

The Believer's Magazine.

A Monthly Journal of
Ministry of the Word of God,

*Bible Study, Expository and Practical Notes, with
Questions and Answers on Biblical Subjects.*

EDITED BY

John Ritchie.

New Series—Vol. 4.

Thirteenth Year,
1903.



Kilmarnock:

John Ritchie, Publisher of Christian Literature,
And through all Booksellers.

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THE BELIEVER'S MAGAZINE.

WORDS OF CHEER FOR 1903.

"Be Strong and of a good courage, *fear not*" (Deut. xxxi. 6).
"Be Strong and of a good courage . . . *I will be with thee*" (" 23).
"Be Strong and of good coueage, *and do it*" (1 Chron. xxviii. 20).

ON the threshold of another year the Lord would greet His pilgrim people with this thrice-repeated word of holy cheer. He knows that they are often hungry and thirsty, often tried and tempted in the scenes through which they pass, oftentimes hard pressed in the multitude of conflicts in which they must needs engage, for the honour of His holy name. Sometimes His ways, pleasant and peaceful though they be, are trod with slow and sluggish step. The powers of darkness seem so strong, and evil makes so many and so gigantic strides, compared with the apparently slow progress of the kingdom of God, that when faith's eye becomes dim to things unseen, the temptation is to give up the appointed path as if it were nothing. It is just at such an hour that "the still small voice" is heard speaking in the soul, the words, "*Be strong* and of a good courage, *fear not*." The way is the Lord's, and His also is the kingdom and the crown. The final triumph of Jesus Christ is as sure as the word of promise can make it, and to all who walk *with*, live *for*, and labour *in* the Lord, the victory and the full reward is sure. The presence of the Lord—the sure promise of the Master, "*I will be with thee*"—is enough for every need. Let the desert be ever so barren, the enemy ever so mighty, the Lord rich in grace, the Lord strong in battle, is more than an all-sufficient portion

for His people. To Him they look: upon Him they lean. Thus they become of "good courage," and fear no evil. They walk on in strength Divinely given: they run the race with unwearied step: they know that the presence of the Lord is their safeguard, and that no evil shall overtake them under the shadow of His Almighty wing. Then His *Word* and *Work* become as delightful as His *Way* to all who are strengthened by the sense of His continual presence; made strong and of "a good courage" by the enjoyment thereof. There's will be the daily going forth, anointed as with fresh oil, to cherish lonely hearts and gather in the perishing, as the days are going by. Let us then, beloved fellow-pilgrims and servants of the Lord, stand girded afresh at the opening of another year, full of holy courage, with our armour fully on; our hearts strengthened by His *Word*; our feet ready to run His *Way*; our hands clean to do His *Work*; His grace our sure resource; His *Word* our only guide; and His *power* our strength for labour, and conflict with the foe. Furnished thus, we shall go forth to serve Him; to gather in the spoil, and to crown Him Lord of all.

Girded by Almighty power,
Faith beholds the tempest lower,
Faith awaits the conflict hour,
Sure of victory.

Clad in armour of the light,
Strengthen'd by the Spirit's might,
We shall put the foe to flight,
Firm our ranks shall be.

THE SEVEN GOLDEN LAMPSTANDS ;

OR, THE CHURCH IN TESTIMONY.

Revelation—Chapters I., II., III.

BY ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

SYLLABUS OF SUBJECTS.*

The Unveiling of Jesus Christ. The Seven Lampstands. Jesus in the Midst. The Seven Stars. The Mystery.

Threefold Application of the Seven Messages:—

First: Prophetic Panorama of the History of Christendom.

Ephesus—The Churches of the Apostolic period.

Smyrna—The period of the Pagan persecutions.

Pergamos—Union with the world-power and its con-

Thyatira—Rome. [sequences.

Sardis—Protestantism.

Philadelphia and Laodicea } The real and the spurious.

The former up to, and the latter continuing beyond the Coming of the Lord Jesus for His Saints.

Second: Positive instruction to the actual Assemblies addressed.

Third: Guidance throughout the Dispensation, as to the individual and mutual responsibilities of the Churches of God.

“THE testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy,” and we should utterly fail to grasp the much needed instruction of the “mystery of the Seven Golden Lampstands” if we did not perceive that their relationship to Him who walks in their midst is the key to the whole subject. If, therefore, we would rightly understand the messages to the seven churches in the second and third chapters of the Revelation, we must first consider the vision of Jesus Christ which John saw, and which is recorded in the first chapter.

Let us begin with the title of the book. For this book—unlike the greater part of the books of the Scriptures—has a Divine title given to it. It is not a little remarkable that when God has given a title to the book, man should go out of his way to give

* A Chart, designed by Mr. Holiday, illustrating the panoramic teaching of the Seven Churches, in regard to the course of Christendom, will appear in our March issue.

it another; for whereas God calls this book, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ,” men will persist in calling it “The Revelation of St. John the Divine.” Probably most of us know that the word Revelation, or Apocalypse, means “Unveiling.” Through God’s goodness to us, we with unveiled faces are enabled to look; and here in this book God has unveiled the glory of the Lord Jesus for us to behold. At the time the Lord Jesus was down here upon earth His glory was veiled, and no man beheld Him unveiled except Peter, James, and John on the mountain of transfiguration; while after the Lord Jesus was risen from the dead, none but disciples saw Him at all, and even they did not see Him glorified. But we note further that this book is called “The unveiling of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him,” and while it is also given to us for our profit, for our help, for our instruction, it is, first of all, God’s gift to His own beloved Son. God has granted this unveiling to His beloved Son during the time in which He is saying to Him, “Sit Thou at my right hand until I make Thy foes Thy footstool.” I love to link together the two Psalms—the second Psalm and the 110th. In the second Psalm, when God brings again the First-begotten into the world, He says—“Ask of Me and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance.” The Lord Jesus was entitled to that. He had humbled Himself to death, and one of the direct results of that was that the kingdoms were to be given to Him; and in raising Him from the dead the Father says to Him, “Ask of Me and I will give it Thee.” But the Lord Jesus has not asked for it yet, because the Father also said to Him in the 110th Psalm, “Sit Thou at my right

hand until I make Thy foes Thy footstool;" and as the perfectly obedient One from first to last, He does not claim at once that which God owns His title to, but willingly carries until God's time for giving it shall have come. When that time comes, then every eye shall behold Him; and that seems to be the direct force of those words coming in where they do, "Behold He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall behold Him." It will not be then simply an unveiling given to Him to be communicated to His servant, and by His servant to all His saints. It will be an unveiling which all shall see and know, and which shall bring judgment upon His enemies; but, meanwhile, while the Lord Jesus is still occupying the place of patience at God's right hand, this unveiling is granted to Him, and being given first of all to Him by the Father, He gives it to us.

This leads us to notice a passage in which we have to make a correction. It is in the ninth verse. In the Authorised Version it reads, "I, John, who am also your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ;" but in the Revised Version it is more correctly given—"In the tribulation and kingdom and patience, *which are* in Jesus." You will observe that these three things are put together, not the tribulation separated from the other two, but the three as three consecutive steps. At first sight it may seem strange that the kingdom should be interposed between the tribulation and the patience. We should rather have supposed that the kingdom was the final thing; but the Spirit of God teaches John to say, "I, John, who am your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience," and I believe

that order is exactly explained by the comparison of the two Psalms I have referred to. First the tribulation; then, after the tribulation comes the kingdom, the absolute unquestioned right of Him who had done all the Father's will even unto death. But, though as to its natural course, regarding the claim of the Lord Jesus upon it, the kingdom follows immediately after the tribulation, there comes that other word from the Father, "Sit Thou on My right hand." The Father who said, as He raised Him from the dead, "Ask of Me and I will give Thee the kingdom," said also, "But do not ask it yet, continue in patience until the appointed time." So that is the order in which it is put, an order which seems contrary to what we should have expected, but which perfectly harmonises with what has actually taken place, and that is the order for us as well as for our blessed Lord; for John says, I John, who am your brother and companion in these three, and these three in this order; first the tribulation, next the kingdom, and thirdly, the patience; for the patience is to be exercised in the strength of the knowledge of the glory that is to come.

The Lord Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He came from God and went to God, laid aside his garments; and, having girded himself with a towel, poured water into a basin and began to wash His disciples' feet; and it is only as, in actual experience, we are learning the fellowship of His sufferings, and are knowing in our own souls that which God has laid up for us as heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ, that we shall be able to walk in the patience that is in Jesus. This, then, is a word that is of special value to us when

we are misunderstood, despised, rejected, wrongly blamed and found fault with, but all the time waiting for a day yet to come, when the truth shall be made manifest and the hidden things of darkness shall be brought out to light. That is why we have the special promise in the third verse, "Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand." It does not say, Blessed are they that *understand*. It is "Blessed is he that *readeth* and they that *hear* the words of this prophecy and keep the things which are written therein." *Keep*, in the sense of laying up in their heart, for it is not so much a question of obeying the things that are written therein. It is not a book of instructions, a book of commandments. Of course, I do not mean that incidentally it does not give any, but that is not the special character of the book.

There seems to be a reason why God did not add the words "and understand." I am not suggesting that it is not also blessed to understand. Thank God for any measure of light or understanding that He gives to us upon what may seem to be the darkest and most perplexing passages in the book. But this verse tells us there is a special blessing in the reading of it and laying up its words, apart from any mention of understanding. I do not think the reason is far to seek. Remember we are living in a day when God is hiding Himself. I do not mean hiding Himself from our souls, but from the world. He does not put forth His power, or work miracles such as the Lord Jesus performed when He was here upon earth. Though God may work through His providence, though He has all the forces of nature at His disposal and He

makes everything accomplish His will, yet men in their blindness can see nothing but natural forces set agoing some long time ago and by some power of whose origin they know nothing. God is not compelling them by their eyesight and the use of their senses to acknowledge His intervention in the things of men. They are willingly ignorant of what God has done in the past, and therefore do not acknowledge Him in the present. But here God lifts up the veil and shows what will be when He no longer hides Himself in that way; when, beyond question, He will show Himself as the God of judgment. It is the preliminary to the moment when the Lord Jesus shall rise up from the right hand of God and come forth to take the kingdoms of this world, and they shall all become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ. The preliminaries, I say, to that moment are all given us in this book, and what marvellous preliminaries they are! God who hides Himself to-day will show Himself then in the most unmistakable manner. Men may gnaw their tongues and blaspheme the name of God, but they will know that God is working, even though in their hardened hearts they still rebel against His working; and it is no small matter for us to be brought, as we are in this book, face to face with the powers of the coming day.

THE CAUSE OF BARRENNESS.—If the Church would but look to Christ, her living Head and loving Lord, instead of to the arrangements of men and the appliances of the world, she would have a different tale to tell. But if we, by our unbelieving plans and efforts, quench the Holy Ghost, need we marvel if we are left to prove the emptiness and barrenness of all such things?—C. H. M.

PRAYER LIFE.

By GEORGE STEINBERGER, Stuttgart.

THE soul of prayer life, is the love which is shed abroad in the heart of every believer by the Holy Ghost (Rom. v. 5). Because prayer is a hidden work, it must be born of the pure love of God, else it is impossible to engage in it with faithfulness. It is easier to work faithfully, than to pray faithfully ; for there is much that helps to keep us up to the mark in our work, which does not come into consideration in relation to prayer.

He only can pray, in whom the Holy Spirit dwells (Rom. viii. 26-27). The Holy Spirit alone is the Spirit of prayer. Only through Him can effectual prayer ascend. Through Him we receive prayers from above. For the prayers which are to ascend on high, must have come from above. God must be able to lay a matter on our heart. Not need, but God must dictate our prayers. Moses allowed himself to be led to help his brethren by need instead of God ; therefore, he fled as soon as difficulty came (Exod. ii. 11-15). For, as a rule, human feelings hold out until opposition commences, and no longer. God must be able through His Spirit to impel us to pray for a certain thing, because just then His time has come to give it to us. Daniel, urged by the Holy Ghost, searched in the Book of the prophet Jeremiah, to find out how long the captivity of Israel was to last. And as he noticed this time was drawing to a close, he began with prayer and fasting to plead with God for the return of His people (Daniel ix.). Very often it is rather ignorance than unbelief which holds back the answer. One wants to obtain something from God by prayer,

without receiving a commission, or at least an earnest of it. The disciples received a most definite earnest for persevering prayer from the Lord in the words—"Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, *not many days hence*" (Acts i. 5). This gave them joy and power for continuing in prayer.

He only can pray, who is taught of the Holy Ghost, and has been led by Him into the thoughts of God on His kingdom. In Rev. xxii. 16, we see a company called the "Bride," who is so made one with the Spirit, and so led into His mind, also in prayer life, that she shares His cry in prayer, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

He only can pray who has a priest's heart, who has learned to treat in a holy manner the unholiness of others ; who does not treasure up their errors in his head to pass them on, but who takes them up on his heart, and bears them in prayer into the sanctuary. Priests bear the sins of others into the sanctuary, and not to their fellow men ; where, as a rule, much is added to the original sin (Psa. xxx. 19-21). Not a falcon's eye has the Bride, but a dove's eye! The devil does not pray ; he is the accuser of the brethren. According to Rev. i. 5, Christ died to make his redeemed ones, praying ones. We are redeemed to become intercessors. The place granted us by the blood of Jesus is, before the Father's face, there as kings and priests.

He only can pray, who makes God's Word his own. He who does not do this, soon loses his definiteness in prayer, or soon has no more words to pray with. God's Word and prayer belong together, like inhalation and exhalation. Every prayer must be born of the Word, and move on the lines of Scripture. "It is written!" Under this rock must the praying one, above all

things, be covered, if the poisonous darts of the enemy are not to touch him.

He only can pray, who knows what meaning his daily difficulties have for him. Every difficulty must become an occasion for penetrating deeper into God's riches of grace. Difficulties are to be food for our faith, not material for defeat. Most of the prayers recorded in Holy Scripture were born out of great difficulty.

He only can pray, who lives continually in God's presence. Thus we abide in that holy equipoise in which we have God, and are not obliged to seek Him.

—o—
BY AND BY.

MY heart is always singing,
From morning until night,
For Christ is always bringing
To me some new delight,
As o'er His Word I ponder,
His matchless love to trace—
Which makes the longing fonder
To see Him face to face.
The gold, the silver fieth,
Like birds unto the sky ;
My deathless treasure lieth
In yonder *by and bye*.

The desert's very dreary,
And Satan's very strong ;
And I am often weary,
Which makes my spirit long,
While reading o'er the story
Of joys that cannot die,
For that bright day of glory—
That longed-for *by and by* ;
When Christ shall bid me enter
His presence and His place—
Himself the Head and Centre
Of glory, as of grace.

And so His Word I treasure,
As wealth of richer worth—
Of greater bound and measure
Than any wealth on earth :
The many-coloured bubble
Of this world's fleeting things,
The little bits of trouble,
Which Satan always brings,
To plunge the soul in sadness,
And shadow Jesus' love,
Can never touch my gladness,
It's fountain is above.

When'er there comes a sorrow,
Which causes me to sigh,
A *ray* I like to borrow
From yonder *by and by* :
A ray that always renders,
A succour for the smart,
And brings the coming splendours
More closely round my heart.

I watch the moments glidings,
While hope lights up my eye—
As harbingers—as tidings
Of that bright *by and by* :
When I with countless legions,
Redeemed from Satan's thrall,
Shall enter on the regions,
Where " God is all in all."

O bliss, beyond all telling,
It's coming I descry ;
My heart with joy is dwelling
Upon that *by and by* :
When Satan, sin, and sorrow
Shall all be done away,
Then haste thrice-blessed morrow,
When Christ shall have the sway.

—o—
The examples of faith in Heb. xi., are not given us to admire only, or even to copy, but to excel.—R. C. CHAPMAN.

NOTES OF BIBLE READINGS

BY THE LATE ROBERT C. CHAPMAN.

MANY have heard of the Bible Readings, which for so many years were carried on by Mr. Chapman in his house at Barnstable to which large numbers of the Lord's people came to share the deep things of the Word of God, and by means of which many were refreshed and strengthened. We hope to give to our readers from time to time brief notes taken by a friend who long attended them. As has been truly said, "It is difficult to put in writing what was given on these occasions." It was not only the words, but the wonderful sweetness and power in which they were spoken, that carried life and spiritual refreshing to the souls of all who were present. May these fragments "gathered up" be used by the Holy Spirit to same end.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD AND HIS SHEEP.

The Gospel of John begins with Christ as "The Word"—not as the Shepherd. The Word tells out all the heart of God. The mysteries of His grace will take eternity to unfold them all. The Word becomes flesh: the Lamb is seen, and the Lamb becomes the Shepherd. This is illustrated in Psalm xxiii., where He is seen walking through the valley, the utmost sorrow of death.

"The Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep" (verse 11). It is His life, and it is His as Son of God. But it must be laid down. We see the type in Genesis, chapter xxii.—the Father and the Son are there. On Moriah, God said to Abraham—"Lay not thine hand upon the lad;" but at the Cross "He spared not" His own Son (Rom. viii. 32). His only alternative was

to sacrifice Him, or leave us in our sin. God had no way save one by which He could redeem us; that was by the blood of the Cross.

"The door" is redemption. By the death of Christ the door was opened.

"The sheep." This name is frequently given to believers in the Word: it denotes fellowship. The sheep first hear His voice for salvation, and after for obedience, to follow in His steps.

"I am come that they might have life." We have life out from Christ, as Eve from Adam. Our life is unspeakably above the highest angel, being derived from Christ in redemption.

"The porter openeth." God's satisfied justice now opens the way to life and endless glory with Christ.

"Other sheep," such as Cornelius and ourselves, not of the Jewish fold.

"Saved, and go in and out." Access to all the fulness of God. Angels deem it an honour to remain waiting on those who are heirs of such salvation. What obligations belong to those who have been so richly blessed, and brought into a place of such nearness to God. How deep the doom of all who despise such grace. Surely Satan is less guilty than man, for he never had the opportunity of rejecting God's salvation. And as we begin with the Lamb and the Shepherd (John i. 29), so we end (Rev. vii. 14-18; xxii. 3).

My Shepherd who for sin aton'd,
When crucified and slain;
With God the Father sits enthron'd,
And soon will come again.

He is to-day and yesterday,
And evermore the same:
He is the new and living way—
How excellent His Name.

HOMELY WORDS TO GOSPELLERS.

NEVER since Pentecostal days, was there so much energy spent, so much effort made in spreading the Gospel of the grace of God among the sons of men, as there is at this present time. The whole world is virtually open to the Lord's gossellers. Countries, where for ages heathen darkness has reigned, are opening their gates to the light, and lands, where for centuries Rome has ruled with iron hand, are throwing off the Papal yoke, and God is fulfilling His purposes in sending His servants with His gospel to gather out from every nation a people for His Name. In our own favoured land there is a moving among the dry bones. In many a priest-ridden parish, where a dead and damning Ritualism has lulled generation after generation to the pit, sinners are awaking as from a long sleep and crying out for the gospel in plain and simple words. Ceremonies and religious tomfoolery no longer satisfy the cravings of their souls. The plain man preaching at the street corner is more attentively heard, than the surpliced priest reciting his intoned prayer. The gospel proclaimed by the working man who knows and can testify to its saving power, is more welcome than the polished essay of the cultured unconverted parson. Attempts to discredit the Bible may tickle the ear and help the devil to deceive the votaries of science, or the recluses of the Academy and the Theological Hall, but they have no interest to the rank and file of humanity who earn their bread by the sweat of their brow, who face the hard facts of daily life, and feel their need of something more than science offers to help them to bear its daily burden.

It ever has been and still is, from the ranks of the "common people," that the gospel's richest harvests have been won. "Not many wise, not many mighty," listened to the words of the great Gosseller: few of the Pharisees were among His followers, but "the common people heard Him gladly." So it is, and so it will be to the end. To reach them now while the day lasts: to ring out the glad tidings full and clear: to carry the gospel to those who will not come to hear it, is and ought to be, the great, the chief business of all God's gossellers—especially of those who have been called and fitted by God to give their time and strength to this honourable service. To "seek and save the lost" was the great Soul-gatherer's daily work. In lone deserts, on storm-tossed vessels, by river sides, in market-places, everywhere and at all seasons, His first servants told the story and gathered the first sheaves of golden harvests. Whole churches "echoed forth" (1 Thess. i. 8) the Word of life, "striving together" for "the faith of the Gospel" (Phil. i. 28), supporting by their prayers and substance the servants of God in distant fields, while making it the chief business for which they existed to carry forward the gospel standard to the "regions beyond." There was no overlapping, no building on other men's foundations, no treading on each others heels, nor need there be now. The field is the world. There are open doors all around. God is willing to help. He is ready to bless. Sinners are dying. Who will reach them? The Gospel is His saving message. Preached by men who are right with God, who stand in His counsel, clean vessels through whom the living stream can flow, it will never fail to effect conversion.—J. R.

LECTURES ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

BY WILLIAM LINCOLN, OF BERESFORD, LONDON.

PART VIII.—JOHN THE BAPTIST.

NOW, briefly to look at the contrast we have in John the Baptist to the Lord. "And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?" This seems to have been a formal, official, influential deputation from the headquarters of religious society. There was nothing like that to the embosomed One, nothing. Whilst a poor, human sinner had honour heaped upon him—the embosomed One received none. "And he confessed, and denied not: but confessed, I am not the Christ." It is as if they were willing to receive him as such, willing to receive any rather than the real. And it was grace given to John to make such a noble confession. And I think God impliedly commends him; we may infer it from the somewhat peculiar expression.—"He confessed and denied not, but confessed." So he had the choice of two—the world's esteem, in thinking him to be the Christ; or God's praise, in denying and confessing. And do you think he was a fool in choosing the praise of God before the praise of mortal men? The loudest praise ever lavished upon any one by mortal men is as nothing to be compared with the smile of Jesus, and the praise of God. "And they asked them, What then? Art thou Elias? And he said, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, "I am a voice." Not *the* voice. And the word "am" the Holy Ghost omits. He presses it so

much about Christ, but leaves it out about John. "I—a voice." Now, remember that the Holy Ghost has called Jesus "the Word," and now He says of John the Baptist, I—a voice." Thus do we get a distinction between the embosomed One and John the Baptist. We think with words; it is impossible to think without them. God had thoughts, we may be sure, and Christ was there. Christ is the outcome, the thought expressed, the word spoken. So, too, is He called Wisdom, the word unuttered. Christ is the Word, and was then in the bosom before He came out from God, in the beginning. But a voice has no existence until it has come out; a word has. I think first with words, and then, when I have thought, I may tell it in my own time or no. I love John the Baptist, for in comparison with Christ he put himself in the right place. Would to God that His servants did so now. People love to magnify men, to cling around what they can see. Oh, to put the Lord in His place. "Worship thou Him."

PRIESTLY SERVICE.

AS of old there was no service so high as that which was fulfilled by the priests of Israel, so now there is no service so high either on earth or in heaven, rendered by created beings, as the spiritual sacrifices offered by saved sinners, when as a company of priests they meet to bring their offerings to God. For while the locality of their gathering is upon earth, their service can only be offered in the holiest place in heaven, whither by faith each one must pass in spirit. The service of priesthood then, which is the prerogative of every real Christian, is far higher than the service of ministry.—R. J. MAHONY.

The Bible Annotator.

THE BOW AND THE CLOUD.

Bow in the cloud (Gen. ix. 13)—Mercy.
 Cloud without a bow (Luke xxi. 7)—Judgment.
 Bow without a cloud (Rev. iv. 3)—Glory.

THE HANDS OF THE LORD JESUS.

Were pierced for our sins—(Psa. xxii. 25).
 Are uplifted for our blessing—(Luke xxiv. 50).
 Filled for our need—(Exod. xxviii. 41, margin).
 Opened for our supply—(Psa. cxv. 6).

THE BELIEVER'S HOPE.

Is not the uncertain thing of men, but the well grounded expectation of what God has promised. It is said to be

- A Good Hope (2 Thess. ii. 16).
- A Living Hope (1 Peter i. 3).
- A Blessed Hope (Titus ii. 13).
- A Purifying Hope (1 John iii. 3).
- "Christ in you the Hope of Glory" (Col i. 27).

JOTTINGS AND MARGINAL READINGS

From the Bible of the late Wm. Lincoln.

THE TRIUNE GOD.—God is three in one and one in three. The Name (not names) of the Triune God is, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (Matt. xxviii. 20). All that is out of God is from the Father; all that can be seen of God is in the Son; all that can be felt of God is by the Holy Ghost.

SATAN.—Now he is the world's "god" and "prince"; its religious and its political head; his sphere at present is in the heavenlies (Eph. vi. 12). At the Lord's coming for His saints, and their rapture into heaven, he will be cast down to earth (Rev. xii. 9, with Rom. xvi. 20). At Christ's appearing with His saints he will be cast into the abyss (Rev. xx. 3), where during the millennium he will abide. In a short interval during which he will be loosed, he will make a final effort to lead men from God, but his career will be suddenly ended, and he cast into the lake of fire—his eternal doom (Rev. xx. 10).

ATONEMENT AND REDEMPTION are both taught in Scripture. Atonement is Godward; Redemption manward. Atonement is satisfaction rendered to God; Redemption is of persons. The former eyes the offended majesty of heaven; the latter, sinners who are the unworthy objects of God's love. Because of the former and its results, the Gospel is preached to every creature. It is the because of the latter

that all the redeemed are drawn to Christ. Much contention there has been, between those who have accepted the one or the other, while both are equally the truth of God.

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The Young Believer's Question Box.

What am I to understand by the words—"Made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints" (Col. i. 12). Is it for heaven? Yes, and present "qualification"—as the word "meet" implies—for our share of the present portion of the saints in light. Present possession in communion, as well as future glory.

Do you consider the book—"What would Jesus do?" suitable to give to a soul seeking after salvation? It is a religious novel, very irreverent, and as might be expected from its title, the LORD Jesus and His claims are ignored. Such a book may tickle religious worldlings, but it is utterly useless to lead a lost sinner to Christ. The Holy Ghost does not use 'novels' as instruments in leading sinners to the Saviour. He uses "The Truth."

*Would it be according to the will of God for a believer to join a Temperance Society? It is the will of God that all believers should be "temperate in all things" (1 Cor. ix. 25), and this includes a great deal more than abstinence from strong drink. No one who sees the ruin wrought by drink can fail to have a compassionate heart, or to be willing to stretch forth a helping hand for the deliverance and salvation of its victims. Not by political agitation, or by joining himself to associations largely composed of the unconverted, but by going forth *directly* to the drunkard with the Gospel which is God's power unto salvation, and which, as we all know, has been the means of changing thousands of drink's victims—not into reformed drunkards—but into born again children of God.*

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Answers to Correspondents.

YOUNG BELIEVER.—The Authorised Version of the Bible was published in 1611; it was, as the Revisers tell us, "the work of many hands and of several generations." The Revised Testament appeared in 1881, and the Revised Bible in 1885. As the titles tell, the latter two were not re-translations, but only revisions, and there are differences of opinion as to their worth.

M. B.—The hymn beginning "Sweet to trace His toiling footsteps" is one of a series of very rich and spiritual pieces translated from the German of Ter Steegen, Tauler, Suso, and others, by Mrs. Frances Bevan. For depth and unction, we know of none like them.

J. E. H.—There is nothing in the Word, so far as we know, to warrant the common notion that the Lord was born on Christmas day. Scripture records the fact and the place of His birth, but not the day. Christmas is a tradition, the Christianising of a Pagan festival.

JOHN D.—The books you name are unsound. They teach what is called "Conditional Immortality": in other words, that the ungodly are annihilated at death, and therefore cannot be punished for sin and Christ-rejection. The fact that their errors are well garnished by many accepted truths concerning the Lord's coming and kindred subjects makes them all the more dangerous. Young and unsuspecting Christians should be warned against them and those who sell them from house to house.

A. H. D., GLASGOW.—There is much wisdom needed in dealing with one who has been overtaken in a fault (Gal. vi. 1), so that he may not on the one hand be driven further away from God by harsh treatment, nor on the other made to think lightly of his sin. Only those who are "spiritual," can perform such a delicate operation as to "restore" such. It is not here, sin of such a character as necessitates church discipline, but rather the godly pastoral care of those whose ministry is to "heal" that which is "broken" (Ezek. xxxiv. 16).

H. D., STIRLINGSHIRE.—No believer who goes in and out among sects, or sectarian missions, hiding the truth which he professes to know and own, is a fit person to "guide" an assembly of God's saints, whose very existence is a witness against all sects. One of the Scriptural qualifications of an overseer is, "Holding fast the faithful Word" (Titus i. 9). This one lets it go, and by his evil example teaches others to do the same. One "newly come to the faith" so acting, may need to be borne with and taught the truth, but until he *learns* and *does* what the Word so fully and clearly teaches, he has no claim to be regarded as an overseer or guide among God's saints—a work which only those who have the full confidence of their brethren can rightly share. It is doing one

who lacks the Divine marks of a shepherd a grievous wrong, to bolster him up in a false position, in which sooner or later he will cause trouble.

T. M., AYRSHIRE.—"Church property" is as a rule a troublesome handful, and the less the assemblies of believers have to do with it the better. We do not attempt to give an opinion as to what the legal aspect of the matter you name may be, but surely if one or more attempt to seize, or by craft acquire, and hold as their own personal property, or for the carrying out of their own purposes, what was provided and largely paid for by others, they come perilously near to being guilty of the sin of covetousness and of following in the way of Achan. It would be wrong to seek the arbitration of the civil courts. Rather wait upon God and keep your cause before Him. Sooner or later, He will make manifest the roots from which such actions spring. He frequently permits such things to happen, in order to bring to light what would otherwise have been buried in the tent, driving God out from the midst of His people. When spiritual health and condition are restored to the souls of God's people, it will be an easy matter to square accounts regarding stones and mortar, but if the former be wanting, and a strained condition exist among those concerned, it will be like "washing the cup and the platter" to begin to rectify results while the cause remains untouched.

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Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION I.—Is a letter of commendation to be regarded in every case as a sufficient guarantee that the individual bringing it is sound in the faith, godly in walk, and one such as should be received to the fellowship of the assembly where he presents himself?

QUESTION II.—Is any believer at liberty to give a letter of commendation to another, without seeking or receiving the fellowship of his brethren? It is often done, and is a common source of trouble?

ANSWER A.—Personal commendation was given by the Apostle, to Phebe (Rom. xvi. 1), concerning Epaphroditus (Phil. ii. 25), John Mark (Col. iii. 10), and others, and one going to a distant place either to reside, or on a visit, should bear or have sent before, the commendation of some who are personally known to the saints in the place. As a rule, such a commendation would be sufficient.—W. M.

ANSWER B.—A commendation is valuable or otherwise, according to the confidence placed in those who give it. In the case of a communication from an unknown place or signed by unknown persons, there might be need for further inquiry, or if it comes from a quarter in which it is known little care is exercised in receiving, it might be needful to personally examine the bearer as to his conversion, doctrine, practice, &c., especially so, if he be one likely to take a prominent place in the assembly. This would not be equivalent to rejecting the commendation—as is sometimes said—but seeking to ascertain further information than it gives, in order to a hearty reception and a full recognition in service, of the bearer. In regard to the giving of such a letter, it seems comely that elder brethren guiding the saints should do this, and that they mention to the assembly for their information, where their fellow-saint has been commended to, in order that they may, *if in the locality, call upon him*, and otherwise remember him.—J. H.

ANSWER C.—As a rule, the commendation of one assembly, is accepted as sufficient ground for confidence in receiving to another. Hence the desirability of all who go to places where they are unknown by face to the saints, taking with them a letter of commendation from the assembly where they are, whether their visit be brief or to permanently reside there. It should be continuously kept before believers, especially young ones and others lately brought into the assembly, that in order to maintain godly order, and prevent imposters and others from creeping in on their own testimony, or encouraging assemblies to receive carelessly, all who are visiting or removing should supply themselves with letters of commendation, which some of the brethren guiding the saints will always be glad to give. For confidence, it is well that it should be understood that they and not all and sundry give such letters.—J. B.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—A letter of commendation given to a believer going from one assembly to another is accepted by the saints in the place to which he goes generally, without question, so long as they have confidence that godly care is exercised by them in regard to those whom they receive. It is well to understand that such a letter does not commend all the bearer's ways or guarantee his godly conduct. He may be one who will need

special shepherd care, or firm ruling; or, if happily he has a large heart and a willing mind to serve, either in the Gospel or among the saints, but is naturally backward, to give him encouragement and welcome as a helper in Christ (Rom. xvi. 9). This—although not included in his letter—might, and surely should be communicated privately to those who have godly care among the saints, so that they may be able to give to, and receive from the newcomer, that spiritual help which the fellowship of saints is designed to nourish. It would surely be unseemly for young or inexperienced believers, or others lacking discernment, to give letters of commendation; it would be wholly wrong for any clique or party to do so apart from the knowledge of those who have shepherd care. It is also well to remember that an assembly by receiving one does not thereby homologate all that the assembly from which he comes may be, either in its practice or spiritual condition, while on the other hand no commendation from a company unsound in the faith, or whose existence is in division, would be received by any Scripturally-gathered Assembly. In the case of an unknown person bearing a letter given by an individual, it can only be regarded as a personal testimony, and not as the assembly's commendation of one going from its midst.

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Questions Requiring Answers.

We invite the help of those to whom the Lord has given understanding of the Scriptures and wisdom, in the answering of the following questions, bearing upon matters of real difficulty to honest and inquiring minds. Answers should be brief, concise and clear, leading to the Word of God. We desire to have all sides of the truth, plainly stated, and duly balanced.

3.—Can any of the Lord's servants give help in the Word as to the Scriptural and godly way of conducting Gospel meetings? There seems to be a lack of "grip" in them and a tendency to degenerate into "Religious Services," with a clear or clever address, rather than the definite object of seeing sinners saved, as in former years?

4.—Is one who absents himself for months from the Assembly, and after being often visited, refuses to give any reason for his absence, at liberty to return whenever he thinks fit without anything being said regarding him to the saints. If not, what is the proper course to take with such a person?

THE WORD OF GOD AND FABLES.

NOVELTIES in religious teaching and practice seem to be the fashion of the times. This is true in its fullest measure in the world's religious systems, where itching ears have long been turned away from the truth and yielded to the hearing of fables, the supply of which is ever equal to the demand, and is likely to be, so long as colleges are open to infidel professors and theological chairs to rejecters of the foundations of the faith. By this means the stream is poisoned at its rise, and a generation of preachers sent forth to become the public instructors of the people, who have abandoned the faith that they are expected to preach, and who make it their chief business to disprove most of the truths they have publicly and solemnly avowed they believe and promised to teach. The effect of this upon the children of God who are under its baneful influence, and in measure upon all who fraternize with it is, that the supreme authority of the Word of Truths loses its hold—first, inwardly, as the means of spiritual subsistence and the standard by which motives of the heart and thoughts of the mind are to be tested, and soon outwardly, as the power by which the life and ways are to be controlled individually and collectively, in the family, the church, and the world.

This abandonment of the Truth and its rejection as the Divine Standard is quickly followed by a rush for novelties, such as we read existed among the Athenians, who spent "their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear of some new thing" (Acts xvii. 21). The man who has some new-fangled theory to tell, or some unheard of mode of attracting the people will always

be sure of his congregation, and for the passing moment will earn the applause of the fickle multitude, while the plain-spoken man who has, Jeremiah-like, the Word of God glowing as a fire within, may at times seem to be forsaken and his message out of date, even among his brethren in Christ. But then, this is just what God has foretold would be (2 Tim. iv. 3), and what He is using to separate the chaff from the wheat and the precious from the vile. "They are of the world, therefore speak they of the world and the world heareth them" (1 John iv. 5), is the Divine decree concerning all such preachers and their hearers. While of the children of the Kingdom it will ever be true "Thy words were found, and I did eat them, and thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart" (Jer. xv. 16), inwardly, while concerning the outward life and walk they will confess "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path" (Psalms cxix. 105). Let the world have its fables, the religious world its novelties—its carnal attractions and frivolities in what it calls Christian work—it has nothing else with which to charm the multitude, but let not those who know and have proved the power of God and the word of the truth of His Gospel, turn aside to vanity, or copy the fashions of those who know not God. This is the chief temptation of the hour, and many of the Lord's people are falling into it. Many are slackening their grasp of the Divine weapon, the all-sufficient Word—and consequently making less use of it—while the Holy Ghost, who is here to guide and control God's business upon earth, and to be the great Administrator of all things pertaining to God's church and kingdom, is virtually ignored by human arrangements.

THE SEVEN GOLDEN LAMPSTANDS ;

OR, THE CHURCH IN TESTIMONY.

Revelation—Chapters I., II., III.

BY ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

PART II.

ONE of the marks of the child of God in Hebrews vi. is that he has "tasted the powers of the age to come." The men of this world only know the powers of the present age. How they boast of what they know of them! How they glorify themselves in the fact that they are able to harness some of the powers of this present age, the forces that God has stored up here in natural things, and to turn them to their own account and use them for their own ends. But they know nothing of the powers of the coming age. There it is not electricity, or hydraulics, or steam, accomplishing man's will; but we see God acting in almighty power, without the intervention of any such agencies as these, and the will of God being accomplished in a moment. Here in this book we see him whom we know as the "god of this world," bound with a chain by a single angel who comes down from heaven to do the will of God. Here we see such forces as we have never seen at work yet, accomplishing God's will. Here we see the waters turned into blood, not only on a limited scale, as in the time of Pharaoh, but on an enormous scale. We are face to face with the power of God put forth, without any hiding of the source of that power. And is it not a good thing for us who have to meet the most dangerous and insidious forms of unbelief of these last days—for it is not now with the grosser forms of blasphemy that we have to contend, but with the culture and education of men in high places, who are denying God in every department of

His work, and, above all, are denying Him in His own Word—is it not a good thing for us, a mercy of God to us, that He has lifted up the veil, and brought us face to face with the powers of the coming age?

We may not be able to put things into their place, we may not be able to trace out the order of the events and say—This belongs to that, and these two passages run parallel to one another. A great deal of it may seem puzzling, but, as we read and hear and lay these things up in our hearts, we are made to realise that the living God, whenever His own time comes for taking things into His hands, can and will accomplish His will in the days to come as He has in the past. God is now acting in long-suffering grace, and the long-suffering of God is salvation to poor, guilty sinners, and has been salvation to every one of us who have believed on the Lord Jesus. But even in the exercise of that long-suffering, the power of God is not any less. God has everything under His control. He is seated upon His throne, and He orders and controls everything, and makes all things to accomplish His will even now. But it cannot be seen that He is doing so as it will be in this coming day, and therefore it is a blessed thing for us to read and to hear and to lay up the words of the prophecy of this book. I believe it would be an unspeakable good to every one of our souls if we would read this book of the Revelation, more diligently and more constantly, if possible, than any other part of Scripture; till we were living in the presence of these things. Then we should see these first three chapters in the light of all that follows. We should see the relationship of the Lord Jesus to the assemblies of His people down here, in the light of that which will be, when

the veil is no longer only withdrawn to the faith of those who believe, but when it will be withdrawn altogether, and His glory will burst upon the world, completely destroying the Antichrist and compelling His foes to acknowledge His authority and kingdom.

In this way we learn that, although God desires his obedient Son to postpone His claims to the kingdoms and their glory, He grants Him, meanwhile, this unveiling. It is not, as we have already seen, an unveiling before the eyes of all the world. That shall be when He comes with clouds and every eye shall see Him. But here, in this Book, He is unveiled, in anticipation, to the eyes and hearts of all who believe on Him. And, as we consider the wonderful vision of His exaltation and glory when He is seen in the midst of the throne in chapter v., followed by all the tremendous results of His taking the book and breaking its seals, we are reminded that the One to whom all this glory and praise belong, is the same whom John saw in the midst of the seven golden lampstands in chapter i., and who, in chapters ii. and iii., sends His messages of grace and instruction and rebuke to the Seven Churches of which those lampstands were the symbols.

Chapters ii. and iii. belong to the time of His patient waiting. But even here the veil is lifted that we may see Him in the light of His coming glory. And it is the time of our patience, too; yet we know also that the sufferings shall surely be followed by the kingdom. And if the waiting time of patience must intervene, what joy to us to behold His glory already in this unveiling, and to know that He counts us as partakers with Him of the tribulation and kingdom and patience.

Although I do not propose in these

articles to go beyond the consideration of the messages to the Seven Churches, it is absolutely necessary, in order to a right understanding of these messages, that we should recognise the division of the whole book into three parts as indicated by the Lord Himself. In chapter i., verse 19, He says to John, "Write the things which thou has seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter" (literally, "after these things.") There can be no doubt as to the meaning of the words, "the things which thou hast seen." John had just seen the seven lampstands and the Lord Himself walking in the midst of them, while He held the seven stars in His right hand. This vision, then, beyond a doubt forms the first division of the book. It may not be so immediately obvious which portions belong to the second and third divisions; but a little careful consideration will make this plain also. The word "hereafter" at the end of verse 19, is given as the translation of the two words, *meta tauta*, "after these things." If we turn to chapter iv. we find that the first verse begins and ends with these same words, *meta tauta*. "After these things I looked, and behold a door was opened in heaven; and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me, which said, Come up hither and I will show thee the things which must come to pass after these things." The two intervening chapters were occupied with the messages to the seven Churches in Asia. These, clearly, are present things, or "things which are." But we could scarcely imagine the Lord calling them "The things which are," or making them a distinct division of the book, if they were not intended to serve any other purpose than to guide or warn those seven Churches.

On turning, however, to the 20th verse of chapter I, we find that, when bidding John to write the things which he had just seen, the Lord adds the words "the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands." If then, these things were mysteries, they have a hidden symbolic meaning. They are, in fact, a panorama presentation of the whole course of Christendom, from the days of the apostles until the church shall be taken away and the remaining mass of false professions shall be spued out the mouth of the Lord. In this way while the actual existing seven churches could be spoken of as "things which are," that which they represent is emphatically "*the* things which are.

Next month I hope to show that there are many grounds for accepting the above view of the meaning of the messages to the seven churches. But I will only point out now how entirely it harmonizes with the indication given in chapter iv. I, as to where the second division of the book ends and the third begins.

NOTE.—Without any desire to enter into controversy, I think it necessary to refer to the fact that Dr Bullinger has recently issued a book, being a re-print of articles of his in *Things to Come*, in which he takes a totally different view of the matter. He asserts that these messages were not addressed to seven churches then existing, but to synagogues of believing Jews, which will come into existence after the Lord has taken away the Church. As this theory cannot stand in view of the division of the book into three sections by the Lord Himself, Dr. Bullinger essays to show that no such division was made. And this is how he does it. He says,

"John was instructed to write what he had seen. It is clear, therefore, that this first chapter is the introduction to the whole book, and consequently, like all other introductions, is written, or supposed to be written, last of all. For at the very commencement (in i. 2) it is said of John that he "bare record of the Word of God (*i.e.*, as we have seen, the prophetic message), and the testimony of Jesus Christ (which he bore), and of *all things that he saw.*" If this chapter, then, be not written after John had seen these things, the words are without meaning; for in that case John had as yet seen nothing. Verse 19 is part of this introduction, and therefore the words, "which thou sawest," are used in the same sense as in verse 2. John had seen, or was supposed to have seen, all the visions of the Book when the command to write was given to him."

It would be difficult to imagine a more complete perversion of the case than is here presented. Chapter I. is not an Introduction to the Book at all, as the least care in reading it will make plain. Verses 1 to 8 are introductory; but in verse 9 the apostle tells us of the actual commencement of the series of visions that were shewn to him, and from that point he goes on continuously. It is impossible that the words "which thou sawest" in verse 19 should be taken in the same sense as "all things which he saw" in verse 2. The latter words form part of the introductory description of the whole book. But in verse 19, at the close of the first vision of Himself in the lampstands, the Lord bids John to write the things he has seen, besides some other things yet to be made known to him, and then proceeds to make these other things known. The Dr. says that

if John had not seen all the visions of the Book before he wrote this chapter, the words of verse 19 are without meaning, as in that case John had seen nothing at all. So that Dr. B. considers that the vision of the Lord Jesus walking in the midst of the lampstands is "nothing at all." No one will deny that John had seen the whole of the visions before he wrote chapter I, or indeed, before he wrote all the rest of the book. But this has nothing to do with the matter. What Dr. Bullinger implies is, that John had seen all the visions before the Lord spoke the words recorded in verse 16. It is lamentable to see to what lengths we can be led, when the exigencies of a false theory, tenaciously held, blind our minds to the most obvious facts. In view of the recent and wide-spread publication of Dr. Bullinger's writings on this subject, I have felt that it was incumbent on me to point out their erroneous character.

REST IN GOD.

THE child leans on its parent's breast,
Leaves there its cares, and is at rest ;
The bird sits singing by its nest,
And tells aloud
Its trust in God, and so is blest
'Neath every cloud.
It has no store, it sows no seed ;
Yet sings aloud and doth not heed ;
By flowing stream or grassy mead
It sings to shame
Men who forget, in fear of need,
A Father's name.
The heart that trusts for ever sings,
And feels as light as it had wings ;
A well of peace within it springs :
Come good or ill,
Whate'er to-day, to-morrow, brings,
It is His will.

THE IMAGE OF GOD, IN CREATION AND REDEMPTION.

AN ADDRESS BY T. D. W. MUIR, OF DETROIT, U.S.A.

LET us read Genesis i., 26-27. In this first chapter of Genesis, the title "God" is used thirty-two times. In each case it is *Elohim*—the Triune God. In prior verses which we have read, we do not find a council held about anything. In verse 1, it is simply, "In the beginning GOD created the heavens and the earth," and following on that, "God said, Let there be light": "God divided the waters," and "God saw that it was good." But now an important part—the most important, shall I say—of His creative work is about to be wrought, and there is a council held. The Triune God, acting in fellowship, brings forth the man, who is to be in His own likeness. "And God said, Let us make man in *our image*, after *our likeness*. . . . So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them" (verses 26-27). Whatever that was, we see in it the perfection of God's wondrous workmanship.

Now, turn to chapter v., where we shall see a similarity, and yet a contrast. "In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made He him. . . . Adam begat a son in *his own* likeness, after *his image*" (verses 1-3). The man who came from the hand of God was God-like, so God could walk with His creature, and His creature with Him. But what a change is here implied. Here you have an image: but it is the image, not of God, but of a fallen man. Between chapters i. and v. we have man's ruin, man's sin, and therefore, instead of him being now in the likeness of

God, he is rather in the likeness of the one who has deceived him.

When Eve gave birth to Cain, she said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord" (iv. 1), or, as the reading really is, "I have gotten a man—the Lord." She had heard the promise of God, when He cursed the serpent (chap. iii. 15), had evidently believed it, and was looking for its fulfilment, possibly thinking that she would give birth to the One who was to bruise the head of the serpent. But alas! the one she bore was the seed of the serpent, and he it was who brought home to her the enormity of the sin she had brought into the world, and the awful consequences of it, for he imbrued his hands in his own brother's blood, and became a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth. Thus the Divine image was defaced, and has never in nature been regained.

Next, turn to some New Testament Scriptures. Look first at Romans i., 20-23. We have heard it said, that if man is left to himself, he will gradually rise up from Nature to Nature's God. Alas! it is the opposite. Man sinks lower and lower; there is no "ascent of man" in Nature, it is all descent. We may safely say, there was one period at least in which the whole world knew God, when Noah, with his wife, his three sons and their wives, came out of the ark. They had seen the evidences of His power, proved the results of His grace, and were brought through the judgment into the renewed earth. But we do not go far on in man's history until we find him acting in defiance of God, building the tower of Babel, where God judged and scattered (Gen. xi.). Idolatry and gross darkness followed, out of which God called Abraham (Joshua xxiv., 1-3). But what became of the Gentile world? Did it get

nearer to God? Ah no! Men started on a course, but it was a going downwards all the time. They knew God, but they did not like to retain God in their knowledge: that is, their conceptions of God lowered from what He revealed Himself as the living and true God, till they were worshipping the reptiles of the earth. That is man without a revelation from God, and his conception of the image of God, which is but the outcome of his own heart. Go where you will, see the so-called deities or gods that the heathen worship, and try to figure out what kind of characters they are supposed to represent, and what do you find? Is there one that indicates the thought of love? No; but rather lust, anger, cruelty, and all sorts of vile passions, depicted in their faces, and avarice in their very attitude. The thought of God so loving the world as to *give* His only begotten Son, never enters the heart of man in nature. The most enlightened and civilized on the face of the earth have no true conception of what God is, apart from what He has revealed Himself in His Son, and in His Word; in other words, in *Redemption*.

As in creation, the Triune God was occupied with man, so in redemption. Now through Redemption by the blood of Christ, and by Regeneration of the Spirit of God He restores His own image lost by sin. Look at Col. i., 13-15: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son: in Whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is *the image of the invisible God*, the firstborn of every creature." Into a scene where every man and woman naturally bears the image of

the serpent, comes the One who is declared to be "the image of the invisible God": the One who so thoroughly knew the heart of God, that His life as well as His words told Him out. In the work of creation and its upholding, we see God's almighty power. In the sunshine, rain and fruitful seasons, we see the evidences of His goodness. But these things do not make known to me what is in the *heart* of God, or how my need can be met as a rebellious sinner deserving God's wrath and judgment. Who then can tell me? The angels could testify as to the magnitude and magnificence of God's glory. But that is not enough. I need someone from the very heart of God, and the only One whose place was there is the only begotten Son. He came, He lived, He died: man hated what they saw in Him, and murdered Him. But He is risen again, and what is the result? "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, *who is the image of God*, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. iv., 3, 4).

The title given to the devil here—"the *god* of this world"—conveys the thought, that he is not only desirous of keeping men from being saved, and doing all he can to accomplish it, but to give them something to satisfy them which is not the gospel of Christ, who is the image of God. Man may have any religion, or all the religions that the world can give, and he would not care, but he will compass sea and land to keep sinners from receiving Christ. Look again at Colossians, chapter iii., 9, 10. "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his

deeds: and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge *after the image of Him that created Him.*" We are now back to speak of creation, but it is the *new* creation. God created man in His own image: the devil came in and spoiled it, and the image that man has borne since has been that of the devil, and the enmity and malignity of the devil is what is natural to him. But God brings in the gospel of Christ, and the sinner believes it. And what takes place? He is created anew: the Divine image is restored. The man who had in his very soul the image of the devil, receives the Christ of God, who is the image of God, and henceforward the devil sees in him the image of God, and hates it. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creation" — not merely a "new creature," but part of what God is yet to have manifested in this world. We belong to Him by virtue, not of the first creation only, but of the new creation. This is true of every child of God.

Thus born of God, His image in us, there is progression. May we know it? "Now the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty. But we all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed *into the same image*, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. iii., 17, 18). Having been "renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him," what is the next thing for the saint to do? Just to go in for being like Christ *practically*. The liberty spoken of here, is not a chance for everybody to talk, or to do something, but it is liberty to gaze on the unveiled face of the Lord Jesus. As I gaze upon Him, and am occupied with Him, I become more and more like Him. I am

"changed into the same image." And again—"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose" (verse 28). This verse is a general favourite with God's people. Things may not be just as we would like them—this thing and the next is going wrong, but they are all working together for our good. Many a child of God has found this passage to be an "easy chair," as an old lady used to call it. But that is not all that is in it by a long way, although that is all some get, or want to get out of it. God has a *purpose* before Him in connection with me, and the things that are occurring in my life from day to day are working that purpose out. The disappointments, as well as the things that I enjoy, are "working together" according to the purpose God has in view. And what is that purpose. Let Him tell us: "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be *conformed to the image of His Son*, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren" (verse 29). We might have been satisfied with being saved from hell, and given a place in heaven, but this would not have satisfied the heart of God. God had an object in view—a plan, according to which He is to conform every child of His, and the present little things that are happening in our lives are being ordered by Him with this end in view—*our conformity to the image of His Son*.

Like the potter who takes a piece of clay and grinds, rolls, pounds, and bakes it in the oven. The clay, if it could speak, would say, "What a hard time I am having." But what is the end he has in view? The potter has before him a model—perhaps that of a chaste and beautiful

cup, to adorn the table of the king. And God, our own God, has taken us in hand, once poor, miserable, shapeless sinners, with the image of the devil upon us, and He is going to conform us to the image of His Son. What a wonderful purpose! And blessed be His Name, it cannot fail: it shall be consummated. "As we have borne the *image* of the earthy, we shall bear the image of the heavenly" (1 Cor. xv., 49). Thank God for the prospect! We shall *see* Him as He is, and we shall be *like* Him for ever.

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TEACHING BY EXAMPLE.

AT a recent Conference of believers, where there was liberty to declare the whole counsel of God, one of the speakers solemnly remarked—"If Christian parents who profess to have been separated from the world's corrupt religious systems by the power of the truth of God, begin to trifle with what they once professed to own as the commandment of the Lord, and go back to those systems to hear popular preachers, or please worldly friends, they need not wonder if the generation following turn their backs upon the path of separation altogether as if it were of little account. Some have found out this to their cost when it was too late, and are mourning to-day over their Christian sons and daughters who have abandoned the path of separation altogether, and have gone back to the world's religion to which they, by their trifling with the truth of God led the way. No doubt the root of all this in most cases is worldliness—a desire to be upsides with others, to be thought well of, and considered large-hearted by religious worldlings. Others seek what is

called a "good berth" for their sons, and husbands in "a good position" for their daughters, which, in order to obtain, they must needs send them to mingle with those who despise the path of companionship with a rejected Christ, and ultimately they abandon it altogether. Alas! for those parents who are seeking to minimise the importance of the path of separation to God, and to build again the things that they once so fully left and taught others to leave. In a few years at most the full fruit of their sowing will appear, and to them it will be a harvest of disappointment and sorrow." Would to God that Christian parents were more exercised over the force of these solemn words. "Teaching by example" is the most powerful form of instruction we can impart to our households, and will have the most far-reaching results for good or evil, on those who are silently but surely being formed and fashioned under its influence day by day.

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HEAVEN'S STARS SHINE IN THE DARK.

WE never see the stars in their fullest brilliancy, unless there be a dark night and a cloudless sky. Moonlight will blot out the half of them and more, while sunshine hides them completely. So it is, with the heaven to which faith lifts up her eyes, for all her delights are there. The stars of this heaven cannot be seen in their full glory, unless looked at in a dark, dark night. Earthly prosperity often annihilates them to vision; and even a very little of the world's good things makes them often dim. But a Lazarus on the pavement sees them in all their beauty.

JOHN DICKIE.

SERVING THE LORD BY "PROXY."

A CHRISTIAN man, the best of whose years had been spent in "making the world," lay upon his dying bed. He had no doubt as to his salvation, for he was resting on the atoning work of Christ alone for that. But his heart had lost its early love and joy, and he sorely lamented his mis-spent life as a Christian. Lying on the confines of the eternal world, he saw things in a different light from what he had seen them in the busy hours of health, and to one who visited him he said—"Brother, my life has been a mistake. I have been trying to serve the Lord by *proxy*. Giving an occasional pound to help forward Gospel work at home and abroad; generally in my place on the Lord's Day; interested more or less in what I heard or read of others serving the Lord, but, oh! I had little or no heart for His service myself. I see it all now, but I can never undo it." Then, grasping his brother's hand, the dying Christian said, with great earnestness—"Do not try to serve the Lord by *proxy*. His word to all His redeemed ones is—'Go work to-day in my vineyard.' He wants yourself, your heart, your life, your strength, and had I to begin my life again, by His grace, I would give Him mine." That last message has a word to us all. There is no serving of the Lord by "proxy." He desires the love of the heart and the activity of the hand to be given, and less than this He does not accept as service. The mere "surplus" of a life spent according to the course and fashion of the present world, is not regarded in the heavenly courts as service unto God. He desires and claims the heart's devotion of His own.

The Bible Annotator.

BRIEF OUTLINES OF GOSPEL SUBJECTS.

THREE FUNDAMENTAL FACTS.

Redemption (1 Pet. i. 18).
Resurrection (1 Pet. i. 21).
Regeneration (1 Pet. i. 23).

A THREEFOLD REST.

Rest for the Sinner (Matth. xi. 28).
Rest for the Saint (Matth. xi. 29).
Rest for the Servant (Mark vi. 30).

THREEFOLD JUDGMENT.

Of the Sinner (Heb. ix. 27).
Of the Son (Heb. v. 5-11).
Of the Servant (2 Cor. v. 10).

THREE CLASSES IN HELL.

Neglecters (Heb. ii. 3).
Rejecters (John xii. 48).
Despisers (Acts xiii. 39).

FOUR STEPS IN ISAIAH VI.

Convicted of Sin (ver. 5).
Cleansed from Sin (ver. 7).
Consecrated to God (ver. 8).
Commissioned by God (ver. 9).

FORIVENESS OF SINS IS

Provided by Grace (Eph. i. 7).
Procured by Blood (Col. i. 12).
Proclaimed in the Gospel (Acts xiii. 38).
Possessed by the Believer (1 John ii. 12).

NOTES ON BIBLE SUBJECTS.

From the Margin of Mr Wm. Lincoln's Bible.

SEAL AND EARNEST.—In two characters is the Holy Ghost known to believers. He is the Seal marking God's claims upon them (Eph. i. 13): He is also the Earnest (Eph. i. 14) marking their claims upon God, through grace and blood.

SAVIOUR, PRIEST, AND BRIDEGROOM.—These three offices of the Lord Jesus Christ together give a complete view of Him in all His work for us. His work as a Saviour was finished at the Cross. His work as Priest commences where this ends, and consists in the daily application of His finished work to all the needs of His own, to bring them into the holiest where He is. So the delightful consummation of His work as Priest will be His future work as Bridegroom, to receive them to Himself for ever.

GOD AND FATHER.—In two great relations does God stand to Christ—to wit, God and Father (see John xx. 17: 1 Pet. i. 3). And because we are associated with Christ, therefore in these identical relations does God stand to us (see Eph. iv. 6, Gal. iv. 6). Such, too, are the names by which we should address Him.

PERFECTION.—This word, as found in the New Testament, is the translation of two utterly different words in the Greek. *Teleois*, as in Col. i. 28 with Heb. v. 14: and *Katartizo*, as in 1 Cor. 1-10 and 2 Cor. xiii. 9-11. The former looks at our individual likeness to Christ: the latter our being well fitted into the body—that is, of our each knowing and keeping his proper place in the assembly of God.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

What is the "valley of the shadow of death" (Psa. xxiii. 3) to a believer? "The valley of death-shade," through which the believer is now walking, is the world darkened by the shadow of the Cross, the place of rejection to the Christian, as to his Lord, through which he passes, ruled by the "rod," upheld by the "staff," and accompanied by the Shepherd, who is ever with him, till he reaches "the house of the Lord," his eternal home.

How could "disciples" say, they had not heard "whether there be any Holy Ghost" (Acts xix. 2)? The Revised Version reads—"We did not so much as hear whether the Holy Ghost was given," that is, as He was promised by John (see Matt. iii. 11, whose baptism alone they knew), and later by the Lord (John xiv. 26: xv. 26: xvi. 7-13), and as He came at Pentecost, to indwell believers as the Spirit of sonship (Gal. iv. 4), the seal of accomplished salvation (Eph. i. 13), and the earnest of glory to come (Eph. i. 14). They had not heard the "Gospel of their salvation," hence they knew not of a glorified Christ and a descended Spirit—a condition unique in itself, and without analogy in our day. We would not say a man was a disciple of Christ at all, if he had no knowledge of the Gospel, and if he lacked the Spirit of Christ (see Rom. viii. 9).

Answers to Correspondents.

BETA.—As a help to the spiritual and practical reading of the Pentateuch, we know of nothing

better than C. H. M.'s notes. They have helped thousands; we heartily recommend them.

W. J. M., CO. TYRONE.—The Word of God is clear as to the responsibilities and duties of Christian children (see Eph. vi. 1-3; Col. iii. 21). And it needs to be remembered, that these commandments of the Lord are not limited to the years of childhood, as some would seek to limit them. They apply to Christian young men and women whose parents are still with them. It would not be rendering "honour" to your parents, to reject their counsel for that of a stranger. You do not "requite" them (1 Tim. v. 4) for their long years of self-denying care, if you turn your back upon them and look out for yourself alone. Nor will God ever bless any who adopt such a course. We have never known any young man or woman succeed in life, or enjoy the blessing of the Lord, who neglected or treated unbecomingly their Christian parents. You may depend upon it that no counsel is according to God, no path, however garnished by fair prospects, is the path of the just, which requires or involves disobedience to parents. If you have set out on such a course, your wisdom is to confess you sin to God and retrace your steps as quickly as ever you can, no matter what the cost. It is surely better to *come* down than to give God the trouble and you the pain of being *brought* down, which all who set aside the plain commandment of the Lord, sooner or later must be.

J. B., GLASGOW.—It is quite easy for a few officious men clambering for place, to give a bad savour to an assembly's testimony, whereas they may not represent it or its mind at all. It has been frequently found, that some who are fond of signing circulars and posing as leaders, do little or no spiritual or shepherd work amongst the saints, and are simply allowed to retain their toys like spoil children, because they keep them in good temper. "Such littlenesses are great to little men." Do not worry over these excrescences; they must needs be. The true servant of Christ, the real shepherd of the flock, is known by His works, and will live in the hearts of the saints notwithstanding all that may be said and done to discredit him.

T. L., LIVERPOOL.—It has been found to be a happy and profitable employment for young believers, and one keeping them intimately in touch with the assembly's Gospel work, to give

them a district to visit in pairs, with sound Gospel messages, accompanied by an intimation of and invitation to the meetings. Watched over and guided by one or more experienced brethren, this work has become a means of great blessing to the workers themselves, and has brought hundreds under sound of the Gospel. There is little danger of young believers straying into questionable associations to find work, if they are wisely and happily guided in such lines of service.

Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION III.—Can any of the Lord's servants give help in the Word as to the Scriptural and godly way of conducting Gospel meetings? There seems to be a lack of "grip" in them, and a tendency to degenerate into "Religious Services," with a clear or clever address, rather than the definite object of seeing sinners saved, as in former years?

ANSWER A.—There is no absolute rule given in the Word as to how Gospel meetings are to be conducted; no pattern, such as we find in 1 Cor. xiv. of the Assembly gathered together in one place for worship and edification. The object of a Gospel meeting is, to preach Christ to sinners, and whatever is conducive to this, the preacher may arrange as he considers best.—G. J.

ANSWER B.—The examples given in the Acts should surely guide, as to how the Gospel should be declared to the unconverted. In Acts xvii. Paul has a congregation of unexercised idolaters. In Acts x. Peter speaks to a company of truly exercised and seeking souls. Clearly the matter and even the mode would require to be different, but it is worthy of note that in neither case was there anything like a religious "service," much less an entertainment. Work done for eternity was the preacher's aim, and room was left for God to come in and do it. If the Word is preached in the Spirit's power, there will be no lack of "grip": this wanting, anything may be substituted, it will effect nothing.—J. H.

ANSWER C.—In days of "Pleasant Sunday Afternoons," "Song Preachers," and other devices to draw the crowd, it is well to be reminded that the first object of a Gospel meeting is, to reach the conscience of sinners with the Word and bring them into the presence of God to learn their state

as sinners before Him. How incongruous to such an object is anything of a frivolous or entertaining nature! When Paul preached "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come" (Acts xxiv. 25), the effect on Felix was anything but "pleasant." "Felix trembled," the Word declares, and wherever the truth is spoken by men in touch with God, the same result will follow. The lack of "grip" is due to lack of God, and the many things brought in to keep up appearances and attract the fickle crowd are—however they may be justified—make-shifts for the power of God. We are amazed to see advertisements in the public prints, of Gospel services in connection with some assemblies, in which solos, bright singing, serio-comic subjects, and other paltry attractions are held forth to catch the people. Does any one expect that God the Holy Ghost, will co-operate in such devices, or that real, abiding work will be done by such means? Is it not more likely that broods of false professors will be brought forth, and that the devil will have there ready to his hand the suitable material out of which to make hypocrites?—R. T.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—As one of our correspondents points out, there are various kinds of gatherings mentioned in Acts—the great record of Gospel preaching of the New Testament. These were mostly of an informal kind, held in divers places, some public, others private. A few—such as the gathered companies in the house of Cornelius (Acts x. 24-27), in Paul's hired house in Rome (Acts xxviii. 23, 30), and the gathering on Mar's Hill in Athens (Acts xvii. 19-22)—were by arrangement, and approximate in character to our Gospel meetings. The subject-matter of the preaching in each case led up to Christ, but the mode of address and the method of reaching the conscience with the truth differed, and was ordered by the speaker, guided by the Holy Ghost in each case according to the capacities and condition of the hearers. So it must always be, hence no hard and fast rule can be made, no "form of service" laid down which will apply to all. But the broad outlines may be stated thus: The object of a Gospel meeting is to reach hearers with the Word of Truth that convicts, and with the Word of Life that converts sinners. Some need to be aroused, others stripped, those already convicted led to the Saviour. The average Gospel address should have a word to all. The

three R's should figure largely, "judgment and the love of God" should abound, and beyond all, the Cross and the Crucified One should be pre-eminent. Christ crucified, risen, glorified, with a full, free, present and eternal salvation in His Name to every sinner under heaven, preached in all the warmth, earnestness, tenderness, and compassion of the Holy Ghost. Abstract doctrines and barren theories are of little avail; religious "tit-bits" and "serio-comic" sayings are disgusting; borrowed phraseology and gathered-up scraps are only fit for emptying seats and preaching halls vacant; and last, yet not least, uncalled, unqualified, and unspiritual preachers should be kept from occupying the platform, alike for their own sake and that of the work. Given these conditions, with a preacher sent of God, a hall clean and tidy, to which people will come, and an assembly of hearty, active Gospellers, co-operating heart and hand, not like spoiled children crying to have "turn about" on the platform, but ready to support whoever God is using, and do anything to help on the work, there will be continuous work done for God, work that will abide the test of time, fruit whose seed is in itself, a witness to all who have eyes to see it, that God uses His own Gospel, and honours his own way, where these are honoured among the sons of men.

Questions Requiring Answers.

We invite the help of those to whom the Lord has given understanding of the Scriptures and wisdom, in the answering of the following questions, bearing upon matters of real difficulty to honest and inquiring minds. Answers should be brief, concise and clear, leading to the Word of God. We desire to have all sides of the truth, plainly stated, and duly balanced.

4.—Is one who absents himself for months from the Assembly, and after being often visited, refuses to give any reason for his absence, at liberty to return whenever he thinks fit, without anything being said regarding him to the saints. If not, what is the proper course to take with such a person?

5.—If brethren who take the place of leaders among the saints, persistently go to meetings manifestly begun in division, and by their sympathy and help confirm such in their evil way, should they be received as preachers and teachers in Assemblies seeking to own the authority of the Lord, and to "mark" and "avoid" them that cause divisions, as commanded in the Word (Rom. xvi. 17)?

CHRIST IS PREACHED.

FROM his prison in the Imperial City the Apostle writes to the Philippian saints—his own children in the faith (Acts xvi. 13,39, with Phil. iv. 1)—telling of the varied joys and sorrows, the triumphs and the trials of his lot as the prisoner of the Lord. Joy in the Lord, and in the progress and welfare of the saints, fill up his cup of rejoicing in thinking of the Philippian converts. They had run well and steadily, and their fellowship with him and in the Gospel from “the first day” had been a cause for unceasing praise with the Apostle. *Even in Rome, where his opportunities for service were few, he was cheered by his bonds in Christ being attested by conversions in “the palace” among Cæsar’s soldiers and servants, and still further in the knowledge that some of his “brethren in the Lord” (verse 14)—some who had been converted through other instrumentality than his own—were “waxing confident,” and stepping out boldly as preachers of the Gospel. All this was good cheer to the Lord’s prisoner. But he mentions yet another matter, a subject of quite another kind, which in itself could not be regarded as adding to his joy, yet in which nevertheless he finally tells them he is able to rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.*

Some, from motives altogether different from his own, and with objects which in themselves could not be regarded as worthy, were busily engaged “preaching Christ” (verse 15) in Rome. They were evidently a faction of some kind, out of touch with the Apostle, having a propaganda of their own, whose motives could not be regarded as sincere or pure when tested in the light. Their preaching was with a view to

“add affliction” or raise up new trials to the Lord’s prisoner, either by dividing the saints, or by drawing away to other centres than Christ, those who might be brought under their influence. “What then?” he exclaims, “Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice” (verse 18). He does not mean that there were no elements of evil in connection with the preachers or their modes and motives, but they preached Christ. They evidently announced the glad tidings of salvation by grace; they were sound on the great foundations of the faith; he could not have rejoiced in the preaching of error. He makes no secret of his estimate of their unsound state and unworthy motives, yet he will not allow the tempter to cast him down over it. He rejoices, in that Christ is preached, and that God who is a Sovereign will fulfil His own purposes and ends thereby. There is much to be learned from this, for guidance and help in our own time. We live in a day of great evangelical activity. Christ is preached by many: a true Christ, and through Him a free salvation, albeit there may be much alacking in depth and solidity in the matter of the preaching, many questionable and even forbidden ways adopted in its manner, and from what can be seen of its objects—such as to increase numbers, advertise results, and the like—there may be much to mourn over and regret. Yet, if Christ is preached, if sinners are saved, if the kingdom of the Son of God is advanced, let all who love His Name rejoice, and pray that by His under-working power and grace, He may bring, in spite of man’s failures, that which will magnify His Name, and be to the praise of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory evermore.

THE WISE SERVANT :

EXALTED, EXTOLLED, AND VERY HIGH.

“**B**EHOLD My Servant shall deal prudently (wisely), He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high” (Isa. lii. 13). The Servant unto whom the God of Israel alludes here, is manifestly our great Lord Jesus Christ, whose “visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.” This Servant dealt so wisely, that His wisdom shone out conspicuously, from the first day of His public service until the scene was closed in the silence of death. To allude to all the matters wherein He dealt wisely would he to recapitulate the four Gospels, and also much that is written in the books of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning Him. When the Sadducees, or the Scribes or Pharisees encountered Him, seeking to entangle or entrap Him, His wisdom shone out most brilliantly. Whether they endeavoured to catch Him in some political complication, or to involve Him in some doctrinal contradiction, they quickly found they had met with a master mind, and a skill and discernment which entirely defeated all their preconcerted plans, cunning machinations, and malicious purposes. Never one blunder or mistake is committed by Him in all His eventful history ; nor one duty to God or men neglected. He emphatically is the Man of the 15th Psalm, who “walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in His heart.” “My Servant shall deal wisely,” “He shall dwell on high ; His place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks” (Isa. xxxiii. 16.)

“HE SHALL BE EXALTED.”

“What if ye shall see the Son of Man

ascend up to where He was before” (John vi. 52). “According to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all Principality and Power, and Might, and Dominion, and every name that is named” (Eph. i. 20-21). “He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens” (Eph. iv. 10). As these superior intelligences, the Principalities, the Authorities, the Powers, and the Lordships, saw the Man Christ Jesus ascending, and ascending up beyond all of them, and still ascending far above the heavens unto the very throne of God, they began to learn, as they had never done before, “the manifold wisdom of God.”

From among the dead He has risen, and death hath no more dominion over Him, and indeed He has possession of the keys of death and of *hades*. From the heart of the earth, where for three days He had been, He ascended up on high, and led captivity captive. He led with Him this multitude, entirely changing their habitation. From and after the time of that triumphal ascent, their residence was up beyond the third heaven. Up where Paul for a little while was, when caught up to paradise to hear the unutterable words. Up in Paradise where the saints go who depart to be with Christ, there to be at home with the Lord. “He shall be exalted.” “Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum ; we have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens” (Heb. viii. 1).

“HE SHALL BE EXTOLLED.”

There is a magnificent scene in the fifth chapter of Revelation, something like a

grand coronation scene. It expresses in gorgeous language, how the Lamb is extolled. The Prophet says "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living ones, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand timesten thousand, and thousands of thousands." This is a number so vast that we can scarcely grasp it. In modern arithmetic it would mean one hundred millions, and many millions more. Who they are and whence they come, who constitute this immense assemblage we will not dogmatically say. Most probably they are a representation from every province of the dominions of God throughout the universe. They are most hearty and absolutely harmonious. Let us hear their exclamation. They were "saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing, and every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them; and I heard them saying, blessing and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four living ones said, Amen" (Rev. v. 11-14). On that auspicious day, with what inexpressible gladness we shall add our little Amen, and say "He loved me and gave Himself for me."

"AND HE SHALL BE VERY HIGH."

On the night in which the Lord was betrayed, and just a little while before that event, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straight-

way glorify Him" (John xii. 31-32). A few minutes later on, the Lord said, "And now, O Father, glorify thou Me with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was" (John xvii. 5). The Lord was just about to take the great and final step in His deep descent, concerning which it was declared, "He became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." This was possibly the highest point of His moral glory, and He said, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life. . . No man taketh it from me, I lay it down of Myself" (John x. 17-18). It was there the great foundations were laid of redemption and reconciliation, upon which the universal empire of righteousness and peace will rest for ever. "Now is the Son of Man glorified."

"And God is glorified in Him." Therein God's righteousness is declared unto the utmost bound of the habitations of intelligent beings. This righteousness is declared "for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God," the sins of all believers from Abel unto the thief on the Cross. Therein, also, "is declared at this time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." The Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him.

"If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself." This is glory which we cannot easily grasp or understand. For Christ Jesus to be glorified in God Himself is so sublimely grand, that angels may well desire to look into it. Humanity eternally and indelibly impressed upon God. This in some measure may explain the the marvels of I Cor. xv. 24-28 when the Son lays aside the sceptre, the

sword, and the regalia He had used for more than a thousand years as King of kings and Lord of lords, and assumes the sublimer glories of Godhead. Then He is manifested as God absolute and essential, "that God may be all in all."

This without doubt will transpire between the close of the session of the great white throne judgment, and the introduction of the new heavens and the new earth. When all the incorrigibles of the universe have been shut up in the eternal prison. When not a discordant voice is heard any more, and when there remains not one insubordinate heart or will throughout the universe. He shall be "very high." We with all our hearts and voices say, Amen.

"Glorv, glory everlasting,
Be to Him who bore the Cross."

J. SCOTT.

HE FAILETH NOT.

"My God shall supply all you need" (Phil. iv. 19).
"The Lord knoweth how" (2 Pet. ii. 9).

SAY not my soul: "From whence
Can God relieve thy care?"
Remember that Omnipotence
Has servants everywhere.

God's help is always sure:
His methods seldom guessed;
Delay will make our pleasure pure,
Surprise will give it zest.

His wisdom is sublime,
His heart profoundly kind,
God never is before His time,
And never is behind.

THE SEVEN GOLDEN LAMPSTANDS;

OR, THE CHURCH IN TESTIMONY.

Revelation—Chapters I., II., III.

BY ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

PART III.

I GIVE seven reasons for believing that the messages to the Seven Churches, contained in Chapters II. and III. of this book, are intended to form a prophetic panorama of the history of Christendom. But before adducing these reasons, I would say very emphatically that this view of the seven messages in no way contradicts, or even ignores the fact, that they were addressed to seven actually existing assemblies of believers, and that consequently they contain instruction and guidance for those assemblies from the Lord Himself. Nay more; as no Scripture is only applicable to those to whom it was first given, but all is profitable for the complete furnishing of the man of God unto all good works (see 2 Tim. iii. 16-17); so these messages, furnishing, as they did, teaching, reproof and correction to the Churches to which they were originally addressed, serve also for guidance throughout this dispensation, as to the individual and mutual responsibilities of the Churches of God.

I purpose, therefore, to consider them, in due time, in these two further aspects; but, in the first instance, I propose to look at them as forming the second division of the whole book; or as being, in effect,

"THE THINGS WHICH ARE."

The seven reasons which lead to this view of the messages are as follows:—
1. That which has already been referred to, that they form one of the divisions of the whole Revelation, and are entitled by

the Lord, "*The Things which are.*" It is scarcely credible that this could have been the case, if they had only been messages to existing Churches, without any definite relationship one to another, and to the other two divisions of the book.

2. The number seven is the symbolic number for a completed thing.

3. The Seven Golden Lampstands of the vision in Chapter I. have a manifest association of meaning with the seven-branched Lampstand of the Tabernacle. This latter is the symbol of the Church, according to the purpose of God, as one with Christ; while the Seven Lampstands speak of the Churches in responsibility here, without a visible link of connection, but maintained in unity as long as they are subject to the Lord in the midst of them.

4. The fact that the Lord Jesus is seen in the midst of the seven is the strongest possible evidence that, in symbol, they form a united whole; the points of contrast, as well as those of likeness, declaring their association with the Lampstand of the Tabernacle.

5. The Lord speaks of them as containing a mystery, the force of which has already been dwelt upon.

6. A comparison of the messages with the leading features of the development of Christendom shows such a manifest correspondence between the two, as to satisfy the careful observer that it could only have arisen from the purpose and design of Him who uttered these messages.

7. The promises to the overcomers, which are pronounced at the close of the successive messages, form a connected whole. They look back to seven things that man forfeited through sin in the past; and they look forward to seven things that God will bestow in the future. The things forfeited were lost in the order

indicated by the seven promises, and the blessings to be bestowed correspond in each case, in character with those forfeited, though far exceeding them in excellence. Moreover, the order in which these future blessings will be given, agrees with that in which the former ones were lost.

This last proof, from its nature, is not as plainly evident, the moment it is stated, as all the others. But when once it has been grasped, as the result of a careful consideration of the whole of the messages, it will probably be found to be one of the most weighty of the seven.

I propose to consider these seven promises to the overcomers by themselves, before dealing with the earlier part of each message. I do this in order that the whole chain of evidence as to the symbolic character of the messages may be complete. But we shall not, on that account, be at all hindered, when we come to look at the complete messages, from seeing the particular applicability of each promise to the Church to which it was addressed, as well as its harmony with the message of which it forms a part.

The first necessity, in order to have a right understanding of these seven promises, is to know who are meant by the title, "*The Overcomers.*" It has been commonly taken for granted that these words indicate saints, who have been specially faithful; saints, who like the Apostle Paul, have fought the good fight, have finished the course and kept the faith. And in accordance with this view of the overcomers, it is assumed that the things promised are the rewards of such faithfulness; like the crown of righteousness, which the Apostle declared to be laid up for him.

This view, however, is the result of a

failure to apprehend the whole character of the messages, and lands us in hopeless confusion. While it may not be evident at first sight, as regards the whole of them, yet in the case of some, at least, it is perfectly obvious that the thing promised is, in no sense, of the nature of a reward for special faithfulness; but it is something that must hold good of every believer. "He shall not be hurt of the second death" (Chap. ii. 11). "I will not blot his name out of the book of life" (Chap. iii. 5). Such promises as these are manifestly true of all who have been born of God, without distinction.

As a matter of fact, this is true of all the other promises, though it may not be so apparent on first reading them. But if this be so, it will not unnaturally be asked, with whom the contrast is being drawn; for undeniably the form of these promises does, in every case, imply a contrast with persons who are not overcomers.

The answer will be found on turning to the 1st Epistle of John. In chapter v. verse 1, we read "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." And again, in verses 4 and 5, "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God." We have exactly the same word in its noun form, translated "*victory*" in 1 Cor. xv. 54-7. "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O grave, where is thy victory." "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." And this is the more striking, as, outside the first epistle of John and the Book of the Revelation, the word is scarcely used at all in the New Testament.

It is abundantly plain therefore, that the overcomers are all who are born of God, and that the contrast is with those who have only a profession, a name to live, while they are really dead. And this is especially in keeping with the symbolic character of the messages, as representing the whole course of Christendom, endowed, with its abundant profession, kept up, even after the whole of the living ones have been taken away. And now, having learned who are the overcomers, let us consider the promises made to them. We find the first in chap. ii. 7.—"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." There can be no difficulty here about locating the thing referred to in the past as lost, and that referred to in the future as to be given. What was the first thing that man forfeited through sin? The earthly paradise with the tree of life in the midst of it. Man was driven out of the garden and the flaming sword was put at the east of it, that man might not touch the tree of life. That was the first thing lost through sin, and the first thing here promised to overcomers is, that they shall "eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." We have only got to consider such a promise as this to see at once, that it cannot be a promise limited to specially faithful ones. When will it have its accomplishment? We shall find, as was said before, that the fulfilment of these promises will be in consecutive order. We have here the first thing that was lost and the first thing in all the series that will be given to God's people in place of that which was lost. Until the Lord Jesus comes, every saint who dies enters at once into the Paradise of God. They do not enter at once into the

fulness of glory. That waits, until we have got our glorified bodies. Those who die will not have pre-eminence over the others, just as those who are alive and remain until the Lord's coming will not have pre-eminence over those who have fallen asleep." "The dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them," and thus reunited with them, we shall be "for ever with the Lord." They will previously have been taken to the Paradise of God. They will have seen the face of the Lord, and will have been at rest with Him. It is when the believer dies, then, that he is taken to Paradise; that Paradise of which the Lord Jesus spoke to the thief when he said "This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise."*

* Dr. Bullinger, in endeavouring to prove his theory of temporary annihilation at death, has recently made a laboured attempt to show, that the Lord did not say to the thief, "To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise," but, "Verily I say unto thee to-day, thou shalt be with Me in Paradise." He alleges that the absence of the word "that" between "thee" and "to-day" necessitates the above reading, and he asks how anyone dares read it as though the word "that" were there. As a matter of fact, the grammatical construction in Greek, as in English, will allow of either form—"I say unto thee, to-day thou shalt be with Me," or, "I say unto thee, that to-day thou shalt be with Me," and that, without in any way altering the sense. In Matt. xvi. 3 the Lord says—"Ye say . . . in the morning it will be foul weather to-day," In James iv. 13 we read—"Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go," &c. The word "that" does not occur in either of these places, and therefore, according to Dr. Bullinger, they ought to be translated—"Ye say to-day, It will be foul weather." "Go to now, ye that say to-day or to-morrow, We will go," &c. The Doctor further says that in Scripture, Paradise is always a place of earthly delight; but he absolutely ignores the reference to Paradise in 2 Cor. xii. 4, where it is made synonymous with the third heaven of verse 2.

A chart, giving a panoramic view of the Seven Churches, will appear in the May number.

TRUSTING AND WAITING.

A WORD OF CHEER TO LONELY SAINTS.

A FEW days ago I was reading Isaiah li. 5—"The isles shall wait upon Me, and on Mine arm shall they trust." I said to myself, "Why does it say *the isles* 'wait' and 'trust?'" If we turn to Isaiah xl., 15, we read—"Behold He taketh up the isles as a *very little thing*." The passage has a literal, and will have a future fulfilment, no doubt, but its principle and meaning has a present voice to us. You are waiting on God for guidance, for blessing, for power in service, or it may be, for comfort in affliction. Thus expectantly occupied, be content to be "a very little thing." Perchance you seek an answer that does not come. Fret not, quietly wait, the answer is most certain to all who wait in faith.

"The isles shall *wait* for His law" (Isa. xlii. 4). No doubt it is hard work; the flesh would sooner do anything than wait. "Blessed are all they that wait for Him" (Isa. xxx., 18). Do you say, "I am lonely; the wicked surround me on every side: they foam upon me like angry waves: they misjudge my motives and breathe out cruelty." Rejoice. Suffering for Christ has always been the lot of the righteous, but "the crowning day is coming."

Do you seek an extended sphere of usefulness? Is your cry, "Could I but escape from this prison to some heathen country, what great and mighty deeds I would do for my Lord!" Stay. Is your light shining brightly in your own little isle?

"*Be still*, ye inhabitants of the isle" (Isa. xxiii., 2); "Sing unto the Lord . . . the isles and the inhabitants thereof" (Isa. xlii., 10). There is a training and a

discipline needed for such service, and the Lord gives it in the desert.

John Bunyan may have thought it strange, that he could no longer go forth and preach, as in the days of old. But to his isolation within those prison walls we owe the "Pilgrim's Progress," which has brought peace and joy to many a heart. Paul, in a dungeon at Rome, shut up from service, drinks deeper from the Fountain Head, and rivers of living water flowed out through him to generations yet unborn. The disciple whom Jesus loved, a captive isolated and alone, "your brother and companion in tribulation, . . . was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. i., 9). Yet his heart was with the seven assemblies, to whom the Lord's message through him came. He says, "I *am*" (not "was") "your companion in tribulation." They had his love, his sympathy, his prayers still. The saints suffered: they needed help, but he could no longer minister to them. He had his trials, persecutions, sufferings: these were things to glory in, but this was surely the hardest trial of all! Cheer up, ye isolated saints. God has a purpose in it all. Wait patiently. Remember—we do not know the way (Isa. xlii. 16), but He knows, and when His full time is fulfilled, "thine ears shall hear a word *behind* thee, saying, this is the way, walk ye in it" (Isa. xxx. 21). Many live in ease and luxury. They are not trained for God's holy service. They have not learned to deny themselves, or He might send them forth to the perishing millions of heathen lands. "The isles shall wait upon Me, and on Mine arm shall they trust" (Isa. li. 5). We have seen a strong man

take up a tiny little babe and nurse it, the little one quite at home in his arms, feeling instinctively that a father's strength and love were pledged on its behalf. And beloved, the Infinite and Eternal God who "holds the waters in the hollow of His hand," is also the tender Keeper who gathers the lambs with His arm and carries them in His bosom. "On Mine arm shall they *trust*." What else can we do? It neither trembles nor gives way. Can anything exceed the tenderness of a mother's love? She presses her babe to her heart in an ecstasy of delight. As years roll on, she follows her child through life with a love—a peculiar love, unknown to wife, or sister, or brother. Some of us, who are not children now, have proved a mother's care unchanged in later years. "And even to your old age, I am He, and even to hoar hairs will I carry you; I have made and I will bear; even I will carry and will deliver you" (Isa. xli. 4). It is a word we seldom hear; yet it is true. The love of God to His own exceeds a father's in strength and a mother's in tenderness—"they *may* forget, yet will I not forget thee" (Isa. xlix.) He will nurse us all along the way, even to hoar hairs. He is our ever-present, unchanging Friend and Lover. O to ever rejoice in the holy intimacy of His love! Though we are only "very little things," yet we are infinitely precious to Him. He paid a mighty ransom for us.

A. J. M.

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In *prayer* we are occupied with our *needs* and *cares* ;
 In *thanksgiving* we are occupied with our *blessings* ;
 In *worship* we are occupied with the Lord
 HIMSELF.

A SUCCESSFUL SOUL-WINNER.

SHE was only a mill-girl in very humble circumstances, working from six in the morning till six at night. Few would have envied her lot, yet she was always happy. Besides being her aged mother's bread-winner and comfort, she had a class of girls in the Sunday School, and a district to visit once a month with tracts. But she was instant in season, out of season. Wherever a sinner was found, she spoke to that one of Christ. Few have I ever known so wonderfully used of God as she was. Certainly it was not her brilliant gifts that the Lord made use of—for of these she had none. Nor was it her extensive knowledge, for she was not so deeply taught in Bible truth as many around her. But she was intensely *in earnest*. Her words glowed with living power. Her very soul was in the appeals she gave. Her prayers were the outpouring of a yearning, longing heart. She meant what she said, whether it was in warning, entreaty or invitation, and somehow people could not help listening to her words. She held them by an irresistible influence. Others saw it and owned it, indeed it could not be hid. The secret of it all was, *she lived with God*. Her burning zeal, her deep compassion, were kindled and sustained by a daily walk with God. They were not of nature, but of grace; their source and springs were in the God she knew and loved. Was it any wonder that God used her? Nay, rather, the wonder would have been if He had not, for it has ever been the way of the Lord to cause the stream of life to flow most freely to others, through those who most deeply drink of it themselves. Herein lies the secret of success in soul-winning.

CHRISTIAN COURAGE.

THE word "Add to your faith virtue"—*i.e.* courage or valour (2 Peter i. 5), while true for all believers, has a peculiar force as applied to those who serve the Lord Christ, in spreading His Gospel among sinners. The true soul-winner must have courage. He must be brave and full of valour. His sphere of service lies within the borders of the enemy's country. His work is to take the spoil from the hand of the mighty. Courage is needed for this: real soldier-like valour, that fears not to face the foe. Faint-hearted and fearful disciples are of no use whatever in the great army of the Lord's Gospellers. He requires those who have the courage to face the enemy on his battlements, to go right into his citadel and get hold of sinners, to whom His Master's message has been sent. This courage is more than natural boldness; many are well equipped with that. It is Divinely-given valour, inspired by love to Christ and true devotion to His service. It comes from heaven upon the waiting soul. It is of the Lord. Men may call it "forwardness;" even saints of God may disparage it. But the soul taught of God, exercised before Him, waiting on Him, will rise up in new strength, with fresh courage, to go forth again in the holy war. "Be strong and of a good courage" (Josh. i. 6), was Jehovah's word to His warrior servant Joshua of old, as he stood on the borders of the promised land, and still the words sound forth in the ears of all Christ's soldiers, who go forth to rescue the perishing in His Name. Never did they more need it. "Wait on the Lord, be of *good courage*, and He shall strengthen thine heart" (Psa. xxvii. 14).

The Bible Annotator.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE READINGS.

TWO GREAT FOUNDATION FACTS.

"It is Finished"—The Perfect Work of Christ.
 "It is Written"—The Eternal Word of God.
 The *Work* makes safe. The *Word* makes sure.

THREEFOLD SECURITY IN COL. III. 3.

A Great Treasure—"Your life is hid."
 A Trustworthy Treasurer—"With Christ."
 A Safe Treasury—"In God."

THREEFOLD CRUCIFIXION.

THE FLESH—"They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh" (Gal. v. 24).

THE WORLD—"The world is crucified to me and I unto the world" (Gal. vi. 14).

MYSELF—"I have been crucified with Christ" Gal. ii. 19, R.V.)

THE GRACE OF GOD IN SEVEN ASPECTS.

The Believer is *Saved* by Grace—(Eph. ii. 9).

He *Stands* in Grace (Rom. v. 2).

He is *Taught* by Grace (Titus ii. 12).

He *Grows* in Grace (2 Peter iii. 18).

He is *Strong* in Grace (Tim. ii. 1).

He *Speaks* with Grace (Col. iv. 6).

He *Dispenses* Grace (1 Pet. iv. 10).

NOTES ON BIBLE SUBJECTS.

From the Margin of Mr Wm. Lincoln's Bible.

THE CROSS.—The Cross of Christ is the crowning proof of God's love to man, and of man's hatred to God. Both met at the point of the soldier's spear.

TWO ADVENTS.—There are two advents of Christ, each comprised of two stages. The first to Bethlehem and Calvary, the second to the air for His saints, and later to the world with them, to judge and to reign.

GATHERED TOGETHER.—Only in Hebrews x. 25 and in 2 Thess. ii. 1, is this word used; the former concerning our gathering together here and now, the latter of our gathering around the Lord Jesus in the air at His coming. Only concerning these two events does the word occur. Thus, as we assemble and persist in assembling around one invisible Head and Lord now, so shall all His saints, be gathered together around Him visibly very soon.

SEPARATION AND RECEPTION.—2 Corinthians contains God's instructions to His people in view of the truth in 1 Corinthians being disregarded, and is therefore specially applicable to these last days. At the close of a long parenthesis (Chap. ii. 7 to vii. 4) on the subject of ministry, the writer entreats the saved not to receive God's grace in vain, to "come out and be separate and touch not the unclean." Then having shewn from whom to stand aloof, He closes by shewing whom to receive, and gives the ground for such reception (see Chap. vii. 2-4).

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Answers to Correspondents.

JOHN B.—The chart, entitled "Babylon," by John Hambleton, is, we fear, long out of print. It was a faithful delineation of Christendom with its religious abominations and shams, a line of things concerning which its author spoke with no uncertain sound. Such ministry, however distasteful to those who most need it, is by no means unnecessary. If any of our readers can provide a copy of the chart, we shall be glad to let you have it.

W. E., BIRMINGHAM.—Christian women—especially such as are free from family cares—may do much true service as helpers in spreading the Gospel (Phil. iv. 3), and in leading on and helping forward in the Word and ways of the Lord, those who have believed (Rom. xvi. 3, with Acts xviii. 21-28). There are some such still in the assemblies of God's saints, little known or heard of perhaps beyond their own sphere, yet doing noble work for the Lord which shall not fail of its reward in "that day." Those who guide and oversee in the assembly will readily acknowledge and assist such in their service, and they, if godly, will ever seek to work under the guidance and with the counsel of those shepherding the flock. We cannot conceive of any objecting to such service, so long as it is rendered in a womanly way, with nothing in it approximating to the evils mentioned in 1 Tim. v. 13, or 1 Tim. ii. 12.

J. M., GLASGOW.—When Eldad and Medad prophesied in the camp of Israel, Moses refused at Joshua's request to forbid them. For such an act he had no commandment from the Lord, but his refusal did not imply that Joshua or any other was

under obligation to take his stand beside them, and thus show fellowship with their work (Numb. xi. 27-30). When the Lord Jesus reproved his disciple John, for forbidding one to cast out demons because he followed not with them, He did not thereby commend that man, or authenticate his path, or encourage his own disciples to imitate his example or company with him. Indeed, he passes off the scene, and we hear of him no more (Mark ix. 38-46), while His last word to them is, "What is that to thee; follow thou Me" (John xxi. 22). The business of a servant is, not to imitate his fellows, or to copy what his Master may seem to tolerate in others, but to do His will as he has learnt it, unhesitatingly and joyfully. If God, in His sovereignty and grace, reach proud sinners of the synagogue with His Word, and cause them to hear His Gospel through the lips of men who, from their nominal association with the systems in which these deluded souls are lulled to slumber, we heartily rejoice, yea, and will rejoice, if sinners are saved and Christ exalted. But we would on no account "go in hand and hand" with the movement, or by our example lead young believers into religious systems, which, notwithstanding the presence of a good man in them, or a faithful preacher for a time being allowed to speak part of the truth he knows in association with and under their patronage, are utterly corrupt and daily becoming worse, from which the truth of God has separated us, and to which it can never lead us back again. It is a false and a foolish thought, that in order to gain influence with, and be able to help those who may be converted, it is necessary to join affinity with that which is false, or to hide the truth of God, and thus appear under false colours. The only "influence" worth having is obtained at the mercyseat, and the only way to help others on in the ways of the Lord is, to walk in them humbly but steadfastly ourselves.

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Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION IV.—Is one who absents himself for months from the Assembly, and after being often visited, refuses to give any reason for his absence at liberty to return whenever he thinks fit, without anything being said regarding him to the saints.

If not, what is the proper course to take with such a person?

ANSWER A.—In the majority of such cases there is a worm at the root, generally coldness of heart and spiritual apathy brought on by worldliness. Pastoral care is resented, and the self-satisfied backslider virtually excommunicates himself. Certainly his case should after a time be mentioned to the assembly, not for excommunication, but to inform them of his position. If restoration of soul takes place, and a desire is expressed to be restored to the fellowship of saints, surely it will be in the interest of the restored one, in whom, by his ways, confidence had been shaken, and for godly order, that his name be mentioned, coupled with some words calculated to restore confidence, by those who have had the joy of knowing of his better condition and desire (see Col. iv. 12), otherwise the full flow of fellowship would be hindered, and godly order reduced to chaos.—J.H.

ANSWER B.—There are possibly some previous questions, such as—Have we acted or spoken unkindly to him or concerning him, thereby wounding his feelings? Have we examined ourselves as to whether our feeble godliness, little spirituality, and the little help which we may have been to him, had anything to do with his withdrawing himself? Have we been continuously and earnestly pleading with God for his restoration and blessing? If he manifests any signs of a desire to return, give thanks to God, take courage, and pray yet more earnestly for him. Remember, that seeing he may have for long been in a spiritually broken-down condition, he will be in a very feeble state of spiritual health and will need very gentle treatment. Remember also, that most of the successful pastoral work is done when "We bow our knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in Heaven and earth is named." If the pastoring brethren have been thus, as it were, for months travailing in birth for this failing one, when he does return, they will have exceeding joy in introducing him to the saints again, as a trophy of the restoring grace, mercy, and love of the Lord.—J. S.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—The above answers view the matter under consideration from two equally important standpoints; the former dealing with

the failing one's responsibility, the latter with that of his fellow-saints, especially those to whom the Lord has given shepherd care in the assembly. No doubt the loving and faithful exercise of such care, especially in the early stages of backsliding, would be used to heal and restore many an erring one, while ungracious or unwise treatment has often driven such to the world. But, there is another side to this. Even in the apostles' time, there were some concerning whom one had to write—"They went out from us, but they were not of us" (1 John ii. 19), and we need to be careful lest we frustrate the work of God in removing one from the midst of His people who is not "of" them, or hastening back an unbroken, unrepentant spirit, only to be a troubler and a further cause of weakness. In this as in much else, godly discernment, such as all do not possess is needed, and a due recognition of the claims of the Lord and of the order of His house as given in His Word, as well as the true restoration and blessing of the erring one.

Annihilationist Teachings.

To the Editor of "The Believer's Magazine."

A PAMPHLET has recently appeared, professing to deal with the story of "The Rich Man and Lazarus," to which an altogether unmerited prominence has been given, by the praise of its friends and the equally unwarranted fear of its foes. There is no single item of its specious array of arguments for the cessation of existence at the death of the body, that is not to be found in the writings of the annihilationists in America and Britain of former times. Peculiarities of translation, such as the alteration of the punctuation of Luke xxiii. 43, the substitution of "return" for "depart" in Phil. i. 23, and vagaries of interpretation, such as that which makes the story of "The Rich Man and Lazarus" a tradition of the Pharisees, which are here set forth with much parade, are all drawn from the same source. They have all been fully and carefully dealt with and exposed in "Facts and Theories as to a Future State," by the late F. W. Grant (a book we would commend to any who may wish to see the whole subject adequately dealt with in a calm, scholarly, Christian spirit), and in an

excellent pamphlet of 57 pages, by Caleb J. Baker, entitled, "Life, Death, Hades and Paradise."

Careful students of the Word of God are not likely to be led away by the partial statements and specious juggling with the Scriptures of the writer of the pamphlet on Luke xvi. to which reference has been made. But, strangely enough, a translation of the Scriptures made in the interests of these doctrines, has met with warm commendation from not a few, whose own loyalty to the truths of the Word is above suspicion. We refer to the translation by J. B. Rotherham, which is regarded by some as their court of appeal; thus the truth has still another enemy to contend with. A glance at Matt. xv. 46, for example, will show how Mr. Rotherham has prostituted his office as translator in the interests of annihilationism and kindred theories.

What the character of the pamphlet on Luke xvi. is, may be gathered from the following quotation: "It is, of course, most blessedly true that there is a vast difference between the saved and the unsaved in this 'falling asleep.' The former have received the gift of 'eternal life' (Rom. vi. 23); *not yet in possession*, but 'in Christ,' who is responsible to raise them from the dead (John vi. 39) that they may enter in the enjoyment of it. The unsaved do not possess eternal life, for it is the gift of God." Comment here would be superfluous.

Yours sincerely,

C. F. HOGG.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—We fully endorse the view of our esteemed correspondent. There is nothing new in Dr. Bullinger's recent pamphlet; simply the washed-out theories of old-time annihilationists garnished with a few fresh mistranslations, such as no Christian reader of ordinary capacity, and certainly no reverent reader of the Scriptures will be misled by. Rotherham's Testament has been long used, with profit, by many. The New Edition is distinctly favourable to Annihilation and Campbellite baptism, and our correspondent has done well to call attention to this. We deprecate alarms sounded for advertising purposes, as some notices of this pamphlet clearly are. Yet, if such serve to call into practice more godly vigilance and care, in regard to men and meetings which have erred from the faith, they may reach some who need to be awakened from the sleep into which they have been lulled on these subjects.

THE TRUE EVANGELIST'S AIM.

IN recounting his labours in the Gospel, and the mighty works which Christ had wrought through him, Paul the Apostle of the Gentiles, the chief and pattern evangelist of this Gospel age tells us, that his great "ambition," his steady "aim," his "point of honour" as an evangelist was, to preach Christ where His Name was unknown, to carry the Gospel to those who had never heard, and not to reap what others had sown, or build on foundations laid by other men. "Making it my aim (being ambitious margin), so to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was already named, that I might not build upon another man's foundation" (Rom. xv. 20, R.V). There are few preachers of the present time who seem to have this heavenly aim, this holy ambition. No doubt it requires more grit and grace than most possess, to go out into the open field, counting on a present, faithful God, to do what He has said and fulfil what He has promised. It requires more faith in God and more confidence in His Gospel than is possessed by most, even among those who have professedly left their nets at the Divine call to preach Christ in all the world, to every creature. The number becomes fewer and fewer as the years go by, who have enough of God in them, to go forth to unknown fields, staff in hand, and give God the opportunity of shewing to an unbelieving world and a backslidden church, what He is able to do for and through a clean and chosen vessel, apart from human help and in spite of Satanic hindrances. Thank God there are still a few who have the godly ambition of "our beloved brother Paul," and whom God uses to open up new fields and plant new

churches wherever they are led. Their names are not continually before the public ; they do not advertise themselves or their work ; they are not reputed as "great" evangelists in the religious world. They do not receive the patronage or the plaudits of newspaper editors, or the presence and support of carnal and worldly-minded persons in their meetings. They are more hated than caressed, warned against than welcomed ; misrepresented and maligned by religious leaders as their Master was, and told them they would be for His Name's sake. Yet God is with them, and the proof of it is seen in the abiding fruit, the healthy assemblies of saints, fully separate from the world's corrupt religion, and intelligently gathered to own Christ as Lord and Head, left to be a testimony for God in every place to which they have been bearers of the message of God. This is just as it ought to be, as God has ordered in His Book, and as the early servants of Christ sought to follow after.

But other times and manners have come upon us. Some, from various causes—other than a call from God, a gift from an ascended Christ, and a Spirit-given fitness which manifests itself in fruit to God, in genuine conversions, and in founding assemblies, which continue as a testimony for God, have gone forth as preachers and teachers, and expect to receive the fellowship and support of assemblies with whose principles many of them have not a spark of sympathy. They go there simply because they find a congregation of listeners ready to their hand, which by no ability that they possess could they have gathered, or would they retain. As a rule, the chief object of their preaching is, to break down every barrier that would hinder

amalgamation with the world's religion ; to blot out all Divinely-drawn lines of separation from the sects of Christendom, and not infrequently to traduce honoured servants of Christ with a view of alienating the saints from them, to whose labours many of them owe their conversion. That sooner or later such men will find their own level is true, but they frequently work untold evil which the toil of years does not fully undo, before they manifest to all what spirit they are of. It is well that the children of God, especially such as have the care of saints at heart, should be on their guard, and not allow a false charity to hinder the truth from being spoken and acted upon, that would cut short the course of such mischief-makers and sowers of discord among God's people.

The true evangelist whose aim is to plant the standard of the Cross in regions beyond, to break up fresh ground with the Gospel, to carry in the truth of God among believers who are in bondage, and need to hear the Word that gives liberty, deserves, and should receive the continual and hearty fellowship of his brethren in Christ. Himself and his work should be continuously the subjects of the prayers of saints, especially of such as are the fruits of his own labour in the Gospel. His needs, and the needs of those who are dependent upon him, should surely be supplied by those who have shared, and do still share his spiritual ministry, and reap the fruit of his self-denying toil. Burdens and cares of temporal things often hamper true men who have hearts for God, and desires to reach forth to needy places. Surely the saints and the assemblies of saints should have their eyes on such, and seek to shew their pactical fellowship with them.

"HIS OWN."

(JOHN x. 27 ; xv. 8-14 ; xx. 17).

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY MAX ISAAC REICH.

I desire to bring before you four expressions found in John's Gospel—"My sheep," "My disciples," "My friends," "My brethren." We see in these passages the different relationships in which believers stand to Christ, the light in which He regards those whom He calls "His own." How blessed ! From the heights of glory He can look down on this world, and He can say of some, "They are Mine." How precious, that He can appropriate them for Himself. "My sheep," "My disciples," "My friends," and most precious of all, "My brethren." He looks down on this scene of evil and sorrow, and claims us as "His own" in a peculiar sense.

Now, we must learn from Scripture what these names mean, what is involved in them, what kind of people they are whom He calls "His own." When I read of "My sheep," do I belong to that company? Have I a right to claim that name? Is it true of me? Do I belong to the number whom He calls "My disciples?" Am I one of those whom He calls "My friends?" Am I one of that heavenly family whom He is not ashamed to call "My brethren?" What evidence have I, that I belong to that order, that family, that circle, those who stand in the relationship of "brethren" to a blessed, glorified, ascended Christ? These are important questions. Well, the first thing that characterises the sheep is, that they are the gift of the Father to the Son. This is very, very blessed. "Thine they were and Thou gavest them Me" (John xvii. 6). "My Father which gave them Me" (John x. 29). We are the gift of the Father to the Son, and that is why He will

never give us up ; He values us because of the Giver. We are the expression of the Father's love to the Son, of His appreciation of Him, of His approval and delight in Him. Are there not some things you would not part with for the world ? They may be of little value ; if you tried to sell them you would get but little for them ; you could buy others like them for a trifle. It may be just a book or some little trinket you have carefully locked away, but you would not part with it, and why ? Because it was a love gift, and you value it because of the love of the giver. I am a poor, worthless thing in myself, but I am a love-gift from the Father to the Son. "The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into His hand," and as one expression of His appreciation of Him, He has given *me* to Christ. In John xvii., that wonderful chapter—that Holy of Holies of Scripture—the Lord, seven times over, refers to the fact that the Father has given us to Him. It seems as if He cannot tire of referring to it, as if He is constantly dwelling on it, and cannot cease from speaking of it. In these seven references we can see what it means, what there is to be enjoyed in having been *given to Christ*. *The first thing He gives us is eternal life*. If the Father has given Him authority over all flesh, it is that He may give eternal life to as many as He has given Him. And what is the *last thing* He prays for us ? "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am." What a wonderful thing ! I am to be in the same glory with Christ. On what ground am I to be there ? I may say, "Because I believe in Him, because Christ died for me, because I am cleansed in His precious blood." But on what other ground am I to be there ? *It is because I*

am the Father's gift to the Son, not merely because I believe in Him and love Him, though all His saints *do* love Him. He prays for that company—"that they may behold My glory." It is as if nothing is too sacred, too blessed, too secret, too intimate, too holy ; He will keep nothing back. The beatific vision is for those whom the Father has given Him. What a great thing this is ! But again I ask, "How can I know it is true of *me* ?" It is easy to know that the sheep have been given by the Father to the Son, but how can I prove, what evidence have I, that I am one of them ? How can I know that the high and lofty One who inhabiteth Eternity, has counsels of love and purposes of grace towards me ? Well, one evidence is very clear—"All that the Father giveth Me shall *come* to Me." Have I come to Him ? that is the point. Yes, I have come. When years ago, ruined, lost, forlorn, with all my load of sin and burden of sorrow,

"I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary and worn and sad,
I found in Him a resting-place,
And He has made me glad."

My need and His great fulness met that day when I came to *Him*. It was not believing a text about Christ, or a nice thought about the blood, but coming to *Him*, coming to the One who shed that blood. The question is, "Have I come ?" How do I know I came to Jesus many years ago ? Perhaps "distance lends enchantment to the view ;" perhaps my memory deceives me. How do I know I did not deceive myself, that it was not some passing feeling, some evanescent experience, some emotion of mine ? It is an important matter, for the enemy often tries to assault our confidence and undermine our assur-

ance. What is the answer? I *still* come; I keep on coming. I have never left off coming; every day I come. "All that the Father *giveth* Me shall come to Me, and him that *cometh* to Me I will in no wise cast out." I draw attention to the *giving* and the *coming*. There is an ever-present freshness in the gift, and an everlasting freshness in the Son's delight in the gift. The Son of God never gets tired of us. There is such a thing as looking at election from a theologian's point of view, but barren theology is a very dry study. It regards Christianity as a cold, barren science, instead of a grand experience to be entered into in the power of the Holy Ghost. "All that the Father *giveth* Me *shall come* to Me"—this is how God carries out His grand design. He "inhabiteth Eternity!" I only inhabit the present moment, the spot where I stand, or the seat where I sit, but He inhabits Eternity. We cannot grasp that. Reason stands abashed before this mighty thought. When, as the God who inhabiteth Eternity, He speaks in Romans viii. of those whom He *foreknew*, He is coming down in grace to our narrow capacity and clothing infinite thought in finite language. But God's thoughts are all in one grand, eternal *Now*—past, present, and future are all alike to Him. He gave us to the Son, He gives us to the Son, and through all the cycles of an Eternity to come, He will give us to the Son. His counsels in Eternity and His operations in time are always in harmony, there is never any conflict between them. So to Christ we come; to Him we need to come constantly for fresh discoveries of His grace, for deeper draughts of His love. We need to come closer and closer still. Yesterday's experience will not do for

to-day. We need to come many a time, or we shall wander away into self, into darkness, into the world, where there is *nothing* for the new man. So we never leave off coming; daily our need and His great fulness meet.

Then "My sheep hear my voice," and "they follow Me" Oh, are we among that company who amid the multitude of voices and the contrariety of sounds, have heard the Shepherd's voice and abandoned themselves to His guidance? Are we afraid of following Him? Do we find the path lonely and narrow, and fear it will become lonelier and narrower as we reach the end? It is the *only* path of safety, peace and rest, through all the intricacies of the labyrinth of this world. Oh! that amidst all the siren voices, ready to attract away from the only good, we may be calm enough, silent enough, quiet enough, to hear the music of the Shepherd's voice!

(To be Continued.)

STILLNESS.

"Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord" (Ex. xiv. 13).
 "Be still and know that I am God" (Psa. xlv. 10).

"**S**TAND still," my soul, for so the Lord commands,
 E'en when thy way is dark; 'tis in His hands,
 His arm is mighty to divide the wave;
 "Stand still," my soul; "Stand still," and
 thou shalt see
 How God can shew His Mighty Arm for
 thee;
 For with a "great deliverance" He will save.
 "BE still"—a deeper step in faith and rest,
 "Be still and know" thy Father knoweth best,
 The way to lead His child to His fair land:
 A land of rest where quiet waters flow,
 Where longing souls are satisfied and know
 The God who all the pilgrim way had
 planned.

THE SEVEN GOLDEN LAMPSTANDS ;

OR, THE CHURCH IN TESTIMONY.

Revelation—Chapters I., II., III.

BY ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.—PART IV.

THE second promise is made to the Church of Smyrna at verse 11, "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." This refers to the second thing that man lost. Of course through sin he lost everything at once, but the actual experiences of the loss came in stages. The first stage was the shutting out of Paradise. The second stage—nine centuries after—was Adam's death, and the promise that looks back to that as the second thing man lost through sin, looks forward to the second gain in its corresponding order. "He shall not be hurt of the second death." This is manifestly put in contrast with the first death that man was hurt of, and it takes us to the coming of the Lord Jesus; because it is written "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection, over such the second death hath no power" (Rev. xx. 7). Therefore, the moment at which this promise has its manifest and blessed fulfilment is, the moment when the Lord Jesus comes and we are caught up and changed into His likeness. Then these bodies of our humiliation—whether they have been laid in the dust, or we are still living here in them—will be changed into the likeness of the body of His glory, and it will be made manifest that we can never be hurt of the second death.

The third promise is to the church of Pergamos. Seventeenth verse: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna; and will give him a white stone, and in the white stone a new name

written, which no man knoweth save he that receiveth it." Now, first as to what this looks back to. God dealt with Adam in the first two promises; now He refers to Israel, for the moment we hear of the hidden manna we are reminded of the children of Israel in the wilderness, and of the manna which came down from heaven day by day. You remember that God commanded that a golden pot should be filled with an omer of manna, and that it should be laid up in the ark of testimony in the holy place. How long was it kept there? Until the Temple was built. Then the ark that had been carried about with the people throughout all their wanderings in the wilderness, was brought into the oracle of the house, and the staves were drawn out: God so fulfilling David's prayer: "Enter Thou into Thy rest, O Lord, Thou, and the ark of Thy strength." In 2 Chron. v. 10, we read, that there was nothing then in the Ark but the two tables of stone. The pot of manna was gone, as well as Aaron's rod that budded. Neither of these was taken into the Holy of Holies in the Temple, and the reason of this is plain. Aaron's rod was not needed any more to be laid up as a testimony against the rebellious ones. That had been commanded in order to manifest the place and authority that God had given to Aaron amongst his brethren, and the Temple speaks of a time when their will be no rebellion against the authority of the Great High Priest. But the pot of hidden manna was removed also. The manna was a type of Christ as the portion of His people, and the hidden manna tells of that concerning Him which we cannot yet apprehend, because we only know in part. But the Temple looks forward to a time

when we shall see no longer as through a glass darkly, but face to face, and we shall know even as we are known, and then we shall feed upon what has been the hidden manna. Most of those who were brought out of Egypt never entered the land of promise. They tasted the manna day by day, but they perished, and their carcasses fell in the wilderness; and when the time came for the manna to be brought out, they had passed away. But to the overcomer, the Lord Jesus says "I will grant that he shall eat of the hidden manna." There is something more than this, however, He adds: "And I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." Now, there is something very interesting about that white stone. It is not the ordinary Greek word for stone "Lithos"—from which we get the word "Lithography" (drawing on stone)—but it is "Psēphos" which we should call a pebble, and from which we get our English word "cypher." The connection between pebbles and cyphering came about as follows. In their earlier days the Greeks used pebbles to assist in calculations, or in giving instruction in arithmetic. The consequence was, that they called the whole science of arithmetic by a word signifying, "Dealing with pebbles," and what we should call an "Accountant" they styled a "Pebbleman." Now an accountant is a man whose business it is to examine people's books, to see that all entries are correctly made, to balance them and show how much stands to the credit of the person whose accounts they contain. So the thought of the white pebble or cypher stone was, that of an accurate judgement of the whole of the past, everything entered up, nothing for-

gotten, the balance taken and the result shown. And so when the Lord Jesus says, "I will give unto him a white stone," He is just telling us that, as He is now taking note of all our sayings, so then He will present each of us with a righteous balance-sheet, which will accurately sum up all that we have been and done. The stone will contain a new name, which no man will know but the one who receives its. Names bestowed by God always declare the work or character of the one to whom they are given. That Name which is above every name was given to the blessed Son of God, when He stooped down to be made in the likeness of men, because He had come to save His people from their sins, and in that Name of Jesus, God has highly exalted Him. In like manner, the name in the white stone will declare what we have been according to God's estimate of each one.

As the judgment seat of Christ follows immediately after our being caught up to see Him as He is, so the partaking of the hidden manna is followed at once by the bestowal of the white stone of the divine record of our walk and service. Thus the third promise, which looks back to the failure of those who were brought out of Egypt to enter the land and enjoy its blessings, looks forward to our being with the Lord in the Father's house, and to our receiving the rewards which He will bestow at the judgment seat.

The fourth promise is, in the message to the Church of Thyatira. "He that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron. As the vessels of a potter they shall be broken to shivers, even as I received of the Father. And I will give him the morn-

ing star" (Chap. ii. 26-28). In the third promise we were reminded of Israel's failure in the wilderness. Here we have allusions to their failure in the land of Canaan. Before Joshua's death, he reminded the people how God had been with them, so that no man had been able to stand before them. He further assured them, that if they would not turn aside from God's commandments, the victory should be assured to them till the guilty nations of Canaan were utterly destroyed. On the other hand he solemnly declared, that if they turned back from following the Lord, He would no longer drive out those nations before them; but would leave them to be snares and traps to chastise His people for their disobedience.

The Book of Judges shows us, how little these promises were appreciated, and how utterly the warnings were disregarded. It is a record of utter failure on behalf of the Children of Israel, and of the consequent forfeiture of the promise of dominion over the nations of Canaan. Set over against this is the promise of a far more extensive dominion in a day yet to come. The Church is to judge the world (1 Cor. vi. 2). When the Faithful and True comes to smite the nations and to rule them with a rod of iron, the armies of heaven, clothed in fine linen, come with Him, to share in His triumph (Rev. xix. 11-15). But because we are called to be sharers in the patience of Christ, and to be despised and unknown in the very scene where that triumph shall be wrought, He adds, "and I will give him the morning star." Thus, we are bidden so to give heed to the prophetic Word, as to a light shining in a dark place, that the day may dawn and the day star arise in our hearts (2 Pet. i. 19).

THE LORD'S LAST PROMISE.

ADMONITIONS and encouragements to strengthen us in the place and posture of waiting for the Son of God from heaven, the Lord Himself seems to me to give, just at the bright and blessed close of the volume.

"I come quickly" is announced by Him three times in the twenty-second of Revelation—words directly suited to keep the heart that listens to them believingly in the attitude of which I am speaking. But different words of warning and encouragement accompany this voice.

"Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book" (verse 7). This warns us, that while we are waiting for Him, we must do so with watchful, obedient, observant minds, heedful of His words.

"Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according as his work shall be" (ver. 12). This encourages to diligence, telling us, that by the occupation of our talents now during His absence, on the promised and expected return, He will have honours to impart to us.

"Surely, I come quickly," is again the word (ver. 20). This is a simple promise. It is neither a warning nor an encouragement. Nothing accompanies the announcement, as in the other cases. It is, as it were, simply a promise to bring *Himself* to His expectant people. But it is the highest thing, the dearest thing. The heart may be silent before a warning and before an encouragement. Such words may get their audience in secret from the conscience. But this promise of the simple, personal return of Christ, gets its answer from the saints. Out of the abundance of the heart"

the mouth speaks. "Amen. Even so; Come, Lord Jesus."

Thus the Lord, after this various and beautiful manner, does the business of the Spirit in the apostles. His own voice, in these different and striking announcements, encourages the saints to maintain the attitude of waiting for Him.

Great things are a doing. The Church, the Jew and the Gentile, are all in characteristic activity, each full of preparation and expectancy. *But faith waits for that which comes not with such things.* The rapture of the saints is part of a mystery, a part of "the hidden wisdom." The coming of the Son of God from heaven is a fact, as I judge, apart altogether from the history or the condition of the world around.

J. G. BELLETT.

A NIGHT OF PRAYER.

WE had been toiling away in our varied spheres of labour for the Lord for weeks and months, without seeing any manifest results. Everybody seemed to feel the dearth, and the want of spiritual power and freshness in carrying on the Lord's work. We came together one night to confer together about the condition of things. Various proposals were made by one and another, with the view of giving an impetus to the work. At last, one simple brother—a quiet worker in a hidden corner of the field—remarked, "I think we need a reviving in our own souls, and our hearts well searched by God, to begin with. I would suggest that we spend the night together, before the Lord in prayer." There was dead silence in the room, for we all felt our brother had struck the right chord. Nobody could object to the

proposal, so he fell on his knees, and in a moment more, we were all alongside of him. It was a wonderful prayer meeting that night, and we felt that God was among us of a truth. There was confession as well as prayer, and every mouth was opened. We continued several hours together praying, and we had the assurance, before we parted, that God had heard our cry. Nor were we disappointed, for very soon after, the stream of blessing began to flow, and many were the saved of the Lord. Dear fellow-believer, are you feeling a dearth of blessing in your service? Take the matter honestly and lay it before God. Invite your fellow-believers to join you in prayer. I do not mean a mere round of formal prayers, asking for everything and expecting nothing, but a time of deep searching of hearts before the Lord, to find out the cause of the lack of blessing. If you are honest with yourselves before God you will find it out—possibly where you least expected, and then it will become your responsibility to deal with it as God demands, and thus be delivered from its power.

BE STRONG.

Men may misjudge thy aim,
Think they have cause for blame,
Say thou art wrong!
Hold on thy quiet way;
Christ is the Judge—not they;
"Fear not!" "Be strong!"

DIVINE DISCIPLINE.—God's corrections all tell the need we have of Divine discipline, If we despise His correction, or impatiently struggle against it, we yield to the flesh, and only bring sharper measures upon ourselves.

R. C. CHAPMAN.

WEIGHTY WORDS AND PITHY SAYINGS

FROM THE MINISTRY OF THE LATE DONALD ROSS.

GRACE does not run in the blood, though it may often run in the *line*.

What I got over sixty years ago was not religion, but Christ, and what I have is in its tendencies like the flame, ever upward.

God has given to all, who receive His Christ, eternal life: it will neither drown, burn, nor kill. All who have it have it, for ever.

There was only one way that Noah could get out of the Ark, that was out at the top. So we who are saved will yet go up: the only way we can cease to be saints on earth, is to go up to be saints in heaven.

The believer is as safe now, though not as comfortable, as he will be in heaven.

No believer will make progress in his spiritual life, save as he day by day deals with the eternal God.

Disappointments are good things for us when they come from the Lord.

A household without prayer, is like a house without a roof, open to all the elements.

Consecration simply means, that you and all you have belong to God. Every beat of your pulse, every throb of your heart, every penny in your purse is His.

Unbelief always locks up God's cupboard, but faith takes the key of God's Word, and unlocking it finds that God is unchanged and still for us.

Evil speaking is an unmixed evil. It defiles the inventor of it, the hearer of it, and the repeater of it.

It is a well known fact, that there are those who neglect their own affairs, but have an insatiable yearning after meddling

with those of others. Such "clips" and "gossips" are a curse to any community.

In all matters go by the written Word of God. If you have no relish for the Word of God, you are a backslider.

In these times, the devil is moving man through his pride to set aside the Word of God, and substitute for it wrecked human reason.

Many are busily engaged squeezing into God's truth some fanciful meaning of their own, and then manifest their wonderful powers of teaching by squeezing out what they themselves put in, instead of trembling at the Word of the Lord.

Carnal believers will not endure the sound and healthy teaching of God's Word spoken in the Holy Ghost. They will rather run after the flattering, flash-in-the-pan talk of popular preachers, who take care not to touch their consciences. And as long as they pay for such garbage, they will get plenty of it.

Some assemblies of believers, which are continually hearing pleasant things and pandered to by their leaders, are like a pretty keepsake covered with a glass shade only to be admired. They are of no use whatever for God.

Unless assemblies do God's will, the devil will give them plenty of work, which they must do for their very existence.

Christians who are always talking about being in the right position, yet bringing forth no fruit to God, are like a hen sitting upon rotten eggs. The position is all right, but the condition is all wrong.

It pays to keep on good terms with the eternal God. Be right with God in your own soul first; there can be nothing right if that be wrong.

Brief Memorials of Donald Ross,

Pioneer Evangelist of the North of Scotland and United States of America.

"Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen . . . in Israel," was the Scripture that came to mind when the tidings reached us, late in February, that our beloved and highly esteemed brother, the Lord's aged and faithful servant, Mr Donald Ross, had fallen asleep on the 13th February, 1903, at Savannah, Georgia, United States of America, aged 81 years and 2 days.

His oft-expressed desire to die "in harness" was fulfilled; he finished his course at his loved employment of "breaking up fresh ground" and winning souls to the Saviour. Until within a week of his home-call to rest with Christ, he was able to go in and out speaking of "the balmy Name of Jesus," as he delighted to call it, and God continued to bless His servant's testimony to the ingathering of the lost. In him was wonderfully fulfilled the words of Psa. xcii. 14: "They shall still bring forth fruit in old age"; his bow abode in strength and his leaf was ever green. In his last letter to his loved ones at home he wrote: "Blessing continues here. There are now seven who claim to be saved. Two of them last week. All's well." And so the long-day labourer, the undaunted witness, the valiant warrior, the man of God, passed to his rest in the Paradise above. A brief sketch of his course, with a few loving recollections of the man and his work, may here be acceptable and helpful to the saints, until fuller Memorials appear.

Donald Ross was born in the parish of Alesch, Ross-shire, Scotland, on February 11th, 1822. He was blessed with godly parents, who revered and used the Word of God and taught its sacred truths to their children. When about the age of 15, while he was teaching in a country school some miles distant from his father's house, he was called to see his dying brother, by means of whose death he was deeply awakened to the reality of things eternal, and by the Spirit of God convicted of sin. Many have heard him tell with melting tenderness, how in great anguish of soul, crossing the hill of Knock alone, on a Thursday afternoon about five o'clock, the linnets warbling their evening song among the Scotch firs, he knelt alone with God, among the ferns and the heather, with no eye upon

him but that of the Eternal there. Convinced of his need of a Saviour, the words of Holy Scripture—first uttered by the Lord Jesus outside the gate of Gethsemane, while He faced the midnight crowd which had come out to capture Him—"If therefore ye seek Me, let *these* go their way" (John xviii. 8), flashed across his mind, and through them the great fundamental truth of substitution, entered in living power to his soul. "Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom v. 6), became the resting-place of his soul, and the keynote of his preaching, from that hour. To hear him describe the first experiences of his new-born soul on that hill-top—as some of us have frequently heard him, with marvellous power and sweetness—is a memory never to be forgotten. When he reached the miller's house where he was lodging, he told the miller and his wife, as soon as he had entered, that he was saved and knew it. They looked at him in wonder and declared he was mad, so uncommon was it in these days to hear the clear confession of Christ and of the knowledge of salvation through Him. But it was a blessed madness, for before a fortnight had come and gone, by means of the incessant prayers and witness-bearing of the young believer, the miller, his wife, and several of the family were converted.

In 1858, the North East Coast Mission was founded to provide for the spiritual needs of sailors, fishermen and their families, on that coast—a class which had been much neglected up till then. In 1859 Mr. Ross became the superintendent of that Mission, and for ten years in that position, with a staff of godly, earnest and active helpers, he was wonderfully used of God. During the Revival of 1859 and subsequent years, the coast villages of Aberdeenshire, Banffshire, and the Moray Firth, were the scenes of marvellous ingatherings to the kingdom of God, in some cases almost the entire population being brought under conviction.

The village of Footdee, at the mouth of the river and within the boundaries of the city of Aberdeen, was in 1861, the scene of a remarkable work of grace. Without intermission for two whole years, the meetings were continued nightly, by Mr. Ross,

assisted by others, with frequent prayer meetings during the day. The story of this wonderful work, and of the Revival that succeeded it in 1869, may one day be put into print, and the day of Christ will fully tell the results. Mr. Ross—who was by no means apt to err on the side of exaggeration in summing up results—calculated, that at least over six hundred were truly born of God at Footdee. The whole village was transformed. Some are still there living for God, who were converted then, and many have joined the “great congregation” above.

In 1870, Mr. Ross and most of those who had been associated with him in the N. E. C. Mission, impressed with the need of the inland towns and villages, severed themselves from that connection and began what was known as “The Northern Evangelistic Association,” in which there were twelve or more agents, whose labours were chiefly in the villages of the counties of Moray, Banff, Aberdeen, and Kincardine, where, during the years 1870-1-2, God did a mighty work, hundreds being gathered into the kingdom. A monthly paper edited by Mr. Ross, named “The Northern Intelligence,” gave stirring accounts of this work of grace in the various districts, and also of the vigorous opposition waged against it, especially by the religious leaders and the newspapers under their control. Never have we seen or heard of such abuse heaped upon men of God, as was directed against Mr. Ross and his co-workers during these years, the veteran evangelist himself always coming in for the fullest share. During all this time “The Northern Evangelists”—as they were called—were all nominally at least, identified with the Presbyterian churches, although year by year the link became thinner, until they were practically squeezed out, owing to the open hostility of most of the ministers. Sermons were preached against the work and the workers: pamphlets issued raising a hue and cry of “heresy.” Naturally the young converts had to seek their spiritual sustenance outside the denominations, which most of them did, with the result, that they were cast upon God and the Word of His grace. In 1872, an old chapel was rented in the Gallowgate, Aberdeen, and nightly meetings carried on in it by Mr. Ross and others. Some wonderful scenes took place there, which space forbids us describing. About this time Mr. Ross, and several others of the

evangelists saw in the Word of God, that it is the duty and privilege of all believers to be “buried with Christ in baptism.” They had been vigorously opposed to “dipping,” and in their ignorance and prejudice had openly spoken against it, warning their converts in many cases against the “water folk.” It took some grace to go back and tell those whom they had misled, the truth, and in some cases they had to meet and do battle with the arguments with which they themselves had formerly armed and provided them. But the Word of the Lord triumphed, and many were baptized; others, resisting the truth, sank back into worldly religion. Mr. Ross was baptized between 5 and 6 in the morning, in the river Dee, by Mr. John Davidson, farmer, Gowanwell, in the presence of his two sons and daughter, who came to witness it. With a hearty “Praise the Lord,” the aged warrior—for he was then about 50, and grey in the Master's service—came up out of the water and went on his way rejoicing. The same year, a little company of believers began to gather in the Name of the Lord Jesus alone, according to Matthew xviii. 20, outside of all denominations, in the Gallowgate old chapel, and all over the North similar gatherings sprang up. God had a people prepared for the truth—already virtually outside the sects from sheer starvation—and as soon as they learned the way of the Lord from His Word, they followed it. God greatly blessed Mr. Ross' labours in the old chapel; sinners were saved, saints were added, and soon a larger hall had to be found, at 6 St. Paul Street, which was occupied by the assembly in 1873, and where still the saints gather, four new companies having “hived off” in other parts of the city and suburbs, all continuing to assemble for ministry of the Word in St. Paul Street Hall, every Lord's Day afternoon.

In 1875, Mr. Ross with his family, removed to Edinburgh, where he had much to contend with, and many trials of faith. God used his ministry both in the city and in the mining villages of Bonnyrigg and Rosewell, in the latter of which God did a mighty work, through him and others. In 1876, Mr. Donald Munro—who had for many years been Mr. Ross' co-labourer in the North, and who had been for some years in Canada—had meetings in Edinburgh, and when he returned to America he was accompanied by Mr. Ross, in the fall of 1876.

From that time until he was called home, the United States, with their teeming thousands, were the field of his labours. In Chicago, Kansas City, San Francisco, Los Angeles, he pioneered, preached and laboured, throwing his whole energy of soul and body into the work. The amount of land covered, the millions of tracts distributed, the number of sinners saved, of saints fed, cheered, warned and girded afresh for the fight, eternity alone will fully tell. We hope—if God permit—to give a brief resumé of the mighty work done there, with narratives and incidents from fellow-labourers, in the "Recollections" which will shortly appear.

In the summer of 1902, he paid his last visit to Scotland. Many who met him saw, that his elastic step and bodily vigour were passing away, and the frailties of old age setting in, while the old spiritual strength and fervency still remained. He left for America suddenly, not feeling well. In December, 1902, he went to Savannah, Ga., partly to escape the rigours of the winter, chiefly to help a small assembly of saints and preach Christ in a new field. For about two months he was able to go in and out preaching Christ, and then the trouble from which he had previously suffered assumed an acute form, and on the afternoon of February 13th, with his son Charles by his side, the aged warrior, the veteran evangelist, with his dimming eye, gave an upward look of expectancy, and went in to be "with the Lord" whom He loved, and in whose holy and honourable service he had spent a long, laborious and fruitful life. The church and the world are both poorer by the home-call of Donald Ross, although comparatively few in either will ever probably know it. He had to be known intimately to be understood and valued. His inner life was the secret of His power; He lived in the presence of God; he breathed the atmosphere of Eternity; he saw things in the light of the judgment-throne. Never have we heard any man preach to sinners with such solemnity, yet with melting tenderness; scarcely do we expect to hear his like again. His warnings were tremendous; his appeals irresistible; men had either to yield or flee. Bold as a lion, yet tender as a lamb, with a passion for souls, a heart for God's people, a grasp of God's Word and confidence in its power, we have never seen equalled. Thus the man of God lived; thus he died. Farewell, beloved Donald Ross; we shall meet thee

again in the morning, in the fair image of thy Lord. Bright will be thy crown of rejoicing there, in the ransomed throng that will greet thee, fruit of thy toils and tears, and of the travail of thy soul. From fields untouched, until thy ploughshare reached them, the golden sheaves shall come, to grace the heavenly harvest-home. Rest, warrior of the Lord; with Christ rest, sweetly rest. J. R.

IN MEMORIAM: DONALD ROSS.

"Valiant in fight" (Heb. xi. 34).

LIKE as the SUN from *East to West* doth run,
So was *thy* shining in this world below—
First in the Eastern, then the Western spheres,
For more than three-score out of four-score years !
As *pioneer*, prince in that art wert thou ;
Not building on foundations other's laid,
But "*breaking up new ground*" in virgin soil
In which to sow the seed with faith and prayer,
Like as a *lion* thou didst face the *foe*,
Yet lamb-like with God's flock thou didst appear
With shepherd's heart for all the blood-bought sheep.
Well we remember how thy *faith* in GOD
Waxed strong, as thou triumphantly didst cry—
"What's *that* to GOD?"—when difficulties came !
And when, as age increased, thy friends said, "Rest ;
Come, *settle down* and take thy rest below."
Thy voice rang out in tones which echo still—
No; never "*settle down*!" 'tis *up* I go,
To *settle "up"* with HIM before the throne ;
His *servant* will not rest where HE had none !"
Thus didst thou die in harness, and hast risen
To *settle up* above, "*with CHRIST*" in Heaven !
"Oh, valiant warrior, welcome, welcome home ;
Well hast thou fought the fight, with shield of faith
Quenching the fiery darts, and buckling on
The Spirit's two-edged sword 'gainst self and sin :
The helmet of salvation on thy head,
And feet well shod with God's own gospel—"Peace,
Peace through the blood" CHRIST shed on Calvary.
(For peace through other means can ne'er be made).
Thus ran thy feet through all the paths of life,
Till now they tread with us the peaceful shore."
Such would thy welcome be within the gates,
Whose pearl-built portals thou hast passed within,
And gained "*abundant entrance*" into bliss.

Ivy Bank, Leominster, M. M. D.
Recollections, by Geo. Aadm, John Scott and others, next month.

CONFIRMING THE DISCIPLES.

IN the service of the Lord's Gospellers of early times, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, there seems to have been one outstanding feature, which is much neglected in this busy day. In Acts xiii. 1-3, we are told that Paul and Barnabas were called, and sent forth with the fellowship of the church of which they formed a part, on a service for which the Holy Ghost had fitted them, followed by a stirring account of their first evangelistic journey, with its trials, persecutions, preachings, and conversions. Then, in Chapter xiv. 21, we are told—"They returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and to Antioch, *confirming* the souls of the disciples and *exhorting* them to continue in the faith." And still later it is recorded that Paul said to Barnabas his co-labourer in the Gospel—"Let us go *again* and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the Word of the Lord, and *see how they do*" (Acts xv. 36). There is not much of this kind of service now-a-days. We hear frequently of special efforts and Gospel campaigns, with reports of considerable numbers of converts. But what is done to feed and confirm the souls of these young disciples? In many cases simply nothing: they are left to find their way very much as they like, or as others lead them, with the result that a large proportion are swamped in the world. Of course, it is not to be assumed that all who profess, are really born again. Evangelists who are the most eager to number converts are not generally those whose work yields the most solid results, as by observation and from painful experience many can testify. It need not be wondered if there

be little desire found in such, to "go again" and "see how they do." In many cases there would be nothing to "see" but a mass of wrecked profession, which believers in the place have to bear the shame and reproach connected with, for years to come, causing greater hindrance to the spread of Gospel than all the opposition of the world and the devil put together.

But there is the danger of neglect where real work has been wrought, often perhaps from lack of consideration of the needs of young believers. They are but "young" and "tender," like the lambs of Jacob's flock, and the children of his family, easily overdriven (Gen. xxxiii. 13), subject to the temptations and seductions of the world, and liable to be overcome by the plague of their own hearts. Their souls need to be *confirmed*—that is, as the word means, established in the faith, settled on the rock-fast foundations of the Word, strengthened in the grace of God so as to be able to resist the enemy. And the first responsibility of this ministry lies with those who have been the means of their conversion. There is a relationship between the soul-winner and his child in the faith that no one else can enter upon, and a responsibility arising therefrom that none save he can fulfil. Even if not personally gifted as a teacher, he may exhort his children in the faith to continue in the grace of God, and if right with God, he can continually "bow his knees" on their behalf and bear them before the throne. And if personally deprived of the privilege of visiting them, as Paul was the Philippians when a prisoner in Rome, he may send some Timothy to "know their state" (Phil. ii. 19). There may not be the enthusiasm or publicity in such work as in Gospel

preaching, but it is a service held in high esteem in heaven, and if rendered after a godly manner it will, sooner or later, prove its worth and yield its fruit on earth. There are young believers everywhere sorely in need of such a ministry. Many of them have only heard a fragmentary Gospel, enough to save, but not to loose them from legal and traditional bondage and lead their souls into the fulness of the light and liberty of the children of God. They need the full-orbed Gospel of the grace and glory of Christ, of death and resurrection with Him as taught in the first eight chapters of Romans. There are many hungering souls who need to "to know the truth," and under its warm and melting power, to be set free; to be rooted and grounded, stablished, strengthened and settled, so that winds of doctrine and craftiness of men may not turn them aside from the Lord. May God give us hearts to seek them out and to help them on, because they "belong to Christ." It is not necessarily in public meetings that such work is best carried on. The homely Bible reading, the conversational meeting, and the hallowed season of united prayer, when all are bowed together before the throne of grace, afford the best opportunity for the exercise of such a ministry. And individual help by letter and wholesome reading is open, where no closer dealing is possible. There is no end of scope, no lack of sphere: the great essential is a heart for Christ, love for His saints, and a willing mind to walk and serve in lowly paths, seeking only to do His will and gain His approval.

And what a rich award awaits
 All who have daily striven,
 To guide them in the narrow path,
 That leadeth up to heaven.

THE SEVEN GOLDEN LAMPSTANDS;

OR, THE CHURCH IN TESTIMONY.

Revelation—Chapters I., II., III.

BY ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.—PART IV.

WE now come to the fifth promise at the close of the message to the church in Sardis, "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot his name out of the Book of Life, but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels" (chap. iii. 5).

The white raiment calls our attention to the priesthood. We have seen Israel's failure in the Book of Numbers, as a pilgrim people, journeying through the wilderness; and in Joshua and Judges, as the Lord's host, charged to fight His battles in Canaan. Now our thoughts are carried to the First Book of Samuel and to the failure of the priesthood recorded there. Eli's sons made themselves vile, and their father restrained them not (1 Sam. iii. 13). In consequence of this, God cut them off from the priesthood; but, in contrast to this, we read in Rev. xx. 6, that those who have part in the first resurrection, shall be priests of God and of Christ during the thousand years. Thus the backward look and the forward look are two things that follow in consecutive order after the matters which had been referred to by the previous promises.

But this promise speaks of something more than the white raiment of the priesthood. The Lord adds, "And I will not blot his name out of the Book of Life." Many have argued from these words that there must be some whose names will be blotted out of that Book. "Why," they ask, "should the Lord give a special

promise to the overcomers that their names should not be blotted out, if no name, once inscribed there, could ever be removed?" And this argument has been used to justify the idea that it is possible for a child of God to be eternally lost. But it proceeds entirely upon a false assumption. The contrast is not between some names which will and others which will not be blotted out from the Book of Life. On the contrary, it is between two books; one, the register of the earthly priesthood (see Ezra ii. 62), from which names may be removed, as in the case of Eli and all his house; the other, the Book of Life, or register of the heavenly priesthood; from which no name will ever be blotted out. The names enrolled there are of those who are born of God, and are, therefore, overcomers.

We come next to the sixth promise, in the message to the church at Philadelphia. "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God; and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God; and I will write upon him My new name" (Rev. iii. 12). Following on the grievous failure of the priesthood, the two books of Kings present us with a sorrowful history of further declension and backsliding. There were occasional times of revival, and individual records stand out here and there in bright contrast with the darkness of the general picture. But the whole culminates in the last chapter of the second book, when God's long-suffering has been exhausted, and the city of Jerusalem is broken up, and the temple of God is burnt with fire. Not only so, but it is

specially recorded that the two brazen pillars which stood in front of the temple porch, and whose names spoke of the strength and stability of the whole house (see 1 Kings vii. 21), were broken up, and the brass of them was carried away to Babylon.

The sixth promise, which we are now considering, contains the most significant reference to all this; while, in blessed contrast, the overcomer is promised that he shall be a pillar in God's temple, and that the Name of God and the Name of the City of God, and the new Name of the Lord Jesus shall be written upon him. The myriads of bricks found in the ruins of Babylon bear, every one, the name of the builder of the city. "Is not this great Babylon that I have built," he cried, "by the might of my power and for the honour of my majesty?" (Dan. iv. 30), and he was determined that every whit of it should proclaim his name. "The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb" are the temple of the holy city (Rev. xxi. 22); but the overcomers are pillars of the temple, and the name of the city and the names of God and the Lamb are written on each one.

And now we come to the last promise. "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" (Rev. iii. 21). Notwithstanding the overthrow of the city of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple, by Nebuchadnezzar, God permitted a remnant of His people to return from Babylon, and to rebuild the city and temple; and, at a later date, holders of the office of high priest actually had themselves crowned, and assumed the title of king. It was only, however, when the long pro-

mised Son of David and Son of Abraham appeared, that the kingdom of heaven was proclaimed, and the true King was presented for Israel's acceptance. But, though He came to His own possessions, His own people received Him not, and as they rejected the King, the promised kingdom was withdrawn, only to be set up after the present dispensation is ended. This closes Israel's history, and the promise we are now considering looks back to their rejection of their King, and to God's consequent rejection of them as a nation. But it looks on to the time when the overcomers share the throne of the Lord Jesus Himself. It is not a question of rule over the nations on earth, but of sitting down with Christ. It is a heavenly scene that is described in Rev. xxii. 1-5, and its last words are, "and they shall reign for ever and ever."

In this way we see that, by means of these seven promises, the "things which are," or the messages to the seven churches, are made to serve as reminders of things which had been in the past ages, and as pledges of blessings to be bestowed upon God's people in the ages to come. And this confirms, in the most emphatic way, the thought, that these same messages present a picture to us of the course of professing Christendom during the present age. It has been urged by some, as an objection to this view, that it makes these messages into a prophecy concerning the Church, whereas prophecy only deals with Israel, as God's people on the earth. But symbols, even though set in a definite order which shall be found to correspond with the order in which the things symbolized shall take place, must not be confounded with prophecy. The story of Sarah and Hagar with their two sons, was not a prophecy but a historic

narrative. Nevertheless, it was a prophetic group of symbols, and is interpreted as such by the apostle Paul in writing to the Galatians. In the same way these seven messages were messages to then existing Churches, and are not a prophecy in the strict sense of the word, though they form a series of prophetic symbols. Those who raise the objection referred to further deny that the messages were addressed to existing Churches at all, and assert that they are intended for seven Jewish synagogues that will be in existence after the Church has been taken from the earth. It is surely sufficient refutation of such a notion, that the Lord commands John to write what he sees in a book, and to send it to the Seven Churches, and that the apostle consequently opens his introductory words with the address, "John, to the Seven Churches which are in Asia: Grace be to you and peace" (compare verses 11 and 4 of Rev. i.).

SOWING IN FAITH.

I know my hand may never reap its sowing,
 And yet some other may ;
 And I may even never see it growing,
 So short my little day.
 Still must I sow, though now I go forth
 weeping :
 I cannot, dare not stay :
 God grant a harvest, though I may be
 sleeping
 Under the shadows gray.

UNCHARITABLE JUDGMENT.—Let us beware, lest we be ensnared into the habit of harshly judging others, remembering the word concerning all who are Christ's, "Thou hast loved *them* as Thou hast loved Me."—*R. C. Chapman.*

"HIS OWN."

(JOHN x. 27; xv. 8-14; xx. 17).

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY MAX ISAAC REICH.
PART II.

WE next come to "My disciples." The subject of discipleship is a very different one. "Disciple" is from the same word as "discipline," and disciples are just those who are disciplined, educated, trained to follow Christ. The whole secret of discipline is wrapped up in the words, "It is enough for the disciple that he be *as his master.*" The end of all discipline is to make disciples like the Master, to perpetuate in Christians Christ's life, to be formed into His character. We read of "the Gospel of the *grace* of God" and "the Gospel of the kingdom of God." The Gospel of the grace of God takes me to heaven, the Gospel of the kingdom teaches me how to live on earth. The Gospel of the kingdom teaches me to own the supremacy of the rejected One. All the operations of God in me now, are to lead me to own and "sanctify as Lord" in my heart while here on the earth, the One whom God has enthroned. How is this to be brought about? The words of the Lord Jesus tell us: "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart" (Matth. xi. 29). We are called to learn of Christ; called to follow the Lamb; to live the life of the Lamb; to tread the path which the sacred feet of the Lamb have trod. And where did that pathway lead Him? It led Him to the Cross. We see the Lamb now in the midst of the throne. The Revelation might be called the "unveiling of Jesus Christ as the Lamb." There we get the blood of the Lamb, the book of the Lamb, the glory of the Lamb, the throne of the Lamb, the war of the Lamb, the marriage of the Lamb, the bride

of the Lamb. The Lamb is the Light of the age to come. Some one has said—"He fetched His glory out of the depths by the way of the Cross." If *we* want to reach it, we must go the same way. If we are willing to follow the Lamb "whithersoever He goeth," we shall eventually reach the place to which He came, and the place where He now is.

I love to think that the future belongs to the Lamb. It does not belong to the first man and his progeny at all, or to the rebel Satan, but to the Lamb, who went down to the very bottom for the glory of God. Discipleship means cutting adrift from everything of the first man to follow Him. If you follow the Lamb He will not lead you to earthly honour; He will not lead you into earthly pleasures or earthly greatness; you will not become a Member of Parliament, or sit on the Magistrates' bench. Your name will not be emblazoned on earth's roll of fame; you will be unknown, rejected, as the Lamb was. As you follow the Lamb you will live the life He lived, and what was that life? A life of meekness. You may study to be meek outwardly, a perfect gentleman to appearance, and thoroughly selfish within. But He was "meek and lowly *in heart.*" As you follow the Lamb you will bear other peoples' burdens as He bore them. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ"—the law of love, the principle of His life. The secret of it all is, "Take my yoke upon you . . . for My yoke is easy and My burden is light." There is a difference between the yoke and the burden; the yoke helps us to carry the burden. When I was abroad, I saw two oxen drawing a heavy load up a steep place, and they would not have been able to do it

at all, if they had not had a perfectly-fitting yoke. So Christ's yoke is given to lighten the labour. It puts us in the place of subjection to the Master, in the place where the Master can do as He pleases with us. The Lord commands us to "take" the yoke, in order that we may be able to bear the burdens of life; and His yoke is easy, His burden light. Moses' yoke was not easy; it was a yoke of bondage "which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear." Put a child of God under the yoke of Moses and he will find it will not fit, no one ever found it an easy yoke. As you take the yoke of *Christ* you will not be worrying others with your burden, but you will be able to bear your own burden and their's too. You will not be going about with a sour countenance, but with a beaming face, because you have learned the secret of rest. That is following the Lamb.

Again, the disciple must learn to die. There has been a great deal of talk savouring of sentimentality and mysticism about this learning to die. But how do I learn death? It is only as I daily take up my cross and follow Him. What is this cross? It is not a sentimental or mystical cross, but a very real, practical, tangible thing. It may be a letter I have received, a rebuke I have not merited, some trouble in my family or business; I must take it up and bear it after Him. As I do this I "learn to die"; *self* learns to die. Wherein did man's fall lie? It was when Satan produced in him a false consciousness of self. But we read that Christ "was manifested to destroy the works of the Devil," and how does He destroy *this* work of the Devil? Simply by putting Christ in the place of self, by putting Adam *out* and bringing Christ *in*. Beloved, are we making pro-

gress in this pathway? We speak of self-will, self-seeking, self-aggrandizement, and self-righteousness is the last phase of self to die. It clings to us, it pervades all we do, it mingles even with our worship and with our service, however, praiseworthy our motives may be. Oh! we need to learn in the presence of God all the ramifications of sin in us, in order that they may be dragged into the light and rebuked. If we follow the Lamb, we follow the One who said in Eternity "I *delight* to do Thy will O my God"; who said here on earth "My *meat* is to do the will of Him that sent me" and who in Gethsemane's garden, with all the sorrows, all the darkness, all the agony of the cross looming before Him, said "Not My will but Thine be done." We must learn to give up our will and embrace the will of Another—that is discipleship. Are you prepared for that? You say "If I do so, my life will be a failure." Well, the life of Christ appeared to men the greatest failure there ever was; it ended on a cross. We have little conception what that meant, there was no degradation like it. But was there ever a life so successful, so fruitful? The life that produced the most abundant fruit, the life that was most truly successful, ended on a cross. There are many names which are household words to-day, names of men of science, men who have obtained military glory, men who are demi-gods with the people, but they are names written only on the sands of time, which shall be wiped out when the tides of the ocean of Eternity sweep over them. But the humblest name of a real follower of the Lamb shall be in everlasting remembrance.

Discipleship leads to *friendship*, and this is something more. "Ye are *My friends* if ye do whatsoever I command you." This

is a relationship we know as we accept Him absolutely as our Commander, just as soldiers at the front absolutely accept their chief as their commander. "If ye do this," the Lord says, "you shall be promoted, you shall be My friends." I know of no higher promotion than this. All believers may be the friends of Christ, to enter into this inner circle of bosom-fellowship where He can open up His heart, where He can communicate His secrets, but do all enter into the enjoyment of it? It is a blessed thing to be there, behind the scenes with Christ. There, when all appears dark outwardly, we learn that His purposes can never miscarry. We are in all the blessedness, all the sunshine, all the calm of His presence, so that when others are cast down we are not discouraged or disheartened. We know what the Lord is doing, as Abraham knew, as Moses knew, for He does not do anything without telling His friends.

We come now to the last thing—"My brethren." Mary stood at the sepulchre weeping. She had lost a home on earth for Christ had gone, and earth was nothing without Him—her heart was broken. True, she was seeking a dead Christ, but, though dead, it was *Christ* she was seeking. She had seen angels but they could not take the place of Christ. Then the Lord reveals Himself to her in that one word "Mary," and in the exuberance of her joy she would hold Him here. She wanted to have the same kind of acquaintance with Him as she had had before His death and resurrection. But the Lord says "Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father; and to My God and your God." He leads

her away from sight to faith, but He does not make her a loser but a gainer. He says "The touch now is to be of a spiritual nature. You shall touch Me now, you shall know Me now as never before, not as the Jewish Messiah but as the Head of the new creation. My Father—your Father: I give you My access there, My communion, My joy, I share them all in fellowship in the sphere of that new creation." Many believers to-day want to know Christ as the Magdalene did. They say "Oh, if I had only been on the earth when He was here, how good it would have been, for me. I would have sat at His feet as Mary did, I would have leaned on His bosom as John did." But the Lord said "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you." But now the Comforter has come, and makes Christ known to us. Believers often make the same mistake as Martha made. She limited the Lord three times; first as to His visible presence, "if Thou had'st been here;" then as to time, "I know that He shall rise again at the last day;" and lastly, as to the extent of His power, "for by this time he stinketh." We often do the same, but this is corrected as we learn the lesson the Lord taught in John xx., as we are weaned from sight to faith, from what the natural eye can see to what is invisible, as we learn to live the *life of faith*. Then Christ, unseen in the glory, becomes real to us on the earth; we are linked to Him there, we have access there, where our home, our life, and our sphere of interests are. The blessed Lord would lead our hearts from earth to heaven, from the visible to the unseen. It is the only secret of growth. It is only while this faith is in exercise that our "inward man is renewed day by day."

A LETTER OF EXHORTATION.

Written by the late DONALD ROSS, over thirty years ago, to one of the first little Assemblies of believers gathered unto the Name of the Lord Jesus, in the North of Scotland, at Old Rayne, Aberdeenshire. Its wholesome and weighty words of exhortation, counsel and warning, are just as much needed now as they were then and there. May God abundantly bless them.

“IT occurred to me, that if a few words of exhortation were in the Holy Ghost given to you as a Church, they might not only be well received but also useful.

I. Your existence as separate from the surrounding confusion is scarcely worth its room in God's earth, excepting in so far as you walk in the Spirit; in that case only do you walk with God and God walk in you, and you look at all your surroundings from God's standpoint.

II. In order to your spirituality or walking with God, there must be communion with Jesus, and as all you are and all you need is in Him only, so be taken up with Him. “They went and told Jesus”—is said of others. Let this be true of you also.

III. As a Church,—“Bear ye one another's burdens.” This is different from bearing one another's faults. Improper conduct in any one of your number, rebuke sharply, lovingly, and honestly, “hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.” When any one of your number confesses, forgive, as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. But let not sin lie by any means on a brother's head. Pride will be your greatest trial.

VI. It has been often said by wise people—“Consult the town clerk of Ephesus, who said, ‘Do nothing rashly.’” And take heed you do not mistake mere natural, fleshly excitement, for the holy, near, calm joy and power of the Holy Ghost. All are

more or less liable to this error, especially youth, with strong tempers, passions, &c.

V. Give to the people and to one another, God's Word, and you will find it will be offensive enough, without any human additions. Give them also the Cross, which cuts off everything. The offence of both truth and Cross will be quite sufficient to make you a separate people without any other separating element.

VI. Beware of raillery. Read 2 Peter ii. 10-11, and Jude 8-9 verses. Draw a distinction between enlightening one another and raillery; especially in preaching the Gospel to sinners, beware of what you say, for the devil will take up the attention of the people with the *out-of-place* things in your address, instead of with the truth you present. Have you noticed how careful the Lord was, in making arrangements that there should be nothing peculiar in the *servicing priests*, lest the people should be taken up with their malformations rather than with the Lord Himself.

VII. Let your *young men especially* take care of pride and conceit. Let “the younger be subject to the elder.” If they are not in a spirit to receive advice, they are not in a state to preach, and when they do preach, let them beware of mere empty, frothy, volubility, which is of no use to man or beast, but rather injurious to the hearers, and besides, raises up obstacles against others preaching. Many a meeting have I seen killed by young men. Let the young men study their Bibles and *know* the truth they preach, and never preach other people's preaching. The person whether old or young who has no pleasure or joy in searching his Bible, is not in a state to preach to anybody else, and much better he should not do it.

VII. "Walk wisely toward them that are without." "Walk honestly towards them that are without," and the Lord give you grace in all things.

Your servant in the Gospel,
DONALD ROSS.

Aberdeen, Jan. 13, 1872.

It was given to the Lord's servant—now gone to his rest—in a measure we have seldom seen equalled, to discern the need and to supply the fitting word of warning, counsel, or rebuke, as well as the message of exhortation, comfort and cheer to the Lord's people. The evils pointed out to that infant assembly over thirty years ago, visible to the spiritual eye then, are still with us. Few there are among the people of God, who have any sense of what is due to His Holy Name, but have mourned over their presence and withering effects in the assemblies of the saints.

The time of the end we are told in the Scripture, is to be marked by increasing insubjection to God and man, and by the setting aside of all authority, Divine and human, for the unrestrained self-will that owns no claim, and honours no rule, either in the family, the church, or the world. And the spirit that is rampant among men is always a snare to saints, especially to such as are in danger of forming alliance and affinity with the world, or who are on the way thither. May the Lord graciously preserve the spirits and keep the feet of His own, and use the words of His departed servant to this end.

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MINISTRY.—True ministry is not the setting forth of our own thoughts, or the opinions of others, but receiving of the fulness of Christ, and giving it out to other s.—*Thos. Newberry.*

TRUE SERVICE FOR CHRIST.

TRUE service begins with Christ, who is the Head, and when Christ is forgotten, then the service is defective ; it has lost connection with the spring and fountain of all service, because it is from the Head that *all* the body, by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, increaseth. The body is of Christ, and He loves it as He loves Himself ; and every one who would serve it will best learn to do so by knowing His heart and purposes towards it. In a word, it is Christ who serves, though it may be through us. We are but "joints and bands." If we are not *derivative* and *communicative from Christ*, we are useless. To be useful, my eye and heart must be on Christ, and not on the issue of my service ; though, if true to Him, the end will vindicate me too, however disheartening the interval. He who judges of his service by present appearances will judge by the blossom, and not by the fruit ; and after all, the service is not for the sake of the Church, but for the sake of Christ ; and if He be served in the Church, though the Church own it not, yet Christ being served, He will own it. Now the constant effort of Satan is to disconnect in our minds Christ from our service ; and this much more than any of us, perhaps, have tully discovered. Whether in reading, or praying, or speaking, how seldom, if we judge ourselves, do we find that we act simply as towards Christ, and Him alone ! How often may sentimentality and natural feeling affect us in our service, instead of simple love to Him !

No service in itself is small,
None great though earth it fill ;
But that is small that seeks its *own*,
And great that seeks GOD'S will.

Answers to Correspondents.

J. C. R.—The best book on the subject of Early Missionaries known to us is, "Conquests of the Cross," in three volumes, published by Cassell & Co., London.

YOUNG BELIEVER.—You would require to be very sure that God is leading you forth to an unknown land, where you will be largely deprived of the fellowship of saints, and with fresh forms of temptation and allurements everywhere around. Do not be led by feelings or circumstances. Jonah's ship lay in the Joppa harbour, there was an empty berth, and he had the money to pay his fare; all this looked providential, but they only favoured a course of disobedience to God, as he and others since who have been guided by outward circumstances, have learned to their cost. A restless will and an insubject spirit, fretting under parental or other restraint, is much more likely to be the root of your desire to go abroad, than the will of God. Nothing can be lost by a little patience. Wait upon God, and above all, take no advice or counsel from worldly-minded men who do not acknowledge God, but walk in the light of their own reasoning.

J. E. B., BIRMINGHAM.—If the sin of railery or evil speaking, with the view of damaging a fellow-believer's character, is allowed to remain unjudged in the Assembly, either from indifference or because one or more who take a chief place are involved, you may depend upon it God, who is very jealous of His Holy Name and for the honour of His saints, will, sooner or later, deal judiciously with those who are guilty. It would be a great mistake for the offended and sinned against one, to take the matter out of His hands. Having affirmed his innocence of the charge made maliciously against him, leave God to do the rest, which He always does in a way worthy of Himself. Meanwhile, let him seek to learn the lesson God would teach by permitting such a trial to come upon him, for which there is always a "need be." Remember Joseph, falsely condemned, in Potiphar's prison; David, patient under Shimei's stone throwing; and greatest of all, the Son of God silent at Pilate's bar. To all, in God's due time, deliverance came; they were raised to honour and their accusers were overthrown. There is nothing on earth so hard, yet nothing so Christlike as to patiently suffer the scourge of the tongue, and

remain silent under the vilest slanders, which have sometimes just as much appearance of truth as carries them along.

JOHN G., CLASGOW.—There is one way open to you to help young believers, which it seems to us is not so much valued or taken advantage of as it was years ago, that is to invite them to your house and have homely reading of the Word and free conversation on its truths. Many who have little convenience in their homes for quiet reading would greatly appreciate an hour thus spent, and would be greatly helped thereby. What is the use of discussing the pros and cons of going here and there to preach, while open doors like these are not taken advantage of. No fear of getting young believers to come. Many are gasping for the pure milk of the Word, and the devil is on the move everywhere with his poison. Be like Melchisedec and get at them first, before the Sodom king comes round the corner.

RECOLLECTIONS AND REMINISCENCES

Of the late DONALD ROSS, Pioneer Evangelist.

FROM OLD FRIENDS AND FELLOW-LABOURERS.

"Although I knew Mr. Ross before, I was not intimately acquainted with him till the latter end of 1869. He had some time previously severed his connection with the North East Coast Mission, and set himself to evangelise the inland towns and villages, assisted by a number of earnest labourers. His success was tremendous. He awoke a gale, and sounded a blast that disturbed and shook the North of Scotland from the Grampians to the shores of Caithness. Previous to that time there were few, very few assemblies gathered unto the Name of the Lord in the North of Scotland, but in course of a few years, such assemblies were to be found throughout the whole country, most of them founded either directly or indirectly through the service of our departed brother.

Subsequently to his work in the North, he removed with his family to Edinburgh. While residing there, he did much substantial work in that city and in the villages of Midlothian, of which I was a witness, and had the privilege of being a sharer, the fruits of which remain in many parts of the world to the present time. As a pioneer evangelist, a breaker-up of fresh ground, Mr. Ross

was incomparably the most diligent servant of God I ever had the privilege of knowing."

SHREWSBURY.

JOHN SCOTT.

"I have never met any one who so 'travailed in birth' for souls as he did. A young lad whom I sent with a conveyance to the station to meet him in 1869, told, that no sooner was Mr. Ross seated beside him than he began to pray for his conversion, and before very long he was converted, and has gone on well ever since. The desire for souls was the ruling passion of his life. He spared no pains, and was deterred by no difficulties in his efforts to carry the Gospel to the neglected and the poor. He was very quick in gauging the spiritual condition of those with whom he came in contact. Believers with bad consciences gave him a wide berth, unless they were prepared to be searched out and put right. 'Revelling in doctrine and living in sin,' he would say, and under his ministry the truth so told on the conscience, that sin had to be dealt with and confessed, or the hearer disappear. Had we such ministry in the Spirit's power now in assemblies of believers (and it is greatly needed), no doubt many who are unprepared to stand the truth and be set right with God by it, would be blown outside them."

STRANRAER.

GEORGE ADAM.

"Mr. Ross was mightily used of God during the year 1865 in Newburgh, also in Fraserburgh and Cullen. Very many were saved at that time. He was a most self-denying labourer, often lodging in very comfortless quarters, in order that he might be in the midst of the work of God. On one occasion I remember him telling, that his lodgings were so untidy, and the food set before him so unclean, that the only thing he could eat in confidence was a hen's egg. We had him with us for a week on his last visit to Scotland in 1902, and had much fellowship with him in the things of God. One had to know him privately to fully appreciate his worth. 'Do not expect much from me,' he wrote from Wick previous to his visit, 'I am getting old and decrepit, and more in need of getting than giving. When one reaches my age, his theology is boiled down to—Christ died for the ungodly.' We all felt the parting very much. He said—"I'll soon be going home. All is well. He has the Government upon his shoulders. And

now the aged warrior is at rest. He died in harness as he so much desired, a pioneer to the end."

NEW DEER.

JOHN DAVIDSON.

In the Spring of 1870, three godly men—all of them now with the Lord—Alex. Stewart, Old Rayne; Robert Philip, Oyne; and Andrew Clark, Buchanston, met together for prayer, to ask God for a reviving among His own people and an awakening among the perishing. Vital godliness and spiritual life were at very low ebb in these times, alike among ministers and people. In answer to prayer, the Lord sent His servant Donald Ross to begin meetings, which were held nightly in Andrew Clark's barn at Buchanston. Part of each day was spent by Mr. Ross alone with God among the broom and whins, praying for a manifestation of His power in the awakening and salvation of sinners. No doubt it was prayer that brought down the blessing. Souls were saved: other labourers followed, and the work spread to Oyne, Insch, and Old Rayne. The whole district was stirred and shaken by power from on high, and there was great opposition raised against the work, especially by the ministers and religious people. The Lord used this to shake His people out from the denominations, and, in the first instance, they met for prayer and reading of the Word. Light arose, and they found it written that it was their privilege to gather simply as disciples of Christ, in His Name alone, to break bread on the first day of the week, which they did first on Lord's Day, April 23rd, 1871, in a joiner's shop at Old Rayne, and there the Lord manifested Himself and gathered His own. Our dear departed brother Ross, was largely instrumental in the great and blessed work which the Lord wrought in these parts, and we all loved and esteemed him very much."

OYNE.

GEO. TAYLOR.

Fallen Asleep.

The Lord continues to call home to His presence and their rest, well-known and beloved labourers, men of God whose service, as we reckon, was much needed among the saints, but for whom the Lord, the Sovereign Head, has willed a better, yea, the "very far better" portion of being with Himself. To His perfect will we bow, assured that He doeth all things well, and that the home-call of His devoted servants has its message for us, as surely as

their ministry had when they were with us. First, we have to record the falling asleep of our brother,

John Scott, of Shrewsbury,

on April 6th, in his 75th year, after a week's illness. He was an earnest, enthusiastic worker, and in harness up to the last. In his removal from earth we lose a personal friend and fellow-worker of by-gone years, in whose fellowship we had many happy times amid scenes of revival and ingathering never to be forgotten.

Mr. Scott shared in the wave of blessing that swept over Aberdeenshire in 1870, and was one of the first to gather simply in the Name of the Lord, in the little Assembly at Old Rayne. He began to preach in these parts while following his calling as a gardener, and was much in the company of Donald Ross, whom he held in high esteem, and to whom he always acknowledged he owed much in the Lord. In 1873, he gave himself wholly to the Lord's service, and for some months preached and taught in the Garioch district and in Morayshire, and in 1874 went South, where he laboured with blessing chiefly in Ayrshire. In 1876 he shared with Mr. Ross in a tent campaign in the villages of Midlothian, where they had to endure hardness, and where God did a mighty work of grace. His later years were spent in Shrewsbury and the surrounding district, where his ministry was valued and his help welcomed. He had "bought" the truth of coming outside the camp to own a rejected Christ as Lord, to gather unto His Name alone, to own His Word the supreme guide in everything, and he sought to help others along the same path of blessing. On Lord's Day, March 27th, he spoke a little on Rev. i. in the forenoon meeting; in the afternoon he ministered the Word to believers, and in the evening was present at an open-air meeting, where he caught a chill. Influenza, pleurisy, and pneumonia followed, and on Monday, April 6th, he fell asleep. He has not long been severed from his friend and co-worker, the Lord's aged servant, Donald Ross, whose death he keenly felt, and to whose memory in his brief Reminiscences, which appear below, he bears a loving tribute. For the widow who mourns his loss, much real sympathy will be felt.

Edwin B. Bennett, of Cardiff.

"A man greatly beloved," who spent his strength

in caring for and ministering to the saints in Cardiff and throughout South Wales, and who was well known and much esteemed among saints everywhere for his self-denying labours of love. Although he had the control of a large business, he always found or *took* time to look after the Lord's work, and was seldom absent from any of the meetings in Adamsdown Hall, where for many years he was in church fellowship and bore the chief share of all the burdens, cares, and labours connected with the work there, besides giving continual counsel, help, and loving labour to the other Assemblies. He was a man of well-balanced mind, firm and uncompromising for the truth, holding it with a grasp of steel in the face of all opposition, yet wise and gracious toward those who differed from him. This through grace, was the secret of his success in dealing with many a difficult question, and in steering through such difficult times as have upset and foundered many a testimony. We often wondered at his powers of endurance, and admired the grace that enabled him to go on, amid much weakness of body still serving the Lord. He took part in the meeting held at Adamsdown Hall on Good Friday, and then went to Clifton, Bristol, for change and rest. There, on the morning of April 20th, it was found he had "fallen asleep," during the night. Thus peacefully ended a long and busy life of devoted and unselfish service for the Lord, such as we have seldom seen. Much prayerful sympathy will go forth to his widow, who was in all his service a true helpmeet, and to the members of his family who will sorely miss a father and brother, while the saints of God—in Cardiff especially—must keenly feel the loss of one, to whose incessant prayers and toils on their account, they owe far more than they will ever know on earth. Several well-known books were written by Mr. Bennett, including *A Brief Memoir of Robert C. Chapman*, and *The Life Story of John Hambleton*; he also edited *Truths for the Children of God*, containing the ministry of the late Henry Cummins, of Bow. In a M.S.S. book sent to us by our departed brother some months ago, there are many valuable Notes and Thoughts on Scriptural Subjects, which we hope to give our readers the benefit of in these pages, from time to time. He was a diligent student of the Word, and these papers contain much precious and edifying truth.

A HEARTY GOSPEL CHURCH.

THE Church at Philippi seems to have been composed of happy, hearty, and diligent Gospellers. It was not to a part, but to all the saints at Philippi, that the apostle wrote, telling them how in every prayer of his he made request and gave thanks for *every one* of them, for their "fellowship in the Gospel" from the first day (Phil. i. 5). And in order that this high standard of Gospel fellowship might be maintained, he goes on to exhort them to "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, *striving together* for the faith of the Gospel" (chap. i. 27), and to be "holding forth the Word of Life" (chap. ii. 16). They were not only fellow-worshippers in the sanctuary of God, they were also fellow-workers in His courts. No doubt they assembled together—as all New Testament Churches did—to shew forth the Lord's death, to worship God, to hear His Word, and to mingle their prayers before his throne. But they did more. They stood as one man, they went forth as co-workers in the glorious work of spreading abroad the Gospel of the grace of God. They would not all be public preachers, but they were all—even the women—helpers and labourers together in the Gospel (chap. iv. 3). These are happy conditions, and much to be sought after, because they are so rare. How seldom you see a Church of hearty, active, good-conditioned Gospellers, all pulling one way, of one mind, with one object. Such a happy state of things can only exist under certain conditions, and these conditions, happily, are not difficult to reach, if we are prepared to be guided to them by the light that shines from the lamp of Truth—the ever-precious Word of

God. There we learn, that the living Head of the Church has made full provision for all the members bearing their part, according to the measure He has given to each of them in the holy work of spreading the Gospel and winning sinners to the Saviour.

In Ephesians iv.—God's great charter on the subject of Christian ministry—we are told that the Lord gives evangelists, pastors and teachers (not to monopolise all the ministry and to preach to a mute and lethargic flock, who pay them for their service and think they have done their part) but "for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministering" (ver. 11-12, R.V.), that so each one may fill his own place and do his own part in the vineyard of the Lord. Then, instead of an evangelist having to be "engaged," or a pastor or teacher "appointed" to do the preaching for the Assembly, *all* the saints would be serving, each in his own sphere and according to his measure. This would not hinder any servant of the Lord from visiting and further helping such an Assembly, any more than the activity of the Philippians hindered Timothy and others from visiting them, but it would, through grace, keep them from being dependent on the continuous supply of extraneous help to carry on the work which, under conditions of spiritual health and Scriptural order, there would be a sufficient measure of gift developed in the Assembly itself to supply, aye, and in such superabundance as to lend a helping hand to others less favoured, as well as to send preachers and labourers to the great world of Christendom and heathendom afar off. That such churches may be multiplied and maintained in the freshness and dew of their youth, is our heart's desire and prayer.

THE VALUE OF THE WORD OF GOD.

BY THE LATE E. H. BENNETT, OF CARDIFF.

THE need of continual exhortation to a diligent study of God's Word increases, as "the day approaches." Therefore, we are inclined to linger a little over this; seeking to impress on our hearts the importance of "searching the Scriptures daily," and applying the truth honestly to every thought, word, and deed, so that all may be brought into harmony with the Divine mind. The grand thing is to realise that we are to be *doers* of God's Word, and not *hearers* only.

We must *feed* upon God's Word, that we may "grow thereby;" not that careless, casual reading of the Bible, without meditation or prayer, which is so common in these perilous times, when Christians, by an endless round of *engagements* are tempted to *neglect* the Scriptures; when society is in a state of unrest and distraction by pleasure seeking, excursions, and entertainments of every kind which divert the mind from the soul's welfare, and lead to spiritual apathy, and leanness. We cannot serve two masters. "*The present world*," in every form, is opposed to Christ; we should therefore turn away our eyes from its vanities; and not follow its fashions or ways. Our *spiritual strength*, to bear the difficulties of life, and *walk* so as to glorify God, must depend on our *feeding upon Christ*, through communion with the Spirit, over His Word.

One has truly said that "every ray of the sun contains three colours; the properties of each being to give light, to heat, and to fertilise. Likewise, *truth* emanates from God, the fountain of light, and is intended to enlighten our understanding; to warm

our hearts; and to produce the fruits of righteousness in our lives."

Desultory reading of God's Word, imparts but little profit, because it lacks the heart-felt desire to *know God's mind, in order to be obedient children*. The mere desire to increase our stock of *knowledge* is not a satisfactory motive to prompt us in "searching the Scriptures." *Natural wisdom* in the church of God (apart from a heart exercised by the Holy Ghost) leads to sorrow. Man's wisdom gathered from man's writings cannot feed the soul; it often spoils it. The *faltering step* and the *uncertain sound* which characterises those who neglect closet prayer, with reading and meditation on God's Word, is quickly discerned by the spiritual mind.

Men's books, with worthless chaff are stored;
 God's Book, doth golden grain afford;
 Then leave the chaff, and spend your pains
 In gathering up the golden grains.

In Divine things "there is a time for everything." God has told us in Numbers ii. that *the manna* had to be gathered "early in the morning;" when the sun waxed hot, it melted, and what was hoarded up bred worms and stank. Solemn and seasonable truth is unfolded here. The manna had to be gathered fresh from "*the dew*." In Scripture, *dew* is typical of the Holy Spirit (see Hosea xiv. 5), and we are to learn from this, that whilst all around is barren, yet God provides for the daily need of our wilderness journey. His Spirit shall abide with us for ever. He unfolds Jesus to our souls as the Bread of life. Truth *from Him* invigorates the new man. Truth acquired second-hand is comparatively useless. We must *feed* upon the Word *fresh from the dew*, if our souls are to *grow thereby*; (see Eph. iii. 16, 1 Peter ii. 2, Col. i. 10). The

world knows nothing of this meat which sustains and strengthens. And the quiet solemnity of the early morning is the best time to gather this heavenly food, before the heart is ruffled with the cares of life. Braced up with this, we shall be "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might."

It is good for God's people to adopt a systematic, regular, and conscientious reading of God's Word. David esteemed *all* God's precepts; so should we read carefully from Genesis to Revelation, and devote as much time daily to this delightful exercise of soul, as we possibly can. It is easy to see how many hours and days in a year we *should thus have, if we set apart fixed times daily*, for reading God's Word. Those who do this, unite in testimony, as to the great profit their souls have derived and the increasing interest awakened in spiritual things until it becomes sweeter than honey to their taste (Psa. cxix. 103), a light to their feet (Psa. cxix. 195), and "better than thousands of silver and gold" (Psa. cxix. 127).

Paul, in writing to Timothy, his son in the faith, exhorts him to "give attention to reading" and to "*meditate upon these things.*"

The need that "*the Word of Christ* should dwell in us *richly*, in all wisdom," is greater now than it ever has been, for "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light," and our only way to detect his wiles or parry his thrusts, is by using *the sword of the Spirit*, and having our "loins girt about with truth." "The entrance of God's words giveth light, it giveth understanding to the simple," and, according to Prov. vi. it leads us when we go, keeps us when we sleep, talks with us when we are awake, and is "a lamp to our feet, and a light to our path."

In these perilous times, Satan does all he can to *neutralise* the power of God's Word

both in saints and sinners. He has flooded the land with works of fiction to charm the *mind and suit every taste—from the religious novel, to the profane novelette.* Sad to say, this garbage from the adversary is too often substituted by Christians for the Bread of life. In thousands of Christian homes, *light literature* is eating like a canker into the souls of young believers, and spoiling their taste for spiritual food. *Tales* found in periodicals of various forms feed the lusts of the flesh and produce unhealthy excitement of the mind, which, more or less, rob the soul of communion with Christ, who says to such, "If ye seek Me, let these go their way." *It is impossible to read fiction or light literature without grieving the Holy Spirit, who dwells within us, and spoiling the appetite for a quiet, prayerful study of God's Word.* It leads to a swallow-like skimming over the surface of your reading, instead of that patient study in "comparing Scripture with Scripture," and meditation on the things of God." Without *digestion*, food is not assimilated to the body. So without *reflection*, our reading is unprofitable to the soul. The Psalms tells us much of the *blessedness* of those who "*meditate on the law of the Lord.*" His promise is that such shall be *fruitful, ever-green, and prosperous.* We want more *closet communings* with our blessed Lord, with ears awakened morning by morning to hear what He shall say to our souls. Public Meetings alone do not suffice for spiritual health. We must get away from "the many coming and going," where we can hear His voice, which alone imparts holy counsel and heavenly strength to lead us safely along, with their snares and seductions, walking with God through these last and *perilous times.*

THE SEVEN GOLDEN LAMPSTANDS ;

OR, THE CHURCH IN TESTIMONY.

Revelation—Chapters I., II., III.

BY ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.—PART VI.

I HAVE been considering the promises to the overcomers out of their proper place, because of the important evidence they afford as to character of the messages of which they form a part. We can now return, however, to the vision of the Lord Jesus in the midst of the seven lampstands. And the first point for our consideration is the relationship of that vision, "*the things which thou hast seen,*" to the remaining divisions of the whole book, "*the things which are,*" and "*the things which shall be after these things.*"

Before the third division of the book begins in chapter iv., the Church has been taken from the earth, and is seen in glory with the Lord. And when, in chapter xix., the Lord comes to earth, His saints, clothed in white linen, come with Him as the armies of heaven.

In the second division, comprised in chapter ii. and iii., the Church is seen in the place of testimony on the earth. But it is not only the place of testimony for Christ, but the place of dependence upon Him and subjection to Him. Indeed, the testimony cannot be maintained at all, except so far as the dependence and subjection are in constant exercise.

In this way we are taken back to the vision in chapter i., and are taught that He who shall come with clouds, manifested to the sight of every eye, is the same who is even now in the midst of His own, discerning all their ways, rebuking, correcting, guiding, and sustaining them.

There has been much controversy over

the words of verse 10, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day." Some take them to mean that the apostle was in the power of the Spirit on the first day of the week, while others understand him to say that he was carried forward in spirit into the coming day of the Lord, in which the greater part of the events foretold in this Book will take place. I incline strongly to the former view, chiefly because of the form used by the Holy Spirit to express "the Lord's day." It is a form which we cannot translate literally into English, because we have no corresponding expression in our language. The word "Lord" has been formed into an adjective, and, as such, is made to qualify, or give its character to, the word "day." This gives us something different from the "day of the Lord," an expression which occurs several times in the New Testament (1 Cor. v. 5, 2 Cor. i. 14, 1 Thes. v. 2, 2 Thes. ii. 2, 2 Pet. iii. 10), and which always refers to the day of the Lord's manifested power. We only find this adjective in one other place in the New Testament, when the apostle in 1 Cor. xi. 20, speaks of "the Lord's Supper." Here the feast is made to take its character from the Lord who appointed it, and of whom it speaks. In the same way it would appear that the day which commemorates His rising from the dead, and looks forward to His coming again, is characterised by His title of "Lord." By confining the use of this Word to these two occasions, the Holy Spirit has given us a manifest hint of connection between the Supper and the day on which the disciples, doubtless by divine instruction, were wont to partake of it.

There are few more important helps to the right understanding of the Scriptures than that obtained by carefully noting the

use made of any given word. When we find so remarkable a word as this occurring only twice in the New Testament, we may not lightly set aside the evidence thus afforded us of a close connection of thought between the two occasions. The connection between the first day of the week and the Lord's Supper is obvious, while it is not possible to find any connection between the Supper and the coming day of the Lord's manifested glory.

But even if other reasons should lead us to accept the thought that the Lord's day in this verse means the Day of the Lord, there would be no warrant whatever for saying that this proves that chapters ii. and iii. can have nothing to do with the Church and the present dispensation. This is what is commonly assumed by those who thus interpret the words, "the Lord's day." If the apostle was taken in spirit at the very outset, they argue, into the Day of the Lord, the time of the Church on earth was already ended, and there can be no reference to it here. But this is a wholly false assumption. That far the greater part of the Book deals with the Day of the Lord is beyond question. As we have already seen, while that day is still in abeyance, God gives to His beloved Son this unveiling of Himself, that He may communicate it to His servants on the earth. If, then, John was carried forward in spirit into the Day of the Lord to behold this unveiling, it is in perfect harmony with such a thought that he should be shown the relationship between "the things which are" and the things yet to come in the day into which he was carried in spirit.

If we compare what is said of the Lord Jesus in chapters i. to iii. with the description of Him in chap. xix., 11 to 16, we

shall be struck with the many points of similarity. Yet in the first case He is seen in the midst of the churches, while in the second He has come to earth, with His saints, to execute judgment upon His foes. But the Lord must act in righteousness whether dealing with His saints or with His enemies. If His own people are disobedient and self-willed, His presence "in the midst" involves judgment. But when they are humbled and have learned to trust in Him, and to cease from iniquity, He will not only bless them, but will joy over them. It was so as regards Israel. The prophet Zephaniah, speaking of the people of Jerusalem in a time of grievous departure from God, says: "The just Lord is *in the midst* thereof; He will not do iniquity; every morning doth He bring His judgment to light (chap. iii. 5). But he looks forward to a time when they shall no longer do iniquity, but shall trust in the Lord, and of that time he can say "The Lord thy God *in the midst* of thee is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love; He will joy over thee with singing" (chap. iv. 17).

In the same way the apostle speaks of sickness and death, as being the marks of the Lord's chastisement upon His people, where they fail to judge themselves; but assures them that when we do judge ourselves we shall not be judged (1 Cor. xi. 30, 31).

There is one other matter that needs to be considered before we commence our examination of the separate messages. We find that each message is addressed, not directly to the Church for which it is intended, but to "the angel of the Church;" and we naturally enquire, therefore, who are these angels of the Churches. In

chapter i. 16 we read that the Lord has seven stars in His right hand; and in the last verse of the chapter, after the Lord has bidden John to write the mystery of the seven stars and of the seven lamp-stands, He adds: "The seven stars are the angels of the seven Churches; and the seven lamp-stands which thou sawest are the seven Churches." The stars evidently symbolise the whole ministry by which the Churches are enlightened and guided. That ministry, as we learn in Eph. iv., all comes from the ascended Christ, and is under His control, and when it is in full exercise all the saints have their part in it. He may bestow special gifts in the person of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers; but it is not that they should monopolise the ministry, but that they should perfect the saints unto the work of ministering, unto the edifying of the body of Christ (see verse 12, R.V.). In this way the whole body is to be fitly joined together, through that which every joint supplieth, to the building up of itself in love (ver. 16).

This is as it should be, but alas how seldom the actual facts correspond with the divine pattern. If some are truly drawing from the Head, there are many who are content to learn at second hand. Hence, in each of these messages we find the searching words: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches." The messages are indeed to the Churches, but only those whose ears are opened can receive them, and these must become the messengers to the others. The word "angel" means a messenger, and the employment of a messenger speaks of a distance between the speaker and those to whom he speaks. If the whole of any Church corresponded with the pattern pre-

sented in Eph. iv., they would all together bear the star character, and the star would not need to become a messenger. But, as things were in the Churches addressed by the Lord, His Word will sift out those who have a hearing ear. Only such can contribute to the general supply, because they alone are drawing their supplies from the Head, and they will be His messengers to others who are comparatively at a distance. The fact that the word angel, or messenger, is in the singular number in each message must not be taken to imply that one individual alone is represented. If that were so, then—because there were only seven stars in the hand of the Lord Jesus—we should have to believe that there were only seven persons in all the Church in whom any power for ministry was found. Everything here is symbolic, and must be interpreted accordingly.

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SYMBOLS OF THE CHURCH.

BY DR. J. NORMAN CASE, OF CHINA.

III.—THE BRIDE.

UNIQUE was the relationship in which Adam stood to Eve. Since that first marriage union myriads of couples have been united in mind, and heart, and spirit; yet no man, in the same way, has been able to look upon his wife and say: "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh!"

It is instructive to notice what immediately preceded the formation of the first woman. The beasts of the field and birds of the air had been brought to Adam to be named. But among them all, was not found one that could be a meet companion for himself. Jehovah graciously undertook to supply this felt need. The man was put

into a profound sleep, and from his side a rib was taken which was formed into the woman.

On beholding her he exclaimed, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. &c." The "this is now" of the verse is literally, *this time* (see Exod. vii. 32, ix. 14), and a number of other places, where the same word is translated *time*. The reference is, to what he had before been engaged in. It is as if he said: "This time there is one brought to me who is suited to be my companion . . . she shall be called Woman (*Ishah*), for she was taken out of Man (*Ish*)." In this way our first father most heartily expressed his appreciation of and gratitude for, a beneficent Creator's last and best gift.

And it is this pair which has been selected by the Holy Spirit to shadow forth one of the relationships existing between Christ and His Church. The most superficial reader of the Scriptures must see in Eph. v. the reference to the scene and sayings of Gen. ii. But while admitting the allusion, some still deny that Eve as the Bride was a type of the Church, or that the symbol applies to the Church.

They argue that the Church is *the Body*, and that this relationship is inconsistent with her being the Bride. But this idea pushed to its logical issue would do away with every relationship between Christ and His people except that of Head and Body. As well might it be said, Believers cannot be *brethren* of Christ (Rom. viii. 29, &c.), for that would be inconsistent with being members of His Body; or, Believers cannot be spoken of as the *sheep* of Christ (John x. 14; 1 Peter ii. 25, &c.), for the same reason. A little consideration will, I think, show that the above argument would prove

altogether too much. And what proves too-much, proves nothing at all.

Further, they remind us that in the Old Testament, Israel is again and again spoken of as the Bride of Jehovah. I have not, so far as my memory serves me, seen this objection pressed very much. But I suppose the point is, that it would not be right or fitting to speak of two Brides of the Lord. But (1) to so argue is to forget that we are dealing with an earthly and natural *figure* of a heavenly and spiritual reality; and that we may not argue in every detail from the natural to the spiritual. (2) There are many things which are forbidden because they are evil—always and everywhere, inherently and necessarily evil, *e.g.*, theft, murder, &c., there are other things which are only wrong to us because they are forbidden of God. Under the latter category comes polygamy, slavery, &c. (3) In the spiritual relationship, God is above some of the regulations He Himself promulgated for men in the natural. In Jer. iii. 1 we have a striking example of this. Through Moses, it was clearly laid down that a divorced wife might under no circumstances be received back by her original husband (Deut. xxiv. 1-4). Yet God longs to do in the spiritual relationship what He prohibited in the natural. In spite of Israel's spiritual adultery—idolatry—God pleads with her to return. Though she had proved so unfaithful, He urges her to come back. "Return, O! blacksliding children," He cries, "for I am *a husband* unto you" (Jer. iii. 14, R.V.). With this before him, the argument as to the inconsistency of *two* Brides will not weigh much with an intelligent Christian. We are further told, that even in Eph. v. 22-23, the Church is never called the Bride

or the Wife. This is so. A little examination shews, that in this passage the figures of Body and Bride are both employed. But it is clear that it is the love of the husband for the wife, and the obedience of the wife to the husband, which are dwelt on, and the pattern for both to imitate is the love of Christ for the Church and her subjection to Him.

Some readers may not know that such an authority on N.T., Greek, as the late Dr Alford, in the passage we are considering, deliberately changes the neuter to the feminine gender in verses 25, 26. He renders: "Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for *her*, that He might sanctify *her*, &c." That this is a literal rendering of the original is certain, but whether it can be properly so translated in *English* is another question, and one we cannot here discuss. We may, however, say, that *having in view the whole passage* such a rendering seems quite legitimate, and more nearly gives the mind of the Spirit than does the usual one.

That the passage mainly has in view the Church as the Bride, seems to me certain. The great end Christ has in view in all that He has done and is doing for us is: "That He might Himself present unto Himself the church glorious, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that she might be holy and without blemish" (Alford). Notice the word "*present*." As her Redeemer—Bridegroom, to present to Himself the Church as the Bride is in keeping; but as the Head to present the Church to Himself, as the Body is altogether out of character. It is contrary to Scripture usage and to what we instinctively feel to be according to the fitness of things. *Present* usually has in

view the thing presented, the one presenting, and the person to whom presented. In some cases the present and the person offering it merges into one, as in Rom. vi. 13; xii. 1, but in no case have we less than two in view.

The act takes us back to Jehovah bringing Eve to Adam. In the grand *finale*, to which the verse looks forward, Christ will act the part of Jehovah the presenter, and of Adam the receiver, for He is, and for ever will be, both God and man. In confirmation of the ancient and generally accepted interpretation of the scripture before us, I add one other point. In regard to his whole treatment of the relation of husband and wife the apostle says: "This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and (concerning) the Church." That is, the mystical interpretation and spiritual application of the scene in Eden, and the words of Adam were *a secret* which man could only know through the revelation of God. A "secret" is the primary signification in the New Testament, of the word "mystery"; though we cannot but think that in this passage, at least, it also has an element of the usual meaning attached to the word, *viz.*, something we cannot fully comprehend.

But notice the latter half of the verse: "I speak," says the Apostle, "*concerning Christ and concerning the Church*," or "in regard of Christ and in regard of the Church." The preposition rendered "concerning" or "in regard of" occurs *twice*. This would not have been so, if the passage exclusively had in view Christ and the Church as head and members of one Body. Such a truth would have been more clearly and more correctly expressed by the simple statement: "I speak

concerning Christ and the Church." But when it is admitted that the Spirit of God had in view Christ and the Church, under the figure of Bridegroom and Bride, the sentence is perfect, and in keeping with the whole context.

Before passing on, we may notice that the Divine declaration concerning man and wife, "and they (or they two) shall be one flesh" is quoted in the New Testament for a three-fold purpose. (1) By the Lord Jesus to prove the life-long character of the marriage bond (Mark x. 2-12). (2) By the Apostle Paul in warning believers at Corinth against the sin of fornication. (3) And in the Scripture before us, to teach the love and care the husband should have for the wife, and the reverence and submission the wife should shew to her husband.

Anything we have to say on the symbol itself, we must leave for another occasion. Dry though this article may seem to some, I trust it will lead many to afresh adore and praise the God of all grace who has brought us into such a near and tender relationship to His eternal Son. May it also stir us up to more sincerity and earnestness in seeking to walk worthy of such a high calling and glorious destiny as we have set before us in the sacred Scriptures, which speak of the Church as THE BRIDE OF THE LAMB.

STRENGTHENED AND FORTIFIED.

I was thinking lately of the difference in character between the two Epistles of Peter. I think you will see them to be thus :

In the *first* he strengthens the saints against all kinds of *suffering*. In the *second* he warns them of all kinds of *deceit*. He contemplates the enemy, as it were, as the *lion* in the *first*, and as the *serpent* in the *second*. It may be for *righteousness*' sake,

or it may be in conflict with the evil that works in our own members, or from the assaults of him who goes about as a roaring lion. It may be suffering then of very different kinds, but still what he looks at throughout. The *first* Epistle is the *suffering* of the saints—faith cast into the trial, as gold is cast into the furnace, that it may be found unto "honour, and glory, and praise, at the appearing of Jesus." And the temper of mind which he especially commends to the saints in connection with this suffering state, I think you will find to be *subjection*: he is constantly enforcing that in them. Whatever relationship he addresses, it is still the duty of subjection that he seems to have in mind. And there is a moral connection between these things; for if we own this to be the suffering age, we shall likewise see clearly that it is the age for exercising the spirit of subjection, or self-renunciation. I cannot honestly confess that the Church is now to count on trial and sorrow, if I am seeking to please myself, or do my own will.

But in the *second* Epistle it is deceit that he contemplates. He fortifies the saints against the false teachers and the scoffers, the *error* of the wicked; and the temper of mind which he seeks to cultivate in them, as security against all that, is the diligence of growing in grace and in knowledge; for in that indeed lies their security. If we are not exercising ourselves in the *good*, the *evil* will get ahead, and find its advantage over us; and thus the moral connection here is as perfect and intelligible as in the first Epistle. Growth in grace and knowledge is the security of the saint against the deceit of the *serpent*—subjection of mind, and *self-renunciation*, our strength in meeting the *roaring* of the lion.

J. G. B.

The Bible Annotator.

OUTLINES OF GOSPEL SUBJECTS.

THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH'S CONVERSION.

- The Guided Servant (Acts viii. 26, 29, 33).
 The Anxious Sinner (Acts viii. 27-32).
 The Mighty Saviour (Acts viii. 33-35).
 The Rejoicing Saint (Acts viii. 37-41).

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS (Luke xvi).

- Two Men (verse 19-20).
 Two Lives (verse 19-21).
 Two Deaths (verse 22).
 Two Destinies (verse 22-23).

BARTIMÆUS THE BEGGAR

(Mark x. 46; Luke xviii. 35).

HIS STATE :

- Blind—The Sinner's Darkness (2 Cor. iv. 4).
 Beggar—The Sinner's Destitution (Rev. iii. 17).

HIS PLACE :

- Nigh unto Jericho—Place of the Curse (Heb. vi. 8).
 Where Jesus came—To seek and save (Luke xix. 10).

WHAT HE GOT :

- Salvation—verse 42 (Isa. xlii. 20).
 Sight—verse 42 (Acts xxvi. 18).

WHAT HE DID :

- Followed Jesus—verse 52—Devotedness.
 In the Way—verse 52—Discipleship.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

LILY D. asks—"Is it right for a believer who has learned from Scripture the truth of believers' baptism, to take part in Christian work in a place where they sprinkle infants?"—We have heard of a popular preacher who is so accommodating that he will either sprinkle a babe or immerse a believer. Possibly he does not regard either as anything more than custom or tradition, and consequently puts little value on it. But the saint who has learned from Scripture that believer's baptism is the will and the way of the Lord, and yielded obedience thereto, must surely be in a very bad spiritual condition and have but little sense of what is due to the Lord, if he can quiescently remain in association with any system where the truth which he has owned is set aside, and a counterfeit put in its place. A false liberality will doubtless tell you that you will best win them to the truth by remaining there, and that if you would retain your "sphere

of influence" intact, you must wink at these little excrescences. We have never known any one remain in such a position without sinking down to its level, and finally, not only ceasing to be governed by the truth he trifled with, but becoming its bitter opponent. One of the clearest testimonies on believers' baptism we ever read, and which was much blessed thirty years ago in leading many into the knowledge of this truth, was written by one who, to gain wider influence and ensure a hearing in places where infants are made "members of Christ" by sprinkling, first caused his tract to be withdrawn and next abandoned the truth it contained, and latterly opposed the truth he once taught. Light received, brings with it the solemn responsibility to act according to it. If misused or trifled with,—even to the extent of conniving with error or recognising a counterfeit alongside of it—it will bring judicial blindness, a blindness from which many in our day are suffering, while yet unconscious of it.

Answers to Correspondents.

YOUNG WORKER.—It is not wise to unduly press anxious souls to decision, or ask them to say they believe, less still to keep at them with argument and quotation until they profess—often, we fear, to get away. Present Christ, His finished work, His saving power as set forth in the Word, and count on the Holy Ghost to lead the sinner to the Saviour. It is the grandest sight on earth to see the light of life dawning upon the convicted sinner, and to watch the first pulses of new and heavenly life in the new-born soul—born of the Spirit through the Word. Be in deep earnest, but always leave room for God the Holy Ghost to do His own work. You will not have to mourn over so much "chaff," or be cast down by seeing so many "counterfeits," if you honour the Spirit of God.

A. J. P.—It will scarcely be credited by ordinary Christians who have not known "the depths of Satan," that one who makes much of the Bible as being the Word of God, and seems to use his gifts and knowledge in expounding its truths, is nevertheless unsound in the very fundamentals of the faith, and consequently a powerful instrument in the adversary's hands to lead simple souls into the path of error. Scripture, wrested from its context and twisted by mistranslation until it is made to

say the opposite of what God has spoken, is far more dangerous than palpable error. To go and hear a man preach who has openly abandoned the fundamental truth of Eternal Judgment is, to expose yourself to the shafts of the enemy. If he does not *teach* his false doctrine, he *holds* it, and has it ready to sow like the devil's tares on the first suitable occasion. Your only safety is to abide by the apostolic word—"From such turn away" (2 Tim. iii. 5). Never mind if you are called "uncharitable" or branded as "narrow." It is infinitely better to have the friendship of God than to be well thought of by carnal by men.

R. E. C., AYRSHIRE.—Arranging for preachers months ahead, and different preachers for every Sunday, was something unheard of in assemblies of believers owning the Lordship of Christ and the presence of the Spirit of God in their midst, in days gone by. It has been borrowed from the Methodists, whose circuit preachers are told off after this fashion, and no doubt it will commend itself to those who believe that the work of God can be carried on by such clockwork-like arrangements. But saints who know and have *proved* the reality of a living and present God, transacting His own business by whomsoever He will, are not likely to be found among the chosen weekly preachers, or on the self-appointed committee of management who arrange them. Had Philip been a "circuit preacher" when the call came to go to the desert of Gaza to meet the Ethiopian treasurer and guide him to Jesus, he must either have refused to obey God, or "broken faith" with his congregation. If you and the saints with you, want to see the hand of the Lord among you as in days of old, then you must leave room for the Spirit of God to work as, and by whom He will. If God sends one of His servants among you with whom He is working, and through whom He intends to give blessing, take care you do not shut out the Master by sending away the servant to make room for another who may be neither God-sent nor God-honoured. This is not disorder, nor does it leave room for anybody and everybody to "take the platform." But it necessitates constant waiting upon God and watchfulness, with spiritual discernment such as few in this day of outward activity and shallow spirituality seem to possess. Yet like all the Lord's paths it "drops fatness." There the Lord commands the blessing, and there

the dew and the freshness of a ministry in the power of the Spirit with its abiding fruit is found.

W. L. H.—If a believer from the sects, knowing little of the truth, but willing to learn, is received into the Assembly's fellowship—as many have been with most satisfactory results—it is surely the privilege and responsibility of all to help him on in the truth as they have opportunity. If he knows his own ignorance, and desires to learn, he will not be liable to push himself to the front or to set himself up as a teacher of others, nor should others help him into such a position until he has first been "proved." (See 1 Tim. iii. 13.) This must necessarily take time, but a true man will not grudge to wait; indeed, it is characteristic of all Divinely gifted and spiritually fitted men, that they are backward in taking the place to which the Spirit of God would lead them and in which He would use them. It is wholly different with the man who, while grossly ignorant, yet *thinks* he knows, and who comes into an Assembly with the idea that *he* is the man to set and keep everything right. It is extremely likely that the persons you describe are of the latter class, and that they will only remain with you so long as they get their own way. Immediately that godly rule, such as the Scripture sets forth, is administered towards them, they will go and try their hand somewhere else. And certainly you will not be much the losers. But the pity is, that they were not gripped more firmly at the beginning, before they were able to do so much mischief.

Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION V.—If brethren who take the place of leaders among the saints, persistently go to meetings manifestly begun in division, and by their sympathy and help confirm such in their evil way, should they be received as preachers and teachers in Assemblies seeking to own the authority of the Lord, and to "mark" and "avoid" them that cause divisions, as commanded in the Word (Rom. xvi. 17)?

ANSWER A.—It is to be feared that the evil of division among saints who were formerly gathered together in one place, is not regarded by many as the Word sets it forth, else it would neither be condoned nor supported as it often is. If there is doubt as to whom the Lord approves, surely it

would be better to stand aside and leave Him to manifest, before rushing in to build up what He may want to scatter.—J. C.

ANSWER B.—There are divisions “contrary to the doctrine” (Rom. xvi. 17) which are to be regarded as evil, and those who cause them avoided, but there are divisions which, while always to be grieved over, are necessary, if the truth of God and the purity of the faith are to be preserved from corruption. Where error is introduced and retained, or evil practice unjudged and defended, and after every effort has been made to bring the Word of God to bear on the wrong has failed, or been frustrated by the craft of men who will not allow the authority of the Word of God to prevail, there is nothing left for those who fear God and desire His approval, but to “withdraw” from what is clearly no longer a place where the Lord is “in the midst,” or where His Word is owned and honoured. If any—especially preachers and teachers—continue to patronize and to help on such a company, it must be evident to all that they need not expect to be welcomed equally by those who for the truth and conscience’ sake had to withdraw, and those who remain. There is much need for healthy soul-exercise on this and kindred subjects affecting the honour of the Lord, and the welfare of His people.—J. H.

EDITOR’S NOTE.—All sides of this subject need to be carefully looked at and examined in the light of God’s presence and tested by His Word. Few things have caused more to stumble at, or to lightly esteem truths connected with the gathering of saints unto the Name of the Lord, than the unhappy divisions among those thus gathered during the past ten or twenty years. Surely, had the honour of the Lord and the welfare of His people been the only objects, many of these had never occurred. It is easy enough where personal grievances exist, to reach a pass when “divide the child” seems the shortest and easiest way out of the difficulty, and if anything can be seized on to give the division a semblance of “faithfulness to the Lord,” it goes far to condone the rest in the eyes of many. In most cases, faithful, godly ministry of the Word, with patient shepherd care, seeking to heal that which was broken, and restore that which had become disjointed, would have been used of God to prevent open divisions where such have occurred from

personal grievances and lack of forbearance or grace. Yet in some well-known instances, while no helping hand was offered to prevent division, no sooner had it taken place, than a rush was made to give support to the party who was known to be of the same “persuasion” regarding some disputed point as themselves, and that without the least attempt at investigation, or any information other than a one-sided story. It surely becomes the first responsibility of those who have godly experience and shepherd care to look into such a matter together, and to give their counsel so that younger ones and others unable to discern, may not have the impossible task thrust upon them of choosing with whom they are to company. Much has been said and written in recent years against the setting up of a “central authority” to pass judgments on such cases, for which, no doubt, there was cause, but the alternative to this surely cannot be, that the veriest babe in Christ is to become a judge of such matters for himself. If the Lord has given those to His Church who have grace and wisdom to grapple with such difficulties, surely it is their responsibility to do so, and ours to be guided by their counsel in the Lord, as men who have understanding and “know what Israel ought to do.” If such were done—as it has been with good results in several well-known cases—there would be less likelihood of preachers and teachers giving their countenance to causers and makers of division, and those who did, would clearly manifest what spirit they are of. To say that both parties—those who retain the evil and those who for the truth’s sake had to purge it out, or, failing that, to separate from it, may both be recognised as God’s Assembly, is simply trifling with Divine things and indicates the lack of an exercised conscience rather than that superabundance of grace which is so frequently placed to the credit of these so advising and so acting.

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Questions Requiring Answers.

QUESTION VI.—If there are a number of elder brethren in whom the saints have confidence, seeking to shepherd and guide the Assembly, is one of their number at liberty to act independently of the others, in inviting preachers, arranging meetings and transacting Assembly matters entirely on his own responsibility? And if such a course is persisted in, what is the Scriptural remedy?

A POWER FOR GOD AMONG MEN.

A COMPANY of believers, right with God and dwelling together in unity, all seeking to esteem each other better than themselves, however few in numbers or lacking in what attracts the crowd, is and must be a real power for God in the place where it exists. God is in the midst of such a people. They are His habitation and His sanctuary. "The shout of a King is among them" (Numbers xxiii. 21). The felt and realized presence of the Lord is there, and so long as they continue true to Him and obedient to His Word, He will bless them and make them a blessing. They shall be "in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men" (Micah v. 7). Not so much their outward energies as their inward condition, will be the secret of their freshness and the source of their blessing. The "river whose streams make glad the city of God" (Psa. xlv. 4), within will be the bearer of life and health and healing whithersoever it flows (Ezek. xlvii. 9). There is no limit to the "influence" of such a people. They are a vessel fit for the Lord to fill and use, a channel through which the living stream can flow to the weary and the thirsty all around, and while they keep in touch with God and humbly walk in all His ways, He will make them in far greater measure than they shall ever know, a power for Him and a witness for His truth among the sons of men. Godly souls will be attracted there by the savour of the Lord's presence, and some who are groping their way amidst the perplexities of the present time will be cheered and encouraged,

helped onward in the truth, and gently guided along the path of righteousness, the rough but right way that leads to the heavenly city. Pleasant is every remembrance of such companies of the Lord's redeemed. They seem to become fewer as the years go by. Very likely they will too, for their generation is not from beneath, but from above. They are not perpetuated by human energy. They are the workmanship of God, formed we may surely say and sustained by Himself, to shew forth His praise, and to be the witness to all who have eyes to see, that whatever, whoever has failed, the living God is still the same, and able to do "exceeding abundantly" on behalf of His own; able to fulfil all that He has promised, to give strength to keep all that He has commanded, even in the midst of the last days of Christendom's apostasy and the Church's departure from her first faith and works. And when a company of believers, an assembly of saints ceases to be a witness to the presence of a present living God in its midst, either by departing from Him and His ways, or by copying and admitting the ways of the world, it is, as an aged servant of God most solemnly put it, "Scarcely worth its room in God's earth." Its numbers may continue or even increase: its machinery may continue to go: great things may be a-doing to hide the nakedness of the land, but its testimony has dropped from heaven to earth, it has ceased to be a power for God in the place where once it was, and unless repentance and a return to God are mercifully granted, it must either by disintegration fall to pieces, or by absorption of worldly persons and worldly principles, sink down like a water-logged vessel into the element which it has allowed to overcome it.

GOD'S GATHERING CENTRE.

AN ADDRESS BY T. D. W. MUIR, OF DETROIT.

SCRIPTURE READ: GEN. XLIX. 1-12.

WE have in this chapter Jacob, ere he dies, blessing his sons, and foretelling some of the things that should befall them in the latter days. So that, in their fullest sense, the utterances look forward to a time yet future in the history of Jacob's descendants.

I will especially refer to that which he spake concerning Judah (verses 10-11): "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and *unto Him shall the gathering of the people be.*" The Word of God is wonderfully far-reaching in its results, and far-seeing in its prospects. Sometimes we, in our ignorance, would confine it to some narrow point, and can see nothing else in it. Its blessings we apply to ourselves, and its curses to the Jews or some one else. But, in principle, there are few Scriptures from which lessons cannot be drawn that would be to our soul's profit, no matter to whom and of whom they are primarily spoken.

Sometimes Christians evade the plain searchings of God's Word by saying, "O that does not belong to this dispensation;" or, "That is spoken to the Jews!" And they seem to think *that* settles the whole question, that on *that* point, at least, they can rest content—that it does not apply to them. Beloved, God's Word is *all* for us. It is God-breathed, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness (2 Tim. iii. 16-17).

In reading God's Word it is well to ask oneself these three questions:—Who is speaking? To whom is He speaking?

About what is He speaking? If He is speaking to Israel or about Israel, then let me seek to understand it in its primary application. But let me not stop there. Let me ask myself another question. What would He say to *me* in all this? For "the things that were written aforetime, were written for our learning" (Rom. xv. 4). And I shall find, if I wait on God, that He will have something to say to my own soul in it—something for reflection and meditation. Something to warn of danger, or encourage in service. In other words, something to do my own soul good.

In the Scripture before us, Jacob is foretelling, by the Spirit, of Judah's kingly greatness. He was to bear the sceptre of government, and until Shiloh came, this was not to depart from them. And when He came, He would be the Centre of gathering, not only for Israel, but for the peoples of the earth (see Micah iv. 1-5). A wonderful prophecy, is it not?

Centuries after this scene in Jacob's death chamber, the descendants of Jacob were redeemed and separated to God. They marched out of Egypt, where they had been slaves, and as they stood on the wilderness side of the Red Sea, they looked back and saw their enemies overwhelmed in the judgment of God there. In the fresh consciousness of this mighty deliverance they sang—and such a song as it was! Jehovah and His work was the theme of it. And in their joy of heart they vowed, "I will make Him an habitation."

In Exodus xxv., &c., God gives them the privilege of doing this. He calls for all the willing-hearted ones to bring Him their gifts, and He adds: "*Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.*" "In the midst of them," Mr. Newberry

renders it. In these words God no doubt breathed that which was a desire in His heart. Not only to have a redeemed people, but to have that redeemed people gathered around Himself—He having His holy dwelling-place in the midst of them. This, let me add, is His desire still.

After the wilderness was past, and Israel got into the land, the Tabernacle was first pitched in Shiloh (Josh. xviii.). There is a coincidence between the name of this *place* and the *Person* of whom Jacob spake. It signifies "rest" or "tranquility," and might well foreshadow the One who will be a true resting-place for God's weary Israel in a coming day. That it was God's appointment we are assured in Jer. vii. 11, where God says, "Go ye now to My place which was in Shiloh, *where I set My Name at the first*, and see what I did to it," etc. God had appointed it at the first. He had later, for the iniquity of Israel, forsaken it.

But Shiloh, while it might prefigure the One who is to be the fulfilment of Jacob's prophecy, was like all other figures, temporary and imperfect. In wilderness days the Tabernacle maintained its place in the centre of the camp. Unto Shiloh, *in the land*, all the tribes of Israel came up at their appointed seasons. It was God's centre, unto which His people gathered. It was God's dwelling-place. It was called "the House of God" (Judg. xviii. 31). From this time onward, God was never without His centre of gathering for His people. He has one yet, and will have through eternal ages.

For various objects would He gather His people together. In Num. xxi. 16, He says to Moses: "Gather the people together, and I will give them water." He would *refresh them* in the midst of their

wilderness wanderings. Again: "Gather Me the people together, and I will make them hear My Words" (Deut. iv. 10). He would *instruct* them. And are not these two objects the cause for which God would gather His people yet? Does He not still desire to refresh and instruct them? You very seldom meet a child of God, who forsakes or neglects to assemble with fellow-saints, that keeps fresh and healthy in soul.

Of course there are some of God's children who are isolated from fellow-saints. Such can look up and tell God that they would not willingly absent themselves from such privileges, were it in their power. And God can and does minister to them there in their isolation, and keep them fresh and green like the tree planted by the rivers of waters. But, speaking generally, it is God's way to give His people refreshment and instruction by gathering them together. And oh, what a privilege it is, and refreshment too, for a child of God, who all day long has felt the grime and slime of contact with the world and Satan, to get into the company of God's people, gathered together in the evening hours, or on the Lord's Day, that *He* may refresh or instruct them!

In Psalm l. 5, we read, "Gather My saints together unto Me, those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice." Undoubtedly, the fullest interpretation of this will be in a coming day, when He will shout His heavenly people up to meet Him in the air, and later on gather His elect earthly people—Israel—from the four winds of heaven. But there is a *present sense* in which the principle found here may be applied. In Israel the males appeared before Him three times yearly. With us, the call is to gather unto His

Name for worship. Because of its fitness it is an oft-quoted text in our meetings for worship, when gathered together in His Name according to Matt. xviii. 20. Note the word "Unto ME." It is not to a doctrine, not to a system, not as we sometimes hear "to the truth;" it is *unto a Person*—unto *Me*. He Himself is the Centre. We were speaking just now of God wanting a sanctuary in the midst of them. Here He would have them recognise this. He would have them gathered around and unto Himself.

There are two of the Kings of Israel who committed sin that God makes special mention of. I refer to David and Jeroboam. You have all heard of David's sin. There is not an infidel or opposer of God's Word but can tell you of David's sin. Of course they are not so anxious to tell you of his repentance and contrition; and of how God judged his sin, yet restored His servant. No, that part of the story they do not speak of.

But how few there are that know of Jeroboam's sin! And yet God has marked Jeroboam out as the standard of wickedness by which He judges the kings that succeed him. He is spoken of as "Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who did sin, *and made Israel to sin.*" David, on the other hand, is the standard of righteousness for the kings that follow. How frequent the commendation: "He did that which was right, walking in the ways of his father, David."

What was this sin that marked out Jeroboam so conspicuously? He had helped on a division among God's people, and become king over ten of the tribes. But if you, at your leisure, read 1 Kings xiii., you will see that to which God refers. Afraid to have the people go up to

Jerusalem, the place chosen by God "to put His Name there" (2 Chron. vii. 16, &c.), after Shiloh had been rejected, and Solomon had builded the temple there, he built two altars—one at Bethel and the other at Dan. In these he established centres of gathering, unto which the children of Israel came. An imitation priesthood, imitation feasts, and a false centre of gathering, constituted the great sin into which Jeroboam led Israel. David sinned against his fellow, and man will not overlook or forgive it. Jeroboam sinned against God, in leading His people away from *His* appointed place of worship, and man considers it a trifle—and never mentions it.

And this is a real sin yet! What a sight it must be for God's eyes to see so many centres around which God's people are gathered! Jeroboam did not stop the people worshipping. He did not call them to worship Baal or Ashtoreth. He placed golden calves at Bethel and Dan, but he *called* it a "feast to Jehovah!" He used Scriptural terms to cover unscriptural practices, and thus many were deceived. He did not deny that a priesthood was necessary. He simply made priests of any one who had a bullock to pay for it! (2 Chron. xiii. 9). His was a horrible sin in God's sight.

While it is true that many of the more godly in Israel, both of the priests, Levites, and people were under the rule of Rehoboam, and remained loyal to "the place God had chosen to put His Name" (2 Chron. xi. 13-17), yet, on the other hand, many true Israelites remained with Jeroboam, and his style of worship became the popular thing. What should be the attitude of one who desired to go by the Word of God to this Jeroboam wor-

ship? To use arguments one hears at this time, the proper thing would be to go in with and help it along, as "we are all seeking to serve the same Master." But is this God's way? We believe not. The Lord Jesus said, "He that is not *with Me is against Me*; and he that *gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad*" (Matt. xii. 30). God looked on Jeroboam, not merely as one who was not with Him, but as one who scattered the people of God, because he drew them away from God's centre to others of his own.

And when we look around us, and see "Israelites indeed" who are ensnared by the many false centres man has devised, do not let us say, "Because there are Israelites there, I ought to help them by going in with them." Let us rather listen to the Word of the Lord to Jeremiah: "If thou *take forth the precious from the vile*, thou shalt be as My mouth; let them return unto thee, *but return not thou to them*" (Jer. xv. 19). God will not thank you or me for building up or strengthening that which divides the people of God, and which He will condemn in a coming day. Don't let us forget this, that every time we help on these things we are helping on that which scattered God's people from God's centre. I may ease my conscience by calling it something else, but nevertheless that is the truth, as the judgment seat of Christ will make manifest.

(To be Continued.)

TRIFLING WITH SIN.

Like the moth fluttering round the candle, the Christian who plays and tampers with sin, will one day fall with his wings destroyed and his testimony blighted.—DONALD ROSS.

PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY.

"YE are not your own." I do not belong to myself; I do not belong to Satan, praise God; I do not belong to the world; I do not belong to the Gentiles. I am bought out and out for Christ, as a member of His body—indwelt by the Spirit. I am His steward, and accountable therefore to Him for all I am and have.

"Ye are bought with a price." If I have sixpence in my pocket, I can say, between me and my fellow-man, "That is mine;" but can I say that to God? Oh, no! I cannot say of anything that it is mine, or that I am my own. I wish to learn this truth better, to be a more apt scholar. I think sometimes I have been so many years in God's school, and yet I am but as a dunce when I hold up this mirror—this mirror of *giving*, which the Spirit holds up before you and me. Let us look into it and try our ways, and see if we have adjusted ourselves by this heavenly standard.

But what a mercy we have a heart to do it at all! What a mercy that there is blood before the throne—that the living Christ is in heaven to meet every description of imperfection!

I would add this, dear brethren: God's *goodness* is world-wide; His *fellowship* is restricted to those who have received Christ. Let His *unbounded kindness* be our pattern; let us do good unto all men, especially to them who are of the household of faith. Our *fellowship* is to be restricted to those who are members of Christ's Church; but as the kindness of God is universal, let us not forget the poor and needy in the world outside. "*Be ye imitators of God, as dear children.*"

H. HEATH.

THE SEVEN GOLDEN LAMPSTANDS;
OR, THE CHURCH IN TESTIMONY.

Revelation—Chapters I, II., III.

BY ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.—PART VII.

WE now come to the consideration of the first of the three applications

indicated at the commencement of these articles. That is to say, we are going to look at the messages to the Seven Churches as forming a prophetic panorama of the history of Christendom.

I propose in the first place to state what I believe to be the several stages represented by the successive churches. Then, when considering the messages in detail, I shall be able to point out the proofs that have satisfied me as to the correctness of the view that I am advancing.

At this point it will be well to refer to the diagram. It will be noticed that the periods represented by the first three Churches are quite

distinct from one another and from those that follow. In other words, the Ephesus period comes to a close when Smyrna begins, while that which Smyrna represents

ends with the commencement of Pergamos. After these three Churches there is a marked difference. Thyatira represents a condition of things which continues to the end of the whole period dealt with. In this way, when Sardis commences, it does not wholly displace Thyatira, but the two

are in existence together. The same holds good with regard to Laodicea, so that these three are all running their course together. It will be further noticed that, in the case of Thyatira, a remnant is addressed apart from the whole Church. This is also the case with the message to Sardis. In regard to the last two Churches, however, while no godly remnant is spoken to in Laodicea, the whole of the Philadelphian assembly bears the remnant character. This, together with other reasons, which I hope to point out later, leads me to the conclusion that the Church of Philadelphia is intended to serve as a picture of the remnant during

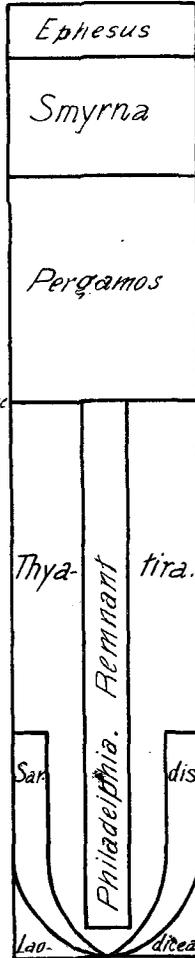
The Seven Churches. Of Asia

First Roman Persecution.

Tenth Roman Persecution A.D. 302.

Pope Stephen II Made a temporal Prince by King Pepin of France A.D. 754.

2nd Diet of Spire A.D. 1529.



the last portion of the history of Christendom. But while Thyatira, Sardis and Laodicea are all running their course together to the end, the remnant, as

represented by Philadelphia, is taken away from the scene before that end arrives.

I refer to these things now, in order that the meaning of the diagram may be made plain. The proofs of what I say will, I trust, become clear as we proceed with the consideration of the messages. I have put a few dates on the left-hand margin of the diagram, but it must not be supposed that the messages convey any thought of precise dates. They are not a prophecy, in the strict sense of the word, but rather a series of prophetic symbols; being more of the character of Daniel's vision in the seventh chapter of his book, than of the strictly chronological prophecy made known to him in chapter ix. In Daniel vii. no dates are indicated, but the moral character of the successive kingdoms that are to rule over the Gentile nations is pointed out. In the same way, in these messages to the Seven Churches, we are shewn the characteristics of the various stages through which Christendom is to pass; but there is nothing to indicate the dates when these stages begin or end. In putting dates on the diagram, therefore, I have only pointed to the leading events recorded in history, which correspond with the successive changes symbolised by the circumstances of the respective churches.

Taking the Churches in their order, then:—

Ephesus represents the condition of things actually existing during the apostolic period. It seems to go back earlier than the days when the vision was given to John, for the later epistles of the Apostle Paul tell of a general declension on the part of the churches.

The Smyrna period is that of the great

Pagan persecutions of the Christians, with a consequent reviving and purifying of the Churches. The ten persecutions recorded in history are evidently referred to in the words, "Thou shalt have tribulation ten days."

Next comes Pergamos, where we have a vivid representation of the condition of things which followed the adoption of Christianity by the Emperor Constantine and the consequent cessation of persecution by the world-powers. The last of the persecutions of Christians by Pagan Rome was in the year 302 A.D., and I have therefore taken this date as corresponding with the close of the Smyrna period and the beginning of the Pergamos age.

The Fourth in order is Thyatira, and this church is representative of Papal Rome. I have suggested the year 754 A.D., as corresponding with the beginning of this period, because it was in that year King Pepin, of France, made Stephen II., who was Pope at that time, a temporal sovereign, by assuring to him the possession of a limited territory, over which he should rule as a monarch. While the condition of things represented by the previous churches only lasts for a time, and is superseded entirely by the next in order, this is not the case with Romanism. It continues to the end, side by side with the further developments that follow it.

Sardis is the symbol of Protestantism, and I suggest 1529 A.D., the year of the second Diet of Spire, as the approximate commencement of this period; because by that time Protestantism was fairly established over a large part of the Continent of Europe.

Philadelphia follows, but, as I have already stated, I believe that this church

bears the same relationship to Laodicea, that the separately addressed remnants of Thyatira and Sardis bore to those churches. I indicate Philadelphia, therefore, as continuing the remnant line; while Laodicea comes in, unlike all the others, with a small and scarcely defined beginning, but gradually extends until, at the close, nearly all Christendom bears the Laodicean character of lukewarmness and indifference.

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THE MORNINGS OF SCRIPTURE.

IN the progress of Scripture, we have several infant-seasons, as I may express myself, or mornings.

Creation was one—but that of course. That was the birth-day of the works of God—the morning of time. And when the foundations, in that season, were laid, “the morning stars sang together,” as we read in the Book of Job.

The Exodus was another of these mornings. Israel, as a nation, was then born, or in its early infancy. “When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called My son out of Egypt,” the Lord says by the Prophet Hosea. The year started afresh then, as though it were new-born. The month of the Exodus was made the beginning of months. Life from the dead, a resurrection morning, was celebrated in the song of Moses and the congregation, on the banks of the Red Sea.

The Birth of the Lord Jesus was another. That event rose upon the world like the light of morning. A very long and dreary night had preceded it. Israel was a captive, and in the dust. There were no signs. The voice of the last of the prophets had been silent for centuries. No Urim or

Thummin, no ephod of the priest, was delivering oracles or answers from God. No glory filled the Temple. Nothing distinguished the city of peace, the favoured seat of God on the earth, save now and again the angel-stirring of the waters of Bethesda, when little expected and scarcely welcomed. But the birth of the Lord Jesus, like the morning, awakened the creation; and the lights of many other days broke forth together, to tell that the long, dark night had at length given place to a very bright and cheerful morning. Heaven rejoiced, like the sons of God, at the creation. Angels, once so well known in Israel, re-appeared. The grace that had acted in infant, patriarchal days, again displayed itself. Promises to Abraham and to David, which anticipated the new birth of the people and of the kingdom, are cited and rehearsed. All this is seen on this great occasion, this fresh morning-hour in the progress of the ways of God. And the child born in Bethlehem is welcomed by the Seer of God as “the Day-spring from on high,” the sunrise or the morning. (See Luke i. 2.)

The Resurrection of the Lord was another of these mornings. It came after the gloomiest night that ever brooded on the face of creation. But it was light, and light indeed. It was the pledge, the harbinger of an eternal day. It was the turning of the shadow of death into the morning. “It began to dawn towards the first day of the week,” when this great mystery disclosed itself—as we read in Matthew xxviii.

The Kingdom will be another of these mornings. It will be day after night—Christ’s day after the night of sin and death, Christ’s world after man’s world. “He that

ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God; and He shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springeth out of the earth by clear shining after rain." This is written of this coming kingdom. (2 Sam. xxiii.)

The New Heaven and the New Earth will be another. It will be creation at its *second birth*. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth," says the prophet; "for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away." It is called the dwelling-place of righteousness, the scene where "God will be all in all."

Sweet it is to see morning after morning thus rising, as we pass down the ages which Scripture measures.

But we have also another sight to see. Man has been again and again turning God's morning into the shadow of death. Creation, which came forth from God so fair and full of joy, quickly was turned into a wilderness of thorns and thistles. The ground was cursed which, at its morning-hour, had witnessed the joy of the Lord over it, and the blessing of the Lord on it. Israel, who sang their resurrection-song on the banks of the Red Sea, became a captive in the dungeons of Babylon, and the land of the glory was left wasted and desolate under the foot of uncircumcised oppressors. The sun that in the morning of Bethlehem rose on the world as the light of it, and on Israel as the pledge of a renewed day, set in the night of Calvary—for man was a sinner and rejected Him. The same blessed Jesus who rose a second time upon the world and upon Israel as life from the dead, bringing light and life for eternity to us with Him, now has to see the waning, fading, evening shades of Christendom,

which are soon to close in the midnight of Apocalyptic judgments. The kingdom which is to break forth as the light of "a morning without clouds," is to close in the great apostasy of Gog and Magog, in the judgment of death and hell, and all not written in the book of life, and in the fleeing away of the heavens and the earth from the face of Him who sits on the great white throne. The morning, however, of the new heaven and the new earth, God will maintain in its first beauty and freshness for ever. There will be no evening shades of man's corruption and revolt, no night of judgment in the story of it. It shall be maintained as the one eternal day, the sun of which shall never go down.

What sights are these which pass in vision before us! The blessed God begins again and again to lay His foundations, as in the freshness of morning, and man again and again turns His morning into the shadow of death. But God cannot dwell in darkness. He is not the God of the dead, but of the living—and, therefore, though man may not join Him in maintaining the light, but plunge the whole scene in darkness again and again, He Himself will make good His own glory and secure His own joy, and having at the beginning called forth light from darkness in the morning-hour of the first creation, will hold in eternal beauty the morning of the second creation.

J. G. B.

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No believer is so crusty, critical, and unmanageable as one who once knew the truth in the power of the Holy Ghost, but has got away in heart from God. He is utterly useless for anything except for mischief.—DONALD ROSS.

The Bible Annotator.

OUTLINES OF SCRIPTURE SUBJECTS.

From the Bible margin of the late Wm. Lincoln.

SEVEN FAITHFUL SAYINGS. 1 Tim. i. 15; iii. 1; iv. 9; 2 Tim. ii. 11; Titus iii. 8; Rev. xix. 9 with xxi. 5; xxii. 5.

SEVENFOLD CALLING OF THE BELIEVER. To Salvation, 2 Thess. ii. 3; to Light, 1 Pet. ii. 9; to Liberty, Gal. v. 13; to Holiness, 1 Thess. iv. 7; to Peace, Col. iii. 15; to Fellowship, Cor. i. 9; to His Kingdom and Glory, 1 Thess. ii. 12; 1 Peter v. 9.

CONTINUE in God's Grace, Acts xiv. 22; in Christ's Love, John xv. 9; in the Word John viii. 31; in the Faith, Col. i. 23; in Service, Acts xxvi. 22; in Prayer, Col. iv. 2; in the Son, 1 John ii. 24.

JOTTINGS ON BIBLICAL WORDS.

DUST AND ASHES (Gen. xviii. 27). Dust by origin; ashes by desert. Ashes tell of fire, reminding us that we had merited wrath.

THE LORD JESUS. This title is applied to the Risen One, more than five hundred times in the New Testament. It is the Name of authority.

DIVINE DISCIPLINE. "Thou hast taught me (literally disciplined me) from my youth" (Psa. lxxi. 17). The Hebrew word is the same as is used for "a goad," to break in oxen. Thus have we been under the Father's discipline, since our spiritual birth.

VALLEY OF BACA (Psa. lxxxiv. 6). Primarily a valley so full of prickly thorns, that none can travel through it without difficulty and scarcely without pain. If a leaf is plucked from the shrub, a dew drop like a tear starts forth, and thence it derives its name. Earth is to the heaven-bound pilgrim a "vale of tears," and "through much tribulation" he must enter the kingdom.

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The Young Believer's Question Box.

J. L., SHEFFIELD, asks—"Is it right to speak of our friends who have died in faith as being 'glorified'? I did so lately and was challenged." No, not in the ordinary sense of that word, as used in Rom. viii. 17; 2 Thess. i. 10. This will only take place at the coming of the Lord, when their bodies shall be conformed to "the body of His glory" (Phil. iii. 21), and all the saints are glorified

together. At death the spirit is freed from its earthly house, it is absent from the body and "at home with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 8 R.V.). It is well to keep to the language of Scripture in speaking of this subject, especially now-a-days, when Annihilationists, Christadelphians, and the advocates of the sleep of the soul, are ever on the watch to catch at a word and lead unwary ones into their snare.

M. L., CO. ANTRIM.—"Is it right to go to a Presbyterian Church, when there is no Assembly of Believers where one is residing for a time?"—If in obedience to the Word of God, one has had to leave the Presbyterian or any other denomination, because of its unscriptural principles and practices, it is clear that the Word of God can never lead that one back to what it brought him out from. Circumstances cannot alter Scripture. If there is no company of believers with whom one can have fellowship according to the Word, it is surely better to "sit alone" (see Jer. xv. 17), than to disobey God. We know some have advised young believers placed in such circumstances to go to worldly churches lest by isolation they may become "cold," as if God were unable to keep his children "warm" apart from worldly religion. But is not that coldness much more likely to occur in the way of disobedience, than in abiding where the truth has led and would always maintain you. If separation from Presbyterianism—and all other isms—be according to God, then it can never be right, under any circumstance, to act as if it were otherwise by going back to them even for a day.

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Answers to Correspondents.

T. M.—Thanks for "The Tile of Christendom," by John Hambleton. It is exactly the thing our Correspondent inquired about.

FLORA B.—The writer of the book, "Life and Light," you name as being so much blessed to you, was John Gilmour, well known in Scotland and the North of England as a rousing evangelist over thirty years ago. It is out of print we fear long ago.

PROPHETIC STUDENT.—No system of human government can bring universal peace. There never will be peace upon earth, or universal harmony among nations, until the Prince of Peace assumes the government, and becomes "King over all the earth." Perfect in His obedience even unto death,

He will be equally perfect in His dominion; no selfish interests will dominate His sceptre. His will be a righteous rule. The long-looked for fulfilment of the Bethlehem song will then be known—"Glory to God in the highest." God will have His due first. "On earth peace, good pleasure, among men;" man will have the blessing. And the long struggle, the clashing of rival interests will cease. Earth's millions will know then what they little know or care to learn now, that subjection to the despised Nazarene, the acknowledgement of that sovereign rule with which God has invested Him is the only way of peace, of harmony, and of blessing. The same is true in principle now. To the individual believer and to the Church, the path of subjection to Christ Jesus as Lord and of obedience to His Word, is the way of blessing. There is no other.

T. B., GLASGOW.—If there is to be singing at the open-air or any other Assembly's Gospel Testimony, then surely it ought to be of such a character as all will be able to share it. Distinct Gospel hymns, declaring the way of salvation, calling upon sinners to turn to God, sung by a circle of happy saints in the power of the Spirit of God, have been used to arrest, awaken, and convert many. To introduce selections of modern pieces, many of them entirely destitute of Gospel truth, which can only be sung by a few trained singers—in other words, by a choir—while all the others stand mute listening to the performance, is the sure way to ruin an assembly's Gospel testimony, as indeed it has ruined many already, by reducing it to a "Service of Song," rendered generally by a few petulant youngsters who sigh and cry for an "up-to-date" exhibition such as they see in the world's religion, which they greatly love, and to which one day most of them will likely go, out and out. But they evidently want to first try their hand at bringing "up-to-date," as they call it, the Gospel testimony of the assembly, which, in some cases, they may manage to do to their own satisfaction, but so far as genuine work for God in lasting conversions, followed by godly lives, is concerned, they have done and can do nothing. It will be well if those who have the care of Gospel work, and to whose earnest labours, under God's blessing its success in interest and results is due, have their senses and energies exercised to prevent the spoiler from gaining the advantage he seeks by

means of these singing parades, now being stealthily introduced to "attract the crowd," which they do not even accomplish. They must have a poor idea of the world's taste for music—or a very inordinate conception of their own abilities—if they think that what is produced by the average "Singing Class" will attract its attention, while the Cathedral, with its full-robed choir of professional singers, is open to them. We candidly confess that if our ears itched for fancy singing, a so-called "Brethren's" Gospel Meeting would be about the last place on earth we—or anybody else for that matter—would ever think of going to, to get it. So the charm over which so much energy is wasted is *effete*. The great magnet of attraction and weapon of assault on the godless crowd is, the Gospel of God *preached* in the power of the Holy Ghost. It never fails. All else is child's play.

Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION VI.—If there are a number of elder brethren in whom the saints have confidence, seeking to shepherd and guide the Assembly, is one of their number at liberty to act independently of the others, in inviting preachers, arranging meetings and transacting Assembly matters entirely on his own responsibility? And if such a course is persisted in, what is the Scriptural remedy?

ANSWER A.—If, as a matter of convenience, one of the circle of overseeing brethren is deputed to correspond, arrange, and otherwise give effect to what has been mutually agreed upon by all, there can be no objection, but it is quite another matter for one to act apart from the others, and to assume he has their fellowship in his actions, if they know nothing of them. In all matters that concern the welfare of the saints and the work of the assembly, there ought to be complete harmony amongst those guiding, before anything is done or brought before the assembly for its approval. Individuals, however zealous or otherwise fitted, must not consider themselves to be the mouthpiece of the assembly to do all its speaking, no more its arm to perform all its acts. Due consideration of others would prevent all such disorders. J. S.

ANSWER B.—The seeds of clerisy are deeply rooted in the human heart and if not jealously watched, will bud and fruit in other soils than the

“denominations” with their “one-man minister.” It was out of the circle of the overseers, or bishops of the early churches, that the “archbishops” grew. The spirit of domination, a desire to be just one step above their equals, is visible in every circle of society, and it is no great wonder if it appears in the church of God. But it is an evil principle, and if allowed, eventually displaces the authority of the Lord, and overrides the consciences of those who dare to differ from it. The Word very clearly shows, that those serving the Lord among His saints should be first agreed and of one mind and then act together (see Acts vi. 2; xv. 22). Any wilfully ignoring others whom the Lord has raised up and given as helpers to His people—possibly because they differ from them on some doctrinal matter or in their estimation are not “advanced” in their ideas of how things should be done—should for the Truth’s sake and the welfare of the assembly be plainly told that such actions are not to be tolerated. This, if done in a proper manner, would have the support of all right-minded Christians, and he must be a headstrong man who will continue to so act in the face of such a protest. J. H.

EDITOR’S NOTE.—Complaints of this sort—and they are by no means uncommon—tend to show the constant need of stirring up the rank and file of the saints who form assemblies, to their responsibilities as set forth in the Scriptures. Where receiving, putting away, restoring, arranging, and almost everything else except giving out an occasional hymn, are left to the “overseers” or other active spirits in an assembly, the others contenting themselves to be quiescent, and let things take their course, so long as they do not give them any trouble, it is no great wonder if “clerisy” in its incipient stage begins to manifest itself in some. It was as much the fault of the “common people” who tolerated and suffered it, and finally recognised and paid for it to save themselves all trouble, that clerisy arose and increased in the church, as it was the wish of the clerics themselves to have the position. There must always be two parties to such a bargain. The only prevention is, for saints to know and feel their responsibilities to God, as worshippers, servants and guardians of the faith, each according to his measure, and thus to be cast upon a present living God for help to fulfil all these

in His fear, and to the edification of their fellow-saints. Then there will be no danger of overseers being disregarded on the one hand, or foisted into a false position on the other. Overseers never act *for* but always *with* the assembly, seeking to exercise the consciences of the saints and guide them to intelligently act according to the Word of God. As one correspondent points out, overseers must be of one mind and acting unitedly, before they can expect saints to follow their lead. How can they, if one—or any number short of the whole—act independently or without the knowledge or approval of the others? There is no surer way of forming parties and making division than this. If it be allowed to go on unchallenged for a time—as it often is for the sake of peace—when the brake is applied, as it must be at some point on the road—the “rearing” of those so long unrestrained will be all the more fierce. The Lord evidently foresaw the danger of some assuming the place of lordship over their brethren and provided for it, in the solemn and weighty words which are recorded in 1 Pet. v. 2, 3. Yet this was disregarded, and out from that very circle grew the upas tree of clerisy, with its widening branches of archdeacons, deans, cannons, archbishops, cardinals, till the Pope in the chair of St. Peter was evolved. “And the thing that hath been, it is and shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun” (Eccl. i. 9).

Questions Requiring Answers.

QUESTION VII.—What do you consider the Scriptures set forth as the credentials necessary for one who goes forth to the foreign field as a missionary? There seems to be a great lack of definiteness, as well as a difference of opinion in regard to this, with the result that some go forth, and are evidently well supported, who would get little countenance as preachers at home, while others who seem to be well fitted and godly are less cared for. I have spoken of this matter to fellow-believers in many places, and find there is a deep exercise in the minds of many regarding it, and much dissatisfaction at the way things are generally done as not being according to God. Any help would be valued.

THE NAZARITE'S VOW.

PART I.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

THE Nazarite was separated to God. He showed his separation in keeping from the following three things :—

(1) He must not either eat or drink any product of the vine

(2) The razor must not pass over his head.

(3) He must not approach any dead body (Numbers vi. 1-6).

(1) The Nazarite who consecrated himself voluntarily to a life of self-denial out of love to God, must abstain from that which naturally would be agreeable unto him. The Scriptures say—"Wine maketh merry" (Eccl. x. 19), and that "It maketh glad the heart of man" (Psa. civ. 15). The ordinary Israelite might take wine, and keep a good conscience, but it was not so with the Nazarite. He who desired to be wholly for the Lord must abstain from the grape, from the pip to the rind. Nothing that came of the vine of the earth must pass his lips. How few of the spiritual Israel are Nazarites! Most have never seen the Lord in the glory, never known the power of the Cross; their joys are earthly and not heavenly. I would solemnly say, If by grace you desire to be a Nazarite to God, do not follow this manner of life. Professing Christians of our day are ready to drink all the wine of earthly pleasures that they can obtain. They are ready to eat the pips and the rind too, and all that comes of the vine. The rigid legality of the times of the Puritans has given place to an impure taste for pleasures and amusements, and this taste has even been cultivated by a sickly church, effeminate and unfaithful, till there is scarcely any

worldly pleasure which is not tolerated by the professing people of God. But if you desire to be wholly given to and for the Lord, you will soon feel that you cannot take part in the world's amusements; that you cannot go to the theatre nor the music hall, nor the evening party, and that you cannot play cards, read novels and romances without defiling the head of your Nazariteship. If you let yourself go to these things, you will find you no longer have the same enjoyment of the Word of God. They will deprive you of liberty in prayer. They will rob you of your spiritual joy, and soon if you do not repent, they will deprive you of all power for being a living witness for Christ. I speak plainly, because I do not think you wish to be only a Christian in theory. The things which I have just mentioned carry with them so evident an imprint of the world, that you have doubtless shunned them ever since the day of your conversion, but the girdle of truth needs perhaps to be further tightened around our loins. There are many things which in themselves cannot be called wicked, but which a truly devoted heart will hold itself aloof from. We have each of us tastes and tendencies which, if we had remained unconverted, would have dominated and characterised our lives. For one, the love of society; for another, the taste for music; for a third, the charm of poetry; for a fourth, science; and so on. I do not now speak of a man's avocation or profession, but of the sources from which he obtains his pleasure, when he has done his duty and is free. Each one of us could doubtless tell that which we most love by nature, and we could doubtless say that we have found out by experience, that satisfying the natural tastes has not helped the

spiritual life. All these things are the product of the earthly vine. They are not always wicked in themselves, but when the heart's affections cling to them, and the heart finds its consolation and satisfaction in them, they then turn us from the true source of joy. The Lord no longer has His place as the supreme object of our hearts, and our Nazariteship becomes defiled. Suppose a widow passes a spot where years before her husband had been killed. You would not expect her to find anything there to attract her heart, however interesting and diverting the amusements may be. Let us consider this world as the place where He whom we love was cruelly put to death. They did not offer Him wine, but vinegar and gall, and He, the true Nazirite, turning from all earthly joy, says—"I will no more drink of the fruit of the vine till the Kingdom of God shall come" (Luke xxii. 18). His joys are with the Father and in heaven, and He would have us know them and share them with Him there, so that we might consider it great gain to turn from the vine of the earth. The heart truly attached to the Lord can say—"Thy love is better than wine. . . . We will be glad and rejoice in Thee. We will remember Thy love more than wine" (Cant. i. 2-4). David could say—"Thou hast put gladness in my heart more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased" (Psa. iv. 7). Have you not tasted this joy in the Lord which infinitely surpasses all that earthly vines can offer? Would you willingly deliberately sacrifice it? I think not. Then take care you do not listen to the deceiver, who seeks to rob you of it by turning you to things that promise well, but do not bestow any real joy.

THE SEVEN GOLDEN LAMPSTANDS ;

OR, THE CHURCH IN TESTIMONY.

Revelation—Chapters I., II., III.

BY ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.—PART VIII.

HAVING briefly indicated the character of the successive periods in the history of Christendom, represented by the Seven Churches, we may now go back to the beginning of chapter ii., and examine the messages in detail.

We shall find that at the commencement of each message the Lord Jesus says something concerning Himself, having a special application to the condition and circumstances of the Church He is addressing. Whatever may be their peculiar trials or temptations, or whatever the character of their failure or sin, He makes a revelation of Himself to them, perfectly fitted to meet their need, to bring home to their consciences a sense of their wrong-doing, or to minister strength and comfort suited to the difficulties of their position.

How helpful this is for us. As one has truly sung:—

"A fulness resides,
In Jesus, our Head,
And ever abides
To answer our need."

"In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. ii. 9). "And of His fulness have all we received" (John i. 10). Of old, God revealed Himself, step by step, to Abraham, to meet his varying needs. He first appeared to Him as the "God of Glory"; afterwards as the "Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth." At a later stage He said to Abraham, "I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward;" and later still, "I am the Almighty God." Thus was Abraham encouraged to go out, not knowing whether he went. Thus was

he so satisfied with his all-sufficient portion, that he could unhesitatingly resist the tempting offers of the King of Sodom. Thus were his fears and his impatience rebuked, and thus was his faith perfected, till he could, without a murmur, offer up his only son, in whom all God's promises were to be accomplished.

So with us to-day. God makes Himself known to us in Christ. The revelation comes to us through the Scriptures, by which, first of all, we are made "wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." Then these same God-breathed Scriptures are "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. iii. 15-17). But everywhere the Scriptures witness of Christ. "They are they which testify of Me," said the Lord Jesus to the Jews (John v. 39); while the angel assured John, in Patmos, that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. i. 10). So do we receive the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and thus only can we be perfected unto every good work through the Scriptures.

The opening words of each of the seven messages give us, therefore, a clue to the character and circumstances of the Church that is being spoken to. And we shall only be able rightly to understand the Lord's statement as to the condition of each Church, by comparing that statement with what He says about Himself. His message to the Church at Ephesus begins with the words, "These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand; He that walketh in the midst of the seven golden lampstands." These words are full

of significance, as to the position which Jesus, as Lord, occupies in relation to the Churches on earth. They bring to mind His declaration to the disciples in Matthew xxviii. 18, "All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth," with the consequent commandment to make disciples, to baptize them, and to teach them to observe all things that He had commanded. This again associates itself with His other word in Matthew xviii. 18-20, that the binding and loosing of the Churches on earth shall be in power, because He is in the midst, where two or three are gathered together unto His Name. We may further connect these two passages with Eph. iv. 7-16. He, who has ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things, bestows gifts on His people, that by them the saints may be perfected unto the work of ministering, unto the edifying of the body of Christ. But the gifts which He bestows are not intended to make them independent of Himself. He remains the One Lord, and it is only as all are subject to Him, drawing from Him, and growing up into Him, that the body can build itself up in love.

The believers composing the Church at Ephesus were richly endowed with spiritual gifts, and were abundant in labours, in zeal, and in patience. Moreover, the Lord bears witness that this was for His Name's sake. Yet His searching eye detects something in them, which mars all that appears so fair outwardly. "Nevertheless I have against thee, that thou hast left thy first love." The word "somewhat," which is introduced in the Authorised Version, seriously weakens the force of the Lord's words. So seriously does this leaving of first love spoil all the rest, in His eyes

that He speaks of them as having "fallen." "Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works." Who, that had not His power to search the heart, would have thought of describing this as a fallen Church? At the judgment-seat of Christ, the hidden things shall be brought to light, and the counsels of the heart shall be made manifest. His unerring judgment of each of us in that day, will be according to what He has seen within us, and not according to what men could see outwardly.

Now the Lord's words concerning Himself to this church at Ephesus, will assuredly have an important bearing upon what He says concerning them. Their loss of their first love will be connected with their failure to apprehend Him as the One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, and walks in the midst of the Seven Golden Lampstands. His holding the stars in His right hand tell, that He still continues, as Lord, to direct and control all the gifts which He has bestowed. And while the heart is filled with love to Him, how willingly we shall recognize this. But when love fails, we soon forget that we need "grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ," and we glorify ourselves because of the gifts that He has given. In the kindness of her youth, the love of her espousals, Israel went after the Lord, and He brought her into a plentiful land to eat the fruit and the goodness thereof (Jer. ii. 1-7). The Lord made her beauty perfect through His comeliness which He put upon her (Ezek. xvi. 14). But she left her first love; she trusted in her beauty, His gift, and she perverted the jewels and the garments which He had bestowed upon her to other purposes than those for which they were given.

How this should search our hearts! First love in the believer, is specially characterized by a deep sense of our utter unworthiness and of His exceeding grace. If we are to retain that first love, there must, with increase of knowledge and experience and development of gift, be an ever-deepening sense of our sinfulness, and of the grace that abounds above it all. This alone will keep us in the lowly place of dependence, where grace is received according to the measure of the gift.

We may have learned, in theory, the place that God has given to His beloved Son, in relation to the assembly; we may recognize that all gifts have come from Him, we may even labour on for His Name's sake. And yet with all this, the lowly dependence which is so characteristic of first love may be wanting. So it was with the Church of Ephesus. The Lord Jesus points out to them that He not only gives gifts to men, but holds them in His right hand; while He still claims the "all authority" that the Father has given to Him, and which He has never delegated to others, by reminding them that He walks in the midst of the lampstands. At the same time He reads the secret thought of their hearts, probably unsuspected by themselves, and shows them that, in leaving their first love, they are denying Him in reality the place they still desire to give Him.

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As long as God's plain Word is spoken reasonably and in the power of the Holy Ghost, Conferences will be a means of blessing to God's dear people, but whenever selections are made and only such things spoken as may suit "ears polite" or please half-hearted and crooked Christians, then their power is gone.—*Donald Ross.*

CHRIST THE LAST.

BY GEORGE STEINBERGER, STUTTGART.

WE can go with God to the very end, because Christ, our Head, is not only the First, but also the Last. As the First He goes before us and makes a way for us and keeps the end in view, and as the Last He sees that we reach the goal. As the Last He not only covers our shortcomings, but is intent on keeping us from coming to a standstill or getting entangled. Do not ask anxiously "How can I reach this high goal?" There is a way and there is a power! How can the weak child come to Berlin? Is not the distance too great for its small strength? No! there is a power—the train—it must do nothing but entrust itself to that. And so what it could never reach with its own power, it reaches without trouble through another.

As the Last, He not only leads the way in the difficulty, but *He stands still in the difficulty* until we have come through it *uninjured and entire*. In Joshua iii. we read that the priests bearing the ark went into the Jordan before the people, and stood in the midst until all Israel had *clean* passed over—not only the strong men, but also the weak ones and the children (verse 17). So Christ is the First and the Last. He has power over all flesh. Only give your life into His hands. For the Lamb alone has power to loose the seals of the book (Rev. v. 1-5). He alone can loose what is yet bound, and break what is yet unbroken *in you*. There are things in our nature like a sealed knot: we have tried to loose them, have asked others to loose them, and yet up to this day there has been no unloosing of them. But let us

come to the Lamb. He is the Last. He can do what none in heaven or on earth can do. When the elders of the children of Israel had begged Pharaoh in vain for lightening of their labour, and Moses, having sought in vain for deliverance, cried to God, "Thou hast not delivered Thy people *at all!*" Then Jehovah said, "Now shalt thou see what *I* will do to Pharaoh (Exod. vi. 19 to vi. 1). Have you gained no deliverance through the elders—experienced Christians—and none through Moses, God's messenger? Do not be discouraged, He is near! He has the keys (Rev. 1). He can open what is yet closed to the light and life of God, and He can close what belongs to death and hell, for He has the keys of both.

As the Last, He has the right to the "last word" over us—not sin, not the enemy, not other people, not even we ourselves, but Christ. The enemy always pretends to be the first and the last—but he is not! We read that the serpent was *more subtle* than all the beasts of the field—not *more powerful!* He can only exercise his power over those who do not obey God; but over him who yields to God *implicit obedience*, the enemy can never reign; he can only tempt him. Only Christ can say, "All power is given unto Me!" And clothed in Him we can go forward. He will go before us like the pillar of cloud before Israel, and be behind us like the pillar of fire to cover us from the enemy who is stronger than we. Do not fear; the fire you see is not meant for you, it is meant for him; it is a covering against the assaults of the enemy. That is practically what it means to be "*in Christ*." He in front of us and behind us: *we inside* and *He outside*. O what a guarantee!

SYMBOLS OF THE CHURCH.

BY DR. J. NORMAN CASE, OF CHINA.

III.—THE BRIDE. (SECOND ARTICLE).

WHILE meditating on these spirit-chosen figures of the Church we should not forget, that the relation between Christ and His people is deeper than can be told out in any natural figure—that of head and members not excepted. For after quoting the words, “two shall become one flesh,” the Apostle states a profound truth. “He that is joined unto the Lord,” he writes, “IS ONE SPIRIT” (see also John xvii. 21-23). All that is contained in this and similar declarations, none of us fully take in. We are still in the infant class, and may well be thankful to our great Teacher for employing natural relationships, which do convey some definite idea to our minds to instruct us in spiritual things.

Christ is the ideal Bridegroom and Husband, and the spiritual reality, of which earthly manage is but the shadow, will be embodied and perpetuated for ever in the relationship of Christ and the Church. Of this relationship Adam and Eve were a faint fore-shadowing. We notice:

I. *Adam existed before Eve.* Even then he was the vicegerent and representative head of this earth. In that capacity he gave appreciate names to the cattle, the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field. Perhaps in this God-given task, he, for the first time felt his own lack. The birds of the air and the four-footed creatures were “mated.” But he was alone. For him, among them all, no meet companion could be found. This became the occasion for the further display of the wisdom, benevolence, and power of the Creator.

The Church's Bridegroom is He, “whose goings forth have been of old from the days of eternity” (Micah v. 3). *In Him as the originator, through Him as the means, and unto Him as the end* were all things created (Col. i. 19; R.V). He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. The stars and planets, and all the host of heaven; He calleth them all by names, by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power, not one faileth.

This glorious Being looked into the future and saw fallen men; while pitying them for what they were, He loved for what they might become. He beheld that which for Him as Man might be made a meet companion, to share for ever His love and glory.

II. *Before Eve could be formed, it was necessary that Adam should pass into a death-like sleep.* In that sleep, by means of the opened side and extracted rib, God formed the woman, and we may be sure that she, the last and the best of this lower creation, was worthy both of her Maker and of the object for which she was made. As an old writer quaintly but beautifully remarked: “Woman was not made out of Adam's head to top him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected by him, and near his heart to be beloved . . . If man is the head, she is the crown; a crown to her husband, the crown of the visible creation.”

We may suppose that Adam's unnatural sleep was designed by God as an anæsthetic, and thus spare him pain, but the sleep itself points to that which Christ must pass through to make us His own. For Him there could even be no physical anodyne (Mark xv. 23) He drank the cup of wrath

and judgment to its last and bitterest dregs.

"But none of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed,
Nor how dark was the night that the Lord passed
through
Ere He found His sheep that was lost."

A bride has often been won by some feat of skill, or strength, or endurance, and very frequently has been purchased. What a fight our Champion waged to win His bride! At what a tremendous cost has He purchased her for Himself! "He loved the Church and *gave Himself for her!*" Love could go no further!

III. We suppose it was Adam's love for Eve which induced him when she had, through the seduction of Satan, disobeyed God and ruined herself, to take his place with her. Eve was beguiled and deceived; Adam sinned with his eyes open. The definite New Testament statement is, "Adam was not deceived" (1 Timothy ii. 4). This made his act all the more culpable. It is Adam, as the head of the race, who is charged with bringing sin and death into the world (Rom. v. 12).

In Adam this act was both foolish and sinful. He followed his fellow-creature even when it involved a deliberate transgression of the Creator's command. If Eve alone had sinned, Eve alone would have perished. Yet, though we cannot scripturally say that Adam's act was fore-ordained, it was certainly foreseen; and, in the Divine purpose, the remedy was provided even before the disease actually existed.

Fully understanding all that it involved, Christ deliberately and of set purpose undertook the task of saving sinners. Because those to be redeemed were

partakers of flesh and blood, He also partook of the same. He "came in the likeness of sinful flesh." Though personally ever sinless and holy, at Calvary He became the sin-bearer, putting it away by the sacrifice of Himself.

From before the foundation of the world He saw us in the Divine programme of the ages, and even then His delights were with the sons of men. Sinners were loved, not for what they were actually, but for what they were potentially; not because of the ruin caused by sin, but because of the restoration grace would work. Till recent years, it was a law of the British realm, that when a man married, by that act, he became responsible for any debts his wife may have aforesaid contracted. Wondrous grace! The Bridegroom of the Church, to make her His own, came and met all the claims against her, and endured the curse and wrath which were her due. The self-signed bond which was against her, He took out of the way nailing it to the Cross.

We remember the word of the first husband on beholding his wife: "For this cause shall a *man* leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife, &c." Under most circumstances it is necessary for the wife as well as for the husband, on marrying, to leave father and mother; in some countries the latter is the rule, while the former is the exception. But it does not come into view in the verse.

In the Antitype we see how this fits in. He it was who "came forth from the Father," who "came into the world to save sinners." When we consider what Christ left and what He came to, what He did and suffered, our hearts should overflow with gratitude and love to Him.

IV. It has been pointed out that in

Eph. v. 25-29 there are seven things which Christ is said to do for the Church. (1) He *loved* the Church. That is the spring of all He ever has or ever will do for us. This love, truly, the many waters of our sins could not quench, neither could the floods of Satanic malice or Divine wrath drown. In Him love was a very flame; it was stronger than death (Song of Solomon viii. 9-7). And His love is as deep and true and tender at this moment as it was when He left the Father's house, or as it was when He went to the Cross.

(2) He *gave Himself* for her. In that act He once and forever demonstrated His love for us, and at the same time met our deep, deep need. Happy the soul that can look back to Calvary, that can look up to the throne of God, that can look forward to the coming glory and say: "The Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me!"

(3) That He might *sanctify* (4) and *cleanse* her. These were the immediate objects of His death. These acts remind us of what the beloved disciple saw and left on record for our instruction. "And one of the soldiers," he wrote, "with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there-out blood and water" (John xix. 34). The blood of Christ is as surely the procuring cause of our sanctification and cleansing as it is of our forgiveness and justification (Heb. ix. 14, 13, 12, &c. No joy, no privilege, no glory, on earth or in heaven, that we owe not to Christ's death. "*Sanctify*" and "*cleanse*" are great words, telling of most important spiritual acts or processes. Beside the Saviour's own past and present service, they include the regenerating and sanctifying operations of the Holy Spirit, for Christ's death and resurrection has

procured for us the ministry of the Paraclete. But the exigencies of space forbid our enlarging on the truths here.

(5) He *nourishes* and (6) *cherishes* the Church. These are full, deep, precious words; they tell of the constant, intimate, tender service of the Bridegroom. The first speaks of the spiritual nutriment He supplies to us; the second points to His patient, powerful, loving protection and care "every moment." All true Christians know by experience the intercourse here described, and only such can understand it.

"The love of Jesus what it is,
None but His loved ones know."

(7) "That He might *present her to Himself*." This is the ultimate object of all that He has done and is doing for the Church. Jehovah-God presented Eve to Adam. But no introduction, I ween, was needed. His whole being must have gone forth to her; instinctively he must have known who and what she was, and how she came to be. His mind reverted to what he had been engaged upon before being put to sleep; and in effect he said: "This time there is one brought who will perfectly suit me—bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." Our Bridegroom is the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace: therefore He will present His Bride to Himself. This last act will take place at His second coming. The Church will then be complete, and He will present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish before Him. All marks of sin, decay, &c., imperfection will have for ever disappeared; she shall be radiantly beautiful because perfectly holy. Her beauty shall be *perfect* through the

comeliness which her Saviour-Bridegroom has put upon her.

What that day will mean for Him and for us, tongue cannot tell, heart cannot conceive! But the anticipation of these coming glories should lead us to count as dross the honours, pleasures, and prizes of this world, to give our whole heart's affection, our strength of mind and body, now and always, to our Lord and Bridegroom. May grace be found for this by reader and writer. Amen.

"Oh, the blessed joy of meeting—
All the desert past!

Oh, the wondrous words of greeting
He shall speak at last."

"Meet companion then for JESUS,
From Him, for Him made;
Glory of God's grace for ever,
There in me displayed."

—o—

THE CUP AND THE CROWN.

MATTHEW XX. 22.

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HOW oft we pray for holiness,
Yet know not what we ask;
We seek the heavenly prize to gain,
Nor think how hard the task.

Through sorrows deep the Saviour trod,
The sinner's life to gain,
His purchased ones must in His steps
To heavenly joys attain.

Wouldst thou among the shining ones
Be foremost in the race,
Or wear a brighter crown than all
Who run the Christian race?

Then be assured thy path must be
Through trials dark and deep;
Thine heart must oft be pierced with thorns,
Thine eyes must oftimes weep.

The soldier who would glory win
Must bear the battle's strife,
Must wage through many a weary war,
And yield but with his life;
Must free himself from every tie
That had him earthward bound;
Must dash the tear-drop from his eye
When fond ones cling around.

Wouldst thou above the things of earth
On wings of rapture soar?
To hold communion in the heights
Of bliss unknown before;

Then must the ties that bind thee here
Be severed one by one,
And thy fond heart, loosed from them all,
Contented mount alone.

Oh! canst thou drink the bitter cup?
He drank it once for thee;
He left His throne and glorious ones
Thy substitute to be.

Lonely to suffer, live, and die,
To raise thee to His throne;
Then murmur not if thou, bereft,
Shouldst walk to heaven alone.

And think whenever thou dost ask
To be more holy here,
That if He grant to thee thy prayer,
Some bitter cup is near.

The gem that decks the monarch's crown,
Ere seen in beauty there,
Is hewn with many a cutting stroke
Its radiance to prepare.

Then count the cost, if thou wouldst shine
A gem of heavenly ray;
The chisel deep must cut the dross
That hides its light away.

But dark howe'er the sorrows be,
Or loud the storms that fall—
One glimpse of Jesus, AS HE IS,
Will make amends for all.

The Bible Annotator.

OUTLINES OF GOSPEL SUBJECTS.

FOUR WONDERFUL "MYS."
 My Soul (Isaiah xxxviii. 17).
 My Sins (Isaiah xxxviii. 17).
 My Saviour (Luke i. 47).
 My Salvation (Isaiah xii. 2).

ETERNAL LIFE IN THREE ASPECTS.

A Past Promise (Titus i. 2).
 A Present Possession (1 John v. 13).
 A Future Prospect (Jude 21).

THREE TYPICAL MEN IN GENESIS.

ABEL: Comes to God—Conversion.
 ENOCH: Walks with God—Communion.
 NOAH: Works for God—Service.

The order is divine. It must never be reversed or altered.

GOD FORGIVES THE SINNER,
 Frankly (Luke vii. 42; Eph. i. 7).
 Freely (Eph. iv. 32; Acts xiii. 38).
 Fully (Col. ii. 13; Heb. x. 17).



The Young Believer's Question Box.

Who are the "them that are without" in Col. iv. 5, Are they believers or the unconverted? Clearly the latter. Most likely Pagans at Colosse. Unconverted of all kinds now, who remain outside the circle of grace, the family of God, including all who have not been "born again." To "walk in wisdom" with regard to such, doing, saying nothing to stumble or give them occasion against the truth, is that to which the believer is called.

Of whom does the seventy-second Psalm speak? Solomon or Christ? It may have had a partial fulfilment in Solomon when he sat on Israel's throne, when there was "neither adversary nor evil occurrent" (1 Kings v. 4), but the full and literal fulfilment awaits the time when the true Son of David shall reign, according to the prophetic promise given to the Virgin in Luke i. 32, and described in such passages as Isaiah xi. 9, xxxii. 1-2 of His millennial kingdom, when the weary earth after its long travail shall be at rest, and under the peaceful rule of the once-despised Nazarene, shall learn at last that He alone is worthy of "the kingdom, the power, and the glory."

Answers to Correspondents.

TOM B.—The first printed Testament in the English language was issued about the year 1523. It was the translation of William Tyndale, and for that noble work he was burned at the stake in 1536.

BIBLE STUDENT.—Of Candace, Queen of the Ethiopians, mentioned in Acts viii. 27, nothing is known. The fact that such a queen is not mentioned in history proves nothing. Besides, it may not have been her personal name at all, but, like "Pharaoh," a designation of the Ethiopian sovereign. In Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* it is said that Ethiopia was then governed by female rulers.

W. J. M., DUBLIN.—A Christian is to be a law-abiding citizen, rendering to civil rulers their honours and their dues (Rom. xiii. 1-4), but he is not called upon to take part in any public agitation, either to create or to decry the existing government. We have never known any believer do so, without losing his power and soon his place as the Lord's witness, and being swamped in the world. Leave the world to arrange its own politics: yours are in heaven (Col. iii. 21).

A. G., BERWICKSHIRE.—Departures from the truth and disorders abound, even among those who claim to be separated from the world's religious systems, and to own the Word of God as their only rule of faith. But while all who fear God must mourn over these, and Daniel-like make their confession of them to God, human remedies such as you suggest will accomplish nothing. It takes God to put such matters right, and sooner or later He will do it. If through laxity or indifference to God's commandment, or because of a prevailing party spirit, an evil-doer is shielded and sheltered in God's Assembly instead of being dealt with according to God, you may depend upon it that God will vindicate His own honour in His own time. David may spare Absalom the Divine judgment, but God will deal with him, and in such a way, that David must reap his own sowing. When Church judgment fails, Divine judgment comes in, and when it does, it makes its voice to be heard in such a way as none can mistake it. Such ever has been and is the way of our God. Solemn beyond measure in His judgment upon all who come within its scope. Do not try by human means to hasten what God has undertaken to do

Himself. If you have given your testimony and individually expressed your judgment as to the course that ought to be taken, you have discharged your responsibility. Leave the rest to God, and wait patiently on Him.

A. L. B., LONDON.—If God has not spoken on any subject or given commandment regarding it, then assuredly “liberty” such as the article you refer to claims, would be proper. But it must not be too hastily assumed that there is nothing in the Word regarding a certain subject, because one does not “see” it there. There may be reasons for not seeing what is there taught clearly enough. How many, for example, do not see *Believer's Baptism* in the Scriptures? Still it is there plain enough, as we think, to any who have not been *taught* to read Scripture through the glasses of human tradition. May it not be possible that the same is true regarding other things? When one has committed himself to a course, especially if he has put his opinions “into print,” it is wonderful how difficult it is to “see” anything that clashes with that opinion, or would necessitate its withdrawal. There is a “liberty” claimed by many in the things of God, which amounts to *lawlessness*, inasmuch as those who claim it have never been exercised before God and over His Word, as to what His will on the matter is. They may have flippantly asked—“What is truth?”—and, like Pilate, turned on their heel and walked off before they got the answer, but to stand in God's counsel desiring to be taught God's will, that they may do it, however contrary to nature and all its desires, they *know nothing of*. It is the unbroken will, the proud spirit, the desire to rove undisciplined by either God or man, that works havoc in the things of God and hinders the free flow of fellowship amongst those who ought to be standing shoulder to shoulder, as ensamples to the flock. But such has ever been and will be. What a mercy that there is a judgment-seat, where those who have been misrepresented and traduced because they sought through grace to cleave to that Word which they esteem above rubies, shall be vindicated by the only One whose praise it is safe to have. How insignificant all else will seem then. Go quietly, firmly on in the plain path, seeking only to please God. Nobody on earth can hinder you from doing that.

Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION VII.—What do you consider the Scriptures set forth as the credentials necessary for one who goes forth to the foreign field as a missionary? There seems to be a great lack of definiteness, as well as a difference of opinion in regard to this, with the result that some go forth, and are evidently well supported, who would get little countenance as preachers at home, while others who seem to be well fitted and godly are less cared for. I have spoken of this matter to fellow-believers in many places, and find there is a deep exercise in the minds of many regarding it, and much dissatisfaction at the way things are generally done as not being according to God. Any help would be valued.

ANSWER A.—Grace, godliness, and gift are all required in one who would go forth in any public service, and he should surely have the approval and commendation of his fellow-saints not only as a consistent Christian, but as one who has *proved* himself called of God to the sphere of service for which he offers himself. Novices, and others who have not commended themselves by self-denial and ability to work with others, such as one going to a foreign land much needs to be well schooled in, are not only certain to give trouble to fellow-workers, but to ultimately break down, as many have done, or, what is worse, drag out a miserable existence where they are, dishonouring the Lord's Name by their ways.—E. D.

ANSWER B.—Although there is no “Missionary Board” to pass—as in the various Missionary Societies—surely the only alternative is not that when a young man thinks he ought to be a foreign missionary, he has nothing to do but get a few personal friends—some of them perhaps not blessed with much spiritual discernment—to commend him to the sympathies of Christians, and say that he wants to be sent forth to some distant land as a missionary. Then after money is asked for and farewell meetings held, off he goes. His name is duly registered as a “missionary.” He is supported by the offerings of Assemblies, and frequently from other sources as well, in many cases getting far more than he would ever have earned at his trade or profession, and as careful observation shows, often doing little *real* work for God. There are, of

course, noble exceptions, but the present system leaves the way open for any number of unspiritual and unqualified persons to go to the foreign mission field, and, as some know, the results have been disastrous. It is all very well to cover the failures of those who break down, and bear with those who act irregularly, but if the conditions under which they are sent out *provide* for such failures, then they ought to be brought to the line and plummet of the Word of God, and tested by it. Paul would not take Timothy as a co-labourer without the commendation of the brethren of the place where he was (Acts xvi. 2), nor would he consent to John Mark being brought by his uncle Barnabas (Acts xv. 37) to accompany them, owing to his unsteady ways. One in such a sphere ought to be an example to others, and surely in heathendom this is especially called for. It is surely right that full inquiry be made of those who have the best opportunity of knowing (and no personal or party interest to serve) what the spiritual and moral qualifications of those desiring to go forth to evangelise the heathen are, whether they have "proved" themselves as soul-winners, and in lowly paths of service in their own sphere, and what evidence there is that they have the call of God to the new sphere which they wish to fill. It lies chiefly with those having spiritual discernment and godly wisdom in the Assembly whom they are, to commend, yet others who know little of them frequently take the whole matter out of their hands, and rush the matter through with little recognition of God, or of His way of doing His own work. Need we wonder if the results are disappointing? No, we must go back to the simplicity of God's way, as we sought to do thirty years ago, when missionaries were fewer and funds less, but when—as some very well remember—there was more of GOD in the work than there is now.—J. S.

ANSWER C.—Physical fitness should not be overlooked. Ability to "endure hardness", to rough it, to be able to do without the comforts of home life, and to deny oneself much for the kingdom of God's sake, are all required of one who goes as a pioneer of the Gospel to an unopened land. It is a grave question in how far married men can fulfil the requirements of such a position; one thing is clear—that families can scarcely be brought up in certain lands. God has devoted

family men in the foreign field, but there are outposts which only single men can fill, and it is manifestly a blunder for a young missionary to saddle himself with family cares before he has well learned the language or become acquainted with the work. As to spiritual "credentials," he would need to KNOW GOD well, to have some experience in trusting Him for daily bread, and not look to "channels," or he will be disappointed. As our country sends its best and most trusted warriors to fill difficult and dangerous posts, and her wisest diplomats to occupy places where skill and tact are needed, so *the very best* men the church of God has, are needed for such high places of the field. Carey, Judson, Wm. Burns and others, were all well-proved men of God, ere they went out on their mission of opening up foreign lands to the Gospel. Surely God has some such men still. Is it our fault that they do not arise and go forth?—J.W.M.

ANSWER D.—It is a cause of unceasing thankfulness to God with us as an assembly of believers that there are those labouring for the Lord in distant lands, who have gone forth for His Name, and who seek to be guided by His Word. We have for many years had godly, practical fellowship with such and their work, and desire in this grace to abound more and more. We were deeply grieved, however lately, when one whom we had regarded as being outside of all denominations labouring for the Lord in another land, whose name appears as such and who is supported by the gifts of believers outside of worldly churches, appeared in this place preaching in a Presbyterian Church, and passed by the little company of believers gathered in the Lord's Name. This has stumbled some who, at much personal cost, have recently come out of that very place, and it at least shews the need of *discrimination* being used, in regard to those whom we support, lest by our liberality we may be helping men to build up what we have left. It is scarcely to be expected that such a missionary would be likely to teach others what he does not believe, or at any rate practise himself. Those who go forth to other lands, would need to be clear as to the truth, else they can never leave anything that will be a permanent testimony for the Lord behind them.—J. H.

Further Answers and The Editor's Note, will appear next month

THE TESTIMONY OF CHRIST TO THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

PART I.—BY C. F. HOGG.

IN the New Testament, alike in its historical and epistolary parts, frequent mention is made of another collection of books under the general title "The Law," or "The Scriptures," or, as they are sometimes more fully described "The Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms." For centuries before our era, these books had been accepted by the Jewish nation as of Divine origin and authority, an estimate which was accepted as an inheritance by the Christian Church, and which has been maintained and defended ever since as an integral part of the faith against the assaults of infidels and heretics, the avowed and the secret enemies of the Cross.

Holding in our hands the bound volume of the Old Testament, the modern and current name by which "The Scriptures" are known, we may forget that in their original form the various books were not so definitely and tangibly associated as they now are. The material used was skin, not paper; the form was that of a roll, or rather rolls, not of a volume. Neither were copies so readily and accurately multiplied when every word had to be laboriously copied by the hand. As we now have them, the books comprising the Old Testament number thirty-nine, though apparently formerly combined in a different way—thus, Ezra and Nehemiah were one, as were the Books of Samuel and the Books of Kings. These thirty-nine books were written by different men, and at varying intervals, during a period of perhaps nine hundred years, or about the length of time that has elapsed since the

Conquest of England by the Norman William. How long these thirty-nine books have been associated is not certainly known, most probably the Canon, as it is called, is the result of a gradual assimilation extending over a more or less lengthy period. Some of them, apparently, were accepted without hesitation, others only establishing their claims to inclusion after longer probation, but each at last establishing its claim to a place among "The Scriptures." Ezra's name has long been associated with the fixing of the Canon, and, according to Josephus, a Jewish writer who lived in the first Christian century, it assumed its final form during the reign of Xerxes, or Ahasuerus, as he is called in the Book of Esther. From the inclusion of the Book of Esther itself, this date is obviously too early; but these two suggestions go to prove, at least, that the contents of the Old Testament were already clearly defined long before the birth of Christ.

While the Bible remained the sole possession of the Jews, it attracted little attention outside that nation. They were not a religiously aggressive people. A way of access among them for any attracted by their tenets and worship was, indeed, available, but their law did not make it incumbent upon them to seek converts among the Gentiles. Where there is no aggression there is no opposition, hence the Old Testament was, practically, never questioned until the active propaganda of the Gospel set in. When, however, the growth of the Christian Church had reached such dimensions as to arouse general fear of its influence upon the natural religions by which the ground was already occupied, the high claim made

for the Book was not allowed to pass unchallenged. It could no longer be ignored, for the new religion based its claims in great measure upon it. Henceforth it was subjected to fierce attacks from every quarter, veering round from ridicule to criticism.

So long as the attempts to discredit the histories and to post-date the prophecies of the Scriptures by denying the traditional authorship, were made from without, the aim of the critics was obvious. It was openly declared; it proceeded from the camp of the enemy. Attacks were to be suspected and could be met by a counter criticism which would more fully and more satisfactorily account for all the facts. Such assaults may have afforded satisfaction to those who made them, but the faith of the children of God in the Old Testament was seldom shaken.

Of recent years, however, the arguments, long the resource of the infidel, have found new sponsors in the Higher, or, as they are often called, Historical Critics, who themselves professing godliness, and in most cases holding positions as ministers of the Word, assert they have found reason for rejecting the claim to Divine origin and authority made by and on behalf of the Old Testament. Obviously it is more difficult to deal with this new condition. Inspiration is not denied, indeed, but a new meaning is attached to the Word. Plausible explanations are offered of narratives formerly credited at face value. When we recognise that the "surviving Semitic literature" is "largely charged with a poetical spirit," it is urged, the value of the Old Testament is greatly enhanced. The account of the Creation and Fall of man as set forth in Genesis, for example,

is not to be taken literally. The histories have been "idealised;" though "invented" or "falsified" are the words that a plain man might use to describe the same process. And whereas the saints of former days supposed that in the Scriptures God spoke, graciously revealing Himself to a fallen race unable by searching to find Him out, according to the newer light the movement was altogether in the other direction. The Jews, we are told, were the most devout people the world has ever known. To them we are indebted for our religion, as we are indebted to the Romans for our laws, and to the Greeks for our art. In the Hebrew Scriptures the most highly endowed minds of the Semitic race made their loftiest flights in expression of the thoughts of God which they had selected and sublimated from the vague and unworthy conceptions of Deity current in the earlier stages of human development. Moses did not write the Pentateuch; the statement that God spoke certain words which is repeated in one form or another nearly seven hundred times in the books usually associated with his name, was used by some pious Ezra or Hilkiah (2 Kings xxii. 8) in order to enforce the claims of priest and scribe by an assertion of Divine sanction to their office and to the injunctions which they sought to impose upon the people. Incidentally many complex questions are introduced, some of them lying beyond the power of man to settle, some requiring such special attainment in ancient languages and history for their consideration as to put them beyond the power of simple believers even to understand. Thus we find ourselves in a dilemma. In these Scriptures, we heard,

or thought we heard, the voice of God. But men who know the facts and who profess loyalty to God and to His Gospel, assure us we have been wholly mistaken in our interpretations of the ancient books, and consequently have attached to them an altogether exaggerated importance. They urge us to emancipate ourselves from antiquated ideas, to make religion credible in modern days by pruning away the crudities of primitive times, and thus lift the Bible, and with it our own spiritual life, to a more elevated plane.

It is not well to frown down enquiry or to indulge in cheap declamation against criticism. If by criticism is meant careful and diligent comparison of Scripture with Scripture, we need more criticism not less. It is not unnecessary to acknowledge that the Old Testament Scriptures present many interesting and difficult problems, the solution, of which are not obvious. The facts of the Bible, like all other facts, call for unbiassed consideration if they are to be understood; but, on the other hand, to exchange blind prejudice in favour of the older view of the Scriptures for prejudice equally blind or ill-founded against that view is no moral gain. Only the man with the opened eye shall see (Num. xxiv. 3-4).

Modern criticism is not the principal factor in bringing about the change which marks the attitude of this generation to the Bible. Men desire to be justified in the line they choose to take, the changed attitude made criticism necessary to justify indifferentism. In a Bible reading age the criticism that makes havoc among the unstable and excuses the carelessly sceptical habit of mind at present so common, was comparatively harmless.

But careless and perfunctory reading on the one hand, and frivolous, fanciful, and ingenious exposition on the other, have prepared the ground for the rationalistic views of Scripture which are the fashion and the bane of our time.

It is incontrovertable that the starting point of destructive criticism is the point blank denial of the supernatural. Man is independent. God does not interfere in human affairs, either by way of prophecy, miracle, or theophany. If the Old Testament Scriptures testify that God has appeared to man, that God has spoken to man, that God has worked directly among men, then a place must be found for its testimony along with the myths and fables which were once widely believed, but which an enlightened age has discarded. God having been shut out of the past, what fear of Him for the future? And God and the fear of Him gone, why should men be straitly shut up to the morality of which He is supposed to be the source? Why should conduct be too rigidly ordered to please One who never has, and so never will, interfere either to reward or to punish?

In this, as in all other questions, however, the first enquiry must be not, what will be the consequences? but, what is the truth? Truth, and truth alone, is eternal. There is no sacrifice too great to make in the interests of truth. Has God spoken? Is the Old Testament, in any real satisfying sense, His Word?

In our perplexity we hear the voice of one who, like ourselves, was tried by the Word of God (Psa. cxix. 19), who turned to his Master saying, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (John vi. 68).

(To be Continued.)

GOD'S GATHERING CENTRE.

AN ADDRESS BY T. D. W. MUIR, OF DETROIT.
PART II.

But, to hasten on. In Acts iv. 25-26, we read of a gathering foretold by David in the second Psalm. It was the gathering of Jew and Gentile, ruler and prince against Jehovah and His Christ. There I see myself as one of that rabble crowd—gathered *against* Him. Religion and politics joined hand in hand—but *against* Him. And yet He is the Holy One of God, the One to whom, in a coming day, all the peoples shall gather. What a scene! Three crosses are erected on Calvary's Hill, and hanging on the middle one is Jesus the Christ of God. Over His head His accusation is nailed. It is written in the language of the Jew, the Greek and the Roman. Thus is the world's religion, wisdom and power seen to be arrayed against Christ. The Jew was the representative of religion, the Greek of wisdom, and the Roman of power. But all were against Him. They did not know that they were in their rage carrying out that which was according to the determinate counsel of God (Acts iv. 28). Caiaphas unwittingly expressed this, when in John xi. 49-52 he said unto the counsel of elders, "Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient that one man should die for the people, that the whole nation perish not." Then the Spirit adds (ver. 52) "And not for that nation only, but that He should gather together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad." Satan's work is ever to scatter. God's work is to gather together His people. And the object of Calvary's cross was not only to save men *from* hell and *for* heaven, but

that He might gather them together in one. Blessed prospect! Satan and sin has separated men one from the other. "Love thy neighbour as thyself" found no response in the heart of man, because of sin. Man may form unions and so-called brotherhoods of one kind and another. But man's union and God's unity are not the same. And like the union of Gen. xi. the most of them are against God, and manifesting their independence of Him. God's unity has the Spirit for its power, the Cross for its basis, and the Person of Christ for its centre.

The Cross then is the ground on which we gather together unto Him, and He says, "Where two or three are gathered in (unto) My Name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. xviii. 20). It is "Gather My saints together unto Me" translated into New Testament language. Had we time, we might notice several places where, in the Old Testament, His Name and presence are linked up with the place He had chosen as the gathering centre for His people. Here, however, you have the thought brought out. He does not say, "There will I be," as though it were a promise. He says, "There am I"—it is a fact. Not to the natural eye is He there, but to faith He is—the Master in the midst of His assembled people—the One unto Whom they have gathered.

In Acts xx. 7, following the Revised Version, we read: "And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them," etc. The custom of the early disciples in gathering together on the resurrection day, the first day of the week, and the object for which they gathered, are both stated here. Paul being present, ministered the Word to them.

But look at 1 Cor. v. 4. "In the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together . . . deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh," etc. Here is a case in the assembly at Corinth calling for discipline. When was it to be attended to? When they were gathered together. In what Name? In the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Being gathered together in the Name of the Lord Jesus, they were assured of the presence and authority of the Lord in confirming their solemn action.

We have known individuals, dealt with by an assembly for some sin, look back at the little company, in its apparent weakness, and with a godless sneer, say, "We don't care for *their* judgment of us!" Do you know that an assembly in fellowship with God, and acting according to His Word, has the assurance that such an action is ratified in heaven? (Matt. xviii, 15-20). May God impress us more and more with the solemnity of His presence in the midst of His own. He there takes His place as Lord over His own house, and His presence and authority is a reality.

Another point here. *We* may convene Gospel meetings, arrange Bible readings, prayer meetings, etc. But there is one meeting *He* has especially appointed: that is when He would have His own around Himself for worship, while remembering Him in "the breaking of bread." To this He calls His own. By His Spirit He gathers them together, and true to His own Word, He is there "in the midst of them." When you turn your back on an assembly of God's saints, so gathered, you turn your back upon Him, whose presence makes it an assembly of God, and that is a very solemn thing.

I know these are old-fashioned truths. Some years ago they were far more commonly heard than, alas! they are now. And younger Christians need to be drilled in these things, so that they may be enabled to stand against the current that seems to be carrying so many back to the thing from which they had been delivered. "Let us go forth, therefore, *UNTO HIM, without the camp*, bearing His reproach" (Heb. xiii. 13), is still a needful word of exhortation to us. May God help us to heed it.

In conclusion, let me draw your attention to one expression in 2 Thess. ii. 1: "Our gathering together unto Him" at His coming. This is the consummation of all our hopes. No longer seen by and known to faith. We shall in that day see Him as He is, and be like Him. Then He will still have His place "in the midst" of His own people. He is the divine Magnet, and all His own will be attracted to Him in the air (1 Thess. iv. 13-18). And in the glory, into which He will introduce us, He will still be the centre, around whom His redeemed ones will gather, and their song will be, "Thou art worthy, for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue, and people and nation, and hast made us kings and priests," &c. (Rev. v. 9-10). The Lord grant that this may be our constant song now, and till Jesus comes.

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GOD'S PICKINGS.—"We are just God's pickings out of this wretched world, and when He has got all His own out of it, He'll burn up the whole concern, like so much kindling-wood."—DONALD ROSS.

THE NAZARITE'S VOW.

PART II.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

IT is a real danger for us as God's children if we allow ourselves to be turned aside by self-pleasing things, which we shall prove in the end. Remember what is said of Israel—"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" (Jer. ii. 13). Doubtless some who desire to enjoy at the same time the heavenly and the earthly, and especially the latter, without troubling themselves much as to what is suited to Christ, will lift their hands with surprise, protesting against being deprived of "innocent pleasures." They will tell us emphatically that they "see no harm" in these things. Well, we will let them go their own way. We need not argue with them. If their heart is set upon the world, to the world they must go. The true Nazarite knows very well that he has something very much better, and the day is at hand when even they themselves will find that another course had been much more to their advantage. The following passage has a solemn voice in connection with our subject—"Ye have not eaten bread, neither have ye drunk wine or strong drink, that ye might know that *I am the Lord* your God" (Deut xxix. 6). God Himself would be the only source of nourishment and joy for His people during the wilderness journey. Our Exemplar refused to make Himself bread (Luke iv. 4), and to receive man's wine (Mark xv. 23). He would receive nourishment only from His God. He would accept no consolation or joy but from His

Father. He was the true Nazarite, and He would have us prove that while travelling through the wilderness, we need none of its pleasures or its consolations. He would be Himself our bread and our wine, and instead of being worse we shall be infinitely better. We shall be like Daniel and his companions, whose "countenance appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children who did eat the portion of the king's meat." The devil is always ready to suggest that a Christian wholly separated from the world and devoted to Christ is a melancholy creature, who has no joy at all in this life. Every tissue of this suggestion is a lie. I could show you what it is that makes the face long and the heart sad, but meanwhile be assured it is *not* entire consecration to the Lord. There is another passage which bears upon our subject—"Do not drink wine nor strong drink, *that* ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean" (Lev. x. 9-10). A man cannot find his satisfaction in earthly pleasures without having his spiritual perceptions blunted, and if he continues to find his joy in earthy things, he will soon love what he once judged as evil. A holy watchfulness in the little details of daily life will then give place to carelessness and moral supineness. From week to week the line of separation with the world will become less and less distinct; the strength of spiritual character will be lost; holiness will not be sought, nor wickedness shunned with the decision that once burned in the soul, and soon this man, once devout, once a prince with God, but now entrapped by the circumstances which surround him, will be wholly spoiled of the beauty of his Nazariteship. Listen to the

solemn warning—"Her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, they were more ruddy in body than rubies, their polishing was of sapphire. Their visage is blacker than a coal, they are not known in the streets, their skin cleaveth to their bones, it is withered, it is become like a stick (Lam. iv. 7-8). How sad to think of the Nazarite, once so beautiful, reduced to such a condition! Have you never seen a Nazarite stripped and dry? A man who has lost the simplicity which is in Christ? The beauty of true holiness and the heavenly character which once shone in Him? Nobody can now read Christ in him gone. His name may still be on the Church list, he perhaps frequents the meetings, but he is not known as a "man of God," a disciple of Christ, a follower of the despised Nazarene, in the streets. Those with whom he companies do not know he is a Christian. Shorn of his strength and beauty, he looks now more like a spiritual ghost. A man in such a condition can only repel; he cannot attract souls to Christ. O, that such may be a beacon to warn off the rock upon which he has made shipwreck. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the fall of the Nazarite began when he turned to seek satisfaction and happiness in things of earth and not of heaven. The Lord lost then the place which belongs only to Himself as the object of the heart. The opening is perhaps very small at the commencement, but the devil has some wedges sharp enough to enter the smallest crevice, and once they are driven home, he knows how to effect an entrance into the house. Unless the grace of God produce repentance and restoration, such become like the Nazarite described in the Lamentations of Jeremiah. Worldly, unhappy, with

the conscience asleep, and sooner or later he must feel his awful wickedness if really converted. The Holy Spirit will not permit us to prove the joys of heaven or let us be happy while pursuing such a course. Thus in seeking to enjoy both worlds, we lose them both for the time. The terrible results of a Nazarite defiled gives us another warning. Not only should we seek to keep pure ourselves, but we should remember we have a responsibility towards others. But he who has left the holy path of separation to God is the chosen instrument of the devil in leading others to where he himself has fallen. "I raised up . . . of your young men for Nazarites, . . . but *ye gave* the Nazarites wine to drink" (Amos ii. 11-12). Solemn words! The temptations which are most disastrous to young Christians are those which proceed from professing Christians themselves. How many young believers have had their spiritual life dried up, and their testimony for God rendered worthless, by the company and example of worldly professors, and backslidden believers who have got away from God, and who can only lead others in the same direction by their teaching and example. Unhappy is he, who is an occasion of stumbling to his brother, as the warning words of the Lord may well remind us. How solemn to be the cause of leading one who had begun and gone on well in the path of holy separation with God, to defile his Nazariteship, by giving, or by example enticing him to drink of earth's wine. Then soon to abandon the path of separation to God, and sink down into the condition that he is no longer "known in the streets" as a Nazarite, a man of God, severed from the world, with God as His portion.

THE SEVEN GOLDEN LAMPSTANDS;

OR, THE CHURCH IN TESTIMONY.

Revelation—Chapters I., II., III.

BY ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.—PART IX.

“NEITHER do men light a lamp, and put it under a bushel, but on a lampstand; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house” (Matth. v. 15). These words of the Lord Jesus help us to understand why He compares the assemblies to lampstands. He had just been telling the disciples, that they were the light of the world, adding that “a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.” For, if they are to be a light to the world, it is needful not merely that they shall shine brightly, but that they shall be so placed that their light may be widely seen.

This He enforces by the words first quoted. It is not enough to light a lamp. The trimming and lighting of the lamp may be carried out in some small closet, but the lamp is not left there. It was not lit merely that it might shine, but that many might profit by its shining. So the lighted lamp is set upon an elevated stand, and then its light is helpful to all who are in the house. When, therefore, the Lord is seen walking in the midst of the lampstands, and when He says that these lampstands represent assemblies, we understand that the gathering of His people together into an assembly, is something which corresponds with the setting of the lamp upon a lampstand. Believers are to be the light of the world; but the light is only fully effective when they are gathered together by the power of the Holy Spirit, and in accordance with the purpose of God, as made known in the New Testament

Scriptures. The Lord Jesus walks in the midst of the lampstands, and holds the stars in His right Hand. Believers individually receive light from Him, and are themselves made lights. But the lamp must be put on the lampstand in order that the light may effectively reach to all around. The city on the hill speaks plainly of the gathering together of many individuals into a collective whole, and the Lord makes the setting of the lamp on the lampstand to be a corresponding figure. By itself, the lamp on the lampstand does not suggest the thought of an assembly in the same way that the city does. But it is the city *set on a hill* that the Lord speaks of in this connection, because it is visible to all, just as the lamp is when set on the stand. The lampstand adds nothing to the light, but it affords the conditions under which the light can be most advantageously spread abroad. Should the light fail, however, of what use is it that the lamp is elevated on the lampstand? In that case, says the Lord, “I will remove thy lampstand out of his place except thou repent.”

“He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me.” “If a man love Me, he will keep My sayings” (John xiv. 21 and 23). This is eminently characteristic of first love. “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” is the enquiry of the heart that has tasted of His love, and consequently yields return of love to Him. Does not this show us how intimate is the connection between, on the one hand the owning of the Lord as the One to whom all authority is given, the One walking in the midst of the lampstands, and who is the source and controller of all the spiritual supplies for His people's needs; and, on the other hand, the con-

tinuing in the first love, which treasures up His sayings and keeps His commandments?

There may be diligent labours and much zeal for the truth when first love has failed, and the light is consequently growing dim; but the poor and contrite spirit that trembles at His word belongs to first love, and this is what delights His heart.

Some people talk as if, of necessity, the warmth and tenderness of first love must needs be lost. But first love means simply the character of the love with which we loved at the first, and there is no reason why it should ever cease or change. Love should grow deeper and stronger, as we grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. But it should never lose that which was so marked at the first, the unreserved surrender of the whole heart's affections. The apostle John divides the people of God into fathers, young men, and little children (1 John ii.) With regard to earthly relationships, the young man ceases to be a little child, and the father ceases to be a young man. But in the heavenly family, the simple dependence and unquestioning obedience of the little child should remain to the end; and the love of the Father, which was specially characteristic of the little child, should not be any less child-like, because the Father is now known as "Him who was from the beginning."

There are those who seem to think that, when we press the claims of the Lord Jesus as Lord in the midst of the assembly, and point out the sinfulness of the religious systems that set aside those claims, we are dealing with matters of doubtful importance, which have no connection with love to Christ and to His people. But these words of the Lord to the Church at

Ephesus show us, that such a thought is completely mistaken. When He would fittingly rebuke those who had left their first love, and at the same time lead them to godly repentance, and so to restoration, He reminds them that it is He who walks in the midst of the lampstands and holds the stars in His right hand. A renewal of first love in the heart will, therefore, surely cause us to consider His claims and to give Him His place, not only as to that which is individual, but also as to all that concerns our gathering together.

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THE CHRISTIAN'S FATHERLAND.

MY heart is bounding onward,
Home to the land I love :
Its distant vales and mountains
My wishful passions move ;
Fain would my fainting spirit
Its living freshness breathe,
And wearied steps find resting
Its hallowed shades beneath.

No soil of Nature's evil,
No touch of man's rude hand,
Shall e'er disturb around us
That bright and peaceful land ;
The charms that woo our senses
Shall be as pure as fair,
For all while stealing o'er us
Shall tell of Jesus there.

What light when all its beaming
Shall own Him as its sun,
What music when it's breathing
Shall bare His Name alone ;
No pause, no change those pleasures
Shall ever seek to know,
The draught that lulls our thirsting,
But wakes that thirst anew.

Answers to Correspondents.

JOHN B.—The best book that we know on the subject is, "The Coming Prince, and the Seventy Weeks of Daniel" by Sir Robert Anderson, published at 5s.

E. B., SHROPSHIRE.—The duty of Christians in relation to the existing Government and the laws and taxes made and imposed by it is clearly set forth in Romans xiii. 1-4; 1 Pet. ii. 13-14, and other Scriptures, and the example of the Lord Jesus in paying the tribute money (Matthew xvii. 24-27) even when it was not righteously their due, should guide us in submitting to such enactments "lest we should offend" and thus vitiate our testimony in greater things. To join in common cause with the ungodly, against the Government of the country, or in running a crusade against the existing law, is clearly not the business of a heaven-born and heaven-bound saint, not even if ministers of the Gospel are leading in such a movement. Nothing but spiritual barrenness and a blighted testimony can result from such a course.

The Qualifications of Missionaries.

In addition to the answers given on this subject in last month's *Magazine*, quite a number of others have come in, which although all in a measure helpful in the elucidation of a subject which is interesting and exercising very many of the Lord's people at the present time, we cannot find space for in their entirety. In order, however, that our readers may have all the phases of the subject dealt with brought before them, we give the gist of these answers.

ANSWER E.—If one has not proved himself at home, not only as a consistent and godly believer, but in self-denial, zeal and endurance in the service of God, he is not likely to *gain* these qualities in another land.

ANSWER F.—Undue pressure put upon young men and women; appeals made by missionaries which work upon their feelings, apart from that inward sense of the Divine call and the preparatory discipline and experiences through which all God-sent servants have to pass, are the chief causes of unqualified persons offering themselves and often being sent into a path of service in which God does not sustain them.

ANSWER G.—While it is good to give every

godly encouragement to one who is exercised as to going forth in a path of service to which he believes God has called him, great care needs to be taken lest we in our zeal go faster than God is leading, or so undertake to provide all that is considered necessary in the way of outfit, passages, and promises of support, that we leave little room for God to exercise His servant in faith and dependence, so necessary in all stages and exigencies of the servant's path.

ANSWER H.—From Acts xiii. 1-3, it would seem that the Holy Spirit called the Church to separate and send forth two servants who had proved their efficiency and had considerable experience in the things of God, for a special mission or service among the heathen to which the Lord had appointed them. The Church discerning the Spirit's call, manifested its fellowship by laying hands on them and prayerfully sending them forth. Surely the Divine principle of this applies still. First, there must be the Spirit's call, and until that has been heard, it is self-will to act. If it were more generally known and practically acknowledged that the Holy Spirit is here still as the Administrator and Guide in all such matters, there would be less difficulty and fewer mistakes made. But this is just where human systems and Missionary Societies with their boards, directors, and committees fail, and where simple assemblies of believers will fail also as they become *like* these human systems in their ways of doing God's work. Our only safeguard is unquestioning reliance upon the Spirit and the Word of God to give guidance. Human wisdom, and what men call "common sense" is sure to lead us astray.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—The above many-sided answers to a question on a subject of paramount importance, may at least exercise and guide in a further godly consideration of it in some of its aspects. The whole world is virtually open to the Gospel; the whole professing Church is more or less occupied with the condition and need of the nations, and since the missionary spirit was revived among the true children of God, many have gone forth with the Gospel message to almost every land and clime. Those who desire to keep close to the Word as their only safe and sufficient guide and to own the supreme administration of the Holy Spirit in the work, as well as the worship of God, have had some little share in the holy and honourable work of sending forth and supporting those whom the

Lord has raised up and called to go forth from the little assemblies of believers gathered in the Lord's Name in this and other lands. Had there been more heart for God and more real fellowship with Him in the great business of preaching the Gospel to all nations, and taking out from them a people for His Name (Acts xv. 14), it might have been much more, but the day of small things is not to be despised, nor the grace of God witnessed in His servants and His work forgotten. At first the number of labourers was small, the work arduous, and the trials great. Most of the earliest labourers have finished their course, many joyfully. There was less danger when persecution was common, trials of faith great, and funds meagre, for any save those who had the Divine call—and therefore could not stay—going forth to unknown lands. But as in all else belonging to God, where the path is somewhat beaten, the way “blazed” and a more “settled” condition of things reached, which presents less trial and needs less grace to enter, *then* the tendency is for uncalled and unqualified persons to venture forth, and for ways and means to be adopted approximating in character to the Missionary Societies and systems of the religious world, not by a sudden change of polity, but more generally by a gradual shading off from the principles of the Word, to the popular and generally—as they appear to human reason—commendable ways of men. All this should teach us that our only safety lies in consulting God at every step, and in all that concerns His honour, His kingdom, and His service, keeping close to the lines laid down in the all-sufficient Guide Book—His Word. This will not *decrease* true interest in the spread of His Gospel, or lessen true fellowship with those who go forth in His Name, but it will through grace leave room for God to do His own work in His own way, and thwart the enemy's purpose to blot out every vestige of testimony to the great truth of this dispensation and of Christianity, namely—the presence of the Holy Spirit here, as the Supreme Administrator of all things in the Church, the Kingdom, and the Service of God. If this be practically ignored, and the responsibility of planning and arranging such matters assumed by men, then the result must be as in all else, where man, by his officiousness, shuts out God—barrenness and failure, followed by a human system to keep matters right.

In Memoriam.

MARY MARGARET DAVIS

(M.M.D.), LEOMINSTER.

BORN FEB. 10, 1865. BORN AGAIN 1872.

FELL ASLEEP, JULY 27, 1903.

FROM her earliest years she was small and frail, so much so, that Mr. William Yapp used to call her “Dot;” but her father said, “Well, if she is ‘Dot,’ she shall be ‘Dot the Diamond,’” and that was her pet name in her early days. She soon showed she had a remarkably good memory, could read beautifully at six, and repeat “Dr. Watt's Divine Songs” off by heart. She was converted in her seventh year, and began at once to study her Bible, which henceforth was her constant companion, her excellent memory retaining what she read. In her ninth year she had a severe illness which left her with acute rheumatism, a diseased heart, and a crippled body, from which she never recovered. Her life was from then a continuous series of painful attacks of illness that shook her feeble frame and taught her by experience to write, in later life, such poems as “Perfect through suffering.”

About the age of twelve, Mary would write simple bits of poetry, and use her little *deformed fingers* in painting from Nature. Hers was a natural talent, for, owing to continual weakness, she never had any professional instruction. She would go out into the garden, pluck a flower, copy it in colours, adding a suitable text. Thus she trained herself for one important occupation of after years—making illuminated scrolls, banners, texts, etc., which were in a variety of languages, sent to various parts of the world. Her hands were constantly occupied in efforts for others, writing long, closely penned letters of cheer and comfort, that ever seemed as cold water to weary, toiling ones.

The first piece of poetry committed to print was about 1888, when she issued “She Came Aforehand.” It was favourably received. Since that, her “Ivy Leaf” series of leaflets have been sent forth from time to time, carrying soothing consolation to many a sorrowing one.

Perhaps the best known, and liked, of her leaflets

is "Living Stones," expressing her own experience:

"Oft a cry
Is heard, as pain and sorrow do their work,
For they are living stones, not lifeless blocks;
They feel each stroke as He, with sorrow's tool,
Severs an ugly corner."

"Alone, but not lonely," showed her feelings in her solitude, as does also "The Hand of My Beloved" show how keenly she realized the presence of the One she loved. "Eternity's Centre" links the Cross and the Throne together; "The Thrush's Song" tells of one of the voices she heard in her garden. Her Scrap Book, containing all her poems—many never printed—is written with great neatness and precision. It tells how her verses were born in suffering, composed mostly in bed, in the silence of the night, when pain prevented her sleeping. For instance, eighteen lines on "Exceeding Joy" has a foot-note—"12.25 midnight, in bed with acute rheumatism." Like many another poet, she "learnt in suffering what she taught in song." An exquisite little piece in her Scrap Book is "Chaff or Corn." We give it in full:—

"Prepare me, O my God, for what
Thou art for me preparing,
And should Thy *flail* upon me come,
Oh let me not be daring.
Up to Thy face like *chaff* to fly—
Angry at tribulation—
Let me, like *corn*, fall at Thy feet,
And bow in adoration.

Sifted as wheat, in Satan's sieve,
Still let me hear Thee saying—
Let not thy faith fail 'neath the strain,
For *I* for thee am *praying*.
No prayer of Thine shall fail, O Lord,
Still let the *chaff* be sifted,
That so the *wheat* may *sooner* be,
INTO THY GARNER LIFTED.

Not to prolong this sketch, we would summarise the chief points in her character. Her constant praying for others; her interest in Missions and Mission workers, following them with prayer and practical sympathy, and their various labours watched with close personal concern.

With her diligent study of the Word of God, she had a knowledge and grasp of the Divine Book that enabled her to understand the meaning and power of Scripture. There was no "down-grade"

or doubtful belief in her mind. Her "Memorial Lines" of dear, departed ones showed the deep insight she had into their character. After her departure, there was found in her Bible some half finished "Memorial lines," supposed to have been intended for Mrs G. Nicholls. They are strikingly suitable for herself. These are they:—

MY THOUGHTS . . . HIGHER . . . THAN YOUR
THOUGHTS.

"She needed rest, for strength was failing fast,
And loving hearts and hands would speed her *home*;
But, lo, a message from her master's mouth
Hath to His weary worker gently come.

No more shall pain and weakness weigh thee down,
Nor slowly shall thy strength regain its power;
Full rest and strength thy spirit shall receive
Abundantly, henceforth from this glad hour.

Enter MY Home—thy home is distant far,
But Mine is *near*—step in and rest with ME."

Always ailing, her departure came as a sudden surprize to all her friends. Out in the garden in the afternoon, coughing came on, hemorrhage followed, and at 7.25 p.m., on Monday evening, July 27, 1903, she went through the gates into the city. Her last words, twice repeated, were, "WITH CHRIST . . . FAR BETTER."

She had often expressed a desire to go Home during one of the Leominster Conferences. This she did, for while the friends were gathering together for their first meeting at the July Conference, she was winging her flight to the "far better" place.

Her remains were, on Thursday afternoon, carried to the little cemetery by the brethren at the Conference; many of them well-known to her as labourers abroad and at home, so that her wish was fully met. The Hope of the Lord's coming was very bright in her. Hers, was a life of Spirit and Faith, triumphing over bodily weakness and infirmity. It shows what can be accomplished by those who, with a life given up to their Lord, can glorify Him, and become a means of helping others in a variety of ways. Of her, it may emphatically be said: "SHE HATH DONE WHAT SHE COULD."

CHARLES BREWER.

[The "Ivy Leaf Series" of Poetry Leaflets may be had from Mrs Davis, Ivy Bank, Leominster, or from the office of this paper.]

PRAYING IN THE HOLY GHOST.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY MAX I. REICH, AT DUBLIN.

Read—"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."—Jude 20.

SPEAKING to God through the Holy Ghost is the only kind of prayer that reaches the ear of God. In essence there is no difference between praying in the Name of the Son and praying in the Holy Ghost. What does it mean to pray in the Name of the Son? That we put His Name as an appendix to our petitions? No! It means that our prayer is so in the guidance of the Holy Ghost, so in consistency with the will of God, so in harmony with His mind, that the Son of God can put His Name to it, that He can countersign our petitions as if He had prayed that prayer. It is not our putting His Name to the prayer that makes it a prayer in the Name of the Son, but it is the Son of God putting His name to it, and such prayer can only be in the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is the fire from heaven that causes the incense-cloud to ascend from the altar of the heart which has been sprinkled by the blood, as an even pillar before the eternal throne.

How little we know of praying in the Holy Ghost! We cannot command the Holy Ghost: we must wait on Him and learn to be still before God in order that we may be drawn into His presence-chamber. We cannot pray in the Holy Ghost in our own will. We might present petitions perfectly correct so far as language goes, heaping up one lovely expression upon another, and yet not pray in the Holy Ghost. What then is the evidence when we do pray in the Holy Ghost? I believe it is getting into contact with God.

The Apostle tells us in Romans viii. that the Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. We may have prayed in the Holy Ghost when we could hardly bring out a word and when we could only lie on our faces and groan. Now we cannot get up that experience, nor can we explain it. The deepest in Christianity cannot be explained. The deeper our experience of divine realities the less we will be inclined to talk about them. The man whose conversation is full of religious gossip has generally only a notion of divine things, or a very superficial experience, and such an one becomes like a perfume bottle with the cork out—the fragrance is soon lost.

To come in contact with God, to be in that spot of blessedness we call the "divine presence," who shall describe what it means? We are called unto a face to face communion with our God. Has such nearness of communion been established between our souls and Himself? Has our experience been that of Moses who, though at first afraid to look upon God, afterwards, through gazing on the glory, was able to reflect it? (Com. Exod. iii. 6 with xxxiii. 11, xxxiv. 30-35).

Praying in the Holy Ghost has a transforming power. While the Lord Jesus prayed on the mount of transfiguration, the fashion of His countenance was altered. It is the purpose of God that we who have borne the image of the earthy should also bear the image of the heavenly. Those who will be changed into His likeness at His coming, are being changed into the same image from glory to glory by His Spirit down here. One great means of transforming the character of one who has carried about the shameful image of the

fallen first man, is a life of prayer. When we pray in the Holy Ghost, we are in spirit in God's invisible world; we are in communion with the things which are unseen and eternal; we breathe another atmosphere; we are brought into the quiet and calm and purity of the presence of God; and we cannot habitually visit that sacred sphere without being impressed and changed. Our circumstances may not be changed but we are changed; the face reflects the light with which we have been in communion. To the eye of Moses the characteristics of Jehovah were beautiful, and Moses desired that the people of Jehovah might have that beauty upon them. (Psa. xc. 17).

If we know what it is to pray in the Holy Ghost, I believe something of the divine beauty would be in our lives. I would even venture to say that, the very countenance would receive softer lines and gather a gentler expression—that there would be something celestial about the countenance that gazes continually on the countenance of God.

As sin makes a man ugly, repulsive; so praying in the Holy Ghost has a subjective influence on the very features. There are people who become more repulsive every year because of a life of selfishness and licentiousness, and there are others who become more and more beautiful as a result of living and praying in the Holy Ghost.

Jude writes for the last days, and by exhorting us to pray in the Holy Ghost would teach us, that it is possible to have a blessed retreat and sanctuary, amidst all the confusions that abound.

“Taken up with Thee, Lord Jesus, I would be;
Finding joy and satisfaction all in Thee;
Thou the nearest, and the dearest, unto me.”

PRIESTHOOD; TRUE AND FALSE.

THERE was once a priesthood upon earth. Its qualifications, its privileges, and its duties were all laid down to the minutest particular, and all appointed by revelation from God Himself.

Birth was the indispensable qualification. Nothing else could give admission. A man might attain by talent, power, or prowess to any other eminence on earth, but he could not be a priest unless he were of the tribe of Levi and family of Aaron.

The worship of Jehovah in the tabernacle or in the temple, was the duty and the privilege of this family of priests. Their worship was ritualistic or ceremonial. Ceremonial in religious worship is of no value, except in so far as it contains a meaning. The ritual is therefore described in the epistle to the Hebrews as being the shadow of a coming reality.

Now a shadow implies a substance; every line of it must be a reflection. It is impossible to alter it in a hair's-breath, except by altering its substance.

Thus all the gorgeous ritual of the tabernacle was prescribed by divine revelation, from the slaughter of every sacrifice to the hem of the priestly robe, or the fraction of an ounce weight in the composition of the sacred incense. The Divine eye alone saw the substance, and represented it on earth, as we are told, not by an image, which might have left some room for variation in roundness or colouring from man's imagination, but by the very shadow of the original accurately revealed to divinely-enlightened minds. Any innovation upon the prescribed order of service was forbidden, under penalty of death.

It might seem an unimportant matter for Nadab and Abihu to have kindled their censers at a flame that had not come from the altar, but their immediate and terrible punishment showed God's view of their guilt.

In the New Testament we are taught that the substance of all these shadows has come. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, for instance, the Holy Spirit makes them pass before us, and then raises our gaze to the realities themselves in all the fulness of their accomplishment.

If then the shadowy and typical service allowed of no variation from divine arrangement in the slightest particular, how much more must the reality be sacred against any intrusion of man's imagination, or the wilful preservation of any shred of those shadows which the Holy Spirit Himself has rolled away!

Let us then reverently draw near and see what great things God has prepared for these days—things which eye saw not, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man, but which God hath revealed to us by His Spirit.

What then are the corresponding realities to these ancient ceremonial shadows?

There is indeed a tabernacle, and there is indeed a priesthood. But that tabernacle is in heaven, and the priests who minister therein are not of earthly appointment. They are not admitted to their office by human ordination, any more than were their representatives, the sons of Aaron.

As with the sons of Aaron, the only way of admission to this holy office is by birth. They were the sons of Aaron.

These must be the sons of God.

Jeroboam might ordain a spurious and illegitimate priesthood after the manner of

the surrounding heathen, but they could not enter the temple or touch the holy things, however they might deceive themselves, or their master, by their imitations of Aaronic service.

Now, men may lay their hands on their fellows, and so authorize them to perform certain conventional ceremonies on earth, varying according to nation and creed; but all the hierarchies in the world could not confer on any being privileges which attach to birth alone. Admission to such an order is the sole prerogative of the Creator, and needs the exercise of His creative power. (1 Peter i. 2, 3; ii. 5).

Every one therefore who in this dispensation is "born again" by believing in the witness of God concerning His Son, is a priest by the divine right of that birth, and as such he is charged to perform priestly functions. He must be an offerer. He is to bring spiritual sacrifices.

In the tabernacle or temple of old, each priest exercised his own functions. He could not do so by another. So in the Christian assembly each must be a worshipper; otherwise they do not come together in the full freedom and prerogative of true priesthood. And as of old there was no service so high as that which was fulfilled by the priests of Israel, so now there is no service so high, either on earth or heaven, rendered by created beings, as the spiritual sacrifices offered by saved sinners, when as a company of priests, they meet to bring their offerings to God; for while the locality of their gathering together is upon earth, their service can only be offered in the holiest place in heaven (Heb. x. 19), whither by faith each one must pass in spirit.

(To be Continued.)

THE TESTIMONY OF CHRIST TO THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

PART II.—BY C. F. HOGG.

THE Four Gospels, little books, mere pamphlets in size, profess to give an accurate and orderly account of the works and words, of the life and death of the Lord Jesus Christ. We do not here raise the question of the origin of these Gospels; whether they are inspired in any special sense or no, at least they contain our only information with any claim to authenticity concerning their common subject. The writers of these Books relate simply, succinctly, and with an air of unhesitating conviction, certain facts about the Lord Jesus Christ which they themselves could never have imagined, so far are those facts removed from normal human experience. His wisdom, His gracious ways, His entire unselfishness, the evident love He bore to all, the tender sympathy with which He treated the afflicted in body and in mind and His pity for the morally erring, were without precedent in the history of the race. His compassion for the victims of lust and disease was matched by His courage in open and explicit denunciation of the hypocrisies of men of repute and influence. Added to this, the powers of nature seemed to wait upon His word; yet according to these Gospel records, His authority over nature was never exercised merely to produce wonder or for His personal benefit, though it was used with unsparing freedom in behalf of the helpless around Him. Through all His words, moreover, there ran a mysterious strain of reference to an inevitable experience wherein He would "lay down His life for His sheep" (John x. 15*), or, as He otherwise expressed it, would

"give His life a ransom for many" (Mark x. 45). At an early age He was put to a violent death, but, to the amazement of His disciples He rose again from the tomb on the third day after His burial, reminding them that this also He had foretold when He spoke to them of His approaching death. Now its significance was made plain. He had died for others; His death was congruous with His life; and from that day, wherever these four books are read, men and women account His death the most important event in the history of the race. In it they find the forgiveness of their sins. On it they base their hopes of future happiness. Through it they enjoy present peace. He who died for them and rose again, reigns in their hearts and controls their lives. The words He spoke counsel them in their perplexities, cheer and guide them in all the varying circumstances of life. His is the one authoritative voice in the universe for them. Where He has spoken, let every other tongue be silent.

In this new perplexity concerning the Old Testament Scriptures, to whom then shall we turn but to the Lord Jesus Christ? If He has left His judgment of them on record, we are prepared to accept it, whatever objections may be urged. If we confide in Him for the present, and for the future, shall we hesitate to trust Him about the past? If He is not to be trusted in His estimate of the Scriptures, is He to be trusted in the vital matters of which they treat? The question is not whether these Scriptures are inspired, either plenarily, in measure, or not at all. Neither is it whether they are inerrant or no. Nor do we enquire whether they are, or contain, a revelation from God, or whether they merely represent the attainments of the

* The references throughout are to the R.V.

human mind, with or without extraneous aid. We are not concerned with questions of authorship or date. We ask the simple question: What were the Old Testament Scriptures to Christ? What they were to Him, that let them be to us. Where the critics differ from Him we are confident the truth will ultimately be found not with them but with Christ.

Before we seek from the Gospel records an answer to the question proposed, it will be necessary to deal with some preliminary considerations in order to clear the ground for our enquiry.

1. It is important to know whether the Old Testament Scriptures are to-day just what they were in the days of the Lord Jesus. Can we be certain they have not undergone such changes in nineteen hundred years as to alter their character materially? Happily the answer can be given unhesitatingly in the affirmative. A long time before His birth, the Jewish nation had lost its dependence, and a large proportion of the people had been scattered abroad throughout the then inhabited earth. The Hebrew language had long given place to Aramaic in the current speech of Palestine, and to Greek among the Jews of the Dispersion. A translation of the Scriptures into Greek had been undertaken, probably in Egypt, about the year 250 B.C., and had been completed about 150 B.C. The virtual correspondence of the surviving Hebrew and Greek Bibles puts it beyond doubt that the Old Testament of the Lord's day is the Old Testament of our own. Differences in minor detail there are; and it is important to remember that the oldest known copy of the Greek translation (called The Septuagint, and usually written

LXX) is several hundred years older than the oldest known copy of the Hebrew original; a fact which suggests that the LXX may, in some places at least, better represent the ancient Hebrew originals than do the Hebrew copies now known to us.

2. A further question that arises is, whether the Lord Jesus referred to the Old Testament with sufficient frequency to enable us to judge with any confidence what His estimate of it really was. Here again the answer is clearly in the affirmative. It has been computed that, excluding duplicates, there are no fewer than four hundred references to the Old Testament in the recorded words of the Lord Jesus.* On forty separate occasions He quoted from it, directly and explicitly, varying the introductory formula, so that fifteen times He began, "It is written"; five times, "Have ye never read"; eight times He spoke of "The Scriptures"; and twelve times He mentioned the division, or the writer, in which the words quoted were to be found. It must be remembered, moreover, that what is written in the Four Gospels is but a small part of all that He taught (John xxi. 25), and no doubt that part is typical of the whole.

3. We must notice, too, that not only did the Lord Jesus quote from or allude to the Canonical Books of the Old Testament with marked frequency, as we have just seen, but He quoted from these alone, ignoring completely the Apocryphal books, which, whatever literary or historical value they may possess, are on a plane altogether different from that occupied by the books from which He

*Denison, cited by Ellicott, in *Christus Comprobatur*.

quoted so freely. And in passing, it may be noted that the late date of the Apocrypha is evidenced by the fact that while the books included under that head were written in Greek, the Canonical Books of the Old Testament were written in Hebrew, already a dead language for three hundred years before the commencement of our era.

4. It is stated in some quarters that the Lord, in thus freely and exclusively quoting from the Old Testament Scriptures, simply acquiesced in the popular estimate of their origin and authority without committing himself to it, knowing very well that "the current conceptions were mistaken," but thinking it "not wise, nor a part of His mission to correct misapprehensions on the matter." In support of the theory thus set forth, some slight proof from Scripture is occasionally attempted. Thus, it is urged, the Lord did not hesitate to speak of the rising of the Sun (Mark iv. 6), though He must have known that it rises in appearance only, in consequence of the diurnal motion of the earth, a discovery only made by man in much later times. The two cases really lie remote one from the other. A competent teacher will not distract his hearers by correcting a purely theoretic mistake on a point unconnected with the subject in hand, nor will he discard an intelligible expression which correctly describes a fact in experience. Though to say that the Sun rises may not describe the actual fact itself, it does describe what we observe quite accurately, and this is the purpose in view in using the expression. We must not confound a phenomenon with its explanation. Observation justifies the

phrase; science explains it. What the Lord Jesus said concerning the Old Testament confirmed its veracity and reliability, and was not spoken incidentally, nor by way of allusion or illustration merely; it was expository, and was woven into the fabric of His teaching. Draw your pen through those words in the Gospels which are traceable to the earlier Scriptures, and see how little will be left, either in the words of the Lord, or in the connecting narratives of the Evangelists. Nay more, disbelief in the writings of Moses made it impossible to accept His own distinctive claims, "If ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?" (John v. 47).

Furthermore, a teacher who accommodates himself, as many have done, to the prejudices of his hearers, is careful to provide against the dissipation of those prejudices by advancing knowledge. He leaves open some way of retreat from a temporary and really untenable position, for only what is absolutely true, will stand the searching tests of time. Thus where modern interpreters would lead us to expect such cautionary phrases as 'is supposed to have said, or written, or commanded,' we read only the unqualified "Moses wrote," "God spake" (John v. 46; Mark xii. 26). Christ has left Himself no such way of escape. His testimony was explicit and emphatic, and committed Him without reservation or qualification to the Divine origin and authority of the Old Testament Scriptures.

(To be Continued.)

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A preacher who talks and talks with no power or pith in his words, is like a mill grinding without corn. No saint is fed, no sinner is aroused.—DONALD ROSS.

THE SEVEN GOLDEN LAMPSTANDS ;

OR, THE CHURCH IN TESTIMONY.

Revelation—Chapters I., II., III.

BY ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.—PART X.

WHILE all that we have been considering regarding the leaving of first love was applicable in the first instance to the Church at Ephesus, we must not forget that this Church is representative of the first period of the prophetic panorama, unfolded to us by the Holy Spirit in these two chapters. This period, which evidently has its commencement many years before the time when the Revelation was made known to John, is characterised by widespread declension. When the Apostle Paul was writing his Second Epistle to Timothy, he not only foretold the terrible character of professing Christendom in "the last days," but he spoke of backsliding on every hand that had already taken place. This must have been nearly thirty years before the appearing of the Lord Jesus to John at Patmos. John himself, too, declares in his First Epistle, that "the last time" had already come, and the reason he gives for this statement is, that "even now are there many antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time" (chapter ii. 18).

It is not a little remarkable that these words should occur in the apostle's special instruction to the babes of the family of God. His first word to the little children was in verse 13—"I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father." The term "little children" in this verse, must not be confused with the same words, as far as our English translation goes, in verse 12. The word there used, does not in any way imply that those addressed are the younger members of the

family. It simply speaks to them as being all of them sons and daughters of God. The diminutive form of the word, which has no doubt led the translators to render it as "little children," is merely the form of affectionate intimacy which the apostle always uses when speaking directly to the children of God. When writing, not *to* them but *of* them, he uses the same word, but not in the diminutive form, as in chapter iii. 1.

Going back now to verse 13, where the apostle is really addressing the little ones of the family, as distinguished from the fathers and the young men, we find that he speaks of knowledge of the Father as that which specially belongs to their early stage of growth. We can readily understand this, by considering the earthly relationship. A little child knows its father as "father," long before it has any other knowledge of him. The world may be ringing with the father's deeds. He may be a conquering General or a great Statesman, but to the little child he is simply "father." Now, when John turns to speak of the young men, he warns them against the love of the world, and declares that "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (verse 15). He does not say that the "love of God" is not in him. But that which was the distinguishing mark of the little child stage, has sadly failed. In the earthly family, as has previously been noticed, each of these stages supersedes the one that went before it. But this should not be the case in the heavenly family, and the love of the Father, which was so sweetly manifest in the little ones, should abide in all its simplicity in those of most advanced growth, who know

God as the One who was from the beginning. So the young men are warned that the love of the world, in any of its varied forms, is that which will surely destroy the simplicity of the little child's love and dependence. The danger of the young man stage is, that those who have reached it should begin to fancy that they can be independent. Hence the little children are instructed as to the character of the last time, with all its antichrist development, so that they may be preserved in the simplicity of their first love and trust.

Now, what is true of individuals is also true of assemblies; and not only so, but the likeness can be further clearly traced in the wider sphere of the growth of all that by profession takes the name of the Church. How often have we seen assemblies that began in great simplicity losing that simplicity, as they increased in numbers and in gifts, and in knowledge. At first, their coming together was marked by lowly dependence upon God, and a real sense of the presence of the Lord Jesus in the midst of them. But time went on, and gifts were developed, experience was increased, and knowledge was multiplied. There was more organization, abundant labour, great zeal, and everything looked most prosperous. But while all these things were good in themselves, it began to be apparent that there was not the same lowliness of heart that marked the earlier stage. They were passing from the little child condition to that of the young man, and they had not escaped the dangers peculiar to the transition.

The great lie of all that is included under the term antichrist, is the denial that Jesus is the Christ. But he that denies the Son, hath not the Father. How are the little

children to be delivered from the insidious paths by which Satan would lead them into such a denial? They have an unction from the Holy One. That anointing abides in them, so that the word they have heard from the beginning may abide in them, and that they may abide in the Father and in the Son.

This is the message to the little children, contained in verses 18 to 27 of 1 John ii., and it is no less needed in the childhood of an assembly than in that of an individual believer. Passing from the assembly of Ephesus, whose condition so plainly indicates the need of such warning and instruction, to the period of which it is the representative, we find the same character exhibited on a larger scale. The whole professing Church was passing out of its little child stage, and, though much seemed to have been gained, there was a grave loss that threatened to more than counterbalance the gain. But we must leave the fuller consideration of this important subject for next month.

THE CHRISTIAN'S DAILY LIFE.

THE great ambition of a Christian ought to be to please God in everything. His one business in life to do everything worthy of the One whose he is and whom he serves. There is nothing too trivial to be done to the glory of God, worthy of the Name of the Lord Jesus. The Word to one and all, the guiding principle of the Christian's life is summed up in the words—"Do all to the glory of God." "Do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus." The sweeping of a crossing, the mending of a shoe, the nursing of a child and the management of a business come equally under this great rule. The little things as well as the great are to be

governed by it. Were this continually kept in remembrance by the children of God, *what a transformation it would work in many a life!* What a dignity it would impart to the commonplace things of daily toil! To do our daily work "heartily as unto the Lord" and not unto men, brings God into everything. As old George Herbert says—

"A servant with this clause,
Makes drudgery Divine;
Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws,
Makes that and th' action fine."

There will be no "scamping" of the work done to an earthly master then; no wasting of the time which is charged to the customer; no using of material inferior to that which is named in the contract. All will be done as under the Divine eye, and to gain the Lord's approval. There would be fewer complaints of slovenly servants and dishonest tradesmen, of inferior work and wasted time to be made by the world against those who profess the Christian name, if this elementary "law of the kingdom" were better observed, as it ought to be in all good conscience by the followers of the Lord Jesus. With too many, Christianity is a Sunday religion, put aside with all care with their better clothes till the day of worship again comes round; it is not supposed to have any place in the kitchen, or the warehouse. But God's Christianity, as it is revealed in the Word, is a power in every sphere of life and for every hour of the day, simply because it emanates from a living Christ within and is controlled by His living and all-powerful Word which dwells richly in His people, governing, guiding, and giving a heavenly character to their lives and actions. It was the consciousness of this and the desire to be

governed by it that caused one to write long ago the quaint yet forcible lines—

"If I were a cobbler, I'd make it my aim
The best of all cobblers to be;
If I were a tinker, no tinker beside
Should mend an old kettle like me."

THE SWEETEST SONG IN HEAVEN.

[T may seem strange, and yet I would
not be
An angel formed in spotless purity;
It may be strange—with all my sins and
cares, [theirs.
I would not change this lot of mine for
They in the light of God have ever shone,
Yet joys are mine which they have never
known; [been
They, since He made them first, have ever
Viewing his glory with no veil between.

In that fair heaven of bliss they still abide,
Drink of its fulness and are satisfied;
Yet even they bend down new depths to see,
New depths of love, the love that rescued me.

Sweet are their songs, yet not to them is given
To sing the song of the redeemed in heaven;
Bright are their crowns, their harps are
shining gold, [hold.
Yet in their hands no victor's palm they

No wreath they wear, such as shall clasp
the brow

Of those who pass through tribulation now;
Their robes are white, yet they shall fade
beside

The robes that Jesus' blood has purified.

They stand near Him, but for His Bride
alone [throne;

Remains the place the nearest to the
To her alone it shall be given to rest
Upon His arm, and lean upon His breast.

Blest thought! Each conflict here, each
bitter strife,

Shall then add sweetness to the cup of life;
Each heavy stroke shall but His child
prepare

To be a pillar in His temple there.

The Bible Annotator.

BIBLE WORDS AND THEIR MEANINGS.

ANATHAMA (1 Cor. xvi. 22) means "accursed." It occurs in Rom. ix. 3, Gal. i. 8. The Hebrew equivalent, *Cherem*, is used of things and persons so devoted to God, or for destruction, that they were unredeemable. See Joshua vi. 17.

BAND (John xviii. 3): The tenth part of a legion of soldiers, numbering five to six hundred. Such was the company sent to arrest Jesus. Each band was divided into a *centuna* or company of a hundred, with a centurion over it. Such was the company appointed to watch the crucifixion.

CANDLE (Matth. v. 15). More correctly "lamp"; usually an earthen vessel with a handle, on which was a nozzle with wick. "Lamp" and "lampstand" should be understood where the words "candle" and "candlestick" occur. There were no tallow rods with wicks in the Bible days. A candle when once lit burns of itself till finished; a lamp needs continuous supplies of oil to replenish it, and care to trim and clean it. So with the believer (Luke xi. 33; Phil. ii. 12) and the Churches (Rev. i. 20).

INN (Luke x. 34). Two words are so rendered in the New Testament. 1. The Eastern *Khan* or enclosed place, occupied by travellers; their beasts of burden occupied the open space without. It was free. Such was the inn at Bethlehem where Jesus was born (Luke ii. 7). The inn to which the Samaritan took the man was an *hostelry*, where payment had to be made for accommodation and care.

TABLE (Luke xxii. 21). Eastern tables for food were low, and formed three sides of a square. The guests reclined on cushioned benches on the outside. The attendants occupied the inside. The place in the centre of the cross table was occupied by the host, the "chief place" (Luke xiv. 7) being on his right hand, where reclined the most honoured guest. This was the place probably occupied by John (Chap. xiii. 23) at the last passover.

Answers to Correspondents.

JOHN H., NOVA SCOTIA.—There are many "Helps" to the study of the Scriptures, some of which are really helpful, others you are better without. A good Cruden's or Young's Concordance

is indispensable. Sound and suggestive "Notes" on most of the Books can be had, but "Commentaries" are usually as dry as dust, and better avoided. Whatever helps you *to* the Word and leads you nearer to God, is a help, nothing else.

AND. F., LONDON.—The book you send for our inspection, is a strange combination of truth and error. It is one of a series being sold from door to door at present by well-dressed and talkative ladies, who are evidently employed to propagate by this means the errors of the system it advocates. Stripped of all its verbage, it teaches Annihilation, denies Eternal Judgment, and is unsound on the Atonement of Christ. You cannot expect to find much "precious truth," where such fundamentals are involved. The danger of the book to simple souls is, its pretensions to orthodoxy and apparent zeal for truth, which are used to garnish its errors. The Lord preserve you, and all others who have come under its influence, from making shipwreck of your faith and falling into the snare of the devil. Your only safe course is to cast it from you and cleave unto God and the Word of His grace.

YOUNG PREACHER.—"Giving your testimony," which we take to mean telling the story of your conversion, is right and proper in its place, but you should not repeat it until it becomes "stale." "Preach the Word," making it your aim to have a message fresh from God on each occasion: not merely a new subject, but the Word suited to the people. This necessitates dependence on the Spirit of God and a right condition of soul.

A. G. H., GLASGOW.—The popular custom of having a "strange" preacher every Sunday, or a "monthly minister" appointed for all the year round, is a practical renunciation of the Scriptural principle of ministry, and a return to the Methodist system of arranging their "local preachers." A step or two further along the same road, will necessitate a Preacher's Bureau or Official Registry Office, where all who require "ministers" will have to make application, and where a list of "disengaged" and "unemployed" preachers will be kept, ready for "supply." If "coming events cast their shadows before them," this is not far distant. But some still believe that the Lord can manage His own business best Himself, and appoint His servants as He sees fit. This is His prerogative, which if recognised in a godly way, will never fail. You will not find

much development of "gift" in places where the "monthly minister" obtains. The whole workings are in the hands of a few, and when these go, the thing dies out, or sinks into a kind of "mission" with little of God about it, either in its worship or service. To maintain its existence it may for a while make plenty of noise, which some mistake for power, but to those who watch such workings, the results tell that the sap and substance of God's work are wanting.

W. L., MANCHESTER.—What you say of the neglect of their children by Christian parents is deplorable. The influence of a godly home, where Christ is honoured and the Word of God revered by the parents, will never lose its hold on the children. They may not immediately be converted—although Christian parents should unceasingly pray for and expect their children's conversion in early years. They may seem to set what they have seen and learned aside, but sooner or later God will cause to grow what these godly parents have sowed. A home where God is honoured is the most potent influence for good on earth, and the pity is, that so little is made of the subject in public ministry and so little attention given to it by Christian parents. A Christianity that consists in being "out at meetings" when they ought to be in their own homes, training their children in the fear of the Lord as set forth in Deut. vi. 68 and Prov. xxii. 6, is not according to God, whatever its pretensions may be.

G. F. H., LANC.—If one goes out from an assembly without any just cause, and then uses his influence to lead others in the same course, or to join him in forming a new party, those who have shepherd care, may find it necessary to warn simple believers against having intercourse either personal or social with such a person, simply because he is a "sower" of discord (Prov. vi. 14) and a "causer of division" (Rom. xvi. 17).

S.G.—When younger brethren, whose lives are godly, seek to share in Gospel testimony, and otherwise desire to help in the work of an assembly, they should certainly be encouraged and taken by the hand. Looking back over the past thirty years, we think of very many cases where this has been done with the best results. But it is quite another matter when they must have the reins, and drive everything according to their own inexperienced notions. The former is fellowship, the latter selfwill which sooner or later ends in disaster.

A.B., LANARKSHIRE.—If one professing to be a servant of God, looking to Him for the supply of all his need, takes exception to the amount of money given him by an assembly in which he for a time labours, it is pretty evident that he is not really trusting God, or walking in the path of dependence upon Him at all, but that he is the servant of men. Thank God, there are some who for many years have gone in and out among the Lord's people, serving Him in His Gospel and His Word, against whom no such accusation lies, although often in trying circumstances. A true servant will deal with his Master about all such matters, and neither make "a poor mouth" or otherwise speak of his "poverty" or "expenses" to fellow-believers. The growing habit of giving so much "pay" for so much "preaching," or in other words, of remunerating evangelists and preachers by giving them sums of money equivalent to the number of meetings held, is very closely allied to a "hired" ministry. When from long-continued habit it becomes a rule for the preacher at the close of his "week" to get a set sum, it is little wonder if he begins to "count" upon it, and in the measure that he does, his eye is off God and his expectation is from man. It is desirable that those who give and those who administer the assembly's gifts, be so guided as to *how*, and *when*, as well as to *whom* such gifts are made, as to give no cause for such departures from the Divine principles of the Word of God applicable to these matters. We have never known that class of preacher who is continually referring to money matters, either directly or indirectly, survive very long. He has either mistaken his calling, or is trying to walk in a path in which God is not supporting him, and in which it is certainly no kindness to encourage him. On the other hand it is the privilege and responsibility of the saints individually and collectively to see that men who are manifestly called of God to give themselves wholly to His service and whose labours have the stamp of His approval, are cared for in temporal things, not as a matter of charity, but in token of our fellowship with the Gospel and the Truth that they spread among men. It is a great honour, and should be looked at in that light, and not allowed to degenerate into a matter of bargain and hire, which in the things of God is an abomination unto Him; and, wherever it obtains, soon withers up the sympathies of God's people.

Fallen Asleep.

MRS. A. W. P. STRONG, Southampton.
(Formerly of Workington, Cumberland),
September, 3rd, 1903.

Another of the Lord's sweet singers and diligent workers has been called to rest—our beloved sister Mrs Strong, for many years of Workington and latterly of Southampton. Our readers have for long been familiar with her name, as the writer of some precious hymns and pieces which have appeared in our Magazines. She was a chosen vessel in this particular service, and being a reverent and diligent student of the Sacred Word, her writings abounded in Scriptural and spiritual truths, which richly dwelt in her own heart and soul. Her "Scripture Stories in Verse"—which appeared in *The Young Watchman* twenty years ago, have been memorised and repeated in home and school by young folks in all parts of the world, and are all but unequalled in their diction and full flow of direct and definite Gospel teaching. Most of these have been issued in leaflet and booklet form, for permanent use in home and school.

Converted in her early years in the North of England, the daughter of godly parents, she gave herself diligently to the study of the Word, which all along her Christian course was her daily companion and counsellor. For many years she, with her devoted husband, Mr W. E. Strong, had an open home for all the Lord's servants in Workington, where chiefly by their devoted service and under their godly care, the Lord's work grew and prospered, and the little assembly gathered in the Lord's Name increased. In the will of God they removed from Workington to Southampton a few years ago, not without feeling keenly the loosing of so many sacred ties, as may be gathered from one of her sayings shortly before she fell asleep. Remarking on the text "Lo I am with you alway," she said "He has been with me for over 40 years of wilderness journeying. How heartsore I was at leaving Workington. When coming down High Street there and taking what I then felt was my last look at the dear old streets and houses, but I am going to my native home—heaven—for that is the true home and country of the heaven-born one."

During her illness, which was a very painful one, she greatly enjoyed the power of the Blessed Hope of the Lord's Coming, finding much joy in

holding fast the confidence of the Hope firm unto the end. "The glory shines before me," and "When we reach our peaceful dwelling" were favourite hymns, sung or repeated during her passage through the valley. Wonderfully was she sustained by the Word long loved and treasured in her heart, ministered freshly by the Spirit throughout the weary days and nights of pain and weakness! Text after text flowed from her lips, expressing the deep untroubled calm of her soul within. Quoting the words—"Because Thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of Thy wings will I rejoice." She remarked—"It is a joyful place." Death had no alarms to her; she was ready, joyfully ready, remarking, "I am not afraid to cross the Jordan, for you know the Ark has gone before." "If you have Memorial cards printed, I would like the texts on—as to the body—"My flesh shall rest in hope" (Psa. xvi. 9): as to the spirit—"With Christ, which is far better" (Phil. i. 23). On September 2nd, she said, "I am very low now, but I shall soon be up higher." In the evening, her husband read to her Rev. xxi. 1-5, xxii. 1-5, God's own description of the homeland to which she was slowly but surely passing, and soon after she sank into a comatose state, and at 5-45 p.m. the following day she fell asleep. Her remains were laid to rest by a large company of fellow-saints, in the beautiful Southampton Cemetery, to wait the resurrection morning. Much prayerful sympathy goes forth for the bereaved husband, who deeply feels his loss.

"Thus pass they onward to the rest above,

The Father's Home—the dwelling place of love."

The following lines, written by our departed sister some years ago, aptly express the longing of her heart in life's latest days:—

"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, no longer hold.

Let me go to peaceful Salem

Where the Lamb is all the light,

Where with psalm and song they hail Him,

Serving Him both day and night.

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."

CLERISY :

ITS RISE, DEVELOPMENT, AND END.

PART I.—BY WILLIAM LINCOLN.

IN the Acts of the Apostles we are presented with an inspired picture of the early Church, in her unity and power, as God's witness on the earth. As the word "Church" imports, those who compose it are a people "called out" from the world, and at its first formation and spread, this line was maintained very markedly. Soon after the departure of the apostles, grievous wolves obtained entrance to the flock, who sought their own gain and honour, and as they gradually rose into a distinct caste, or "clergy," separate from and lording it over the people or "laity," they became the instruments by which in process of time all barriers between the Church and the world were removed, and the interested agents for the consummation of the Union of the two into one—Christendom.

The rise, development, and end of this clerical system has been set forth by the Lord in the Scriptures, as He regards it, and to His warnings all who desire to escape its meshes do well to take heed.

The Apostle Peter in his First Epistle, chap. ii. 5, speaks of all believers as "a holy priesthood," whose privilege is to offer up "spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ," while in chapter v. 3, he calls all the Lord's people His "clergy," or inheritance, and the presbyters or elders are admonished that while they act the bishop in and oversee the flock, they are not to lord it over this said heritage or clergy. Thus the two errors are brought into close juxtaposition and condemned together.

The spirit of Clerical assumption and

Prelatical usurpation had thus early begun to manifest itself in Peter's own day, and is here reproved. In his Second Epistle he warns against "false teachers" who were "among" the saints, whose perversions of the truth had been so extensively embraced and whose errors so generally prevailed, that "the way of truth" was through their instrumentality already being evil spoken of (2 Peter ii. 2). The Apostle Paul warned the Ephesian elders that after His departure "*of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them*" (Acts xx. 29, 30). Here again the evil rises from within, and among those who are addressed as elders, overseers or bishops, and it should be remembered that it was this particular Church that the Lord made choice of, some years later, to depict the general decline of the entire Church in its first stage, and the growth of Nicolaitinism, or clerisy within its pale.

So early as in the beloved disciple John's day, there was a Diotrephes who "loved to have the pre-eminence," and whose "evil deeds" and "malicious words" that apostle refers to in his third Epistle, verse 10. The presumption and arrogance thus begun, developed with such an amazing rapidity that Jude forewarns in his day that these clerics would come to "despise dominion and speak evil of dignities" (verse 8), which actually came to pass when the religious rulers of Christendom caused civil governors to execute their behest and usurped the monstrous power of releasing subjects from their allegiance to their rightful Sovereign, while emperors bowed with fear and trembling to the men who claimed to be the Vicars of Christ.

Thus, some of the professed servants of Christ, instead of being "examples to the

flock," even in very early times usurped dominion, lording it over God's possessions, and as their claims were yielded to they waxed increasingly arrogant. Who that reflects at all, but must see that herein lies the very root of the apostasy!

It would be very small in its beginnings. In some assemblies there would doubtless be certain who desired to have some one to lean upon, where there was not faith to reckon upon a present God, to supply all His Church's needs. Gifted but carnal men would willingly take the place thus accorded to them, and become "ministers," claiming the exclusive right to preach and teach. Practice would grow into custom and especially when copies of the Scriptures were few, would in course of time become an accredited "doctrine." And thus a distinct and clerical caste grew up within the Church, who gradually drew a hard and fast line between themselves and those they termed the "laity," claiming for themselves superiority in all spiritual matters, and that they only had the right to recognise and appoint others to perform the same function, so that whoever was received by them into their circle, however glaringly deficient he might be in those heavenly gifts which truly constitute a minister of Jesus Christ, yet immediately upon his masonic-like investiture into the charmed circle he became a minister by that act, and wherever he henceforth happened to be, his voice alone must be heard and every one else must be mute and passive.

And again, whoever is not thus received into this clique, however markedly he may be furnished by the Holy Ghost with gifts and graces, however well equipped with spiritual knowledge wherewith to edify the Church, yet, in consequence of being *outside*

that elect, that charmed circle—an *imperium in imperio*, a church within a church—he may not perform scarcely any public function. Such is clerisy; such was its beginning, which as we shall see grew and flourished, because it had the sufferance if not the support of a people who had left their first love and lost sight of the Lord Jesus, as the Supreme Head of His Church. Clerisy chiefly depends for its existence and sufferance upon the notion that Christianity is nothing but the expansion of Judaism. In Judaism there was a divinely-instituted priesthood quite separate from the body of the nation, a three-fold order—high priest, priests, and Levites. But the Cross abolished all these. There is now no high priest but One, who is declared by the Spirit to have the priesthood "intransmissibly" (Heb. vii. 24), an high priest after the order of Melchisedec. For any to assume to intervene between God and His people, save He who appears in the presence of God on their behalf (Heb. ix. 24), is an invasion of His rights, which sooner or later a jealous God, who watches over the honour due to Christ, will visit with judgment. There is no priesthood on earth, save that which is the common privilege of all who have been loosed from their sins in the blood of Christ (Rev. i. 7), who anointed by the Spirit (2 Cor. i. 21) are invited to enter the holiest (Heb. x. 19) as worshippers. The gradual yielding on the part of Christians generally of these privileges, in some through fear and indolence, in others through ignorance and unacquaintance with the Scriptures, with the increasing arrogance of the clerics in assuming more and more the place of lordship over the heritage of God perfected the apostasy.

THE TESTIMONY OF CHRIST TO THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

PART III.—BY C. F. HOGG.

THE witness of the Lord Jesus to what He designated the "Word of God," stands in striking contrast to His pronounced and uncompromising opposition to the traditional interpretations by which it was nullified. The Scribes and lawyers, the accredited teachers of the people, devoted themselves to the study and enforcement of the law, a term which was used so as to include the whole of the Scriptures, and thus had the key of knowledge under their control (Luke xi. 52). But they deprived the people of the true knowledge by "teaching for their doctrines the commandments of men," thus setting aside the commandments of God, and "making void the Word of God by their (your) traditions" (Mark vii. 7-13). In six distinct categorical statements made in public, He deliberately traversed the Rabbinic interpretations of the Scriptures (Matt. v. 21-43), showing no inclination whatever to accommodate Himself to "current conceptions" where those conceptions were at variance with truth. Indeed the relentless opposition with which He met the teaching of those whose interest it was to maintain these traditions, incurred for Him the virulent hatred of the most powerful class of the community. But when He attacked the Scribes and Pharisees, it was not to charge them with imposing on the people the fraudulent writings of priest and prophet, as so many modern students account them. On the contrary, the indictment was that they had set aside the good Word of God in favour of profitless traditions and barren precepts.

And if these modern scholars are right in their conclusion, that the Old Testament is but a human product, of whatever excellence, they justify the Scribes and lawyers to this extent, that they put a more reasonable estimate on these ancient writings than did the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. And yet it would indeed be incongruous to oppose so strenuously popular misinterpretations of the Scriptures, and to allow to pass unnoticed a mischievous mistake as to their origin and authority.

Nor was the attitude of the Lord to the Scriptures uncritical. The Gospels show that His knowledge of them was not only wide but accurate, as for example, when He reminded his captious hearers that circumcision did not originate with Moses, but with the Patriarchs (John vii. 22); or again, when He pointed out that Moses had made a concession in the marriage laws (Mark x. 4-5), or corrected their misapplication of a pronoun to Moses, which was really applicable to God alone (John vi. 31), or when He explicitly confirmed the authorship of a psalm (Matt. xxii. 43).

It is to be noticed, moreover, that the Lord Jesus did not confine His use of the Scriptures to His intercourse with men, among whom alone the necessity for accommodation to prejudice could possibly exist. Satan cannot be under any misconception as to the origin and authority of the Scriptures. Nor can God Himself. Yet nowhere does He more unequivocally attest the claims of the Scriptures than in His threefold reply to His adversary (Matt. iv. 4-10). In that wonderful prayer in which He anticipated the Cross and the Ascension, and, for a brief space, drew

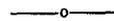
away the veil from the Inner Sanctuary, He ascribed the fate of Judas the betrayer, to the necessity for the fulfilment of Scripture (John xvii. 12.) Not in heaven, not in hell, but on earth alone is doubt cast on the written Word of God.

The Lord claimed to speak the words He heard from the Father (John viii. 26-28). This He reiterates in a form even more precise, "The Father which sent me, He hath given me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak" (John xii. 49-50). The difference between the two words "say" and "speak" is important, the tautology is only apparent, not real. The Greek words also differ; one, *laleo*, referring to the form, the expression; the other, *legeo*, to the matter, the idea to be conveyed by the word used. Thus the Lord declares Himself dependent on the Father, not only for the message He came to deliver, but for the form in which it was delivered, and makes the Father responsible for both. His object in coming into the world was to bear witness to the truth (John xviii. 37), indeed He called Himself "the Truth" (xiv. 9). Is it inconceivable that One accustomed to describe Himself and His mission in such terms, should yet in a matter vital to that mission, accommodate Himself to the ignorant prejudices of men whose leaders he did not hesitate to charge with ignorance of the books they themselves esteemed divine? (Matt. xxii. 29; John iii. 10).

Consider further, what weighty issues hung upon the Words He spoke! To receive them is the solemn condition on which alone eternal life is to be obtained (John v. 24; viii. 51). Against the man who rejects them, they will rise up in

judgment in the last day (xii. 48). Nay more, by their words men shall be justified, and by their words they shall be condemned. Will the Lord Himself shrink from His own standard? Will the daylight of eternity reveal a flaw in His testimony in time? He might, indeed, teach less than He knew, but could He teach what He knew to be untrue? We are not shut up to inference. Heaven and earth are less permanent than the words He spoke. They shall pass away, His words never (Matt. xxiv. 35). What He said was supplemented in due season, it could not be varied (John xvi. 12-13).

And finally, notice the attitude of the Lord toward possible misconceptions in the minds of His disciples as to the future: "If it were not so, I would have told you" (John xiv. 2); words we may safely apply to the subject under consideration. He would not have permitted them to remain to the end in ignorance of the truth about the writings which they held in such reverence, and which they continued to hold in reverence, and to expound as the very Words of God even after the glorious ministry of the Spirit had set in (2 Cor. iii. 8; cf. 1 Peter i. 23).



Lack of power is mostly due to sin covered up and unconfessed. God never uses an unclean vessel. No amount of zeal can make up for the want of GOD.

What sinners need is not smooth things to tickle their ears and help them down to hell, but the fallow ground of their souls broken up and laid open to the light of heaven. There are not many "coulters" among preachers now-a-days. — DONALD ROSS.

FUNDS FOR AGGRESSIVE WORK.

IT is a common complaint that aggressive work for God in the Gospel is crippled for want of money. Halls have to be rented, advertising paid for, and many incidental expenses run up, as those who have experience in such work know. After the ordinary expenses of the Assembly are met, it is in many cases found that there is little left for aggressive work in carrying the Gospel to needy fields. It might be worth while for all the Lord's people to see if they have nothing that may be turned into cash and used in this great work. The time for such service is passing away: to some this season will no doubt be the last. Martin Luther was once asked to contribute toward a good cause, but he had no money. Perplexed and abashed he turned to his home and commenced to search his drawers, in the hope of finding something there that he might sell, to yield the required sum. Spying in a corner a medal that had been struck of Joachim, Elector of Brandenburg, he said aloud—"What doest thou here, Joachim, lying idle? Come out and make thyself useful!" The medal was lifted from its hiding-place and sold, the proceeds being used for the good work he had desired to help. There are other "Joachims" lying dormant in many corners, which ought, in the light of our stewardship for God, to be converted into the currency of heaven and used for the spread of God's gospel. What about the jewels, the useless heirlooms, the oldtime idols, the memorials of unconverted days, which can only be regarded by healthy-souled believers as remembrancers of their unregenerate years, and which, if allowed to remain, may yet prove

temptations to them in unguarded hours, and lead them away from God. Whatever of the "unrighteous mammon" can be turned to account for God, without endangering others into whose possession it may come; let it be used. There is as much lying useless, or being exhibited on the persons and in the houses of God's people, as would feed and clothe the poor of the flock and speed along the Gospel to places where its sound is never heard, if all the "Joachims" were dragged out of their hiding places and devoted to the service of the Lord as they surely ought to be. See how many "Joachims" *you* can bring forth and turn into the treasury of the Lord? It would surely be a triumph of grace to see old relics of worldly days, which only can bring shame to their owners as they look upon them lying useless in their drawers, turned into "sinews of war" to carry the Gospel to new fields, providing halls and enabling those who have the heart and the ability to occupy them for God, making known His Gospel and proclaiming His truth to thousands who are living and dying in darkness and ignorance of God.

WALKING BEFORE GOD.

(GEN. XVII. 1.)

WALK before God and perfect be;
 Care not for human eyes,
 Which but the outward aspect see;
 To Heaven's high standard rise.
 Walk before God: a pathway where
 No human eye can see;
 And all thy Heart to him make bare;
 From secret sins be free.
 Walk before God: obey his Word,
 And yield to His demands;
 Beware of calling Jesus "Lord,"
 Yet slighting His commands.

THE BRIDE OF THE LAMB:

HER PRESENT POSITION AND FUTURE PROSPECTS.

(*Brief Notes of an Address by Max Isaac Reich*).

CHAPTERS xiii. to xvii. of John's Gospel is a section by itself, and is the private property of the children of God. In the first twelve chapters we have the ministry of the Son of God to *the world*; as long as He was in it, He was the light of the world; but on crossing the threshold of chapter xiii., we are in a different atmosphere. There He is in spirit out of the world, and addressing *His own*, whom He regards from many different points of view.

1. As Washed—thus having part with Him.
2. As Disciples—known by their love, one to another.
3. As Branches—of which He is the Vine; fruit growing on the branches, reproducing His life.
4. As Witnesses—"Ye also shall bear witness."
5. As Friends—"Henceforth I call you friends."

In the xvii. chapter He groups these different thoughts together and tells the Father how they became His own. He has "given" them to Him; but what makes the xiv. chapter so attractive to our hearts is, because He regards His own in the light in which a bridegroom regards his chosen bride. This thought gives colour and fragrance to this wonderful chapter. She is meantime a "veiled" bride, even in the Holy Scriptures, not being mentioned by name till the close of the Revelation. Rebekah guided to her bridegroom as a veiled bride, is a picture of how the Holy Ghost is now conducting a veiled bride, a hidden people, across the

desert of this world, to meet the coming One. In the Revelation, after the marriage, we see the unveiling. The bride comes down from heaven having the glory of God—her light is like unto a stone most precious. Think of it! each member of the bride having a body of light, a luminous body—transparent to reflect the life, the beauty of the Lamb, that the saved nations may walk in the light of it, and lose their way no more. The bridal relationship is dear to His heart, and it is as in that character the Lord speaks of "His own" in chapter xiv. of this Gospel. There the bridal heart discovers itself. The bride cannot be happy without the joy of His presence. This is no selfish trouble. It is the peculiar trouble of the heart that loves Christ so intensely, that it cannot be happy without Him. "Believe in God, believe also in Me" (R.V., marg.). Have confidence in the divine plan. It is expedient for the carrying out of God's, programme that Christ go away as a visible presence. He went by the way of the Cross. The Cross seems shame and darkness, but it is the power of God. It looks like defeat and disaster, but it is triumph and victory. "Let not your heart be troubled."

Verse 18. There are many rejoicing that His absence is but for "a little while," but are we as spiritually alive to the fact that the risen, ascended Christ comes to His own, to be their companion until "the love-promise" is fulfilled? Do we really believe it, that we are better off to-day than were those who walked with Christ in the wonderful days of His incarnation on the earth; better off than the woman who sat at His feet and anointed His head and His feet for the burial: than the one who put his head on His bosom? He is accepted

by God for us, and through the Spirit has come back to us to be nearer to us than to those who saw Him, and heard Him, and walked with Him, and were eye-witnesses of His majesty. I am not forgetting that Christ is in heaven when I say that He is "*in you* the hope of glory." But the Victim of Calvary must be the victor on the throne, not only of the Father, but also on the throne of your heart.

"There's a Friend for little children." "Where?" "Above the bright blue sky" "Ah! that is too far away for me. I want a friend nearer than that. I want Him in the midst of my infirmities down here in the wilderness, and in the hour of temptation. I want Him in my poor heart, prone to wander off into vanity and sin. "I will come to you." He does not mock a human soul. Wherever the heart is open, He comes in grace to set up His kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost. Then the feast is made known. "I will sup with Him, and He with me"—no third party to intercept. "I with Him, and He with me." There may be this face-to-face intercourse between the Lord and the one who has let Him in. The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and there is a joy with which the stranger doth not intermeddle. The enemy is looking on, but he cannot hinder the feast (Psalms xxiii. 5).

"Peace I leave with you." When did the Lord say this? On the mount of transfiguration? On that mount He spoke of the Cross, but on the night of the betrayal He spoke of peace! The Cross with all its terror was before Him, but peace was expressed in every movement, in every glance of His eye. The world needs this peace, and we are to be witnesses

to it. "My peace I give unto you." Wherever Jesus went, His peace went with Him, and opened doors and hearts. Christ's life was a life of peace, triumph, love, trust, glory, and if He is allowed to live out His life in us, unbelievers about us will be convinced of the reality of the supernatural.

MINISTRY : GOD'S APPOINTMENT.

THE service of priesthood, which is the prerogative of every real Christian, is far higher than the service of ministry.

The special gifts of ministry are enumerated in Ephesians iv. 11. These gifts are living men bestowed by the Lord Jesus Christ upon His Church. In every age and generation, from the day of Pentecost to His second coming, they are continued by divine provision. Sometimes acknowledged, sometimes rejected, sometimes persecuted and slain, sometimes weakened, darkened, well-nigh overwhelmed by submission to human ordinations and formulas, they are not only a blessing, but an absolute necessity to the Church on earth. But as priests, in common with all believers, they exercise higher functions than they do as ministers. As priests, their service is in heaven. As ministers, it is on earth. So that as high as heaven is above earth, so high as to the locality of its exercise is priesthood above ministry.

From this stand-point let us for a moment survey Christendom, and we cannot fail to see how entirely it has strayed from God's appointment in these most sacred trusts.

In the first place, shall we wonder most at the childish recklessness, or at the

presumptuous insolence which has set up a fancy priesthood between man and God?

A self-asserted infallibility, turning from the full midday light that reveals the substance without a shadow, has rushed back into the darkness of past dispensations, and brought out at random the shreds of a departed ceremonial.

Failing to see the meaning and the fulfilment of these prophetic types, it has as a consequence failed to see their congruity. The office, the robes, the service of the Levitical priesthood, are mingled, selected, diversified, according to human fantasy of imitation. Not a colour, nor a loop, nor a fringe, recited in the commands from Sinai, but had a deep and pregnant signification; and the thunders of Jehovah enforced anxious exactitude of obedience. But the system before us, regarding the truths and the terrors of Sinai as of no more importance than the records of an extinct volcano, revels with impunity in a burlesque, half Jewish half heathen, which could not escape the divine wrath for one moment under a dispensation of real earthly ritual. (Levit. xxii. 9.)

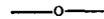
The great majority of Christendom approve this, because it interests the imagination, because it does not disturb the conscience, because its elements are earthly, because it is material and tangible, and because the atmosphere of faith in the Son of God, and life through His name, is too high, pure, and rarefied for the natural mind.

That for this life, while the senses last, taste and superstition may easily fill up with form and colour every outline of natural religion is comprehensible; but it is strange indeed that reasoning beings can risk their everlasting future on such a

foundation, when the light of God's Word reveals clearly the fallacy and the awful gulf that underlies it. (Isa. xxviii. 16, 17).

That a system such as this, which ignores the dispensation under which it exists, should ignore also the special provision which the Lord Jesus has made for ministry to His Church is a matter of course. In fact it leaves no need for evangelists to preach the gospel where sacraments are supposed to save (1 Cor. i. 17); no need of impressing the necessity of heart-service towards God, when a round of mechanical ceremonies and repetitions meets every supposed requirement of righteousness; no meaning in speaking of liberty to enter into the holiest place in heaven, when a hierarchy on earth blocks the way; no sense of individual responsibility is possible, when another undertakes it all for you on certain conditions of his own imposing.

Thus this system, which shuts in jealously so many millions in professing Christendom, could not be built but on the ruins of God's workmanship. It puts under foot these two pillars of His rearing; viz., the royal priesthood of all His people, and the preaching and teaching of His Word through men authenticated and sent forth by the Lord Jesus Himself.



FORMALISM, SOCIALISM, AND HOLINESS.

THERE are three distinct elements—to use a phrase in much present use:—Formalism, Socialism, and Divine Holiness.

Formalism obtains in all the aged systems of Romanism and the parish church.

Socialism has made great inroads on it in this day of ours. To a great extent it is the favourite principle of the present genera-

tion; whether in or out of the church, we see it in activity. The men of the world are combining, and form their joint-stock companies, their confederacies, for the advance of present accommodation and international brotherhood. Such is the day. The saints are always tempted by the spirit of the age, and are now very much acting on this principle. They receive one another in an abstract way, not under the condition the Word of God prescribes, as in 1 Cor. x. And the social atmosphere is very grateful; they breathe it freely and encourage one another by no means to disturb it.

Divine Holiness pauses in the light of everything, and challenges it, however precise, amiable, respectable, and widely accredited, by the light of the Lord, and forces it to give an account of itself to the Word of God. It has its peculiarities, which it can never surrender either to socialism or to formalism. It is something more than the moral sense of man, or even than a "charity" that refuses to judge or distinguish things that differ. It is the mind of God dispensed in Scripture in any given age, and walking in the light of His mind. This divine holiness is a separating principle, but not that of a Pharisee, all to the tradition of men, or assumed higher holiness in one's self, but that of obedience to God's peculiarities—the principles of His house revealed in His Word.

It is easy nowadays to take the journey from formalism to socialism. There is much in the temper of the age to put a very large generation on that road, so that great countenance is given to those who are travelling there. But to travel from socialism to divine holiness is another thing altogether.

J. G. B.

"WORDS TO SOUL-WINNERS."

EXTRACTS FROM THE MEMOIR OF DONALD ROSS.

"You left on me the impression that your soul is less permeated with that thing called Love than it ought to be. Believe me, until you get broken down and ground, and your scraps of poetic rubbish squeezed out of you, and the Word of God put in its place, and the whole mollified with the ointment of love, your labours will be to a great extent useless. Now try to get at this. I beseech of you spend more time on your knees, and when you are walking, instead of reciting poetry, *be praying.*"

"Two things I wish you to attend to as elements of usefulness. *First*, living near to God. Although all is of grace, yet please notice that only persons having Christianity of the highest type are used by God for the conversion of souls. Many there are labouring for Christ and seeing no fruit, who take refuge under the sovereignty of God, whereas if they would examine their own private conduct, they would find a key to the want of success. *Second*, a mind having the capacity to lay all nature under the tax of supply pictures, allegories and illustrations, in order to unfold spiritual things, and in the proportion of people's ignorance, these illustrations are both acceptable and useful."

"It is well the people prize the meetings. Always bear in mind, however, that one person brought to Christ, or rather is a greater fact, than the pleasing of five thousand people. There are many who are pleased with preaching that never touches them, just because of that circumstance."

The Bible Annotator.

THEMES FOR BIBLE READINGS.

WHAT BELIEVERS LOOK FOR.

- Looking for the Saviour (Phil. iii. 20; Heb. ix. 28).
- Looking for that Blessed Hope (Titus ii. 13).
- Looking for a City (Heb. xi. 10; Rev. xxi. 10).
- Looking for the Day of God (2 Pet. iii. 13).
- Looking for New Heavens and Earth (2 Pet. iii. 13).

THE STANDING OF GOD'S PEOPLE.—THEY

- Stand in the Gospel (1 Cor. xv. 1).
- Stand in Grace (Rom. v. 2; 1 Pet. v. 12).
- Stand in Liberty (Gal. v. 1).
- Stand girded with Truth (Eph. vi. 11).
- Stand fast in the Faith (1 Cor. xvi. 13).
- Stand complete in all God's Will (Col. iv. 12).
- Stand against the Devil (Eph. vi. 11).

The Young Believer's Question Box.

In the R. V. of Romans viii. 1 the words, "Who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit" are omitted. Is this as it ought to be? Yes. Almost without exception, trustworthy translators say, there is no equivalent for these words in the original of verse 1. They occur in their proper place at the close of verse 4, where they are in full keeping with the context, but not so in verse 1.

What does the expression in Luke iii. 23 mean—"Jesus Himself began to be about thirty years of age." It reads somewhat strange, does it not?—The Revised Version gives it—"And Jesus Himself when He began (to teach) was about thirty years of age." This clears away all ambiguity, and is no doubt the correct translation.

Does the word in 1 Thess. v. 23—"The very God of peace sanctify you wholly"—teach the doctrine of "entire sanctification," or "freedom from sin," as some call it? It is much used in this connection, and some ask help on this passage? The word "wholly" does not refer to the progressive measure of the sanctification of the man as a unit, but to the setting apart of every part of his complex being, composed of "spirit, soul, and body." Alford, Anderson, and others expound it thus. The other view is contradicted by such Scriptures as 1 John i. 8; James iv. 2. Experience corroborates this and makes it untenable.

Answers to Correspondents.

CHRISTIAN WORKER.—You will find much help on the fundamental truths you mention in "The Gospel and its Ministry," by Sir Robert Anderson, a book which for over a quarter of a century has been a real help to preachers of the Word.

A. T., AYRSHIRE.—By all means get all the educational help you can, and use up every spare hour you have in study of the Word with whatever "helps" you have at your disposal, to enable you to understand its meaning; above all, depending on the enlightenment and teaching of the Spirit, who has come to guide the people of God "into all truth" (John xvi. 13), and to make them know the things that are given to them of God (1 Cor. ii. 12). It is no credit to any one who goes forth in the service of the Lord to be ignorant, nor is it a proof of spiritual efficiency if one despises the cultivation of the voice and other outward things so necessary to all public speakers. But on the other hand, there is a special danger—and it was never greater than now—of young preachers getting much occupied with the manner and style of their delivery, when they have little or anything to "deliver" that is of any use to their hearers, and worst of all, no spiritual power, no unction, no grip with what they say. No amount of "culture" can make up for the want of God. We certainly would not advise you or any Christian young man who has been separated from the world's religious systems, with all their traditional teachings and erroneous practices, to attend "classes" conducted by religious leaders who are in the sects, even if "evangelical." There is not a sect in Christendom that is not honey-combed with fundamental error, and no man can long remain in or under the auspices of such, without becoming contaminated with their evils. There is abundant proof of this to those who have eyes to see it all around us. But some are so "heady" that they think themselves wiser than God, and that they may with perfect safety touch pitch without being defiled, and take fire into their bosom without being burned.

W. J., GLASGOW.—Do not on any account wither your spiritual life, and render yourself unfit for the service of the Lord, by arguing with those who have left the plain paths of the Word, and turned aside into error, especially such error as "Conditional Immortality," and its associated denials of

the fundamental truths of our most holy faith. It is not for a young believer like you to expose yourself to the subtillies of those so deceived. You will not benefit them—for we have never found any of this school subject to the plain Word of God—but there is every possibility that they, by their subtle reasonings and skilfully-planned arguments, may upset or unsettle you. The Word of the Lord—"Let them alone" (Matth. xv. 14) is surely applicable to all such false teachers.

J. M., GLASGOW.—There is no doubt very great need for true pastors, who will visit the flock, seeking out those who are backsliding, and restoring such as have wandered from the way or have been overcome by the world. This is especially the case in large towns and cities where temptations abound, and where Christians do not so frequently meet with or know each other's circumstances and conditions as in country Assemblies. The common complaint is, that brethren seeking to take oversight do not visit the flock, especially the wandering ones as they ought, and probably would, if they had more time at their disposal. But most of these brethren have to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow, and have only a small reserve of either time or strength to give to such work, after family and other responsibilities have had their claims fulfilled. The problem of how this need is to be met may well cause much exercise among all who have the honour of the Lord and the welfare of His people at heart. We are sure the remedy does not lie in the direction your friend has suggested and advised, namely, that each Assembly, or each group of Assemblies, should have a *paid official* pastor, whose work would be to overtake all deficiencies, and make up for all the delinquencies of overseeing brethren, and gradually to become pastor, evangelist, and teacher all in one, doing duty as one-man minister, without the name. This is no new experiment; it has been tried many a time, especially where there was one or more possessed of this world's goods, or with money at their disposal to pay the salaries of such individuals, with the result that they and one or two others did all the worship and ministry to a mute and unexercised congregation, which soon dwindled practically into a small mission or unnamed denomination. No doubt it has its benefits, but in common with all human

institutions it has this defect, *it shuts out God* and leaves no room for the Spirit to raise up and lead out those whom the Lord may be fitting for His service. If the whole Church, or even those who see the need, were to pray believingly and expectantly, holding themselves at God's disposal, He would no doubt in His own way supply the need. And when He raises up from within, or sends from other spheres those whom He appoints to His service, the responsibility of His Churches is to welcome, leave room for, and bring on their way such servants, but in no case is it their business to call to, or appoint men for spiritual work, or to control them in it.

W. J. M., CO. ANTRIM.—The presence of one at the Lord's Table whom you believe to be living in unjudged sin, is a matter which should cause you much exercise before the Lord, and if you can privately reach such a person with the Word of God spoken in grace and faithfulness so as to produce conviction and lead to confession and restoration toward God, it will be a triumph of Almighty grace and cause for abundant thanksgiving. But if this fail, and there is an absence of such proof as will enable those guiding the saints to bring guilt home to the conscience, or warrant them in asking the assembly to deal in discipline with the one suspected, you are not warranted in "sitting back"—which would be practically to excommunicate yourself from the assembly—or even to continuously absent yourself from the Lord's Table on this account. If the sin is there it will sooner or later—if still unjudged—come out, but the assembly cannot deal with it until it does.

J. P., LANARKSHIRE.—The new departure of a few restless spirits combining to carry on what they call "Gospel work on their individual responsibility," apart from the fellowship of the assembly and frequently in opposition to it, when stripped of all the human reasonings by which its advocates bolster it up, and examined in the light of the Word of God, is simply—*division*. It is all very well to talk about being "The Lord's servants"—not the church's—and to use religious phraseology to cover their own conceit and gain the sympathies of the young and uninstructed, but the real reason is, that they may be at liberty to do as they like, bringing in sectarian preachers, using organs, and parading young girls whose conversion in many cases is gravely questionable,

as solo and duet singers. The question with you is, whatever induced persons with such notions to leave the sects, and the only possible reason that we can think of is, that they were unable to get their own way there, or the amount of "preaching" that they consider themselves capable of undertaking. One thing is clear: if Divine order is maintained and the Word of God brought to bear upon them and their actions, they will not be with you long, nor should their departure be regarded as a grievous loss, either in spiritual power or godly testimony. The mistake most frequently made is, in the reception of such persons at all. If godly inquiry were made as to their previous history and conduct, and the truth of God as to separation from the world's religion and its ways, set before them plainly and fully as in years gone by it was—and still ought to be—there would be no trouble with such, for the Word would act as God's winnowing fan to prevent such persons from ever being in assemblies gathered to the Lord's Name.

Questions Requiring Answers.

QUESTION VIII.—There seems to be a danger of letting go and losing sight of the distinctive truths that were taught so fully and clearly from the Word of God over thirty years ago, by means of which hundreds of God's people were brought out from the sects. There is evidently no longer any place for these truths on the larger Conference platforms, speakers being selected in most cases who will not speak of them. Is it not the responsibility of servants of Christ who know and value such truths to give opportunities for the many young believers and others who have never heard them, by giving addresses in such places as they, and many others who are at present sorely perplexed as to their position in the sects, can attend. The retrograde movement of recent years depends largely for its progress on the ignorance of the Lord's people on these subjects no longer taught, therefore, surely it is the business of all who know the truth to give it out, and leave God to look after it. Assemblies in which there are young believers, and to whose meetings others groping after the truth come, have surely a responsibility to see that they get it, either from some of themselves or by laying the need before servants of Christ who

are able to minister the Word on such subjects, and assuring them of their co-operation in making such gatherings known, &c. At a recent gathering of elder brethren to consider this matter the above thoughts were expressed, and they with others would be deeply thankful to know the mind, and have the counsel and suggestions of brethren who have shepherd-care among the saints on the matter.

REVIEW.

MEMOIR OF DONALD ROSS.*

To the Editor of "The Believer's Magazine."

Dear Brother in Christ,—Having read this book with much interest and profit, I feel it will be a humble service to the Lord and to His people, to recommend a careful perusal of it to others, especially to Gospel preachers and to all soul-winners. The subject of this Memoir was a *unique* man. That is, he could not in his work and character be imitated by ordinary Christian men; but no Christian can read the book without adoring the God of all grace, while marking the way in which Mr Ross was fitted for his life-work, and "squeezed" into it again and again; and also how he was sustained all through to the very end of his life leaning on the "Living and eternal God" for *all he needed* to sustain him. His method of carrying on the work of the Lord was truly apostolic. Whether we look at how he needed no power or attraction but the power of the Holy Spirit as in primitive days, or at the way in which he looked to God alone for all supplies. And that blessed God whom he so implicitly trusted, and so faithfully served to the very end, never failed him. Every Gospel preacher ought to have this book, and ponder over it until his soul catches fire at the marvellous grace of God which animated and sustained the "Veteran Evangelist" for so many years, and which shone brighter and brighter as he neared the close of life. In this day of departure from the simplicity of faith in the "Living God," it is like an "oasis in the desert" to come across the record of such a truly devoted life, from the pens of so many witnesses as is to be found in the Memoir of this "Man of God."

Yours in the Blessed Hope,

GEO. ADAM.

* By C. W. Ross: Published by John Ritchie, Kilmarnock. 2/6 net.

A HOLY GHOST MINISTRY.

BY THE EDITOR.

THE only ministry that is of any abiding value to either saint or sinner, is that which is in and of the Holy Ghost. All else ends in smoke. There may be intellectual ability, there may be the truth, but if it lack the fragrance and freshness which the Spirit of God alone can impart, it will bring no one nearer to God, or up to a higher plane of spiritual life. "Judgment to come" preached without the power of the Spirit, hardens sinners into scoffers, and drives them further into sin. The Gospel declared in a clear and intellectual fashion, to unawakened, unrepentant souls, without the accompanying power of the Spirit, appeals to reason, and makes converts to a creed or belief, who are not born again. This is the chief cause of the terribly unsatisfactory results of much present-day evangelistic work, and the process by which lifeless professors are brought into the assemblies of God's people. Nothing short of the living stream—the outflow of the Spirit of God (see John vii. 37-39) can bring life to the dead, or health to the living (Ezek. xlvi. 8-9). In all Gospel effort, whether to the crowd, or the individual, dependence on, and a clear channel for the Holy Ghost is absolutely essential to real work being done, that will abide the test of time and the revelation of eternity. Whatever is short of this, is of man or Satan, and whatever its appearances or pretensions, it is a counterfeit of the work of God. What a solemn awakening awaits those preachers, whose sensationalisms and clever but carnal methods reach the flesh and move the feelings sufficiently, to make converts to a flippant profession of worldly

Christianity, without the life of God, or the indwelling Spirit in them! The credentials of a true soul-winner are, that he is a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost (Acts xi. 24) and the "hall mark" of heaven upon all true converts is, that they "have received the Holy Ghost" (Acts xi. 47); God's own seal upon them as His property (Eph. i. 13). Apart from this, they have no claim to be regarded as children of God. It requires spiritual discernment to discriminate between the work of God and its counterfeits, such as few in these days seem to possess. Such discernment is not natural clear-sightedness; it is of the Spirit of God (1 Cor. ii. 12), acquired under His tuition (1 John ii. 19). There is no other real safeguard against false material being brought into the churches of the saints. Where a Holy Ghost ministry and a Spirit-given discernment are wanting, no human barrier will prevent decay or corruption.

In the ministry of the Word to the children of God, the great necessity is a ministry of the truth in the unction of the Holy Ghost. By this alone is freshness, energy, and godly unity maintained. Neither an iron rigidity, nor a false charity, will keep saints or assemblies right with God. Spiritual tone, health and beauty, are only attained by a constant flow of Divine fulness, of grace and power from the Head to the members, in the Holy Ghost. Human wisdom, man's arrangements, intellectual discourses, incoherent ramblings, alike shut out or stop back the "river which makes glad the city of God" (Psa. xlvi. 4), which causes fertility and fruitfulness wheresoever it comes (Psa. i. 3; Ezek. xlvi. 12). The greatest of all our wants is a Holy Ghost ministry. Without it, decay, declension and departure must ensue. With it, all

other difficulties and forms of evil may be met and conquered. "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him" (Isa. lix. 19) is a principle true in all ages. Our responsibility is to see that we are personally clean for Him to fill, and clear from all associations and practices that hinder His workings.

A Holy Ghost ministry is not a ministry of pleasant things. The work of the Spirit is to "convict" the world of sin (John xvi. 8), and to "mortify" the flesh in believers (Rom. viii. 13). There will be no entertaining of the ungodly with "smart" sayings, no "Pleasant" afternoons, or "Musical Services" to attract them. Peter's address in Acts ii. was in the full power of the Spirit, and "pricked" the hearers to the heart, making them cry out, "What shall we do?" while Stephen's address in Acts vii., which was also a stream of Holy Ghost ministry, caused the hearers to gnash their teeth and murder the preacher.

The ministry of the Spirit of God through the prophets to Israel and Judah in their backslidden state was not a ministry of delectable things, nor did it consist of statements on matters concerning which they were all agreed. It consisted chiefly in setting before them their sins and calling them to repentance and restoration. "But they refused to hearken and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped the ears, that they would not hear. Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord hath sent in His Spirit by the former prophets" (Zech. vii. 12). Such a ministry is needed in this day. May God raise up those who will not shrink from giving it. It will never be popular, either in a back-

slidden church or in a godless, sin-loving world. This indeed is the reason for its scarcity. To be a channel through which the living stream may flow, involves being separated unto God, and so apart from the popular course of religiousness and secularized Christianity, as to incur its venom and its persecution; for nothing so stirs up the enmity of the human heart as when the living edge of God's truth, wielded by the Spirit, falls on the guilty conscience of either saint or sinner, bringing it into contact with Him who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins, either to be humbled, cleansed and restored, or to become seared and hardened in its sin.

This may cause the servants of Christ to tread a lone path, in which the scorn of those who are "at ease in Zion" will be plentifully given them. They will be too far for some, not far enough for others, but if they walk with God and make it their chief concern to present themselves as clean channels, through which His grace and power may flow, the present joy will amply compensate for all the wrongs they receive. And in the day of the judgment seat, when heaven's own light will shine on all the service of earthly days, it will then be seen what were the full results of a ministry in the power of the Holy Ghost.

SPIRITUAL CONDITION.—The spiritual condition of the preacher is of the first importance. If this is wrong, nothing is right. His words may be clear and clever, there may be well-rounded sentences and bursts of eloquence, or the feelings of the hearers may be wrought upon by touching stories, but if the preacher is not in the Holy Ghost, all that he says is worthless to do God's work. It is alike useless to man and beast.—DONALD ROSS.

CLERISY:

ITS RISE, DEVELOPMENT, AND END.

PART II.—BY WILLIAM LINCOLN.

WHEN love to Christ declines in the hearts of His own, love of the world, probably covered over with some religious pretext, must take its place. The heart of man, like nature, abhors a vacuum; it must have something to occupy it. Thus, in the earliest stage of the church's decline, as set forth by the Lord Jesus in Rev. ii. 1-7, there are two forms of evil detected, one of the *heart*, the other in the *life*. Inwardly, the church had left her first love, yet not wholly; outwardly Nicolaitianism or clerisy began to appear, not without the great disapprobation of some at first, who in the course of time as their love to Christ became less, ceased to witness against the evil, which was thus permitted to grow and increase within the church's pale, until the "deeds" of these clerics became a custom and were accepted as a "doctrine" (ver. 15). As regards Christ, it was the ceasing to give Him His place as LORD in the assembly of His saints, together with the ignoring of the Holy Ghost's presence there. On the human side it was the leaning on some gifted individual or individuals, who gradually performed all spiritual functions.

But it may be asked what proof is there, that Nicolaitanism here condemned by the Lord is clerisy.

1. There never was a sect of the Nicolaitanes. All sorts of old tomes have been searched to discover such a sect, but in vain. Men have found a Nicolas, then assumed this sect were his followers, all in imagination. Suppose there had been, why should the Lord single this one out from all the rest, of which there were at

least a dozen by the end of the first century, and give it twice over ALL the blame? The word when translated means "Those who put down or conquer the people," and is chiefly associated with "the doctrine of Balaam," which latter word means, "Those who would devour the people;" and when it is remembered that the point of the teaching in regard to this prophet and his work of seducing Israel into an unholy alliance with Moab, is not to be found in fleshly, but in spiritual fornication (James iv. 4), the application of it to clerisy is at once striking and solemn. The "doctrine of the Nicolaitanes" looks at the priestly assumption of these clerics; the "doctrine of Balaam" has respect to their work in bringing the church into an unhallowed union with the world, and the profit accruing to them therefrom. Surely then clericalism and Nicolaitanism are identical! The writings of the apostles abound in descriptive allusions to the apostasy of the Church, and they also trace the various evils by which it is accomplished to their source, which is seen to be within, and to proceed from ungodly men making a base use of the ministerial office.

The Second Epistle to Timothy deals chiefly with these evils and with the Christian's duty in the face thereof. In the third chapter, there is a notable reference to the cause or prime movers in this state of things. "Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth." *How* do they resist it? By successfully imitating up to a certain point what God had commanded His servant to perform. These resisters, having a form of godliness but destitute of its power, imitate the true ambassadors of Christ.

The Second Epistle of Peter and the

Epistle of Jude speak out plainly and portentously of the class of men who are the instruments in enticing the Church from the path of separation, and bringing it into unholy alliance with the world. There too their inner selves, their thoughts, their objects, and the secrets of their hearts are brought to light. They are "false teachers" (Chap. ii. 1), although they would not avow themselves to be such. Wolves in wolves clothing would but very partially succeed. Unmingled error would not avail or take. These ministers of Satan transformed themselves into "the apostles of Christ" (2 Cor. xi. 15), privily bringing in heresies of destruction, no doubt mingled with grains of truth. The object was to "make merchandise" of the saints, for their hearts were exercised "with covetous practices" (chap. ii. 14).

"The way of Balaam" and the error of Balaam" both mentioned in these later epistles, with the end and doom of that covetous prophet, have a solemn warning voice to those who use the ministerial office "for advantage." "Livings" bought and sold for "filthy lucre" continue until this day. That these clerics were the chief movers in bringing about this union in the days of Constantine is a matter of history. The very names of the chief movers are preserved. Without them and their false prophecyings of peace, this union would have never been consummated; by it they were, and their successors are to this day, the greatest gainers in earthly things. Others in turn began to lord it over the clericals; the great ecclesiastical tree shot up and spread forth its branches of deacons, archdeacons, priests, deans, bishops, archbishops, patriarchs, until at length the Papal supremacy with cardinals second in

rank crowned the whole, with all sacred things in their power, and with heaven and hell as was supposed absolutely under their control. "The church, the church" was then the term ever in men's mouths. Christ the Living Head was unheard of. SHE was supreme. Holy mother church was all in all! Then it was that the church became Paganised, and at the instigation of her ministers persecuted unto death the faithful servants of Christ as the fourth Epistle, the message to the church in Thyatira tells. Then followed one gross abomination after another, until full apostasy was reached. The church accepting the Pope's supremacy, and the world's kings charmed into the belief that by submission to its outward rites they would propitiate heaven, soon permitted the Pope to rule over it. Thus the evil which had so small and apparently trivial a beginning, and was probably winked at by those whose responsibility it was to check it, grew and increased until it domineered over church and world alike. Such is clerisy, and such its way wherever found. "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear!"

—o—

"GO WITH GOD!"

The Spaniards use as a salutation, the words, "Go with God." They may be taken as a watchword.

"Go with God!"

The way is lonely, we shall meet no more
Until, for thee, earth's pilgrimage is o'er.

"Go with God!"

The path will darker grow as night draws
nigh,
For you the light shall break from even sky.

"Go with God!"

And when thy lonely pilgrimage is trod,
Love shall be ours again, at home with God.

SYMBOLS OF THE CHURCH.

BY DR. J. NORMAN CASE, OF CHINA.

IV.—A TEMPLE.

THIS striking figure, as before observed, is used of the Christian and the local assembly as well as of the Church as a whole. It is, however, the last named use of it we have now before us.

1. As to its Origin. Of old Jehovah said—"Let them make me a sanctuary: that I may dwell among them" (Exod. xxv. 8). This was one great end He had in view in all His dealings with His people. He chose them for Himself; He redeemed them from Egyptian bondage and the hand of Pharaoh; He led them through the Red Sea into the wilderness, and ultimately into Canaan. He perfected the sacrificial system, instituted the priesthood; promulgated holy, just, and good laws, in order that He might have a nation in whose midst He could dwell. Their election, redemption, and national separation originated in the mind and heart of Jehovah their God. So with the Church. Every member thereof was chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph. i. 4). On believing, they receive an eternal life, which God before times eternal, *promised* to Christ their Federal-head and Representative (Titus i. 2). The Church was "in God the Father" by foreknowledge and election, before it was "in Christ" by redemption and calling (Rom. viii. 28-30; 1 Thess. i. 1).

2. Its Foundation. Of this spiritual temple Christ, is both its foundation and chief corner-stone. He was so appointed by God. As it is written—"Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-

stone, a sure foundation" (Isa. xxviii. 16; 1 Peter ii. 6; see also 1 Cor. iii. 11). Yes, whether for the individual or the Church, Christ alone is the rock-foundation on which faith can rest. The expression in Eph. ii. 20, may seem to associate others with Christ in this position. Rightly understood, however, it does not. The sentence may well be read—"Being built upon the foundation *belonging to* the Apostles and Prophets." That is, the foundation upon which they are built as well as ourselves (see Alford *in loco*). At the most it can only mean, that they are the foundation in a secondary sense. In order of time the Apostles and Prophets (New Testament) were built directly on the foundation, and, in that aspect, all who afterwards believe are built upon them, and by means of their testimony brought to rest on Christ. Christ is also spoken of as the Chief Corner-stone as well as the Foundation. The latter expression reminds us of the *essential* place He occupies in this spiritual house; the former sets forth the *prominent* and *important* place which is His. In penning this passage (Eph. ii. 19-22) the Apostle probably had in mind an immense rock of such a rise and shape, that it would serve both as the foundation and corner-stone of a building. However scarce such a stone may be in the natural world, it is precisely what we have in Christ—for He is at once the only Foundation and Chief Corner-stone of His Church.

3. The Material it is built of. The edifice throughout is of the same material as the foundation. As the Apostle Peter writes: "Unto whom coming, *a Living Stone* . . . ye also as *living stones* are built up a spiritual house." Christ is essentially the Living

One. In resurrection He has life to communicate to others. We are here forcibly reminded, that when the word "stone" is used of Christ or His people, spiritual and heavenly realities are being set forth under material and earthly figures. In the natural realm a *living stone* is an impossibility. Yet it aptly sets forth what Christ is in Himself, and what we are as united to Him. Of old the stones of the temple were not visible from the inside of the house. "There was," we read, "*no stone seen*" (1 Kings vi. 18). They were all covered with cedar wood, overlaid with plates of gold. The interior of the temple points to the Divine aspect, that which the eye of God rested upon. It was a material foreshadowing, a setting forth, of the Church's acceptance in her Incarnate, humbled, crucified, risen, and glorified Lord. It is doctrinally set forth in the words of the Apostle—"In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are made full in Him" (Col. ii. 9).

4. The Method of its construction. Turn to what is recorded of Solomon's temple in 1 Kings vi. 7. This was an ideal process. It was after the style of God's usual way of working. Silently, slowly, yet surely, apart from earth's clamour, dust, and noise, the building grew. At length it was completed, and they brought forth the headstone with shoutings of grace, grace unto it! But this necessitated what was practically a prior building of the stones together. In or near the quarry the stones were hewn, chipped, smoothed, with great exactness, fitted to their place, and then conveyed to the upper world. It was wise to do it after this manner. For we are told that in its natural state the stone used is quite soft and easily marked ;

but when for a time exposed to the air it become as hard as marble. In recent years, near Jerusalem, a quarry has been discovered, from which it is almost certain that some of the material for the original temple was taken. Blocks of stone, half quarried, still bearing traces of the chisel, and the chalk marks of Tyrian workmen, are still to be seen. In the spiritual realm, too, there is the same double process. (a) On the one hand we have statements such as these: "On this rock I will build my church, &c.;" and, "In whom all the building fitly framed, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." These, and like Scriptures, view the matter wholly from the Divine stand-point. It is the ideal church. Everyone in it is truly regenerated—a living stone in the building. It is infinitely raised above human frailty, passion or imperfection. It is all of God: all as it should be.

(b) But on the other hand we have a work as follows: "If any MAN build upon this foundation gold, silver, &c." Here we have human responsibility: and the probability of failure and imperfection in the work is recognised. The labourers may be spending their time and strength upon blocks of stone that will never have a place in God's true temple. Yea, with guilty carelessness they may introduce material wholly out of place in such a building. The hammer and axe, the noise and dust, the levity and bickerings of the workmen are here all too conspicuous. But from this we turn away. The heart and mind rest with complacency on that glorious temple, whose Architect and Builder is God.

"View the vast building, see it rise,
The work how great! the plan how wise,
O wondrous fabric! power unknown,
That rests it on the Living Stone."

THE TESTIMONY OF CHRIST TO THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

PART IV.—BY C. F. HOGG.

AN alternative attempt to weaken the testimony, incidental and direct, of the Lord Jesus to the Divine origin and authority of the Scriptures, is made in such words as those quoted from the writings of representative religious teachers, English, American, and German respectively. Our justification for reproducing the words is that we may see plainly whither the road leads in which so many are beginning to walk. For the truth is that to attack the Scriptures is to attack Christ, as these extracts testify. The Written and the Living Word are so intimately bound up one with the other that dissociation is impossible. Our estimate of the Person of Christ will determine our estimate of the Scriptures. But to proceed with the quotations. One writes in a work cheap and popular, and highly commended by certain apologists as an able defence of the Bible. "He himself was truly limited in His knowledge of this matter, and in accepting the limitations of humanity He accepted the limitations of knowledge which bound humanity at the time." Another writes: "As an individual man He had, of necessity, a definite, restricted intellectual outfit and outlook, and these could be only those of His day and generation. As a teacher of Spiritual truth, sent from God and full of God, He is universal; as logician and critic He belongs to His times." And a third: "The Redeemer never claimed to be an infallible or even generally precise interpreter of the Old Testament. Interpretation is essentially a scientific function and one conditioned by scientific means,

which in relation to the Old Testament were only imperfectly at the command of Jesus."

We are conscious of a painful jar as we read these words, and are tempted to dismiss such distasteful suggestions with impatience. We had better face them, however. If these extracts correctly state the case, the Gospel records will confirm them. If otherwise, they will supply evidence ample for confutation. And yet we cannot but shrink from the unworthy consequences alike of this teaching and of that dealt with in the preceding section. It is a sad alternative this, between moral and intellectual defect. Happily we are not shut up to either. The devout and honest heart will find in the Gospels many and cogent reasons for the conclusion that each of these alternatives lies equally remote from the truth.

Before turning to the Scriptures, in the light of which these theories must be examined, it is desirable to devote a few words to a specious line of argument frequently followed, to the effect that the Lord Jesus, living long so ago, could not have been acquainted with the manifold discoveries of our modern day. The thought thus expressed, exhibits a fundamental misconception of the relation of the Lord Jesus Christ to the universe. Man discovers truth by slow and painful processes. What are modern sciences and inventions but the discovery of a part of the truth about the nature of things? Science and the arts do not add anything to nature; they bring to light hidden qualities and uses present there as long as the things themselves have existed. Mathematical, chemical, astronomical, electrical, and other sciences are the different roads along which

men move toward the discovery of truth. But Christ Himself is The Truth (John xiv. 6), and that not only in spiritual things, but absolutely and in every sphere. In Him, as well as through Him, were all those things created to the comprehension of which men devote themselves. In His mind was produced the archetypal idea expressed in the visible creation. Plan and execution were alike His (Col. i. 16). Thus He knows all that perfectly whereof man just learns a little here and there, making an altogether disproportionate boast of his meagre attainments.

To say, moreover, that the Lord Jesus "belongs to his times" is to ignore two obvious facts at least. The first, that He aroused the fiercest opposition of His contemporaries; the second, that nineteen hundred years later He is, more than ever, the paramount Person. Men who "belong to their times" live at peace with their contemporaries and are soon forgotten.

Reverting now to the question with which we are directly concerned, we find appeal made to the Gospel records in support of the theory that the Lord Jesus was strictly limited in His knowledge, and did not know the truth about the Old Testament, inasmuch as He could not anticipate the conclusions of modern scholarship. Such passages in the Gospel as seem to lend countenance to this theory demand attention.

That the knowledge of the Lord was limited in one particular direction; He explicitly stated. "Of that day or that time knoweth no one, not even the angels in Heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark xiii. 32). The words "neither the Son" may be peculiar to Mark, indeed, but they are not the

less authentic on that account, and it must be unhesitatingly acknowledged that no statement of the Person of the Lord is complete in which they are ignored. The alternative before us, however, is between confirmation of the Divine origin and authority of the Scriptures based on adequate knowledge on the one hand and unavoidable error, through ignorance, on the other. Thus the cases are not parallel as they would have been had the Lord fixed upon a wrong date. We cannot keep it too clearly before the mind that the question lies not between knowledge and ignorance, but between knowledge and error. In this case, and it is unique, the Lord did not know, and therefore made no assertion, when He made assertions we conclude that He knew. If He did not know to be true what He stated as truth, the defect is not intellectual merely, it is moral as well. Christ is indeed the most competent witness to the Old Testament, but the worth of His testimony depends solely on His character for the most absolute, the most rigorous, the most uncompromising veracity.

Does this mean that the moral character of Christ is established at the expense of His intellectual completeness? Certainly not. When "Christ Jesus—being in the form of God—emptied Himself, taking the form of a (bond) servant" (Phil. ii. 5-6), He assumed the place of absolute dependence on His Father, submitting to His will in all things (Luke xxii. 42; John vi. 38), seeking only His pleasure (John viii. 29), refusing nourishment for His body (Matt. iv. 4) and succour for His distress (Matt. xxvi. 53), save in His Father's way and at His Father's time. So complete is His dependence that He does nothing of Himself and speaks only what He hears

(John viii. 28). His teaching is not His, but the Father's that sent Him (John vii. 16). One thing He particularises; the time of His return "the Father had set within His own authority" (Acts i. 7), and had not chosen to communicate to the Son. This explicit statement does not appear to have suggested, or to have been intended to suggest, general or inevitable ignorance; rather it suggests the completeness of the knowledge which He had received from, and which He held in dependence upon His Father. How full that knowledge was we shall see presently; it is sufficient here to point out that limitation of knowledge as to the future is different from ignorance as to the past, and that His open, disingenuous assertion of such limitation in a matter that did not concern His ministry, and knowledge of which was not desirable for His disciples (John xxi. 22) affords no ground for assuming that He was in ignorance of the true nature and source of the Book to which He pointed as the accumulated preparation for His own advent.

Support for this theory, often called the "kenosis" theory, from the Greek word translated "emptied" in Phil. ii. 6, is also sought from the words "He marvelled because of their unbelief" (Mark vi. 6; Matt. viii. 10), used when the people failed to bring their sick to Him for healing. This surprise, we are told, was due to ignorance! The word translated 'marvelled' appears again in 2 Thess. i. 10, and in Jude 16 ("respect") where surprised ignorance is certainly not the cause of the emotion here described.

Again, in Luke's brief inference to the youth of the Lord Jesus we read that He "grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (ii. 52) an exquisitely

natural account of His perfect adjustment, physical, moral and intellectual, to the environment into which He had voluntarily entered. Perfection is relative. The lad of twelve with the frame of a man of thirty is a monster; with the mental powers and the experience that belong to riper years he is precocious. Growth and development properly considered are not evidences of imperfection, but the contrary. The bud is perfect, so is the flower into which it develops. The mental growth of the Lord, moreover, is not said to be in knowledge but in wisdom; and these differ. Wisdom only comes with experience and is gained in adapting knowledge to the needs and circumstances of life. Taken thus, without constraint or violence to their simple sense, the words do nothing to support the doctrine of the limitation of Christ to which use some have endeavoured to pervert them.

(To be Continued.)

THE INNER LIFE.

IN a day of much activity in evangelical and other work there is great danger in the neglect of the cultivation of the inner life. The service of the outer courts may easily be allowed to interfere with the soul's devotions in the inner sanctuary. Great care may be given to that which is presented to man, while little time is given to the condition of the soul before God. Hours are spent in preaching and other manward services while minutes suffice in the presence of God. Such a state of things cannot last long. Spiritual vigour can only be sustained by the cultivation of the inner life, and this requires time for heart-searching, prayer, and meditation on the Word in the presence of God.

The Bible Annotator.

FIVE ASPECTS OF CHRISTIAN LIFE.

- Children*, in Relationship to God (1 John iii. 1).
Disciples, in Subjection to Christ (Matt. xxviii. 19).
Saints, in Separation from the World (1 Cor. i. 2).
Priests, in Nearness as Worshipers (1 Pet. ii. 5).
Witnesses, in Testimony for Christ here (Acts i. 8).

VOICES OF THE LORD JESUS.

- The *Saviour* says—"Come unto Me" (Matt. xi. 28).
 The *Teacher* says—"Learn of Me" (Matt. xi. 29).
 The *Shepherd* says—"Follow Me" (John xxi. 22).
 The *Master* says—"Occupy" for Me (Luke xix. 31).

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Is it Scriptural to pray to the Holy Spirit, saying "Blessed Spirit?" We read of "praying in the Holy Ghost" (Jude 20), but there is neither precept nor example for prayer to the Spirit. He makes "intercession for the saints" (Rom. viii. 26); it would not therefore be according to the analogy of the faith to address prayer to Him. Prayer is usually addressed to the Father, in the name of the Son, by the Spirit.

Answers to Correspondents.

YOUNG DRESSMAKER.—There is no "age limit" given in the Scriptures as to how long you are under obligation to "obey your parents in the Lord" (Eph. vi. 1). You may consider yourself highly privileged to have the counsel and advice of Christian parents in the early stages of your life in the world, and you will never regret being guided thereby. Youth has its ardour and zeal, but lacks the experience and wisdom which are needed for safe guidance in a world of which you admit you know but little. Prov. i. 8, is needed truth for all time, and we have never known any to permanently prosper, either in spiritual or temporal things who ruthlessly set it aside.

J. E. H., MANCHESTER.—No man who takes the place of being a guide and example to the flock of God, especially if he has influence among young believers, can go into worldly circles and appear in worldly gatherings without doing damage to those who look to him as a leader whose ways are to be

followed. God pity the assembly in which there are such shepherds! Let brethren who have wisdom and grace—and responsibility also—point out to those who are such causes of stumbling the evil of their ways, and seek to reach their consciences. This will probably result either in their restoration, or in manifesting their true condition. Such a ministry is by no means pleasant, but nevertheless necessary, never more so than now.

E. G. GLASGOW.—No doubt the determined and subtle efforts that are being made to introduce the world's religion and its methods to assemblies of believers gathered in the Lord's Name by men who never had any real sympathy with the path of separation to God and from the world, have stumbled many exercised believers in the sects, and driven godly ones to exclusivism. We sympathise with you in your perplexity, but do not think the change you contemplate will prove to be the remedy. Is there no assembly of believers gathered according to the Word, and seeking, amid much to mourn over, to walk in the old paths together in the truth? Better to pick your way, and follow with those who so seek, than remain in isolation.

Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION VIII.—See page 132 in Nov. issue.

ANSWER A.—The lamentable lack to which this question draws attention, is very manifest throughout the whole of the British Isles, with the result that a generation has arisen, some of them in Assemblies professedly gathered to the Lord's Name, who do not know why they are there, or what is the difference between being so gathered and being a member of a sect. If the truths are not taught which led others into this position, need it be wondered if those who are ignorant of them drop back into denominationalism as many do. Surely the responsibility of those who know the truth is to teach it to others, as they have opportunity.—W. J. E.

ANSWER B.—Meetings for the ministry of the Word, bearing on such subjects, were held last season in Beresford, London, where the truth was plainly and fully spoken, and it was remarked by many how eagerly it was listened to by very large companies. There is a felt want of such meetings all over, and if brethren in the various centres would undertake to arrange them, and lay the need

before servants of Christ who are competent to minister the Word, no doubt they would be able to give the desired help. This is being done in several towns this winter.—R. S.

ANSWER C.—What a servant of Christ, writing on another subject, calls “a conspiracy of silence,” seems to have been permitted by almost unanimous consent, to hold sway in certain quarters on all God’s Truth relating to the separation of believers from the world, and their gathering together unto the Name of the Lord Jesus in assembly, as distinct from all denominations. Two chief reasons are given for this—First, that ministering brethren are so hopelessly divided on these subjects, that any public ministry would at once manifest it. Second, that believers professedly so gathered are now divided into so many parties, that it seems impossible to give any effectual testimony on these subjects. The former is sadly true, but it forms no true reason for keeping silence on what God has so plainly written in His Word, nor will the silence make the differences any less. Some of us know the effect of a similar silence for the same reasons on “The Lord’s Coming” in some West of England Assemblies, where the leaders have for half-a-century been divided, some holding the proximate hope of the Lord’s return, others the impossibility of it until Antichrist is manifested and prophecy fulfilled, with the result, that this most precious subject has been invariably kept back in public ministry, and virtually lost sight of to most of God’s people. Surely this is a high price to pay for what is supposed to be “unity.” The same is becoming true of truths regarding our Church association, and I am thankful to say, some are being deeply exercised about it. Those who are fitted to teach publicly, are assuredly responsible to do it, and others may surely circulate the printed ministry which happily exists on these subjects.—E. A. H.

ANSWER D.—For twenty years it has been our habit to set before each applicant for fellowship the truths of God’s Word which are our warrant for assembling as we do, and for being entirely separate from all sects, whether large or small. We have never proposed any believer to the Assembly for fellowship, who has not had these truths simply and plainly set before them, and the result has been, that none received to the Assembly has ever sought to return to denominations, or even to visit them when attractive preachers are there. This,

I believe, has been used of God to prevent wilful and insubject persons from being associated with us. We have had conferences and meetings for ministry in which these truths have been fully and ably ventilated, confirming what had privately been set forth, and when any servant of Christ came along and spoke on them, he was always welcomed, and received a good hearing. Instead of believers in the sects being repelled by such ministry, they have been led on, and many led out and into intelligent association with us. God always owns His own Word, and it is only when the whole truth is taught, that we are preserved from error and kept right with God. Any Assembly that suppresses any part of the truth will soon find its weakness in dealing with error or in recovering wanderers.—H. B.

EDITOR’S NOTE.—We heartily homologate the above. If the testimony to the Lordship of Christ, the presence of the Holy Ghost, the supremacy of the Word of God in relation to the Church is to be maintained, then the truth of God bearing on these subjects must be plainly and definitely taught, not to the neglect of other truths, or in such a manner as to give undue prominence to it, or to make it the badge of a party, but wisely, graciously, and as those who hear are able to follow. Assemblies that exist all over the earth, were not brought into existence by keeping silence on these subjects, nor will they be maintained in health and fruitfulness by such a course. If men are relaxing their hold on these truths, and returning to the world’s religion, out from which they professed to have been brought, that is no reason why others who fear God and love His truth should consent to be silent on certain parts of it for fear of giving them offence. If certain platforms are guarded against the possibility of any word being uttered that would bring such backslidings to the light of Scripture, others, thank God, are open, and the Word of God is not bound, not even by Conference programmes and appointed speakers. The Word of God in all its scope and fulness must be proclaimed, and when one door is closed against it, God will set others open to His servants, and so long as they are true to Him, no weapon formed against them shall prosper, but return with awful force against those who, in crushing out His servants and His Word, are fighting against God, as one day they will find to their cost.

TO OUR READERS.

IT is with a sense of deep indebtedness to the God of all grace and to the willing helpers He has raised up to share in this service, that we close another year and complete another Volume of "The Believer's Magazine."

For *Thirteen* years we have been privileged to edit and issue this paper, and it is our desire, if the Lord so please, to continue it on exactly the same lines as hitherto, ministering ALL God's Truth to ALL God's people, in plain and simple words, such as all may understand, keeping nothing back that will be for the edification and profit of our readers.

Changes many and great have taken place in the world and what professes to be the Church, since the first number was issued. As we are forewarned in the Word of God, the time of the end will be characterised by increasing corruption and apostasy from the truth among those who profess the Christian name, with a decline in vital godliness leading to self-satisfaction and a closer approximation to the world, especially in its religion, among the children of God. And so we see on every hand and in every land, more especially where the light and love of the Truth has shone most fully, where privilege has brought responsibility which has not been discharged. Light trifled with brings blindness; privileges abused incur their withdrawal, and position boasted in with no corresponding spiritual condition, leads to Laodicean self-satisfaction and Divine rejection. To pursue the way of the Lord, to tread the plain path marked out for the obedient disciple in such times, needs special grace and close cleaving to the Lord and His Word. It is with the earnest desire to further this and to help "the poor of the flock" who fear the Lord and desire to be found "in the way of His commandments," that these pages appear.

We desire to acknowledge our deep gratitude to all who have been our helpers during the present year in the production and circulation of "The Believer's Magazine." It has been a joy to have the fellowship of several new writers, together with the valued aid of old and valued helpers whose expositions and addresses have enriched these pages. Cheering testimonies come from many of the Lord's people, of timely help and holy cheer ministered to them through these pages, while,

others have had their eyes opened to see and their steps directed to walk in ways that were before unknown or obscure to them.

It will be encouraging to those who have written and to others who have so constantly helped to circulate the Magazine to know, that its circulation has again increased throughout the year.

For 1904, we are glad to be able to announce the following papers to appear in these pages:—

MARANATHA—A series of papers from the pen of our esteemed contributor and valued helper, Mr ALFRED J. HOLIDAY, prepared for the press before his illness. These will appear each month throughout the year, and we trust in the will of God he may be able to complete his valuable papers on "THE SEVEN GOLDEN LAMPSTANDS."

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE in Various Aspects, as Sons, Saints, Servants, Witnesses; with Six Addresses on "THE CHILDREN OF GOD," their Position, Path and Prospects, by the Editor.

SYMBOLS OF THE CHURCH, by Dr. J. Norman Case, of China.

THE BOOK OF ESTHER, its Typical and Practical Teachings. A fresh and valuable exposition of this little known Book, by the late J. G. BELLETT, of Dublin, author of "*The Moral Glory of the Lord Jesus*," and other well-known works.

TRUTHS FOR THE PRESENT TIME.—Papers and Meditations by the late E. H. Bennett, of Cardiff. "NOTES ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS," by George Adam, with BIBLE READINGS by Robert C. Chapman, taken in Notes as given in his house at Barnstaple. EXPOSITIONS ON THE EPISTLES, by Wm. Lincoln, of Beresford, with PRESERVED GEMS from the ministry of Donald Ross, Thomas Newberry, and others.

CONFERENCE ADDRESSES and Present Truths by Max. J. Reich, Donald Munro, T. D. W. Muir, and a Series of LETTERS on the Present Condition of things in Assemblies, will be a new feature for 1904, which we trust will be helpful to many of the Lord's people gathered unto His Name, with Bible Annotations, Questions and Answers dealing with Fundamental Truths and present day perplexities, Answers to Correspondents, etc., etc. To any who desire to introduce the Magazine, a packet of Specimen Copies will be cheerfully sent, free.