-9; xx. 10). He rejoiced with them, but He draws His joy from a higher source. Their joy was in partial triumph over the enemy; His in the full. Their joy was like His in texture, but He swelled it. Like a mighty current running to a little stream, His great joy coming into their tiny stream of joy swelled it into a mighty river.

"Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth," &c., does not mean that it is wrong to labour for our daily bread, but that our diligence in that direction is to be surpassed by our earnest-

ness in seeking spiritual blessing.

Chap. xii. 7.—Never let us lose our identity in the crowd. God knows my heart. Men may take my number to report me; the Lord has taken my number to support me. I am only one; but I am one, and an important one with an important duty.

Verse 24.—Jesus called attention to two birds in particular—the raven and sparrow. Both these birds belong to an order that have not the strength of birds of prey; and, on the other hand, have not the fixed food

of other birds.

Chap. xiii. 24.—God is not indifferent to those who strive to enter in. He numbers all their tears; He registers all their resolves. How can it be otherwise? If the state of mind be that of true striving after God, He Himself has inspired it. He sometimes permits those whom He determines eventually to bless to strive long, and perhaps to wander in erroneous ways; but they will ultimately understand, much better than they otherwise would have done, the direction and the issue of the new path. Perhaps the remains of self-will or self-confidence exist within them, which can be removed only by the experience of sorrows which are attendant upon the errors it invariably commits, and accordingly God leaves them to test the value of human wisdom. They try it, they fall into mistakes; they are overwhelmed by confusion, and then, and not till then, they see the necessity of reposing all their confidence in Him who alone can guide them in safety.

"THEY THAT SOW IN TEARS SHALL REAP IN JOY."

OUR circumstances may be very sorrow-ful when Nature in its unbelief looks ful when Nature, in its unbelief, looks on them; but the sorrow loses every trace of bitterness when Faith takes them out of a loving Father's hand. Faith looks on them as seeds, seeds which God Himself has sown, and sown with the design of producing from them a glorious and everlasting harvest. And when Faith looks on the matter in that light, then Hope springs up, and, in her eagerness, anticipates the glorious crop which shall surely come—and even now she begins to exult in the harvest-joy. And now our estimate of the affliction becomes completely changed. The poverty, the sickness, the trial of whatever kind, is recognised as the indispensable condition under which it is meant that we should enjoy God; without it we should never have sought God so eagerly as we have been constrained to do, nor should we have so found Him, nor should we have been able to take in so much of His fulness. Instead, then, of feeling dejected by our present trials, let our faith even now forecast the glorious harvest into which they are meant to ripen, and let us think of that day of wonders when "THEY THAT SOW IN TEARS SHALL REAP IN JOY" (Psalm cxxvi. 5; 2 Cor. iv. 17). "Wherefore comfort one another with these words."—JOHN DICKIE.

Correspondence.

THE ZIONIST CONGRESS.

To the Editor of THE WITNESS.

Dear Sir,—As you are interested in Israel, and a student of prophecy, I am writing to you, as I have for the past two years, about the Zionist Congress which has just been held in London, and which has been one of the most influential and best attended. Even the Jewish Chronicle, an anti-Zionist paper, remarks that for the past week London has been the Mecca of the Jews from all parts of the world. No sincere Jew can view such a spectacle without emotion.

There were many of the same delegates as in

previous years, who were pleased to see me, and with whom I had interesting conversations. To some I gave appropriate Hebrew texts; nearly all are acquainted with the New Testament.

I enquired of them if the Zionist movement is increasing among the Jews in the various nations represented at the Congress. They said it decidedly was, adding: "We have all the finest and most intellectual Jews with us; but great financiers, and such rabbis as are under their thumb, hold aloof, and do not want to suffer with God's ancient people."

I had a conversation especially with an orthodox rabbi, to whom I said: "But the Sultan of Turkey is not willing to let you have Palestine." The answer was: "Everything human is difficult to accomplish; but if we work and trust in the Living God, who promised the land to us,

the way will be opened."

At this Congress there has been much more recognition of God than on former occasions, and reference was even made to the New Testament by the President.

Dr. Herzl remarked on the pathetic fact that throughout the wide world there is but one spot—Great Britain—in which God's ancient people are not detested and persecuted. He also referred to the prophecies in Holy Writ of their return to the land of their forefathers.

What a wonderful answer to an intelligent infidel must the sight of these many representatives of the still existing Nation of Israel be to the truth of the Word of God, as they gather year by year to facilitate their return to Palestine!—Yours sincerely,

ISRAEL ISAIAH ASCHKENASI.

London, Aug. 18, 1900.

Questions and Answers.

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

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 are most thankful to all our friends who have endeavoured to help us by replying to Questions, but the Editor hopes that Correspondents will study brevity, and when too long he will take the liberty of "using the scissors" freely in preference to rejecting Auswers, on account of their length, in which there may be points of value.

REPLIES ARE INVITED TO THE FOLLOWING:

THE SAINTS IN HADES.—Does Scripture teach that the saints who had died before the death of Christ were confined in Hades, and that the Lord Jesus, at His death, descended into Hades and released them?

Baptism and Fellowship.—Must a Christian be scripturally baptised before he can sit at the Lord's Table?

THE SECOND COMING AND THE GREAT TRIBU-LATION.—Have we plain evidence in Scripture that when the Lord appears believers who are then on earth will be caught up to meet Him in the air, previous to the great tribulation, and are there any passages which would lead one to suppose that some Christians will be left behind to go through that time of trouble and do not form part of the Church?

Christians and their Civil Rights.—In cases of persecution, injustice, oppression. assault, &c., from which protection is clearly granted by treaty or law, is it for a Christian, regardless of rights and privileges, to meekly suffer himself to be wronged, or ought he to apply for the protection legitimately his due? In case of theft, should he notify existing authorities, or merely commit his case to God?

THE RIGHT-HAND SESSION OF THE LORD JESUS.

QUESTION 422.—Does not Psalm cx. r declare that Christ will not leave the Father until He comes to execute judgment on Israel's foes? If this is correct, then my long-cherished hope of our Lord's speedy coming must be in abeyance until that time; but I cannot help still praying, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

Answer A.—When Christ was raised from the dead by His Father, He set Him at "His own right hand" (Eph. i. 20, &c.), thus giving Christ the seat of honour and glory. To this our Lord Himself refers in Rev. iii. 21: "I overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne." But the first part of the verse says: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne," which alludes to the time when the Father will "give unto Him the throne of His father David" (Luke i. 32), when Christ will reign on the earth for a thousand years. This period of time is mentioned frequently in Scripture. See Luke xxii. 29: "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me;" and Matt. xix. 28: "When the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory." See also Ps. cxlix. 2-9, 1 Cor. vi. 2, Dan. vii. 13, 14, Jude verses 14, 15, Matt. xxv. 31, Isa. xxii. 22-24, and Rev. xx. 6.

It will be observed that nearly all these Scriptures mention the saints, the Bride of Christ, reigning with Him. As Jude says: "Behold, the Lord cometh with . . . His saints to execute judgment," &c., and this necessitates His coming FOR His saints prior to coming with them.

But this in nowise hinders the perfect fulfilment of Ps. cx. 1: "Sit Thou on My right hand UNTIL I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." "Sit Thou on My right hand" is a term intended to convey in a figure the high honour the Father would confer on His Son, and does not imply that the Son would remain seated during the many centuries intervening between His ascension and second coming. For instance, Stephen saw Him "standing at the right hand of God"; a position which showed His fullest sympathy with His faithful martyr.

The figure "seated" shows that the work of redemption was perfectly accomplished; as Heb. x. 12 says: "This Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God."

That place of honour at the Father's right hand is His until the Father gives Him the throne promised in Luke i. 32; which in Rev. iii. 21 Christ calls "My throne," as distinguished from "My Father's throne."

The time occupied in coming for His Bride is so brief that it could scarcely be called "leaving His Father—"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" she will be united to Him, and He will present her to His Father with exceeding joy. How near He must be to us and we to Him, when one moment will suffice to bridge the distance that now separates us!

Christ's coming to the earth in "judgment on Israel's foes," as foretold in Zech. xiv. and 2 Thes. i., must be preceded by His coming for His saints, since Zech. xiv. 5 declares that at that time "The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee." And 2 Thes. i. 10 speaks of this time as "when He shall come to be glorified in His saints," &c., which is distinct from coming for them. Connecting Zech. xii. 8-14 with Rev. i. 7—"All kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him"—is it not evident that the saints are no longer on earth? Surely the BRIDE will not greet her long-looked-for BRIDEGROOM with a wail!

Answer B.—If our brother, in reading Psalm cx. 1, had fixed his mind on verse 2, it seems to us he would have been encouraged to continue to pray, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." How oft our hearts are before our heads. "Thou knowest we love Thee."

The "right hand" is the seat of honour (I Kings ii. 19); of power (Exodus xv. 6-12; Psalm xx. 6: Acts ii. 33, 34; I Peter iii. 29; Heb. i. 13). God has exalted Jesus to His right hand, and Paul, in Hebrews i. 13, quotes our text to assert the superiority of Jesus over the angels, as the Apostle (or sent One) of our confession. Connect Heb. iii. I. Now He occupies this place; "all power

in heaven and on earth is in His hand, and He exercises it until the subjection of every foe. The Father hath committed all judgment to the Son" (see John v. 22, 23). He exercises this authority till the time of 1 Cor. xv. 24-26; then, and only then, He surrenders it back to God, even the Father, that God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) may be all in all (1 Cor. xv. 27, 28).

All this does not touch the coming of the Lord Jesus for "His own," for after Christ's resurrection the next event in order is "they that are Christ's at His coming (1 Cor. xv. 23). Then the end or finish BEGINS (1 Cor. xv. 24-28) to be accomplished.

Psalm cx. 2 foretells it. "The Lord shall send the rod of Thy strength out of Zion; rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies"; but "His own," who await His coming, come with Him, and reign with Him (Rev. xix. 7-21; see also Rev. xx. 4-6).

Praise His Name, not one who trusts Christ will be left behind. His promise is, "I will come again and receive you (I know you will all forsake Me, and leave Me alone; I know Peter will deny Me); but I will come and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." "They all slumbered and slept," but the wise virgins could say with us, "I oft sleep, but my heart waketh." Christ died that, whether we "watch" (see margin of Newberry) or sleep, we should live together with Him (I Thess. v. 9, 10). May we not receive this grace in vain (2 Cor. vi. 1-3).

Answer C.—The teaching of Psalm cxxx. 1 is that the Lord Jesus is invited by the Lord God to sit on His right hand until His enemies are made His footstool. That is until the rebellion is quite crushed and completely disappears. In the phraseology of scripture the right hand of God, or of Jehovah, means the fulness, the infinitude of Divine power. I quote a few illustrations-Exodus xv. 6, "Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power; Thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy;" Psalm xcviii., 1, "His right hand and His holy arm hath gotten Him the victory;" again, Psalm cxviii. 15, 16, "The right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly; the right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly.' These three are specimens of the many scriptures which tell that the right hand of the Lord means infinite Divine power.

"He was crucified through weakness," but "God hath raised Him from the dead, and set Him on His own right hand." Now He rests, or calmly sits, in the infinitude of God's power. No effort is required to do the greatest things; He speaks, and it is done. When at His call every dead saint is raised, and every living saint changed and caught up to meet Him in the air, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, it will

very definitely be an exercise of His RIGHT-HAND action. When he crushes the myriads of the anti-Christ, and seizes him and his prophet, and casts them into the lake of fire, gathers this ancient people into the land, and establishes the reign of righteousness, it will be a splendid manifestation of His RIGHT-HAND administration.

Sitting in the right hand of power, He will cast the devil into the lake of fire, establish the great white Throne, and bring the dead, small and great, before Him, from Cain unto the last man who dies. From that Throne He will adjudicate the case of each one, and settle his eternal future. He will sit securely in the right hand of God until the last vestige of the great rebellion is gone, and until the heavens and the earth which are now be burned up, many, many centuries after our translation to be with Him.

Editor's Note.—We give three replies to this question. It appears to us from Revelation iii. 21 that there is a very definite distinction between the period during which the Lord Jesus is seated on the right hand of the Father's Throne and the period during which He is seated upon His own Throne, reigning as Son of Man and Son of David.

Queen Victoria has been for sixty years upon the throne of Great Britain. We say she "ascended the throne" in such a year, and she remains there till she abdicates or dies.

So, during all the period of Satanic dominion in the scene of Messiah's promised kingdom, Christ is seated—as shown in replies—in the

place of glory, honour, and power.

That He should be seen "standing" by Stephen, or that He should descend as the Resurrection and the Life to receive to Himself in the air all who are His own and take them to the Father's house, is not inconsistent with His being seated still on the right hand of the Majesty on high, any more than Queen Victoria's journeys to Balmoral, or Ireland, or the Continent are inconsistent with her being on the throne of Great Britain.

But we believe that the right hand of the Father's throne will be occupied by the Lord Jesus until, and only until, the time arrives for the fulfilment of the promise to give Him the throne of His father David. The passage does not say, "until I shall have made Thy foes Thy footstool," but "until I make," i.e., until the time of Revelation xi. 15-18. Then He will be seated upon His own throne. The process of making His foes His footstool will be commenced in the outpouring of judgments upon the enemies before He descends in flaming fire. But it will then be completed, and no foe will ever again be allowed to glory over the sufferings of Christ or His saints.

THE CALAMITIES ABROAD IN THE EARTH.

By J. R. CALDWELL, Author of "Things to Come," "Because Ye Belong to Christ," &c.

I T has recently been stated by a servant of Christ who is over 80 years old that he does not remember at any one time so many calamities abroad in the earth. The South African war, the Indian famine, the stealthy movements of the plague, the unrest, persecutions, and massacres in China, all combine to render the present year one of darkness and distress.

It is the prerogative of our great and gracious God to bring good out of evil, and it is the privilege of all who know His Name to cry to Him to glorify Himself by making these calamities very fruitful in blessing to the Church and to the world.

Already the darkness of the war-cloud in Africa has been relieved by many conversions, blessing having in a remarkable degree attended the testimony of those who went out specially to declare the glad tidings of salvation among the soldiers, as well as the testimony of many Christian soldiers who received grace to witness for Christ at every opportunity.

Young men who went out utterly careless of their eternal interests have been awakened as they faced the danger of an instantaneous death, and as they witnessed the sufferings and heard the groans of the wounded, the sick, and the dying. Brought face to face with eternal realities, they have sought the company of the believers, crowded around the preachers, in open-air meetings and in tents, listened with eagerness unknown in these lands of peace and careless ease, and as a result hundreds have been converted to God, and are living changed lives that fully prove the reality of their faith in the living Saviour.

And yet there is "more to follow." It may reasonably be expected that those vast countries now forming part of the British Empire will be placed under a stable Government, through whose administration there shall be equal justice and freedom for all, and full liberty for the proclamation of the Gospel.

The need will be great, for the territory annexed is enormous; the races that occupy

it are varied, but all seem to be alike in ignorance of the truth that saves and makes free.

In China, whatever may be the causes that produced the anti-foreign feeling so general and so embittered, it is evident that the present movement is anti-Christian as well as anti-foreign. The persecution to which the native Christians have been exposed is proof of this, and too plainly declares it to be of Satanic origin.

But out of this, also, good will issue. It is a true saying that "the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church." Again in China this will be seen, we do not doubt. Whilst under the pressure of persecution some, perhaps many, may go back to their idols, it will be but the sifting of the chaft from the wheat. All that is unreal will be exposed, whilst the genuine faith of God's elect, that which He has implanted by His Spirit, will be strengthened and purified in the furnace. These faithful witnesses will have an influence, we believe, in the future beyond anything that ever was known in that land of thick darkness, and through their testimony the Gospel will be heralded as never was or could be by those who were universally regarded as "foreign devils."

Meantime, of those who went forth as the servants of Christ, many have been faithful unto death, and have thereby secured the martyr's promised crown of life. The greatness of their sufferings will be out-measured a thousandfold by the brightness of the glory that shall be revealed in them. Others have suffered the loss of all things, and through nakedness and peril have reached a place of safety.

Shall not the truest heart sympathy of saints in these quiet and comfortable home lands go out towards the suffering, bereaved, impoverished servants of Christ, both foreign and native, who now await in prayerful expectation a time of quietness in which they may resume the labours of love that they have for the time been compelled to relinquish. Surely our abundance ought at this juncture to be a supply for their need. Prosperity in things temporal is the order of the day among the Christians in Great Britain; now is the opportunity to express the unity

of the body, to manifest the reality of divine love, by self-denying liberality and practical fellowship with the sufferings of Christ in His members.

With regard to India, whilst the servants of Christ there have been sorely tried in witnessing and endeavouring to relieve the sufferings of the people, our sympathies mainly flow toward the vast famine-stricken population, tens of thousands of whom have died in the agonies of hunger, and thirst, and nakedness, and in utter misery and darkness of soul, without God and without hope.

Photography has done much to help us at this distance to realise in some degree the horrors of famine, but descriptions, however graphic, and pictures, however life-like, fail to touch the heart like one sight of the

actual sufferers.

Nevertheless, the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit will produce a deep and effectual compassion for those who are perishing, whether physically or spiritually.

"God so loved.. that He gave." Have we so loved the famishing Indians that we have denied ourselves to send help to them in their dire distress? Or have we been quietly and selfishly enjoying our comforts and

leaving them to perish?

Although, in the mercy of God, abundant rain has been given, and the prospect of the next harvest consequently assured, nevertheless, the poverty that the famine has left is awful to contemplate. The future crops are largely hypothecated to money-lenders, who have given the seed in advance under a lien upon the harvest to come.

The people, whose health has been undermined by long continuance of insufficient food, are feeble and liable to disease, and cholera and plague are stalking stealthily through the land, and claiming their victims

by thousands.

Meantime some of our missionary friends have not only given relief, as far as they were able, to the famishing, thus effectually commending the Gospel of Christ, but have undertaken the care and upbringing of many hundreds of children whom the famine has left orphans. This is a most important and arduous service, and one that, in the good-

ness of God, may be very fruitful in blessing to India in the future. It is the experience of the past that a large proportion of the children placed under Christian instruction and upbringing became genuine Christians and witnesses for the Gospel. But this work involves large expense for years to come, and those who have undertaken it have done so in faith in the living God, looking to Him alone to supply all the needs of the work, both spiritual and material, and to make it very fruitful to His own glory.

Here, then, is an outlet for Christian love and liberality. Here is a subject for continual remembrance in earnest, believing

prayer.

And will not the sufferings and claims of India, of China, and of Africa, thus in the providence of God brought so forcibly before us, tend to enlarge our hearts and our sympathies in fellowship with the heart of the Lord Jesus? May it be even so. May God grant a vast increase in the number of those who go forth weeping, and bearing the precious seed of the Gospel to the lost, and a proportionate increase in the love and fellowship, in the prayerfulness and practical help of all saints toward the work of the Lord.

It pleased God, when calling upon Israel to make for Him a dwelling-place in their midst, to permit the people to bring their offerings of all materials required for its construction. Whoever was willing-hearted might bring, and whoever was wise-hearted might work. But so freely did their gifts come in that one day a notice was issued closing the opportunity, for there was enough and more (Ex. xxxvi. 5-7).

And a morning is drawing near when our opportunity of offering to the Lord for His work will be closed. The Church will be complete, the last elect member of the Body will be gathered in, the trumpet of God will declare the work completed, and the suffering saints from every land will be for ever beyond the reach of sorrow, suffering, and death, of famine, war, and pestilence.

EVERY man has his burden from the Lord, and glorifies God in proportion as he bears it in the Lord's strength.

THE LAST COMMAND.

By DAN CRAWFORD, Garenganze.

"In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week" (Matt. xxviii.).

HERE, indeed, the Sabbath does end in the deeply double sense, and here, too, is the gladly double dawn of the first day of the week. For this indeed—the Lord's Day—is "the day the Lord hath made; in it we will joy triumphantly!" For the angel said, "Fear not! He goeth before you into Galilee." And as they went Jesus met them, saying, "All hail!" That is, Rejoice—this is the day the Lord hath made—in it, "All hail!"

"Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee"—speeding north with joy in their hearts; north to "Galilee of the Gentiles!" Every step leaves Jerusalem farther behind—dark Jerusalem, slayer of the prophets, "which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified." Yes, north to "a mountain where Jesus had appointed them."

There, on that mountain top, He would point them far away to the great lands yet unpossessed, and utter the command, to be passed on from lip to lip down the ages,

"Go ye into all the world."

A glance down the Bible will at once certify that if God called any one of Adam's race up on a mountain top the commands so communicated were trebly solemn and emphatic. So this significant mountain command is emphasised. And is it not a fact that this whole holy matter of the Gospel to the heathen-how many are to go, and where—is surely all a matter of mere altitude? If we live little, local lives then our horizon is contracted down to a few miles. And if, on the blessed contrary, we are up on the heavenly mountain top, then the far-stretching mileage is immense down below. Then all the earth, as a lost unit, is in full view, no one part more lost than another, and also no one part more entitled to a hearing than another.

Our Lord standing there, with the little nucleal band looking out on the kingdoms of this world, reminds us of a contrast between the end and the beginning of his earthly ministry. Then we read that the devil taketh *Him* to an exceeding high mountain and showeth Him all the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them, and saith, "All these will I give Thee." That is, I will make you *anti*christ, not Christ. Satan knew how dearly our Lord loved these lost, seething kingdoms, and how dearly He longed for the time when He would take unto Himself His great power and reign.

And here, too, the Lord is saying to His own, "All these will I give you." "Go ye and make disciples of all nations, for all authority is given unto Me in heaven and on earth." "Given unto Me"—yes, but given

of the Father.

"The Lord thy God, Him only shalt thou serve!" That was the vanquishing thrust, and thus Christ went on His way, serving God, and so serving, overcame and was set down with His Father in His throne, all authority in heaven and on earth being given unto Him,

After that vision of the kingdoms of this world we read, "The devil leaveth Him;" and here on the mountain in Galilee He promises His loved ones never, never to leave them. "Go ye; and lo! I am with you always."

Yes, this indeed is keeping Him on His kingly throne. Grace reigns, and mere apathy and lethargy will not frustrate His

election of grace.

"Times of the Gentiles" is His own designation of these glorious centuries which have seen millions saved by grace—not "some of the Gentiles," but "the Gentiles." Ask "the Apostle of the Gentiles" the limits of his parish, the extent of his proclamation, and listen to his answer: "The commandment of the everlasting God made known to all nations for the obedience of faith." Romans, in fact, begins as it ends with this solemn word, "For obedience to the faith among all nations." And this surely implies that a mere flying itinerary through any land is not evangelising it, in the deep "obedience-to-the-faith" sense.

Brethren, we would not boast in another man's line of things; yet we can stand in our place as specialists in one theme only—I mean that of sorry, crying need! Here are vast tracts of silent land, silent only as regards the voice of God's praise; long alter-

nations of ridge and hollow; hamlet and town, and the Lord Jesus Christ never named therein. Alas! there are those who, to defend a position in prophetic controversy, can actually aver that "no man can tell when the witness of grace is complete."

Nay, verily, but we can cry out that it is incomplete, here and now, with ugly heathendom at our elbow: "Pray ye, therefore, the

Lord of the harvest," &c.

And if, in conclusion, anyone by misunderstanding certain Scriptures falters out a statement to the effect that the backwood Indian, Hottentot, or Greenlander was preached to in apostolic times, let him be challenged to say, after such a remark, the Christian formula: "I have believed, and therefore speak."

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD. By T. CREWDSON WILSON, Kendal.

WHAT is the meaning of the term the Fatherhood of God? In other words, who have the right to call God their Father?

This question, if put to the individual members of the Christian Churches of to-day, would meet with two different answers, not only distinct from, but really antagonistic to, each other.

Some would answer: "God became, through the incarnation of His Son, the Father of the whole human race." Others would answer: "God becomes the Father of the sinner directly he individually receives God's Son as his personal Saviour."

With these two distinct views before us, let us ask: "What saith the Scripture?" at the same time desiring the guidance of the inspiring Spirit in understanding His inspired Word, and bowing unreservedly to what God says.

"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God (and such we are, R.v.); therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not" (1 John iii. 1).

If it be true that God is the Father of the whole human race, then this verse tells us:

r. That the Father hath bestowed upon us something which we already possessed, viz., "sonship." 2. That the world knows us not because we are the sons of God, and yet (according to the above theory) all the people in the world are themselves the sons of God.

Thus we are landed in two contradictions. (See also verse 10, "children of God" and

"children of the devil.")

"But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name"

(John i. 12; see also verse 13).

These verses, if read carefully and prayerfully, hardly need comment. It is surely evident from them that becoming sons of God is dependent upon personal reception of Christ as our Saviour.

I will, in order to save space, only give references to further texts on this point: Romans viii. 14-17; John viii. 38-44 (especially verse 42); Galatians iii. 26.

In Matthew vi. 1-18 and 31, 32 the true

child of God is contrasted:

1. With the hypocrites, the former having the secret reward and approval of his Father, the latter having the approval of men (see especially verses 4, 6, 18).

2. With the heathen, verses 7, 8; and

Gentiles, verses 31, 32.

Yet, if God is Father of the whole human race, the hypocrites, heathen, and Gentiles are His children, and the title Father, so frequently used in the above passage, loses all distinctive meaning.

On what passage do the advocates of the universal Fatherhood of God ground their views? I believe very largely on the Lord's Prayer and the parable of the prodigal son.

The Lord's Prayer is recorded in Luke xi. 1-4, and Matthew vi. 9-13. In the former passage it is distinctly stated that one of our Lord's disciples said to Him: "Lord, teach us to pray." In the latter, the prayer comes in the midst of the passage above referred to, in which our Lord contrasts the conduct which ought to characterise His true followers with that of the hypocrites, heathen, &c.; and the whole context shows clearly that the prayer was given to His true followers.

But, apart from this, the Lord's Prayer itself shows unmistakably that it was meant for the use of His redeemed children, and of them only. An unconverted man might

sincerely pray the last *four* petitions, but how could any unconverted man truly and sincerely pray: "Thy kingdom come," or, "Thy will be done," when he has neither yielded his own heart and life to God's will nor accepted Christ as his King?

The parable of the prodigal son is supposed by many to show the Fatherhood of God and the sonship of the sinner before conversion. Is there good ground for this? I think not. It is a mere truism to say that teaching by parables is in its nature figurative. Why, then, are we asked to literalise the characters in this one particular parable and not in others?

Luke xv. contains three parables. By what rule of interpretation may we literalise the characters in the third parable, if not also those in the first and second? In other words, if the third parable proves that God is a Father and the unsaved sinner a son, the first parable equally proves that God is a Shepherd and the sinner a sheep; and the second parable that God is a woman and the sinner a piece of silver!

The conclusion to which these passages appear to me inevitably to lead us is that God is revealed to us not as the Father of the whole human race, but only of those who have individually received the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour; therefore the universal Fatherhood of God and brotherhood (in a similar sense) of man are, I believe, unscriptural, and therefore unwarranted terms.

One point I would wish to guard. are some who appear to think that if belief in the universal Fatherhood of God were given up, their belief in the universal love of God to man must go too. This seems to me an entire mistake: they are in no way dependent on each other. The amazing love of God to man in his sins is shown us, not only in such passages as John iii. 16, but in their fulfilment on the cross of Calvary. There we have, in all its mighty fulness, the love of God to a sinful world—loving the sinner, whilst hating the sin, and giving His beloved Son to bear the awful load of sin, that the sinner who accepts Him as his Saviour might go free, delivered from the penalty and from the power of sin.

May I add, in conclusion, that all I would ask of those who do not agree with what I have written, is that they would "search the Scriptures whether these things are so" (Acts xvii. 11).

P.S.—In order to avoid the possibility of misconception, it is better to add that (as I read the Bible) the Fatherhood of God and the consequent brotherhood of His redeemed children, are purely spiritual truths; and are, therefore, totally distinct from the truths of the Creatorship of God, and the common origin and "fellow-creaturehood" of mankind.

THE HOLINESS OF THE LORD'S TABLE.

In these days of increasing difficulty it is needful for those who would enjoy the Lord's presence and blessing, when they gather around His table, to look at truth from all sides, and not be so occupied with one aspect of it as to ignore others which are

equally important.

The Holy Spirit used the Apostle James to guard believers against the abuse of the precious doctrine of justification by faith as taught through the Apostle Paul; so the same Spirit may now use one of His people to guard against the abuse of truth He has been pleased to teach through another. Some years ago those who desired to walk "in the midst of the path" had to use their energies in withstanding an attempt to set up human conditions around the Lord's table. That attempt appears at present to have lost its attraction, and of late the current seems to be running the other way.

This being so, we need to be on our guard lest we overstep the balance of truth, and in our zeal to oppose error we do so at the expense of vital truths which affect the holiness of the "house of God" and the spiritual welfare of His children.

But to come to the point. In Numbers v. 1-4 the children of Israel get a definite command from the Lord to put certain forms of defilements "outside the camp." The "congregation" were responsible to see that this command was obeyed, and they did so (see verse 4). But besides these defilements which were specified by the Lord, and concerning which the children of Israel had responsibility, there were other defile-

ments which rendered the worshipper unfit to approach into the presence of the LORD, or to eat of the "bread of God" and of His offerings. Take, for example, the truth taught in Leviticus vii. 20, 21: "But the soul that eateth of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace-offerings that pertain unto the LORD, having his uncleanness upon him, even that soul shall be cut off from his people." The uncleanness here was such as the congregation had nothing to do with; it was the responsibility of the offerer himself. In clearing away all human barriers between the Lord's people and the Lord's table, are we to allow all this line of truth to be ignored?

Let us take for another example the washing of the feet and hands of the priests (Ex. xxx. 17-20). In the previous chapter we have Moses washing the priests (see ver. iv.). This washing typifies the "washing of regeneration" (Titus iii. 5), and never needs to be repeated. But this one washing was not enough to keep the priests in a fit condition to enter into the holy place, and there to minister before the Lord. There was a continuous washing they themselves were responsible for, and to neglect it would have cost them their lives.

I know it is not safe for us to go back to the shadows of the Levitical law in search of *principles* to guide us in things pertaining to the Church of God; but when we find principles in the New Testament, it is quite legitimate to use typical teaching by way of illustration. When we turn to the writings of Paul, who was in a special sense the minister of the Church (see Col. i. 24-27), we find the same principles taught which we have seen in the Mosaic economy. In I Cor. v. II there are certain sins specified on account of which the assembly were responsible to "put away from amongst themselves" the wicked person. In other parts of the Word we have certain evil doctrines specified which ought to be similarly dealt with. These things the assembly, and especially the "guides," are responsible to see to. But after all that is attended to, is there nothing more needed to secure the Lord's blessing and presence when we gather to remember Him in the breaking of bread? What was the reason why the hand of

the Lord was so heavy on the saints at Corinth? We read: "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" (1 Cor. xi. 30), That is, many were laid aside by bodily affliction, and many were dying. And what was the cause? Those whom the Lord was thus judging were not guilty of anything for which the Church was authorised to put them away, and yet the Lord was so displeased that He chastened them thus. It seems clear to me this was because they were neglecting verse 28: "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup." They were eating the Lord's Supper with unjudged consciences, or, in Old Testament language, they were eating the peace-offering "with their uncleanness upon them."

Would we not do well to ask ourselves if we are sufficiently alive to this aspect of the truth of God? In contending for the truth that all the children of God have a birthright title to be at the Lord's table, and having, as we think, established that truth, are we justified in stopping there? those in the Church at Corinth were "sanctified in Christ Jesus" (see chap. i. 2). They were all members of the Body of Christ (see chap. vi. 15), and, as we have noticed, those amongst them whom the Lord was judging so severely do not appear to have been guilty of any of those sins specified in chap. v. 11, and yet He was so displeased with their condition as to "cut off" many of them by death. In our teaching as to the right and privilege of all believers to be at the Lord's table, are we giving due prominence to this solemn line of truth we have been pointing out? In seeking to lead new-born souls into "the ways which be in Christ" are we not in danger of producing the impression that all that is needed to enable them to eat the Lord's Supper to His pleasing, and their own blessing, is simply to be born again? And are not the moral effects of this deficient teaching to be discerned by any spiritual eye in the light and flippant manner in which many young people come tripping in and sit down at the Lord's table? But some may ask here, What is to be done? If they really belong to Christ, and if they are guilty of no sin that would debar them from the Lord's table, what can we do? We can for ourselves get into the mind of the Lord as to the holiness of His table, and as to the searching selfjudgment, and godly reverence, that become those who in themselves are so unworthy to draw near as the guests of the Lord of Glory. Then, when we have seen this for ourselves, we can, and ought to, teach others. We can teach them from Scripture that if there is a coming together without godly self-examination, we are coming together, "not for the better, but for the worse" (chap. xi. 17). This solemn truth can never be taught with power, and with effect, until it has penetrated our own inner being, and laid ourselves in the dust before the Lord. Then we will know something of what is meant by having fellowship one with another in the light of the presence of the Father, according to I John i. 7. A child of God who is walking after the flesh cannot have fellowship with one who is walking in the Spirit. They may sit at the same table, and partake of the same bread and cup, but it is not fellowship according to the mind of God, nor according to the desire of the Lord, and of every spiritual soul.

NOTES FROM A YOUNG MAN'S BIBLE.-VII.

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE.

SOME SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS GOSPEL.

Chap. xiv. 22, 23.—What a sad sight! Seats prepared for expected guests—but empty; a part in that chorus for you not taken up. "Go out." The Lord Jesus was out, out, ever out; out all day, and often out all night; out in the mountains, out on the lake, out in the city, out in the lane. It is so now in one sense. Jesus is in the world as one who serves; He is on the battlefield leading forth His hosts; He is among the sick healing all manner of diseases. He is in the harvest-field reaping the golden grain, and on the hills looking after the sheep.

Verse 33.—Discipleship (Phil. ii. 13). Inseparable moral essentials: Self-denial (Luke xiv. 26-33; humility (Matt. x. 24 and xi. 29); permanence (John viii. 31); fruit-bearing (John xv. 8); love one to another (John xiii. 34, 35). In loving one another we are apt to consider only two of the parties concerned

—the brother or sister, and one's self—forgetting the most important of all: Christ Jesus, the connecting link. The Christ in me cannot help loving the Christ in you—no thanks to us.

Chap. xv. 1.—"Then," after the most scathing, winnowing, heart-searching words, "they drew near." And so, after severe selfexamination in the light of God's Word when we find we have failed so miserably, when we find we have fallen so short—are we to give it up? No. Then let us draw near. Peter says, "To whom shall we go?" (John vi. 68). We have failed, but, O, we cannot go elsewhere. To whom? cannot do without Jesus. Ah! it is when we realise that we are weak and utterly helpless—when we become as babes—when we accept not only as a theory but with our hearts—that we cannot think, or speak, or act, or desire without Christ-then we are strong. A touching illustration of this is found in Mary-she cannot do without Him -"They have taken away my Lord;" and there she waits at the spot where she last saw Him. The disciples had gone to their own houses, she had no home without Him, and to her were spoken the grandest words, perhaps, that are to be found in the Bible: "I ascend to my Father and your Father."

Chap. xviii. 9-14.—This is an exposure of self-righteousness. Did Jesus see or hear on some occasion these two men in the temple? The Pharisee so near, and yet so far off; the publican so far off, and yet reconciled and brought nigh. A Pharisaic person is to us one whose characteristic is mere evil pretence; but in the days when Christ spoke it had a high and holy meaning to begin with, however perverted it became. It indicated a man who separated himself so thoroughly from evil that he would gather his robes about him lest he should be polluted by the touch of a wicked person. The Pharisees were the good, the righteous, the worthiest persons in the whole community, e.g. Saul of Tarsus and Gamaliel. Of course there were hypocrites, but in learning the lesson let us take the highest and best, not the worst type. He asks nothing, because he needs nothing. We may accept it as a truthful prayer. He has no intention of deceiving

himself or others—he is self-satisfied. All down the ages men have ever been inclined to set great store by the rigid performance of certain rites, duties, &c., and to attach to them a wholly delusive value, and one dangerous to their truest interests. God commanded a fast once a year; the Pharisees instituted it twice a week. God commanded the lews to give tithes of the produce of flock and field, &c., but this man gives tithes of all he possesses. And on these two things his eye rests with the greatest complacency, and he mentions them as the foundation on which he stands. The Pharisee felt that because of these things God had reason to regard him with approval, and he prided himself on the fact.

The other prayer—he strikes, as it were, at the root of his sin, the cause of his sorrow—"God be propitiated to me, the sinner." How different! The first without heart, cold and lifeless; the second the cry of a man who knows his need, and tells it out. It bursts forth, burning hot, rushing from his life as a cry kindled by intense conviction of sin and the need of forgiveness.

Chap. xxii. 41.—"About a stone's cast" (Josh. iii. 3, 4). This was the material distance; but how great the spiritual distance! Nobody ever mistakes anything for Scripture which is not, if he is familiar with the Word of God.

No one will ever mistake an utterance of Scripture for a piece of secular writing, that is to say, if he is really qualified to judge, and is a reader of God's Word. We have four Gospels; let those who believe them to be of any origin lower than Divine, try to write a fifth. Persons of large imagination, and quite capable of writing every kind of fiction, and imitating the style of all the poets, whether modern or ancient, let them try to give us some new incidents which can be interwoven into the life of Christ—some new miracle. Let them try their hands at a new psalm!

There was no real reluctance in the Saviour's heart to redeem me. He only wished the coming woes to be averted, if it were possible, consistently with God's will.

In our Gethsemane (our hour of direst sorrow and temptation) our best resort is to prayer. Do not mind saying the same words again and again; it will soothe you. Your pitying Father does not forget that you are dust. Pour out all your heart before Him. As you do so you will get calmer and quieter; you will come probably to feel that the path must be trodden, the cup drained, and a change will pass over the spirit of your prayer, and you will murmur, as a child sobs itself to rest upon its mother's bosom, "O, my Father, if this cup may not pass from me except I drink it, Thy will be done."

Gethsemanes are the schools of manhood. They are threaded by the King's highway, which passes directly through them towards

the New Ierusalem.

Chap. xxiii. 14, 15.—A negative relationship to Christ has always ended in His crucifixion. Pilate said, "I find no fault in Him." Herod also, but they gave Him up to the murderers. There is no security in negativeness. If you merely "find no fault" in Him, you will assuredly give up Christ under external pressure. Christ asks us for no good conduct certificate. He asks for the loyalty of the whole heart's trust.

Chap. xxiii. 46.—His last utterance on the cross; the last words from his lips which the world heard were words from the Scriptures, Christ's favourite Book! Christ's only Book! the Book He always read, always quoted.

Chap. xxiv. 50.—" He lifted up His hands and blessed them." The last impression left upon the eyes of the disciples was the Lord's hands uplifted in blessing. "His pierced hands," "in like manner" (Acts i. 11).

Verse 52.—"With great joy." Having Scriptural views of Christ and His work, the disciples were filled with joy, which was their strength for private devotion and public service.

CHRIST OUR OBJECT.

Christ is more than ever precious to me, in His atonement, righteousness, merit, heart. Nothing else satisfies me. I only yearn to know Him better, and preach Him more fully. His Cross and His Crown never lose their attractiveness. Day by day He is my rest, my heaven.—A. Bonar.

THE CROWN OF THORN.

"We see Jesus" (Heb. ii. 9).

"Wearing the crown of thorns" (John xix. 5).

"On His head . . . many crowns" (Rev. xix. 12).

L IFT up your heads, ye golden gates! The Son of God comes out to reign, While countless hosts of heaven prepare To follow in His glorious train: He comes with Victory's flag unfurled To take the kingdoms of the world.

Upon His head are many crowns,
Each bathed in light beyond compare;
Conspicuous by its absence, one—
And one alone—is missing there;
Yet O what peerless grace adorns
Love's foremost crown—the Crown of Thorns.

No cruel thorns shall e'er again
Press bleeding drops from that meek brow:
Each anguished trace of grief and pain
Is swallowed up in victory now;
But still how dear that conquering morn—

It was for thee, His much-loved saint (Treasure His heart can ne'er forget), Man's hatred wove the curse of God

The mem'ry of the Crown of Thorn.

Which Love with priceless blood-drops set; Yea, matchless Love met depths of scorn, The seal of both—that Crown of Thorn.

He loved thee well who wore that crown,
That He might give a crown to thee:
A crown of glory, life, and joy
To wear throughout eternity;
Yet never would its rays adorn
Thy brow but for His Crown of Thorn.

The suffering and the shame are o'er;
We see Him crowned with glory now,
Proclaimed in heaven the Lord of all,
With many crowns upon His brow;
Yet though in wondrous radiance worn,
Outshines them all, that Crown of Thorn.

But why so peerless, then, that Crown? Ye saint of Jesus, answer why: 'Twas seal of love beyond compare That brought the Son of God to die. He saw thee lost, accursed, forlorn, And flew to wear that Crown of Thorn.

Thou glorious Lover, Bridegroom, Friend, I long to see Thee as Thou art! That brow, enshrined in dazzling light,

Once pierced for me with Hatred's dart: Those eyes' unmingled joy that morn Which wept beneath the Crown of Thorn.

Thy Royal diadem that day
Will fix our rapt, adoring gaze,
Sweet love-light from Thy glorious face
Wake ceaseless songs of rapturous praise;
But deep in each fond memory borne
Will ever lie—The Crown of Thorn.

Portswood.

E. J. A. P.

A FEW THOUGHTS ON THE "ART" OF PREACHING.

FOURTH PAPER.

WE now proceed to deal with certain hindrances to a preacher's effectiveness. One great element in the "art" of preaching is the art of getting rid of peculiarities that render our ministry dull and uninteresting. When some valuable metallic ore is brought from the bowels of the earth, steps are at once taken to separate the precious metal from all extraneous matter. This is exactly what should be done in the case of those who desire to do business with the "gift" with which they believe they have been endowed by the great Head of the Church. If the gift is there it will speak for itself-that is, if it is not obscured and held down by "extraneous matter" of one kind or another. Let these hindrances be removed, so that nothing but the "pure gold" shall be left, and the Church will find she has a wonderful heritage of ministry, not with standing the deadening effect of these lukewarm times.

In the case of "specially gifted" men, they seem to have leaped into freedom from deadweights of every kind. So far as they are concerned, "everything is in keeping with everything else." And everything is beautiful and in its due proportion; so that style, manner, and the man himself, do not obtrude themselves on your attention. The message arrests you, and holds you: that is all. It is well known that the highest tides occur when both moon and sun are in agreement. If, in addition to this, a strong wind

is blowing landward, the tide reaches its highest point, because all the conditions are favourable. Thus it is with him who is specially fitted for the work of the ministry. All the conditions are favourable for a highwater mark being reached in setting forth the eternal verities. He is manifestly endowed with a divine perception of Christ in His relations to the Church and the believer, "the personal apprehension of which by a saint, through the Holy Spirit, makes him a gifted man." He is endowed with fluency of utterance. Grace has been poured into his lips; and he may be even physically fitted for the arduous work of addressing, and continuing to address, vast gatherings of his fellows. But between that speciallygifted brother and the "man of five words" there is a very great variety in the measure of gift. And it is with the object of helping to preserve in their purity these "lesser gifts" that the present paper is written. We will just jot down some hindrances as they occur to us. First there is what we may call the

MINISTERIAL DIRGE

in a preacher's style. He delivers his address on one tone, generally well up in the scale. He may occasionally drop to his "ordinary tone of voice"; but, as if feeling this to be a digression, he is back in a moment to his former style of address. With neither break nor pause he goes on, holding so tenaciously to the one chanting tone that a musician could easily determine the exact key-note on which his address is being delivered. This is to be deplored, for the result is that his matter (possibly good matter) utterly loses its legitimate effect. drowsy and monotonous feeling settles over the meeting, and the only sign of real interest occurs when the address comes to an Then the people wake up, probably chiding themselves for their own listlessness. But, if a recent scientific lecturer is right, it is not the people who are to blame. According to natural law the "ministerial dirge" is bound to "make for sleep." What is the remedy for this? It is simply to abolish the ministerial dirge from our style, and speak in our natural tone of voice. Why should a brother's gift be virtually made of

none effect by adopting a drawling and artificial style of delivery? It is not so much a development of gift we want, as a getting rid of the "foreign matter" by which gift is obscured. When an honoured American evangelist first set foot on these shores and began a Gospel campaign, it was remarked that he preached just as if he were speaking to some one on the other side of a table. People at once perceived the difference between this natural way of speaking and the dreary intonation they had been accustomed to hear. The one was felt to be natural: the other was believed to be artificial. have observed one of the "intoned" preachers drop, in a moment of happy forgetfulness, into his natural tone of voice, and in an instant the meeting was all attention. "Ah," we said to ourselves, "if he were just to speak always in his natural tone!" We are persuaded there is many a brother with a message to edification who simply buries that message in the ministerial dirge.

KEEP WITHIN YOUR MEASURE.

Another serious drawback to effective ministry is what is known as going beyond your measure. Among brethren who are fitted in any degree to minister the Word, every man has his measure; and he is a wise man who knows what that measure is, and who is careful to keep clear within its boundary line. There is room in the field of service for the one-talent man as truly as for the ten-talent man; but it unfortunately happens that the one-talent man seriously impairs his own usefulness by attempting to do as much business as the man with five, or even ten talents. The result is that the faces of the righteous are made sad whom the Lord has not made sad. The wheels of service go round, but the work is not done. If the brother had kept within his measure he would have been accepted; but having gone beyond his measure, his whole ministry comes under suspicion. He fails to do the work of the five or ten-talent man, while his own proper work is not done.

Perhaps in this matter we want a revival of humility which shall teach us not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think. One brother may be able to speak

for ten minutes with considerable acceptance, and yet prove a veritable infliction if he attempts to fill up half an hour. It is not a question of "How long can you speak?" but "How long can you speak to profit?" A man's measure in the ministry is determined by the length of time he can hold his audience. The moment he ceases to hold his audience, his time is up. Some preachers hold their audience for a certain space, and go on for a long period after the hold is lost. There are also preachers who seem never to hold their audience at all: yet they preach, and often at considerable length—perhaps on the plea that they have as good a right to speak half an hour as brother So-and-so! All this goes to show that many have never perceived the difference between a heaven-bestowed ministry and the mere spinning together of words. Even in true ministry a point is reached when the anointed ear can perceive a voice saying, "Ye have compassed this mountain long enough." The wise man hears, and stops. If preachers were to keep within their measure, there would be less ministry, we admit. But this decrease in quantity would be a distinct gain. Edification would then be the rule; for the ministry left to the Church would have the undoubted stamp of the pure gold of heaven.

BAPTISM: THE SCRIPTURAL MODE.

By John R. Caldwell, Author of "Shadows of Christ in the Old Testament," "Things to Come," &c.

A S already remarked, all divine ordinances are typical. When giving instructions to Moses as to the making of the Tabernacle and its vessels, again and again he was warned to make all things "according to the pattern showed him in the Mount." (See Exodus xxv. 9-40, xxvi. 30, xxvii. 8.) In Hebrews ix. 23 we are informed that these were the "patterns of things in the heavens."

Likewise, in the construction of the Temple nothing was left to be devised by David or Solomon. The pattern of it was absolutely divine. (See I Chron. xxviii. 11, 12, 19.) To depart from the divine pattern would have been a serious offence against the Lord.

The sin of Ahaz culminated in his setting aside the altar of the Lord and substituting for it another made according to the pattern of an idolatrous altar which he had seen at He also removed the laver from the brazen oxen that supported it. Human self-will and effrontery could go no further. The record of his sinful life closes here, but it is added, "They brought him not into the sepulchres of the kings of Israel" (2 Chron. xxviii. 27, also 2 Kings xvi. 10-17). Of no other king is it written, "that he transgressed sore against the Lord." Concerning the Passover, although for certain specified reasons it was allowable to keep it on the second month instead of the first, yet it is written, "According to all the ordinances of the Passover they shall keep it "(Numbers ix. 10-12).

Thus any departure from the divinely-appointed form in the observance of a typical ordinance is no light matter. The type is spoiled, and the teaching it is intended to convey is perverted. In all probability this had to do with the severity of the Lord's sentence upon Moses when he smote the rock instead of speaking to it. The rock had once been smitten—type of the smiting of Christ upon the cross, and this ought never to have been repeated.

Many make light of the mode of baptism, but looked at as a divine ordinance of a typical nature, the question assumes a most serious aspect.

We have seen that baptism expresses the identification of the believer with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. It is therefore evident that the form of baptism must in some way represent this. Immersion in water answers to this simply and beautifully, whilst sprinkling bears no analogy to it whatever. This, apart from any other consideration, warrants us in concluding that immersion is the divine order.

"Baptise" is the equivalent in our English translations for the Greek word "baptizo." It is thus practically left untranslated, and therefore the exposure of the falsity of sprinkling as a mode of administering the ordinance was avoided, which would have been the inevitable result of rendering it into simple English, as any Greek lexicon gives it, and every Greek scholar is aware, "to dip or immerse."

Space forbids our giving many authorities

on this point; but it may be well to refer to a very few.

The late Dean Stanley, whose statements as an authority on Church history will not readily be called in question, wrote: "It was an entire submersion in the deep water, where for a moment the waves closed over the bather's head, and he emerges again as from a momentary grave. . . This was the part of the ceremony on which the apostles laid so much stress." He further adds: "For the first thirteen centuries the almost universal practice of baptism was that of which we read in the New Testament, and which is the very meaning of the word baptise, that those who were baptised were plunged, submerged, immersed into the water. That practice is still continued in Eastern Churches, and the cold climate of Russia has not been found an obstacle to its continuance throughout that vast empire. Even in the Church of England it is still observed in theory;* but in practice it gave way since the beginning of the seventeenth century. It had, no doubt, the sanction of the apostles and of their Master; it had the sanction of the venerable Churches of the early ages, and of the sacred countries of the East. Baptism by sprinkling was rejected by the whole ancient Church as no baptism at all, except in the rare case of death-beds or extreme necessity. It (that is immersion) still has the sanction of the powerful religious community which numbers among its members such noble characters as John Bunyan, Robert Hall, and Havelock."

Mosheim, the great Church historian, says: "The sacrament of baptism was administered in the first century by an immersion of the whole body in the baptismal font."

Calvin says: "The word baptise signifies to immerse, and the rite of immersion was practised by the ancient Church."

Dr. CHALMERS says: "The original meaning of the word baptism is immersion, though we regard it as a point of indifference whether

the ordinance so named be performed in this way or by sprinkling."

To us it seems inexplicable that it should be a "point of indifference" how an ordinance so pregnant with significance is administered; but still more serious is it to find the admitted innovation thus defended: "It is a striking example of the triumph of common-sense and convenience over the bondage of form and custom," though the same writer (Dean Stanley) acknowledges "the change from immersion to sprinkling has set aside the larger part of the apostolic language regarding baptism, and has altered the very meaning of the word."

Thus the divine ordinance is changed; it is deprived of its significance, and the superiority of "common-sense" and "convenience" to the Word of God is boldly asserted.

Is it to be wondered at that the enemy of truth should take advantage of such a glaring inconsistency, and use it as a handle against all who profess to know no final appeal in things pertaining to God but the Scriptures.

The following instruction is issued by the Papal authorities: "When a Protestant offers you a pious book praising the Bible to the skies, and attacking at the same time the truths of our faith and Christian practice, under the pretext that they do not find them in the Bible, ask him to show you where he finds in the Bible that it is right to baptise little infants, which they do just the same as ourselves."

Thus by letting go the plain teaching of the Scripture on this point, and substituting for it the tradition of men, the Word of God is made of none effect, and the citadel of truth exposed to the enemy.

It is worthy of note that the Revised Version gives the correct rendering of I Cor. xii. 13, viz.: "For in one Spirit were we all baptised into one body." In all other passages where baptism is in question, whether "in water" or "in the Spirit," the Greek proposition "en" is used, the proper rendering of which is "in." The Revisers have elsewhere followed in this the Authorised Version, giving in the text "with water" "and with the Spirit" (see Matt. iii. II); but in every case the margin gives the proper rendering "in." Common honesty forbade

^{*}The instruction in the Church of England Prayer-Book runs thus: "The priest shall take the child into his hands and if they shall certify him that the child may well endure it, he shall dip it in the water discreetly and warily." In the baptism of such as one of riper years it says: "Then shall the priest dip him in the water or pour water upon him."

the continuance of the traditional rendering without in some way calling attention to it.

In Acts viii. 38, 39 we read that Philip and the eunuch "went down into the water," and, again, "when they were come up out of the water." We do not know how words could more plainly describe baptism by immersion. Again, we read that "John was baptising in Ænon near to Salim, because there was much water there" (John iii. 23). What need for "much water" if sprinkling had been the mode adopted?

It is matter of history that the Westminster Assembly in 1643 discussed the question; 24 voted for immersion and 24 for sprinkling. The question was decided by the casting vote of the chairman, Dr. Lightfoot, and so the Church of Scotland, and all Presbyterians who own the Confession of Faith as their standard, are committed to a practice which

has no support in Scripture.

We do not think it necessary to pursue this head of our subject further. It seems to us indisputable that baptism by immersion is the only scriptural way, and those who have intelligently submitted themselves to it can testify to the blessing realised in the keeping of this simple ordinance.

THOUGHTS ON DANIEL III. 19-30. IN Isaiah xliii. 2 we read: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; . . . when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." This precious promise was fully realised by the three Hebrew children - Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego—when they found themselves ruthlessly thrust, bound hand and foot, into the seven-times heated fiery furnace. The One for whose honour they were willing to perish, and for whose sake they counted not their lives dear unto themselves (Acts xx. 24), came to deliver them. He loosed their bonds, and remained in close companionship with them until they were restored to life and liberty. They came forth unscathed. They were tried by fire, and their faithfulness stood the test. They not only brought glory to the name of God, but, with prolonged life, they received promotion and liberty such as they never enjoyed before. That "One like unto the Son of God" is our

Deliverer in a far deeper sense. He took our nature upon Him (Heb. ii. 14). A man of sorrows; acquainted with grief (Isaiah liii. 3); and tempted in all points like as we are (Heb. iv. 15); having Himself suffered, He is able to succour them that are tempted (Heb. ii. 18), and so deliver them from the power of death (Heb. ii. 15). In the person of the Holy Spirit, He is our ever-faithful and close Companion and Deliverer. In the burning fiery furnace of affliction and trial He will be with us; for He has chosen His people in the furnace of affliction (Isaiah xlviii. 10), and has said: In the world ye shall have tribulation (John xvi. 33). He will be with them all the days (Matt. xi. 28, R.v.); He will never leave them, nor forsake them (Heb. xiii. 5) until all sorrow and suffering are over, and they have passed into the more abundant life (John x. 10) of eternity; into the fulness of the joy of His presence, where there are pleasures at His right hand for evermore. Not alone, then, will a Nebuchadnezzar be heard giving glory to God as Deliverer, but the voices of ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands will be heard saying: Blessing and honour and glory and power to Him who has delivered us from the power of death (Prov. v. 11-13).

Correspondence.

A CALL TO PRAYER.

THIRTY days preceding the Jewish New Year are set apart by the pious Jews as days of humiliation, during which they rise (in Jewish towns on the Continent especially) before daybreak, resort to their synagogues, and pray for forgiveness of sins. These thirty days are called by them "Selichoth's days," or days of forgiveness.

The week before the New Year, after the morning services the Jews visit the graves of their departed relations, the eminent Rabbis, on whom they call

for intercessory prayer.

The oral law teaches the Jews to regard this festival as nothing less than a day of judgment, in which the Almighty Judge pronounces sentence on every individual. "As the merits and sins of every man are weighed at the hour of death, so [it is said] every year on the New Year's day the sins of every man that cometh into the world are weighed against his merits."

The services in the synagogue are long and varied. It is called in Scripture the feast of trumpets (Lev. xxiii. 24 and Num. xxix. 1-9). The ram's horn is blown in memory of the ram substituted for

Isaac on Mount Moriah. The Rabbis say that this is the day on which Abraham offered up Isaac, and their prayers contain numerous references to that event.

Ten days later occurs the Day of Atonement. The ceremonies observed on this day are minutely described in Leviticus xvi. The most remarkable of them was the entrance of the high priest into the holy of holies, a thing not allowed on any other day of the year. How forcibly were the people of Israel reminded, by these various sacrifices and ceremonies, of their condition as sinners before God, and of their need of some substitutionary offering, whose blood might be shed for the remission of their sins! For it is plain that these observances must have been typical. How could the blood of bulls or goats take away sin? It could not be. A mere ceremonial of this kind could not satisfy the disturbed conscience of a transgressor of the law of God.

Where, then, shall the substitutionary offering be found through whose blood the sin of transgressors may be purged away? We need not look far. It is He who says, "Lo, I come, in the volume of the Book it is written of Me." It is He of whom Isaiah prophesied, "Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows . . . He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath met upon Him the iniquity of us all."

Now, as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are the Lord's remembrancers, and one of your greatest privileges is to put God in mind of His gracious promises to His people Israel. For many years past it has been customary for several Hebrew Christians to congregate and have a special meeting for prayer and meditation on the eve of the Day of Atonement. Will you therefore allow me, as a Hebrew Christian, to suggest that you consecrate not only the eve but also the Day of Atonement (which will be this year Wednesday, 3rd October) to special prayer on behalf of God's chosen peoplethe Jews. Whilst our Jewish brethren all over the world are clad in their grave-clothes, standing barefooted, fasting and weeping in their synagogues on account of their sins, without a sacrifice and without a Mediator, standing afar off indulging in fruitless lamentations, will not the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, who, having boldness to enter into the holy of holies by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, draw nigh with one accord and plead for these abject ones at the Throne of Grace?

I trust that from many a closet, and from many a family altar, as well as from special meetings, will ascend, on this their Day of Atonement, the incense of prayer and intercession for my benighted Jewish brethren. Christians! remember the words of your Lord and Master: "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. xviii. 19).

M. S. B.

Questions and Answers.

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

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 are most thankful to all our friends who have endeavoured to help us by replying to Questions, but the Editor hopes that Correspondents will study brevity, and when too long he will take the liberty of "using the scissors" freely in preference to rejecting Answers, on account of their length, in which there may be points of value.

REPLIES ARE INVITED TO THE FOLLOWING:

The Saints in Hades.—Does Scripture teach that the saints who had died before the death of Christ were confined in Hades, and that the Lord Jesus, at His death, descended into Hades and released them?

The Second Coming and the Great Tribu-Lation.—Have we plain evidence in Scripture that when the Lord appears believers who are then on earth will be caught up to meet Him in the air, previous to the great tribulation, and are there any passages which would lead one to suppose that some Christians will be left behind to go through that time of trouble and do not form part of the Church?

A Full Reward.—Please explain 2 John 8: "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward."

RESPONSIBILITY OF ELDERS.—Acts xx. 28. To what extent are overseers responsible? Does the flock which they are to feed embrace all Christians, or only those gathered to the Name of the Lord?"

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.—Please explain the term "Kingdom of God" in John iii. 5. Is it synonymous with the term "Church," as taught by some?

JESUS IN THE MIDST.—Please explain Matt. xviii. 20. Is Jesus in each assembly now, as in John xx. 19, or in the midst of all gathered ones as one body?

PHILANTHROPY.—Does the example of Christ warrant believers to engage in philanthropic work?

BAPTISM AND FELLOWSHIP.

QUESTION 423.—Must a Christian be scripturally baptised before he can sit at the Lord's Table?

Answer A.—In apostolic times there was no difficulty in regard to the baptism of those who

believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. All the testimony of Scripture goes to prove that the custom of baptising those who made a profession of faith in Christ was universal. When Peter preached to the Jews the way of life through Jesus Christ, whom they had crucified, they that gladly received the Word were baptised. When Philip preached in Samaria the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ those who believed were baptised. When he preached Jesus to the eunuch in the desert he baptised him in the first water they came to. And so with Saul of Tarsus, Lydia, the jailor, and others besides. In the present day there few dispute that baptism in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit is an ordinance of Divine appointment. Wherever missionaries go preaching Jesus Christ they invariably administer to those whom they look upon as converts a rite which they name baptism. And submission to that ordinance always precedes participation in that other ordinance, variously named Lord's Supper, Holy Eucharist, Communion, and Sacrament. But while there is no dispute as to the ordinance itself, there is a diversity of opinion among Christians as to who are the proper subjects of the ordinance, and also the manner in which the ordinance should be administered. And the traditions of men in regard to both of these points of difference have been handed on from generation to generation through centuries of time, till it has come to pass that many godly persons honestly believe that infants should be baptised, and that pouring, or sprinkling, is baptism.

In the judgment of the writer it would be hard to refuse such an one. But if a man coming out of heathenism (whether at home or abroad) refused to be baptised, while professing faith in Christ, there would be no difficulty. Whereunto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. And if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

J. A.

Answer B.—It is well to endeavour to give divine doctrines and ordinances the place and importance they get in Scripture, and nothing more. It does seem clear from the record in the book of Acts that baptism was the first step in obedience which the disciples were called to observe. As a sample of this see Acts ii. 38, ix. 18, xxii. 16, x. 47, 48, xviii. 8; and surely it is well for those who have a responsibilty in receiving to the Lord's Table to recognise this and point it out, as also to instruct the applicant as to the divine meaning of baptism according to Rom. vi. 4 and Col. ii. 12, leaving it to the Spirit of God to use the truth and lead the be-

liever into the light and liberty which a clear understanding of what baptism means always gives, and is sure to produce obedience as soon as practicable. Some may be physically unfit to be immersed in water without risk of injury. and with some it may not be convenient to have it done then and there, whilst some, on account of previous erroneous teaching, may for a time be unable to be baptised as to the Lord, and yet all of these cases may be in a condition to eat the Lord's Supper, and to refuse them the privilege of doing so because they are not baptised. is to give to baptism a place which it has not in the New Testament. Of course there are instances where baptism is set aside for some carnal or fleshly reason, and it is for those who are called of the Lord to guide the saints to discriminate in such cases.

Answer C .- For answer to above we need go no further than Acts ii. 41, and there get God's order, viz.: 1st, They believed; 2nd, Were baptised; 3rd, Were added. Anything apart from that is a violation of God's holy order, and seeing God is not the author of confusion, seeing God's Word cannot be altered, seeing it is given us to be our only guide, we can only say, anyone altering or wanting altered the order given cannot be led of God, and until they comply, and are first baptised, we should see to obey God, and gracefully, truthfully tell them they cannot be allowed to sit and break bread. How can one be added before being baptised any more than they can be baptised or added before being saved?

Answer D.—I presume the question really meant is this: "Must a Christian be scripturally baptised before we can permit him to sit at the Lord's Table?"

To many of God's people the question of "Scriptural Baptism" presents no difficulty whatever. They have been thoroughly grounded in the truth that it is believers who are to be baptised, and that baptism is an immersion. One would think that a careful reading of the Acts of the Apostles should leave no doubt on the mind of any one who seeks light on the Nevertheless we have to face the subject. obvious fact that, owing to life-long environment amid defective teaching, many believers are not clear as to baptism. Yea, there are devoted children of God, adorned with the beauties of Christ, who do not see baptism as we see it. We believe they are as willing to bow to the will of God as we are; and perhaps they have suffered more for Christ than not a few of us who can claim to have been scripturally baptised. Are we to refuse them their place at the Table of their Lord and ours because they cannot bow to an ordinance which they do not see to be in

keeping with the will of God? I remember an aged brother who desired fellowship, while at the same time explaining that although ready to submit to the will of God, he was not prepared to be immersed, as he believed he had been scripturally baptised when an infant. meeting, though not by any means "open" at the time, gave the old man the right-hand of fellowship. We believed he had "the willing mind" (2 Cor. viii. 12), and that God had received him (Rom. xiv. 3). We felt we had no Scripture to exclude him from his birth-right place at the Table. I think this simple example cannot fail to show how mischievous and unscriptural it would be to reject one whom God has received, and whose only offence is that he cannot see eye-to-eye with us on baptism.

We would ask, Where is chapter and verse for refusing one his place at the Table because he has not been "scripturally baptised" from our point of view? In the solemn matter of exclusion from the sacred feast we must have a clear "Thus saith the Lord" for our action. If one called a brother is guilty of certain sins (1 Cor. v.) we are expressly told, "With such an one no, not to eat." Where is the scripture that says, "If a brother is not scripturally baptised, with such an one no, not to eat"? It may be contended that baptism was strictly commanded and practised in apostolic times. True, but there were many other things strictly commanded and practised in those times. Why select one of those commandments and make it a virtual test of fellowship? Scripture says we are to owe no man anything (Rom. xiii. 8). That is as clearly a commandment as baptism. therefore, should not the "debt question" be made a test of fellowship? Are those who contend for baptismal fellowship prepared for this? If so, they must be prepared for far more "tests" than one or two. In short, if you go outside the list of sins which Scripture specifies as excluding from the fellowship of saints, you must be prepared for quite a catalogue of questions on which the applicant for fellowship must be clear before you can receive him.

It appears to me that in insisting upon obedience before permitting a brother to sit at the Table we are simply putting a premium on hypocrisy, for the person who is ready to subject his conscience to the will of man will be prepared to submit to the ordinance and be inside, while he who will not take a step until he sees it to be the will of God will be compelled to remain outside. To make everything hinge on the observance of an outward rite must of necessity operate as an instrument of oppression. If we believe a brother to be eating of the spiritual bread, and drinking the wine of heavenly communion—if he is sitting

at the table of fellowship with God—how can we refuse him his place at the table of fellowship with us? To those who reject God's children who are not "scripturally baptised" it must surely be a solemn question: "What if our God were to act on the same principle?" What if He were to refuse them fellowship? Consider how many devoted children of God would thus be kept outside the veil until they were scripturally baptised! How vain for us to attempt to bind on earth that which is not bound in heaven, and to shut out those whom God shuts in with Himself! w. s.

Editor's Note.—To this question we have received a large number of answers, and its practical importance is so great that we give it extra space, though not enough for one-fourth of the replies.

The majority are against the reception of believers who have not received scriptural baptism. (See answer C.) But one and all of these ignore the fact that, owing to false teaching, those who are not immersed nevertheless solemnly convinced that they have fulfilled the Lord's requirement. And so generally has this erroneous view of baptism been received and held, that the possibility of its being wrong never occurs to multitudes who truly love the Lord, and according to their light seek to please Him. Even when the question is raised they are often unwilling to face it, not that they would willingly disobey the Lord, but simply because they do not think it possible that so many good and true Christians can be in error.

The question, then, is not one of obedience or disobedience, but one of intelligence, and this is proved by the acknowledged fact that very many who hold to infant sprinkling are not only believers but godly, devoted persons, serving the Lord in much humility, with blessing on their work and joy in their souls.

Many of the answers referred to occupy much space in showing that in Scripture baptism was the initial act of the believer, and therefore preceded the fellowship of the Lord's Table. This is not generally disputed. The difficulty is really the misapprehension as to what is baptism. Whilst giving our mind thus, it will be evident from our recent papers on the subject that we do not underrate the value of the ordinance, or treat lightly the perversion of it so prevalent. But as a matter of experience, those who have been received whilst holding to infant sprinkling have in nearly every case become ere long exercised as to the ordinance, and have sought to be immersed as believers. The obstacle was not an insubject will, but a lack of intelligence on the subject.

GOD OUR FATHER.

Notes of an Address by J. R. CALDWELL, Author of "Because ye belong to Christ," "Things to Come," &c.

PART II.

WE read in Gal. iii. 26, "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Iesus." This is a simple, definite statement as to how those who are the children of God became such. It was not by creation, not by natural descent, not by any educative process, not by the gradual development of some inherent good, but by faith in Christ Jesus.

John says, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God." That means, we were not such before; rather, as we have seen, we were naturally "children of the Wicked One," "children of disobedience," "children of wrath."

In John i. 12 we read, "As many as received Him, to them gave He power [or right or privilege to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name." From this it is clear that this privilege must be "obtained," and that it is only obtained by those who "receive Him." It is granted to those that believe on His Name. agrees exactly with what we have seen in Galatians. Such are "born" into the family of God—born "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Born of the flesh, according to nature, I am a child of Adam, and I bear the likeness of Adam. Not the Adam that came from the hand of God, but the Adam who had fallen. He begat a son after sin entered "in his own likeness, after his own image, and called his name Seth." Such are all his descendants; they have "borne the image of the earthy." But born of the Spirit by faith in Christ Jesus, I became a child of God. It is God's work, as it is written, "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth" (James i. 18). This newly-begotten spiritual being is not a thing that you can see or feel; it has not flesh and bones, but it is nevertheless a great and blessed reality. In Eph. iv. 24 it is called "the new man." That which is born of the flesh, which I have inherited as a child of Adam, is "the old man." That which I receive by faith in Christ Jesus is a new Spirit-begotten life. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

But what is the nature of this newly-implanted Spiritual life? It is "after God, created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. iv. 24). It is "renewed in knowledge, after the image of Him that created him" (Col. iii. 10). Now, God has predestinated that every one that is born of the Spirit shall be "conformed to the image of His Son." This is God's ideal. This is the end toward which He is working, and He begins by implanting the very nature of His Son in that new-born spiritual being that characterises every one who is a child of God. God sees in every believer the very likeness of His Son stamped upon that inner, divinely-begotten man. At first this new life is like that of a new-born babe. It is feeble; it requires to be nourished, like the babe, upon food suited to it, even upon "the sincere milk of the Word." It is encumbered by the flesh, which lusts against it. Therefore from its very inception it has a conflict to wage. Blessed be God, He does not any longer regard us as in the flesh; He sees us no longer as branches of the old Adam tree, but as "in Christ," even as the branch in the vine, or as the member is a part of the body, one with Christ.

And this new-born life has not only the lineaments, but the instincts of a child of God. The day before he was converted, if he met a Christian, they had nothing in common; he rather shies off, and is not desirous of having much to do with him. After he has received Christ there is, as it were, a magnetic attraction, which draws one Christian to another—a kind of divine freemasonry, which recognises another member of the same body; the spiritual instinct of a new life, which apprehends, without knowing much about it, a new relationship; it is that of the sons of God.

I remember hearing of a great missionary meeting at which there were a few native converts from various lands. At the close two of these stood face to face, but they could have no interchange of thought, for they spoke in different tongues. But there are certain words in Scripture that are wisely left untranslated, and are therefore recognisable as the same in all languages. One of these converts looked at the other, and said,

"Jesus"; the other at once responded, "Hallelujah," and the link of brotherhood was discovered and established.

Such is "the new man," but the body of the believer remains just what it was before. The body is not born again; it will be created anew when the Lord comes. Meantime the believer, as to his body, is subject to sickness and suffering. There is no difference between the flesh of the unregenerate man and that of the believer. He may die, and his body moulder into dust, but by and by these mortal and corruptible bodies are going to be changed into the image of Christ, made like to His glorious body, and then the whole being will be, according to the purpose of God, "conformed to the image of His Son."

But whilst we wait for this, we meantime have received the salvation of our The new spiritual being, begotten of God, possesses eternal life, and cannot die. Death cannot touch the Christian's life. If you were told that you were granted life, a new life, and that it would last for a thousand years, would that satisfy you? you would say, "a thousand years are a long time, but even a thousand years will come to an end, and what then?" But suppose you were told you had life for ten thousand years, would you be satisfied? "No," you say, "for ten thousand years will come to an end, and what then?" Then you try to comprehend eternity, and you think and think until your brain seems to reel, and you give it up, conscious that the idea of eternity is too great for a finite mind to grasp. And yet so are we constituted by God that nothing short of "eternal life" will satisfy us. Oh, yes; the new relationship, which is ours as sons of God, is eternal. "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish" (John x. 28).

This relationship is sometimes called "adoption." But it is not the human idea of adoption. Sometimes a man who has no children adopts a child. He calls him his son, loves him, makes him his heir, gives him a legal title to his property; but all that will never make him a son. But this does not represent the scriptural idea of adoption; it is nothing less than sonship by birth, and the relationship is indissoluble.

A son may be one who affords great joy

and comfort to his father, or he may be one who occasions him sorrow and shame; but the one is as much a son as the other—conduct cannot alter relationship. What a marvellous truth this is! Born of God; children of God; eternally His; His own for ever!

Now let us see what follows upon this. Gal. iv. 6: "And because ye are sons God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts crying, Abba, Father." Here is something new, one of the privileges of those who are sons; the Spirit of Christ comes and unites Himself with your spirit, and thus there is abiding in the believer "the Spirit of His Son." It is thus that we know experimentally God as our Father. It is the Spirit of His Son within us that enables us spontaneously to cry, "Abba, Father."

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the Old Testament saints were just as much children of God as New Testament believers. were men of faith, being born of God. this spirit of sonship was not bestowed upon them, nor was it given to them to cry, "Abba, Father," It is the peculiar language of this age, in which Christ is at the right hand of God, and the Holy Spirit has descended and made the bodies of the children of God His abode—His living temple. "Abba" is one of the untranslated words. It is just the first lisping of a little Hebrew child, very much as our little ones say "Da-da." The second word is the Greek "Pateer," and means the same thing, only in the language of the Gentile.

The first to use these words was the Lord Jesus Himself (see Mark xiv. 36); but it was not until after His sufferings that He linked His disciples with Himself in His Sonship, saying, "I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God." He linked Himself with both Jew and Gentile, speaking the language of both, and His Spirit, the Spirit of Sonship, cries in the heart of the believing Jew, "Abba!" and in the believing Gentile, "Pateer!" Thus all are one, members of one body and partakers of one Spirit, and children of one Father in Christ, and consequent upon that they are "brethren," for it is sonship that constitutes brotherhood, and "members one of another." (To be concluded in our next).

A FEW THOUGHTS ON THE "ART" OF PREACHING.

FIFTH PAPER.

LET THE PEOPLE HEAR.

T is wonderful what can be effected by even a "humble gift," provided it is exercised within its proper sphere, and is freed from influences which would seriously hamper its due operation. In this matter it is to be feared that many ministering brethren habitually neglect the most selfevident "rules" in their public ministry. For example, if you are addressing an audience, say of five hundred persons, it is yours to see that the people hear what you are saying. Some speakers have a habit of dropping their voice almost to a whisper every now and again. The result is that the whispered passages are heard only by those sitting near to the platform. great majority of the hearers thus "lose the thread" of the discourse several times in the course of the address. This is most tantalising. The audience, through their vain efforts to hear, are rendered irritable and impatient. They feel that they have not been fairly dealt with. If you could let them hear every word for ten minutes, you could easily have let them hear the whispered passages which perhaps four hundred people did not catch a word of! There is nothing wrong in merely dropping to a lower tone of voice. This may be perfectly fitting and natural. But see that the tone is not too low for the people to hear. Your words cannot edify if they are not heard. If they are inaudible, you might as well be speaking in an unknown tongue.

God ever adapts means to ends; and if we are in His leading it will be our care to see that there is a "fitness of things" in the exercise of our ministry. We must say we do not see the fitness of things in our undertaking to address an audience of a thousand people if our voice cannot possibly reach beyond a few of the front benches. If five hundred of those present have scarcely heard a word, this is serious. Even our voice and our physical strength have their measure; and it is vain for us to press them beyond their measure, and to attempt what

is manifestly beyond us.

MESSAGE LOST IN SOUND.

On the other hand, a brother's message may suffer from the loudness of tone in which it is delivered. His voice may be so unnecessarily loud as to completely distract attention. The message is thus lost in the sound. When the drum of the ear is continuously assailed by a penetrating voice, the hearer becomes absorbed, not in the teaching, but in the thunder by which the teaching is accompanied. In this connection it is as well to say that an audience should have its attention absorbed by nothing except the message. If everything were as it should be, or even as it might be, scarcely anything distracting would obtrude itself on They would be left free to our hearers. hear the message and concentrate their attention on it. In a certain true sense the words would be fulfilled, "And they saw no man, save Jesus only."

TWO KINDS OF ATTENTION.

If an audience is giving you its close attention, do not presume on that circumstance, and go on "for a while yet." Whatever his gifts may be, he is poorly endowed with the "gift of wisdom" who pursues his subject till everybody is wearied. Charity itself, not to speak of good manners, may lead people to give you considerable attention, even although they are heartily longing for the end of your address. Deliver your message and sit down, remembering there are two kinds of attention—the attention of appreciation, and the attention of "You gave that speaker very close attention," I remarked to a friend on one occasion. "Yes," was the reply, "I did not want to appear rude, but really I never was so glad as when his address was finished."

MADE SICK BY HOPE DEFERRED.

Another serious defect in the exercise of ministry is seen in the speaker who leads everyone to believe he is just finishing-"one word more," and he will be done. But he is not done. A new thought suddenly occurs to him. He seizes it, and beats it out for a time. Then he leads you to believe he is going to close now, for certain. But the end is not yet. He makes a new Every fugitive thought is pressed start.

into the service. His audience feel they are being trifled with. Hope deferred has made them sick at heart. At last the end comes—painfully attenuated and long-drawn-out. There is a sigh of relief. How shall we designate such ministry? Instead of calling it a ministry of edification, we are constrained to term it an undoubted ministry of irritation.

CHARY OF MAKING PROMISES.

Be chary of making promises as to how short you are going to be. We have observed that four out of every five who say they are going to be very short go on to a considerable length. Why bind yourself by uncalled-for vows? Again, how often we have heard a brother rise and say, "I will merely read this passage." As a matter of fact he spins a fairly long address out of it! He certainly should not have hemmed himself in by the intimation that he was merely going to read a passage from the Word.

KEEP TO YOUR ALLOTTED TIME.

If you are allotted a certain time in which to address an audience, you should not exceed your time, unless in very exceptional circumstances. If you take twenty minutes to your first "head," while you have other four "heads" to come, that is no reason why you should go on till you "finish your work." If there are other speakers, you must "consider one another." A message from the Throne may come through one of these other speakers as readily as through you. Why should any of them be crushed out or hampered for time by your taking part of their time as well as your own?

INDICATIONS OF WEARINESS.

It is also well to note any indications that your audience is longing for you to draw to a close. A wise man will never shut his eyes to these signs and tokens. It is simply useless to go on if your hearers are wearying for you to sit down. Yet we can all recall instances in which a preacher, with dogged determination, has threshed out the remotest detail of his subject in face of the most palpable evidence that he was only beating the air, so far as the attention of his audience was concerned.

NO CARNAL WEAPONS. In the exercise of ministry in an "open"

meeting—that is, a meeting open for ministry "as the Lord may guide"-we believe the "man of God" will be content to "bide his time." He who waits on the divine guidance will observe no undue haste to let his voice be heard. Neither will he use any carnal device in order to get in before another speaker. He may be crushed out by a rush to the platform—by the use of weapons which he feels he dare not touch. Yet he calmly waits. His time will come. door does not need to be pushed open if God sets before you "an open door." It may be truly said that when God wants a man to speak, the door of opportunity (like the gate of Acts xii. 10) opens "of its own accord."

W.S.

THE ETERNAL TRINITY.

I. God the Source (Psa. ii. 7); Christ the Medium (Eph. ii. 14); the Holy Ghost the Communicator (John xvi. 14).

II. "The Father...the Word...and the Holy Ghost: these three are One" (I Jno. v. 7).

III. The Trinity (John xv. 26). "The Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father...shall testify of Me."

IV. The unity of purpose in the Trinity,

as seen—

In Creation (Gen i. 1, 2, 26): 1. "In the beginning God created." 2. "The Spirit of God moved." 3. "In the beginning was the Word" (John i. 1); "Without Him was not anything made that was made" (John i. 3); "And God said, Let us make."

In Manifestation (Matt. iii. 16, 17): "The Word was made [became] flesh and dwelt among us" (John i. 14); "He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him; and lo, a voice from heaven,

saying, This is My beloved Son."

In Revelation: I. "I am God...declaring the end from the beginning; and from ancient times the things that are not yet done" (Isa. xlvi. 9, 10). 2. "I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass ye might believe" (John xiv. 29). 3. "When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come ...He will show you things to come" (John xvi. 13).

In the work of Redemption (Heb. ix. 14):

· "Christ...through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself to God,"

In Co-operation of Purpose (Heb. x. 9-15):
1. "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God!"
2. "By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." 3. "Sanctified by the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xv. 16).

In Relation between God and the Believer through Grace (Gal. iv. 6): "God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying Abba, Father." Thus the unity of the Trinity makes the link between God and man, for, as seen in Ephesians ii. 18, we have access to the Father, whose grace is the source of our salvation (Eph. ii. 8), through Christ the Medium, by the Holy Ghost the Communicator.

In Co-operation in the heart of the Believer (Eph. iii. 16-19): "Strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man" (verse 16); "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith" (verse 17); "that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God" (verse 19).

In the Believer's eternal Security (Eph. i. 3, 5, 13): "God the Father...having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself...in Whom, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise."

In Fellowthip (2 Cor. xiii. 14): "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen." E. A. H.

BIBLE STUDIES.

SEVEN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

		/ 1 ~	JD.
1	DISCIPLES -	-	In the same school
	One Master	-	Acts xx. 7
2	CHILDREN -	-	In the same family
	One Father	-	John xi. 52
3	Sheep	-	In the same flock
_	One Shepher	d -	John x. 16
4	SAINTS -	-	In the same covenant
•	One rank	-	Rom. i. 7
5	STONES -	-	In the same house
•	One foundate	on	1 Peter ii. 5
6	Members -	-	In the same body
	One Head	-	Rom. xii. 5
7	THE BRIDE -	-	In the same glory

One Bridegroom Rev. xxi. 2, 9 M.I.R.

THE REVIVAL IN WALES IN 1858-9, AND THE WAY IT BEGAN.

THE Revival in 1858 and 1859 was one of the most powerful ever known in of the most powerful ever known in Wales, when very many thousands were There were over added to the Churches. five thousand added in Cardiganshire alone within six months, and it spread all over Wales, and almost every locality was influenced by it. It began through Mr. Humphrey R. Jones, a young man from the neighbourhood of Aberystwith, who went to America, and after his conversion was impressed to go to the different chapels among the Welsh-speaking people in America, where his preaching had such influence that wherever he went hundreds professed to be converted. This was in 1857-8, but at the beginning of the summer of 1858 he came over to his native place in Wales and began in the same spirit, but without much effect until he went to Ysbyty, near Aberystwith, where he preached in a Calvinistic Methodist Chapel on Amos vi. 1.

After the sermon the members of the church were asked to stay behind, when he told them that he felt it difficult to preach to them. Then one of the deacons of the church arose and said it was also difficult for them to respond when they were guilty and condemned. Then he sat down and fainted away, and such a feeling laid hold upon all present that they never witnessed its like before, and each one hung down his head and wept.

Mr. Jones then got into private conversation with Mr. David Morgans, the minister, for two or three hours, and it had such power upon Mr. Morgans that he could not rest, eat, nor sleep for three days, but after this he found peace, and then received power, and in that power he went forth preaching throughout Wales, and the effect was wonderful. Other ministers were also blessed, and went forth in the same spirit, and very many thousands were added to the Churches. I was in the very midst of it, and witnessed it all, but did not experience its power, nevertheless I was converted in 1865.

Last week, when on my way home from North Wales, I saw the following letter written by Mr. Humphrey R. Jones to a young preacher soon after his return to Wales, and I translated it into English. It shows the inner life of the revivalist, and the publishing of it in *The Witness* may be a means to stir up other young men to seek to be filled with the same spirit, and go forth in the same way.

DAVID E. JONES.

FRE'R-DDOL, 16th July, 1858.

DEAR BROTHER,—You will be surprised to see this letter. I feel constrained to write it, but I cannot explain why I should do so. I understand that you were at Taliesin (a village near Fre'r-ddol) last Sunday, and great was my joy when told of your method of preaching, and how you aimed to reach the conscience. Who knows, said I, if this one is not raised of God to be a reformer among the Calvinistic Methodists?

You are of the same age as I was (twenty-three) when I was under conviction that I ought to go to all the chapels and seek to awaken them. So I went, and was well received by all; revival took place where-ever I went, and hundreds were converted. But it is different in this country. It would be of infinite joy to me to see the Lord raising reformers among every denomination. I believe that He will do it, and I believe that a very great revival will very soon come to Wales.

I would very much like to have an hour or two with you, that I may tell you my mind how to become a truly successful preacher. First, it is to be much alone with God in prayer; to be there many times a day wrestling with God, and each time as if it were the last, and not leaving His presence before you have a proof that the Lord has heard you. Be urgent, and ask the Lord in faith what to say to the people. Go each time straight from the closet to the pulpit, like Moses from the mount to the camp. Then an unction will accompany your speaking, and every word that you will utter will be received as from the angel of God. And preach pointedly and convincingly, and aim each time to reach the conscience. Tell the people their sins to their faces. Take no heed to the people's good or bad opinion of you, but seek to have a conscience void of offence towards God and man, and seek not to show yourself in any of your discourses. I seek to attain two things in my preaching —First, to have myself out of sight; next, never to say anything to amuse, and endeavour to preach each time as if I was to die then, and as if I was to go from the pulpit to appear before God. If we are not in this condition we shall be of very little good. Oh, my dear brother, let us as two young men live close to heaven—live sogodly that our fear be upon all, not saying a disrespectful word of anyone, or anything, except the devil and sin. Think well of all Christians in all the denominations, and love His image in all, remembering that we are of the same Father, and all brothers in Christ, having been regenerated by the one Spirit, belonging to the same family, feasting at the same table, washed in the same fountain, travelling the same road, being led by the same pillar towards the one eternal home. Although I do not belong to your denomination, yet I love all of God's people among them as much as those among us.

I would like to see you soon. If you are to be owned of God, then, speak to the Church first. It will be of little use to preach to the world before the Church be first awakened.

I understand that you are a student in college, preparing for the ministry. I hope that you will come out having more of the image of heaven on you than when you went in.—Yours in the best of bonds,

HUMPHREY R. JONES.

THOUGHTS ON RAILING.

By JOHN WALBRAN.

RAILING, reviling, and deriding, if not exactly the same, must be very near akin as a comparison of Matthew xxvii. 39, 40, Mark xv. 29, 30, and Luke xxiii. 35. In further evidence that railing and reviling are strongly similar, if not entirely identical, I would point out that in the Revised Version Matthew xxvii. 39 reads "railed," while the Authorised Version reads "reviled." Then in I Cor. v. II the Revised Version gives "reviler" and the Authorised Version "railer." Morever, both Authorised and Revised Versions read "reviler" in I Cor.

vi. 10. Putting I Cor. vi. 10 and v. II, with their contexts, together, I conclude that a person to be put away as a railer is a person whom the Lord will take in hand, and so deal with as to bring to godly repentance, or who, if remaining unrepentant, and dying in that condition, is in danger of being eternally reprobated, in all probability never having been truly regenerate. Hence the awful solemnity of branding persons as "railers" with whom for years we have professedly had most holy and sweet fellowship at the Lord's table, and whom with pen and tongue we have so often addressed as "beloved fellow-saints," &c.

Nothing short of irresistible evidence carrying heartrending (1 Cor. v. 2) conviction to the conscience of all shall ever, I hope, cause me to have part or lot in such holy and awful work as putting away a person or persons on the charge of railing. Anyone who, Sennacherib-like (2 Chron. 32. 17), rails on God is certainly such a person as shall not inherit the kingdom of God, and should not be eaten with, but rather "put away," even though "called a brother." Moreover, should anyone that is called a brother give way to railing on or reviling Christ and His members, I hesitate not to take part in putting such an one away, but even then I seek not to forget that those designated by the Holy Spirit "railers" upon our blessed Lord were filled with hatred, cruelty, mockery, murder, and unbelief (Matt. xxvii.).

Paul's apóstleship may be questioned, if not denied, and, therefore, insinuatingly at least, he may by some be branded as "a self made apostle," &c., but what of that? Shall he, therefore, turn away from the Corinthians as a whole, or select a few of them as persons who must needs he thrown overboard for having reviled him and caused a mutiny in the vessel? Nay, verily, but rather the less he is loved, the more abundantly he loves, and so his heart and hand cleave "unto the Church of God which is at Corinth."

Paul and Barnabas may dispute about Mark, and even have a *sharp contention* over the matter, but shall they on that account judge one another unfit to sit together at the

Lord's table? Far be such a petted, childish thought from servants of our Lord Jesus Christ, and still further from us be the wicked thought of accusing one another of railing if at any time in the heat of controversy self-control takes flight and we speak or act as becometh not Christians.

I submit and maintain that, ere essaying to "put away" a person for railing, we ought to be able to demonstrate from Holy Scripture what railing is, and I am persuaded that much one hears nowadays zealously anathematised as "railing" cannot by Holy

Scripture be proved to be so.

Concluding this brief and imperfect statement of my deep conviction on a subject which I fear is little understood, if not greatly misunderstood and terribly abused, let me add that, if all one hears called railing is so, then woe betide the most of us. Yea, what if even such servants of Christ as J. and C. Wesley, Whitfield, R. and E. Erskine, J. N. Darby, Benjamin Willis Newton, &c., "N.T." brethren and "open" brethren, and thousands more of our Lord's brightest and best witnesses, should yet be found to have railed upon one another?

May we ever, when confronted with such a subject, pause, ponder, and pray before giving judgment which scandalises, if not reviles, those judged, and if by mistake the latter, how sad, if not sinful, for us.

NOTES FROM A YOUNG MAN'S BIBLE.-VIII.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN.

THE EAGLE. THE SON OF GOD.

JOHN'S GOSPEL is a deep, tranquil lake, in which are reflected the pleasant shores around, and the pure, clear sky, with sun, moon, and stars, above. Very remarkable is it how little children and ripe Christians, the simplest-minded and the deepest-minded, all like it with so profound a liking.

Chap. i. 1.—John has opened his words, as it were, with a burst of thunder. This is the thunder brought down to us by a "son

of thunder."

As in the beginning of Genesis, "God" is taken for granted. There is no attempt to prove that He is, by argument. There

is no discussion or parley with the atheist. There is no side-glance taken of any denial that has ever been made of the Divine existence—it is as if there had never been, and never could be any controversy on such a subject.

"The word:" as a thing, is secret and unknown until it is put into words, so the true character of God is unknown until

revealed in Jesus Christ.

Verse 4.—"In Him was life." All the life of creation, so vast in its sum, so wonderful and glorious, from the life that lasts only a summer evening to that of the archangel who bows before the Eternal Throne and adores—all that life was in Him. Life should be our light, not light our life.

Verse 14.—The Incarnation. Hitherto the verb "was" has been used of Him, now "became." It is certain that in becoming "flesh" the Eternal Word did not cease to be what He was before. It is also certain that the Word "became" what He was not before. John's use of the word "flesh" differs from Paul's. He employs it to denote human nature in its entireness, with all its sensibilities, capacities, and powers—not the body alone, but all that constitutes us human beings. Thus the Word became a true member of the human family. He had a body—material, visible, tangible (1 John i. 1), but He did not take a body only, and become the Word em-He could say, "Now is my soul troubled." Again the evangelist could write of Him, "He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled." The special thought is the reality and wholeness of that manhood. Hence He grew in wisdom and knowledge. He was tempted, He sorrowed, He wept, He wondered, as truly as we do, "in all things made like unto His brethren." The "Word made flesh" is a revelation-the highest revelation that at present we are capable of receiving of the Divine Godhead in its perfect essence, and manhood in all its elements, joined in indivisible and everlasting union.

Verse 14.—"We beheld His glory." Only the first three evangelists record the transfiguration scene, but John almost begins his narrative in the bright glow of it. Verse 17.—Jesus Christ, now mentioned by the evangelist for the first time, is the Name that embraces all the revelations of the past, and all the grace and truth of the future. "No man hath seen God." There had been revelations through nature, providence, history, man's heart and conscience, but putting all such revelations together, it held true, "No man hath seen God at any time." The revealing is accomplished through the Only-Begotten (1 Peter i. 21) by Him.

Verse 47.—Nathanael saw Christ not then as the "altogether lovely," yet he acted far differently from many people in the world, for at Philip's invitation he cast away, at least, his great prejudice, and came. Would that every unbeliever, though he see not Christ's loveliness, at least would come and taste that the Lord is gracious.

Names in Chapter i.—The Word, the Light, the true Light, the Only-Begotten of the Father, Jesus Christ, the Only-Begotten Son, the Christ, the Lamb of God, Son of God, Jesus, Messiah, Rabbi, King of Israel, Son of Man.

Chap. ii.—Water and wine, history of a soul's conversion; water, weakness: wine,

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Chap. iii. 7.—"Ye must be born again." The doctrine of the new birth has always in its neighbourhood the doctrine of the fall, and of the atonement, and of the eternal issues beyond life, of the choice made while it lasted; and if history teaches anything it teaches that the proclamation of these doctrines that cut athwart human anticipations and conceptions, has moved men with unexampled force.

Chap. iii. 16.—"God so loved the world," &c. The measure or quantity of His love—"so". Like the whole Bible written by an expert caligrapher in Queen Elizabeth's time, who placed it in the compass of a

large walnut-shell (1 John iii. 1).

Chap. iv. 4.—"He must needs go." Not for geographical reasons, but because in communion His Father had whispered to Him that there in that city was a heart, longing, crying, beneath the dust and ruins of sin. He is not here now, but there are 10,000 of His, and He leaves us an example.

COMPANIONSHIP WITH JESUS.

OH, blessèd fellowship divine, Oh, joy supremely sweet, Companionship with Jesus here Makes life with bliss replete. In union with the purest One, I find my heaven on earth begun.

In walking close to Jesus' side,
So close that I can hear
The softest whispers of His love
In fellowship so dear,
And feel his great Almighty han

And feel his great, Almighty hand Protects me in this hostile land.

In leaning on His loving breast
Along Life's weary way,
My path, illumined by His smile,
Grows brighter day by day.
No foes, no woes my heart can fear
With my Almighty Friend so near.

I know His sheltering wings of love Are always o'er me spread, And tho' the storms may fiercely rage, All calm and free from dread My peaceful spirit ever sings, I'll trust the covert of His wings.

BAPTISM: DIFFICULTIES AND OBJECTIONS.

By J. R. CALDWELL, Author of "Things to Come," "Christ in Hebrews," "Earthly Relationships," &c.

To the minds of not a few who are really in earnest to arrive at the truth about baptism, certain difficulties and objections are almost sure to arise. Some of those most frequently met with may now be considered.

I. Some say there is

NO COMMAND TO BE BAPTISED.

It is only one instruction to the baptiser.

In reply, we would refer to the Lord's own words:

"He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved "(Mark xvi. 16).

This by no means implies that baptism is essential to salvation, as some have tried to make out; for the way of salvation is many times stated without any reference to baptism, nevertheless the fact that the Lord so couples the ordinance with the faith even in one instance shows that it is His will that

baptism should follow believing. In Acts ii. 41 we read:

"Then they that gladly received His Word were baptised."

Surely no one will contend that they were baptised apart from their desire for it, or at least their consent! Still less will anyone contend that in so allowing themselves to be immersed, they did it without being made aware that in this they were fulfilling the will of the Lord. It was an act of faith, or else it was sin, for "whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. xiv. 23). If it was not obedience to the expressed will of the Lord, then it was either subjection to man or it was self-will.

But again, in Acts x. 48 we find Peter

"Commanded them to be baptised in the Name of the Lord."

Did he utter this command as from himself, or was he only commanding that concerning which the Lord had made known His will? Surely there can be no reasonable doubt that the apostle enjoined it upon them in accordance with the Lord's own command in Mark xvi. 16 and Matthew xxviii. 19. We do not understand how any simple-minded believer could evade compliance with the Lord's expressed will on the ground that it was not a command.*

II. Some say it was

NOT INTENDED FOR THIS DISPENSATION, and back up the assertion by quoting Paul's words in 1 Cor. i. 17:

"For Christ sent me not to baptise, but to preach the Gospel."

But although Paul was not specially commissioned to baptise, we nevertheless find that in some instances he did baptise (see I Cor. i. 14-16). In Acts xvi. we are not told whether it was Paul or Silas that baptised Lydia and the Philippian jailor; but whoever did it, they saw to it that it was done. So in Acts xviii. 8 Crispus was baptised by Paul himself; but

"Many of the Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptised,"

not by Paul, but by Silas, or Timotheus, or others. The point is, they were not left un-

^{*} Suppose I instruct one of my elder children to take one of the younger ones to school. How would it look for the younger one to refuse, and give as a reason that there was no command to him (the younger one) to go?

baptised. It was an ordinance that required no apostolic or priestly authority to render it valid; indeed, Paul himself was probably baptised by one known only as

"A certain disciple named Ananias."

Therefore, whilst Paul's gift fitted him for the higher work of ministering the Word and unfolding mysteries that had been kept secret from the foundation of the world, any of his helpers was competent to baptise those who believed, and so relieve the apostle.

His thankfulness that he had baptised so few of the Corinthians was no disparagement to the ordinance, but because of the carnal way in which they had been forming parties in the Church, saying, "I am of Paul," &c. He did not thank God that so few of them had been baptised, but that he had baptised so few of them. So far as we can gather, they had all been baptised.

We judge, then, that the apostle's words afford no evidence that the ordinance was not for this dispensation, but rather the con-

trary.

But from a careful comparison of the following Scriptures it must be evident that the commission of the Lord (including baptism) is essentially one and the same in the four Gospels and in the Acts:

Matthew xxviii. 19:

"ALL NATIONS," in contrast to chap. x. 5: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles.'

"TEACH," or "make disciples of."

"Baptising them." Could only apply to such as

accepted the teaching of the apostles.

"TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE," &c. Could not apply to the nations as such, but to those who became learners, and as disciples of the Lord were baptised.

"I AM WITH YOU ALWAY,"

"EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE AGE."

Mark xvi. 15:

Go ye into all the World . . . to every creature," agrees with "all nations" (Matthew). Preach the Gospel." The method by which they were to be taught or discipled.

"HE THAT BELIEVETH." The only way of becom-

ing a disciple.

"AND IS BAPTISED." Following faith or discipleship—agreeing with Matthew.

"SHALL BE SAVED." Therefore, to be taught to

observe, &c. as in Matthew.

"HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT," i.e., does not become a disciple, therefore not eligible for baptismbaptism not mentioned here-"shall be condemned."

Verse 20—They fulfilled the commission, and the Lord fulfilled His promise. Exactly in correspondence with Matthew.

Luke xxiv. 47:

"REPENTANCE AND REMISSION OF SINS." According to Mark, "the Gospel."
"Among all Nations," as in Matthew and Mark.

(See above.)

Verse 49-" Power from on High," in order totheir being "witnesses of these things."

John xv. 26, 27:

"THE COMFORTER," "THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH," to enable them to be "witnesses of these things."

John xiv. 12: "Greater works"—"Because I go to the Father;" corresponding with Mark xvi. 20.

Acts i. 8:

"WITNESSES," as in Luke xxiv. 49; John xv. 26, 27 Unto Me"—personal, special testimony during the period that Israel nationally is set aside. OWER FROM ON HIGH," corresponding to Matthew, "I am with you," and Mark xvi. 20, "The Lord working with them."

Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria (contrast to Matt. x. 5), "and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Exactly as in Matthew, Mark, Luke.

We conclude, then (a), that although the special form of the Gospel of the Grace of God, as revealed to and by the Apostle Paul, is not here given, yet it was the testimony to Himself in this present age that the Lord had in view in the whole of the instruc-

tions given;

(b) That the four Gospels and the Acts fully agree, and that, in such a way, as to include the Gospel as preached by Paul. Though Paul's Gospel was not then fully revealed, yet there was nothing in any of the Lord's words inconsistent with it; on the contrary, room is left within the broad lines given by the Lord for the filling in of all the subsequent details as revealed to and preached by Paul;

(c) That there is not a word in any of the Lord's utterances as to "the kingdom," but rather testimony to Him as the rejected One in the power of the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven whilst He is at the right hand

of God;

(d) That the preaching of the Gospel, as recorded in the Acts, fulfils all the conditions of the Lord's commission, and affords a practical illustration or object-lesson for the rest of the dispensation.

We would observe that the great Gospel work of the last 1860 years, and especially of the last 50 years, has been founded upon the Lord's own commission: His command and His promise, as given in these Scriptures, having been the motive and strength of the work. And, further, that although the testimony of this present age is the fulfilment of the Lord's commission, and has ever been so regarded by His faithful servants, it does not follow that the same commission may not have further fulfilment after the Church is removed and the Pauline testimony closed.

III. Some object: "I have been a believer for many years;

BAPTISM IS AN INITIAL ORDINANCE; it is therefore out of place that I should be baptised now."

Many godly persons seeing the truth concerning baptism have been hindered by this consideration.

If baptism be an initial ordinance, much more so was circumcision, which the child eight days old was to be subjected to (Gen. xvii. 12, Phil. iii. 5). This had been neglected all the forty years of Israel's wanderings in the wilderness (Josh. v. 5). Many of them must have been 20 to 40 years of age when they entered Canaan, but no such plea is advanced as its being "an initial ordinance," and therefore out of place in an adult.

In Acts xix. I we read of "certain disciples" at Ephesus who had no doubt been believers in the Lord Jesus as the true Messiah for some time. They had been disciples of John, and had been baptised with John's baptism, but were evidently ignorant of the great truths concerning the glorifying of the Lord Jesus and the descent of the Holy Spirit.

The fact of their having been baptised by John is ignored, and they are rebaptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. No question is raised on the score of their having been baptised already, or of their having been believers for years. The fact of any command of the Lord having been overlooked or neglected through ignorance, is no warrant for continuing to neglect it when once it is known. The divine principle is, "When he knoweth of it, then he shall be guilty" (Lev. v. 3). "He that loveth Me keepeth My words." Surely the words that came from the lips of the risen Lord concerning

this ordinance are worthy of being kept, pondered, and obeyed.

IV. It is contended by some that, according to I Cor. vii. 14, THE CHILDREN OF BELIEVERS are holy, and that therefore they ARE ENTITLED TO BAPTISM.

But in what sense are they holy? For in whatever sense they are "holy," the unbelieving (heathen) husband or wife is "holy" also, and if the argument holds good they also should be baptised. We find a somewhat analogous use of the word in I Tim. iv. 5. Meats that under the Mosaic law were declared unclean and defiling, are no longer to be so regarded; they are "sanctified" by the Word of God and prayer. That is to say, they are set apart thus for the use of the believer, and he may partake of them with a good conscience.

So is it in I Cor. vii. Under the old dispensation, when the men of Israel married strange wives, that is, wives not of the seed of Abraham, they were obliged, in pursuance of the will of God, to put them away, and also the children that were born of them. (See Ezra x. 2, 3.) The question with the Corinthian believers was, If a husband or a wife become a Christian, does this involve separation from the unbelieving husband or wife? And also does it involve separation from children sons and daughters who are not yet converted? No, says the apostle; the marriage yoke is recognised by God as indissoluble on any such ground.

The unbelieving partner is sanctified by the believing one relatively, so that it is not defiling to remain together or to retain the children in the family and seek to "gain" them for God. And it is added, "Else were YOUR children unclean." Not the children of those parents one of whom is a heathen, but the children of all the Corinthian saints, for they are all "by nature the children of wrath, even as others," until they are "born again." The passage, therefore, instead of teaching a "sanctification" that entitles to baptism, teaches the very opposite, for it emphasises the uncleanness by nature of all, even the children of believing parents. To found household baptism on this passage necessarily involves more than is intended, viz., the baptising of the unbelieving husbands and wives of Christians.

OUR WALK AS CHILDREN OF GOD.

SINCE God has made us His children, how responsible we are to glorify our how responsible we are to glorify our Father by living so as to please Him. are to be "blameless and harmless, children of God, without blemish, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation," among whom we are called to shine, especially by our conduct, "as LIGHTS in the world" (Phil. ii. 15). Having the spirit of Christ, and actually LED by that spirit, our conduct will not resemble, but will contrast with, the conduct of those who are not children of God, but filled with enmity to Him, and who are guided by that spirit which now worketh in the children of disobedience. Nay, our present walk, as children of God, should not only contrast with that of the world, but it should contrast equally with our past selves. Once darkness, we are now light; and are meant to walk as children of the light (Eph. v. 8). What a difference—midnight darkness and broad daylight! Light amid surrounding darkness—a lily among thorns, a lamb among wolves. . . . Such the child of God is always to be. The sons of God are to be like the Father, and it is only by their being so that they shall fulfil their mission in the world. And, in seeking to discharge our mission, it is to be in the full, free, and joyous spirit of sons, and not as bond-slaves. —John Dickie.

THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

THE frequent use of the above expression proves how little regard is apt to be paid to accuracy—whereaccuracy is especially needful—in statements of doctrine. Not once is such a term to be found in Holy Scripture. An examination of the few passages in the New Testament in which the words "mortal," "mortality," "immortal," "immortality" occur, brings evidence of the fact that they are used of the body, not of the soul. There are but twelve passages, and in three of them the English rendering should be "incorruption," "incorruptible."

In considering, then, the vital subject of man's future, when existence on earth has ceased, it is of high importance not to draw

conclusions from a false premiss. It is also important not even to listen to any argument whose foundation is not based upon Scripture language.*

That the natural death of the body does not end the existence of man is, and always has been, the opinion of all races. This finds expression in various ways, but chiefly in an instinctive fear of death and in the practice of significant funeral rites. It is not, then, the part of adherents of this opinion to defend it; it is for its opponents to disprove it. This they can only do if able to bring forward unquestionable evidence of a Divine revelation to that effect. The writer remembers personally how for fifty years (and, of course, long before) false teaching has been presented to the unwary on this point. If we, however, hold "the faith once delivered to the saints," we shall not be led astray by plausible arguments; we shall continue to believe in a "wrath to come," in a "resurrection of damnation," and in a "revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds."

There are not many whose mental habit and training fit them for a critical judgment upon words (such as "destroy," "perish," "eternal") which are often introduced into this controversy. Their meaning is, indeed, to be ascertained by a childlike dependence upon the teaching of the Holy Spirit rather than by lexicographical learning. But the Spirit does not teach those who do not read the Scriptures, and this with a view to "correction" as much as to "instruction in right-eousness."

God has a grave controversy with His creature man. It cannot, in the face of experience, be maintained that this controversy is settled during this life. Sorrows and joys are not distributed according to desert. Some good persons have much affliction, some evil persons great prosperity. There is a hereafter. Man knows it. Let him not try not to know. "After this [death] the judgment," is the solemn testi-

^{[*} The eternal, conscious existence of the soul or spirit apart from the body after death is proved in many scriptures, and underlies the teaching of all scripture, but this endless being is not in scripture language called "immortality," which, as our correspondent shows, is only applied to the body.—ED.]

mony of the Spirit. Can man measure his own guilt? Impossible! Neither can he then apportion his due of punishment. The heinousness of sin and the judgment it deserves are known by the Holy One alone. We may approach to His mind concerning them just in so far as we "behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." The "Lamb of God" is the "Son of God." As we have but an imperfect apprehension of His sufferings, so have we but a partial idea of the wrath from which He delivered believers, and which still abides upon those who believe not (John iii. 36).

The writer refrains from examination of the whole question. His present object is defined by the title of this short paper. Those of his readers who desire to verify his statements as to the use of the words "mortal," &c., are invited to read carefully the only passages in which are to be found the Greek equivalents. They are: Rom. vi. 12, viii. 11; 1 Cor. xv. 53, 54; 2 Cor. iv. 11, v. 4; and 1 Tim. vi. 16. In Romans ii. 7, I Tim. i. 17, and 2 Tim. i. 10, the English rendering should be "incorruption," "incorruptible."

THE LOST AXE HEAD.

"And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us. Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell. And he answered, Go ye. And one said, Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants. And he answered, I will go. So he went with them. And when they came to Jordan, they cut down wood. But as one was felling a beam, the axe head fell into the water; and he cried, and said, Alas, master! for it was borrowed. And the man of God said, Where fell it? And he showed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast it in thither; and the iron did swim. Therefore, said he, Take it up to thee. And he put out his hand and took it" (2 Kings vi. 1-7).

A PAINFULLY sad duty it is to have to point out that not a few saved people, at one time all life and vigour for God, are now in the same helpless fix as this son of a prophet—they have clean lost the power for service. And some don't realise the seriousness of what has happened. If you are of this class, may God work a speedy and a deep repentance in your soul, dear

reader, till you cry aloud in true anguish, "Alas, Master!" The loss of your axe head has meant keen sorrow to the Lord, and has laid a burden on the heart of believers who well remember your better days. How, think you, are those giant trees of the forest to be hewn down when you stand useless before them? That handle in your hand, what can it do? The iron is off the end.

In old times "a man was famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees" (Psa. lxxiv. 5), and the spiritual woodman is accounted of God famous by the number and kind of persons who fall before his weighty and skilled use of Holy Scripture. There have lived but few woodmen to rank with John the Baptist, whose blows fell with a thud and a keenness of edge that shook the oaks of Bashan. But his axe was heavier than the flabby muscles of this generation could swing—it had been forged in the wilderness, and its edge was guaranteed not to turn. Have you handled the new pattern? By would-be "experts" it is regarded as an improvement upon the old and rather roughly-shaped implement that John used. Feel its lightness to the touch; note the polish of its smooth surface; see the comfort with which you can swing it. Brethren, the timber such axes fell can scarce produce a decent-sized beam of any real value.

When John wielded his axe in that notto-be-forgotten sermon reported in the third of Matthew, he made the chips fly. He did, indeed. That rough-looking man in the camel's-hair suit, with loins girt about with leathern girdle, and whose meat was not dainties for fastidious palates, but locusts and wild honey, produced a trembling in the hearts of Jerusalem and all Judea, and a confessing of their sins. Sirs, this is a want of the times—men skilled in the use of the axe, whose powerful strokes shall fell thick timber ample and suitable for beams for the building of God's habitation. We don't want this playing at being woodmen, and snipping trees with gilded toys. Not children are wanted, but men, and men whose lungs have inhaled the desert air, and who hold not men's persons in admiration; men absorbed. with a single object—the Cross of Christ; men who tread the world as strangers and sojourners, and who suffer the loss of all things.

There is a widespread outcry against hard strokes nowadays; but we have observed that the heavy strokes of a man of God are worth their weight in gold for the good they bring to souls. Let the labourer for God have his axe head forged on the anvil of the wilderness (never mind those elegant-looking ones which, believe me, could not fell a sapling though you struck ever so hard), and see that he keeps the edge sharp by close and real dealings with God. Let him live on plain, wholesome fare gotten fresh from the Book of Life, and his joints and muscle will develop, and many a good day's work he'll The Master will honour His faithful servant, and He will see to it that none of his words shall fall to the ground.

We have known believers who once upon a time could do exploits among the trees of the wood, and we paused and listened to the sound of their strokes with no small pleasure. We said to ourselves: "This man will be famous for God; posterity will long remember him." By-and-by we come his way again, and are struck with the dead silence reigning around. We find him with nothing save a handle in his hand—a profession which has lost its weight and edge. Lord had given a measure of ability for ser-. vice, and he was happy in the work, when Satan got him off his guard and marred his usefulness. His humble hut has been converted into a tidy cottage since last we were here; and entering within we see around us evidence that the things of this life have found a place in his affections. We hear there are neighbourly Canaanites (the old inhabitants of the land) who visit him. The old, well-thumbed Book that ever lay about the table is put on a shelf where it may not be so readily seen; and strewn about is other reading matter, supplied by his visitors, that takes up half-hours once upon a time spent in meditation over the inspired Word and in lifting his voice in prayer to his Father in heaven. His conversation has undergone a change: it has become varied and more congenial-instructive withal. Concerning redeeming love, he had been known to say, "None other my tongue shall employ;" but now he takes up a multitude of matters, from "the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall." He speaks also of "beasts and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes" (I Kings iv. 33). And his society is sought after by those he once belaboured with his axe.

Some prophet is needed to come along to "cut down a stick," and by its means fetch back that lost axe head, so that once more we shall hear the sound of the workman's strokes; back, through a rod of correction, to the days of simplicity, a single eye, and a walk with God; back to the days of contentment with a simpler life, when the wants were few, and "the kingdom of God and His righteousness" was first sought in everything! Happy days when they walked with God the path of separation from the scene around! How oft they felt their strangership, and highly prized their heavenly calling. To them the world had lost all its charms, save as a place in which to witness to the truths they held dear, and where they might bear about a savour of Christ and God.

Correspondence.

THE TERRIBLE CHINESE SORROWS.

To the Editor of THE WITNESS.

Napier, N.Z.

DEAR SIR,—Your timely and telling article in issue of last month ("The Calamities Abroad in the Earth") will have good results, and Dr. Case's accounts of the Chinese crisis are of great value.

This week a letter has come in from Dr. Parrott, Shanghai, dated 29th August, several extracts from which will interest your readers. It is well known that his station was at Lao-ho-kou, Hupeh Province. He says: "We had urgent orders from the British Government to retire to the coast immediately. There was not time to pack up more than a few things necessary for a long journey of a thousand miles, leaving houses and everything as they were. In other northern provinces hundreds of poor people have been burnt and killed and robbed of everything. In Shansi alone more than 100 European and American missionaries are miss-

ing. Some 60 in the capital—Tai-yuen-fuwere massacred, it is almost certain among them Mr. Alex. Grant's daughter, married to Dr. Lovitt, also the Piggotts and all their party, and all the English Baptist Mission there. Others escaped from the south and have reached Hankow more dead than alive. Five of their party were murdered on the road, and all nearly starved. They actually ate the grass on the roadside, and drank water from the puddles on the road. They were robbed of everything except a pair of cotton drawers each, men, women, and children alike. Even their hats and shoes were taken: The heat was intense.

"It is impossible to go into details, they are too awful. Savages could not have treated them half so badly. Poor China! Maddened by her own poverty, famine, and mandarin oppression, they have turned on their best friends, and made it clear to all the world that China is no more a civilised nation than she was 2000 years ago.

"There are not less than 700 missionaries in Shanghai; many are going home. We wait to see how matters will develop. Everything is very dear, and houses difficult to get.

"No one can tell when we may get back to inland stations. The troubles are spreading, and it is doubtful if the Yang-tse valley can

escape the general blaze-up."

Now, while most of the societies have suffered severely, and lost some of their best workers, let the good hand of God be owned toward us, and His mercy acknowledged in sparing the lives of our brethren and sisters. May we render to God the gratitude and thanksgiving that is His due. But isit to end here? Is not God's voice in this great mercy a call to increased devotedness in Chinese work? At present rather more than 50 male and female workers are in that country from our meetings, the lives of all of whom have been spared—a very small company for such a need. Will it be too much to make it a definite subject of prayer that God may be pleased to send forth at least other 50 workers to that great field—not our sending forth, but God's calling, and fitting, and sending? Can we show our gratitude to God in a way that will be more pleasing to His great heart of love, who gave up His Son, and waits to see the inbringing of His own "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation?"

And if God raises up such, will the Lord's people in home lands be prepared to evidence their gratitude to Him by increased self-denial and liberality, so that those already in China may lack nothing, and others "be brought forward on their journey after a godly sort?"

May God stir us all up and give grace to "redeem the time."—Yours in our Lord,

Thos. M'LAREN.

Questions and Answers.

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

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.

REPLIES ARE INVITED TO THE FOLLOWING:

A FULL REWARD.—Please explain 2 John 8: "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward."

RESPONSIBILITY OF ELDERS.—Acts xx. 28. To what extent are overseers responsible? Does the flock which they are to feed embrace all Christians, or only those gathered to the Name of the Lord?"

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.—Please explain the term "Kingdom of God" in John iii. 5. Is it synonymous with the term "Church," as taught by some?

JESUS IN THE MIDST.—Please explain Matt. xviii. 20. Is Jesus in each assembly now, as in John xx. 19, or in the midst of all gathered ones as one body?

PHILANTHROPY.—Does the example of Christ warrant believers to engage in philanthropic work?

THE SAINTS IN HADES.

QUESTION 424.—Does Scripture teach that the saints who had died before the death of Christ were confined in Hades, and that the Lord Jesus, at His death, descended into Hades and released them?

Answer A.—"Hades" is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew "sheol." "Hades," or "sheol," is the place of disembodied spirits. It was the place where the soul of the Lord Jesus went at His death (Acts ii. 31). He called it "paradise" (Luke xxiii. 43), and unveiled it in His parable of the rich man and Lazarus. There He showed it to consist of two regions, one of peace and felicity, the other of torment, but separated by an impassable gulf. One is apparently distinguished in Scripture as "the upper," and the other as "the lower." Into the upper of these two regions, then, He descended (Eph. iv. 10). This was paradise. But when the Apostle Paul was taken in spirit to paradise, he was "caught up" (2 Cor. xii. 4). Paradise is then no longer "down," but "up." This agrees with what he writes to the Ephesian believers, that our Lord, after He descended, ascended, and in His ascension "led captivity captive" (Eph. iv. 8, et seq.).

Satan not only had some claim over the bodies of dead saints (Jude 9), but also kept guard over their souls. Jesus said, "No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he

will spoil his house" (Mark iii. 27). So He died, "that through death He might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. ii. 14, R.V.). Thus he saith, "I have the keys of death and of hades" (Rev. i. 18, R.V.). He is the Guardian of our bodies when we die, and of our souls when we leave this lower sphere and rise into the glorious atmosphere of His love

and His presence.

Thus we gather that at death the souls of the Old Testament saints descended into "sheol," or "hades"; that at death the soul of our Lord Jesus also descended into this gloomy but peaceful region. At His ascension He emptied the place of the souls of the righteous, who had collected there until His advent, and led the erstwhile captives of Satan up into "the third heaven," there to rejoice in His presence until he comes again, when, clothed upon with their heavenly bodies, and united with the changed saints who are alive at that blessed moment, they shall be presented before the presence of His Father with great joy.

As the paradise in "the lower parts of the earth" (Eph. iv. 9) became the paradise of "the third heaven" (2 Cor. xii. 4), so the paradise of "the third heaven" will become "the paradise of God" (Rev. ii. 7).

D. A. B.

Answer B.—Sheol, of the Old Testament, and hades, of the New Testament, are identical. The quotation in Acts ii. 27, from Psalm xvi., proves this definitely.

Sheol was the expectation of the ancients. Jacob said, "I shall go down into sheol, unto my son, mourning" (Gen. xxxvii. 35). Job said, "O, that Thou wouldst hide me in sheol" (Job xiv. 13). Solomon said, "For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge in sheol, whither thou goest" (Eccles. ix. 10).

But there is a lower sheol, and the Psalmist praises and glorifies the Lord his God, because He had delivered his soul from the lower sheol (Psalm lxxxvi. 12, 13). It was, without doubt, in the lower sheol that the rich man of Luke xvi. lifted up his eyes. Sheol is generally spoken of as being down. So in Rom. x. 7, "Who shall descend into the deep, that is to bring up Christ again from the dead " (or abyss)? so also in Eph. iv. 9, "Now He that ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth." Also in Matt. xii. 40 the Lord said, "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." From that deep place, or abys's, He ascended UP far above all the heavens, and led with Him as His captives those who had previously been captives (see Eph. iv. 8).

Therefore, now, and ever since His asce nsi the locality of disembodied saints is up, not down, for they depart to be with Christ. J. s.

THE SECOND COMING AND THE GREAT TRIBULATION.

QUESTION 425.—Have we plain evidence in Scripture that when the Lord appears believers who are then on earth will be caught up to meet Him in the air, previous to the great tribulation, and are there any passages which would lead one to suppose that some Christians will be left behind to go through that time of trouble and do not form part of the Church?

Answer A.—I. The consecutive order of events is given in I Thessalonians. In chapter iv. we get the coming of the Lord Himself, the resurrection, and translation of the saints; then in chapter v. the times and the seasons, the day of the Lord, the wrath, or great tribulation, the sudden destruction, and the blessed assurance that God hath not appointed us to wrath or tribulation, because our Lord Jesus Christ died for us that we should live together with Him.

2. In Jude 14 and other scriptures we see the Lord coming to execute judgment, accompanied with ten thousands of His saints. These must have been previously translated to be with Him.

3. In the days of antichrist there is a temple of God in Jerusalem, recognised as such (2 Thes. ii. 4). This cannot be until we are removed, for at present we are the temple of God (1 Cor. iii. 16), and no other temple is recognised during this dispensation.

4. We are constantly enjoined to keep on the tiptoe of expectation of the coming of the Lord by such scriptures as these, "Looking for that blessed hope" (Titus ii. 13); "Our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. iii. 20). We cannot possibly be looking for His coming if the whole period of the rise, and development, and domination of the antichrist must intervene between us and that blessed event.

5. In the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke we see much of His coming as Son of Man to take vengeance, to execute judgment, and to rule, but in John xiv. is the first revelation of His coming as Son of God to receive His saints to Himself. As Son of God He is Lord of life and Lord of resurrection (John v. 25, 26, 28, 29).

6. When the Lord comes not a saint will be left behind. I Thessalonians iv. tells us that "The dead in Christ shall rise first, then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air." And further, I Corinthians xv. 51 says, "Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment." J.s.

A PRECIOUS PORTION.

By Robert M'Murdo, Glasgow.

"I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also."—John xiv. 3. VERY sweetly must these words have fallen upon the ears of those to whom they first were spoken. Brightly have they shone in the firmament of Scripture since then, cheering the hearts of thousands as they waited for the dawn. They shine to-day in lustre undimned, drawing the affection of the saints upwards, purifying their lives, and filling their souls with the desire to see Him who claims them as His own.

Here every word is precious, and every sentence pregnant with love's sweetest message. Heart speaks to heart, the Bridegroom to the Bride. Wondrous grace! that God's beloved Son should love and seek the love of those who loved Him not.

"I will come again and receive you unto Myself." Such words were never heard in Eden. They were pressed out under the shadow of Calvary from the Heart of infinite love so soon to be pierced so that the covenant of life and peace might be sealed by blood.

This precious portion, like the river that went out of Eden to water the garden, parts into four—The Person, The Promise, The Portion, The Prospect. Each one of the four stands alone in solitary grandeur, and together they are like a cluster of precious gems where the beauty and brilliance of each is enhanced by the others. There is no Person like "Christ," no Promise like "His coming," no Portion like "His people," and no Prospect like being "with Him."

I. THE PERSON.

The order is perfect. First stands the Person—"I will come." Christ is the Author and Finisher of the whole. Without Him there would be no promise. Each soul would be left in the darkness of eternal night; and without Him there would be no prospect but the gathering gloom of judgment. In Him are all the promises of God—Yea and Amen.

No mere creature of Time is He, but the God "who inhabiteth Eternity"; no servant in the Father's House, but the Son who abideth for ever "Heir of all things."

How, then, shall we speak of Him who is God's unspeakable Gift? Or how shall we measure the excellency of Him "in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead?"

Look where you will in the Temple of Creation, every whit of it showeth His glory. The blazing sun is the work of His hands. "He telleth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names. Great is our Lord, and of great power; His understanding is infinite." The Word of God, like the burning bush, is all aglow with His presence. Open it where you will, you feel the fragrance of His gracious Person, for "His Name is as ointment poured forth." Who or what is the main subject of the whole of Scripture? What mean all the figures and ceremonies of the Law, the costly furniture and precious ornaments of the Temple, the rich vestments of the Priest, the blue, the purple, the scarlet, the fine linen, the gold and silver, the gems and precious stones? Is not every one of them are they not all together shadows and dim resemblances of the matchless perfections of Christ? He indeed is "a rose without a thorn." And best of all, each child of God can say, "My Beloved is Mine!"

II. THE PROMISE.

"I will come again." Great and precious are the promises that Gcd has given—sometimes gathered in a cluster like a bunch of fruit, sometimes spread out on the page of Scripture like the manna that fell from heaven. Yet among them all there is none like this, the shortest, the sweetest, and the richest of them all. It has in it all that God ever promised to man, for "in Christ are all the promises of God." They are in Him as the streams are in the sea, as the light is in the sun. He is the fountain of all that heaven and earth can afford, all that can be needed or desired. Laid up in the chambers of His glorious attributes are "all things."

This promise of His coming belongs to all the saints, and its fulfilment will be the crowning joy of each. In the darkest hour of trouble, from the deeps of human sorrow the prayer can rise, "Come, Lord Jesus." His coming shall bid the sorrow cease, and usher in the eternal day of heavenly joy.

If the earthly portion be the brightest, the cup full of the sweets of human love and companionship, with abundance of good strewn in the way, these mercies, if they answer the end for which they are sent, will draw the heart upwards with an ever increasing longing to see Him who is the Giver of them all, for if the gifts of His hand are good, the Giver is better.

Christ will come not only on our account, but more especially on His own. He comes that He may reap the fruit of His toil and wear the crown of glory where He once wore the crown of thorns. But above all, He comes that the joy may be His of receiving unto Himself the purchase of His blood.

Blessed promise! Bright Star of the Morning, come, and give unto Thy saints "Beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

III. THE PORTION.

"I will come again, and receive you." For the Church there is no promise like His coming. For Christ there is no portion like "His Church"—the subject of eternal counsel; the Father's gift to the Son; the object of His choice and everlasting love; the "Pearl of Great Price," for which He gave His all; the subject of His prayers on earth and of His priestly care in heaven, for which He died, lives, and is coming again.

"The nations," so great in the eyes of men, "are as a drop of the bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance. They are before Him as nothing, and are counted to Him less than nothing and vanity." But the Church is ever before Him in love, "As a seal upon His heart, as a seal upon His arm."

"The Lord's portion is His people." Oh, the riches of His grace, which makes it possible for each believing one to say, "I am my Beloved's, and His desire is toward me."

IV. THE PROSPECT.

"That where I am, there ye may be also." No prospect like this, "for ever with the Lord." Bright was the prospect in Eden when the morning rose upon Adam and his bride, in the perfection of beauty and innocence; their home furnished by God Himself,

not a care, not a cloud. But, alas! how soon all was marred by sin, and the guilty pair driven forth to toil, and suffer, and die. But this bright prospect shall never be marred. Sin shall never enter where He is.

Little is said about the place to which we are going. Much is said about the Person who brings us there. But we may rest assured that as heaven's best was given to bring us there, nothing less than the best of heaven shall be given us when we get there.

The late Henry Dyer said, "God is great in great things, but very great in little things. A party stood on the Matterhorn admiring the sublimity of the scene, when a gentleman produced a pocket microscope, and having caught a fly, placed it under the glass. reminded us that the legs of the household fly in England were naked, then called attention to the legs of this little fly, which were thickly covered with hair, thus showing that the same God who made the lofty Swiss mountains attended to the comfort of the tiniest of his creatures, even providing socks and mittens for the little fly whose home these mountains were." "This God is our God." And if He so cares for the comfort of a little fly, what will He not do for those who are not only the creatures of His hand, but the objects of His love, yea, the Brideelect of His beloved Son.

The prospect set before us is the brightest. To be "with Him where He is"—in that home of infinite love where the fine gold shall never become dim. "We shall be abundantly satisfied with His goodness." And He shall rest in this love and joy over His people with singing. So, while we wait, and work, and watch, let it be with the eye of faith upon Him who, when the hour of darkness was gathering round Him, gave us this precious portion,

Look up!
The brightest gem that gleams
Receives its beauty from the sun;
So let thine eye behold the Saviour's face,
And daily shine for Him
In this dark place.

God has been teaching me that the most effectual way of seeing the evil of sin is in the face of Christ.—A. BONAR.

BAPTISM.

FURTHER DIVERGENT VIEWS EXAMINED.

By J. R. CALDWELL, Author of "Things to Come," "Christ in Hebrews," "Earthly Relationships," &c.

V. U PON the fact that baptism in the Name of the three Persons of the Godhead is not mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, some have built a theory that THE LORD'S OWN COMMAND WAS HELD IN ABEYANCE WITH A VIEW TO A FUTURE DISPENSATION, and that Christian baptism ought to be in the Name

of the Lord Jesus only.

As regards the observance of the Lord's Supper, we have the command of the Lord Himself, "This do in remembrance of Me." Have we, then, no command at all applicable to this present dispensation as to baptism? Did the Apostles during the period covered by the Acts not proceed upon the Lord's own command as recorded in Matthew xxviii. 19 and Mark xvi. 16? Or had they some other command, of which no record is left us, upon which they founded the new formula? appears to us most reasonable to conclude that they simply acted upon the Lord's command. There is no evidence that the recorded words in the Acts constitute in any instance a formula. On the contrary, the words differ in each case. We have, "in the Name of Jesus Christ" (Acts ii. 38), "in the Name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts viii. 16), "In the Name of the Lord" (Acts x. 48). Also, the prepositions used are various; "Epi" ii. 38, "Eis" viii. 16, "En" x. 48. It is the character of the baptism that is thus brought out. It is in His Name, as being by His authority (Acts x. 48); it is unto (Eis) Him as Leader and Lord, even as the children of Israel were baptised (Eis) unto Moses (Acts viii. 16); and it is upon (Epi) His Name, that is as the ground of their confession in the face of the national rejection of Him as the Christ (Acts ii. 38).

Those who say that the Lord's command in Matthew xxviii. 19 does not apply now, would hardly go on to say that the subsequent words, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age," do not apply now; yet surely the whole passage applies to the period during which the Lord is absent in person, but invested with all authority at the right hand of the Father, and

present in and with His servants by His

Holy Spirit,

In Acts xix. 2, 3 we think a side light is thrown upon this point. The question of the apostle, upon finding that they were ignorant of the descent of the Holy Spirit, is, "Unto what, then, were ye baptised?" Their reply explained the position. In John's baptism no mention was made of the Holy Spirit as being then given, but as a gift to be bestowed afterward by the Mightier One who was to succeed John. If they had been baptised as those in Acts ii. 38, they would not only have heard of the gift of the Spirit, but would have received Him. The Lord's own command involved this.

VI. Referring to Romans vi. 4, the question has been asked, How does burial into DEATH APPLY IN REFERENCE TO THE FATHER AND THE HOLY SPIRIT? Such a question shows a confounding of the authority for baptism and the result of it with that which baptism symbolises. Baptism never can or did signify anything else than death, burial, and resurrection. But it is through the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Iesus that those who believe are brought into new relationships never before revealed. Baptism "in the Name of the Father" expresses the nearness of the relationship into which the believer is brought, even as a son, to cry, "Abba, Father." "In the Name of the Son" involves the efficacy of that glorious work accomplished for us on the Cross, and all the glory of that union with Him which gives its peculiar character to our calling and standing as "heirs of God and jointheirs with Christ." "In the Name of the Holy Spirit" involves all that wherein as indweller He leads, teaches, comforts, guides, unites in one as members of the Body of Christ, revealing Him to us.

The triune Name reminds us of the Aaronic blessing upon Israel: "Jehovah bless thee and keep thee; Jehovah make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee Jehovah lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace" (Numb. vi. 25-27); and then it is added, "And they shall put My Name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them." Even thus is it in baptism; it is a seal to them that the Father will keep

them, that the Son will be gracious unto them, and that the Holy Spirit will give

them peace.

VII. Some assert that "BAPTISM CAME IN THE ROOM OF CIRCUMCISION." It is admitted that both are initial rites: the one for the seed of Abraham according to the flesh upon the child being eight days old; the other upon becoming not only "Abraham's seed," but "children of God by faith in Christ Iesus" (Gal. iii. 26-29).

Those who had been circumcised in the flesh were nevertheless also baptised, and when certain of the Jews sought to impose circumcision upon the Gentile converts the controversy was settled by asserting that salvation, whether of Gentile or Jew, was by grace alone through faith, and not in any way connected with ordinances. How easy it would have been, then, to show that "baptism came in the room of circumcision," and that having been baptised, there was no need for them to be circumcised, if that had been true!

But Scripture teaches very differently as to circumcision, viz, that every believer has been circumcised without hands in the circumcision of Christ, i.e., not the rite of circumcision to which He, in common with all the male children of Israel, was subjected in His infancy, but His cutting off at the Cross, "the putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ " (see Col. ii. 11). And the practical power of the Cross, even death to the flesh known experimentally, is that inward circumcision of which the outward was a figure, "circumcision of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter: whose praise is not of men but of God" (Rom. ii. 29).

The Old Covenant carnal ordinance of circumcision is not superseded by a new ordinance, but being one of the shadows of the past, it is superseded by the great spiritual reality to which it pointed forward. It may nevertheless be admitted that there is some analogy between the two ordinances of the New Covenant, viz., Baptism and the Lord's Supper and the two leading ordinances of the Old Covenant, viz., Circumcision and the Passover, and the analogy is most significant. As already shown, all

ordinances point to the Cross of Christ. Circumcision shows the putting to death of the flesh; Baptism shows the burial of that which has already been put to death. The Passover shows the shedding of the blood of atonement, the Lord's Supper shows the death to have taken place before, and the blessedness of feasting with the Risen One on the results of His accomplished redemption.

VIII. In some minds difficulty attaches to such passages as Acts ii. 38, because it appears to connect the remission of sins and the gift of the Spirit with Submission to the Ordinance. But the difficulty disappears when the distinction is seen in the ways of God when dealing with Jews and with Gentiles.

A Jew of old was not only a sinner by nature, dead and guilty before God, he was also one of the chosen people—one of the commonwealth of Israel—and as such invested with many privileges. The nation as such was held guilty of, and charged with the murder of their Messiah. Hence faith in Him had to be accompanied by the outward confession in baptism of that Name which, as a nation, they had despised and rejected.

No such special form of guilt attached to the Gentile, and we believe this accounts for baptism, in the one case, being unto the remission of sins and the gift of the Spirit; and, in the other case, being administered subsequently to forgiveness and the bestowment of the Spirit.

Compare Acts ii. 38 with Acts x. 43-48. So with Saul of Tarsus; being a Jew, he is told to arise and "be baptised, and wash away his sins:" thus dissociating himself completely from the guilt of the nation.

Still, as a matter of fact, even in Acts ii., it was only those who by faith "gladly received the Word" that were baptised. There could at that time have been no possible motive for desiring to be baptised in the Name of the Lord Jesus, but a previous faith in Him as the risen Son of God.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit, whereby all believers, whether Jew or Gentile, are constituted one body in Christ is the common heritage of all who are His. It is in the Epistle to the Corinthians (I Cor. xii. 13) that this truth is clearly set forth: "In one Spirit were we all baptised into one Body" (R.v.). It is not a privilege attained by some and vainly sought after by others. The Corinthian Church was by no means composed of model believers; on the contrary, it was the most faulty of all the Churches addressed by the Apostle. Yet he makes no exception or qualification. If in Christ, then they were so by the baptism of the Spirit, and thereby members one of another.

But they were also "made to drink into one Spirit." And herein lies the difference between one and another. All believers have been baptised into one Body—all have in some measure drunk—but all have not been filled. Some drink but little, and have little of the joy and comfort of the Spirit; others drink till they are filled with joy and power. "Be ye filled with the Spirit" is as plain a command as "Be not drunk [filled] with wine" (Eph. v. 18).

Three questions arise:

"What doth hinder?" (Acts viii. 36).

"Can any man forbid?" (Acts x. 47).

"Why tarriest thou?" (Acts xxii. 16).

Sometimes there are hindrances to be overcome. God is able to make a plain path for those who desire to do His will.

Sometimes a parent forbids, and the child pauses and waits upon God, and it is a matter of common experience that in due time the parent withdraws the prohibition. The waiting time is not lost, and the willing heart is meantime accepted of the Lord.

Sometimes there is a needless tarrying, a putting off, without any sufficient reason. Let any who thus delay give heed to the words of the Psalmist: "I made haste, and delayed not to keep Thy commandments" (Psa. cxix. 60).

"In keeping of His commandments there is great reward."

These articles will be issued in book form, Paper Covers, 3d.; Cloth Covers, 6d.

BIBLE STUDIES.

Our own Master, - Romans xiv. 4
Our own Vineyard, - S. of S. i. 6
Our own Business, - I Thess. iv. 11
Our own Reward, - I Cor. iii. 8

"GOD LOVETH A CHEERFUL GIVER."

"But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully."—2 Cor. ix. 6.

THEN it was made known that some thousands of our brave men in South Africa were suffering needlessly because of insufficient supplies, a wave of indignation ran through the country, and an explanation was demanded. Yet, while there are hundreds of thousands of perishing souls who might be reached with the Gospel but for the insufficient provision made for the work by those to whom God has entrusted the means, how few seem even to heave a sigh. We may be assured that our God will one day DEMAND AN EXPLANATION. How shall we then face the ghastly multitude of lost souls? Shall we not have to confess that we have been guilty of a worse crime than they, in withholding the knowledge of a Saviour—in keeping to ourselves the Gospel which we are *commanded* to preach to EVERY CREATURE.

If, instead of the million and a quarter given by the people of Great Britain to missions, they should for once give eighteen millions, the nations around would surely count us mad. Yet the latter enormous sum is spent upon cigarettes alone, and no one accuses us of insanity! What must the Redeemer think, as amongst the wasted wealth he sees gold spent by His own that should have helped to spread the knowledge of His love?

It is to be feared that, as another has said, it is only here and there we meet with a Christian who gives conscientiously and on principle. The greater number, if they give at all, do so under pressure—principle has very little to do with it. In the days of Moses the people, whom we reckon to have known so little of the heart of God compared with ourselves, brought so much for the work of God that their liberality had to be restrained. When we hear of something like this amongst us, we may perhaps see the "showers of blessing" that we sing of and long for, but which, alas! so seldom come.

Our friends abroad do not beg, nor do we beg for them. They wait on God, and earnestly desire that the vast field which lies open before them may be speedily and well sown with Gospel seed. We at home simply exhort one another to understand how great is the privilege of helping in such a work, and the loss we sustain by neglecting to do The doors are open and opportunities abound. Do we care? Alas! for the heart that is callous about souls for whom Christ Pray, brethren; pray, sisters, that God may enable us to rise above the narrow corner in which we live, and to look upon the need of a whole groaning world. When that is seen we shall weep as well as pray. w. H. S.

MORDECAI.

By WILLIAM COLLINGWOOD, Bristol.

I F in the Book of Esther we find no mention of God by name, we may find there many precious lessons of His wondrous ways. If in the lips of Mordecai that name is not heard, it may show that his godliness is not to be measured by the high profession that calls Him "Lord, Lord," but by doing of His will. His faith, like that of the elders in Hebrews xi., is to be seen in his works. He has left us a bright example of godly walk, and to him the Lord fulfilled His word, "Them that honour Me I will honour."

He sought no honour from man. would have lost the opportunity afforded by Esther's advancement to obtain advancement for himself. So far from this, choosing rather to remain unknown except as having an interest in her welfare, he charges her not to show her people or her kindred. When he had so signally saved the king by exposing the conspiracy against him, and it was certified to him in her name, no use was made of it to seek honour or reward. Nor to the last does such a thought escape his lips, or appear to have occupied his mind. When honour came at length it was not by his own seeking.

And he had saved the king's life at the risk of his own. The readiness of those around him to do him mischief shows what he might have expected from any confederates of the conspiracy. All that was

nothing to him. He had done it in the fear of God.

In the ordinary course of things the man who had rendered such a service would have been promptly promoted to honour, probably put into the place of those who had suffered for their crime—as actually happened afterwards in chapter viii. "Yet no man remembered this same poor man," only "it was written in the Book of the Chronicles." And God, too, had written it in His book of remembrance.

How, then, was he requited? By the place of honour being given to a worthless and wicked favourite, his own death-warrant signed, and that of all his people for his sake.

His refusal to bow to Haman was not from resentment or jealousy. It was, as he told them, because he was a Jew. He could not reverence one of those against whom Jehovah had sworn that He would have war to all generations. Beyond this we read of nothing like reproach, accusation, or anger. He never talks about the injuries done to him. He goes on as before, sitting at the king's gate.

Haman was an Amalekite to the core. Not only must his pride be avenged by getting rid of the man who would not cringe to him, but his hatred of God's people must be satiated by their extermination. He has the king's ear, and obtains his permission. To secure success he casts lots for the lucky day. It falls late in the year, giving him full time to work out his purpose.

But God has His time, and He can afford to wait till the last moment, though our faith can sometimes little bear the strain. Happy when we are content to leave ourselves in His hand. Mordecai, who had quietly borne all the injustice done to himself, now, when the life of his people is at stake, rouses to action. It was time for Esther to use her influence with the king. Now she is to make known her kindred. Waiting only for the three days of fasting and crying for help from above, she presents herself before the king to seek that day an opportunity of making her request. But she is a day too soon. Urgent as it seemed, she could not utter her petition. She was a day too soon for God. Great indeed was the extremity, but it had to be greater still before His opportunity was fully come. The gallows had to be prepared for Mordecai that night

God is wont to have strange and unlookedfor purposes to bring about, and therefore He uses strange and unlikely means. He is never at a loss for ways of accomplishing His work. That night the king, unable to sleep, rather than have "instruments of music brought before him" (of which see Daniel vi.), chose to entertain himself with the dry reading of the Chronicles, awaking thus to the tardy recognition of his debt to Mordecai. And Haman's impatient haste to get Mordecai hanged brought him at that early hour to be the counsellor who should prescribe for his intended victim the wellmerited honour and dignity. And his own position, as the most noble of the princes, fitted him to be the one to execute it. With his hand already on his prey, he seemed to see his hand also on the topmost round of the ladder of his ambition. It is for him to devise the highest honour he could covet for himself. God's moment was now come. Haman finds himself fallen into the pit that he made. It was for his victim he was providing the honour. Instead of the gallows fifty cubits high, Mordecai is set on the place of highest dignity, and Haman himself must be the one to proclaim it.

So at length Mordecai has his reward. Honour and dignity have been done to him. The king has paid his debt, and there is an end of that, so far as man is concerned. And what was it, after all? A pageant of an hour. He had ridden on the king's horse, wearing the king's robe and the king's crown. And he has returned to the king's gate just where and what he was before—his enemy still in power, and the decree still unrevoked. Such was man's recompense at the best!

But that was not to be the end. Mordecai was serving another and a better Master, One who was not going to let it pass off with man's poor requital. He had now begun to work. He had something to give more worthy of Himself. Before nightfall Haman had been hanged on his own gallows, and the servant of Jehovah went out from

the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, a great crown of gold, and a garment of fine linen and purple all now his own; and for the rest of his days to be "next unto the king, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed."

These two steps in Mordecai's advancement were entirely independent of each other. The reward for saving the king's life needed only that it should be remembered in due time, and would have come if there had been no Haman. The lasting honour he afterwards attained had nothing directly to do with that. It might have occurred had no such service been rendered. It was Haman's crime that made the place for Mordecai's final exaltation.

Here we have a practical commentary on the Lord's teaching in Luke xiv. 12-14—"When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours, lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind; and thou shalt be blessed, for they cannot recompense thee, for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."

That is His way with us. To His costly feast of salvation He has called us, the poor, the blind, the lame, who cannot recompense Him except by coming at His bidding and partaking of His gifts. And under this figure he teaches us to be like Himself as constrained by His love to us. If what we do is in view of recompense from man, we may, perhaps, have our reward, but there is an end of it. We are quits. It does not get into God's Book. It is so much to our loss. Or, receiving no recompense or thanks, we shall soon be weary in well-doing, leave off our work, go disappointed, talking of the wrong or the ingratitude, and lose our blessing. If, on the other hand, it is done to the Lord, the seeing that others receive the benefit will satisfy and gladden us. Where that fails, we may indeed be sad, but we shall not be soured. Our reward, then, is the consciousness of acting in fellowship with the Lord, and serving Him. He tells

us that they are happy who get no recompense here. To such he says: "Thou shalt be blessed, for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." In His grace He makes Himself our debtor, and will pay us in His own coin. Not that we hold Him our debtor. That would vitiate it all. parable of the labourers in the vineyard tells that such will get their earnings, and no more, while others who take it of his free bounty prove what that free bounty is. The parable of the sheep and the goats shows how He recompenses those who have served Him without thought of worthiness or claim-"Come, ye blessed of My Father." The recompense in the resurrection of the just for a cup of cold water is the kingdom! Only, we must leave that all to Him; it will be according to His grace, not according to our deserving, or our estimate. And were it thus, we should make woeful mistakes if we think to appraise it. The measure of its value is not in the deed itself, but the One who accepts it as done to Him.

A story was told many years ago of an elderly gentleman in London who, on his way from the Stock Exchange to the Bank, was standing on the footpath, fearing to cross the crowded road, when a young clerk, seeing his embarrassment, offered his arm and landed him safely within the precincts of the Bank. Beyond a word of thanks and exchange of names nothing was offered by the one, or expected by the other. About four years after, the young man heard from a lawyer that Mr. —, whose name he recognised, had left him a thousand pounds and a gold watch. The reward, coming in due time, was in no proportion to the act itself, but to the person to whom it had been rendered. After this fashion our heavenly Master reckons and requites. What we want is to enter into the spirit of His command, seeking to be ministers of His kindness to all in spite of disappointment or ingratitude, only to obey Him, and please Him, and be like Him.

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

"GOD OUR FATHER."

Notes of an Address by J. R. Caldwell, Author of "Because ye belong to Christ," "Things to Come," &c.

PART III.

THE spirit of Sonship enabling the believer to cry "Abba, Father," is a blessed

reality.

I once heard of a wealthy couple who had no child. At their gate in a cottage lived a man and his wife who had a large family. This man of means and his wife determined that if the parents were willing they would adopt one of the children of this cottage, bring it up as their own child, and provide for it. It seemed too good an offer to refuse,

and so the child was handed over.

It was at once dressed in clothes suitable for its new position, and provided with toys such as it had never played with before, and so the first day passed off. Next day was not quite so happy, but with the help of new toys and other gratifications it passed off too. But the third day came, and the child was discontented. Everything was tried in vain. The child burst out a-crying, and would not be comforted. "What is it you want, my child?" said the lady; "have you not got everything you can wish? Are we not kind to you?" But all in vain. The little one in a burst of crying let out the truth: "I want my mammy!"

The spirit of sonship could not be imparted. Money could not purchase it; kindness could

not develop it.

But God adds to all His loving kindness this, that He imparts to His children "the spirit of adoption" [or Sonship], and so we know God as our Father, confide in Him, run to Him, love Him, and are at rest in His presence. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. iv. 6).

Now remember, if God by His Spirit teaches me to call Him Father (which He never teaches an unconverted man to do, albeit so many repeat by rote, "Our Father who art in Heaven"), that itself is a pledge that He undertakes to fulfil to me all the responsibilities of a Father.

Those who are parents will understand something of what this means. The parent

lives and labours for the children. Nature has placed them in their helplessness absolutely in his hands. They are entrusted to the parents as their first responsibility, and they are not worthy of the title of father or mother who do not exert every power they possess for the well-being of their children. Not one of my children ever at any time had one moment's concern or anxiety about where their next meal was to come from. They knew their parents looked after that, and that so long as it is in their power the children shall never lack. To-morrow morning's breakfast costs them no thought.

And is my "Father in Heaven," who has begotten me and taught me to call Him "Father," going to deny His responsibility? Is He going to show Himself less worthy of the honoured name of "Father" than our earthly parent? Would I not be a foolish child to carry the burdens and charge myself with responsibilities that belong to Him as my Father? Let us learn to take into our hearts the comfort of the Name, "our Father," "casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you."

And now we may enquire, What is the responsibility of the children? The child's

place is obedience.

The Son of God was ever the obedient One. He came "not to do His own will, but His Father's." He "learned obedience by the things which He suffered." "He became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." And knowing all that obedience involved, He said, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God," and the exhortation to us is, "as obedient children," to "prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

The obedient child is the happy one.

One of the most important privileges of the children is the parental discipline. The child may not like it at the time—may fret under it, and kick against it even though it be necessary and wise and gentle. But in after years the benefit of it is better understood.

The Scripture is plain as to this precious privilege of those who are the children of God. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He

receiveth." The disobedient child is on a very different footing from the condemned sinner. The erring child is not dealt with by the sword of judgment, but by the "rod of instruction." Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest, and teachest out of Thy law"

VERY FAR BETTER.

"To depart and be with Christ, which is far better"
(A.v.) "To depart and be with Christ is very far better" (R.v.).—Phil. i. 23.

O GIVE each golden word its place*—
A missing note the chord would mar—
To sound the riches of the grace,
'Tis "pollo mallon," "very far."

In Him to live, bask in His love,
The heart is glad to know it well;
"To live and reign with Christ" above,
What mind can grasp, what tongue can
tell?

'Tis not, O Lord, that Thou art far,
And we must wander Thee to find:
Thou leadest where Thy people are,
A flock to follow close behind.

And thus I hover on the marge
Of ebbing Time and working day,
To "wake or sleep, to "keep Thy charge,"
Or rest with Thee upon the way.

In glooms of valley, or of storm,
Thy potent rod and staff are near;
Faith o'er the wave can trace Thy form,
Thy "still" and stilling voice can hear.

Thy mourners ever find Thee nigh,
With all Thy loved not far, in Thee;
And wait their welcome call on high,
"For ever with the Lord" to be,

For aye, and all where Thou are King, Creation's "Bright and Morning Star," Where all the stars of morn shall sing, 'Twas "good," 'tis "better very far!" †

* Prov. xxv. 11. +Gen. i. 31; Job xxxviii. 7.

[The above lines were suggested by this obituary notice, the departure of this beloved saint having been like a translation:—" October 31, at 5 Kenilworth Square, Rathgar, Elizabeth de la Cour, widow of the late James Bogue, of Cork, aged 82. 'Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better'."—Phil. i. 23.]

A FEW THOUGHTS ON THE "ART" OF PREACHING.

SIXTH PAPER.

COUNTERFEITED EMOTION.

IN the ministry of the Word nothing is more despicable than counterfeited emotion. The world's stage-player simply is what he professes to be—an actor—and no one is deceived. But, in the sacred work of preaching, the man who "puts on" the broken voice, as if he fain would weep, is wanting to appear what he really is not. It is a deliberate attempt to deceive. Yet it is to be feared that "working up the feelings" is one of the things which, in some quarters, are considered a desirable accomplishment for a preacher! As if dissimulation could work out the purposes of God! hypocrisy could do service for Him whose eyes are as a flame of fire! No, the "strange fire" of pretended pathos and manufactured tears shall never ascend unto God, nor be the channel of blessing to men. We cannot conceive of any man "sent of God" having recourse to such arts. He who feels he is not in touch with God may use these devices to gain power with men, and it is very questionable if even that end is reached. But he who is consciously under the power of the Unseen and Eternal has no need, as certainly he has no wish, to introduce the dissimulation of earth into the service of heaven.

IDOLISING GIFT.

This is a day of the itching ear. Among the saints there is a strong desire to listen to able ministry. This has begotten a tendency to what we may call the idolising of gift. That is a tendency to revere, or perhaps adore a man for his gift of utterance, no matter what the man may be in character and conduct. Now, a man's facility in the matter of utterance is not a part of his character. A painter may produce a splendid picture—even of Calvary itself—but that gives you no insight into what the man really is. Notwithstanding his fine picture he may be of a selfish and repelling disposition. And the public speaker—the artist who paints with words-may produce a splendid representation of the most sacred theme,

while his life and ways are antagonistic to the truths he heralds forth. Many seem to fancy that if a man can preach fluently and eloquently he must of necessity be a good man. There never was a greater delusion. God never tells us to esteem a man apart from character. It is not a man's cleverness we are to esteem, nor his eloquence, nor his ability. These are externals. You must go deeper to find the man himself. far as we see, the test to be applied is a very simple one. Abstract, as it were, the man's gift of preaching. Take away the mere externals for the time being, and see what is left. If there is so little left that the preacher would never have been heard of if it had not been for his "gift," then we humbly submit that he is nothing more than a speaking machine.

And it is surely an evil day for the Church when such preachers are pitchforked to the pinnacle of the temple of service. If the "gifted" preacher is a "good man," like Barnabas of old, if his manner of life spells "Christ," then it shall be our privilege to esteem him as one truly sent of God. When the Church is rejoicing in revival light and revival discernment, she perceives, as by an intuition, the ministry which comes from above, and will not be charmed by an imitation, let the charmer charm never so wisely.

PREACHING AND CONDUCT.

You may be a recognised authority in scientific matters and yet be an infidel. You may lecture on geology and be, at the same time, immoral in your own private life. Yet you may be reckoned a "savant," notwithstanding. That is to say, there are many things in which conduct has nothing to do with fitness. In the Christian ministry it is entirely different. There you cannot have fitness apart from conduct. He whoprofesses to be an ambassador from God to man must himself first come under the power of the truth he proclaims. messenger must be assimilated to his message. It is easy to see the futility of a temperance orator declaring the benefits of total abstinence while he is himself addicted to liquor. And it is as easy to perceive the futility

of one proclaiming the transforming power of the Gospel while scarce any transformation is visible in his own life. The world knows right well -- even the scoffing and unbelieving world—that Christianity is not a mere set of theories which you may hold in the same way as you hold the theory of the gravitation of bodies. The man of the world knows that Christianity is a life. wants to see, and he holds he is entitled to see, Christianity in the life of those who claim to have come under its power. It is a solemn thought that every one who stands forth to speak for God virtually says, "I have come under the transforming power of that almighty Saviour who saves to the uttermost, and takes the throne of the heart, and transforms the life."

SPIRITUAL CONDITION.

Perhaps the most important element in the preacher's equipment is his own spiritual condition. This is one of the fundamental rules of service, "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord" (Isa. lii. 11). I may have matter for any length of an address, and all the eloquence of an Apollos. But if there is a dead fly in the apothecary's ointment (Ecc. x. 1)—if I am not clean—my service is vitiated. Instead of being in the place of public testimony my true place is the secret place, to deal with God as to the cleansing of the temple. You may find men who can preach, no matter what their spiritual condition may be. We have heard of those who could preach just as well if there were no Holy Spirit of God! But he who has a conscience, and who has ever known anything of communion within the veil, cannot get on if there is sin in the camp. He knows well that it is only mockery to preach deliverance to the captives if he is himself in the house of bondage. While others are longing for the power of *eloquence* he is longing for the power of purity. Apart from that power he is like Samson shorn of his locks—weak as other

But let the self-judgment and the cleansing come, let him tread once more that path of purity which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen (Job xxviii. 7), and all is changed as by the stroke of a

magician's wand. A voice, as from the excellent glory, is heard—Christ is exalted, His beauty is seen, and people are made to feel—they know not how—that they have been brought very near to the gate of the upper sanctuary.

HEARD AT THEIR BEST.

Many préachers are heard at their best when they have only ten minutes or a quarter-of-an-hour in which to "deliver their soul." They are compelled to do without any introduction, and to avoid all mere "padding." They are into their subject with a single plunge. A few striking thoughts, crisply and clearly put, take a manifest hold upon the audience. And before preacher or hearer is aware of it the time is up. Usually the remark is passed, "Yon was a grand word." Yes, we fear there is more than one "fifty-minute" preacher who would renew his youth and have many a grand word if he were rigidly compressed within the bounds of a quarter-of-an-hour.

PERSONAL MAGNETISM.

What is known as "personal magnetism" has a great deal to do with effective ministry. If the preacher is an attractive personality, besides being apt in the Word, he wields a special power as a minister of Christ. When we remember that personal magnetism is just another name for beauty of character, we need not wonder why it is that some men's ministry is so effective, while the ministry of others, though not lacking in ability, seems to fail of its purpose. He who is deficient in the bowels and mercies known as personal magnetism is deficient in one of the greatest elements required in those who would win either saint or sinner.

LANGUAGE OF UNBELIEF.

We are not clear as to a preacher telling his audience how utterly useless is all his preaching if God does not work, and that if the blessing does not come down from above the meeting will be a complete failure. This is the language of unbelief in the guise of assumed humility. We know quite well that, if God does not work, nothing will be done. But why put it in the negative?

Why not confidently count on God working? If a preacher has a secret misgiving as to his call, or his condition, he is tempted to trace possible failure to the sovereignty of God. But the man of faith launches out into "the deep" of the promises, saying, "And I am sure that when I come unto you I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ" (Rom. xv. 29).

NOT OUR DOUBTS.

We are never called to preach our doubts. If a preacher has any of these he should tarry at "the back-side of the desert" until he can come forth and say, "I have believed, therefore have I spoken." The preaching of our doubts will never strengthen faith in others. Doubts should all be settled in the closet. He whom God sends will ever be found dealing in certainties, saying, "We speak that we do know."

THE TONE OF HOPE.

There may be the words of faith, and yet the tone of despair. True ministry has an air of victory about it. You will often perceive a preacher's faith even in the sound of his voice. Throughout his message there runs the predominant tone of hope, saying to the careworn and oppressed,

"Ye tempted ones, there's refuge nigh."

In the Gospel field especially we believe that effective ministry is ever characterised by this "tone of hope."

I now close these "thoughts" on this great subject. I trust they may be found helpful in the case of those who are seeking to do a little in the work of the ministry. If the great Head of the Church is pleased to bless anything I have said, unto His Name be glory. Amen. w. s.

HIS CARE.

I HAVE left my all to the care and providence of my Almighty Friend; He will manage for me better than I could for myself. My health, my circumstances, my family, children, and servants, are all under His government.

—WM. ROMAINE.

"UNDER THE SUN."

Ecclesiastes i.

THE book is written by Solomon, son of David, the greatest king, the wisest and richest man, the king with more wealth and honour than any before or after, and written in the seat of his greatness, namely, Jerusalem (see verse 1). He was the son of a king who knew God personally, and he himself declared God to be his God.

With this history of Solomon, it would be easy to imagine him the possessor of as great happiness as riches, wealth, and honour; but instead of a heart bubbling over, like David's in Psalm ciii., we hear the words, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." David, too, had said, "Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is, that I may know how frail I am Verily, every man at his best state is altogether vanity." But David's knowledge on this point was drawn from a different source than Solomon's.

It was from the consciousness of his own nothingness in God's sight; Solomon's was the result of satiety, and dissatisfaction born of failure to serve God with a perfect heart. That took the bloom off all he tried, and the pleasure from any service he sought to do, until his heart was made right again in God's sight. Hence the cry, "What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?" It was a dreary thing to look back to the dead and gone generations, and as dreary to look forward and feel that some day he, too, would end his life down here, and, in spite of it all, the earth would remain exactly the same in its renewal of seasons, &c. good, therefore, was it to do anything? The sun would rise and set, the wind blow, the rivers run, the miracles of nature take place exactly as before, quite unaffected by the birth or death of such a man as Solomon.

Everything was a burden—"full of labour"—he could not express it. His eye was still unsatisfied with seeing all the lovely things in nature and art; his ear still craved something more than the melodies and wonders

it had already heard. Perhaps his eye had been too dim to see God, for "Happy are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;" and perhaps his ear had not listened for the "still, small voice" that is so sweet and satisfying in its comfort.

He knew that nothing new was going to happen—"nothing new under the sun"—so there was nothing to look forward to.

How it would have quickened his listless pulses to have heard it said, "See, this is new." But the folly of it all was that, although things had gone on for generations in exactly the same way, no one seemed to remember it, but all thought discoveries were daily being made, and in the future, too, there would be the same lack of wisdom. Ah, it was all vanity.

Verse 13: Now he (Solomon) begins to explain a little of his life. He had found out that, though he was the wisest man living, even his understanding was limited, and this was sore pain to him. He had tried to work out all sorts of problems connected with daily life, but was baffled, confessing that this infinite craving in the human heart for knowledge is planted there by God, but left in this world unsatisfied.

He looked into all the works of man, and they were more than vanity—they were also vexation of spirit. The weary toil to earn the necessary daily food, the crippling of limbs, the young and old lives lost, maimed, or destroyed in the bitter struggle of the working poor, appealed to him and vexed his spirit. They were without number in the past, and would be without number in the future. Did God care? He said to himself he was different from other people, outside the race of man, as possessor of more wisdom, wealth, and honour than others, and all this sorrow appealed to him. What good was it all—what purpose of wisdom had God in connection with it. His own wisdom here failed him, and he tried to drown his questioning heart in frivolity and folly.

But the result was only grief and sorrow, till at last these despairing words were wrung from his lips: "There is no good in any knowledge under the sun; it only increases sorrow."

M. S. G. B.

NOTES FROM A YOUNG MAN'S BIBLE.-IX.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN.

THE EAGLE. THE SON OF GOD.

Chap. iv. 46.

TRUST in the dark. The first miracle of Cana was one of joy, this one was of life—not only—but to teach desperate trust in the bare word from Hislips, without any visible sign. You never can forget the first time. A perfect glow of joy! Six waterpots full! It seemed a lifelong supply, and the marriage joy filled your heart so full that it irradiated your life, and the bounteous supply of "good wine" from His presence brought a glory into your soul like heaven's song, and joy came down to earth. But now, it was trust. How often the Lord says "To-morrow" when He gives a promise (Josh. iii. 5); 2 Chron. xx. 16, 17; Exod. xvii. 9; Josh. xi. 6). "To-morrow" implies a night before the deliverance, a time in the dark when there is absolutely nothing to see. "The pillar of cloud went from before their face and stood behind Absolutely nothing between them and the sea; no cloud to guide. But this was advance; this was preparing for deliverance. Are you left without any cloud to guide yon? Trust—only go on at His bidding through the dark, and you will find a miracle waiting for you.

Chap. v. 6.—WILT thou be made whole? Put your will on God's side in everything, and leave to Him the responsibility of fulfilling in you and through you (2 Thess. i. 11, 12).

There are times when, if we are simply dependent on our feelings, we shall be ready to despair. Say, "I will to be only, always, all for Thee. I long for nothing so much as that Thou shouldst hasten Thy work of conquest within my soul, till every thought and feeling are brought captive to Thine obedi-In sorrow and trial all that can abide the fire must be made to pass through the We suffer as the loved one leaves our embrace. We suffer as we have to leave cherished surroundings, and venture, as the eagle's nestlings, on the untried air. We suffer as we have to be the means of inflicting pain on those who love us. We suffer as some creeping paralysis slowly cuts us off from the avenues of sense and life. But we learn obedience by the things that we suffer. When thoughts of rebellion and mistrust surge upwards in your soul, do not lose heart. Trust God to deal with them; you cannot master them, but God can. Only be sure that your will is as true to Him as the needle is to the pole. If we dare to believe in Him, our emotions and feelings will be won over.

In regard to sin: Horrid thoughts, vain imaginations, vile suggestions, noisome pestilence indeed. Nor can we be held chargeable of sin so long as the spirit cleaves its way through all, tossing the suggestions aside as a ship the foam-crested waves. Will to be free, will to walk with God in stainless robes, will to deny flesh, and crucify self. In proportion as the will of man is brought into unison and harmony with the will of God there will be growing peace and growing power.

Verse 39.—"Search the Scriptures." The context here shows plainly that reading, and even studying, the Word is not enough. We must read with a mind made up to believe and obey, at all costs, whether the Word teaches, exhorts, or rebukes. We must search in order to know Him and become like Him in every respect. We must search ut tabula rasa, that is, with no preconceived ideas. We must apply the Scriptures to ourselves. It is well to search the Scriptures, but if the Word is to have any power over us, we must be searched by it.

Chap. vi.—The two aspects of the Church. 1st, Feeding the multitude with Him. 2nd, Toiling in rowing, waiting for Him.

Verse 47.—Certainty. One man takes hold of Christ, as it were, with a drowning man's grip; another but touches the hem of His garment. But the sinner who does the former is not a bit safer than he who does the latter. The feeblest faith in Christ eternally saves, while the strongest faith in aught beside is but the offspring of a deceived heart—but the leafy twigs of your enemy's arranging over the pitfall of eternal perdition. Said an anxious soul once to a servant of Christ, "Oh, sir, I cannot believe." "Indeed," said the preacher; "who is it that you cannot believe?" It is not a question

of the amount of your faith, but of the trustworthiness of the person in whom you repose your confidence.

Chap. vii. 12.—"Some"—"others." The sun calls forth miasma and malaria from the swamps it shines upon; but the fault is not in the sun, but in the land. The very same rays call forth fertility and abundance from the cornfield.

Verses 37, 38.—Not one river, but many —an Amazon, a Mississippi, a Nile, a St. Lawrence, an Ohio of blessing! Rivers flowing forth from you over desolate, desert places. Claim it—claim it—be content to be channels. God has oceans of blessing to pour in these last days on the arid places of the world. Offer yourselves as channels, that rivers may flow from you. That filling has to be repeated many a time, for the drainage and leakage of earth tell upon one. Christ handled the Word of God in such a way as to stir up in others a disposition to read and think of it. In John vii. 37, 38 He grouped two or three phrases from the Old Testament. This is followed by quite a run of passages in which we read of different persons who were led to consult the same authority - John vii. 41, 42, 51, 52, John viii. 5, &c.

Chap. viii. 1.—" Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives." There He lay all night, under the blue Syrian sky, no roof covering Him save the starry canopy of heaven, in communion with His Father in the glorious home above. Early in the morning, as the sun was shining forth in its brightness, Jesus entered the Temple, and the verse in which He makes the lofty claim, "I am the Light of the world," was very strikingly illustrated in the incident which immediately preceded the utterance. Christ is the Light which discovers the deceiver and hypocrite. He is also the Light which pours comfort and gladness into the heart of the poor sinner; the Light of the world exposing all its ghastliness and woe, and bringing at the same time healing on its wings for all the heavyladen and sin-stricken ones. Only the Perfect One who came to bear our sin and to cleanse it could pronounce judgment, and He did not do it. Now and here He has come not to judge men, but to save them;

therefore, while He does condemn sin, He does not condemn the sinner.

Verse 24.—"If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." Wrapped up in them as in a deadly-poison robe, self-woven, and from which there is no escape for ever.

Verse 29.—" Not alone." That is the most finished character that leans on the love of kindred while it may, and when it may not, can stand erect in the love of God; that shelters itself amid the domesticities of life while duty wills, and when it forbids, can go forth under the expanse of immortality and face any storm that breaks, and traverse any wilderness that lies beneath that canopy.

DAILY BREAD.

"N Y children always have a piece of bread and butter as soon as they wake in the morning, and it keeps them from getting cross," was the significant reply of a mother when a friend remarked how good her two small children were while being bathed and dressed, &c., each day.

If we, God's children, always had a portion of heavenly "Bread," with the "fresh oil" of the Spirit, should we not be better fitted to cope with the trials of daily life without irritability, and thus glorify our Father more than we often do?

M. M. D.

Questions and Answers.

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

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 are most thankful to all our friends who have endea-

We are most thankful to all our friends who have endeavoured to help us by replying to Questions, but the Editor hopes that Correspondents will study brevity, and when too long he will take the liberty of "using the scissors" freely in preference to rejecting Answers, on account of their length, in which there may be points of value.

REPLIES ARE INVITED TO THE FOLLOWING:

Christians and their Civil Rights.—In cases of persecution, injustice, oppression. assault. &c., from which protection is clearly granted by treaty or law, is it for a Christian, regardless of rights and privileges, to meekly suffer himself to be wronged, or ought he to apply for the protection legitimately his due? In case of theft, should he notify existing authorities, or merely commit his case to God?

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.—Please explain the term "Kingdom of God" in John iii, 5. Is it synonymous with the term "Church," as taught by some?

JESUS IN THE MIDST.—Please explain Matt. xviii. 20. Is Jesus in each assembly now, as in John xx. 19, or in the midst of all gathered ones as one body?

PHILANTHROPY.—Does the example of Christ warrant believers to engage in philanthropic work?

A FULL REWARD.

QUESTION 426.—Please explain 2 John 8: "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward."

Answer A.—The Apostle writes beseeching the group of believers he so loved not to be carried away by false teachings, lest he (and other-co-labourers with him) should lose, by their defection, the things he had wrought for, and fail of a full reward in them. Note the "we" as referring thus to John and other true labourers.

Answer B.—Several of the authorities who have collated the ancient manuscripts for us tell us the verse should read: "Look to yourselves, that ye destroy not the things which ye have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward." One has well said: "God does not ask me to set the world right—He knows I cannot do it. He does not ask me to set the Church right-He knows, also, I cannot do that; but He does ask me to see to it that I am myself right." Thus the Apostle asks the elect Lady and her children to look to themselves—that they should continue in Christian love, and continue to walk according to His commandments; and, further, that she should not bestow her hospitality upon evil teachers, nor shew courteousness unto them, lest she and her's should spoil their previous testimony, or be injured by their evil teachings, and thus be damaged in their faith and their adherence to the truth.

The apostolic exhortation implies his desire that there should be a continuity in their behaviour and in their faith, that their present and future hospitality and good works, faith and truth, be added to the past, so that their reward might be according to a full summing-up of their entire Christian history.

J. s.

Editor's Note.—Three words in this passage which are not affected by various readings may be emphasised—work, loss, and reward. We find the same three words in 1 Cor. iii. 14, 15. Taking the two passages together, it seems plain

that the loss is not that of salvation or eternal life, but the reward or recompense for faithful service at the judgment-seat of Christ. And we thus are shown that in order to the obtaining of a full reward, nothing is more necessary than to abide in the truth, avoiding and maintaining a rigid separation from teachers of fundamental

RESPONSIBILITY OF ELDERS. Acts xx. 28.

Question 427.—To what extent are overseers responsible? Does the flock which they are to feed embrace all Christians, or only those

gathered to the Name of the Lord?

Answer A.—The first responsibility of elders is to take heed to themselves. Incalculable mischief is sometimes done by elders trying to shepherd the flock, while they themselves are not spiritual—are not walking with God, and so

are not in harmony with Him.

There can be no reasonable doubt that all the Christians in Ephesus were gathered together unto Him, and all in fellowship with each other; but now in modern times few towns, if any, are in these happy circumstances. The apostolic exhortation to them is to take heed to all the flock in which, or among which, the Holy Spirit had made them overseers or bishops. What flock? The Church of the Lord, which He had purchased with His own blood. This excludes no redeemed ones, although they may have gone into some

sect or party, or called themselves by some name or cognomen not known to the New Testament. The difficulty, however, is that many of the saints will not submit to be shepherded by bishops, made such by the Holy Spirit.

Although in a large town or city no one could possibly shepherd all the flock, nevertheless the commission of Acts xx. 28 puts the divinely-made bishop under an obligation to care for and help all the saints he can reach. Yet no doubt those in the same assembly with him have a first claim upon his care, his help, and his prayers. J. s.

Editor's Note.—It is obvious that shepherd care, as well as any other ministry, can be exercised freely and to full edification only in an assembly which comes together after the Scriptural order. But the responsibility which rests on the elders to exercise this care over the flock is not based upon the order of gathering, but upon the fact that they "belong to Christ." said, "All Mine are thine," and "thine are Mine"; and the under-shepherd who has the mind of Christ, the Great Shepherd of the sheep, will in his measure so regard all who are His.

The Lord said to Peter, "Feed My sheep; feed My lambs," thus emphasising the fact that they are HIS, and therefore to be cared for and fed whatever their position or condition. If they cannot be reached, or will not have it, that is their responsibility, and love will seek to reach and help even those who don't want to be followed

by a true shepherd.

THE THRTY-FIRST YEAR OF THE WITNESS.

I N continuing the issue of The Witness for 1901 we purpose (p.v.) adhering to the object for which it was begun thirty years ago, viz., to present the Truth, in its variety and breadth, with definiteness and moderation, keeping back nothing that we deem to be profitable, yet seeking to present it in such a spirit as to give no unnecessary offence to anyone. We would again record our gratitude to God for help vouchsafed in the past, and for blessing given through the truth ministered in the pages of The Witness, of which many of the Lord's people in various lands have communicated their testimony and thanks, to our joy and encouragement. During next year, amongst many others, we hope to have the following papers:

Revised Notes of Addresses on Christ Crucified, Risen, Glorified, Coming, and Reigning. Also, occasional Original Articles by the Editor.

Expository Papers on Romans VIII., by Mr. W. H. Bennet, of Yeovil.

Short Studies on Bible Geography, by Mr.

Matters of First Importance, by Mr. E. Venn. Articles on Subjects of Interest, by Messrs. W. H. Bennet, Wm. Collingwood, Dr. Case, Messrs. G.

Adam, Wm. Shaw, Max Isaac Reich, George F Trench, Franklin Ferguson, and many others.

Shorthand Notes of Addresses by Dr. Neatby. Messrs. Henry Heath, James Wright, Robert C. Chapman, George Müller, Max Isaac Reich, and others.

As well as Reviews of profitable books, Answers to Questions on a variety of subjects, Intelligence from all parts, Missionary Reports, Correspondence, BIBLE STUDIES, Original POEMS, GEMS OF TRUTH, &c.

We desire the continued assistance of those competent to write on Scripture subjects, and of those who send in Answers to Questions, and shall be thankful for the prayers of all who love the Lord Iesus, for wisdom and grace to continue this service, and for increased blessing thereon.